

PSRF Project - Climate Change, Communities and Environment

Building research capability to identify climate change vulnerability and adaptation options for South Australian landscapes

Project Launch. 22 October 2009

Wayne S Meyer

Imagine -

As we progress through the next 25 years we continue to see an amazing change in the goods and services that surround us – fully portable video communication, smaller lightweight highly energy efficient transport systems, information systems with instant global connections and medical interventions that make bionic and gene modification an everyday procedure.

These are the trappings and externalities surrounding us while the underlying needs of people will remain the same as they are now - the need for shelter and security, the need for quality water, food and clothing and the need for a sense of purpose and place. At this fundamental level our intimate dependence on the Earth's natural resources is clear. Our connection with the Earth and its condition is critical to our condition. Our indigenous cultures appreciated this connection while we, the products of the industrial revolution (or we of the fossil fuel generations) have mostly given fleeting and scant attention.

Imagine -

That we begin to act now in a systematic and structured way to modify what we do on the landscape, how we do it and where we do it. We do not wait for a crippling crisis but rather we identify what we value in the landscape, what we value in the surrounding natural resources and what personal and social attributes of our place we want to maintain and enhance.

Imagine –

That we anticipate a warmer, mostly drier climate and we start to adjust our thinking and attitudes, we help our communities gather an appreciation of how we might change and we foster and encourage a cohort of people who can guide those on-ground changes that are needed to adapt.

Imagine –

A landscape that has a mosaic of land use with production areas suited to the most productive and responsive areas - we've moved away from the old practice of farming on the average to farming within paddock land capability. We have different land use activities which now include a mix of endemic perennial vegetation that has become part of whole farm energy and carbon asset accounting.



PSRF Project - Climate Change, Communities and Environment

Building research capability to identify climate change vulnerability and adaptation options for South Australian landscapes

Project Launch. 22 October 2009

Wayne S Meyer

A new appreciation has developed for the importance of maintaining soil health with cover and carbon turnover. We have become cognizant that healthy soils, healthy vegetation and bio-diverse ecosystems are critical for clean water, for waste recycling and for our sense of stewardship. We recognise that surface waters and ground waters are connected. We now plan our grazing, cropping and conservation vegetation management in the full knowledge that this is the most significant environmental effect we have on energy, carbon, water and nutrient balances of the landscape.

Imagine –

Among the land use mosaic there is a deliberately retained set of endemic ecosystems that are large and connected enough that they can be maintained for the foreseeable future. The region has become renowned in an ever crowded world as a significant visitor destination because it retains a character that was not rolled over by the great push for global sameness of the early 2000's.

The region is also renowned for the diversity of enterprises which, like the ecosystems it has sought to retain, bestows a regional resilience, a buffering to the inevitable variability of seasonal conditions, of commodity prices and consumer preferences. Some communities in the region have emerged through a stressful period of consolidation but now pride themselves on being strongly self sustaining. People within the communities have a common sense of well being that has come from a well planned development of their own capacity and the confidence that they can readily identify where to source support and advice.

Imagine –

That as a result of some far sighted and visionary leadership 25 years ago there was a well planned and monitored program that brought together the governance and institutional organisations, public and private which empowered the regional planners and implementers.

An important part of that visionary program was to increase the information and analysis linkages to understanding the big global influences. There was a deliberate process to link with and learn from national projects that were relevant to the region and there was also an innovative consultative and extension effort that won the support of land users.



PSRF Project - Climate Change, Communities and Environment

Building research capability to identify climate change vulnerability and adaptation options for South Australian landscapes

Project Launch. 22 October 2009

Wayne S Meyer

Ladies and gentlemen –

the Climate Change, Community and Environment Project is about setting us on a course that helps realise this vision. I believe that by gathering what we know about the resources, identifying the key driving bio-physical, economic and social processes and bringing this into a regional learning interaction that we can help regional adaptation.

What we learned from a previous project, the Lower Murray Landscape Futures was that the land use decisions made today were the ones that determined what the landscape looked like and how well it functioned into the future. Those decisions of land use were more influential than any of the effects we could forecast from likely climate change or commodity changes. In other words, our decisions determine what the landscape looks like and how well it functions.

My project team aims to assess the impacts of a range of climate adaptation options through:

- Modelling biophysical impacts including water, carbon, nutrients, and biodiversity under changed climate conditions,
- Quantifying the economic and social impacts such as income, jobs, and food and energy security,
- Provide alternative, spatially-explicit policy and management options which increase resilience and reduce climate change vulnerability of our regional social-ecological systems.

We expect to develop the understanding, expertise and tools that result in more evidence based planning and implementation of regional NRM. The net result will be more cost effective conservation and more resilient, viable regional communities.

I want to acknowledge the Partners in this project

- The Premiers Science and Research council
- The University of Adelaide
- CSIRO Climate Adaptation Flagship
- South Australian Government through DWLBC, PIRSA/SARDI, and DEH
- The two NRM regions SA MDB and EP

I thank our Advisory group and look forward to working with them over the next 2 1/2 years



PSRF Project - Climate Change, Communities and Environment

Building research capability to identify climate change vulnerability and adaptation options for South Australian landscapes

Project Launch. 22 October 2009

Wayne S Meyer

Roger Wickes	NRM Council
Patrick O'Connor	O'Connor NRM
Barry Brook	Uni of Adelaide
John Johnson	SA MDB NRM
Sheridan Alm	SA MDB NRM
Kate Clarke	EP MDB NRM
Cecilia Woolford	EP MDB NRM

And finally acknowledge the input from the management group

Members	
Wayne Meyer	Uni Adelaide
Brett Bryan	CSIRO
Andrew Fisher	DWLBC
Michael Cutting	SA MDB NRM
Steph Williams	DEH
Peter Hayman	SARDI
Megan Lewis	Uni Adelaide
Mark Stanley	EP NRM
Observers/Team members	
David Summers	Postdoc observer
Greg Lyle	Postdoc observer
Research Officer - SA MDB NRM	Team observer
Research Officer - SA EP NRM	Team observer

Thank you for your interest and support.

