USE OF THESES

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Managing policy-driven landuse change to enhance the sustainability of rural communities

Jeanette Stanley

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of
The Australian National University
May 2005

Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies
Australian National University
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Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies
Australian National University
Statement of Originality

Except where otherwise noted, this thesis is entirely a result of my own research.

Jeanette Stanley
May 2005
In memory of

Mary McKenzie (1908 – 2000) and Margaret Stanley (1928 – 2004)

Who continue to inspire me with their strength and their dignity.
Acknowledgements

There are many people without whose help and support this thesis could not have been completed, and to whom I give my heartfelt thanks:

Research such as this is never possible without the generosity of communities – for me it was the communities of Adjungbilly and Bourke who generously shared their time, stories and experiences.

Steve Dovers, whose professional guidance kept me on track, who supported me through all of my life’s distractions without losing faith, and whose well-rounded perspective always helped to ease my stress (and who also knew just when to talk ‘thesis’ and when to talk dogs!).

Richard Baker, for many years of faithful supervision, continuing to provide professional and personal support and encouragement.

David Lindenmayer, for seeing the ‘holes’ the rest of us failed to see, his ruthless editing, and his consistent support for my sometimes questionable life decisions.

Land and Water Australia who provided generous financial support for this research.

The staff of NSW NPWS and Forests NSW, for being frank, honest and generous with their time.

Nick C. for his professional and personal support of this research and his faith that it would be finished.

My PhD compatriots – particularly fellow CREStaurant dwellers – whose daily chats, disputes and procrastinations, entertained and informed.

Ben, Ioan, Batman and Adrian for great friendships and inspirational conversations.

CRES support staff, past and present – particularly Phil, Adele, Alan, and Nikki – who provided exceptional administrative and IT support even from afar.

My Qld Department of Natural Resources and Mines colleagues, Beth, Emma, and Jim, for listening to my ramblings, understanding my occasionally vague and tearful moments, and cheering on the final steps towards the finish line.

My sisters, Sue and Cathy, and good friend Cathy R, whose willingness to listen to my self-absorbed mutterings over phone-calls, emails, or chats over hot chocolate, provided much needed support through a personal ‘bump-in-the-road’.

Special thanks to Jo for her ever-reliable love and support through all of my life and thesis adventures!

My Mum, who continues to support and encourage me to achieve my aspirations (no matter how long they take!).

Charlie and Claudie who always knew exactly when (and how!) to distract me from my work and get me out on a walk!

And finally a huge thank you to Doidy who, having never known me without a PhD hanging over my head, provided patient support, cooked dinners, and expert map-making to get me through in the end – we finally have our weekends!
Abstract

Landuse change is occurring across rural Australia with significant implications for rural communities, socially, economically and environmentally. Some of this change is the result of explicit government policy. Policy-driven landuse change has the potential to change landscapes, alter local and regional economies, and change social dynamics. In some cases, the changes that take place are unable to be absorbed by local communities, who may not have the resilience or ‘stocks’ of social capital to cope with and adapt to the changes. Hence, policy-driven landuse change may threaten the social and economic sustainability of surrounding communities.

Alternatively, the change may be ‘embraced’ by the local community as a positive alteration to the existing economic, social and physical landscape, and can offer economic and social opportunities for communities under pressure from highly variable market and climatic conditions.

By synthesising three bodies of literature, and exploring case study evidence, this thesis aims to make both a practical and theoretical contribution, by exploring the conditions under which policy-driven landuse change can contribute to sustainable rural communities. I argue to achieve this, it is necessary to identify and manage social and economic issues associated with landuse change. This study examines two case studies of policy-driven landuse change, and examines the social, economic and institutional issues that have arisen. The knowledge gained from this study will enable policy makers to better implement proposed landuse change to promote opportunities for regional and local communities.

The first case study examines the Adjungbilly community near Gundagai and Tumut in NSW. Predominantly a grazing community, the major change in the region is the active, government-sponsored replacement of agricultural landuses with softwood plantations. Large tracts of pastoral land have been purchased and are now being developed as pine plantations. This is having significant impacts on the rural community, resulting in a negative relationship between Forests NSW and the local Adjungbilly community.
The second case study examines a rural community within the Bourke district of western NSW. While the region is still dominated by large grazing properties, since 1996 the NSW NPWS have purchased three former grazing properties to create Gundabooka National Park totalling over 60,000 hectares. Gundabooka National Park was proclaimed under a state government initiative to protect natural systems in the Western Division considered under-represented in the reserve system and to protect cultural values. The landuse change in this region is far less visually obvious than that of Adjungbilly, but still represents a significant change in management philosophies, goals and priorities, from one of economic production to one of ecological conservation. In contrast to the Adjungbilly case study, the Bourke community have responded to the transition to national park positively. It is therefore possible to learn from this to better inform the management decisions and philosophies that influence future landuse change decisions.

To introduce policy-driven landuse change in a way that contributes to a community’s long-term sustainability, and offers economic and social opportunities for the community, this thesis has proposed a community landuse policy approach, combining social impact assessment, public participation, and social capital enhancing strategies into a practical policy framework. This approach is encapsulated within five management philosophies:

- Place-based management;
- Managing landuse change at a local and regional level;
- A triple-bottom-line approach;
- Adopting a participatory approach; and
- Whole-of-government decision-making.

These management philosophies lay the foundations for all decision-making surrounding landuse change. By planning for change, and introducing it in a sensitive manner, communities and governments can influence the social outcomes and the ongoing sustainability of communities. Policy-driven landuse change can, therefore, be a positive experience for communities, enhancing their long-term sustainability.
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# Acronyms

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTIC</td>
<td>Bourke Tourist Information Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUGV</td>
<td>Bush Users Group Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>Comprehensive, Adequate, Representative (Reserve System)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COAG</td>
<td>Council of Australian Governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSIRO</td>
<td>Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAD</td>
<td>Decide-Announce-Defend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEAD</td>
<td>Decide-Educate-Announce-Defend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC</td>
<td>Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPI</td>
<td>Department of Primary Industries (NSW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIA</td>
<td>Environmental Impact Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPA</td>
<td>Environmental Protection Agency (NSW)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPA Act</td>
<td>Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPBC Act</td>
<td>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Australian Government)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESD</td>
<td>Ecologically Sustainable Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDC STR</td>
<td>Inter-Departmental Committee on Scrub and Timber Regrowth</td>
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<tr>
<td>KWPC</td>
<td>Kidman Way Promotions Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDABC</td>
<td>Murray-Darling Basin Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAPSWQ</td>
<td>National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDSP</td>
<td>National Dryland Salinity Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHT</td>
<td>Natural Heritage Trust (I and II)</td>
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<td>Natural Resource Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSES</td>
<td>National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
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<td>New South Wales Farmers Association</td>
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<td>National Water Initiative</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>Office on Social Policy (NSW)</td>
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<td>Resource Assessment Commission</td>
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<td>Resource and Conservation Assessment Council</td>
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<td>RFA</td>
<td>Regional Forest Agreement</td>
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<td>RNED</td>
<td>Register of the National Estate Database</td>
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<td>SEPP</td>
<td>State Environmental Planning Policies</td>
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<td>SIA</td>
<td>Social Impact Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPA</td>
<td>Strategic Perspectives Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLLMP</td>
<td>Western Lands Lease Management Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWG</td>
<td>Wilderness Working Group</td>
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Managing policy-driven land use change to enhance the sustainability of rural communities
Part 1: Research Context
Chapter 1
Introduction: Policy-driven landuse change and its impact on rural communities

INTRODUCTION

Rural landscapes across Australia are experiencing major changes as a result of explicit government policies directed at changing landuses. Government policies to purchase rural land for the purpose of establishing national parks or pine plantations, for example, are resulting in changes to the economic, environmental and social structure of many rural communities and landscapes. Importantly, these policies are impacting on the social dynamics of communities experiencing the landuse changes.

Policy-driven landuse change has the potential to contribute to regional development and the enhancement of local communities, or at least be negotiated to have minimal impact. However, this is rarely achieved. Often landuse changes are introduced without community consultation, and with little consideration for affected communities. The community into which the landuse is introduced may experience a range of environmental, economic and social impacts, many of which are unpredicted or unnoticed and therefore difficult to manage. As a result, the community may feel threatened and animosity towards the ‘new’ landuse may grow. The potential consequence is that instead of the new landuse making a beneficial contribution to the community (or at least being an understood and tolerated addition to the community), it creates divisiveness and animosity. This has obvious ramifications for the harmony of the existing community as it struggles to cope with, and manage, the enforced changes. Ultimately, a poorly introduced and managed landuse change can threaten a community’s social sustainability.

This thesis will argue that governments have a responsibility to contribute to, and protect, a community’s sustainability when introducing landuse change. The thesis will provide recommendations for government agencies when introducing landuse change, to enhance the positive contribution that landuse change can make, and to ensure that the long-term sustainability of a community is not diminished. The thesis will develop and advocate a community landuse policy approach, designed to guide...
government agencies introducing landuse change to first: ensure the 'best-fit' for both the landuse and the community into which it is being introduced; and second, to ensure that management decisions are based on appropriate management philosophies.

This thesis examines two case studies of policy-driven landuse change. The first examines pine plantation expansion across the predominantly grazing community of Adjungbilly, NSW. The second examines the introduction of a national park into the predominantly grazing and agricultural community, of Bourke, NSW. These two landuse changes were introduced to the Adjungbilly and Bourke communities by respectively, the NSW Department of Primary Industries (Forests NSW\(^1\)) and NSW Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service\(^2\)), producing quite disparate outcomes. The thesis will identify the social and economic issues that arose for the two communities, and examine the different approaches adopted by the two agencies. The thesis will argue that the community landuse policy approach, combined with basing management decisions on appropriate management philosophies (detailed through Chapters 4-7), can fundamentally influence the degree to which a landuse change will be embraced or rejected by a community. The knowledge gained from this study will enable policy makers to better implement proposed landuse change by minimising the negative and maximising the positive effects on rural communities.

**RESEARCH CONTEXT**

The Australian landscape is characterised by ancient soils, highly sensitive to disturbance with low fertility and slow reproductive qualities; annual rainfall is highly variable; and, land degradation is prevalent, manifested through erosion, salinity, waterlogging, rising or declining water tables, and loss of soil fertility and structure (Beresford *et al.* , 2001; Cameron, 1991; Conacher and Conacher, 2001, 1995; Davidson, 1995; Goldney and Bauer, 1998; Industry Commission, 1998; Messer,

---

\(^1\) Forests NSW is a public trading enterprise within the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), responsible for managing public native forests and plantations. While DPI is the agency responsible for managing (and introducing) the landuse change, to avoid confusion the thesis will refer to the responsible agency as Forests NSW.

\(^2\) NSW NPWS is part of the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), the main conservation agency in NSW. Again, while DEC is the agency responsible for managing (and introducing) the landuse change, to avoid confusion the thesis will refer to the agency as NSW NPWS.

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*Chapter 1: Introduction: Policy-driven landuse change and its impact on rural communities*
Because of the limited area of fertile land in Australia, different landuses – agriculture, grazing, plantation, national park, mining, residential, industrial etc – often compete for suitable land. Add to this, social and economic factors, such as fluctuating market conditions, the withdrawal of state support, rural population decline, decreasing employment opportunities in rural areas, and the loss of social services and infrastructure across rural communities\(^3\), and conflicts between competing landuses are inevitable. It is into this biophysical, economic, and social landscape that governments must introduce policy-driven landuse change.

**What is landuse change?**

Landscapes are constantly changing and evolving. Many of the changes that take place in a landscape are subtle, taking many years to become obvious. These changes may occur naturally, they may be human induced, or a combination of both. Natural landscape change is not the focus of this thesis, which concentrates instead on landscape change within human control. One example of a human-induced landscape change is the changing of landuses. As much of the Australian landscape is utilised for human needs, whether these be productive, aesthetic, recreational or ecological in nature, humans have significant influence over the way in which landscapes change by the way we use the land; that is, interactions between society and nature (Haberl *et al*., 2004). In the same way that humans have the capacity to create landscapes of social, economic and ecological value, we also have the capacity to create impoverished and degraded landscapes (Haberl *et al*., 2004).

Human-induced landuse changes arise from evolving social, economic and environmental conditions, and may be cumulative, market-driven, cultural or social, or policy-driven. While a change may be assigned to any one of these groups, it is more likely that change will arise from complex interactions between the groups: for example, cumulative changes may be driven by market forces.

\(^3\) The social, economic and environmental pressures that rural communities face will be explored in Chapter 3.

*Chapter 1: Introduction: Policy-driven landuse change and its impact on rural communities*
Cumulative landuse changes are those that occur over time as a result of many smaller changes. These may be made by a range of individuals, agencies, or corporations and eventually accumulate to change the landscape. An example is when individuals across a region begin to diversify the type of commodities they produce. Individuals in a predominantly grazing community might diversify into native flower production, wine growing, or crop production. It is only through their cumulative impact that a region genuinely experiences landscape or landuse change. Cumulative landuse changes are perhaps the least manageable because they arise from many individual decisions. The change may not even be observed or noticed until it is embedded in a landscape.

Market-driven landuse changes are those that take place because of market fluctuations or economic decisions. Land managers are highly influenced by market forces, and will make decisions based on market stability, or alternatively on high risk, potentially lucrative market swings. For example, grazing properties may be developed into wine growing properties because of downward falling wool prices, and an upward surge in the wine market. Landuse changes that are driven by the market are less amenable to government control. Aside from creating legislative limits and controls, there is often little governments can do to control, manage or facilitate market-driven landuse changes into rural communities.

Culturally/socially driven landuse changes may arise due to evolving cultural and social factors. An example is evolving landholder attitudes towards rural landscapes and management practices. As land degradation becomes increasingly evident, and our understanding of the causes and drivers of degradation is enhanced, many landholders are implementing new and innovative ways of managing their land. While many of these changes are to management practices within current landuses, sometimes these changes may manifest in radical transformation of the way that the land is used. For example, landholders may change from grazing to farm forestry and wood production, in an attempt to halt erosion. Changing attitudes lead to a changed landuse, that in turn changes the landscape. Again, governments may have little direct or singular control over these changes.
Policy-driven landuse changes are those that arise from explicit government policy. Examples of this in a rural context might be the encroachment of urbanisation because of changes to urban zoning, the flooding of rural landscapes to increase water storage, the conversion of land from State Forest to National Park, the development of grazing land to forest plantations, or the purchase of rural land for the creation of national parks. In these instances, governments have the primary capacity to manage the landuse change and its impacts from the conception of the policy. Unlike other forms of landuse change, governments in this case may act proactively rather than reactively.

It is important to separate drivers of change over which Australian governments and communities have differing levels of control. In cases where little direct control exists, the scope for policy intervention is limited. However, in cases where changes in rural landuses are a result of explicit, purposeful policies, resource managers can manage the change and its impacts from the conception of the change. This enables policy makers to minimise the impacts of changes on local communities, to consult with communities before implementation, and to ultimately contribute to the ongoing social, economic and environmental sustainability of communities. This should result in far more harmonious relationships between established and introduced landuses. So, while all of the kinds of changes outlined above will almost certainly affect a community in a variety of ways, this study will focus on policy-driven landuse change.

What is policy-driven landuse change and why was it the focus of this research?

Governments make decisions across a range of policy arenas that affect landuse change. Some current examples are: the Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) process is driving the expansion of the protected area estate, and the expansion of state forest plantation – Australian plantations are increasing at an average rate of 87,000 hectares per year (Forests NSW, 2003/04). At a state level, the NSW Plantations and Reafforestation Act 1999 was introduced to promote and assist the development and expansion of NSW plantations and large reafforestation programs (EPA, 2000). Salinity-focused reafforestation programs are being driven across agricultural landscapes under key Australian and state government initiatives, such as the National

Chapter 1: Introduction: Policy-driven landuse change and its impact on rural communities
Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAPSWQ), the Natural Heritage Trust II (NHTII), and the National Dryland Salinity Program (NDSP) (EPA, 2000). The Groundwater Flow System Framework (developed under the NDSP) is promoting the expansion of plantations across the Murray Darling Basin (MDBC, 2003). The NSW Government’s Environmental Services Scheme encourages landholders, through the use of incentives, to implement a range of landuse changes such as reafforestation (EPA, 2000). The National Water Initiative (NWI), developed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), is attempting to increase the productivity and efficiency of Australia’s water use and to ensure the health of river and groundwater systems. The NWI has targeted a range of areas, such as the expansion of water trading, and more secure water access entitlements. Such initiatives have the potential to change the way that land is used across Australia’s landscape (COAG, 2003; 2004).

The National Biotechnology Strategy is actively driving the development and expansion of biotechnology initiatives into the Australian agricultural industry, such as genetically modified crops (Biotechnology Australia, 2000).

These are just some examples of policies that are driving landuse changes across the Australian landscape. While there are clear policy imperatives for the changes, governments are intervening in complex social, economic and environmental systems. While governments are attempting to manage natural resources for the benefit of the broader public, they lack a simple process of how to manage conflicting values and needs. Hence, this thesis addresses a current and increasing challenge by providing a clear framework to begin addressing the complex social, economic, and environmental systems into which policy-driven landuse changes are introduced.

Policy-driven landuse change can arise from either indirect or direct policies. *Indirect* government policies that influence landuse change are those where the primary intention or objective of the policy is not to change or introduce a landuse; landuse change is an unintended or secondary outcome. An example of an indirect government policy influencing landuse change is the introduction of water regulations, such as the Queensland government’s *Water Act 2000*. Policy initiatives under the Act are likely to reduce and reallocate the amount of water available to individual producers. The primary objectives of the policy are to increase water use efficiency, and increase natural environmental water flows. The unintended (although predictable)
consequence is the restructuring of industries that are high water users, such as the sugar and cotton industries. While this may not be the primary objective of the policy it is still highly predictable, and as such governments can incorporate economic adjustment strategies into decision-making.

Direct policy-driven landuse changes are those where the primary objective of the government policy is to alter the landuse. Lugg (1998) documents a direct policy decision to convert a northern NSW forest to national park, leading to the closure of a local sawmill, with subsequent social and economic impacts. Other examples include changes to land use zoning, environmental regulations, and government land acquisitions with the express purpose of introducing a new landuse. Focusing on the latter - government land acquisitions - offers an opportunity to examine a policy-driven landuse change over which governments have significant control.

To meet agency objectives, government agencies sometimes purchase rural land either compulsorily, or more commonly through the open market for the express purpose of developing it for a different landuse, such as state forest expansion or the creation of national park. This dramatically changes the landuse, and often the landscape. This thesis will focus on government land acquisitions as examples of direct policy-driven landuse change and its impacts on rural communities, through close investigation of two government-sponsored land use changes affecting rural communities.

How does policy-driven landuse change effect rural communities?

As will be demonstrated in this thesis, policy-driven landuse change has the potential to create significant social, economic and environmental impacts for rural communities. Economically, policy-driven landuse change may destabilise local economies, decrease or alter employment opportunities, and change property values. Socially, it may contribute to declines in rural populations, particularly outlying communities, placing pressure on the maintenance of social and community services, or creating feelings of isolation; it may lead to a loss of local history and sense of place and may present challenges for the maintenance of social institutions, networks and other informally generated support systems. Policy-driven landuse change may
increase administrative burdens, aesthetically alter landscapes and ultimately lead to a loss of community control over the future of their landscapes. Alternatively, it can create opportunities for rural communities, particularly by contributing to regional economic growth during uncertain economic times, with consequent social and economic benefits.4

Ultimately, however, a poorly introduced policy-driven landuse change has the potential to contribute to the decline of a rural community, detracting from its long-term sustainability. As will be detailed in Chapter 3, rural communities are already facing pressures from many directions – market fluctuations, climatic variables, technological changes, retraction of subsidies, environmental degradation, depopulation, withdrawal of community and social services, an ageing population, and decreasing opportunities for employment.

Rural communities are a small but vital part of Australian society. Rural communities represent only a small proportion of the Australian population yet manage over 60% of the land area. Increasingly, rural communities are expected to carry the burden of environmental stewardship, tasked with repairing landscapes that have been degraded by two centuries of agricultural and other practices. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 3, environmental sustainability is strongly dependent on social and economic sustainability – we need socially sustainable communities if natural resource management objectives are to be achieved. However, as will be demonstrated throughout this thesis, increasing pressures on rural communities, including the introduction of policy-driven landuse changes, may threaten rural social cohesiveness and their social and economic sustainability and hence, may also threaten ecological sustainability.

Ultimately, governments have a responsibility to contribute to enhancing community sustainability under Australia’s National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (NSESD)5. A guiding principle of the NSESD is that “decision-making processes should effectively integrate both long and short-term economic,

4 The social and economic impacts of policy-driven land use change for two case studies will be explored in Chapters 8 and 9.

5 The influence that the NSESD has had on government decision-making will be discussed in Chapter 3.
environmental, social and equity considerations” (COAG, 1992:n.p). It is therefore a responsibility of governments when introducing landuse change to ensure that the landuse ‘fits’ the community – environmentally, socially and economically. This is closely tied to the triple-bottom-line concept that will be explored in this thesis – the triple-bottom line is presented as a core management philosophy that should influence decision-making surrounding landuse change.

The triple-bottom-line paradigm requires landuse managers to integrate economic, social and environmental factors into decision-making. The three ‘lines’ represent society, the economy and the environment. Society depends on the economy, and the economy depends on the global ecosystem, whose health represents the ultimate bottom line. While originally a commercial concept it is now a core principle across the natural resource management agenda. For example, of relevance to this thesis is Forests NSW commitment to managing forests for a large number of values across the broad performance areas of social, environmental and economic sustainability (Forests NSW, 2003/04). This demonstrates a theoretical commitment to triple-bottom-line and sustainability principles.

I argue, that the reason that government agencies do not adequately consider social and economic needs of communities when introducing landuse change at present, is not that they do not care, or that they have little regard for the value of rural communities. Rather, it is because they do not know how to incorporate social and economic needs into landuse decision-making. The complexity of social and economic systems and their relationship with natural systems acts as a barrier to the effective integration of social and economic considerations into landuse decisions. The value of this thesis is that it offers decision-makers a way forward by providing a framework to guide decision-making surrounding landuse changes with consideration of social, economic and environmental needs of both the community and the government agency.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The key objective of this research is to provide recommendations to government agencies when driving or introducing landuse change into rural communities to enhance the capacity of the community to cope with the change, and enhance their
social, economic and environmental sustainability. To achieve this, the thesis has a number of subsidiary objectives:

- To examine the potential impacts on rural communities of policy-driven land use change;
- To propose a framework for governments to use when planning to introduce land use changes to avoid contributing to the further decline of rural communities;
- To introduce the concept of a 'best-fit' land use change – socially, economically and environmentally; and
- To investigate and describe management philosophies that contribute to the successful introduction and management of policy-driven land use change.

Rural change generally, and land use change more specifically, is inevitable. However, the way that change is introduced can mean the difference between the sustenance of a local community or its demise. By planning for change, rather than thrusting it upon communities, communities and governments can have much influence over its eventual outcomes and the ongoing sustainability of the community.

**RESEARCH QUESTION**

To address the thesis objectives, one simple question can be asked: How can governments introduce land use change to communities in a way that does not detract from their long-term sustainability? The thesis will take a pragmatic approach and will provide recommendations for government agencies when introducing land use change.

This approach has been influenced by my personal experiences in Queensland state government working to integrate social impact assessment into regional natural resource management arrangements. While appreciation of social issues is high across government agencies, understanding of how governments address social issues in decision-making is low. To increase consideration of social and economic decisions, and to meet their triple-bottom-line obligations, governments are seeking guidance on how best to integrate social and economic issues into natural resource management decision-making. Ultimately, therefore, governments are looking for simple models to guide decision-making; models that do not significantly challenge governance...
arrangements, but rather work within the limitations posed by bureaucratic boundaries. This thesis aims to make a timely contribution by providing such a framework.

**THE THESIS**

The objective of this thesis is to develop recommendations for government agencies when driving or introducing landuse change into rural communities to enhance the capacity of the community to cope with the change, and enhance their social, economic and environmental sustainability. To do this, governments need to understand what communities need to be able to cope with introduced changes.

Values and needs will differ across rural communities. However, through theoretical, empirical and case study evidence, this thesis has identified six key conditions or ‘needs’ that, if met, will assist communities to cope with landuse change. The rationale for these ‘needs’ will be examined in Chapter 3, and how to meet them will be integrated throughout this thesis. The key conditions or ‘needs’ that this thesis will address are for:

1. Community values and expectations for the social and economic future of their community to be understood by policy makers.
2. The impacts of the landuse change to be identified and mitigated (or enhanced) wherever possible to promote or protect economic prosperity, social systems (including their sense of place, identity and heritage), and ecological integrity.
3. A knowledge and understanding of the landuse change, how it might affect them, and how it can benefit them (community learning).
4. Opportunities to have their say, express their concerns, and share in the decision-making process.
5. A well-networked and trusting community.
6. A healthy, sustainable community.

It will be argued that the first five of these needs can be met through the strategic use of three ‘tools’: social impact assessment (Chapter 4), public participation (Chapter 5), and social capital enhancing strategies (Chapter 6). The final need – to have a healthy, sustainable community – can be met through the delivery of all of these tools into a community landuse policy, which aims to find the ‘best-fit’ for communities and the

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*Chapter 1: Introduction: Policy-driven landuse change and its impact on rural communities*
introduced landuse. The community landuse policy approach, including models that provide guidance for the delivery of the approach, is detailed in Chapter 7.

From the community landuse policy process, it is possible to develop community landuse strategies to ease the transition of the change and lay the foundations for ongoing management. Chapter 7 will also argue that the following broad management philosophies should lie at the core of landuse change decision-making:

- Place-based management philosophies as opposed to the application of generic agency policy;
- Managing landuse change at a local and regional level;
- Adopting a triple-bottom-line approach;
- Adopting a participatory approach; and
- Whole-of-government decision-making.

The thesis will examine two case studies of policy-driven landuse change to compare and contrast the diverse management approaches adopted during their introductions. The first case study used few components of the community landuse policy approach, while the second unintentionally followed large parts of the approach. The outcomes for the respective communities were vastly different, with the first community actively opposing the change, and the latter community embracing the change.

A key contribution of this thesis is its synthesis of three different bodies of theory and practice – social impact assessment, public participation, and social capital – into a pragmatic, policy approach. In addition, it draws on such areas as, whole-of-government, community development, social sustainability, capacity building, landuse change, rural social change, and triple-bottom-line management. Because the resultant community landuse policy approach has not been constrained by a single theoretical approach, it offers significant potential to alter how policy-driven landuse changes are introduced into rural and regional communities, and therefore alter how they respectively impact on the communities. Such an attempt to synthesise these theories into a series of policy recommendations has not been attempted before.

Chapter 1: Introduction: Policy-driven landuse change and its impact on rural communities
Case studies

The first case study (Chapter 8), examines the Adjungbilly community located near Gundagai and Tumut in south-eastern NSW. The Adjungbilly community has undergone a transition from predominantly grazing country to a landscape dominated by *Pinus radiata* plantations, as a result of a Forests NSW policy to expand plantations in the region. Large tracts of pastoral land have been purchased and are being developed as pine plantations. This is impacting on the rural community, detracting from their sustainability as a cohesive, networked social unit, and creating a negative relationship between Forests NSW and local landholders.

The second case study (Chapter 9), examines a rural community within the Bourke district of western NSW. While the region is dominated by large grazing properties, government-induced change has occurred with the government purchase of three former grazing properties to create Gundabooka National Park, totalling over 60,000 hectares. Gundabooka National Park was proclaimed under a NSW state government initiative to reserve natural systems in the Western Division considered under-represented in the National Park reserve system, and to protect significant Indigenous values. The landuse change in this region is less visually obvious than that of Adjungbilly, and is less expansive across the region. However, it still represents a change in management philosophies, goals and priorities, from one of economic production, to one of ecological conservation, while introducing a new land manager into the region. The relationship between the local community and NSW NPWS has been almost entirely positive, with only minor conflict over some management detail. As such, it offers a rare example of how governments can introduce landuse change into communities in a way that contributes to community goals, needs and aspirations, enhancing their long-term sustainability.

This thesis will argue that the fundamental differences in the two case studies lie in the degree to which the landuse changes ‘fit’ the communities, and the disparities in management philosophies adopted by the two agencies that influenced management decisions. This will be explored in Chapter 10.

*Chapter 1: Introduction: Policy-driven landuse change and its impact on rural communities*
Thesis structure

The thesis is divided into four parts: Part 1, Research Context (Chapters 1, 2 and 3), sets the scene for the research, and the contribution it makes to policy processes surrounding landuse change. Chapter 2 details research methodology, while Chapter 3 explores the benefits that sustaining rural communities offer, and the responsibility of governments to contribute to the social sustainability of communities when introducing landuse change.

Part 2, Building Community Capacity to Cope with Change (Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7), provides the theoretical background for the community landuse policy approach. Chapter 4 explores social impact assessment, and the contribution it can make to ease the introduction of landuse change into rural communities. Chapter 5 explores public participation, and its role in involving communities in landuse change, increasing their understanding of the issues and allowing people to have their say in the decision-making process. It concludes by examining how government agencies and communities can increase public participation in landuse change decisions. Chapter 6 examines social capital and its role in building well-networked and trusting communities, while exploring how governments can contribute to the maintenance and potential growth of social capital through the landuse change process. Chapter 7 details the community landuse policy approach, describing the process and how it utilises each of the above tools. The framework provided was developed primarily from the case studies (explored in Chapters 8 and 9) by evaluating the management processes instigated in the two case studies, and comparing and contrasting what worked well and what did not. From this grounded theory approach (explored in Chapter 2), bodies of theory were explored to support the practical recommendations – namely, social impact assessment, public participation, social capital, whole-of-government, place-based management, and triple-bottom-line management – and the result is a framework that evolved from a highly pragmatic evaluation of real-life scenarios of landuse change, that is also firmly embedded in strong theoretical boundaries. The framework provides two models for introducing landuse change into communities. The chapter then explores management philosophies that, I believe, should underpin landuse change decision-making.

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Part 3, *The Changing Nature of Rural Communities: Case studies of policy-driven landuse change* (Chapters 8, 9, and 10), explores the two case studies. Chapter 8 details the Adjungbilly case study, examining the impacts perceived by the community and the relationship between the Adjungbilly community and Forests NSW. Chapter 9 explores the Bourke case study, examining the benefits identified by the community and the positive relationship that has developed between NSW NPWS and the Bourke community. Chapter 10 compares and contrasts the two case studies within the context of the community landuse policy approach – the framework developed in Part 2 was used to evaluate the case studies in regards to the degree to which they considered community sustainability in the introduction of their landuses.

Part 4, *Community landuse policies: concluding remarks and wider implications* (Chapter 11), offers a summary of the thesis, provides broad recommendations, describes the relevance of the thesis beyond the case studies, and outlines the empirical and theoretical contributions of the thesis.

The thesis structure is summarised in Figure 1.1.
Chapter 1: Introduction: Policy-driven landuse change and its impact on rural communities
Chapter 2
Research Methods

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the research methods adopted to explore the key research question: How can governments introduce landuse change to communities in such a way that does not detract from their long-term sustainability? To address this question, two case studies of policy-driven landuse change were explored, people affected by the changes and people responsible for implementing the changes were interviewed, and a wide range of secondary data sources were examined. Because of the pragmatic nature of the thesis, the primary and secondary data were compared and contrasted to develop policy recommendations for governments introducing landuse change. This chapter will begin by examining the research design, including the qualitative and applied nature of the research, the grounded theory approach adopted, as well as the use of case studies. It will then move to examining the research process. Data collection methods, with an emphasis on interviewing, will then be discussed, as will the data analysis techniques that were adopted. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the limitations of the research.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research principles

The following will describe the qualitative nature of the research, the applied nature of the research, the grounded theory approach adopted and the use of case studies.

Qualitative

Qualitative research is designed to “capture people’s meanings, definitions and descriptions of events”, while quantitative research aims to “count and measure things” (Minichiello et al., 1995:9). Qualitative research is a deliberate move away from quantifying and testing hypotheses, towards interpreting how the complex social world is understood and experienced, revealing how people attach meaning to their
lives, and how this influences their actions (Marshall and Rossman, 1989; Mason, 2002; Minichiello et al., 1995; Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Flick (2002) suggests that the essential features of qualitative research are:

- The correct choice of methods and theories, pursuing only those that will do justice to the complexity of the object under study;
- The recognition and analysis of participants’ perspectives and diversity;
- The researcher’s reflections on the research as part of knowledge production, by including the subjectivities of the researcher in the research process; and
- Using a variety of methods and approaches.

Qualitative research is based on flexible, strategic and contextual data generation, and therefore uses a variety of empirical materials such as case studies, interviews, observation and interactional methodologies (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Mason, 2002). These were all utilised for this research. Analysis of qualitative research is holistic and contextual, and involves developing an understanding of complexity and detail (Mason, 2002; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Shaw, 1999). The differences between qualitative and quantitative research approaches are summarised in Table 2.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
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<tr>
<td>Concerned with understanding human behaviour from the perspective of the respondent; Assumes dynamic and negotiated reality.</td>
<td>Concerned with discovering facts about social phenomena; Assumes a fixed and measurable reality.</td>
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| Methodological | Data are collected through participant observation, semi- or un-structured interviews; Data are analysed by themes identified by respondents; Data are reported in the language of the respondent. | Data are collected through measuring things; Data are analysed through numerical comparisons and statistical inferences; Data are reported through statistical analyses. |

Table 2.1 Conceptual and methodological differences between quantitative and qualitative research methods (Minichiello et al., 1995).

Chapter 2: Research methods
Shaw (1999) and Silverman (1997) both suggest that qualitative and quantitative principles have roles in social science research, and that the approach taken is dependent on “what you are trying to do” (Silverman, 1997:14). Shaw suggests that if insider perspectives are needed to answer the research question, if the outcome includes complex actions, if intensive inquiry is appropriate and possible, if diverse data sources are available, and perhaps most importantly if ‘thick description’ is required to fully understand the complexity of the issues, then a qualitative approach is the most suitable.

As such, this research pursued a qualitative research method, as I was attempting to garner perspectives on complex issues that were highly context dependent. For example, without understanding the historical context of Bourke’s landscape and land degradation, the positive response to the introduction of a national park could have been misconstrued. Additionally, without understanding the importance of the local school to the social structure of the Adjungbilly community, decreasing school numbers might not have been identified as a significant impact. However, intensively inquiring and probing into respondents’ feelings and opinions in the context of their history, landscape, and social structure, developed a ‘fuller’ picture and deeper understanding. It was the qualitative nature of the research that allowed this to happen.

**Applied and interdisciplinary**

This research sought to understand the perspectives and opinions of communities in response to policy-driven change, to develop practical and policy relevant recommendations. As such, this research is based on applied research principles. An interdisciplinary approach was also adopted, as I strongly believe that policy or management solutions can rarely be found within a single discipline such as resource economics, or public participation. It is the inter-disciplinary nature of the research, that provides its most significant strength; as the research was not constrained by a single disciplinary focus it has been able to draw on a range of social theories, and therefore provides practical, flexible and pragmatic policy recommendations that can be applied to a multitude of policy decisions.
My personal experience in the public service as a social impact assessment advisor in a natural resource management (NRM) agency, as well as my academic background and interest in natural resource management has strongly influenced this research, by creating a desire to contribute to policy design, and a realisation that government agencies are lacking genuine guidance on how to improve decision-making processes at a management level.

**Grounded theory**

This research adopted a grounded theory methodological approach, which is designed to “produce theories that are grounded in empirical data from which they are generated” (Sarantakos, 1993:13). The purpose is to build and adopt theories that are faithful to, and illuminate, the area under study (Strauss and Corbin, 1990), rather than attempting to make the findings fit to preconceived theoretical boundaries.

Grounded theory requires the researcher to enter the field without preconceived theoretical definitions. The researcher then studies single cases or groups, making observations that can then be compared to other cases. This allows the researcher to categorise and hypothesise data, which are integrated into more general statements, establishing a substantive theory. Data collection and analysis essentially take place along the way. A formal theory emerges from the comparative analysis, which is an attempt to generalise statements (Sarantakos, 1993). As will be discussed in the research process, I began fieldwork before establishing a strong theoretical framework, allowing the theoretical approach to be informed by the research findings. While the community landuse policy framework advocated in this thesis is supported by the integration of a number of key bodies of theory – namely, social impact assessment, public participation, social capital, whole-of-government, place-based management, and triple-bottom-line management – it was developed in a highly pragmatic way by comparing the processes instigated in the two case studies, and comparing and contrasting what worked well and what did not. This allowed me to select theories that illuminated and built upon the findings, further enhancing the applied and interdisciplinary nature of the research.
Case studies

A case study is an in-depth, multifaceted investigation of a single social phenomenon, usually requiring a qualitative methodological approach (Orum et al., 1991). It involves an in-depth examination of a particular setting or settings, over a period of time, contributing to our understanding of the social phenomena under study (Yin, 2003). A case study approach allows investigation “within the real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Yin, 1991:23). Case studies can provide a rich, detailed account of processes at work in a real-life context allowing a researcher to explore the issues in-depth (Shaw, 1999). Interest in a case study approach usually develops out of a desire to understand complex social phenomena (Yin, 2003). With some caution, findings can be generalised to inform policy-making or to highlight the need for further research at a broader scale.

So, what is a ‘case’? Stake (1995) suggests that a ‘case’ is a special ‘something’ to be studied, not a problem or relationship; the case should be a ‘living’ entity. Geographic entities such as bounded communities therefore make excellent case studies. While a case study may be selected because it exhibits a particular problem or issue, the ‘problem’ is not the case study (Shaw, 1999).

The use of case studies may address either single or multiple cases. As Yin (1991) suggests, case studies may serve the purpose of clarifying previous studies, by providing further evidence of a phenomenon that has been studied before, referred to as critical cases. Alternatively, they can serve to reflect upon a phenomenon that has previously not been identified, referred to as revelatory cases. In this second sense, case studies offer for example, a way of evaluating novel policy approaches (Shaw, 1999). This thesis has used a case study approach to achieve both of these objectives. For example, the first case study – an exploration of the impacts of the expansion of pine into a small rural community – adds further evidence to a number of previous studies that have revealed similar findings (see Chapter 8). However, the second case study – the expansion of national park into a rural community – offered an opportunity to investigate a phenomenon that had not previously been captured elsewhere; this was a revelatory case.
The use of case studies can serve either to predict similar results; that is, if the case studies are similar in nature, they should produce similar findings that can then be generalised across other cases; or to produce contrasting results for predictable reasons (Shaw, 1999; Yin, 1991). The purpose of studying two case studies was originally an attempt to meet the first of these purposes – to make the findings more generalisable. It was hoped that common themes would emerge across both case studies that could be applied to similar scenarios. However, because of the nature of the second case study and the unexpected findings, the two case studies served more to compare and contrast two very different management approaches and two very different social outcomes. However, because the differences could be traced to predictable reasons, shared learnings can be drawn from the two contrasting case studies. As such, the case studies could then be used to identify practical ways that government agencies could use to introduce policy-driven landuse change in strategic and socially sensitive ways. The pragmatic recommendations that have emerged are strongly supported by literature (Chapters 3-7).

A case study approach was therefore adopted for this research, as I was attempting to understand complex social interactions in-depth. While specific characteristics of the case studies are probably not applicable more generally, the broader findings are.

The case studies were limited to explorations of the range of perceived social, economic and environmental impacts of two real-life policy-driven landuse changes. The reality of the perceptions of respondents from the two case studies was not tested. The framework that evolved from the case studies to guide the introduction of landuse changes more sensitively into rural communities was not tested on-ground after it was developed primarily because it would have involved extensive commitment from the two agencies. Hence, the framework that developed is a theoretical construct, based on real-life findings.

A further limit to the case studies is the comparison and contrast of two very different cases, where two quite different processes were completed by government agencies. The case study approach did not involve the comparison of similar cases, where similar findings emerged. As such, there are some issues with comparing and contrasting the two case studies. Further, the second case study is not believed to be
particularly representative of similar landuse changes. However, in many ways this is a strength as it has allowed the exploration of a case where the process differed from the first case study, and hence the resulting impacts also differed.

**Case study selection**

The first case study was selected because it offered an example of newly converted pine plantations on former grazing land, and it had already been established anecdotally that conflict was emerging between community members and Forests NSW (the agency responsible). Before interviewing began, the original focus of the case study was the Tumut region more broadly. However, after several interviews with people residing close to Tumut, and those located on the fringes (particularly around the Adjungbilly locality), it emerged that there was a very clear distinction between local or ‘fringe’ communities, and the region more broadly. It became clear that ‘Adjungbilly’ was a distinct community as defined by their own admission, their distinct social structures, and by the different ways in which they experienced the landuse change (as compared to the broader region).

Generally speaking, the Tumut region believed pine plantation expansion to be a positive social and economic force and moreover, one that had been underway for many decades (in the wider region plantation expansion has been occurring since the 1920s, while in the Adjungbilly region the expansion of pine plantation has only been occurring since the late 1980s). The broader Tumut region did not even consider it a landuse change. In contrast, the local Adjungbilly community viewed the change as recent, continuing, and negative, with significant social and economic impacts. This revealed a theme that would become an important component of this research and influence much of the policy recommendations: while landuse changes such as pine plantations might have benefits at a regional scale, local communities may experience negative impacts – the ‘regional benefits and local costs’ dichotomy.

So, these early findings changed the focus of the case study, making the Adjungbilly community the primary focus. While some interviews were still conducted across the wider Tumut region, to explore further the regional benefits, the research focused on the Adjungbilly community.
A second case study was also explored. Because I was interested in the conflicts that commonly emerge between production and conservation interests, I was interested in identifying a case study where a national park had recently been introduced, with the expectation that conflict would be present between the community and the government agency. I assumed, given the adverse media depictions of NSW NPWS in the western division, that by exploring the western division of NSW for a potential case study conflict would be virtually assured. A fieldtrip around the western division of NSW quickly identified Gundabooka National Park, located in the Bourke region, as a seemingly ideal case study. Bourke was an icon of our grazing past, and they were grazing properties that had been purchased. The park was newly declared, primarily for Aboriginal interests, which only confirmed my beliefs that this would indeed be a site of conflict between the state government and the community, and potentially even within the community. It fitted the research parameters, as it was a direct, policy-driven landuse change, involving the acquisition of farming land.

However, it soon became apparent that Gundabooka National Park would present something of an unexpected twist in the research. Instead of conflict, the research revealed that the community had not only embraced the change as a positive social and economic change, but were in agreement across community sectors. This led me to question whether the case study was representative of policy-driven landuse change, particularly for the purpose of national park development, and particularly given the depiction of the western division of NSW as being highly antagonistic towards nature conservation agencies. Could the impacts identified in the Bourke case study therefore, be applied to other case studies of national park development in the same way that the Adjungbilly case study added further confirmation to the growing body of evidence on the social and economic impacts of pine plantation expansion? In reality, probably not; however, rather than discard the case study and look for a more ‘representative’ example of conflict, I looked towards what the case study could offer – it perhaps had even more to offer as an example of what governments might actually do right when introducing landuse change.

So, rather than using two case studies of where government agencies had adopted insensitive approaches to the introduction of landuse change as originally intended, the research instead offers two different case studies with different outcomes, allowing a
comparison of what was done well, and what was done poorly. This allowed me to test some of the findings that had emerged out of the first case study – is it the management philosophies on which decision-making is based that actually determine social and economic outcomes for communities? Examination of the second case study revealed that very different management philosophies were influencing management decisions. This allowed me to compare and contrast how these disparate management philosophies produced very different outcomes for the respective communities. From this, the community landuse policy framework emerged, and is supported by a strong theoretical basis.

Research process

The process that this research followed was an evolutionary and dynamic process. It began with the selection of a broad research topic examining the impacts of policy-driven landuse change, but specifically the impacts of pine plantation expansion. From the beginning of this research process, I had decided that the research outcome would be policy focused, and would offer recommendations to guide decision-makers introducing landuse change, to minimise social impact.

After selecting the first case study of Adjungbilly, NSW (this process was described above), a preliminary review of literature on the social and economic impacts of pine plantation expansion was explored to begin identifying potential impacts across other communities. A strong theoretical framework was not adhered to in the early stages of this research. I decided instead, that given the policy and pragmatic nature of the research, the theory would be guided by the case studies. Instead of basing the research on a specific theoretical framework from the beginning, I instead chose to explore a wide range of theories, in the hopes that an interdisciplinary approach would capture a policy ‘solution’. This fits the grounded theory approach adopted for this research.

As such, preliminary fieldwork commenced early in the research process, with several community and agency interviews. These interviews influenced survey design and focused some questions. It was these early interviews that also revealed issues of place, as well as the local costs and regionalised benefits dichotomy that became a
consistent theme of this research. These became core management philosophies that underpin this thesis. The first case study was explored through the use of in-depth, qualitative, semi-structured interviewing of most of the community members, members of Tumut and Gundagai councils and some Forests NSW staff (discussed in detail below). These interviews also influenced the early exploration of community and social sustainability literature. This became the foundations of the thesis, as it was towards socially sustainable communities that I was aiming for in the development of policy recommendations.

The first case study findings strongly influenced the theoretical framework, as it was through these explorations that I began to see that many of the impacts of pine plantation expansion were not simply an inevitable consequence of a changed landuse, nor did they have to be associated with that landuse. Instead, much of the impact was revealed to be a result of the policy approach adopted by the agency. It became clear that Forests NSW needed a much more strategic and socially sensitive approach to the introduction of pine plantation. Through discussions with Forests NSW staff particularly, it became clear that the changes that were of most concern to the community were a direct result of insensitive management philosophies. I therefore began to explore the literature for theories or practices that could contribute to a more socially sustainable approach to introducing landuse change. Over time, social impact assessment, public participation, and social capital emerged as having much to offer the policy process, albeit with some changes to the way in which SIA and public participation were currently practiced. Much later, and influenced by my employment in a Queensland government agency, whole-of-government literature emerged to make another important theoretical and practical contribution.

The second case study located in Bourke NSW was then selected (discussed above), and interviews conducted across many sectors of the community including neighbours, landholders generally, the Indigenous community, tourist operators, local council, local business, and the NSW NPWS. As discussed earlier, these two very different case studies, with very different outcomes, allowed a comparison and contrast of what was done well and what was done poorly, in respect of community sustainability. This allowed the theoretical findings to be critically examined and refined.

Chapter 2: Research methods
The final period of the research process was focused on analysing the data to develop recommendations for the introduction of policy-driven landuse change. It was during this time that the community landuse policy approach emerged, and the synthesis of social impact assessment, public participation, social capital, and whole-of-government literature began to take shape – the formal theory. Moreover, it was through analysing and comparing the case study findings that it became clear that much of the differences between the two case studies were a result of vastly different management philosophies – an earlier finding of the first case study, which was confirmed through comparison and contrast of the two case studies.

Fieldtrips to Adjungbilly to collect data were conducted on a regular basis over 2000 and 2001. Seven fieldtrips to Bourke were conducted over 2001, 2002 and 2003.

The outcome of this research process is a highly pragmatic, policy-relevant, thesis that offers a synthesis of a number of theories and of case study findings, which are then applied in a practical manner to form policy recommendations.

**DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

Both primary and secondary data sources were used for this research. Primary data consisted of structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews (depending on the sector), and observation, while secondary data collection utilised refereed, academic literature, government reports, newspapers, historical documents and community derived publications.

**Interviewing**

The following section explores interview methods, the number of interviews conducted, methods used to identify interviewees, the recording process and issues of anonymity.
Interview methods

The potential for in-depth exploration of issues means that interviewing is the most valuable tool for collecting data in qualitative research (Minichiello, 1995; Yin, 1991). Interviewing is a face-to-face verbal exchange, in which an interviewer attempts to elicit opinions or information from another person – the respondent (Crano and Brewer, 2002; Wadsworth, 1997). Interviewing allows insight into the respondent’s experiences, opinions, and attitudes, and is intended to “get at the meanings that participants ascribe” (Minichiello, 1995:7). Particularly, interviewing allows the interviewer to explore issues as they arise, and to spend as little or as much time on an issue as it requires, revealing its complexity (dependant of course on the willingness of the respondent). A further advantage of interviewing includes being able to observe body language that accompanies a verbal response.

Interview techniques can be split into structured, semi-structured and un-structured interviews, and may be designed to collect quantitative or qualitative data (Babbie, 1989; Crano and Brewer, 2002; Kidder and Judd, 1986; Minichiello et al., 1995). Quantitative research requires formal and structured interviews for reliable data analysis, while qualitative research tend to utilise less formal semi- or un-structured surveys.

Structured interviews consist of a set of questions that are usually closed-ended\(^6\). It is important for analytical comparability that interviewers do not deviate from the set questions in the set order (Minichiello et al., 1995). Because these interviews tend to be short, and able to be conducted by any trained interviewer, they are particularly valuable for garnering a large number of people’s opinions on simple issues that do not require in-depth dialogue. Semi-structured interviews tend to be conducted around a set of questions or issues, without set wording or ordering, with the researcher able to probe more deeply into responses, and enter an open dialogue. Unstructured surveys tend to develop as a conversation; they may be guided by the interviewer, but allow free-flowing discussion to develop. Semi and un-structured interviews are highly

\(^6\) Closed ended questions are when the respondent is asked to choose between several predetermined answers such as yes/no/don’t know; while open-ended questions do not place a constraint on possible answers and are used when trying to determine how a respondent feels about something, or to describe an event (Crano and Brewer, 2002; Minichiello et al., 1995).
flexible, informal, consisting of open-ended questions, and providing more insight into the individual’s attitudes or opinions (Mason, 2002; Sarantakos, 1993). They are essentially, “conversations with a purpose” (Minichiello et al., 1995:61).

Interviewing, particularly semi-structured interviewing, was the principal research method used in this research, reflecting the qualitative nature of the research. However, the research also used unstructured and structured interviewing techniques. The bulk of the interviews in the two communities were with landholders (see Appendices A (Adjungbilly), and B (Bourke), for an approximate interview schedule). These interviews tended to be semi-structured, in that I used a list of questions that guided the discussion. However, the amount of time dedicated to each of these varied significantly between respondents. While discussions frequently went ‘off-course’, I encouraged this free flow of ideas, and would occasionally re-direct conversation back to the list of topics. It was from these free-flowing conversations that some of the significant in-depth analysis arose, particularly, the strong sense of identification of Adjungbillians away from the Tumut region more broadly. These interviews on average lasted about 2 hours, and in two cases went for a full day.

I also used semi-structured interviewing with members of four shire councils – Bourke, Cobar, Gundagai and Tumut (see Appendices C (Adjungbilly) and D (Bourke) for approximate interview schedules). While I did prepare a more formal questionnaire for these interviews, again I encouraged the respondents to explore other topics as they arose. These interviews each lasted for no longer than an hour. Agency staffs from both Forests NSW (on-ground staff and senior policy executives) and NSW NPWS (on-ground staff and senior planning staff) were also interviewed using a semi-structured interview method. On-ground staff were interviewed as it was believed that they would have more of an understanding of many of the issues affecting their communities, while senior decision-makers were interviewed as they had more understanding of the processes and policies that govern many of the decisions affecting the community. Again, a formal questionnaire was prepared, however, the respondents were encouraged to explore other issues as they arose (see Appendices E (Adjungbilly) and F (Bourke) for approximate interview schedules).

Chapter 2: Research methods
In the Bourke community, the Indigenous interviews were unstructured. While I had several broad issues that I wished to explore, I mostly encouraged a more conversational approach to the interviews. As for the landholder interviews, the length of these was highly variable, averaging around 2 hours, with one lasting around 5 hours (see Appendix G for a list of issues that were discussed).

Structured interviews of approximately 15 minutes were conducted with most of the local businesses in Bourke, and some local businesses in Tumut (see Appendix H for an approximate interview schedule). A tourist survey was also conducted at the Bourke Tourist Information Centre, where I interviewed all visitors to the Centre between 9am and 5pm, over four separate days (during peak tourism periods), to explore whether visitors to Bourke were visiting the Park and whether they would go on organised tours to the Park were they available (see Appendix I for an approximate interview schedule). The manager of the Centre was also interviewed for the research, along with all of the tourist operators in Bourke. These interviews were also structured. A visitor survey of campers was conducted at Gundabooka National Park for six days over two peak tourism seasons. Again this was structured, and was designed to explore, among other things, whether Park visitors utilised local Bourke services, and whether the Park was the main attraction for them to the region. Separate visitor surveys were developed for visitors from the region, and those who came from outside the region (see Appendices J (local visitors) and K (‘outside’ visitors) for approximate interview schedules). The findings from these visitor surveys were only used to verify claims that Park visitors were increasing visitation to the region.

The number of people in each of the interest groups interviewed for the two case studies is shown in Table 2.2. The lower number of interviews in the Adjungbilly community is indicative of its nature – it is a small community based around a locality and does not have services such as banks, supermarkets, post-office etc, actually located in the immediate region. The Bourke community as a township were more heterogenous, and therefore interviews with all of the key sectors were attempted.

Potential interviewees were identified through a number of techniques. In Adjungbilly, previous biophysical research in the region had identified a number of
interested people. From these a method of snowballing eventually identified most people living in the Adjungbilly locality. Most of these were interviewed. NSW NPWS provided a list of neighbours for the Bourke case study; these neighbours then suggested other potential individuals to interview (snowballing). All neighbours were interviewed, as well as a number of landholders within the Park’s vicinity (who did not actually neighbour the Park). Bourke and Tumut businesses were identified through local business guides, discussions with the Council and observation. Most businesses in Bourke were interviewed, including all accommodation establishments, all restaurants and cafes, several of the service stations, and all of the supermarkets.

Table 2.2: Interviews conducted for the two case studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder type</th>
<th>Adjungbilly Community</th>
<th>Bourke Community</th>
<th>Interview type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landholders</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous people</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Unstructured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency employees (Forests NSW and NSW NPWS)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Shire Councils</td>
<td>Gundagai – 1</td>
<td>Cobar – 1</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tumut – 1</td>
<td>Bourke – 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist operators</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local businesses</td>
<td>7 (Tumut)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors to Gundabooka National Park</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors to Bourke Tourist Information Centre</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>Structured</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was more difficult to identify representative individuals for the Indigenous community. As for many stakeholder groups, the Aboriginal population of Bourke do have divisions. In divided community groups, snowballing is a less effective method of identifying respondents, as people tend to only give referrals to like-minded people. While I began by contacting the various Aboriginal organisations in the region and used a method of snowballing to contact other potential respondents, it is possible that I remained within a single interest group and did not identify Aboriginal interests more broadly. While I endeavoured to contact a wide number of Indigenous people, it is unclear whether these interests were representative of the whole Aboriginal community in the region.

Chapter 2: Research methods
All interviews were conducted in a place chosen by the interviewee, usually their home or workplace. Several Indigenous interviews were held by the Darling River on the outskirts of Bourke, on the Park and in the Brewarrina Café. Most interviews were arranged by phone and in most cases I was referred by another community member (this was particularly important for the Indigenous interviews).

The methods used to select interview respondents allowed virtually all of the Adjungbilly community to be interviewed and a wide range of the Bourke community to be interviewed. It is believed that this process collected a representative sample of community opinion. Due to the extensive data collected, not all of the data has been analysed extensively for this thesis.

**Recording process**

While tape-recording does allow precise wording of respondents to be captured, the ability to listen to and reflect on interviews at a future date, while also allowing the interviewer to be a free and attentive listener (Minichiello *et al.*, 1995), in the early stages of the research I decided not to tape-record interviews. In previous research I had conducted, I found that tape recorders act as an artificial barrier and make many respondents feel uneasy, particularly if the discussion is of a sensitive nature. However, even without sensitive topics, I have found that tape recorders make conversation more stilted and less free-flowing. By not tape-recording interviews, respondents could be more assured of the anonymity of the interviews, and were more relaxed sharing their stories. Additionally, tape recorders may suffer from mechanical problems, flat batteries and poor recording, all of which may not be realised until after the interview is concluded. Instead of tape-recording interviews, I took hand-written notes and attempted to capture information in exact wording wherever possible. At the conclusion of the interview I would quickly ‘review’ my notes with the respondent to ensure I had captured the essence and wording of the conversation. I used quotation marks if I had managed to capture precise wording. These quotes are used throughout Chapters 8 and 9. Immediately after leaving the interview, I would spend around 20 minutes revising notes, and adding in detail I had not captured at the time.
Anonymity

To encourage the free flow of ideas and honest responses, all of the interviewees were assured of their anonymity. As such, all identifying quotes were discarded, and/or modified to protect confidentiality. A coding system was adopted early in the process, the first letter of which identifies whether they are Adjungbilly or Bourke community members, the next one or two letters identifies their stakeholder group, and then a number was randomly assigned to them at the commencement of the data analysis. Table 2.3 shows the codes that are used in the thesis (not all interviewees have actually been quoted in the thesis):

Table 2.3: Codes used to protect anonymity of interview respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Stakeholder group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALH</td>
<td>Adjungbilly, Landholder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASF</td>
<td>Adjungbilly, Forests NSW employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGC</td>
<td>Adjunbilly, Gundagai Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BI</td>
<td>Bourke, Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLH</td>
<td>Bourke, Landholder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Bourke, Shire Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNP</td>
<td>Bourke, NSW NPWS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observation

Observational methods of data collection entails researchers immersing themselves in a research setting, to observe and experience for themselves the range of behaviours, interactions, relationships and events that transpire (Mason, 2002). There are various degrees of observation, ranging from the complete observer where behaviour and interaction continue as though the researcher is not present (Adler and Adler, 1998), through to an observer-participant role, and finally the role of the researcher as a complete participant where the researcher plays an active role in the action (Flick, 2002; Jorgensen, 1989). While the interactional dimension of interviewing to some degree fits a participant-observation methodology, observation in its truest sense requires a more embedded approach.

Chapter 2: Research methods
While not a significant methodology for this research, an observational methodology was adopted in a number of instances. I attended Landcare meetings in the Adjungbilly case study where I observed social interaction, and problem solving in action. It was during these meetings that the strength of the community became apparent. At Bourke, I observed visitor behaviour to the National Park, and was lucky enough to witness ‘commando camping’ first hand! I also attended protests for a potential third case study that was not pursued, which involved the establishment of a proposed silicon plant on the south coast of NSW.

Secondary sources

Literature reviews serve to guide the research question and process, by informing the researcher of work that has already been completed, and its findings. It is important to place all research in the context of current knowledge, so that it contributes to understanding. Literature reviews also allow the researcher to justify the contribution that their own work will make, while providing useful guidance on potential methodologies (Minichiello et al., 1995).

A comprehensive, wide-ranging and interdisciplinary literature review was conducted for this research. As mentioned previously, early case study findings influenced the direction of the review, focusing it towards theories and practices that could prove useful for improving the way that policy-driven landuse change is introduced to communities. Social impact assessment, public participation, social capital, whole-of-government, community development, principles of sustainability particularly social sustainability, capacity building, landuse change, rural social change and triple-bottom-line management literature, have all contributed to and influenced this thesis. For the two case studies, government reports, historical documents, and newspaper sources, were all used to develop an understanding of the landuse changes, the decision-making surrounding the changes, and the context of the communities in which they were embedded.

7 Commando camping is when visitors ‘hide’ from national park rangers to avoid the camping fee. It involves a highly complicated procedure of scattering into the scrub whenever a white 4wd vehicle approaches. When it became clear that I was a harmless researcher, the family would emerge and allow me to interview them.
DATA ANALYSIS

Analysing qualitative data is a complex and difficult task, requiring the researcher to 'make sense' of large amounts of information by identifying and interpreting patterns or common themes (Patton, 1990). Data analysis is the process of ordering, structuring and giving meaning to this mass of collected data (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). It is important that the researcher does their best to "fairly represent the data and communicate what the data reveals given the purpose of the study" (Patton, 1990:372). Final analysis of the data is highly dependent on the strengths, weaknesses and personal feelings of the researcher. Therefore, everything, from the questions I chose to ask, to the way I chose to interpret and present the findings, is subject to my personal biases and influence. Another researcher given the same aims may have chosen to approach this research and analyse the data quite differently.

This study utilised case analysis and cross-case analysis. Case analysis is the study of individuals or single groups without comparison to others, while cross-case analysis is the grouping together of common answers from different people as well as comparison with other case studies (Patton, 1990). Each of the case studies was examined and analysed independently (case analysis). However, they were then brought together to identify commonalities and differences (cross-case analysis).

This study uses a descriptive approach, by truthfully and accurately describing respondents reactions and feelings (usually in their own words) within the context of the case studies; an analytical approach, by systematically reporting and analysing the data into themes; and an interpretive approach, by providing an analysis and explanation of what I believe created the outcomes.

Because qualitative research involves the collection of verbal data, a statistical analysis is not possible. Instead it requires studying verbal accounts (quotes) for common themes. Lofland and Lofland (1995) and Mason (2002) suggest, that a researcher needs to develop a consistent method of categorising and cross-referencing data to access the data easily, and more importantly to begin building analyses and interpretations. I began by grouping together all of the data (verbal accounts) into themes, usually broken down into issues. For example, in the second case study – the

Chapter 2: Research methods
introduction of Gundabooka National Park to the Bourke community – I separated verbal accounts of each stakeholder group, for example landholders, into such themes as: issues of place, community identity, historical associations with the region, cultural significance and management (further separated into Indigenous and non-Indigenous), and environmental, economic and social issues raised. Verbal accounts of the Indigenous respondents were broken down into such themes as: levels of consultation, history of the Gunderbooka Range, feelings about it becoming a national park, the level of support towards NSW NPWS felt in the Indigenous community, their relationship with NSW NPWS, the historic value of the Park and their level of satisfaction regarding its management, and the employment of local Indigenous people.

I also separated out discussions on community and social structure, place, and identity, and grouped these. The purpose of this was to be able to retrieve data (quotes) on a specific issue easily, and also to begin interpreting opinions and feelings specific to individuals and those that were felt more broadly across the community. By categorising data into themes, the research took on an inductive approach, allowing systematic analysis of data to find patterns and common themes (Patton, 1990).

The two case study chapters (Chapters 8 and 9) are reporting on these common themes, by presenting the data (quotes), separated into common themes (issues), and then providing a discussion of their significance. Chapter 10 is a synthesis of the two chapters, comparing and contrasting the findings of the two case studies.

**Validity and reliability**

Important for qualitative research is the validity and reliability of the findings. Validity refers to the ability of the research to produce findings that are accurate (Flick, 2002; Sarantakos, 1993). Reliability is concerned with the ‘repeatability’ of the findings (Lindlof, 1995). Qualitative researchers attempt to achieve validity and reliability through the use of appropriate methods of data collection and analysis. Triangulation is one of the key methods of ensuring validity in qualitative research (Silverman, 2001).
Triangulation

Triangulation is the use of two or more methods of data collection, to increase the validity and reliability of the research findings (Flick, 2002). It involves comparing two or more different kinds of data to see whether they corroborate one another (Silverman, 2001). Triangulation allows the researcher to (Sarantakos, 1993):

- Obtain a variety of information on the same issue;
- Use strengths of each method to overcome deficiencies of the others; and
- Achieve a higher degree of validity and reliability.

This study used triangulation of methods by employing multiple types of interviews (semi-, un-, and structured interviews), observation, and secondary data; triangulation of sources (by using a wide range of sources, such as a variety of interview respondents, more than one case study, and a variety and range of secondary data sources); as well as the adoption of a number of theoretical perspectives to interpret and add meaning to the findings (Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Patton, 1990).

Interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholder groups – landholders, Indigenous people, agency employees, local councils, tourist operators, local businesses, and national park visitors – strengthening the validity and reliability of my findings. Where a belief or opinion was not a general consensus this has been noted within the thesis.

Contrasts and comparisons

Using two case studies allows a researcher to compare and contrast findings to further ensure the validity of the research. The intention was to identify similarities in policy approaches by the two government agencies that produced similar outcomes. However, the nature of the second case study meant that there was more reliance on contrasting the different policy approaches, analysing how these produced such different outcomes.
RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

While all efforts were made to protect the integrity of the research so that policy recommendations could be relevant and applicable across other examples of policy-driven landuse change, research limitations invariably arise. The following factors should be considered when attempting to apply the recommendations of this thesis.

The resource intensiveness of the recommendations

One expected criticism of the community landuse policy approach advocated in this thesis, and the recommendations made in Chapter 11, is that they are resource and time intensive, which may direct state agency funds away from other wider, societal benefits to meet local needs and interests of relatively small communities. It might be suggested that such a direction of funds has ramifications for social justice.

However, most landuse changes introduced by government agencies (and certainly the two explored in this thesis, namely national park and state forest expansion) provide wider societal benefits. It can therefore be argued that local and regional communities should not have to bear the full costs of such initiatives, particularly if the costs are the loss of social, economic or environmental values, for the benefit of wider society. It is the responsibility of the wider public to direct some funds towards attempts to enhance the sustainability of communities that are bearing the costs of improved biodiversity, or the production of timber resources, for example.

Secondly, by investing in management responses that avoid social or economic harm in the early stages of a landuse change proposal, later costs that arise from community hostility can be avoided and the transition of the landuse change made smoother.

Interdisciplinary nature of the thesis

The interdisciplinary nature of the research is both a limitation as well as the thesis' greatest strength. Because the thesis integrates a number of different theories, disciplines and policy 'tools', into a single framework, the thesis does not, and can not, provide guidance for every aspect of landuse change decision-making. For example, while the thesis advocates the use of social impact assessment and provides a detailed

Chapter 2: Research methods
analysis of its usefulness as a decision-making tool including its strengths and weaknesses, it does not provide a methodological framework for how to implement a social impact assessment process. The triple-bottom-line concept also strongly influences the community landuse policy framework, however again methodological process is not included in the thesis. Similarly, public participation and social capital are both concepts that are rigorously examined in the thesis, but methodological processes for implementing a public engagement strategy, or measuring and enhancing social capital, are not comprehensively examined. However, other authors do comprehensively examine all of these processes; the thesis therefore directs the reader to alternative references that detail these aspects. What other authors have not attempted, and this thesis does attempt, is an integration of these theories into a decision-making framework. It offers governments a way of incorporating community values and needs into decision-making surrounding landuse change, enhancing the likelihood of social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

Comparison of case studies

Some caution is necessary when attempting to compare and contrast two quite different case studies. The first difference lay in the landuse itself: one case study was an example of state forest expansion (production) while the other was an example of national park development (conservation). The physical landscapes that these two landuses produce are starkly different, with one fundamentally changing the landscape, and the other intending to protect the status quo. To reduce research problems arising from this, I have avoided any contrasts that have evolved because of the different landuses, and instead focused on comparing and contrasting aspects of the case studies that arise from disparate management philosophies.

A further potential issue arising from comparison of the two case studies is that the communities are quite different. The Adjungbilly case study was small (in population) and to some extents a largely homogenous community, representing a single production type (grazing) and demonstrating quite similar value systems. In contrast, the Bourke community was much larger, highly diverse, made up of a variety of heterogenous sectors such as primary producers, Indigenous people, business owners, and tourist operators, and demonstrating highly diverse value systems. Moreover, the
state of the communities was also very different before the introduction of the landuse changes. The Adjungbilly community was a highly bonded, strong community, while the Bourke community’s bonds were much weaker, and tending more towards bridging bonds (particularly across sectors).

Interestingly, it was the highly diverse, weakly bonded community that received the landuse change positively, whereas, arguably, the more homogenous, highly bonded community should have been easier to engage, easier to identify the needs of, and easier to meet the needs of. This highlights a point made in Chapter 6; bridging bonds are more likely to create communities that are resilient to change, whilst highly bonded communities are less resilient to change and more susceptible to negative impacts. The diversity of community ‘type’ was not considered a particularly limiting factor for comparison and contrast, as it seemed to have little influence over the outcomes for the communities.

**The Bourke case study was atypical**

If media depictions can be believed, national park development, particularly in the western division of NSW, is usually received with hostility by rural communities, introducing management problems such as weeds, pests and changing access rights. In this sense the Bourke case study is clearly atypical. This was considered to be a strength more than a weakness of the research, as it allowed recommendations to evolve from a real-life example of where management philosophies had contributed to good will. However, some might consider that as it is not representative of other national park developments it does not contribute to the growing body of case studies of conflicts between NSW NPWS and communities. In the opinion of this author, however, it does contribute, by demonstrating that outcomes can be changed and that conflict between production and conservation is not inevitable.

**Perceptions versus reality**

As the primary data was collected through interviewing, the research relied heavily on the perceptions of interviewees. These perceptions were not verified or validated, except through community consensus. As such, they are presented as perceptions not
as fact. In reality, it is likely that many of the perceptions are accurate, that some may be exaggerated and others inaccurate. However, for the purpose of managing a landuse change perceptions are reality. It is important for government agencies to acknowledge and manage concerns that communities have that may not be supported by scientific or other evidence, while also acknowledging that their own scientific knowledge base may also be inaccurate or exaggerated.

**Research methods**

The research was based on qualitative principles and as such, was not intended to be statistically representative, which may arguably hinder the applicability of the research beyond the case studies. However, from a case study perspective, because of the small size of the communities, particularly Adjungbilly, the reality was that statistically, the study was highly representative of these case studies. The applicability of the findings beyond the case studies is the same as any other research that uses a case study approach – it should be attempted with caution, however, by examining other case studies in the future, confidence in the research findings’ applicability can be enhanced.

While all of these factors should be considered before applying the findings or recommendations of this research more widely, it is firmly believed that the research does allow thoughtful adaptation of the recommendations, particularly given the strength of the theoretical framework that underpins the recommendations.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter has examined the methodological approach taken for this research, examining the research design including the qualitative and applied nature of the research, the grounded theory approach adopted, as well as the use of case studies. It then examined the research process that was followed. Data collection methods, with an emphasis on interviewing, observation and secondary data collection were then discussed. Data analysis techniques adopted for the research were examined, particularly case and cross-case analysis, categorisation of data, and the use of
triangulation and contrasts to ensure research validity. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the limitations of the research, and an assertion that the broad research findings that informed the construct of the community landuse policy, can be applied more generally.
Chapter 3
Enhancing the Sustainability of Rural Communities

INTRODUCTION

Australian landscapes are comprised of biophysical, economic, political and social components; people have shaped and continue to shape landscapes through their everyday decisions. Communities are therefore a crucial consideration when introducing landuse change into a landscape. The knowledge of, interest in, and stake that communities have in the introduction of policy-driven landuse change means that its chances of successful introduction and ongoing management will be significantly improved by understanding the role that communities play.

As will be explored in the case studies of this thesis (Chapters 8, 9 and 10), policy-driven landuse change can impact on communities in a variety of ways. Rural change generally (and landuse change more specifically) is inevitable. However, by planning for change, rather than thrusting it upon communities, communities and governments can have much influence over whether the outcomes are negative or positive, and thus influence the ongoing sustainability of the community (Broadway, 2000).

While contemporary public policy is beginning to embrace the role that communities can play in delivering policy objectives to achieve sustainable development, this thesis is more concerned with the responsibility that governments have to ensure that the introduction of landuse change does not detract from a community’s sustainable existence.

This chapter will begin by exploring the concept of ‘community’, and its contentious and complex meanings, and discuss the implications of varying definitions for policymakers introducing landuse change. It will explore the wide-ranging benefits of communities economically, socially and environmentally, as well as summarise the pressures that rural Australian communities currently face. The chapter will then introduce the concept of sustainable communities, and argue that governments have a responsibility to contribute to the sustainability of communities into which they
introduce landuse change. The chapter will conclude by establishing six basic conditions that if met, will help communities cope with policy-driven landuse change. The thesis will argue that these can be met through the use of community landuse policies designed to find the ‘best-fit’ landuse for a community, and to manage the landuse based on management philosophies that enhance the likelihood of community sustainability.

**AN EXAMINATION OF ‘COMMUNITY’**

**Definition of ‘rural’**

As this thesis is primarily concerned with rural communities, it is important to understand what is meant by ‘rural’. Whether a community is defined as ‘rural’ depends variously on (Black, et al., 2000):

- Socio-demographic characteristics, such as population density;
- Predominant forms of landuse activity, such as agriculture, pastoralism, or other primary industries;
- Socio-cultural characteristics, such as particular kinds of social relationships and values.

Halfacree (1993) identifies three features that define what he terms a rural locality. First, that there is an association with primary production; second, that there is a low population density; and finally, that there exists a social representation of rurality. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) bases its definition for ‘rural’ primarily on population density, stating that rural areas have no more than 150 inhabitants per square kilometre (OECD, 1994; 2003). The Australian Bureau of Statistics has adopted similar criteria, defining rural as population clusters of 200-999 people, in a minimum of 40 occupied non-farm dwellings (Black et al., 2000). Sorenson and Epps (1993a) provide a broader definition of rural, defining it as all localities engaged in or servicing primary production, and further refining the definition to include all parts of Australia excluding the capital cities, the Gold Coast, NSW Central Coast, and major industrial cities such as Newcastle, Wollongong and Geelong. Other definitions also exclude Cairns, Townsville, Toowoomba and Albury-Wodonga (Black et al., 2000). Harris et al. (1998) defines small rural communities as
incorporated towns with fewer than 10,000 people. This thesis will adopt a modified
definition of rural, incorporating Black et al. (2000), Harris et al. (1998), and Sorenson
and Epps (1993a), focusing on small towns (less than 20,000), and clusters of people
living outside of a serviced town, primarily engaged in primary production.

**Definitions of ‘community’**

‘Community’ is a term used liberally in the policy arena. However, its definition is
often unclear. Complicating matters is that the definition of community is highly
variable, depending on the geographic, political and/or cultural context (Race and
Buchy, 1999).

Adams and Hess (2001:3) suggest that a community is a group of people “who create
relations based on trust and mutuality, within the idea of shared responsibility for
well-being”. Etzioni (1993:31) states, “When the term community is used, the first
notion that typically comes to mind is a place in which people know and care for one
another...Communities speak to us in moral voices. They lay claims on their members.
Indeed, they are the most important sustaining source of moral voices other than the
inner self”. In 1959, Kaufman defined community as a group of persons in social
interaction, sharing common ties within a geographic area. However, given that a
community’s main function is to mediate between the individual and society, people
can relate to their societies through both geographic and non-geographic substructures
or communities. Therefore, contemporary definitions of community now go beyond
geographic boundaries and encompass shared interests or beliefs (Scott et al., 2000).

Because of advances in technology many kinds of communities have developed, and
still act as a source of social interaction. A community therefore, does not have to be
tied to a geographic location or provide for the daily needs of its residents to be a
‘community’. For example, sporting clubs may be geographically dispersed and will
not cater to their members’ daily needs, but may still be communities. Fan clubs are
another example of a community of interest; geographically, they may be dispersed
across the world, however they still serve to keep members networked and to provide
access to other people who share the same interest.

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**Chapter 3: Enhancing the sustainability of rural communities**
Ife (2002) places little emphasis on geographic ties, asserting that ‘community’ is defined by five related characteristics: a human scale sufficiently small to allow interaction; a sense of identity and belonging; a sense of obligations; non-contractual interactions; and a shared culture. McKay (1999) also suggests that communities are social entities, where members share a common identity and opportunity for social interaction. They may have a shared past or history, or shared goals and expectations for the future (McKay, 1999). A shared geography is not a necessary precondition.

The different community types can be divided into ‘communities of place’ (or communities with a territorial base), and ‘communities of interest’ (or communities that may be spatially dispersed, but based around a shared interest e.g. a community of wool graziers) (Ife, 2002; Osborne et al., 2004; Silk, 1999). Community values are often generated by inter-dependence; that is, we help our neighbours, because we might need help ourselves in the future. Solidarity for difficult times is created. However, once this mutual need is taken away the community may collapse. Arguably, the more ‘global’ the world becomes, the less individuals need geographic communities. As globalisation causes geographic communities to splinter, people form themselves into other communities based on different, more prioritised needs, such as recreation or work – these are communities of interest.

Communities of interest can coexist within communities of place; they are not mutually exclusive (Machlis and Force, 1988). A regional community of pastoralists while primarily based on a shared occupation and livelihood, are also brought together by a shared geography. Similarly, communities based on a shared concern, such as Landcare or catchment groups, are united by both a shared concern as well as a shared geography. The community of interest is the foci for the community; however, the community of place is also a defining feature. What is important when introducing policy-driven landuse change is that the relevant communities (whether they are of place, interest or both) are identified. However, defining a community based on the right commonality is a distinct challenge for governments. Race and Buchy (1999) provide Indigenous communities as an example, citing the tendency of government institutions to define Indigenous communities geographically, while Aboriginal people tend to recognise wider, looser cultural boundaries. Further, people may define their community differently for different purposes.

Chapter 3: Enhancing the sustainability of rural communities
Resource-dependent communities are an example of where communities of interest, and communities of place, are not always easily separated. They are based on similar livelihoods and a shared dependency on resources. Resource-dependent communities are linked through local patterns of production; mining, forestry, agriculture and fishing communities are the more obvious examples (Machlis et al., 1990). They may be situated in the same geographic location (e.g. mining), but also may be geographically isolated but still dependent on the same resource (e.g. fishers’ communities) (McKay, 1999). Machlis and Force (1988) argue that while some communities are obviously resource dependent, such as mining towns where virtually everyone is an employee of the mining industry, other communities are more complex. Many rural towns exist because of a single agricultural industry. However, the majority of people may not be directly employed in agricultural production. A community is resource-dependent however, if they are particularly susceptible to fluctuations in the predominant agricultural industry – people may not be directly employed by the industry, but much of the services providing employment exist to support agricultural production. Resource-dependent communities are therefore highly vulnerable to land use change, as the primary entity that brings them together is their dependency on a resource. If this resource use changes, then fundamental change to the social structure of the community may occur.

Davers (2005) also places emphasis on ‘communities of interest’ as including spatial or place-based communities, as place-based communities share interests based on a shared affinity with a spatially defined system. Davers (2005) identifies eight categories of communities. He suggests that it is important to recognise these distinctions as each of these categories may require different participatory strategies. These are summarised in Table 3.1.

Individuals will likely belong to multiple communities, crossing several, or even all, of the community categories identified by Davers (2005). Each community serves a different purpose, and meets different social and economic needs. Also complicating a definition of communities is the differential degree that diverse communities (or individuals within single communities) experience and enjoy power in decision-making processes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of community</th>
<th>Basis of common interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spatial (place based)</td>
<td>Determined by affinity with or stake in the condition of a spatially defined system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familial</td>
<td>Members of a located or extended family or kin network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Communities linked by culture, ethnicity, religious belief etc. May be spatially linked also but not necessarily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace/professional</td>
<td>Recognisable groups of people linked by profession or employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Defined by a knowledge system or discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Linked by economic interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue related</td>
<td>Given purpose and identity by interest in or commitment to a substantive issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>Linked through participation in common recreational activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While communities of interest are increasing, as individuals seek support and companionship outside of their local geographic area, place and place-based relationships are still significant features of people’s social interactions (Bridger and Luloff, 1999). Bridger and Luloff (1999) argue that the local community remains the primary setting for our daily lives, remaining bounded within an identifiable geographic area. Individuals not only share a geographic location, but also are likely to share interests, occupations, goals, or concerns (McKay, 1999). This is particularly the case for rural communities, where individuals form much of their identity from their ‘rurality’. All sorts of physical, ideological and cultural barriers provide a boundary for a defined community, regardless of whether this is a geographic or philosophical boundary.

Ife (2002) argues, that to develop sustainable communities in an ecological sense, they must be bounded to a locality, and thus a bioregional system to develop responsibilities and affinities with their physical environment. Arguably, it is people’s artificial separation from land that is the cause of many of our ecological problems. Under this argument, government responsibilities to sustain communities should focus primarily on geographic communities, as these are more likely to provide ecological 

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sustainability in conjunction with social and economic sustainability. Ife (2002) in fact suggests that geographic communities are a preferred option for community development and community-based services as opposed to communities of interest, and even advocates the discouragement of communities of interest if they are thriving at the expense of geographic communities.

To a large degree this argument is irrelevant to this thesis, as both case studies are primarily place-based rural communities. Practically, geographic communities are easier to identify, and probably easier to provide services to than purely interest-based communities. However, communities of interest are a significant part of contemporary life – both rural and urban. They can provide support for marginalised sectors such as the disabled or refugees, while expanding the horizons of all individuals, introducing new ideas and knowledge. Communities of interest provide a space for people with like interests or needs, to support and nurture each other. Communities of interest are therefore an important consideration for governments, and should remain on the policy ‘radar’. Indeed, the levels of government support for community interest groups indicate the importance that governments place on communities of interest. However, this thesis remains primarily concerned with the introduction of policy-driven landuse change to geographic communities. Included within this is any community of interest that is also locality-based.

A common misconception concerning communities is that they are always cohesive social units. There is a tendency for government agencies and other institutions, to treat communities (particularly rural communities) as though they are homogenous, static groups of people, sharing common views, cultures, values and interests (Agrawal and Gibson, 1999; Cloke and Little, 1997; Everingham, 2001; Jones and Wiggle, 1987; Liepens, 2000; Race and Buchy, 1999). “Community is portrayed as a static terrain rather than a dynamic one of political contention” (Everingham, 2001:108). The reality is that communities are comprised of individuals with highly diverse cultures, social and economic status, interests, values and opinions, all of which must be accounted for in decision-making (Agrawal and Gibson, 2001; Kenny, 1999; Lee, 1991). Communities are comprised of multiple interests and divergent actors – recognising these divergent interests is crucial in managing landuse change, as the ability and willingness to embrace the change will differ across the community.

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(Agrawal and Gibson, 1999; Lee, 1991). Moreover, even within individuals, values can vary across time (Gibson and Koontz, 1998). Hence, community conflict is a likely result of policy-driven landuse change; it is how that conflict is managed that will affect the long-term sustainability of the community.

As a social structure a community is highly reliant on interactions and relationships (Bridger and Luloff, 1999; Kaufman, 1959; Silk, 1999). People who share interests or geographic terrain interact with each other on a continuing basis, deriving their social being and identities largely from these interactions (Wilkinson, 1991). Community interactions are based on a degree of coordination, integration and unity. Singular, unrelated actions do not form communities (Kaufman, 1959). Communities manage their interactions by establishing formal and informal norms, which provide some guidance for behaviour. While interests and values may be divergent, communities will have institutionalised ways of managing these differences, by establishing and implementing negotiated rules. These local level interactions are a key component of what constitutes a community. Interactions and relationships across a group of people form social networks—a cornerstone of rural communities (Day, 1998). Social networks are credited with information dissemination, the provision of support, and the maintenance of cultures (Day, 1998). Most individuals function within two types of social networks—dense, strong networks usually comprised of immediate family; and sparsely-knit, weaker networks usually comprised of friends, neighbours and workmates (Wellman and Wortley, 1990). The types and degrees of support that these each offer are highly variable.

While communities are not homogenous, they may share a common identity based on political, social, academic, recreational or other similarities, which provide individuals with some insight into their own values. This contributes to an understanding of their identity/ies. Arguably, the most important characteristic of a community is their identity; if a group of people identify as a community then it does not matter whether they meet other criteria. For example, while the people of Adjungbilly (the first case study, explored in Chapter 8), share both a geographic locality, as well as interests,

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Social norms are those informal rules in a society that 'govern' how individuals should act in particular social contexts. This concept will be explored in detail in chapter 6.

A social network is an interconnected group of people who have an interest or an attribute in common. Again, this concept will be explored in more detail in chapter 6.

**Chapter 3: Enhancing the sustainability of rural communities**
cultures and livelihoods, the most important characteristic for defining them as a ‘community’ is that they identify as one.

In a study examining rural Welsh communities, Goodwin et al. (1995:1255) found that rural communities define the community concept as representing, “a taken-for-granted set of social and cultural norms, based on sharing, belonging, caring and pulling together”. However, these same rural communities placed even greater emphasis on the community concept as being synonymous with Welsh culture and language (Goodwin et al., 1995), demonstrating the importance of a shared identity. Moreover, in small rural communities – the concern of this thesis – there is a greater likelihood of similar values and shared identities given similarities in occupation and lifestyle and a high dependence on social interaction.

Also important to geographic or place-based communities is a shared sense of place. A sense of place refers to the relationship between people and place. In this context, ‘place’ refers to geographic areas that are the source of social relations and a reflection of an individuals’ identity, engendering pride and a sense of ownership (Carr, 2002; Cocklin and Wall, 1997; Massey, 1991; Murtagh, 1998; Quayle and Driessen van der Lieck, 1997). A sense of place is a social construct, as individual and group identities are bound up with their construction of place. ‘Place’ may be shared across a broad spectrum of people i.e. a ‘community’, or it may be highly personalised. Read (1996) in his book, Returning to Nothing, clearly demonstrated through the emotive stories of a number of individuals that a sense of place is a highly individualised concept. Perhaps more importantly, Read (1996) demonstrated that place is an intangible yet significant factor in an individual’s sense of his or her own identity. Entangled in the concept of place is the landscape, which may or may not play a significant role in how people interact with, and value their ‘place’. Meinig (1979:33-48) highlights the individualised construct of landscape:

“Take a small but varied company to any convenient viewing place overlooking some portion of city and countryside and have each in turn describe the ‘landscape’… to detail what it is composed of and say something about the ‘meaning’ of what can be seen. It will soon be apparent that … we will not – we cannot – see the same landscape. We will see many of the same elements – houses, roads, trees, hills… but such facts take on meaning only through association… Thus we confront the central problem: any landscape is composed not only of what lies before our eyes but what lies within our heads”.

Chapter 3: Enhancing the sustainability of rural communities
Meinig (1979) describes ten ways that individuals may interpret landscape, highlighting the complexity of what a ‘place’ might represent to different people. Landscape can be interpreted as nature, as habitat, as cultural artefact, as a system, as a problem to be corrected, as market value, as ideology, as history, as place, and as beauty (Meinig, 1979).

While a place may represent different things to different individuals or community sectors, the broader community shares the sense of place. For example, some people in a community might value a place for its ecological diversity, while others place high importance on its aesthetic value with little appreciation of its ecological role. For many, the value of a place is intangible, locked into its history, their memories and a comforting sense of belonging, or a sense of home. Yahner and Nadenick (1997:138) assert that for some, an important component of a sense of place is a memory of the past: “The memory of the past that exists in the tangible elements of the cultural landscape... all reveal the local history, enhance the sense of place, and make that community uniquely distinguishable from others.” While specific values are different, reflecting differences in individual identities, what individuals share is a sense of belonging to a place, a shared feeling of experiencing a place that is unique from other places, and a shared appreciation of a place for its role in reflecting their own personal identities. A shared sense of place is, therefore, the way in which people express a shared attachment to a locality (Gray, 1999), regardless of their personal reasons for the attachment.

Because of the value of place to rural communities, it is a core principle of the community landuse policy approach advocated in this thesis. Decision-making surrounding the introduction and management of landuse change should be ‘place-based’. That is, receptive and responsive to the needs and values of communities, rather than maintaining agency commitment to generic, statewide policies that may not reflect community needs and values.

**The implications of varying definitions and scopes of community**

The diverse nature of communities offers challenges and opportunities in the design of participatory policy approaches. Confusion about boundaries and definitions of
communities can hinder state agencies that are genuinely seeking to develop a participative framework for decision-making. This is because identifying the community, and who is part of it, is highly complex (Dovers, 2005; Race and Buchy, 1999). The boundaries of geographic communities are highly unlikely to coincide with arbitrary municipal boundaries, and are more likely to be defined by social interaction. Some communities may be bound together by things that are not immediately obvious. For example, there may not be an obvious social institution that defines the community, such as town boundaries, a post office, general store etc. For example, the community examined in detail in Chapter 8 – Adjungbilly – on a map is simply a locality, with only a small school as the single social structure. Yet, the community remains a tight-knit and active rural community.

As mentioned previously, communities are not homogenous and are likely to be comprised of a diverse range of values and attitudes. As a result, community reaction to a proposed landuse change is likely to be just as diverse. From a government perspective, simply identifying these diverse opinions is a difficult task. Managing and responding to the range of responses felt across a region may be near impossible in highly heterogeneous communities. Moreover, as Davers (2005) argues, even if a community and its values can be identified, determining the degree to which they should influence the decision-making process is challenging, and highly susceptible to biased value judgements.

A recurrent theme of this thesis is the challenge faced by governments when trying to find the appropriate ‘level’ of community to engage in decision-making. Many decisions are made based on regional, state or even national imperatives, with little consideration of the local community that will likely bear the brunt of the policy’s implementation. Regionalisation tends to support regional centres, at the expense of smaller towns or communities (Jeffreys and Munn, 1996). This is particularly the case for policy-driven landuse changes. The decision to locate a landuse in a particular region is often based on state or national level policies. One example of such an approach is raised by Mercer and Underwood (2002) who suggest that while plantation policies in Australia are frequently driven at the national level, their implementation, and resulting conflict, takes place at the local level. Any impact assessment that might be attempted will likely focus on the middle ground – the regional level – and assess
regional benefits and costs, with little consideration of the micro community level. However, within a single region there may be many communities, each with very different reactions to a proposed landuse change. This makes it very difficult to identify the full range of impacts that will be felt across the region. Building understanding of local or community impacts is an important challenge for governments. The community landuse policy approach aims to build an understanding and appreciation of local needs, values and expectations into landuse policy decisions. This should not however, be at the expense of considering regional issues as well. As such, both place-based management and local (as well as regional) level decision-making are important management philosophies influencing the community landuse policy approach.

The wider benefits of rural communities

Communities can contribute to social, economic and environmental well-being, although these benefits are not a pre-condition of their existence. Community ties with friends, families, and neighbours provide social support, making up much of the social capital that helps people to ‘get through life’ (Wellman and Wortley, 1990). While some community ties are burdensome and not supportive, research does suggest that personal community networks can have benefits to individuals in the form of increased health, support in times of crisis, companionship, and increased access to resources (Wellman and Wortley, 1990). In fact, Kawachi et al. (1997), found that public health was correlated with levels of social capital, with those societies enjoying high levels of trust and cohesion more likely to enjoy better health standards. The positive and negative roles of social capital are explored in more detail in Chapter 6.

As the stewards and managers of our natural and agricultural resources, rural communities produce much of the primary produce on which the rest of Australia depends, while also being responsible for managing land for biodiversity benefits. Rural communities currently manage over 60% of the land area of Australia. So while they might represent a small percentage of the Australian population, they play a disproportionately significant role in the conservation and restoration of Australia’s natural resources. In contemporary resource management, communities are seen as playing a pivotal role in developing sustainable resource use policy, while providing
the key to successful implementation of changes for sustainability (Agrawal and Gibson, 1999; Bridger and Luloff, 1999; 2001; Fellizar and Oya, 1994; Martin, 1991a; O’Brien, 1995). By implementing macro level policy, at the more meaningful and functional micro level of community, on-ground change is more likely to be achieved.

It is increasingly recognised that government, particularly Commonwealth and state spheres, have enjoyed limited success in the conservation of natural resources, and are therefore looking to regional and local communities to play an enhanced role in natural resource management. This is evidenced by the current national approach to natural resource management, which has seen the devolution of responsibility for planning and implementation increasingly fall to regional NRM bodies — although the Commonwealth and State governments have retained financial, and thus ultimate control over direction. Essentially, the Commonwealth and State governments are expecting that regional and local communities will succeed where they have failed. This policy direction is premised on the theory that communities who use resources have an incentive to use them wisely (Agrawal and Gibson, 1999). Hence, rural communities are expected to carry much of the costs associated with repairing degraded landscapes.

Because environmental sustainability is closely connected to social sustainability (i.e. you can’t have one without the other), if current policy initiatives to halt land degradation and restore degraded land are to be successful, it is clear that social sustainability must also be achieved. Rogers and Ryan (2001) argue that sustainable development can only occur with a renewed emphasis on community and a shared responsibility for our well-being and our environment. Hence, it is for the benefit of the broader Australian community that governments ensure that they do not detract from a rural community’s sustainability when introducing landuse changes.

Bennett et al. (2004) suggest that rural and urban Australians value rural communities as the stewards of our natural resources and as primary producers and support government attempts to maintain rural populations. Anderson (2000) suggests that rural communities also provide intrinsic benefits for the wider society, beyond those who enjoy a rural lifestyle, suggesting that urban dwellers value the future option of visiting rural landscapes, while also enjoying the cultural and historical association that comes from rural communities.

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The societal wide benefits that rural communities provide is somewhat reflected in current rural policy. While governments have gradually phased out much of their price support policies (Bennet et al., 2004; Cocklin and Wall, 1997; Lowe et al., 1993), rural support is still a significant component of rural policy. Governments have imposed ‘community service obligations’ on many service providers (such as telecommunications, electricity and postal services), obliging them to provide minimum standards of service delivery at a standardised rate, regardless of remoteness (Bennet et al., 2004). The importance of social and economic sustainability is recognised by the inclusion of social and economic considerations in the regional arrangements currently being implemented through NAPSWQ, and NHTII. Regional NRM bodies, charged with implementing the natural resource management agenda, are obliged to consider the impact of decisions on the social and economic viability of rural communities.

Drought relief payments, as an example of direct rural support, remain a controversial support payment. Drought relief programs were originally provided as an attempt to keep settlers on the land during ‘hard times’. Funded by the Commonwealth government up until July 1990, drought relief remains an important component of State government rural, social policy, and a good indicator of the degree to which governments (and society) are willing to support the rural sector (Conacher and Conacher, 1995; O’Meagher et al., 1998; Smith et al., 1992). Arguably, drought assistance encourages farmers to exceed their land’s carrying capacity, by providing assistance for fodder during periods that their land is unable to sustain usual stocking rates (Smith, 1993). Drought assistance, however, can be viewed, and structured accordingly, as a social welfare policy, rather than an industry support mechanism, by changing the way that it is offered. For example, if assistance was given to assist farmers to relocate livestock, or to diversify their farming enterprises, or simply to continue supporting their family commitments during periods of extreme financial stress, it would provide social support for individuals and communities, while providing less incentive to continue degrading the land through overstocking. Given the wider benefits that the rural sector offers Australian society, as a social policy it is appropriate to assist sectors of society who are in need.
The concept of community is almost always used in a positive context, implying that communities are always ‘good’. However, while communities are places or spaces where people come together, they may also be places from which others are excluded (Everingham, 2001; Whittaker and Banwell, 2002). The negative aspect of communities and the negative ways in which social capital can be expressed will be explored in more detail in Chapter 6.

So, rural communities play an important role as stewards of Australia’s landscape and natural resources, as primary producers, and as an important component of Australia’s cultural identity. Together, these values provide a strong case for policy-makers to include rural social sustainability on the decision-making agenda, and for directing public resources into the rural sector. It is therefore important that rural communities be supported and sustained during periods of change (such as the introduction of new landuses) if current natural resource management objectives are to be achieved. This places pressure on government agencies to introduce policies such as policy-driven landuse change, to ensure that the sustainability of rural communities is not threatened, particularly given the pressures that rural communities face from a range of sources.

**Rural communities under pressure**

Rural communities face a multitude of economic and social pressures and changes. Fluctuations in markets have produced highly unreliable commodity prices for much of Australia’s primary produce (Barlow and Cocklin, 2003; Lockie, 2002). Technological changes have increased outputs while raising the cost of farm inputs. Technology has also lead to the oversupply of some primary products, reducing farm profits and forcing farmers to further increase production (Black *et al.*, 2000). Input costs are rising, while prices fluctuate in response to increased national and international competition and demand: the cost-price squeeze (Lawrence 1992). At the same time, state-support has decreased with the retraction of agricultural subsidies and deregulation of many industries (Cocklin and Wall, 1997; Sorenson and Epps, 1993b). While Australian farmers are exposed to free-market forces, some international competitors continue to receive protection and support, significantly disadvantaging Australian producers (Jeffreys and Munn, 1996; Lawrence and Share, 1993). Increasing financial pressure has forced some farmers off the land, contributing to a
decline in rural populations (Gray, 1994). Moreover, farmers seeking economies of scale are increasing the size of their landholding, decreasing the number of farms, and further reducing populations (Black et al., 2000). This is contributing to population decline as individuals leave communities to seek employment elsewhere (Bennett et al., 2004). While regional centres have received much of the migration, smaller rural communities, localities and towns are under pressure, particularly those that are dependent on primary production (Bennett et al., 2004).

Environmental pressures, particularly salinity, erosion and water quality issues are resulting in the loss of land from productivity, increasing farm costs, and decreasing the sustainability of farming enterprises. The economic cost of these issues are immense, both in loss of production and environmental repair. Australia-wide, land degradation (including erosion and salinity) is estimated to cost annually over $2 billion in restoration works, and $1.2 billion in lost production (Conacher and Conacher, 2001). A 1995 estimate of the economic costs of land and water degradation was $1.41 billion – a large part of which will be carried by the individual landholder (Curtis and Lockwood, 1998). If the current intensity of agriculture persists with insufficient modification to practices, degraded land will be increasingly lost to production. Additionally, Australia’s unpredictable climate results in extreme fluctuations of drought and flood, which can have devastating effects for unprepared landholders. Communities dependent on agricultural production face the contraction of services and an inevitable population decline (Jeffreys and Munn, 1996). The resultant costs to regional economies and social well-being are substantial. Many of the social issues are immediately evident, not least of which are the significant financial and emotional costs to the individual farm ‘family’, and the potential decline of local communities.

Communities are rarely stable, as people come and go from the community. However, while all populations evolve “those who enter a community do not often match those who leave it, either in the occupational skills they possess, in the sociocultural orientations they bear, or even in aggregate number” (Price and Clay, 1980:592). Contemporary rural populations are experiencing the true nature of this instability. While regional centres experience the benefits and costs of increased populations, the centralisation of services has led to diminishing use of local services (Heilpern et al.,

Chapter 3: Enhancing the sustainability of rural communities
Rural depopulation may result in the contraction of local economies and the withdrawal of services (Black et al., 2000), placing increasing pressure on surrounding communities, and affecting the viability of local businesses, schools, services, social institutions, community groups, and thus general community well-being.

A further pressure facing rural communities is the increasing tendency for children of farmers to leave the land in pursuit of more financially rewarding and stable careers (Black et al., 2000). The decline in farm succession is leading to an ageing demographic in rural communities, further threatening the long-term sustainability of those communities. A loss of youth also leads to a future loss of families, with subsequent pressures on local schools, sporting clubs and community infrastructure, as they struggle to retain sufficient numbers for their survival (Jeffreys and Munn, 1996).

The health status of rural communities by urban standards is poor. Verrinder (2000) identifies a range of risk conditions for rural residents: low socio-economic status, dangerous and stressful work, risks associated with isolation, lack of social support, a growing disenchantment with future prospects, and risks associated with substance abuse and stress generally. Suicide rates among rural populations are significantly higher than urban centres, starkly demonstrating the impact of stress on rural health (King, 1994). The regionalisation of health services is further contributing to health service demand, as is a general decrease in health care service provision (Verrinder, 2000).

The National Competition Policy\(^{10}\) (Parliament of Australia, 2001) and other micro-economic reforms are designed to increase competition and provide incentive for improved economic performance. However, when applied to community services it tends to create perverse incentives, encouraging providers to concentrate on less expensive urban and regional clients at the expense of remote communities (Black et al., 2000). The gradual withdrawal of public services from many small towns in an age of economic rationalism, has further contributed to a loss in employment opportunities (Heilpern et al., 2000). Having fewer workers in rural communities, results in fewer children attending schools, and fewer people using local service

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\(^{10}\) The National Competition Policy is a set of reform policies aimed at increasing efficiency in the use of Australia's resources, by increasing competition (Parliament of Australia, 2001).

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providers. This may decrease employment opportunities as local service providers come under increasing pressure. A reduction in employment opportunities results in migration, particularly of youth. This loss of youth is also leading to a distorted age profile, with consequences for social interaction and community sustainability (Black et al., 2000). Depopulation generally leads to a further loss of services; the downward spiral for rural communities continues (Gray, 1994). Impacts on community morale may occur, as people experience increasing isolation, increased costs and decreased opportunities.

Policy-driven landuse changes can be yet another pressure on rural communities. The introduction of new economic, environmental and social components into a rural community can “upset the balance of rural life and damage its social fabric” (Day, 1998:99). The case studies explored in Chapters 8 and 9 reveal that, depending on the landuse and particularly on the way that it is introduced, policy-driven landuse changes can decrease or alter employment opportunities, alter property values, introduce administrative burdens, lead to the decline of outlying communities and population decline with consequent feelings of isolation, result in a loss of local services, a loss of local history and sense of place, aesthetic changes and ultimately a loss of community control over the future of their landscapes. Alternatively, if introduced sensitively, landuse change can offer opportunities for declining communities to diversify into more economically stable markets and invigorate social networks (Barlow and Cocklin, 2003).

Sustainable communities

While the term ‘sustainable communities’ often refers to the degree to which the activities of communities are impacting on the biophysical world around them, that is the size of their ‘ecological footprint’\footnote{Ecological footprint is a measurement of the natural capital used by a defined population to meet expected living standards. It is usually expressed as a measurement of biologically productive land. The size of a population’s footprint depends on population size, material living standards, technology, industrialisation, and ecological productivity (Wackernagel et al., 1999).}, this thesis is primarily concerned with the social and economic sustainability of communities. While introduced landuses must be ecologically sustainable (and this will be recognised through the triple-bottom-line management philosophy advocated in the community landuse policy approach,
Chapter 7), the social and economic sustainability of the community will be the primary focus. This is because social, economic and environmental sustainability are dependent on each other. As Scott et al. (2000) argue, social inequities are an underlying cause of ecological problems and these must be addressed to ensure ecological sustainability. Hence, the thesis is less concerned with the ecological contribution that communities can make, and more concerned with the long-term sustenance of the social community, and how policy-driven landuse changes can be introduced in such a way as to promote social and economic sustainability.

The term ‘sustainable’ is contested, and most definitions focus primarily on ecological sustainability, and less on social and economic sustainability. Most definitions capture the idea that current generations must not compromise the ability of future generations to access resources and meet their material needs, while enjoying a healthy environment (Bridger and Luloff, 1999, 2001; Campbell, 1991; Newman, 2004; WCED, 1987). The National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (NSESD) defines ecologically sustainable development as “using, conserving and enhancing the community’s resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained, and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased” (COAG, 1992:n.p).

Fundamental to this definition is that of intergenerational equity – future generations have the same right to resources as current generations (Scott et al., 2000). Sustainable communities therefore, are ones that “meet the social and economic needs of their residents, enhance and protect the environment and promote more humane local societies”, now and in the future (Bridger and Luloff, 1999:381). A sustainable community may be characterised by its efforts towards achieving the maintenance and improvement of the economic, environmental and social characteristics of an area, so that its members can enjoy healthy, productive, enjoyable lifestyles (Smith, 1998). A sustainable system (including a social and economic system) is one that is stable, regenerative, productive and profitable, resilient, appropriate, self-reliant, and non-disruptive (Campbell, 1991). Kline (1995:4, cited in Bridger and Luloff, 1999:381) defines sustainable communities as:

“Those that can utilize their natural, human and technological resources to ensure that all members of present and future generations can

Chapter 3: Enhancing the sustainability of rural communities
attain a high degree of health and well-being, economic security, and a say in shaping their future while maintaining the integrity of the ecological systems on which all life and production depends”.

Bridger and Luloff (1999) suggest that there are five key components to sustainable communities. First, is an emphasis on local economic diversity. The second component is closely linked, with an emphasis on self-reliance. That is, introduced landuse changes should foster self-reliance to protect the community from external disruptive forces, such as global market shifts. This entails the development of local production, local employment, local processing and greater local cooperation. The third and fourth dimensions are concerned with a reduction in the use of energy, and the protection and enhancement of biological diversity and stewardship of natural resources. Finally, fundamental to sustainable communities is a commitment to social justice. Sustainable communities provide social support and infrastructure to ensure the social well-being of its members. Necessary to this, is an empowered and active citizenry that effectively participates in decision-making (Bridger and Luloff, 1999).

Most definitions of ecological sustainability focus on reduced consumption of resources, or technological improvements to achieve sustainability. How to ensure the conservation and wise-use of social resources as opposed to natural resources is quite different. Social resources, as opposed to natural resources, need to be used to remain sustainable. If a community does not utilise its social networks for example, these networks will erode. This will be explored in more detail in Chapter 6.

A more recent inclusion in definitions of sustainability is the concept of resilience. While it is a term more usually applied to ecological systems there are increasing moves to monitor social or community resilience. Resilience is “the buffer capacity or the ability of a system to absorb perturbations, or the magnitude of a disturbance that can be absorbed before a system changes its structure... other definitions emphasise the speed of recovery from a disturbance” (Adger, 2000:269). Resilience refers to the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change, so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure and identity (Gunderson, 2000; Walker et al., 2002, 2004). Resilience differs from stability, as it allows adaptive change, while stability requires no change. Resilience therefore, also includes the...
degree to which a [social] system expresses capacity for learning, adaptation, reorganisation, and renewal in response to change (Berkes et al., 2003; Carpenter et al., 2001; Carpenter and Gunderson, 2001; Folke, 2003).

Social resilience, therefore, is the ability of communities or groups of people to cope with, and adapt, to external pressures and disturbances, as a result of social, economic, political, and environmental change (Adger, 2000). Social resilience is highly dependent on ecological resilience, particularly for resource-dependent communities. Social resilience is an important component of a sustainable community, and a relevant concept to any consideration of policy-driven landuse change, as it allows social and economic systems to cope with, and adapt to, changes.

Pepperdine (2000) has developed a list of rural social sustainability indicators, suggesting that sustainable communities will demonstrate most or all of these characteristics:

- Ability to work together;
- Community mindedness;
- Active participation;
- Economic and social prosperity;
- Neighbourliness;
- Acceptance of newcomers;
- Opportunities to participate in social activities and public affairs;
- Employment opportunities;
- Social integration;
- Attachment to the area and a shared ‘sense of place’;
- Economic viability;
- Active community groups, community self-reliance;
- Communication;
- Common values, volunteerism;
- Population stability.

Understanding the degree to which communities demonstrate these indicators can facilitate the integration of social and economic factors into planning and decision-
making regarding landuse change, and enhance the ability of policy-makers to develop policies that do not undermine or erode social sustainability. In the case of policy-driven landuse change, understanding a community’s sustainability potential is an important part of developing landuse policies that are appropriate to the community and the environment.

In summary, a sustainable community is one that can persist over generations, enjoying a healthy environment, prosperous economy, and vibrant civic life. A sustainable community demonstrates resilience, able to withstand, absorb and/or adapt positively to social, economic and ecological change. Its social and physical systems of support are protected and enhanced. In the context of policy-driven landuse change, a sustainable community is one that not only copes with landuse changes, but also embraces the potential benefits that might ensue. It therefore, does not require that communities remain ‘fixed in time’; instead it requires the capacity to adapt to change (Barr, 2002). Community or social capacity therefore, is about developing a community’s ability to manage change so that they can understand and cope with the many internal and external influences on the direction of that change (Rogers and Spokes, 2004; Thomson and Pepperdine, 2003).

However, even given the most vibrant, active and resilient social system, if a landuse change is not aligned with community values, expectations and knowledge systems, then the resilience of that community to cope with the change will be challenged. It is, therefore, a responsibility of governments when introducing landuse change, to ensure that the landuse ‘fits’ the community – environmentally, socially and economically. Australia’s National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (NSESd) supports this through its core objectives (COAG, 1992):

- To enhance individual and community well-being and welfare by following a path of economic development that safeguards the welfare of future generations;
- To provide for equity within and between generations; and
- To protect biological diversity and maintain essential ecological processes and life-support systems.

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One of the guiding principles of NSESD is that “decision-making processes should effectively integrate both long and short-term economic, environmental, social and equity considerations” (COAG, 1992:n.p).

While the principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) (as outlined in the NSESD) have arguably not been transferred to practice, at least in theory its influence on Australian and state law and policy is evident by its inclusion in the legislation of all nine governments in Australia (Stein, 2000). Twenty-three Australian Government Acts refer to ESD, while forty-seven NSW Government Acts incorporate ESD (Stein, 2000). Governments therefore, have a clear legislative imperative to consider ESD in all decision-making.

Essentially, the NSESD requires a triple-bottom-line approach to decision-making. The triple-bottom-line is a key component of the community landuse policy approach, as understanding the social, economic and environmental constraints and opportunities will increase the likelihood of finding the ‘best-fit’ landuse for a community. Hence, the application of a community landuse policy is one way to increase the likelihood of a landuse introduction that does not erode community sustainability and social resilience.

WHAT CONDITIONS NEED TO BE MET FOR COMMUNITIES TO COPE WITH POLICY-DRIVEN LANDUSE CHANGE?

This chapter has established that rural communities play an important role in managing Australia’s natural resources, landscapes and agricultural resources. Hence, when introducing landuse change into rural communities, governments have a responsibility to protect the community they are affecting. The knowledge of, interest in, and stake that communities have in the introduction of landuse change means that its chances of successful introduction and ongoing management will be significantly improved by understanding the role that communities play.

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See Stein (2000) for a discussion on the operational problems of ESD and precautionary principles as referred to in legislation, and the responsibility of decision-makers and courts to evaluate these principles and their place in decision-making.

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Chapter 3: Enhancing the sustainability of rural communities
If rural communities are to cope with policy-driven landuse changes then their capacity to cope needs to be sufficient. As explored earlier, landuse change can introduce significant challenges to rural communities, affecting their capacity to remain viable, active communities (Harris et al., 1998). The case studies (Chapters 8 and 9) have identified numerous reasons for a community’s inability to cope with policy-driven landuse change, several of which are outside of their control:

- Poor design and placement of the landuse change;
- Insensitive management philosophies influencing the landuse change;
- A lack of understanding of the potential benefits of the landuse change;
- A lack of communication between the community and the government agency introducing the landuse change; and
- A lack of capacity to engage with, embrace or reject a proposed change or the capacity to understand and cope with potential impacts.

Harris et al. (1998) has developed a community resilience index to measure a community’s ability to adapt to change in constructive ways. This is based on characteristics identified by communities as important to their community identity, such as aesthetic attractiveness, level of civic involvement, effectiveness of community leaders, economic diversity, and social cohesion. The higher a community scores on these criteria, the more resilient they are believed to be. According to Hill and Phillips (1991, cited in Jeffreys and Munn, 1996) communities that have access to resources, strong community networks, and information and support services are more able to cope with changes.

Harris et al. (1998) conducted a study on communities faced with forest landuse changes and found that those communities that demonstrated a low capacity to cope with the changes tended to 1) be less populous and therefore susceptible to even minor changes in population; 2) have limited infrastructure; 3) have lower levels of economic diversity; 4) have less active leadership; 5) be more dependent on nearby communities; and 5) demonstrate weaker linkages to regional centres of economic and political influence. In essence, the communities were more susceptible to changes because they were not sustainable to begin with – they were unprepared for the changes and did not

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Chapter 3: Enhancing the sustainability of rural communities
have the social capital to cope. Essentially, if communities are high in social capital and already exhibiting sustainable characteristics, they are more likely to absorb landuse changes. Harris et al. (1998) argue that governments can develop policy initiatives that are tailored to different levels of community resilience by developing an understanding of the degree of social capital present when introducing landuse change. They can then ensure that the landuse change does not introduce impacts that the community are unable to absorb, while identifying and protecting community values. Understanding and enhancing social capital is, therefore, an important component of the community landuse policy approach.

Kilpatrick et al. (1998) argue that learning in rural communities can build social capital, which in turn can help communities to cope with changes (such as policy-driven landuse change). They argue that learning requires direct interaction with others. As these interactions necessarily occur within a social structure they may promote social capital if the interactions are sufficient in number and of a particular quality (Kilpatrick et al., 1998). Rogers and Barker (2000) suggest that learning communities are also more resilient to change and better equipped to embrace change as an opportunity. Further, learning communities are better able to engage with policy development, and to negotiate successful implementation of a policy if it has been developed to achieve mutual benefit (Rogers and Barker, 2000). Abdalla and Kelsey (1996) argue that communities need to understand the decision-making process, the trends and forces affecting change, and the degree to which they can influence change, while learning how to manage change as it occurs. This provides the community with some power and control over the decision-making process.

By keeping a community informed and promoting and encouraging interactions among the community and between the community and the government responsible for the change, community learning can be achieved and community values understood and incorporated into decision-making. In turn, knowledgeable, informed and empowered communities can assist in the successful implementation of landuse change. Public participation and the two-way transfer of knowledge between communities and governments is therefore a key component of the community landuse policy approach.

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Bennet et al. (2004) used a choice modelling exercise to conclude that Australians are generally willing to financially support rural communities. They argue that this provides some justification for the development of policies that redirect wealth from city to rural areas to support rural populations, particularly in support of their stewardship roles. They concluded by arguing “policies impacting rural and regional Australia need to be assessed carefully for any detrimental impact that they may have on the populations of country communities. These impacts should be factored into the policy assessment process” (Bennet et al., 2004:508). Essentially, policies, including landuse change proposals, need a comprehensive social and economic impact assessment to ensure that impacts are identified and lessened (or promoted) wherever possible so that they do not erode the sustainability of rural communities.

In Defining Rural Sustainability, Fairlie (1999) has developed a set of criteria to determine whether development proposals will contribute to sustainable rural communities. These criteria are specifically designed for land-based developments, and offer guidance for governments to judge whether a landuse proposal will contribute to or detract from sustainable communities. Fairlie (1999) argues that well planned landuses can contribute to sustainable communities by supporting local services and industries and providing employment opportunities. The criteria relevant to the Australian landuse context are listed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Criteria for evaluating the sustainability of landuse proposals
(adapted from Fairlie, 1999)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The project has a management plan which demonstrates how the landuse will contribute to a community’s livelihoods, and how it will achieve sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The landuse provides affordable access to land and/or housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The project can demonstrate how it will integrate into the local economy and community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The project can demonstrate that its activities will not create undue nuisance to the surrounding community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Any infrastructure will be sited with respect of the local landscape and settlement patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The landuse is reversible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Environmental impact (waste generation, energy, pollution etc) will be minimised</td>
</tr>
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Chapter 3: Enhancing the sustainability of rural communities
The Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy (Newman, 2004) has developed principles of sustainability for government development agendas. These components of a sustainable community can be adapted for the introduction of land use change, and are divided into foundation and process principles:

**Foundation principles**
- Long-term economic gain;
- Access, equity and human rights;
- Biodiversity and ecological integrity;
- Settlement efficiency and quality of life;
- Community, regions, 'sense of place', and heritage;
- Net benefit from development;
- Common good.

**Process principles**
- Integration;
- Accountability, transparency and engagement;
- Precaution; and
- Hope, vision, symbolic and iterative change.

While sustainability should be a core principle of government development projects when introducing land use change it is not the responsibility of agencies to 'build' and develop sustainable communities. Rather, it is their responsibility to introduce land use changes to reduce the likelihood of the sustainability of communities being eroded or diminished.

The case studies and the theoretical research have revealed six generic conditions or 'needs' that, if met, can help communities to cope with the introduction of policy-driven land use change. The challenge of meeting these will be examined in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. The key conditions or 'needs' that this thesis will address are for:

1. Community values and expectations for the social and economic future of their community to be understood by policy makers.

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*Chapter 3: Enhancing the sustainability of rural communities*
2. The impacts of the landuse change to be identified and mitigated (or enhanced) wherever possible to promote or protect economic prosperity, social systems (including their sense of place, identity and heritage), and ecological integrity.

3. A knowledge and understanding of a given landuse change, how it might affect them and how it can benefit them (community learning).

4. Opportunities to have their say, express their concerns, and share in the decision-making process.

5. A well-networked and trusting community;

6. A healthy, sustainable community.

This thesis will argue that to achieve these, management decisions surrounding landuse change need to be embedded in appropriate management philosophies. Insensitive management philosophies may decrease a community’s capacity to cope with change. This is one factor that can be controlled by government agencies. Management philosophies underlie all decision-making and as such have great influence over outcomes. This thesis will argue that communities need five basic management philosophies to lie at the heart of landuse change decision-making. These were developed from both the case studies (Chapters 8 and 9) and the literature examined in this chapter. These will be explored in detail throughout the following chapters:

1. That government agencies be willing to make decisions that might lie outside of generic policies. That is, that decisions be made relevant to the place in which the landuse is located;

2. That management decisions be made considering local and regional needs;

3. That management decisions be based on the triple-bottom-line;

4. That community participation always be sought in landuse change decision-making; and

5. That government agencies introducing landuse change be willing to consider a whole-of-government approach to management if challenges, impacts and needs lie outside of their agency capacity to manage.

As these management philosophies indicate, the government agency responsible for the landuse change has a significant role to play in the way it is received by the community. If these issues are ignored then it will likely lead to decisions that further alienate the public. These philosophies should influence the decisions that are made.

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prior to the introduction of a change, and continue to influence decision-making for the life of the landuse.

Meeting the generic community needs should form the basis of a community landuse policy when introducing landuse change. This forms the structure for Part 2 of this thesis. It will be argued that these needs can be met through social impact assessment, public engagement, enhancing and promoting social capital, and developing landuse decisions based on appropriate management philosophies. In combination, these 'tools' and processes build the capacity of communities to cope with landuse change. Figure 3.1 illustrates the approach taken in Part 2, building community capacity to cope with landuse change, outlining community needs, the 'tools' to address these, the management philosophies on which all decision-making should be embedded, and how these combine to develop community landuse policies and strategies:

**Figure 3.1: The community landuse policy approach: Building community capacity to cope with landuse change**

**LOCAL SCALE MANAGEMENT**
- Community values and expectations to be understood by policy makers
- The impacts of the landuse change to be identified and mitigated (or promoted) wherever possible

**THE TRIPLE-BOTTOM-LINE**
- The six basic needs of communities
- To be part of a healthy sustainable community
- To be part of a well networked and trusting community
- To have an opportunity to have their say

**PLACE BASED MANAGEMENT**
- Social impact assessment (chapter 4)

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- Public participation (chapter 5)
- Developing community landuse strategies (Chapter 7)
- Building social capital (chapter 6)

**WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACHES TO POLICY AND PLANNING**

**Chapter 3: Enhancing the sustainability of rural communities**
Part 2 of this thesis will make a case for a community landuse policy approach to introducing landuse change: a comprehensive, sensitive and strategic approach, culminating in a community landuse strategy. The community landuse policy is designed to identify and manage the expectations and needs of communities to increase their capacity to cope with the change. It is also concerned with identifying the best location for an identified landuse, or the best landuse for a given community. The community landuse strategy is concerned with developing management philosophies that underpin management decisions.

SUMMARY

Rural communities are an integral part of Australian society. Aside from social, economic and health benefits to its members, rural communities also provide cultural, spiritual, recreational and aesthetic values, to Australian society more generally. Rural communities are increasingly expected to carry the burden of environmental stewardship, tasked with repairing landscapes that have been degraded by two centuries of agricultural and other practices. Only communities that are appropriately equipped socially and economically can undertake such a task. However, increasing pressures on rural communities, including the introduction of policy-driven landuse changes, threaten their cohesiveness and even their continued existence. This thesis asserts that governments have a responsibility to introduce policy-driven landuse change so that rural communities are sustained. By introducing policy-driven landuse change within a considered community landuse policy, landuse change can be designed to ‘fit’ the community into which it is being introduced, by meeting community needs and enhancing their capacity to cope with the change. Moreover, by basing management decisions on appropriate management philosophies, community sustainability can be enhanced.

Part 2 of this thesis will describe and examine the community landuse policy approach, and the five management philosophies introduced earlier in this chapter.

While this thesis will focus on how to find the best location economically and socially, equally important is how to find the best location for a given landuse environmentally. This requires land capability and environmental impact assessments, the detail of which lies outside the scope of this research, but which are implicitly included in the community landuse policy approach.
Part 2: Building Community Capacity to Cope with Policy-Driven Landuse Change
Chapter 4
Social Impact Assessment: Identifying the potential community impacts of policy-driven landuse change

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explored the importance of communities and argued that it is the responsibility of governments when introducing landuse change to do so in a strategic and sensitive manner to ensure the long-term sustainability of rural communities. Governments can develop community landuse policies to ensure that a landuse change ‘fits’ the community into which it is being introduced. From this process, community landuse strategies can be developed, based on appropriate management philosophies.

This chapter explores the role of social impact assessment (SIA) in identifying community values, expectations and potential impacts of landuse change, and examines how SIA can contribute to improved decision-making for communities, by identifying how impacts can be mitigated (or promoted). SIA can address two of the conditions that if met, can help communities cope with the introduction of policy-driven landuse change:

1. Community values and expectations for their social and economic future need to be understood by policy makers.
2. The impacts of the land use change need to be identified and mitigated (or enhanced) wherever possible to promote or protect economic prosperity, social systems (including their sense of place, identity and heritage), and ecological integrity.

This chapter will explore the concept of SIA, its legislative status, and the variety of problems that prevent it reaching its full potential as a tool for managing landuse change. It will conclude by offering recommendations to increase the benefits of SIA, and fully utilise it as a decision-making tool. While SIA is a tool that can be applied to any policy change, decision-making process, or developmental proposal, this discussion will focus on its usefulness for the introduction of policy-driven landuse change in the context of a community landuse policy approach.
WHAT IS SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT?

SIA is a complex tool, which requires a full understanding of its various uses and methodologies for its potential benefits and limitations to be realised. The following section will define the extent and boundaries of SIA, outline its importance, and briefly describe the process of SIA.

Definition

To define ‘social impact assessment’ it is first necessary to determine what is meant by ‘social impacts’. Social impacts are the changes that occur in communities, social groupings, or to individuals as a result of external change, such as a policy-driven land use change (Cox and Miers, 1995; Reser and Bentrupperbaumer, 2001; Wildman and Baker, 1985). “Social impacts include all social and cultural consequences to human populations that alter the ways in which people live, work, play, relate to one another, organise to meet their needs and generally cope as members of society” (Barrow, 1997:226).

Vanclay (2003) summarises social impacts as being any changes to one or more of the following as a result of a development or policy change:

- People’s way of life;
- Their culture;
- Their community;
- Their political systems;
- Their environment;
- Their health and well-being;
- Their personal and property rights, and
- Their fears and aspirations.

These changes can manifest as benefits or losses, and may be considered differently by various sectors of the community. In fact, whether an impact is considered as a cost or benefit is very dependent on an individual’s values, attitudes and preferences (Hyman et al., 1988). Impacts can generally be divided into three categories or ‘phases’ – the opportunity-threat phase, when individuals or community sectors may make decisions
based on a promise or perception of opportunity or threat, which has ramifications for other sectors; the development phase, when structural and physical changes begin to happen; and the longer-term phase, after physical activities moderate or cease, but when the community is still undergoing changes as a result of the development (Freudenburg and Gramling, 1992).

SIA\textsuperscript{14} is the process of predicting, assessing and evaluating in advance the social consequences on people (and their communities or social groupings) of changes resulting from major policies, plans, programs, activities and developments (Barrow, 1997; Burdge 1988; Burdge and Vanclay, 1995; Craig, 1990; Finsterbusch, 1985; Formby, 1986, 1988; Freudenburg, 1986; Lugg, 1996; Reser and Bentrupperbaumer, 2001). The SIA process alerts the various stakeholders in an issue – community, planners, government and project proponents – as to the likely benefits and costs of a proposed project or policy change, to assist decision-makers in determining whether and/or how the proposal should proceed (Burdge, 1988; Harding, 1998).

"Social Impact Assessment is an attempt to predict the future effects of policy decisions (including the initiation of specific projects) upon people, their physical and psychological health, well-being and welfare, their traditions, lifestyles, institutions, and interpersonal relationships (D’Amore, 1978:366).

SIA differs from social research more generally, because of its focus on prediction and the contribution it attempts to make towards fostering informed decision-making. SIA can be seen as a prospective or anticipatory rather than retrospective decision-making tool, as well as a way to facilitate negotiation among interest groups. It also tends to be proposal or development specific, and is usually intended to contribute to policy decisions (Barrow, 1997; Bowles, 1981; Coakes, 1999; Cox, 1994; Freudenburg, 1986; Usher, 1993).

\textsuperscript{14} It is difficult to separate social impact assessment from economic impact assessment, as economic impacts will usually also have social impacts. For example, a change in employment structure, while an economic impact, has obvious social ramifications (Bowles, 1981; Cox, 1994). Social health is invariably tied to economic status and vice versa. For the purpose of this thesis therefore, SIA includes assessment of economic impacts at a localised level.

\textit{Chapter 4: Social impact assessment: Identifying the potential community impacts of policy-driven landuse change}
Why do social impact assessments?

There is a growing demand to address the social consequences of government policies. SIA provides a mechanism to identify impacts, allowing government agencies or developers to reduce negative effects (Fisher, 2001). As Fisher (2001:231) suggests, SIA provides a “mechanism for increasing the speed of the policy evolution and introducing social issues into the decision-making in a structured, acceptable manner”.

As discussed in Chapter 3 it is the responsibility of governments to help protect the sustainability of communities. As Menzies (1993 cited in Shantz, 2001:189) suggests “communities become ghettos when their social dynamics are destroyed and their sense of community pride is replaced by wanting to move elsewhere”. As an individual’s identity is often linked to their sense of place, disrupting these dynamics can have repercussions for individuals and communities in the form of costs and benefits. As Bowles (1981:1) argues, small communities “may gain little and lose much” when large-scale projects are introduced. Therefore, if a policy-driven landuse change threatens to destroy those characteristics and values that are important to a community, particularly those values that underlie their identity, it is essential that we identify and protect those values under threat. It is the identification of these impacts, with the subsequent adjustments to planning to manage them, which is the primary purpose of a social impact assessment (Lane, 1997).

Bowles (1981) suggests that the need to conduct an SIA arises if: there is a defined community (but, as noted in Chapter 3 there are inherent difficulties in defining communities); that some sort of identifiable intervention has occurred or is proposed in the form of a project, development or policy change; that this intervention has consequences affecting the existing community; and finally, that these consequences are separate or cumulative to those which are happening within the community as a result of other reasons.

Development or policy changes can, and do, affect communities. This can happen even at the hint or suggestion of a change – market speculation, for example, can affect real estate markets (Burdge and Vanclay, 1995). Communities may experience
increased anxiety at the uncertainty or perception of negative impacts very early in the proposal process. As Burdge and Vanclay (1995) suggest, impacts start to occur simply in response to the suggestion of change as people anticipate impacts.

If communities are involved through the planning process, uncertainty can be reduced and the benefits of the development or policy change enhanced (Burdge and Vanclay, 1995). By conducting an SIA in a respectful and sympathetic manner, developers and/or government agencies can avoid or reduce community conflict, thereby avoiding delays in implementation (Coakes, 1999; Rakowski, 1995). Ultimately, a properly conducted SIA has the potential to lead to more sensitive and considered developments and government programs, with the result of more satisfied communities, minimising local resistance (Burdge and Vanclay, 1995; NSW OSP, 1995).

There is frequently an assumption that changes in rural industries that result in increased financial benefits will automatically result in increased social benefits (Fisher, 2001). The Honourable Warren Truss, Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (2000 cited in Fisher, 2001:231) for instance argues: “...and so the very best thing we can do to revitalise rural and regional Australia is to revitalise their most important industry and that of course is agriculture. And what we can do to build stronger agricultural industries will certainly have the effect of rebuilding rural communities”. While economic well-being is one of the determinants of a healthy rural community, if this comes at the expense of other values it can have an overall negative impact on social health, or at the least a lessened potential net benefit. Rural communities identify a variety of issues that are of concern, including attachment to place and identity issues (Fisher, 2001). If these are threatened by a development then the economic gains are frequently not enough to render the development acceptable.

Problems arise with the introduction of developments or landuse change because costs and benefits are rarely equally distributed across societal sectors, or equally distributed across local, regional or national community/ies (or perhaps more importantly, rarely perceived to be equally distributed) (Lane, 1997; Rickson et al., 1988). Importantly, benefits of developments are often enjoyed at a regional or higher level, while costs are frequently experienced at a local or community level (Lane, 1997; Lane et al., 2001;
Wildman and Baker, 1985). Moreover, Lane (2001) suggests that minority communities tend to be more vulnerable to the impacts of a development simply because they tend to lack political representation and power, and are less able to instigate political opposition. While Lane (2001) is referring primarily to minority ethnic groups in the USA and the high correlation with unwelcome landuses being situated in areas of high ethnicity, these minority communities and Australian minority groups, such as Indigenous or agricultural communities, share commonalities. As Lane and Dale (1995) argue, Indigenous populations face resource management proposals that are aimed at exploiting the land that they inhabit, while also facing projects designed to improve their economic independence. Both of these policy goals have the potential to impact significantly on Indigenous populations. More so than agricultural communities, Indigenous communities tend to be politically marginalised and fragmented as well as under-resourced, which dramatically decreases their potential political power (Lane, 2001).

The USA’s National Environmental Policy Act has in-built measures to improve accessibility and increase acknowledgment of minority communities. Guidelines provide advice for: identifying low income and minority populations; methods and tools for analysing impacts; factors to be considered in environmental justice analysis; and, improved public participation opportunities for low income and minority populations (Lane 2001). While the Act does not emphasise negotiation, empowerment, or participatory design, it does go some way to promoting the ideal of environmental justice across sectors of society.

SIA is closely tied to social justice – the fair treatment and involvement of all people with respect to development, landuse change and environmental issues generally (Bass, 1998; Been, 1993). To ensure that social justice prevails, it is necessary to identify the potential impacts of a development or policy change on all sectors of society including the disenfranchised or marginalised sectors, and act to mitigate inequitable negative impacts. A properly conducted SIA can, therefore, contribute towards better decision-making by informing the balancing of social, economic and environmental issues, while accounting for all sectors of society (Cox and Miers, 1995). A triple-bottom-line approach is therefore linked to social impact assessment.
One of the most useful outcomes of an SIA is to develop mitigation techniques to reduce potential negative impacts or promote potential benefits of policies and developments (Burdge and Vanclay, 1995). Ideally, SIA can act to identify costs and redistribute these, so that those who are benefiting are also carrying the bulk of the costs (Wolf, 1983). As Wildman and Baker (1985:9) argue, it is the responsibility of government to work to ensure the "society-wide equitable distribution of costs and benefits of the development process". To develop equitable mitigation and cost redistribution strategies an SIA process should identify potential impacts on both majority and minority sections of the community. Perhaps SIA’s greatest value lies in its potential ability to identify inequalities in resource distribution among sectors of the community (Barrow, 1997) and to stimulate public participation by sectors of society not currently participating in the policy process (Rickson et al., 1988). SIA, therefore, has two components: to anticipate the potential consequences of a development or policy change; and to help develop policies to enhance desirable impacts and minimise undesirable impacts of the change (Thomas, 2001).

SIAs allow decision-makers to be more aware of the consequences of a policy decision before they commit themselves to a change. At its best, SIA allows people to participate in the decision-making process, helps to design mitigation strategies, and provides an opportunity for public debate about conflicting values (Barrow, 1997; Lugg, 1996; Rickson, et al., 1988). This leads to empowered communities and developments that are more positively received, enjoying more success in many arenas. Wildman and Baker (1985) argue that more satisfied communities equal more productive communities. They suggest that social and community development and harmony is closely associated with physical and resource development.

It is important to understand an individual or group’s ‘sense of place’ in relation to their locality; it is the humanism strongly evident in social theory that allows the exploration of such intangible qualities (Scott et al., 2001). Strongly embedded in a person’s ‘sense of place’, is their identity. As Scott et al. (2001) argue conflicts over the environment are interpreted as being entrenched in the politics of a community’s identity. The importance of ‘sense of place’ was found to be particularly relevant in the Adjungbilly case study explored in Chapter 8. Understanding the role of place in the

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formation of an individual and community’s identity is important to develop landuse policies that respect and maintain the ‘sense’ of a place. Place-based management is, therefore, an important characteristic of the community landuse policy approach developed in Chapter 7.

In summary, SIA allows decision-makers to (Burdge and Robertson, 1990; Burdge and Vanclay, 1995; Cox, 1994; Cox and Miers, 1995):

1. Ensure that proposal proponents consider the social and human environment when making decisions;
2. Understand values, identities, needs and expectations of affected communities;
3. Understand, manage and control change;
4. Predict likely impacts from development or policy changes;
5. Identify and implement mitigation strategies, to minimise negative and maximise positive impacts, at a stage in the development approval process when ‘least impact’ techniques can still be included in the consent conditions;
6. Develop alternatives to the proposal;
7. Provide a justification for the rejection of a development that has unacceptable negative impacts;
8. Address issues of social equity;
9. Develop monitoring programs, to identify un-predicted impacts and keep track of predicted ones; and
10. Raise community consciousness to better understand the changes.

The use of SIA will not necessarily lead to perfect solutions and united, satisfied communities. Individuals and different sectors of society will always have differing views on development and policy and even the most detailed and conscientious SIA is unlikely to change this. Landuse change can produce a variety of social and economic impacts by disrupting local markets, changing or reducing employment patterns, impacting on local populations, increasing feelings of isolation, affecting community identity and sense of place, affecting service provision, and affecting the dynamics of local social groupings. However, by conducting an SIA as part of a community

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landuse policy, impacts can be identified and mitigated (or promoted) wherever possible. By understanding and acknowledging community values, identifying problems before they arise, and by involving the community in both the problem identification as well as the problem solving processes, negative impacts can be reduced or at least managed for and negotiated. In theory, the first two needs of communities being, to have their values and expectations understood, and for impacts on these values to be identified and mitigated wherever possible, can be met or at least better addressed. Later sections will explore whether, in practice, SIA actually achieves these community outcomes.

**Conducting a social impact assessment**

There is an institutionally accepted process for conducting SIA, consisting of a series of steps. These can be summarised as 3 distinct phases – impact assessment, the decision, and impact management (NSW OSP, 1995)\(^\text{15}\).

Due to a lack of resources, appropriate technical skills, and information, most SIA tend to be based on quantitative, rather than qualitative data. Quantitative data can frequently be obtained from statistical agencies or similar sources. Qualitative data on the other hand, is rarely already available, and can be time consuming to gather, difficult to present in an easily digestible format, and frequently not well respected by decision-makers due to perceived methodological problems (Cox *et al*., 2001; Lane, 1997; Lane *et al*., 2001; Shantz, 2001). However, a social impact assessment for landuse change should utilise both quantitative and qualitative data.

Some data for an SIA may be available\(^\text{16}\) and can be collated from statistical agencies, government agencies, local councils, and through the public participation process. A public participation process during an SIA is vital to engage stakeholders and to determine what the community perceive as the likely impacts of a proposed landuse

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\(^{15}\)This section will provide only a brief overview of social impact assessment practice. For more detailed guidance on social impact assessment practice and methodology, see Burdge, 2004; Cavaye, 2003; Coakes, 1999; Cox and Miers, 1995; NSW OSP, 1995; and Stanley *et al*., 2004.

\(^{16}\)The problem with using data collected for other purposes (such as census data) is that it provides no explanation for why a trend is occurring, while collecting primary data allows more exploration of trends (Black *et al*., 2000).

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change (Burdge and Robertson, 1990). This can be done by inviting submissions to publicly released documents, holding forums and workshops, and conducting surveys of stakeholders to collect more detailed data (Cox and Miers, 1995). The role of public participation in the SIA process will be introduced later in this chapter, while its role in the community landuse policy approach more generally will be explored in Chapter 5.

To identify the impacts that a community might experience as a result of an introduced landuse change, it is necessary to understand the local context that the change is occurring within. This can be achieved by compiling a community profile\(^\text{17}\), which tells a ‘story’ of the community, identifying a wide range of information that assists in predicting potential impacts. A profile can include (Scott \textit{et al.}, 2001):

- Historical background of the region and/or community;
- Settlement and land ownership patterns;
- Socio-economic status and demography of affected communities;
- Political organisation, interests and values of affected communities;
- Distribution of power and local conflicts in the region or community;
- Industry, employment and occupation data;
- Social and economic infrastructure and services; and
- Significant social groupings.

A community profile also can examine other less measurable data, such as what Carley and Walkey (1981) describe as the ‘social condition’. These are the subjective indicators of quality of life that reflect feelings, expectations and satisfactions of individuals within the social setting. While these factors are intangible and difficult to accurately represent through most methodologies, they can illustrate quite accurately the general feeling towards the landuse change proposal, and often offer the most illuminating perspectives (Carley and Walkey, 1981).

With consideration of the community profile, a comprehensive SIA can then explore the potential impacts of the landuse change proposal on variables such as (Barrow, 1997; Reser and Benttrupperbaumer, 2001):

\(^{17}\) Also see Clouston \textit{et al.}, 2004 for information on compiling a regional profile.
• The potential winners and losers;
• Economic conditions;
• Employment opportunities;
• Social pattern or lifestyle;
• Social amenities and relationships;
• Psychological features;
• Demographic features (e.g. changes to population size or distribution, youth migration).
• Physical amenities (intellectual, cultural, aesthetic and sensual);
• Mental and physical health;
• Personal security;
• Religion and traditional belief; and
• Culture.

It is critical for an SIA to include both objective and subjective components. Subjective components are important because “it is impossible to assess the quality of life in a community... without grounding that assessment in value decisions... we therefore argue that all quality of life studies should begin by constructing profiles of the major values in the communities being examined” (Olsen et al., 1985:328, cited in Albrecht and Thompson, 1988:71). Albrecht and Thompson (1988) outline a range of subjective attitudinal variables that should be considered: (1) attitudes relating to environmental conservation; (2) levels of community knowledge regarding the potential impacts of a proposal; (3) community perceptions prior to the proposal; (4) the level of community desire for development and social change; (5) perceptions of the anticipated and actual impacts of the development; and (6) levels of community satisfaction, cohesion and general social health.

Once data have been collected there are a number of ways of measuring, assessing and displaying the data to assist decision-makers. Some of the most widely used techniques are outlined in Box 4.1. Which of these techniques is selected, will depend on the availability of resources and time, information availability, the level of professional expertise available, and the context and issues. These will not be explored in detail.
Box 4.1: Social impact assessment techniques

**Social indicators** – a technique that is used to monitor changes in particular social areas, which takes place over a period of time. By using this technique we can monitor quality of life or social well-being of social factors which are hard to quantify. This technique is most valuable as a monitoring device to reduce long-term social impact (Cox and Miers, 1995; NSW OSP, 1995).

**Social auditing** – a social audit or account examines the broad social impacts of an organisation or a government and/or community project. It is usually used to determine those areas where improvements could be made to practices to reduce negative impacts (Cox and Miers, 1995; NSW OSP, 1995).

**Cost-effectiveness analysis** – a technique that attempts to identify the most economically effective way of reaching some pre-defined policy goal. It is usually used to compare costs and benefits of various alternatives, all of which lead to the same outcome. The ‘costs’ and ‘benefits’ would also include those that are intrinsically hard to quantify in economic terms. Ideally, the most cost-effective and socially cohesive option would be accepted (Cox and Miers, 1995; NSW OSP, 1995).

**Cost-benefit analysis** – a technique that attempts to place monetary amounts or values on identified impacts and determine whether these can be categorised as costs or benefits. The total of the two figures is then compared determining a cost-benefit ratio. Generally if benefits exceed costs the development or project would proceed (Cox and Miers, 1995; NSW OSP, 1995).

**Multi-criteria analysis** – this is a technique that attempts to analyse a variety of criteria or different types of effects of a project or development proposal. Such criteria might be social effects, economic impacts and environmental impacts. It requires value judgements to be made when making the final decision (Cox and Miers, 1995; NSW OSP, 1995); and

**Impact display table** – this involves the compiling of a table, listing and describing the various benefits and costs that have been identified as possibly resulting from the proposal. This avoids value judgements, as no values need to be placed on the various impacts. As it does not require the measurement of the impacts it is an effective technique when resources are limiting the extent of the social assessment process (Cox and Miers, 1995; NSW OSP, 1995).

It is important for government proponents of a landuse change to identify stakeholders to ensure that their values are considered, and potential impacts identified. Scott *et al.* (2001) assert the importance of identifying whether groups or individuals are primary stakeholders (those who are directly affected such as neighbouring landholders), or secondary stakeholders (those who have an interest such as environmental groups). However, while it may serve some purposes to make this distinction, it is also important to be careful not to automatically render a primary stakeholder as having more of a ‘stake’ in an issue than a secondary stakeholder. A person or group does not need to be directly affected by a landuse change to feel very strongly about it. Moreover, stakeholders who were presumed to be secondary may, on completion of an SIA, be more accurately described as primary stakeholders.

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Connor (1999) argues that residual populations – those who do not fall into a defined stakeholder group – tend to be excluded from public participation processes. He argues that instead of identifying stakeholder groups (those with a vested stake in the outcome), an alternative is to identify various publics, without the onus being on a stake or membership of a representative group. It is only when all of these publics are identified and an opportunity provided for them to participate, can a valid, reliable and permanent decision be made (Connor, 1999). While Connor’s suggestion to identify ‘publics’ instead of ‘stakeholders’ takes some emphasis off the need for the public to have a primary interest in an issue to be involved, it does not present any solutions for identifying whom these publics are. *Structuration theory* accounts for the differentiation of power – economic, political and social – between different societal groups, and hence may contribute to this task. Explicitly understanding stakeholder access to power, resources and decision-making, allows resource managers to fully understand, and therefore account for the complexity of societal structures (Scott et al., 2001).

**The Legislative Status of Social Impact Assessment in Australia**

Currently, Commonwealth, state and local governments have legislative requirements to conduct environmental impact assessments in Australia – the imperative to conduct *social* impact assessments is less clear. This section will examine the legislative status of impact assessments at a Commonwealth level, as well as the state of NSW, and the obligations of NSW local councils.  

Arguably, the most influential legislation for developing contemporary impact assessment standards in Australia was the *Environmental Protection Act 1974*. While it has been repealed its provisions have been integrated into the more recent *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). This more recent statute was an attempt to develop more consistent legislation across the

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18 NSW is the focus of this examination of the legal status of SIAs as both of the case studies to be examined are located in NSW. Legislative requirements in other states are similar.

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Commonwealth (Cox et al., 2001). While there is no explicit reference to social assessment within the EPBC Act, Section 136(1)(b) of the EPBC Act requires that:

"In deciding whether or not to approve the taking of an action, and what conditions to attach to an approval, the Minister must consider the following, so far as they are not inconsistent with any other requirement of this Subdivision:... (b) economic and social matters”.

While the Act requires consideration of social matters, it does not specifically require SIAs. As a result, much of the responsibility for SIAs falls to the States and/or local governments. Ross and Lane (2001) argue that it is unlikely, therefore, that SIAs will ever be given their due consideration as the States and local councils rely significantly on developments (including landuse change) for revenue. Additionally, local governments may not have sufficient resources to conduct comprehensive assessments.

The most important factor that determines whether an SIA should be conducted in Australia is the definition of the term ‘environment’. While legislation outlines specific requirements for the undertaking of environmental impact assessment (EIA), there are no explicit procedures for social impact assessments identified in state or Commonwealth legislation. The system relies on the ‘human’ or social element to be included within the scope of an EIA. To ensure that SIAs are included in the EIA process the definition of ‘environment’ to include human or social elements becomes critical (Cox et al., 2001). The need to conduct an SIA is usually triggered by recognition that ‘humans’ are intrinsically encompassed in an environment where a proposal is being considered. However, the degree to which the human or social element is recognised in the term ‘environment’, varies hugely, and is treated as less important than the biophysical component of the environment (Cox et al., 2001).

In the EPBC Act 1999, the Commonwealth of Australia defines the term ‘environment’ to include:

a) Ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities;
b) Natural and physical resources;
c) The qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas; and
d) The social, economic and cultural aspects of a thing mentioned in paragraph (a), (b) or (c) (EPBC Act 1999 section 528).

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The NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, defines ‘environment’ as including, “all aspects of the surroundings of humans, whether affecting any human as an individual or in his or her social groupings (EPA Act 1979, section 4(1)).”

While these definitions clearly include the human element as a component of the ‘environment’, it is still necessary to judge whether a development is likely to affect people and/or their communities. This remains open to differing values, biases and interpretations.

The Commonwealth has direct power to intervene and request an impact assessment if a proposal falls within its sphere of power. The Commonwealth will respond if it is perceived that the proposal is likely to impact the ‘environment’ to a significant extent (Ross and Lane, 2001). However, as Marsden (1999) outlines, the Commonwealth’s intervention is limited to matters of national environmental significance, or impacts arising from trade, commerce or the implementation of Australia’s international obligations. What the Commonwealth legislation (EPBC Act 1999) provides is a national framework for the consideration of impact assessments in development applications. It also acts to ensure that decisions at the state level, to grant approval to development applications, must be dependent on the application meeting certain criteria, which includes consideration of an assessment report.

The NSW legislation that provides the most significant basis for social impact assessment is the NSW Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EPA Act). The legislative requirement to conduct an EIA, and potentially an SIA, is invoked in response to either proposals that require development consent (usually private sector proposals), or proposals that require decisions by determining authorities (usually public sector proposals) (BBC Consulting Planners, n.d.). Section 90(1)(d) requires councils to “take into account the ‘social effect and the economic effect’ of proposals when considering development applications”, while section 90(1)(r) requires councils to “take into account the ‘public interest’ when considering development applications”.

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The EPA Act was amended in 1987, with the design of an ‘integrated development assessment’ system. The process was streamlined to include different stages of approvals, while also developing levels of assessment to indicate the varying significance and potential impacts of a proposal (Cox, 2001). If a proposal falls into the category of ‘local development’, the emphasis and responsibility for ensuring the consideration of social and environmental impacts is placed on the local planning authority (Cox, 2001; Cox et al., 2001). Section 5(c) of the EPA Act requires Councils to “provide increased opportunity for public involvement and participation in environmental planning and assessment”. In accordance with the Act, Councils are required to consider a variety of areas when determining the appropriateness of a development (Cox et al., 2001). One such area that they are expected to consider is “environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments, and social and economic impacts in the locality” (EPA Act 1979, s79c (1)). It was also previously left to individual councils to determine what could be classed as ‘social and economic impacts’, while now the various categories of impact which should be addressed are included in the amended legislation (Cox, 2001). In addition to the EPA Act, State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPP) 5, 10 and 38 contain specific provisions for councils to assess the social impacts of certain types of development (Cox et al., 2001; Cox and Miers, 1995).

However, while SIA is addressed in various statutes, there are no provisions to enforce the management of social impacts after they have been identified (Cox, 2001). Aside from formulating mitigation measures in the earlier stages of the development, there is rarely any responsibility placed on the proponent to introduce long-term provisions to avoid social impacts (Cox, 2001). The lack of legally enforceable legislative backing for SIAs is mirrored in EIAs. There is little enforceable requirement to protect environmental values such as biodiversity, only for development proponents to consider them (Buckley, 1995). In addition, while the amendments to the EPA Act were intended to increase public involvement and to increase the degree of communication in relation to environmental, social and economic assessment between affected parties and governing bodies (Shantz, 2001), the degree to which this actually occurs remains open to interpretation.

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While some progress could have been made with the release in 1997 of ‘Guidelines for Assessing Social Impacts’, developed by the Social Policy Development Unit of the NSW Government Cabinet Office, these guidelines were not made public (Cox, 2001). As Shantz (2001) argues, it is essential that we more solidly and consistently embed social impact assessment into state legislation rather than relying on the various interpretations of local governments, as the system at present means that a change of local government could fundamentally change the degree to which they seriously consider social impacts. This is also the case for policy-driven landuse change proposals. As there is little requirement to identify and address social impacts, they may not be considered in decision-making surrounding landuse change. However, this thesis will argue that if SIAs (and EIAs) were embedded in a community landuse policy the likelihood of impacts being addressed will increase.

Cox et al. (2001) suggest that the most significant indicator of social impacts within NSW is not the SIA process, but rather the public reaction at the announcement of a development proposal. It has become the responsibility of communities themselves to bring government attention to social impacts (Cox et al., 2001). Even then it is an institutional reality that local impacts are often accepted as a necessary evil for the greater public good. Because there is little legal imperative to mitigate impacts, SIA runs the risk of becoming an exercise in identifying impacts with little genuine attempt to alter practices (Howitt, 1989).

So, the legislative status of SIA is still unclear and dependent on a range of variables that are open to interpretation. A report commissioned by the NSW EPA into the effectiveness of SIA concluded that the social element of impact assessments needed to be more explicitly included (Ross and Lane, 2001). The Resource Assessment Commission (RAC), suggested that impact assessments should necessarily include consideration of social, cultural and economic impacts, and that it was necessary to improve public participation to ensure that SIAs acted to reduce impacts on communities, rather than merely reporting on them (Ross and Lane, 2001).

I would argue that we need a separate requirement to conduct social impact assessments, outside of the EIA process. At present, if a development or policy

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proposal is not seen as having environmental impacts then there is little impetus to conduct an SIA. For the ‘social’ to be considered at all, it must first be determined that there are environmental problems associated with the proposal. A significant concern is that social impacts may emerge from proposals with no environmental impacts. Cox et al. (2001) argue that changes to the consideration of the ‘social’ in impact assessments will only occur if communities insist on more rigorous social impact assessments. However, as will be discussed in following chapters, communities are only likely to become more proactive concerning development and policy changes if they possess adequate stocks of ‘social capital’, and if governments are prepared to encourage and facilitate public participation in decision-making. While the following chapter will explore the responsibility that governments have to ensure that communities have sufficient capacity to cope with change, development and policy change tend to impact on those communities less able to cope, and therefore less likely to object given their lack of existing capacity – a self-reinforcing cycle.

A DISCUSSION OF SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN PRACTICE

So far this chapter has focused on the theory of SIA, a theory that focuses mostly on the potential for SIA to contribute to decision-making, and to assist in identifying arenas of conflict. The reality of the practice of SIA tends to be wrought with methodological, theoretical and political problems that render it inadequate as a decision-making tool on its own. The remainder of this chapter will explore the practice of SIA, outlining ‘technical’ versus ‘political’ approaches to SIA, and the range of problems associated with the practice of SIA, and concluding with a range of proposals aimed to help realise the potential that SIA has to more fully and equitably contribute to the introduction of policy-driven landuse change.

The ‘technical’ versus the ‘political’ approach to SIA

Decision-making can be classified as either ‘technical’ or ‘political’ in nature (Craig, 1990). The ‘technical’ approach to SIA, examines empirical data, seeking to provide decision-makers with the necessary information concerning the social impacts of a development and possible management strategies (Lane et al., 1997). It is a technical
component of rational decision-making, and tends to be devoid of value judgements (Usher, 1993). The ‘political’ approach however, recognises that development decision-making is value-driven and political in nature (Lane et al., 1997). A politically focused SIA can be used as an internal advocacy strategy for community or developer interests (Freudenburg, 1986; Lane et al., 1997; Thomas, 2001; Usher, 1993). A political approach to SIA is more likely to examine impacts on community social structure, and dynamics and power relations within the community, while also more likely to consider intangible impacts such as community attachment to place, and sense of belonging (Craig, 1990). Lane et al. (1997) argue that successful inclusion of SIA into the planning process depends on recognition of the political environment in which it is embedded. Lane and Dale (1995) argue that expecting an SIA to provide neutral, technical advice ignores the reality of the political domain it operates within, suggesting instead that communities need to be advised on strategies for negotiation with developers. The key distinctions between the technical and political approaches are summarised in Table 4.1.

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Current trends suggest that the political approach allows a more in-depth, substantive examination of a community and its values, within the broader context of a political setting. Earlier models of SIA were frequently conducted by engineers and tended towards purely technical approaches, while recent trends are to increase community empowerment and develop true indicators of impact (Usher, 1993). This is necessary...

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if the intent of an SIA is to contribute to decision-making on a political level. However, SIAs are affected enormously by the context in which they are conducted (Freudenburg, 1986). If recognising the political nature of SIAs may highlight the need to consider all sectors of society, including marginalised sectors, then such an approach may also have significant issues in respect of potentially allowing sectors of society who are more empowered to benefit at the cost of less powerful sectors (Freudenburg, 1986). This can have repercussions for social justice. As such, technical approaches may offer a less biased, more ‘pure’ approach to SIA, possibly enhancing the likelihood of sector interests being considered equally. In reality, both technical and political approaches to SIA have a role in decision-making.

Why are social impact assessments frequently neglected?

“There is little doubt that social assessment deserves its reputation as the ‘poor cousin’ of biophysical assessment in planning and decision-making” (Lane et al., 2001:5).

The reality of SIA is that it is frequently overlooked or poorly conducted in planning processes. The reasons for this neglect are complex, and may be a result of problems with SIA methodology, process or institutional barriers. This section will discuss the variety of barriers to conducting SIA and integrating the findings into decision-making surrounding landuse change.

Government reluctance

There may be a government assumption that people should simply ‘cope’ with change so long as it is for the betterment of society, creating a reluctance on behalf of governments to investigate a community’s ability to cope with change, as it is seen as unnecessary and burdensome (Rickson et al., 1990a). There is also a fear that involving the public will lead to a transfer of power from the government to the public, leading not only to top-level disempowerment, but also to inefficiency in decision-making. There is also a widespread belief that SIA only identifies the impacts of a development or policy change, with little or no recognition of the benefits. Therefore,
SIA is seen as a process that may slow down, or stop altogether, the project or policy change (Burde, 1988).

Another institutional barrier is the degree of conflict between production and growth-oriented sectors of government and those sectors commissioned to conduct impact assessments. Even within the same agency, let alone between local, state and federal governments, there exist impediments to co-operation because of differing values, skills and experience. The reality of the bureaucratic system is that information can be withheld and access denied if it is believed that the assessment process will halt the progress of policy (Rickson et al., 1990a). This is a political barrier to the successful inclusion of SIA into the decision-making process. This attitude will remain so long as impact assessments are viewed as inefficient and burdensome to the policy process.

**Lack of resources**

SIAs are often poorly resourced with staff, money, and time (often because of government reluctance to invest in SIA). Because of this they tend to have a reputation for lacking rigour and coherence. As generalisations need to be drawn from a limited and poorly collected data set (Lane, 1997; Lane et al., 2001; Llewellyn and Freudenburg, 1989), it makes it very difficult to draw meaningful interpretations (Lane et al., 2001). In theory at least, sufficient time, funding and expertise could counter such shortcomings.

**Lack of a community of expertise**

As discussed previously, SIAs have not traditionally been taken particularly seriously in the decision-making process. Combine this with the lack of resources to conduct them in a professional manner, and the result has been an inconsistent and frustratingly slow growth in the discipline. As a result, there is very little disciplinary expertise in social assessment to draw upon, which means that much learning is done by trial and error on an individual basis, rather than an accumulated body of knowledge and community of expertise (Lane et al., 2001; Shantz, 2001). Additionally, many practitioners are trained in the physical sciences, and lack disciplinary expertise in
social sciences. This has particularly become a problem in recent years as demand for social impact assessors increases without a corresponding increase in suitably qualified practitioners (Chase, 1990; Lane, 1997; Lane and Dale, 1995; Llewellyn and Freudenburg, 1989). Rickson et al. (1988) suggest that the lack of social theory in SIAs has limited the generalisability of impact information, thereby reducing its value to decision-makers. Social theory guides the impact assessor in determining what to ask and how to interpret the responses, whereas SIA lacking in social theory tend to be guided by political biases and power struggles (Rickson et al., 1990b).

From a different perspective, the interdisciplinary nature of ‘impacts’ means that ‘disciplinary inertia’ may result in the failure of the impact assessment process. The disparate assumptions concerning human behaviour among the disciplines prevent the successful conduct of an interdisciplinary assessment (Rickson et al., 1990a). For example, how an economist assumes a human will behave in a given situation is quite different to how a sociologist will view the same situation. The end result is immense difficulty in creating and sustaining interdisciplinary relationships (Rickson et al., 1990a).

**Difficulty in predicting impacts**

Arguably, the most difficult problem to overcome in the practice of SIA is the difficulty practitioners face in predicting impacts. Social change is complex, and further complicated because people interact and adapt as change occurs (Barrow, 1997).

The ‘prediction’ problem is complicated by the fact that the data the predictions are based on are usually pre-development or pre-change, making it difficult to make assumptions about the change. It also operates on a basic assumption that communities and individuals will act predictably. However, social research reveals that communities frequently act in unexpected ways, thereby making it difficult to accurately predict impacts. Additionally, people’s attitudes and values may change over time, making the original prediction assessment irrelevant to the changed community (O’Faircheallaigh, 1999). Moreover, few SIAs include a prediction of the
impacts of alternative developments, or the maintenance of the status-quo (Formby, 1986, 1988). This is exacerbated by the lack of monitoring and evaluation processes conducted post-introduction to ascertain the accuracy of predicted impacts. Hence, there has been little attempt to develop an accumulated body of knowledge regarding predicted impacts (Freudenburg and Gramling, 1992; Rickson et al., 1990a).

**Immeasurability of social impacts**

Much of the difficulty in predicting impacts lies in the immeasurability of many social impacts. Social impacts are frequently based on value judgements and attitudes that may change as people reassess their own needs. They may also be difficult to articulate and sometimes contradictory to an individual’s other values (Hyman et al., 1988). Impacts may be inherently value judgements or ‘soft’ data, which can be difficult to collect and to quantify (Shantz, 2001). The human or social world is an extremely interactive one. It cannot be measured without considering multiple and intractable variables such as values, politics and different human characteristics. These tend to be difficult to quantify, and for some decision-makers, difficult to ‘trust’. As Scott et al. (2001:35) argue, as a society, we devalue “human meaning systems and perceptions as valid evidence of social impacts”.

Taylor et al. (1990:15) argue, “It is often precisely those variables that are most valuable to us that we have most trouble quantifying”. It is extremely difficult, for example, to place a quantifiable value on the importance of a ‘sense of place’ to a community. As a result, research methods chosen to collect the qualitative aspects of social impacts may be inappropriate and/or inadequate, leaving the data collection fundamentally flawed and limited in its extent (Lane, 1997; Lane et al., 2001).

Of even more concern is that qualitative aspects are often completely neglected, leading to significant flaws in the data used to determine social impacts. Frequently, ‘human’ data are limited to the socio-demographic parameters of a community, rather than incorporating psychological impacts of a change – often the most heart-felt of impacts (Reser and Bentrupperbaumer, 2001). Memon and Morgan (2001) claim that even when attempts are made to address impacts beyond the ‘numbers’, they tend to be
limited to concerns about amenity, rather than issues of social justice, welfare and community survival. Because of problems with methodology and a general lack of expertise, there is reluctance by many SIA consultants to predict impacts. Rather, they tend to focus on population changes and infrastructure demands, at the expense of impacts on social and cultural dynamics (Ross and Lane, 2001).

Spatial and temporal isolation of social impact assessments

SIAs tend to be conducted as ‘one-off’ assessment processes, spatially and temporally removed from other potentially relevant developments, or even a future point in the same development. As a result, SIAs usually only capture the potential impacts of a policy or development change at a brief moment in time, with very little consideration of the long-term future. SIAs are rarely re-done after the implementation of the policy/development to identify any impacts that had not been predicted, or to evaluate the accuracy of the original predictions (Rakowski, 1995). The problem with this approach is that many of the impacts of a change in a community or economic region may not be experienced or even imagined, until well into the future. Because there is little scope within an SIA to revisit the community, these often go completely unrecorded with little accumulation of knowledge.

Monitoring and evaluation of impacts and mitigation techniques is rarely initiated (Cox, 2001). Even if conditions are attached to a development approval to mitigate impacts, monitoring does not always take place to ensure the conditions are met (Shantz, 2001).

Little scope to measure cumulative impacts

The spatial and temporal isolation of SIAs means that cumulative effects often go unnoticed (Shantz, 2001). Landuse change does not occur in isolation, making it difficult to separate the range of social impacts that might arise from other pressures the community is experiencing (Burdge and Vanclay, 1995). Cumulative impacts are the accumulation of impacts that result from more than one development in a location, or over time (Cox and Miers, 1995; McDonald and Brown, 1995; O’Faircheallaigh,
1999). In theory, there is some scope to measure cumulative impacts of the same development over time, but not to consider the combinations of a number of developments and policies (Ross, 1990). The problem is that the level of impact for each individual development may be minimal. However, when these are combined, there is a substantive increase in the degree of impact the community experiences.

Additionally, perhaps as a result of the lack of expertise in the discipline of SIA, there is very little contrasting and comparing of similar developments and policies, which might serve to guide the social assessment process and/or inform the policy process (Lane et al., 2001; Taylor et al., 2001). While many impacts are individual to one community, many more are likely to be felt within any community undergoing the same developmental, policy, or landuse change. There is therefore, a great deal to be learnt from examining similar changes. However, Barrow (1997) suggests that the ‘looseness’ of the theoretical basis for SIA, and the inconsistencies frequently evident in methodology, means that it is difficult to compare successive case studies.

**Limited public participation**

The practice of SIA often places little value on public involvement. However, SIA as a process relies on substantial public involvement – the full extent of impacts on a community cannot be determined without engaging the community. Lane et al. (2001:6) argue, by involving the public throughout the entire SIA process it can be “informed by local knowledge; important value choice issues can be articulated; and the research can be made accountable and responsive to the local community”. However, the short time frame usually given to conduct SIA does not allow the appropriate level of public involvement. This raises an important question – how can we develop appropriate, adequate and equitable levels of public participation while keeping planning and decision-making processes to an acceptably efficient period of time?

There is a range of reasons why SIAs are usually conducted in a hurried manner – a lack of resources, and a tense political environment being perhaps the most significant. Typically, the role of the public is confined to commenting on draft proposals, via the

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quite limiting process of written submissions, with no built-in assurances that the submissions are actually considered (Harvey, 1996; Lane et al., 2001). The degree to which the public is involved in the decision-making process is very much at the discretion of the governing body.

There has been some attempt to more formally recognise the role of the public in the EIA and SIA processes. The Australian and New Zealand Conservation and Environment Council – the previous Ministerial Council – agreed to a set of principles for public involvement in the EIA process. Schedule three of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment, contains a provision for public involvement in the EIA process (Harvey, 1996):

“...opportunities will be provided for appropriate and adequate public consultation on environmental aspects of proposals before the assessment process is complete” (IAE, Schedule 3, section 3x).

However, the principles only identify public consultation, as opposed to participation or engagement. Additionally, the degree to which the various states and territories formally implement even a consultative role is highly variable (Harvey, 1996).

**Inequities in public participation**

Even assuming that policies and practices are developed to ensure the participation of the public generally, there will almost certainly remain inequities and inconsistencies between community sectors who differ in their ability to participate in the impact assessment process. It is likely therefore, that an assessment process will exclude those who are lacking the capacity to become involved. Minority groups for example, are frequently not included in SIAs very effectively (O’Faircheallaigh, 1999). Power is distributed unevenly within society and many community sectors, such as Indigenous people, lack the power to influence the policy process. As O’Faircheallaigh (1999:64) suggests when referring to Indigenous people’s involvement in SIA, if the minority group’s values and perspectives are in conflict with the “dominant social ethos”, they tend to be poorly identified and even more poorly managed. Interestingly, it also tends to be communities that are lacking in power which are the least likely to question a development or policy that will affect

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them and frequently the most likely to experience significant impact (Dugdale and West, 1991; Irvin and Stansbury, 2004; Sanders, 1997; Weber, 2000). As Rickson *et al.* (1988; 1990a) argue this is because they tend to be neither mobilised, and/or united enough to express conflict, nor do they have the necessary access to information and resources that would enable political opposition.

Alternatively, some argue that SIA focuses on marginal groups within communities, rather than representing the majority view (Taylor *et al.*, 2001). They are sometimes seen as the ‘voice’ of politically activated minority groups, whose interests are threatened by the development proposal. Some argue that the bulk of society reacts only to proposals they disagree with, implying that the majority are largely in support of the development proposal (Taylor *et al.*, 2001). Either way, inequities in public participation are almost inevitable.

**Many community voices**

Communities or community sectors are rarely united across all issues. Even within a single minority group there will be differences of opinion and varying values and attitudes. However, the broader public are often quite critical of minority groups who are not united — “If they can’t work it out amongst themselves then what are we supposed to do?” This makes it difficult for decision-makers to decide which ‘voice’ they will listen to.

**Local impact versus regional benefit**

There is a tendency for SIA to ignore ‘local’ impacts and focus only on regional impacts, particularly benefits. This issue was introduced in Chapter 3, which highlighted the difficulty of finding the most appropriate level of community to engage. Decisions are frequently made at a regional, state or national level, but implemented at a local level. Local communities are rarely identified as separate and distinguishable, with a genuine stake in the issues. This problem can present itself in a number of forms. First, it is difficult to identify and consider various community sectoral groups, such as agricultural, Indigenous, etc. Often within an identifiable
region there exist many sub-communities based on either geographic commonalities, or ‘communities of interest’. A further complexity is that even if these communities can be identified, to what degree should they be considered in the policy process? It can be difficult for governments to be sympathetic to what might be a small contingent of the population, when the benefits will be felt across a much broader spectrum (Howitt, 1993). The community landuse policy approach advocated in this thesis is strongly place-based, in an attempt to build consideration of the ‘local’ as well as the regional into landuse policy decisions.

**Power struggles**

The value judgements that governments must exercise when deciding which impacts to consider, gives weight to the argument that SIAs are merely a means for governments to control public dissent and participation in policy making, rather than a means of empowering communities (Rickson et al., 1988; Schnaiberg, 1980). SIAs are seen as a “symbolic gesture to environmental protest rather than signifying government commitment to environmental goals” (Rickson et al., 1988:3). Impact assessments can act to enhance the appearance of considered decision-making, without having any genuine influence over the decision-making process (Carter, 2001). This can effectively disarm hostile communities, by convincing them that their needs and concerns will be considered.

In contrast, as public participation and involvement in decision-making becomes mainstream, SIAs may simply become a means for communities to become empowered by inserting themselves into the policy process, rather than a genuine way to ensure best-outcome decisions. Howitt (1989) argues that some community-based SIAs have become a means of empowering communities over corporate or government agencies, making SIA more about power control than about reaching the best outcome. While empowerment of communities through the SIA process is a positive outcome, it should not be confused with other goals.

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**Politicisation of social impact assessment**

The struggle for power, whether it is by government or community, can have significant repercussions for community harmony. Communities that have lived in relative harmony may be thrust into discord, as individuals find themselves on opposite sides of a political debate (Freudenburg and Gramling, 1992). However, there is little scope within an SIA to measure the degree of social harm that may arise from debate and antagonism within the community in response to a policy or landuse change proposal. As Freudenburg and Gramling (1992) suggest, this is not helped by a common occurrence among project proponents to portray objectors as antagonists, or selfish to the overall public good. Alternatively, opponents often attempt to portray the proponents as corporate, capitalist ‘monsters’, with economic gains as their highest priority and the good of the community their lowest. These types of positions tend to pit community sectors against each other, achieving little in the quest to uncover potential social harm, and instead creating divisiveness and animosity.

This is perhaps the most difficult problem facing the practice of SIA – the excessive political use of SIA. While political approaches to SIA have a place in decision-making, there is a tendency to use SIAs as a policy or development advocacy process, rather than a process of identifying impacts – positive or negative. Therefore, social impact assessors often attempt to highlight the positives and ignore or hide the negatives (Lane and Dale, 1995; Lane et al., 2001). This problem may have arisen because of the need for consulting firms to maintain positive relationships with the development or policy proponents to ensure future contracts (Lindenmayer and Gibbons, 2004). Additionally, pressure is often placed on policy-makers to approve development projects where economic gains are significant (Formby, 1986, 1988).

**Perception versus reality**

A problem with SIA that will be a recurrent theme throughout this thesis is the perception versus reality dilemma. While communities must be involved in decision-making to ensure that landuse change does not detract from their long-term sustainability, it is also important that community perceptions of impacts are weighed against objectively assessed, likely impacts – community perceptions can be biased or
ill-informed (Burdge and Vanclay, 1995). Impacts that communities predict may be borne from hysteria, poor information, or an irrational resistance to change. Conversely, ‘experts’ often underestimate impacts, overestimate benefits, or simply ‘get it wrong’. It is, therefore difficult to determine the reality of a perceived impact. Managers may have to manage for perceptions that may not actually be likely. This poses a question that will be asked throughout this thesis – to what degree should government agencies manage for perceptions versus what they might believe to be the reality?

Because of all of these problems SIAs are rarely effectively integrated into the policy process (Lane et al., 2001; Taylor, et al., 2001). Even when SIAs are conducted, the results are unlikely to significantly affect the decision-making process. It is rare for a development application to be rejected purely on social impact grounds, or for fundamental changes to be made to the development outcomes (Cox, 2001; Fisher, 2001; Taylor et al., 2001).

In practice, it would seem that SIA is unlikely to meet the community needs that it is designed to address: for community values to be understood, and for potential impacts to be identified and mitigated (or promoted) wherever possible. The difficulty of predicting impacts, the immeasurability of many social impacts, the spatial and temporal isolation of SIAs, and the regional or national benefits that are often achieved at the expense of local communities, mean that impacts are often not fully identified. Even when they are identified, techniques to mitigate these are often not attempted. Moreover, limited and inequitable public participation, poor legislative standing of SIA, many and varied community voices, government reluctance to invest in SIA, power struggles and the politicisation of SIA, have often meant that community values and expectations go unnoticed. SIA becomes an exercise in identifying impacts with little genuine intention to alter practices (Howitt, 1989). So, is SIA a useful ‘tool’ for the introduction of landuse change? I would argue that despite these inherent problems SIA has enjoyed some success, and that this success can be increased by the implementation of some changes to SIA practice.

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Successes in social impact assessment development

Despite the inherent problems with the practice of SIA, some advances with SIA have been achieved in recent years as governments more fully realise the importance of involving and working with communities. Rakowski (1995) argues that the success of SIA should not just be evaluated against its ability to re-direct decision-making, but also against its ability to generate debate and raise consciousness within the community. While changes may not be made to the development or policy proposal as a result of an SIA, this does not mean it has not been successful in raising community awareness, or creating a more united community. This can have long-term benefits as communities are more galvanised to participate in future decisions. The following is a number of ways that SIA is increasing its influence in Australia in respect of political and methodological advances:

- Commonwealth and state agencies have developed capacities for SIA responsibilities. The Bureau of Rural Sciences at the Commonwealth level has increased the staffing and funding of its social sciences division considerably in recent years, while most of the state and territory governments now have social assessment units established to work with community groups and project developers to best meet their needs (Coakes and Fenton, 2001);
- The introduction of community consultation, capacity building and social and economic units into many government agencies across a spectrum of responsibilities, indicates an increasing recognition of the importance of social factors among senior management in government agencies (Coakes and Fenton, 2001);
- There is an increasing body of practitioners, technical guidelines, and improved methodologies, in respect of SIA (Coakes and Fenton, 2001);
- A growing literature on SIA is allowing communities to be better considered in the natural resource management process, as awareness is increasing across government, academics and community as to the potential benefits of a well-conducted SIA process (Coakes and Fenton, 2001);
- There are many pieces of Commonwealth and State legislation acknowledging the human and social dimensions of the term ‘environment’ (Cox et al., 2001; Stein, 2000);
• There is a slowly growing body of case studies where community groups have successfully used SIA to change policy directions, or negotiate mitigation techniques (Coakes and Fenton, 2001); and

• Commonwealth and State governments are attempting to embed consideration of social and economic issues into regional NRM decision-making, by making it a condition of accessing funds through NHTII and NAPSWQ.

Such advances in the SIA field mean that the strengths and abilities of practitioners are growing substantially, and that it is likely to be a prominent and highly useful tool in the future. However, there is a range of changes particularly to methodology, which need to be made. Moreover, SIA needs to be entrenched in the decision-making process (Fisher, 2001; Taylor et al., 2001). The following section will explore some recommendations to improve the practice of SIA, and help it to achieve its potential in meeting community needs for policy-driven landuse change.

Recommendations to maximise the benefits of social impact assessment

Changes can be made to SIA methodology to embed it more solidly in legislation and in decision-making processes. The following are some recommendations for the broad practice of SIA that have emerged from the literature review and the case studies explored in Chapters 8 and 9. These recommendations aim to maximise the potential benefits and help SIA to achieve its potential to clearly identify community values and expectations for policy-driven landuse change, and to identify impacts of landuse change proposals to mitigate or promote these – community needs 1 and 2.

Increase resources

As discussed previously, SIA practitioners are frequently under-resourced. While it would be difficult to legislate for increased resources dedicated to SIA, governments can raise obligations of project proponents to identify and address social impacts. When introducing landuse change government agencies have a responsibility to dedicate an appropriate level of resources to engage with relevant stakeholders, and to
adequately explore community values and expectations (Ross and Lane, 2001). While resource needs differ, a guiding principle is to provide sufficient resources to conduct a strategic public engagement process, allowing additional resources for engagement of isolated stakeholders. The engagement process should be funded from the conception of the proposal until its introduction, through to ongoing management and monitoring. Efforts to mitigate or promote particular impacts should not be funded by the impact assessment process, as these should be incorporated into project implementation (Lindenmayer and Gibbons, 2004).

**Increase technical capacity**

The capacity of both practitioners and government staff to understand SIA and to incorporate its findings into decision-making, needs to be enhanced by improving and widening the training of practitioners and establishing a network of links with academics and other experts (BBC Consulting Planners, n.d.; Lane et al., 2001).

The capacity of government staff to understand social assessment methodology needs to be addressed. While they are rarely responsible for the actual SIA process, they issue guidelines for proposal proponents and also may be responsible for evaluating completed assessments and providing recommendations (Ross and Lane, 2001). Because of the significant role that government staff play in the impact assessment procedure, it is essential that they are well trained in social assessment methodology and possess an understanding of the importance of identifying social impacts.

**Improve methodology**

While the consistency of SIA methodology needs to be increased and socially appropriate, it should remain flexible to enable adaptation of different techniques to different contexts. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques should be encouraged to deal with the subjectivity and place-specific nature of local knowledge (Scott et al., 2001).
SIA methodologies and research priorities need to be consistent with the communities they are attempting to ‘assess’. Indigenous communities in particular are concerned that their priorities are often ignored in favour of government or research organisation priorities (Ross, 1990; O’Faircheallaigh, 1999). Ross (1990) suggests that we need an emphasis in SIA on community control and community values and perspectives, embedding SIA in a social and cultural context. She argues that we need methodologies with which Indigenous communities are comfortable. This same argument can be applied to all communities: methodologies must be culturally and socially appropriate, while also appropriate to the proposal and available data.

**Consider the ‘social’**

Social issues should be considered on a level equal to economic and environmental issues (Burde and Vanclay, 1995). Freudenburg (1986:469) suggests that SIA needs to be more closely focused on sociological variables, instead of “allowing the analysis to be guided by data availability, political pressures, or whatever ‘laundry lists’ of potential impacts happen to be available”. There needs to be a commonly accepted framework for the sort of sociological data which an acceptable SIA should be comprised of, with general definitions and scope for perhaps the most important variable, ‘quality of life’ (Freudenburg, 1986).

**Increase public participation**

Public participation must be a central component of SIA. To achieve increased participation, publicity of SIA processes must be widespread (Formby, 1986, 1988; Harvey, 1996). Institutions need to reform the way that they operate and interact with communities (Lane et al., 2001). Some progress has been made towards this by the growth in bottom-up decision-making, and the increasing involvement of communities in such fora as the Landcare movement, however this is not institutionally entrenched.

Relevant sectors of the community must be accounted for and engaged throughout the SIA process, by resourcing and empowering all sectors to participate (Burde, 2001; Formby, 1986; Lane, 1997; Lane and Dale, 1995; Lane et al., 2001). By involving the

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public in SIA community concerns can be incorporated into the foundations of the landuse change (Harvey, 1996). If public opinion is sought early in the process – during the scoping phase – the guidelines for the SIA can be developed with community concerns in mind. Therefore, the level of local resistance to the proposal can be determined and the proposal altered accordingly (Harvey, 1996). As a consequence, the public feels informed and listened to, as their concerns have already been addressed before the proposal reaches the final stages (Shantz, 2001). Landuse change decisions can be made based on community needs and values; a core principle of the community landuse policy. Chapter 5 will explore public participation in more detail.

**Improve public understanding of the proposal**

Improving public understanding of a proposal should be a key objective of a public engagement strategy. For people to accurately identify potential impacts on their values, they must have an understanding of the proposal. By improving community knowledge of the planning and development process, participation can be increased (Lane and Dale, 1995). This in turn can increase a community’s ability to operate in the frequently politicised domain associated with development, planning and decision-making. Including substantial education campaigns in the assessment process can work to ensure that miscommunications and community misunderstandings are avoided, so that the SIA process is not overtaken by ill-conceived perceptions (Rickson et al., 1990a).

Practitioners and communities also must recognise that there is unlikely to be an absolute outcome for the whole community – “this development will benefit the community” or “this development will disadvantage the community” – instead recognising that different sectors of the community, and indeed individuals within these sectors, will experience the change in different ways.

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Consider cumulative impacts

SIA needs to be conducted with consideration of other developments in the region that might have a cumulative effect (Barrow, 1997; McDonald and Brown, 1995). It is also necessary to place a proposed policy or development change in the context of the community’s history, as impacts accumulate over a long period of time (Ross, 1990; Taylor et al., 1990). Not only does a community that has experienced a long history of disturbance have far less capacity to deal with further change than a relatively undisturbed community, but also the impacts are likely to be more intense as they are combined with previous changes (Ross, 1990). As Ross (1990:192) suggests, "it is the nature of human experience that makes an occurrence an impact and shapes the way a community responds. Impact analyses are likely to be wide of the mark if they discount the impacted people’s values, social dynamics and beliefs about events".

Rickson et al. (1990b) argue that applying assessment procedures over time allows the identification of cumulative impacts and impact thresholds. Finsterbusch (1985) notes that this has the added advantage of contributing to our knowledge of impacts, thereby helping future SIAs predict potential impacts.

Entrench monitoring of impacts into SIA process

At present there is little monitoring of social impacts after the approval of a proposal, and hence, diminished capacity to manage longer-term impacts. There is also little attempt to develop an accumulated body of knowledge regarding impacts (Freudenburg and Gramling, 1992; Rickson et al., 1990a). Freudenburg and Gramling (1992) and Lugg (1996) suggest that this requires a longitudinal approach to SIAs, with studies lasting over several years or more. While this is ideal in theory, it leaves very little room for the reality of the political environment that SIAs are usually commissioned in – an environment that requires a rapid assessment with recommendations to proceed, or not, with a particular proposal. Perhaps more important (and achievable) than a longitudinal approach to SIA is entrenched monitoring and evaluation of impacts post implementation of the landuse change. This can go some way to addressing the spatial and temporal isolation of SIAs. Institutionally accepted, and perhaps legislatively enforced, post-assessment

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monitoring programs of approved developments should be implemented (BBC Consulting Planners, n.d.). Whether this becomes the responsibility of the proponents or an independent body should be the subject of further discussion.

**Consider local impacts**

Given the problem identified earlier that local communities often bear the cost of wider society benefits, there needs to be an increased attempt to identify and involve local or sub-communities in the SIA process. This places a greater responsibility on the project or landuse change proponents to immerse themselves in local community politics, be they geographic communities or communities of interest. While stakeholder identification is a standard component of SIA, it requires a dedicated process to identify local or sub-communities to ensure that their interests and values are protected.

**Increase the statutory requirements for social impact assessment**

To ensure that SIAs are conducted, the statutory requirement to include them needs to be increased (Burdge, 2001), by either legislating for them as an independent process, or by raising their profile within the EIA process. Particularly if the latter approach is taken, the term ‘environment’ needs to be clearly defined in the legislation to more definitively include social impacts (BBC Consulting Planners, n.d.). This would require the consideration of an SIA regardless of whether environmental impacts were expected.

There is some argument around the proposition that an independent body is needed to conduct impact assessments – a body which does not benefit or lose from a development’s acceptance or rejection (Coopers and Lybrand, 1994). This would, arguably, remove inherent biases in the system.

The social impact statement could have a mandatory requirement to address the question of whether the social impacts, or their cumulative impact with other developments or policies, warrant the vetoing of a proposal (Howitt, 1993). At
present, SIAs are rarely considered in decision-making, and are very rarely the impetus for the rejection of a proposal. By including a statement within an SIA as to whether impacts are significant enough to warrant a veto, it places responsibility on the SIA practitioner to acknowledge the significance of the impacts, and then on the government to consider the recommendation (Howitt, 1993).

**Fully integrate social impact assessment into the planning process**

SIA needs to be fully integrated into the planning process at the appropriate level of jurisdiction to ensure that social factors become central to decision-making (Burdge and Vanclay, 1995; Fisher, 2001; Taylor et al., 2001). Impact assessments generally, are not bound tightly enough with the planning process, thereby contributing very little to long-term planning. Even when there is a clear requirement to conduct an impact assessment, there is little requirement for its findings to be included in the policy and planning process. As McDonald and Brown (1995:485) argue, in respect to (environmental) impact assessments: “The requirement is that it is done rather than anything be done about it”. There should, therefore, be a statutory requirement to provide evidence of how an SIA has informed the planning process, and importantly how the proponents have responded to anticipated impacts.

The Interorganisational Committee on Guidelines and Principles for SIA (1994 cited in Burdge and Vanclay, 1995) has developed a series of nine principles to guide social impact assessors and increase the value of SIAs. These principles in summary are:

1. Involve the diverse public – identify and involve all groups within the community who may be affected by the proposal;
2. Analyse impact equity – clearly identify which stakeholders will benefit, which will lose, and those groups who are not sufficiently empowered to ‘fight the battle’;
3. Focus the assessment – deal with the impacts which are most significant not just the ones that are easiest to quantify;
4. Identify methods and assumptions, and define significance in advance – make the methods and assumptions publicly available;

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*Chapter 4: Social impact assessment: Identifying the potential community impacts of policy-driven landuse change*
5. Provide feedback on social impacts to decision-makers. Identify potential mitigation strategies;
6. Use qualified SIA practitioners;
7. Establish on-going monitoring and mitigation programs in advance;
8. Use a variety of data sources – primary data and secondary data. Also use comparable case studies; and
9. Plan for gaps in data – as discussed previously, it is not likely to be possible to gather all of the information to determine the full extent of impacts, therefore it is necessary to make decisions based on an incomplete ‘story’. This should be acknowledged, and appropriately planned for.

These principles support the recommendations made above. It is therefore imperative that changes are made to the practice of SIA to ensure that it can be a useful tool for the introduction of landuse change.

**SUMMARY**

Social impact assessment is a ‘tool’ that governments can use to help avoid, reduce or manage the impacts that a community may experience, before, during and after a landuse or policy change. SIA can help communities to achieve sustainability across the triple-bottom-line by embedding consideration of the ‘social’ into decision-making. Despite its flaws, the potential of SIA to identify impacts that might arise from a proposed change and develop mitigation techniques, is significant. Its success relies on methodological improvements, more status and recognition within legislation and by government agencies, and changes to SIA practice. Further, as a tool on its own, success is limited. While the process of SIA does include public participation, the extent of this in practice is minimal. Additionally, there is no scope within the SIA process to build on the capacity of communities to cope with change – only to measure potential impacts. When SIA is combined with an ongoing participative process, with informed and active communities, and with efforts to enhance the community’s social capital, its full potential might be realised. The success of impact mitigation strategies can be enhanced by policies to increase community capacity to cope with change – to build and enhance social capital (Chapter 6).
This chapter has argued that social impact assessment can meet two of the six basic conditions that can help communities cope with introduced landuse change, namely:

1. Community values and expectations for their social and economic future to be understood by policy makers.

2. The impacts of the landuse change to be identified and mitigated (or enhanced) wherever possible to promote or protect economic prosperity, social systems (including their sense of place, identity and heritage), and ecological integrity.

The following chapter will examine the usefulness of public participation to promote an understanding of the landuse change, and to allow communities to contribute to decision-making (needs 3 and 4).

**Chapter 4: Social impact assessment: Identifying the potential community impacts of policy-driven landuse change**
Chapter 5
Public Participation: Involving communities in policy-driven landuse change decisions

INTRODUCTION
There is a growing awareness that public input into decision-making surrounding landuse change can improve outcomes and enhance the performance of government agencies. Policy makers have also begun to recognise that ordinary people have a basic right to be involved in decision-making processes (Appelstrand, 2002; Johnston and Buckley, 2001; Scott et al., 2001). Moreover, for landuse change to be successfully introduced it requires the participation of those individuals and communities whose decisions and activities will affect the introduced landuse (Mock et al., 2003).

Arguably, public participation improves planning and management of resources by including local knowledge, values and interests\(^{19}\), while potentially increasing the likelihood of a socially just and democratic outcome (Petts, 2004). A more equitable and socially just decision should help increase consideration of community values, thereby reducing conflict (Hunt and Haider, 2001; James, 1991). Public confidence and trust in the end-decision (and the government agency) may therefore increase, lending legitimacy\(^{20}\) to the end decision (Petts, 2004). The contribution that public participation makes to the maintenance of sustainable communities is acknowledged by its consistent inclusion in principles of ecologically sustainable development, such as the Australian Government’s National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development, and legislation such as the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

\(^{19}\) The terms \textit{values} and \textit{interests} are often confused. ‘Values’ tends to be an all-encompassing term, referring to all factors that might be valued by various community sectors (Petts, 2004). This tends to lose the distinction between stakeholders with interests, and those who hold specific values. ‘Values’ for the purpose of this thesis refers to “people’s beliefs, attitudes or worldviews” (Petts, 2004:116), while ‘interests’ refers to financial and regulatory concerns.

\(^{20}\) A \textit{legitimate} decision is one that is accepted and approved by the public. Deliberative democratic theorists argue that legitimacy can only be reached by the free and unconstrained deliberation of the public across all spheres of society, on matters of public relevance (Benhabib, 1996; Cohen 1989; Dryzek, 2001).
The previous chapter examined social impact assessment (SIA) as a ‘tool’ to identify potential social impacts of policy or land use change. Due to misunderstandings of the complexity of SIA and its many components, public participation is frequently confused with SIA. Public participation in planning and development does not in itself equate to an SIA; it is merely one component of the overall SIA process, and is often conducted separate to an SIA process (James, 1991; Montgomery, 1983).

This chapter will argue that a two-way public engagement process can help meet two of the six basic conditions that can help communities cope with introduced land use change, namely for.

3. A knowledge and understanding of the land use change, how it might affect them and how it can benefit them (community learning).

4. Opportunities to have their say, express their concerns, and share in the decision-making process.

A genuine participatory process allows the community to express their own concerns and needs, while also allowing the transfer of information between the government agency and the community. This is a core component of the community land use policy approach. Public participation also helps identify community values and expectations – the first condition for meeting the needs of a community when introducing land use change (discussed in Chapter 4). Public participation is also a core management philosophy advocated by this thesis to contribute to socially and economically sustainable communities.

This chapter will explore and compare the concepts of public consultation, public participation and public engagement. The advantages of involving the public in decision-making surrounding land use change will be discussed, as will the challenges of involving the public and the reasons for its neglect. It will conclude with a discussion of methods to move towards genuine participation in land use decisions, and ultimately, to achieve socially just decisions that reflect community values and interests.

Chapter 5: Public Participation: Involving communities in policy-driven land use change decisions
WHAT IS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION?

"Public participation is a two-way process of communication between planners and the community which promotes the exchange of information and ideas and encourages problem-solving and the resolution of conflict in order to produce plans and policies which are acceptable to the community and which can be effectively implemented" (Dugdale and West, 1991:454).

The terms public involvement, public consultation, public participation, and public engagement, are often used interchangeably. However, these terms have fundamental differences. Public involvement is an overarching process, referring to the inclusion of the public in the policy development process through participation, consultation or engagement (Roberts, 2003).

Consultation is one type of public involvement process, where opinions, values and interests are sought from another party (Aslin and Brown, 2002, 2004; Buchy et al., 1999). Consultation includes education and information sharing (Roberts, 2003). Often consultation only extends to informing the community about a decision which has already been made and is essentially used to convince the public to accept a predetermined outcome (Roberts, 2003). It is used by government agencies to provide information to the public and to gain some insight into how the community are likely to respond to an already established outcome. Consultation rarely involves mutual learning (Tabbush, 2004).

Participation implies a more active role for the public than consultation. It brings the public into the decision-making process through joint planning and public control, and should ensure that all sectors of society have the opportunity to participate. However, if they choose not to, their interests should still be protected (Roberts, 1995).

Engagement involves a diverse range of people working together for a common purpose, not just participating in a decision-making process, but also actively committing themselves to achieving the best outcome (Aslin and Brown, 2004). Genuinely engaging a community is much less within the control of government agencies. Whether a community is engaged depends not only on the government agency being committed to achieving a participatory process, but a public that is interested or concerned enough about the issues to commit themselves to resolving
conflicts: “It is possible that people may be consulted, participate and even be involved, but not be engaged” (Aslin and Brown, 2004:5). Public engagement is therefore a collaborative activity (Tabbush, 2004).

The distance between community consultation and genuine participation or engagement is significant. In 1969 Arnstein proposed a now classic ‘ladder of participation’ (Figure 5.1), illustrating the degrees to which the community can be involved in decision-making.

**Figure 5.1: Arnstein’s ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969)**

In Arnstein’s model, the bottom three steps, while on the gradual movement towards genuine participation, are generally not considered participative, while the final step on the ladder involves a categorical transfer of power to the public (Bishop and Davis, 2002; Claridge, 1997). While arguably a provocative illustration of public involvement in its various forms, the fundamental argument underlying the ladder is simple: there are significant gradations of public involvement along a continuum, and most grades will not result in genuine engagement (Arnstein 1969; Bishop and Davis, 2002). These various levels have different outcomes for community empowerment.  

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21 For the purpose of this thesis: “Empowerment is a long-term process in which people’s sense of personal efficacy and self esteem become strong enough for their successful participation in, share in the control of, and influence over, events and institutions which affect their lives. This is achieved by the acquisition of skills in a supportive environment” (Claridge, 1997:6).
(Konisky and Beierle, 2001). Aslin and Brown (2002) have developed a similar model, which demonstrates progression through the various stages of public involvement, culminating in engagement (Figure 5.2).

**Figure 5.2: The stages of public involvement (Aslin and Brown, 2002)**

![Diagram showing the stages of public involvement](image)

Johnston and Buckley (2001) have proposed a further variation on Arnstein’s ladder, shown in Table 5.1, which demonstrates the link between the degree of community involvement sought, and the level of involvement where this would be achieved.

**Table 5.1: Levels of community involvement in decision-making (Johnston and Buckley, 2001)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of involvement in decision-making</th>
<th>Influence of the community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate</td>
<td>Jointly agreeing to the decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interact</td>
<td>Having an influence over the decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to and advise</td>
<td>Being heard before the decision is made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform</td>
<td>Knowledge about the decision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most of the steps in all three ladders reflect only tokenistic involvement, without genuine participation. Johnston and Buckley (2001) argue that the highest aspirations of such ladders are unrealistic, and that public participation as initiated by government agencies is never likely to extend beyond ‘partnership’, ‘delegation’, or ‘interaction’. Tabbush (2004) supports this further, arguing that power is unlikely to ever be surrendered to the public, making the final step in Arnstein’s ladder a utopian vision. Instead, Tabbush (2004) argues that a more realistic aim is to ensure that all community interests are included, with or without active participation.

Arnstein’s ladder implies that only some forms of participation are valid. However, it is more realistic to suggest that each of the various levels of public involvement is appropriate in different circumstances. As stated by Bishop and Davis (2002:18), “...if policy problems are fundamentally different in character, then participation types too would be separate and discontinuous”. There are certainly occasions when collaboration and citizen control are not necessary, and providing information is adequate. Dovers (2005) suggests that three factors limit the degree to which the public can be engaged: first, broader public needs may require a central authority to balance local perspectives; second, time and resource constraints may exist; and finally, demands on individuals and communities limit the degree to which they can participate in engagement processes.

While Thomas (1990) supports the idea of a continuum of involvement, he is more open than Arnstein to the legitimacy of the lower rungs of the ladder. The key to establishing a representative decision-making process that aims to avoid conflict and create equity lies in understanding the degree of public involvement that is appropriate and necessary for each situation. This can only be decided on a case-by-case basis, and is essentially achieved by examining the likelihood and degree of impact that a decision may have on a community, sector of a community, or individuals. It will be argued, therefore, that the success of a public engagement process for landuse change should not be gauged by how far along the Arnstein ladder it falls, but whether it achieves a socially just and environmentally sound outcome at the appropriate scale of community. Public involvement should be strategic, with the degree of involvement

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22 The issue of local impacts versus wider social benefits has been explored in chapters 3 and 4 and will be further examined later in this chapter

Chapter 5: Public Participation: Involving communities in policy-driven landuse change decisions
sought, dependent on the issue at hand (Petts, 2004; Thomas, 1990). “Participation is not an absolute virtue, only an appropriate response in particular circumstances” (Bishop and Davis, 2002:19).

**INCREASING SOCIAL JUSTICE BY ENGAGING COMMUNITIES**

Involving the public in decision-making surrounding landuse change benefits both the public and the government agency pursuing the change. There are three basic rationales for involving the public in decision-making – *policy acceptance, policy improvement, and building ethical policy.*

**Policy acceptance**

The *policy acceptance* rationale is that by involving the public in the decision-making process it will lead to a more efficient introduction of landuse change, with public acceptance of the outcomes more likely (Roberts, 1995). If the public is ignored in the decision-making process, then a significant amount of time and resources may be directed toward a result that may be neither supported or valued by the community expected to implement or live with it (Henton *et al.*, 2001). In this scenario public involvement is intended to be a soothing process, helping the community towards an inevitable outcome. Bruns (2003) and Connor (1997) refer to this as the DAD process – Decide-Announce-Defend – or as Roseland (2000) terms it, the DEAD process – Decide-Educate-Announce-Defend. A genuine public participation process however, provides the government an opportunity to explain the rationale for a proposed landuse change, forcing agencies to be accountable to the community (Burdge and Vanclay, 1995; Curtis and Lockwood, 2000; Irvin and Stansbury, 2004; Johnston and Buckley, 2001; Laurian, 2004; NSW OSP, 1993; Roberts, 1995).

By engaging communities in decision-making a government agency is also able to identify those sectors or stakeholders who are likely to be hostile, ultimately learning whether proposed landuse changes are likely to be received poorly and might best be avoided (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004). If the public is not widely involved in a decision-making process surrounding landuse change, then affected parties may not know about the proposal or the effects it may have on their lives. As a result, the community may

*Chapter 5: Public Participation: Involving communities in policy-driven landuse change decisions*
become antagonistic to the government agency, and landuse changes may get unnecessarily delayed for long periods (Cox and Miers, 1995). Public participation, therefore, can decrease the level of conflict surrounding a decision such as a landuse change. By sharing experiences and viewpoints in a neutral and non-threatening environment, it can help conflicting groups come to some understanding of opposing rationales and worldviews (Allen, 1996; Allen et al., 1998; Halvorsen, 2003). As Halvorsen (2003) suggests, once citizens understand the rationale for a proposed landuse change, they may become more sympathetic to agency decisions. Particularly, participatory approaches allow the public to share their concerns and potentially resolve problems even before those problems eventuate (Burdge and Vanclay, 1995). Public participation, therefore, provides a means to reach a consensus in the community regarding a landuse change proposal, lending legitimacy to the planning exercise (Stave, 2002). The introduced change becomes more sustainable by increasing community commitment (Cox and Miers, 1995; Manikutty, 1998).

**Policy improvement**

The *policy improvement* rationale is that involving the public will lead to better designed policies and more successful landuse change. As Renn et al. (1993) argue, the public as a collective is generally capable of making wise decisions. Public input is not only strategically necessary to gain acceptance but also necessary to make the ‘right’ decisions. Public participation allows people to play a direct and active role in decision-making surrounding landuse change, building capacity and redistributing power, while clarifying facts and values that will help the decision-making process (Finsterbusch and Van Wicklin, 1987; Hyman et al., 1988; Manikutty, 1998). The answer, therefore, lies in a collaborative approach to decision-making, accommodating multiple perspectives and utilising multiple sources of information (Allen and Kilvington, 1999; Appelstrand, 2002).

Involving the public in landuse change decisions allows government to access and use community knowledge and innovative ideas in developing policy and landuse

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23 *Community knowledge* refers to “information and understanding about the state of the biophysical and social environments that has been acquired by the people of a community which hosts (or will host) a particular project or programme” (Baines et al., 2003: np).
changes. The public contributes to the management of the resource or the development of better policy (Brody et al., 2003; Carter et al., 2005; Curtis and Lockwood, 2000; Dugdale and West, 1991; Irvin and Stansbury, 2004; Johnston and Buckley, 2001; Laurian, 2004; Montgomery, 1983). Good decision-making relies on extensive knowledge and understanding of the social, economic and physical environment within which the landuse change will occur. It therefore seems logical that by involving the public the quality of the information available to decision makers is improved, increasing the likelihood of a ‘best-fit’ landuse being selected – one that fits a community environmentally, economically and socially (Allen and Kilvington, 1999): The policy improvement rationale suggests that involving the public will lead to landuse decisions which are more considerate of the people they will affect, and more likely to achieve the intended outcomes – a community who invests time into designing a landuse decision is much more likely to cooperate in its introduction and ongoing maintenance (Allen and Kilvington, 1999; Carter et al., 2005; Dugdale and West, 1991; Roberts, 1995).

Alternatively, Thomas (1993) argues that involving the public may entail a trade-off between increased public acceptability of the outcome and the quality of the decision made, suggesting that public involvement detracts from the quality of the outcome. However, work done by Beierle (2002) examining 239 case studies, found that including the public in the decision-making process enhances the quality of environmental decisions. Moreover, Beierle argues that the more intensive the participation process, the better the outcome. In addition to improved decision-making, involving the public increases community knowledge and understanding of environmental issues, potentially transforming participants’ beliefs (Halvorsen, 2003). Public participation therefore, contributes to building community capacity (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004).

Even when considering the costs involved with engaging the public – both for the community and the landuse change proponents – public participation can save time, effort and money, by avoiding lengthy community disputes (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004). Opponents are also able to contribute their own skills and considerable community resources. This provides significant incentive for governments to involve
communities in landuse change decisions, potentially increasing their commitment to protecting and enhancing sustainable communities.

Even if conflicts cannot be resolved, if the public participation process was conducted in a non-confrontational manner it may result in an improved rapport between the community and government agencies, potentially building a co-operative, problem-solving relationship that can be carried to other arenas (Beierle and Konisky, 2000; Buchy et al., 1999). Public participation builds mutual ownership of a problem, increasing a community's sense of responsibility. This may lead to a more committed and trusting community, assuming more responsibility for improved decisions and improved outcomes (Brody et al., 2003; Burby, 2003; Campbell, 1991; Laurian, 2004). As communities and regions become more diverse and issues more complex, no single community or government sector can solve regional problems, or affect representative change by itself (Henton et al., 2001). The entire community therefore, has a role to play in regional planning, introducing landuse change, or developing workable community policies.

In the arena of nature conservation and landscape management, communities are vital stakeholders, determining as they do "the state of the environment every day by the accumulation of their small decisions" (O'Brien, 1995:209). Indeed, the emergence of the Landcare program and more recently Commonwealth and State government commitments to regional arrangements for natural resource management, are acknowledgements that communities have an essential role to play in landuse decisions (Martin et al., 1992). Both the policy acceptance and policy improvement rationales are pragmatic, recognising that the success of a policy, program or landuse change frequently relies on community acceptance and/or involvement.

**Increasing social justice**

Finally, and arguably most importantly, public participation increases the likelihood of social and environmental justice by building ethical policies surrounding land use change. As Syme and Nancarrow (2001) suggest, natural resource management is increasingly concerned with the allocation of resources, and it is an unfortunate reality that environmental costs often fall to poorer nations or socio-economic groups in

*Chapter 5: Public Participation: Involving communities in policy-driven landuse change decisions*
society, while the benefits are accrued elsewhere. Social justice literature is concerned with providing guidance for policy formulation and its implementation, which has, in the past, been neglected by policy-makers (Syme and Nancarrow, 2001). Genuine public engagement is one procedure for increasing the likelihood of a socially just outcome. Public participation involves the pursuit of a representation of all values and ethics held within a community (Perglut, 1986, cited in Johnston and Buckley, 2001). By providing the public with a genuine opportunity to contribute to policy decisions, the likelihood of those decisions being fair, just and considerate of community values increases, thereby creating an ethical policy process and potentially, an ethical social outcome (Hampton, 1999).

There is a growing expectation that communities and their members have a basic right to participate in decisions about changes that may affect them, such as landuse change (Appelstrand, 2002; NSW OSP, 1993; Taylor et al., 1990). As Davies (2001:80) suggests, a failure to engage the community may not lead to an “impoverished decision”, but it does mean that the diversity of views will go unacknowledged, denying the opportunity for community values to exert authority and influence over decisions. Involving the public in decisions surrounding landuse change provides an opportunity for communities to exert their own values, and to retain some degree of control over their environment. Given the established value of ‘place’ in defining a community and individual’s identity (Chapter 3), allowing communities to engage with landuse decisions will go some way to protecting a community’s sense of place. As such, embedding public participation within a place-based management framework is an important component of the community landuse policy approach.

Communities are increasingly expectant of social justice in landuse change decisions, and are beginning to realise that this is only likely to be achieved if they become actively involved and expressive of their own values and interests. Cooperative, transparent and participatory decision-making is more likely to achieve socially just and sustainable decisions than those made in a closed and adversarial environment (Beierle and Konisky, 2000). By ensuring that all sectors of the community are involved, there is some ability to redress social injustices that frequently occur in highly politicised decision-making environments, such as landuse change (Taylor et al., 1990). Providing a community with the opportunity to convey their values and

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opinions in a non-confrontational environment increases their legitimacy as political players (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004). A decision-making process that embraces public participation therefore, gives communities an opportunity to actively contribute to the direction of their community, enhancing social capital and political empowerment (Buchy and Race, 2001; Laurian, 2004; Taylor et al., 1990). Indeed, Syme et al. (1999) concluded from the findings of four case studies relating to water allocation, that the involvement of local people in decision-making is one of the most significant determinants of peoples’ perceptions of the fairness of a decision; more significant than economic considerations. This demonstrates the value that communities place on becoming involved in landuse policies.

Mascarenhas and Scarce (2004) suggest that involving the public in decision-making legitimates the end decisions. People expect transparency, openness and fundamentally democratic processes, with a representative outcome. The most effective means to provide this is to harness the contribution of the public as legitimate and knowledgeable stakeholders, leading to a more transparent and targeted landuse change decision (Appelstrand, 2002; Barnes et al., 2004; Guthrie, 2003; Halvorsen, 2003).

Arguably, in a representative democracy active citizen participation should not be necessary, as the purpose of a representative democracy is to avoid the complex and lengthy process of public engagement by electing representatives to make decisions on behalf of the public (Roberts, 1995). However, questions are raised as to whether elected officials represent the public for the purposes of all decision-making, given that a bare majority may have elected them.

Further, elected representatives can only act for the community if they are fully informed as to what the community wants. The complexity of many resource and landuse issues means that elected representatives are increasingly confronted with the dilemma of whose interests to represent (McCool and Guthrie, 2001). This is further complicated by the emergence of new issues for which the elected representative has little grasp of their constituents’ views. State agencies and their planning staff are also often pursuing quite different interests to those held by the community. This is certainly evident in natural resource agencies given the objective of nature

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conservation or resource management. This agenda may conflict with other societal values and interests, meaning that public values may not automatically be considered in the course of decision-making. Many land use and development decisions are made outside of the political system, by government bureaucracies, by developers, and by the judicial systems – none of which are elected (Akkerman et al., 2004).

Moreover, the public is becoming increasingly dissatisfied with allowing others to speak for them, whether through an elected representative or a representative lobby group (Bishop and Davis, 2002). The assumption that public interests can be aggregated into one voice no longer holds up. Instead, people are beginning to demand more participatory democracies, or collaborative governances (Bishop and Davis, 2002; Newman et al., 2004; Painter, 1992). “We face a participatory dilemma in which peoples’ expectations about their capacity to influence decisions are not matched by political and institutional realities” (Fiorino, 1989:501 cited in Tabbush, 2004:147). Representative democracy is therefore, an insufficient means of bringing the public and governing institutions together (Newman et al., 2004).

Deliberative democratic theory is an attempt to overcome the deficiencies inherent in representative democracy. Deliberative democracy is a process where citizens contribute to policy decisions based on informed deliberation; decision-making arises from reasoned public discussion among equals (Hendriks, 2002). Deliberative democracy usually involves some degree of trade-off between consensus decision-making and representative democracies. Deliberative democracy advocates argue that representative democracies are vastly inadequate at capturing public needs and expectations, and that legitimate decision-making arises from genuine public deliberation (Manin, 1987; Sanders, 1997). It is argued, that by increasing the public’s understanding of issues surrounding decision-making, it will increase the likelihood of reaching rational alternatives and developing legitimate decisions. A deliberative democracy first requires policy-makers to justify decision-making to their citizenry, and second to ensure that all relevant information is accessible across the public arena (Gutmann and Thompson, 2004). Deliberative democracy relies on an active public, willing to engage with public decision-making, while also depending on an equal capacity among the public to participate (Sanders, 1997). A process is democratic and deliberative if “the participants are free and equal to decide on the agenda, propose

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solutions to the problems set for discussion and aim to settle on an alternative” (Hendriks, 2002:8).

Arguably, public participation is the key to democracy, as it is only through a participative community that values and attitudes can be reflected in policy decisions (Dugdale and West, 1991; McCool and Guthrie, 2001). Public participation acts as a vehicle for moving from representative democracy to participatory democracy, arguably addressing the “democratic deficit” that deliberative democratic theorists espouse, and interjecting a broader range of social values into decision-making systems (Barnes et al., 2003; Cornwall, 2004:1; Hindess, 1997; Mascarenhas and Scarce, 2004). It furthers people’s involvement in decision-making and increases government accountability (Curtis and Lockwood, 2000). “Participatory democracy provides a system of checks and balances against the limitations of a purely representative system” (Roseland, 2000:106). Neither participatory democracy, nor representative democracy, ensure that citizens’ best interests are served, but together, they do bring the ideal closer (Roberts, 1995).

A strength of deliberative democracy is that by focusing on the process of participation it provides the public with sufficient time to understand issues, discuss relevant science and develop considered and informed decisions. In theory, it should promote equity as decisions are made on the basis of reasoned argument rather than power relations (Marion Young, 2001). Moreover, when citizens develop policies they are usually much more willing to live with the outcomes.

However, many contemporary deliberative democratic theorists suggest that deliberative democracy is only desirable (and achievable) for a small number of policy decisions (Ackerman, 1991; Dryzek, 2001; Rawls, 1993; Walzer, 1999). The key weakness of deliberative democracy for this discussion is that it is highly resource intensive, detracting resources from other elements of the decision-making process, without necessarily improving the outcomes (Cohen and Rogers, 1983; Sanders, 1997). Deliberative democracy assumes that citizens have the time, willingness and capacity to actively engage in the political and decision-making arenas, and that where they lack the resources and skills, governments have a responsibility to work with publics to increase their capacity.

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Deliberative democracy is therefore highly demanding on the public, and can enhance inequities as marginalised, isolated sectors are unlikely to engage. Realistically, landuse change decisions are unlikely to be made under a genuinely deliberative democratic approach. Necessarily, government agencies usually have a defined objective when introducing landuse change, which greatly restricts the degree to which the public can genuinely deliberate. The deliberative role of the public is more achievable at a higher level of the landuse change decision process; certainly deliberative forums to discuss timber production policy, or the value of expanding public nature reserves versus protecting natural resources on private land, could play a significant role in influencing landuse decision-making. However, this thesis is concerned primarily with how to introduce a landuse change once it has already been defined, as such deliberative democracy in its true sense cannot be achieved. This thesis will therefore, avoid detailed discussion of deliberative democracy, believing it not to add significant value to the community landuse policy advocated in this thesis. While elements of deliberative democratic theory and practice should be adopted for the introduction of policy-driven landuse change namely its focus on participative publics, such an intensive participatory exercise will not be pursued in the community landuse policy approach. The thesis will instead advocate strategic and timely public participation, intending to avoid participation overload. Certainly, elements of deliberative democracy can be adopted into the community landuse policy approach, particularly the strategic use of such tools as citizens' juries. These will be appropriate in some circumstances where a decision requires an active deliberative role for the public.

An interesting argument has recently emerged with suggestions that the move towards an interactive government and society presents some dangers for democratic process.

24 A citizens jury is a randomly selected and apparently representative panel of citizens required to examine an issue of public importance. They are given access to experts and other evidence, and given time to deliberate together on the issues. At the conclusion of the exercise they are required to present recommendations to decision-makers. The process provides an opportunity for members of the public to develop an informed understanding and to provide collective, deliberative, recommendations (Smith and Wales, 2000). One issue that arises from citizens juries, is that as a group is exposed to more information and data their views and support may evolve away from the general community, detracting from their 'representativeness' (Nancarrow and Syme, 2001). Nancarrow and Syme suggest that to overcome this issue, justice issues dealt with through such processes need to be visible to all in the community. The conclusions that arise from the evolution of the groups logic should not simply be presented as a 'fait accompli' but be subject to questioning by the community as it develops (Nancarrow and Syme, 2001).

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Akkerman et al. (2004) argue that when traditionally polarised community groups become incorporated into political systems, they will likely lose much of their grassroots orientation. While on the surface government agencies and community groups working co-operatively appears to facilitate better decision-making, it is possible that by losing the oppositional relationship traditionally held, there may be some weakening of oppositional forms of collective action – actions which may empower community groups in highly politicised environments.

Additionally, public participation efforts often fail to actually resolve conflict, increase community support for projects, or adequately represent community values and interests. Proponents for public engagement would argue that this simply means that the process was not adequate, and that communities had not been engaged enough. However, as Smith and McDonough (2001) argue, the outcome that people are looking for in a decision-making process is that they are represented, considered, and that an acceptable consensus is reached. Arguably, they do not need to be involved in the process for this to occur.

Chess and Purcell (1999) have summarised the debate that exists among public participation proponents about whether the success of a public participation exercise should be judged by the process or the outcome. Much of the argument for public participation lies in its value as a process, implying that an engaged public is always better than a passive public. Whatever the outcome, if the community have been engaged and all voices have been heard the participation process is deemed successful (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004). The participation process is a “valuable health promoting activity in and of itself” (Baum et al., 2000:414). As Illsley (2003) suggests, while publics may express dissatisfaction with the outcomes of a decision-making process, there is much evidence to suggest that public dissatisfaction often arises because of the nature and validity of the process itself. Citing Lind and Tyler (1988), Illsley suggests that people are more accepting of an outcome even when it has gone against them, if they believe that they were treated fairly; the opportunity to voice their own concerns and opinions is one of the key elements that people consider to be of importance to their perception of a fair process (Illsley, 2003). Deliberative democratic theorists ascribe to this theory, focusing as much, if not more, on the participation process itself as they do the outcome of the process.

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Alternatively, some argue that if the end result is a socially just, and environmentally sound decision then it does not matter how that was achieved (Baum et al., 2000; Chess and Purcell, 1999). Appelstrand (2002), and Dobson (1996) argue that a participatory process might not be an “absolute precondition” of a legitimate policy process. Dobson (1996) suggests that in the natural resource management arena, the most important component is a sustainable outcome, which may be achieved through a participatory process. He argues that if the desired outcome is one of ecological sustainability, then many modes of decision-making, including non-participatory ones, need to be considered. While participatory processes and sustainability are not mutually exclusive, they do not need to be mutually inclusive either. In the opinion of this author, it is more important that decision-making processes focus on achieving fairness and equity, than on a participatory public being the ultimate goal (Smith and McDonough, 2001). Beierle and Konisky (2000) suggest that as long as agencies remain flexible and responsive, then even top-down, tightly managed processes can be successful. Essentially, landuse planners can not claim that they have achieved social justice simply because they conducted a public engagement process – public participation can help increase the likelihood of a socially just outcome but the process does not in itself achieve social justice.

Government agencies and community planners must ensure therefore, that the decisions that are made, whether through a participatory process or not, represent the diversity of community values and interests, and are an ethical and socially just decision-making process (Henton et al., 2001). The responsibility and onus is on the proponents of the landuse change to ensure that this occurs. The extent to which it is appropriate to involve a community will be highly variable. A strategic public participation process should therefore, be closely aligned with community needs and expectations (Johnston and Buckley, 2001).

Essentially, public participation can increase information and understanding between communities and government agencies, allowing communities to have their say, while also learning about the landuse change. Public participation also allows values and expectations to be clarified. Hence, community needs 3 and 4 are met through public participation, while also contributing to the first community need.

Chapter 5: Public Participation: Involving communities in policy-driven landuse change decisions
THE CHALLENGE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The previous section has outlined the advantages of public participation as a tool to build support for decisions, improve decision-making, and increase the likelihood of a socially just outcome. However, while the benefits certainly provide a rationale for the participation imperative, involving the public may be a costly, time consuming exercise with no guarantee that outcomes will be improved, or indeed even be particularly different. This section examines the challenges of involving the public in landuse decision-making, and then examines strategies to enhance the benefits of public participation and manage the difficulties.

The difficulties of involving the public

Despite genuine attempts by practitioners to increase the participation levels of the public, it still remains an under-utilised decision-making tool. While the argument for public participation is ideologically strong, the reality is that the practice of public participation is fraught with difficulties and challenges (Buchy et al., 1999). This section examines the inherent barriers to public participation.

Representation

While government attempts to involve the public might be genuine, there is still a strong probability that a large proportion of the public will choose not to become involved, or be prevented from participating through lack of access to information or resources. The number of people who participate is not necessarily a problem. Small sample sizes can still represent the range of community opinions, values and interests, if all community sectors are represented. However, this introduces a common misconception of 'community' introduced in Chapter 3 – it is often assumed that communities are homogenous groups of people, sharing common views, cultures and interests. Instead, communities usually consist of diverse groups or sectors of people, with differing social status, cultures, interests and socio-economic conditions (Race and Buchy, 1999).

The inclusion of all of these interests introduces the problem of representation. Those community members that choose to participate in decision-making are not always
representative of the entire community (James, 1991). They tend to be those members who have the time, the resources (e.g. a vehicle to get to public meetings, access to childcare), the confidence to participate, or the most developed interest or stake. Participation is sometimes limited to an educated elite, excluding sectors of the community who are disenfranchised through poverty, class, and powerlessness – often those most affected by development or landuse change (Dugdale and West, 1991; Irvin and Stansbury, 2004; Sanders, 1997; Weber, 2000). The likelihood of a representative sample of all community sectors participating is low. As Singleton argues (2000), the strengthening of community authority through public participation, may in fact lead to less equitable decision-making if some sectors are empowered at the expense of others. Figure 5.3 demonstrates the four levels of community that government agencies need to target in natural resource management decision-making.

**Figure 5.3: The levels of community for a participation process**

![Diagram of community levels](image)

The inner circle represents those people who are already actively engaged in natural resource management through participation in Landcare, catchment management committees, etc. This level is easy to identify and include: they are already receptive to natural resource management ideals and will demonstrate an interest in landuse change decisions. The next circle represents the leaders of a community who may not demonstrate a direct interest in landuse change decisions, but who will likely be interested in decisions that potentially affect social dynamics. Again, this group is
relatively easy to identify – they are the leaders of clubs, local council members, members of Country Women’s Associations, rural fire brigades, parent and teacher committees etc., and are prominent in the community. They may be more difficult to engage with landuse change decisions than the inner circle, however, they probably have a sense of civic responsibility, increasing their responsiveness. The third circle represents the majority of society – they exist in communities of interest, are likely to be connected to some social networks, and hold some values common to those around them. While significant in number this group present some difficulties to engage, as they tend to be an anonymous majority, quietly going about their lives; they may feel little personal responsibility and perhaps little interest in the issues. However, by targeting their social networks in a strategic manner, this group can be persuaded to engage with landuse change decisions to varying extents, particularly if a decision may disrupt social ties or networks.

These first three levels are connected through networks and social groupings. The outer circle however, represents the disenfranchised or disempowered sectors of society – note the chasm between this group and the rest of the community. They exist on society’s fringes, with little or no engagement in community networks. As such, they are difficult to identify and even more difficult to engage with landuse change decisions. This sector of society is arguably, the most difficult to capture in a participation process as they generally lack the capacity to engage or the power to be heard.

These various community levels differ in the degree to which they exert power over the decision-making process, and the participation strategy chosen will likely lead to the inclusion of some, and the exclusion of others (Davers, 2005). There are also fundamental inequalities between these levels in political know-how, status and ability to mobilise resources, which leads to an imbalance in representation (James, 1991). Even if disempowered sectors can be persuaded to attend public participation events, those members of the community who are well organised and articulate, more familiar with the planning process and have community status, tend to gain advantages and consequently be heard over other less persuasive voices (James, 1991). This compromises the participation process, by limiting the exposure of the government agency to a selective range of community values and beliefs.

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The concept of representativeness raises important questions. Should decision-makers attempt to gain equal representation from every community interest or stakeholder group, or should they aim for a proportionally representative sample, more likely to reflect the various interests? That is, should a minority group have the same influence as a more mainstream group? (Barnes, et al., 2003). Additionally, is it necessary for a group to actually engage in a process for their interests to be represented? (Barnes, et al., 2003). These questions have important ramifications for socially excluded, isolated, or marginalised groups, and the extent to which they can legitimately exert power in the decision-making process. They also raise the idea of adopting different public participation strategies for different stakeholder groups and different proposals.

**Fact versus perception**

Public opinion is not sacred – just because an opinion or belief is held does not make it true or accurate. The public gathers information from a variety of sources and interprets and discards information based on personal experience and biases. It is likely therefore, that public participation may expose perceptions that are incorrect or misleading. These must still be managed for – “perception is reality” for the purpose of managing natural resources or landuse changes in a social context (Roberts, 1995: 238). By providing opportunities for genuine public participation and engaging in an open dialogue, misunderstandings and media mis-representations can be minimised. Alternatively, the value of local knowledge means that community perceptions might be closer to reality than government agencies think – historically government agencies have provided poor natural resource management advice, demonstrating the need for government agencies to ensure that community opinions, knowledge and values are treated with respect, regardless of how well they align with government knowledge.

**Complexity of decision-making**

Involving the public does not result in clear-cut, objective decision-making. In fact, by garnering public opinion, decision-making surrounding landuse change becomes more complex, and can introduce hostility and conflict (Curtis and Lockwood, 2000). The social domain of attitudes and opinions makes them difficult to quantify, highly
variable, contradictory and sometimes seemingly irrational (Dugdale and West, 1991). While there is a tendency for communities to be seen as single entities with common interests and identities, they are actually comprised of a variety of individuals and sectors, each with biases, agendas, values, interests and attitudes, all fighting to be heard (Barnes et al., 2003; Blyth et al., 1995). Simply by increasing the involvement of the public in decision-making does not automatically resolve conflict (Curtis and Lockwood, 2000).

Potentially, a highly engaging public participation process could actually result in increased conflict, if divergent sectors were successfully encouraged to participate (Davies, 2001). Conflict that arises out of participatory approaches is not necessarily a negative outcome if it has meant that more people have been heard, and potentially more values considered in the end decision. However, as Layzer (2002) argues, a truly successful public participation process is only likely if the participants share fundamental values. From a government agency's perspective, it is difficult to find solutions in the chaos of conflicting community views (Dugdale and West, 1991).

Moreover, assumptions underlying public participation are that if communities are involved in decision-making they will be more likely to accept the costs of implementing the decisions. However, this assumption ignores the many constraints that communities face to implementing government decisions, and places too much emphasis on their desire to deliver government objectives. The reality is that even the most engaged community may still lack the capacity to implement changes, while even the most well-meaning government agency may be met with a disinterested community (Buchy and Race, 2001). It must be acknowledged that actively engaging communities does not have a guaranteed outcome – it may decrease conflict, and it may increase public acceptance of policy changes thereby increasing the likelihood of success, or it may not. Hence, public participation may be seen as a waste of time and resources given the potential limits of its success.

**The technical nature of landuse decisions**

Landuse decisions and resource management generally, are highly technical and scientific in nature. As such, the public may lack the expertise and understanding to
influence decision-making (Mascarenhas and Scarce, 2004). “Because environmental decisions generally involve complex scientific and technical issues and a wide array of stakeholders, scientific uncertainty, value conflicts, ecosystem dynamics and social dynamics make environmental decisions especially prone to challenge” (Stave, 2002:140). The many scientific elements to landuse decisions require a high level of understanding of a variety of ecological processes, which “may lead to reinforcement of a culture of technical control” (McCool and Guthrie, 2001:311).

There is a fine balance when attempting to avoid purely technical decisions. As Mascarenhas and Scarce (2004:29) ask: “In a democracy, who best represents the public when highly technical issues are under consideration?” While local community knowledge is valuable, government agencies need to make decisions with consideration of all knowledge. As Dietz and Stern (1998) suggest, decision-making is essentially a system of trade-offs between the many divergent values within society – scientific, environmental, social, economic etc. – and it is important that all of these values are represented. Therefore, where uncertainty exists between conflicts, it is essential that stakeholders are involved in making trade-offs. This issue revisits the ‘fact versus perception’ dilemma; if environmental decision-making is entirely left in the hands of the general public there is a risk of decisions being made on ill-formed perceptions. So, while public involvement is an important component of decision-making, it is just one aspect. A decision about where to situate a national park or a forest reserve for example, has many elements of which the community’s perspective is just one. It would be an unfortunate outcome of a public engagement process if a community determined every aspect of a landuse decision, with no consideration of the scientific knowledge available or of broader social and policy goals. This is a risk associated with public engagement – how do we genuinely engage the public while retaining ecological and scientific integrity? Deliberative participation techniques such as citizens’ juries (see above) are one technique aimed at addressing this issue.

**Language barriers**

Following on from the highly technical nature of landuse decisions is the barrier presented by language differences. Government agencies, particularly natural resource management agencies, tend to have a continually changing ‘language of jargon’, which
many people find difficult to understand and engage with (Magill, 1991). When a landuse change proposal is released for public opinion, it may only be commented on by those members of the public who are familiar with the language and confident enough to engage with it.

An example of government specific language can be found in the regional natural resource management planning process being implemented across Australia. To access Commonwealth and state government funding, regional groups are required to design natural resource management plans with full consideration and input from the regional community – the plans must be ‘owned’ by the community. However, there is also a requirement to prepare these plans within a language framework, consisting of terms such as resource conditions targets, regional arrangements, capacity building, traditional ecological knowledge, ecological systems and biodiversity. Many community members have struggled to adapt to the bureaucratic and scientific language and may, therefore, be reluctant to engage with the regional planning process.

**Community cynicism and unwillingness to become involved**

No proposed policy or program is introduced into a fresh community environment. There is always a history, a legacy of previous government interaction and intervention, and a complex social, cultural and environmental history within which the new landuse change or policy must be introduced (Martin and Lemon, 2001). This history may have already created hostility and antagonism, which makes the participation process highly problematic: “at the nexus of the currently problematic relationship between government agencies and local community members is the long history of expert/lay person interaction that has dominated the theory and practice of extension in NSW” (Martin et al., 1992).

The traditional ‘top-down’ method where governments attempted to educate and inform rural landholders about best practice, with little transfer of information from the ‘bottom-up’, has sometimes led to communities who feel undervalued and ignored. Further, the advice provided by government agencies in the past has frequently been based on incomplete science, laying the foundation for many of the natural resource
management problems we face today. The result is often a suspicious and cynical public, who have little regard for government processes and advice. Hence, even genuine attempts to engage a community may be met with cynicism and hostility (Allen and Kilvington, 1999; Johnston and Buckley, 2001).

Many communities are also facing ‘consultation overload’, particularly as government agencies and developers increase their attempts to engage the public. This is a downside of involving the public in decision-making. The burnout or exhaustion that results is exacerbated by community perceptions that their involvement did not change the outcome anyway. This trend has been explored in detail by Curtis (2000, 2003), Byron and Curtis (2001) and Byron et al. (2001), in various studies exploring volunteer exhaustion and burnout in Australian Landcare groups.

A further issue is that sometimes communities, and/or individuals within communities, lack the capacity to participate in decision-making (Buchy and Race, 2001). Guthrie argues that social exclusion\(^{25}\) provides a significant barrier to achieving representative communities in public participation processes. Some societal groups, such as Indigenous people, and remote or socially excluded people, may be disempowered in the participation process (Guthrie, 2003). Further, Bucheker et al. (2003) suggest that people may be prevented from engaging in a participation process from a fear of risking conflicts and being ostracized from community life. This may be particularly evident in small, remote communities, especially those that appear to hold highly homogenous values.

Additionally, community interest in the proposed policy may not exist – a complacent community is unlikely to commit to a time-consuming and frequently dull process (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004). Irvin and Stansbury (2004) argue that ‘top-down’ management might be appropriate when communities display complacency toward an issue – as discussed earlier sometimes a participatory process is unnecessary. However, it is usually unclear whether a lack of community responsiveness is because of public cynicism, a lack of capacity to engage, or a genuine disinterest in the issue. If community engagement is hindered by cynicism or capacity, then government

\(^{25}\) Social exclusion refers to the inability of an individual or community sector to participate effectively in economic, social, political and cultural life (Green 1997, cited in Guthrie 2003).
agencies run a risk of further alienating the public if they do not pursue a public engagement exercise.

This is perhaps one of the most challenging problems confronting public participation practitioners: how do we involve people who lack resources, who lack interest in the issue, who lack the belief that they have anything to contribute, and whose voice is not usually heard? (Cornwall, 2004). Particularly, how do we determine when public engagement is actually necessary?

**A lack of governmental capacity and support**

In addition to a lack of community capacity, a lack of government capacity also presents a significant barrier. While there is widespread agreement that public participation is necessary in the decision-making process, the necessary skills are often undervalued in government agencies: “Everyone thinks they have the skills to do it; few actually do” (Johnston and Buckley, 2001:88). Many government agencies lack the in-house facilitation, group process and conflict resolution skills necessary for effective public participation (Henton et al., 2001).

Government agencies are comprised of individuals who have vastly different views of the usefulness of public participation despite the official government policies they are bound to act within. There may be reluctance to hand decision-making power over to what is sometimes considered the ‘ignorant masses’ (Dugdale and West, 1991). Syme and Nancarrow (2001) also suggest that individual planners are likely to approach environmental problems with consistently different environmental justice philosophies depending on their experience with the issues, disciplinary training, social and environmental values, previous political and community negotiations, tolerance for uncertainty, and likely outcomes. These different approaches will almost certainly have a bearing on the degree to which individual planners, government staff, and politicians value public participation.

Moreover, Magill (1991) argues that a ‘we know best’ attitude among government agency staff can often prevent meaningful involvement from the public. While staff may welcome public input, if there is conflict between an agency position and a public
position, professional staff may be more inclined to question the validity of public opinion rather than their own or experts' opinions. As discussed earlier, this is evident in natural resource management where a scientific rationale may be the main driver of decision-making. However, governments are now being asked to make significant decisions based not only on scientific evidence, but also on value-laden, volatile public opinion. It is therefore not surprising that governments are reluctant to relinquish or even share control.

Hence, government commitment to the public participation process can vary. Governments are often accused of being tokenistic in their attempts to engage the public, concerned more with maintaining control. Mercer (2000) cites the high-level example of when Commonwealth Minister for Environment, Robert Hill, allowed only one month for public comment on the discussion document *Reform of Commonwealth Environment Legislation*, effectively dis-empowering the public from involvement. What this amounts to is a set of non-negotiables, factors on which the government is not willing to compromise from the outset (Johnston and Buckley, 2001). This can serve two purposes: it can help to focus a participation process, giving the community some boundaries, or it can limit the process, frustrating the community who feel controlled and powerless.

The simple act of investigating community values, attitudes, and perspectives, implies that they will be incorporated into the decision-making environment (Allen and Kilvington, 1999). If community input does not influence the outcome then it is likely to build resentment, and potentially have a demoralizing effect on the community who will be less likely to become involved in future participation exercises (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004). Smith and McDonough (2001) suggest that public participation exercises that do not have community outcomes are more dissatisfying than no participation at all. As a result, if government agencies do not have the capacity to incorporate public values and interests into decision-making, then they are unlikely even to attempt a public participation process given the community expectations that will likely result.

A further problem concerning government attitude towards participation is emerging. While participation processes have increased markedly in recent years since the advent
of the Landcare movement across Australia, there is some concern that government willingness to involve the public in natural resource management may be a result of responsibility shifting, rather than a genuine commitment to policy improvement and democratic processes (Dovers, 2000; Singleton, 2000). This may be evident with the shift towards regional natural resource management through NAPSWQ and NHTI and II. While public participation has certainly increased at a regional level, with more landholders and other stakeholders becoming involved in regional NRM bodies, it remains to be seen whether this will lead to better outcomes or simply shift the responsibility for natural resource management problems away from Commonwealth and state governments and towards regional non-governmental groups. The cynical rationale for this shift towards ‘bottom-up’ management is that if the regional process fails to improve natural resource conditions it will not be the fault of the higher-level government agencies; after all they provided significant funds. Rather, regional NRM groups who failed to make appropriate decisions and allocate funds accordingly, will carry the blame. The devolution of responsibility to the regional level may stand to be the most successful public participation process attempted across the Australian landscape, or it may stand to be the most successful attempt to ‘pass the buck’.

**Lack of resources**

Following on from the previous issue is a lack of resources including time, staff and financial resources, for running public participation processes. Comprehensive public participation processes impose significant burdens on time and resources without a clearly defined outcome evident from the outset, or potentially even emerging at the conclusion (Buchy et al., 1999; Henton et al., 2001). As a result, well-meaning public engagement staffs are frequently limited in the resources they have available to engage the public. This may limit advertising of participation events, the degree of targeting that can be conducted, and the depth and scope of the participation methods used. This results in an inadequate involvement process, usually merely consultative in nature, with very little consideration of the full range of community values and interests. Lowndes et al. (2001) suggest that for resource-constrained agencies, particularly local governments, it may be difficult to justify expenditure on improving public participation for one issue when other services lack resources.
Combine a lack of dedicated government resources with a lack of community resources, and genuine participation becomes highly problematic. Public participation places time and financial demands on communities (James, 1991). Because all government agencies are facing increasing pressure to involve the public, there is a possibility that the public will face overload as demands on their time increases. This does not necessarily indicate a disinterest in the policy process, merely an inability to continually contribute for extended periods (Roberts, 1995). It is unclear what responsibility the government has to provide resources and support within the community to prevent public overload, as the human and financial resources necessary to participate effectively excludes those members who cannot afford it. As discussed above, this leads to a lack of community representation in the participation process, which compromises the participation process and its outcomes (James, 1991). This problem highlights the need to adopt timely and strategic public participation approaches to avoid public overload.

As Irvin and Stansbury (2004) argue, the costs on both the government and the community may provide a significant disincentive to even attempt a public participation process. An administrator may arrive at the same conclusion as the community in a significantly shorter period of time, implying that the effort involved may not improve outcomes. However, this discounts many of the other values of public participation, namely the increased acceptability of the decisions to the public, increasing the ease of implementation, and the potential social capital value that public participation can produce – explored in Chapter 6 (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004).

**Working towards an engaged community: Methods to improve participation levels in communities**

It is clear that engaging communities is essential for democratic and effective decision-making surrounding landuse change, but that such processes are fraught with challenges. For participation processes to be valid, they must have a decisive influence on decision-making outcomes. "The most fundamental precondition if participation is to be successful is that there is a sincere desire among decision-

26 As discussed in a previous section, volunteer 'burn-out' may occur in participatory publics.
makers, authorities...to pay attention to the beliefs and opinions of all stakeholders” (Appelstrand, 2002:288).

While there are many practical strategies to achieving an effective public engagement process, it is aspirational values or principles that establish an ideology of effective participation. The following set of values should underpin a community engagement process (Aslin and Brown, 2002; NSW OSP, 1993):

- Openness and transparency;
- Representativeness;
- Inclusiveness in developing user relationships based on trust and sharing;
- Commitment to a long-term perspective;
- Respect for the diversity of views;
- Flexibility and openness to learning and adapting to change;
- Mutual obligation for responsibility and accountability among the different levels of government, and between governments and the community;
- Practicability to choose long-term outcomes and ensure that all partners have the capacity to play their agreed part.
- A commitment to co-operation rather than adversity;
- A willingness to listen;
- A shared vision to work towards a best outcome for all stakeholders rather than an acceptable compromise.

The attributes which lead to the success or failure of a public participation program can be divided into two categories – context, those external factors over which the agency has little or no control; and process, those attributes over which the agencies and/or the participants exercise significant control, such as the style and method of engagement used (Beierle and Konisky, 2000). Swearingen White (2001) concluded, from a study examining an attempt by the Wisconsin’s Department of Natural Resources to shift towards a more inclusive, participatory decision-making model, that contextual factors such as trust, civic capacities, demands on time, past working relationships, and interest in the issues, could each affect the degree to which stakeholders engaged in a

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27 For practical strategies and guidance on facilitating public participation processes, see Aslin and Brown, 2002; Creighton, 2005; Gramberger, 2001; Northwest Regional Facilitators, 1999; Participation Services, 2004; Sarkissian et al., 1986.
participation program. Alternatively, a study conducted by Beierle and Konisky (2000) explored a variety of social attributes to determine those factors that are most likely to influence the outcome of a participatory process, and found that the process of participation appeared to be more important than the social context in which the participation took place. This suggests that it is largely within the control of the government agency to ensure a successful outcome, through engaging good deliberative processes, effective two-way communication, and commitment to the process (Beierle and Konisky, 2000). The following therefore, offers some recommendations for government agencies to increase the success of public participation processes to improve the outcome of landuse change decisions.

These recommendations are practical suggestions for government agencies to adopt when embarking on a public engagement process. Indeed, even with the most aspiring principles and the most well-intentioned individuals driving the public engagement process, if consideration is not given to the practical means of achieving success then the engagement process is likely to fail.

**Strategically weave public participation throughout the decision-making process**

Bingham and Jones (1993) suggest that participation will be most effective from the proposal stage of a landuse change, when the government agency has maximum flexibility, and when the resolution of problems is most easily reached. Additionally, by including the community from the outset, procedural fairness and equality will be enhanced (Hampton, 1999). Hyman *et al.* (1988) argue that public participation should occur early enough in the process so that participants feel as though they can make a difference, but be late enough for policy makers to have some grounds with which to work. Participation needs to be weaved throughout a process – “participation cannot simply be bolted to an existing project concept as an add-on. It has implications for the entire gamut of working practices of a project” (Shepherd, 1995:477). However, this does not mean that they have to be involved in every aspect of decision-making. Indeed, as has been argued, the optimum public deliberative model where public participation entails full ownership and power over a decision is unrealistic in most cases, requiring significant commitment from the public. Instead,
the community should be involved in a strategic manner, utilising their experience and local expertise at those stages where it is most relevant.

**Provide resources, information and access to scientific knowledge**

Government agencies must ensure that timely, accurate and comprehensive information is provided to ensure that the public can contribute meaningfully, while also providing sufficient resources to run a full public participation process (Dugdale and West, 1991; Hampton, 1999; Roberts, 2003; Roseland, 2000). As Laurian (2004) argues, this begins with providing well-publicised information on any methods available for the community to contribute to a landuse change decision and fully resourcing these. It should include information on how to participate (process information), and background about the key issues, constraints and guidelines (content information) (Dugdale and West, 1991; James, 1991). Participants need to be fully informed as to the current scientific perspectives, the agency perspective and the full range of potential benefits and costs already identified (Hyman et al., 1988).

**Flexibly manage the public participation process**

Public participation processes need to adopt a systematic and co-ordinated yet flexible approach (Manikutty, 1998). Buchecker et al. (2003:42) argue that participation processes need to have well-defined rules to establish “an accepted way of acting”. They should however, avoid being too prescriptive and should remain adaptable. Strategic timing of the event can increase public involvement opportunity – this includes when the process is instigated, as well as how long the process lasts (Buchy and Race, 2001; James, 1991). Additionally, government agencies need to acknowledge the value of informal participatory processes and manage the participation process to include these (Laurian, 2004). A study conducted by Brody et al. (2003) revealed that while formal participatory processes such as public meetings are the most commonly used by government agencies, they are among the least popular for the general public, suggesting that by providing and encouraging informal settings for the exchange of ideas, participation may increase.
Identify and target stakeholders

The target public should be identified and their involvement actively encouraged in the participation process (Allen and Kilvington, 1999; Dugdale and West, 1991; Hampton, 1999; Hyman et al., 1988). This includes targeting those sectors of the community who are disenfranchised or powerless, and utilising a range of methods and opportunities to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate (James, 1991; Hampton, 1999). One simple but effective technique that may improve participation, is to provide resources such as child-care or transport. This helps to include some sectors that may not otherwise participate, increasing the representativeness of the public participation process – although it probably does little to achieve the participation of the disenfranchised or powerless (Buchy and Race, 2001; Dugdale and West, 1991; Laurian, 2004). As mentioned previously, this is one of the most difficult challenges facing public participation practitioners – the involvement of community sectors who lack capacity, willingness, and who question even their own value in the decision-making environment.

Create ‘safe’ environments for participation events

To achieve maximum benefit from a public participation process, it is important to establish relationships between the government agency and the community. This facilitates an environment where people feel comfortable sharing information, voicing opinions and working collaboratively (Allen and Kilvington, 1999). Effective public dialogue can only occur if a community feels ‘safe’ and able to share their concerns; this is achieved through building trust and relationships (Henton et al., 2001).

Sometimes creating a safe place may be as simple as holding community meetings and forums in local non-political spaces, where the community is familiar with and in control of the environment (Buchecker et al., 2003; Henton et al., 2001). Cornwall (2004) argues that the space in which a participation forum is held is significant, and contrasts the concept of ‘invited’ and ‘popular’ spaces. The way that spaces are managed may mean the difference between a process which is inclusive and equitable,

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28 An invited space is government provided, whether in response to public demand or self-instigated to ease the transition of policy changes, whereas a popular space is an arena where people feel comfortable and in control (Cornwall, 2004).

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and one which is government controlled, with an inequitable distribution of power between and across the various community sectors. Cornwall (2004) suggests that while both invited and popular spaces offer arenas for people to enter the domain of governance, learn the system and contribute, popular spaces tend to be inviting and inclusive to those sectors that may feel powerless in the presence of government. Barnes et al. (2004) further argue that popular spaces offer a means to develop alternative discourses and approaches, and that their independence from government is a critical component of democratic systems. However, while popular spaces may be more inclusive and potentially more welcoming to some sector groups, the potential of community groups to influence policy and contribute to decision-making still lies in their ability to harness and use power.

**Use interactive participation techniques**

Traditional consultation techniques, such as inviting the public to respond to a proposal via written submissions, provide little scope to engage with local knowledge, leaning more towards a one-way (government to community) information exchange. While this may be appropriate in some instances, if genuine engagement is sought, ‘top-down’, consultative approaches where the instigation and control of the process remains with the government agency should be avoided. Top down discussion grants the agency the power of decision-making; the role of the consultation process is simply to disseminate the critical message. It relies on an eventual community acceptance of the proposal in its substantive form, allowing little room for significant community input (Henton et al., 2001). By using interactive participation techniques such as citizens’ juries, panels and workshops, participation processes can encourage the exchange of ideas and opinions. Policy decisions can be informed by local knowledge and new ideas, adding value to the outcomes (Dugdale and West, 1991).

**Encourage communities to define the issues**

To gain a comprehensive and mature understanding of the landuse change proposal, the community should be encouraged to define the issues themselves. A pre-determined agenda should be avoided, as this hinders the effective involvement of the community by limiting the degree to which they can influence the outcomes. This will

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devalue the process and minimise its chance of success (Singh and Khare, 1993). Communities and government agencies frequently view issues quite differently, and if a government agency attempts to define and contain the issues within a public debate, they risk preventing the process from evolving into a meaningful discussion. Issue definition is about values and personal experiences, and if the issues are defined even before the public enters the debate, it becomes limited and bounded by government values (Henton *et al.*, 2001).

*Embrace constructive conflict*

Government agencies, and indeed most sectors, tend to be adverse to conflict, ignoring the potential benefits that can arise from constructive conflict. Conflict however, is both inevitable and healthy. It is from conflict that new ideas and solutions are identified. Conflict is often the catalyst for involving people in decision-making. McCool and Guthrie (2001) argue that conflict or negative feedback acts as a meter of the political and social acceptability of proposed actions. It is through the process of negotiating conflict that people become more understanding of differing viewpoints, potentially leading to more lateral and adaptive solutions (Allen and Kilvington, 1999; McCool and Guthrie, 2001). It is important to accept and expect conflict, particularly in the early stages of a landuse change proposal (Dugdale and West, 1991). Even when a compromise is reached and a decision made, conflict may remain – there are almost always those who win and those who lose. It is part of the social impact assessment process (discussed in Chapter 4) to determine who the losers are and to work towards reducing and mitigating the impacts.

*Be honest about the potential degree of influence a community can exert*

Importantly, government agencies should be honest about the degree to which they intend to involve the public, and the extent to which communities can actually influence change (Buchy and Race, 2001; Buchy *et al.*, 1999). If the public come to the process with a genuine expectation of change and active participation, while the government agency sees the process simply as an information gathering and dissemination exercise, conflict, alienation and disappointment are inevitable (Buchy
and Race, 2001; Curtis and Lockwood, 2000; Lyden et al., 1990). Feedback regarding the participation process should also be given at various stages to ensure that the community are aware of how their input is impacting on decision-making. The agency therefore, becomes more credible to the community (Dugdale and West, 1991; James, 1991).

**Finding the ‘right’ community level to engage**

It is a consistent theme of this thesis that government decision-making and participatory engagement processes are frequently aimed at an inappropriate community scale. For many practical and political reasons, decisions are usually made at a regional, state or national level. As a result, the complex layer of local community is often ignored. It is frequently at this micro-level that much of an individual’s life takes place, and where people may be the most vulnerable to change. External rules, regulations and policies developed at a state or national level may be dis-empowering to local participants. Martin and Lemon (2001) argue therefore, that governments need to develop social policies that are more sympathetic to local contexts – “policies and projects need to come ‘closer’ to local people” (Martin and Lemon, 2001:595).

Governments however, lack the capacity, the resources and perhaps even the motivation to ensure that the community participates in decision-making at the appropriate scale. The current regional arrangements for natural resource management (NRM) go some way to addressing this issue. By operating at a regional or catchment level, rather than a state or national level, there is more opportunity to engage with local communities and begin to fill in the gap in community engagement. However, even regional management often neglects many local communities. Regional NRM bodies responsible for delivering the national NRM agenda under NHTII and NAPSWQ, tend to engage with defined stakeholder groups, leaving little room for geographic communities or communities of interest which may not appear to have a direct interest in natural resource management, but who may be affected by landuse change policies. If community members do not stand up and proclaim themselves to be legitimate stakeholders, they are unlikely to be noticed.
Regional NRM emerges from a focus on biophysical issues without fully recognising the complex interactions between humans and their natural systems. As human interaction with the environment has caused many of our biophysical problems, it makes sense that human needs be a core consideration of NRM. These needs are often only identified by examining issues at the local or community scale. Without the cooperation of people living in natural systems we can achieve little to improve their condition. For effective participatory processes to take place, it is vital that agencies, be they regional, state or Commonwealth, identify the most appropriate geographic level to engage participants (NSW OSP, 1993). Chapter 7 will examine decision-making at a local scale as a core management philosophy of landuse change.

**THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN LANDUSE CHANGE DECISIONS**

While this thesis argues that public participation is an important component of natural resource decision-making, and an essential aspect of community landuse policy making, this argument is not intended to devalue the role of government agencies. There are limitations to public participation and advantages to government control. First, government agencies are much less susceptible to social pressure, allowing the enforcement of regulations or the redistribution of scarce resources without social intimidation. Second, if a community sector is unwilling or unable to participate, despite attempts by government to facilitate their involvement, then government agencies can nevertheless seek to represent their interests. Government agencies also have the capacity to attempt the engagement of disinterested locals through incentives. If decision-making is completely within the control of communities there runs a risk of disenfranchised sectors' interests and broader societal goals not being considered, as community groups would likely lack the financial resources or willingness to fund those who lack the capacity to engage. Governments have a legal and economic responsibility for decision-making and therefore, have a responsibility and right to be involved (Singleton, 2000).

This thesis argues for a system where both government and community sectors are involved in decision-making, enjoying the benefits and advantages that both have to offer (Singleton, 2000). The following chapters will argue that the successful merging of government and community can be facilitated through the development of

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community landuse policies. However, active attempts to engage communities must be implemented by government agencies and community sectors alike for community landuse policies to be successful. The following section will briefly discuss the responsibility that communities carry to participate in decision-making processes.

**A COMMUNITY’S RESPONSIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE**

Much of this chapter has been concerned with what government agencies can do to promote public engagement with communities. However, the community also carries some responsibility to ensure the responsible and sensitive introduction of policy and landuse changes.

To participate most effectively in decision-making surrounding landuse change, a community should play a constructive role in the decision-making process (Disanto *et al.*, 1981). Even if they are vehemently opposed to the change, they should recognise that it is only with rational discussion that sensitive policies can be developed. At the very least, an informed community is a more powerful one.

Even the best-intentioned public participation process can only be as effective as public willingness to become involved. Minority individuals tend to exert the most influence even though they may not be representative of community opinion. This is because of reluctance by many to become informed about the proposal and its potential impacts, and to invest in what may be a long-term commitment. Webler *et al.* (1995) discuss the tendency for individuals to pursue individual objectives as opposed to collective ones, and argue that a public participation process needs to effectively cope with this by coordinating individual actions into collective actions, reflecting more shared interests.

Essential to an effective public participation process is an understanding of the explicit differences between public opinion and public judgement. Attlee (2002) suggests that public opinion alone will not lead to useful policy guidance, that public opinion — *"our knee-jerk reactions"* or ill-considered thoughts on issues and controversies — can sometimes be harmful to a participation process. Wise public judgements or the *"deliberative sense of the community"* emerge from an engagement process that is

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respectful and considerate of the diversity of public opinion. Wise public judgement can only be achieved through consideration of diverse viewpoints (Moore Lappe and Du Bois, 1994, cited in Atlee, 2002). Community groups may be highly segregated into diverse interest groups, and public participation processes are often simply a battleground to garner the most influence on the policy process. As Atlee (2002:n.p) states, such a process “generates partisanship, not public judgement; heat, not light; opinions, not wisdoms; debate not dialogue. This is not healthy... where unwise decisions could generate horrendous consequences for us all”.

Communities will generate the most influence in a decision-making process if wherever possible, they act together as a cohesive community, without sacrificing their own principles, values and interests (Disanto et al., 1981). It is an unfortunate reality that the definition and boundaries of a community will most likely be imposed upon a group of individuals based on the locality of the landuse change proposal. A community may only exist for the purposes of exerting power over the proposal, and may not be a substantial or meaningful community beyond an impact assessment or public engagement exercise. However, by defining themselves as a single entity, that is, a community, rather than disparate individuals, the degree of power and influence that they can exert increases.

So, while it is the responsibility of government agencies to create an environment where community sectors can engage with each other, it is also the responsibility of the community to be responsive to differing views and to embrace a growth or potential change in their own individual or sector values. This will lead to a more adaptive community engagement process, and a more constructive influence on the introduction of the landuse change.

Community groups may also exert influence by adopting a strategy of non-participation (Halpin and Martin, 1999). By a community’s refusal to engage and cooperate with a participation process, governments are frequently left with no choice but to adopt changes to a proposal to make it more amenable to the community. Johnston and Buckley (2001) argue that government attempts to control public participation is an illusion; the public at the very least have the power to refuse to participate, thereby halting the participation process and effectively taking control. In
the current political climate governments are increasingly expected to actively seek public participation. By refusing to cooperate a community may force government agencies into compromise. However, again, to be successful the community must act together as an organised form of resistance, or their protest runs the risk of being unnoticed, and overtaken by a more active community sector.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter has argued that by involving communities in the decision-making process surrounding landuse change, we can meet two (needs 3 and 4) of the six conditions that need to be met for communities to cope with policy-driven landuse change:

3. A knowledge and understanding of the landuse change, how it might affect them and how it can benefit them (community learning).
4. Opportunities to have their say, express their concerns, and share in the decision-making process.

By including communities in decision-making processes, their knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding the landuse change can be increased, and their existing knowledge utilised to improve decision-making. Moreover, this allows the community their fundamental right to ‘have a say’ in decisions that affect them, meeting community needs 3 and 4. Public participation, while a ‘tool’ for governments to utilise in landuse change decision-making is also a fundamental management philosophy or principle for decision-making (discussed in Chapter 7).

The following chapter will examine how the concept of social capital – a measure of the degree to which a community can cope with change based on its internal strength and access to resources (physical, economic and social) – can promote well-networked, trusting, and sustainable communities. It argues that it is in the best interests of government to help enhance a community’s social capital, to build their resilience to change and their capacity to respond positively to policy-driven landuse change.

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Chapter 6
Social Capital: The role of social capital in helping communities cope with landuse change

INTRODUCTION

Social capital is the ‘glue’ that holds a community together. It is the norms, networks, trust and systems of reciprocity that underlie social interaction and contribute to community cohesiveness and coordinated action. This chapter will argue that governments can contribute to meeting the fifth community need when introducing landuse change – a well networked and trusting community – through the promotion and protection of social capital. This chapter will first examine the concept of social capital, exploring its varied definitions, its usefulness to policy, its inherent problems, and its measurability. The chapter will conclude by discussing the government’s role in building social capital through the landuse change process, and how it fits into the community landuse policy approach (to be discussed in Chapter 7).

WHAT IS SOCIAL CAPITAL?

"Whereas economic capital is in people’s bank accounts and human capital is inside their heads, social capital inheres in the structure of their relationships" (Portes, 1998:7).

While the concept of social capital has been in the background of sociological theory for over a century, it began its rise to prominence in the policy development arena in the late 1980’s. Coleman (1988) examined the role of social capital in developing human capital, and then later, Putnam (1993a) argued that increasing a society’s social capital might increase the effectiveness of democratic institutions. While some authors have emphasised the contribution social capital makes to economic efficiency (Bourdieu, 1980, cited in Lin, 2001; Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001), Putnam has focused on potential returns for democratic processes arguing that networks and norms improve governance (1993a). Putnam (1993a), in an examination of Italian civil society, suggested that civic engagement gives rise to networks, norms and trust (social capital), which provides the basis for effective government and for economic development. What earlier studies into social capital lacked is how we definitively
recognise social capital and importantly, how we can monitor its growth or decline in a given society (Productivity Commission, 2003).

It is difficult to fully encapsulate the meaning of social capital in a single sentence, and even harder to quantify it (Harper, 2001). Putnam (1993a, 1995) and Coleman (1988) argue that social capital is defined by the presence of norms, networks and trust, while Woolcock (1998) argues that social capital is defined by the existence of social relationships or networks, and that trust is a consequence of social capital. Fukuyama (2001:7) argues that social capital is an “instantiated informal norm that promotes cooperation between two or more individuals...trust, networks, civil society and the like which have been associated with social capital... [arise] as a result of social capital but not constituting social capital itself”. However, Putnam (1993a) and Falk and Kilpatrick (2000) variously argue that networks and relationships will not function unless trust is present, implying that it is a critical, although secondary component of social capital.

It is not the intention of this thesis to contribute to this argument, as the finer detail of what is social capital and what is simply an outcome of social capital, is not important for this thesis. Instead, it is important to acknowledge that these arguments all rest on the same basic principles. For societies to operate in a healthy and sustainable way, certain significant characteristics need to be present. What is relatively agreed on therefore, is that social norms, networks and trust (see Box 6.1), are implicitly encapsulated in the meaning of social capital.

For the purpose of this thesis, social capital is therefore defined as the degree of social cohesion and interactions that exists in communities in the form of social relationships. Social capital refers to the processes or shared feelings of belonging between people that establish institutions, networks, norms and social trust, and facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit (Cox, 2002; Falk and Guenther, 1999; Giorgas, 2000; Kilpatrick and Falk, 2001; World Health Organisation, 1998). For social institutions to remain vital and healthy they need to be based on trust and trustworthiness, reciprocity, established and respected norms, and strong networks (Coleman, 1988). For example, Coleman (2000) suggests certain elements – trustworthiness of the social environment, which means that obligations will be repaid...
(reciprocity), and the extent of obligations held – influence how much social capital a community has available on which to draw at any time. Essentially, individuals are more likely to assist others if they are confident that that same assistance will be extended to them if a future need arises. This creates social obligations that must be repaid (although not necessarily by interactions with the same individuals). The endless cycle of reciprocated favours creates a social system on which its members can depend.

**Box 6.1: The key features of social capital**

**Social norms** are those informal rules in a society that ‘govern’ how an individual should act in particular social contexts e.g. Surrendering a seat on a train to a pregnant or elderly person, or, joining the end of a queue. There may not be a formal law dictating these behaviours, but there is a societal expectation that people will follow them. **Reciprocity** is a key feature of social norms, with an expectation that a favourable act will be rewarded through reciprocation (Coleman, 1988; Ostrom, 2000); by whom, and when, is usually an unknown variable, although the assumption is that everyone will be better off by participating in the system of reciprocity. Societies depend on the majority of people respecting social norms to function healthily. For example, if people ignore a queue and start to push ahead, then the social norm of ‘first in first served’ very quickly collapses.

**Social networks** are interconnected groups of people who have an interest or an attribute in common. Networks allow the filtering of information, the establishment of a sense of identity, resource allocation, and the shaping of behaviour (Fernandez-Kelly and Schauffler, 1994, cited in Giorgas, 2000). When individuals share ideas, skills and resources, they are participating in a network (Kilpatrick and Falk, 2001). Individuals will likely belong to a number of social networks based on job, recreation, neighbourhood, religion etc. Within these ‘sub-communities’, there will be a further set of social norms. Belonging to networks strengthens reciprocity, as trust and confidence in being rewarded, increases.

**Trust** refers to the level of confidence that people within a society can have that other members will act in a particular way. It is a critical component of cohesive relationships, as it leads to cooperation between individuals and organisations, which in turn leads to socially cohesive outcomes, such as community safety (Falk and Guenther, 1999). Trust arises from a belief that individuals or groups will not seize opportunities, which though personally beneficial, are of detriment to others (Francois, 2002). This trust gives people the confidence to lend money, to allow children freedom to play independently, and to leave their houses unlocked. All of these lead to the development and enhancement of social capital. Trust can relate to individuals, groups, institutions and governments. Putnam (2000) identifies two types of trust – thick, where trust is seen as arising from intimate social networks (i.e. family and friends), and thin trust, which is a more generalised trust that we extend to strangers.
Offe and Fuchs (2002) suggest that there are three components of social capital: attention, trust and associability. Attention refers to the degree to which members of a society are aware of, and attentive to, collective conditions and concerns. It may not include active care-giving but does require sensitivity to the quality of public life. Offe and Fuchs suggest that while it is not a strong indicator of social capital given that it does not necessarily result in active involvement in society, it is almost certainly a precondition for more active civic responsibility. Trust, as described by Offe and Fuchs, is simply an absence of fear or suspicion concerning the likely behaviour of others. Trust is necessary for members to join in collective efforts as it supports the belief that cooperative efforts will lead to desirable outcomes or will, at the very least, not be harmful. Associability refers to actual engagement in social and community networks, organisations or groups. These three components are highly interrelated, serving to build on the strength of each other (Offe and Fuchs, 2002).

Flap (cited in Lin, 2001) has also established three elements of social capital: 1) the number of people in an individual’s network who would be prepared or obliged to assist them; 2) the strength of the relationship indicating their readiness to assist; and 3) the resources available to those people. Bourdieu (1983, cited in Lin, 2001) supports this claim, arguing that social capital depends on the size of an individual’s connections, and the resources they have at their disposal.

Social capital is essentially all of those characteristics necessary for collective action (Allan and Holland, 2003; Putnam, 1993b). Allan and Holland (2003) suggest that social capital is made up of: 1) the impetus for people to work together, 2) The degree of trust between individuals and groups, and 3) the hope that positive change could be achieved through their collective action. These three components rely on five elements: experience; relationships; rewards and sanctions; beliefs and norms; and personal responsibility to initiate change. These are bound by the perceived degree of risk associated with participation, and the level of poverty experienced by individuals. This is illustrated in Figure 6.1.

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People will be exposed to different types and levels of social capital, depending on the social interactions in which they are engaged (Bowles and Gintis, 2002). The degree of social capital available is also dependent on such factors as age, education, employment, socio-economic status, health, (dis)ability, etc. (Lin, 2001; Productivity Commission, 2003). However, it is a significant component of social capital that the scales of interactions are much less important than the qualities that they exhibit – namely reciprocity and trust (Coleman, 1988; Hogan and Owen, 2000).

To a large extent, social capital is locked in a feedback loop (Figure 6.2). For example, while education seems to be linked to an individual’s capacity to access the benefits of social capital, simultaneously having access to social capital most likely enhances an individual’s capacity to access certain benefits, such as education (Productivity Commission, 2003). The presence of social capital also helps to further build social capital.

So, the presence and absence of certain characteristics help nurture networks and social norms (social capital), which in turn leads to beneficial outcomes, which feed directly back into the system, by further developing those characteristics that are amenable to building social capital.
Social capital is therefore, intrinsic to social functioning, created as an unintended consequence of relationships between people (Coleman, 1988, 1990; Cox, 2002; Harriss and De Renzio, 1997). DeFilippis (2001) adds another dimension to our understanding of social capital, arguing that the concept is also essentially about power. Communities must be able to retain control over policy processes (such as landuse change), for social capital potential to be realised.

There are two distinct ‘degrees’ of social capital in practice: bonding and bridging. ‘Bonding’ refers to relationships within a homogenous group that shares common interests and/or values, strengthening social ties within that group. ‘Bridging’ refers to relationships between disparate groups, strengthening ties across groups (Gittell and Vidal, 1998; Gittell et al., 2000; Harper, 2001; Onyx and Bullen, 2000; Putnam, 2000). Pretty and Smith (2004) also describe linking social capital, which is the ability of groups to engage vertically with external agencies to influence policies or access resources. Much recent literature discusses the different outcomes that these varying types of social capital produce. It is commonly understood for example, that highly homogenous (or bonded) groups, while building strong ties which can offer support to its members, also frequently produce unhealthy social capital, by excluding others and rejecting new ideas (Bowles and Gintis, 2002; Brown and Lauder, 2000; White 2002). Bridging ties however, are seen as weaker ties, less likely to offer support in times of crisis, but credited with bringing together diverse groups (Schuller et al., 2000). In
fact, White (2002) suggests that weak ties are indispensable for integration across communities, and Gooey and Howden (2004) argue that weak ties provide cohesion and information exchange. They further add that weak ties should be the focus of government attempts to build social capital, as weak ties broaden the exchange of information, while developing relationships across disparate groups.

Landcare is an example of bonding, bridging, and linking ties in action. At a national level the collective efforts of the Australian Conservation Foundation and the National Farmers’ Federation in the 1980s to achieve a shared goal of addressing land degradation, is an example of tenuous but effective bridging ties. These two groups came together to achieve a common purpose, but are equally likely to work against each other in other political arenas. The bridging ties therefore, exist for a single purpose. Linking ties are evident in the relationships that have formed between communities and government agencies. However, at a local community level, Landcare is also an example of bonding ties. Landcare is a community process, and as Sobel et al. (2001) suggest, groups are usually formed with at least some acknowledgment of social communities. While networks within Landcare groups are a significant characteristic of their success (and an example of bonding ties), these networks can also work across Landcare groups (bridging ties) to achieve a larger landscape focus (Sobel et al., 2001). These networks increase the effectiveness of individual Landcare groups, by coordinating resources and increasing access to information and knowledge. Sobel et al. (2001) argue that this has led to an increased capacity to adapt to change.

Both bonding and bridging ties have benefits for introducing landuse change. Putnam (cited in Harper, 2001:11) suggests that bonding social capital is important for “getting by”, while bridging is crucial for “getting ahead”. Bonding may increase the capacity of individuals to cope with change as they utilise networks, solidarity and trust, while bridging ties encourage the transfer of knowledge and innovation, which may be helpful when trying to alter negative implications of the change (Lin, 2001). From a government perspective therefore, both bonding and bridging ties are significant. Additionally, vertical ties (between individuals/sectors of different backgrounds), and horizontal ties (between individuals/sectors of similar backgrounds), can be useful and the challenge is to encourage and nurture the right balance of the two. As Kilpatrick et
al. (2003) argue, by encouraging social mobilisation and diversity social bonds may weaken, however the overall stock of social capital will increase through the diffusion of bridging social capital.

Social capital occurs at all levels of society, beginning at the family level, through to local, regional and even national institutions. At a local level, social capital is experienced in neighbourhood contacts; small exchanges, both informal and formal, between people who are bound together through geographic location or shared interest. At a national level, it moves away from individual contacts and begins to be experienced as a collective trust. Arguably for example, a nation which does not trust its leaders, and which begins to lose confidence in the security of its future, is a nation that is lacking in social capital. Sobel et al. (2001) argue that for social capital to be effectively used, scale is significant. They suggest that smaller scales allow personal relationships to be developed and trust to be built and maintained. This re-introduces an important theme of this thesis – landuse change needs to be managed at a local scale to fully appreciate its impact and to develop strategies to limit potential damage to local communities. Adding strength to this argument is that social capital is strongest, and potentially at its most useful, at a local scale.

There is much disagreement as to whether social capital is held at an individual or collective level. Some see it as a characteristic possessed by individuals (most notably Putnam, 1993a; Fukuyama, 2001; Dasgupta, 2000; Hogan and Owen, 2000; Bourdieu, 1997), while others see it as residing in group processes, neither stored nor owned by individuals or communities (Coleman, 1988; Cox and Caldwell, 2000; Lochner et al., 1999; Maloney et al., 2000; OECD, 2001): “Unlike other forms of capital social capital inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors. It is not lodged in the actors themselves...” (Coleman, 2000:16).

Kilpatrick, et al. (2003) divide these approaches into two distinct groups: ‘individual benefit’ and ‘collective benefit’. Proponents of the individual benefit approach see social capital as an aggregate of resources available to individuals through their membership in groups. The quantity of social capital available to an individual is therefore directly correlated with the size and quality of networks he/she can mobilise. Social capital is considered an individually owned commodity that enhances the

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capacity of individuals to use social groupings (Cox and Caldwell, 2000; Kilpatrick et al., 2003; Lin, 2001). Proponents of social capital as a collective benefit define it as features of social organisation (networks, norms and trust) that facilitate coordination for mutual benefit. Social capital is a commodity that is produced only through group processes, and enjoyed by individuals (Coleman, 2000; Cox and Caldwell, 2000; Kilpatrick et al., 2003).

This thesis ascribes to a collective benefit approach, holding that social capital is essentially embedded in relationships, but also recognises that individuals enjoy the benefits of social capital, thereby making it both a public and privately enjoyed good. It is collectively owned because individuals alone cannot restrict its use, making it available to all members of a community (albeit to different degrees). Both ‘sides’ agree on the importance of both individuals and a collective in building and contributing to the growth of social capital (Lin, 2001). So, while it may not be possible for an individual to hold social capital external to a social grouping, individuals do play a fundamental role in group processes, and as such, cannot be excluded from social capital models.

Falk and Guenther (1999) have developed a model (Figure 6.3), demonstrating the flow of knowledge and identity resources between the three societal levels – micro (individual), meso (communities and organisations), and macro (larger society). Knowledge resources allow people to know whom, when and where to go for advice or assistance, while identity resources provide the willingness and ability to act in a beneficial way for the rest of the community (Kilpatrick and Falk, 2001; Kilpatrick et al., 2003). Falk and Guenther (1999) argue that this flow of knowledge and interaction allows trust at the micro level to influence greater social and economic well-being (Falk and Guenther, 1999; Falk and Kilpatrick, 2000; Kilpatrick and Falk, 2001). The interdependency of levels of social interactivity is crucial to this model, as it is only through interaction that social capital can be built, indicating the pivotal role of individuals in building and harnessing, but not individually possessing social capital.
A further significant discrepancy in the literature is the degree to which governments can influence the level of social capital present in a society. Putnam (1993a) and Coleman (1988, cited in Brooks, 2003) both argue that social capital is an aggregation of individual actions that alone determine the existence of social capital in any given community. They suggest that social capital is external to the environment within which it exists. Under this argument, the role of the government should be limited; as it is through the withdrawal of government services that community participation grows, strengthening bonds and networks (Cox and Caldwell, 2000). Alternatively, Cox and Caldwell (2000) argue that this is more likely to result in an increase in social inequalities, as groups that are already socially cohesive will be favoured. Woolcock and Bourdieu (cited in Brooks, 2003) further argue that social capital exists within the context of a policy environment. They suggest that “social capital is the social relationships in the macro and micro environment, which result in the outcomes of trust, reciprocity etc” (Brooks, 2003). Governments can play a significant role in creating social cohesion through the development of socially responsible policy (Cox and Caldwell, 2000). It is this view that this thesis follows: social capital can be influenced by government agencies in the design of policies and must be a significant consideration in landuse change decisions. This will be explored later in this chapter.
HOW DO WE MEASURE SOCIAL CAPITAL?

By understanding a community's 'stock' of social capital, government agencies can go some way towards understanding the community's capacity to cope with an introduced landuse change. Moreover, government agencies can use aspects of social capital to ease the introduction of the landuse change, such as social networks to disseminate information. First however, government agencies need to have some understanding of the level of social capital that exists; they need to 'measure' it. This thesis suggests that an absolute or quantifiable measure of social capital is not necessary. Instead, decision-makers need a general understanding of the level of social capital in a community, and how it is being expressed e.g. social networks. Social capital can be measured by examining indicators of social capital and indicators of a lack of social capital. Both will be examined below.

Formal measurements of social capital are still in developmental stages in social capital literature, and are being explored in Australia through separate studies conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the National Land and Water Resource Audit. What is in agreement at this stage is that the complexity and elusiveness of the social capital concept means that it can never be expressed through a single measure or figure, nor can it be measured directly. Instead, it requires the examination of 'indicators' (Cox and Caldwell, 2000). It is these indicators that current research in the social capital arena is attempting to identify. As Allan and Holland (2003) suggest, the measure of social capital is not absolute. Instead, it is more useful to ask, "Is there enough social capital to support what we are trying to achieve?" It is not the purpose of this thesis to hypothesise about the methodology needed to measure, monitor or evaluate indicators. This section will instead examine current theory on social capital indicators.

The relationship between public participation and social capital is reasonably well understood: a community that participates in decision-making is more likely to possess high 'stocks' of social capital, than a non-engaged community: "Engaged, ongoing participation produces the trust and networks that are the oil of social capital" (Baum et al., 2000:415). It appears obvious therefore, that to measure social capital we must search for indicators of trust, networks, and civic participation. White (2002) suggests
that social networks act as a proxy to what he terms *structural* social capital, while values, beliefs, norms and behaviour – termed *cognitive* social capital – are less objective and more intangible. He suggests that combined, these two dimensions make up an aggregate indicator of social capital (White, 2002).

Indicators can be classified into two groupings: *proximal* and *distal*. Proximal indicators are those that are outcomes of the core elements of social capital, those being networks, trust and reciprocity (Stone, 2001). Example of proximal indicators might be measuring participation rates, or membership of social groupings. Distal indicators are outcomes of social capital that are only indirectly related to its key elements such as crime rates, employment and unemployment rates, and education levels (Stone, 2001). However, difficulties arise with using traditional measures of socio-economic well-being such as these (Falk and Guenther, 1999). For example, economic measures do not take account of the ‘gap’ between feelings of well-being and official socio-economic indicators. Additionally, it is impossible to separate social capital from its context, as some characteristics that might suggest high levels of social capital do not always correlate with other dependent variables (Falk and Guenther, 1999). Finally, traditional economic measures are highly culturally determined, and are not useful for cultures that do not value for example, high employment or formal education (Falk and Guenther, 1999). It is important to recognise that an indicators approach does have inherent problems: as social capital is unevenly distributed, society-wide data may be misleading (Fukuyama, 1995, 1997; Johnston and Percy-Smith, 2003).

Stone (2001) argues that we can improve our analysis of social capital indicators by collecting primary data, rather than relying on data collected for entirely different purposes e.g. census data. Stone suggests that while secondary data may provide some indication of levels of social capital, more insight is gained by collecting purposeful data, with considered questions and indicators.

Difficulties arise when measuring social capital, in determining whether its strength depends on *individual* properties of citizens (education, socio-economic status), or on *collective* properties (membership in social groupings, volunteerism) (Offe and Fuchs, 2002). While research indicates that individual properties can provide an indication of

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levels of social capital, given that social capital is a collective resource experienced in the relationships between people it would seem likely that collective social properties also have much to offer when measuring social capital. Harper (2001) observes that social capital is generally measured by asking questions of individuals and then aggregating their answers. However, if social capital is considered a community or collective good, it is quite possible that the interpretation of aggregated data may be misleading. Further, it is difficult to distinguish between individual levels of trust, which can be ‘carried’ to other places and other communities, and contextual levels, that are induced by the location or place (Harper, 2001).

However, as Stone (2001) suggests, by gathering individual data we can not only scale up the information to provide insight into the level and distribution of social capital within the community/ies in which those individuals exist, but we can also gain a detailed picture of how social capital shapes and affects the lives of individuals and families. The following therefore, discusses a number of studies that have attempted to encapsulate both individual and collective characteristics in their measures of social capital. While none offer a decisive answer, they do provide a basis to inform the selection of appropriate, community relevant indicators.

One method used to measure social capital is to produce a ‘census’ of social groupings and monitor the rise or fall of participation over a set period. However, aside from being near impossible to produce a complete catalogue of social groupings – many are informal and may not even be acknowledged as groups by members – it offers little to our understanding of social capital anyway. A catalogue of social groups tells us nothing about their cohesiveness, their openness, the contribution they make to society, the level of trust they generate, the participation rate of their members, or their capacity to network across other social groupings. As a single indicator of social capital, using numbers of social groupings as a measure is highly problematic.

Perhaps the most well known study into measuring social capital is now one of the most widely criticised for this very reason. Robert Putnam’s examination of civil society in Italy (Making Democracy Work, 1993a), and his application of those findings to the US (Bowling Alone, 2000), attempted to correlate membership in social organisations with social capital. Putnam argued that a fall in membership across the
US was evidence of a decline in social capital. Critics of Putnam’s study cite the limitations of using a single indicator, while also drawing attention to problems with his measurement of membership. Critics suggest that Putnam did not account for the growth of informal social groupings, nor did the selective organisations he chose to monitor reflect new patterns of community action and forms of leisure (Harper, 2001; Levi, 1996; Maloney et al., 2000; McClenaghan, 2000). Another possible interpretation of Putnam’s data is that social capital has not necessarily fallen, but that it is being expressed through different channels, as communities adapt to modern technologies, cultural transitions, and contemporary challenges. A more recent study by Putnam (2000) therefore, expanded the social data sets to draw conclusions on the level of social capital across the United States. His measures included: 1) intensity of involvement in community and organisational life; 2) public engagement (e.g. voting); 3) community and volunteering; 4) informal sociability; and, 5) reported levels of interpersonal trust.

Hogan and Owen (2000) have also explored the relationship between active citizenship and social capital. By using three measures of active citizenship – breadth of participation in voluntary organisations; the amount of time devoted to voluntary activity; and participation in political actions – Hogan and Owen found that a clear and positive relationship exists between levels of social capital and levels of engagement in civic activities. Hall (2002) supports this claim, suggesting that membership in voluntary associations as a form of civic engagement, lies at the core of social capital: involvement in social groupings results in interaction with others (a significant factor in building trust and reciprocity), while such interaction nurtures their capacity to act collectively to achieve social objectives; an example of the social capital feedback loop (Figure 6.2). Hogan and Owen (2000), Putnam (2000) and Hall (2002), have all demonstrated that participation rates in social groupings are an important indicator of social capital, however, it should not be used as a single indicator.

In a study by Cox (2002), a range of social characteristics were examined as ‘indicators’ of the health and vitality of social capital in Australia – combining participation rates and membership with other indicators:

- Participation and engagement (e.g. civic engagement, levels of volunteering);

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Membership and participation in different social institutions (e.g. community groups and social movements, religious engagement, trade union membership); Political involvement (e.g. watching the political news, becoming involved in political movements); and Generalized trust (e.g. trust in democracy, trust in strangers, fear of crime).

While her findings were somewhat inconclusive, Cox argued that an examination of these characteristics demonstrates a general decline in social capital in Australia, with a rising distrust and disengagement from political and formal community processes. This is reflected in a 1997 study – *Measuring Progress* – which revealed an increasing unease in faith about the future, finding that over half of Australians believed that life was ‘getting worse’, when considered from an environmental, economic and social perspective (Cox, 2002). Hofferth and Iceland (1998) suggest that the decline in social capital is less distinctive in rural localities than urban for a number of reasons: isolation, limited public transportation, seasonal demands of farming, unreliable climatic conditions, and limited access to public services. These characteristics of rural communities tend to strengthen rural residents’ sense of responsibility and trust in others (Hofferth and Iceland, 1998).

However, as trust and hope erodes, so too does social capital. Cox also suggests “social capital appears to be most functional in those population groups...who have the capacity to benefit from social change” (2002:357). When a community does not have the resilience to manage changes, they are at risk of a further decline in social capital. Cox argues that there is a clear imperative for states to provide the framework and the stimulus for participation and involvement opportunities, suggesting that social capital can not be relied on to evolve spontaneously. This supports the underlying theme of this thesis – governments must work with communities to increase their ability to cope with and manage change for the benefit of the government and communities.

The ABS (2000) has also identified a number of possible indicators of social capital. These have been developed with consideration not only of their likelihood of indicating the level of social capital, but also their potential measurability. These are outlined, with examples, in Table 6.1.
Table 6.1: Indicators of Social Capital (ABS, 2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social capital indicators</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social networks and support structures</td>
<td>- Frequency of contact with friends and family;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Quality of relationship experienced between employer and employees;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Frequency of ‘helping’ neighbours;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Existence of a support structure in times of need.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social and community participation</td>
<td>- Active involvement in community projects or groups;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Participation in community action during times of crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic and political involvement and empowerment.</td>
<td>- Degree of awareness of local people, events and politics;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Degree of involvement in national, state or local issues;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Likelihood of contacting political representatives;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Likelihood of ‘speaking out’ at a public meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust in people and social institutions</td>
<td>- Degree to which people feel that their neighbours and community generally can be trusted;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Experiences of crime;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Beliefs about the potential of becoming a victim of crime;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Level of trust in political parties etc.;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Level of confidence in the media, in churches etc;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance of diversity</td>
<td>- Level of tension or disagreement between ethnic groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altruism, philanthropy and voluntary work</td>
<td>- Degree to which people give up their own time for others;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Level of support for charities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lane et al. (1997), have developed three integral indicators of social capital: social vitality – the degree to which individuals can respond effectively to imposed problems; economic viability – the degree to which communities and the individuals within them are able to earn income from external sources, and retain (or gain) economic independence; and political efficacy – the level of community participation in political processes. Lane et al. (1997:308) argue that these indicators can be used to determine a community’s resilience to adverse impacts resulting from a development, and encourages the “viewing [of] communities as active agents of change rather than passive respondents”.

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A study by MacGillivray and Walker (2000) attempted to measure the stock of social capital that grew from an environmental regeneration effort. By involving program participants in the design of the study they developed a set of 14 indicators, expressed as statements which people were invited to agree or disagree with. These are outlined in Box 6.2.

**Box 6.2: 14 Indicators of social capital** (MacGillivray and Walker, 2000)

1. I feel I can help bring about change locally.
2. I am proud of this area.
3. This is a good place to live.
4. I have learned/used new skills in the past 6 months. (If so) I have used them.
5. My neighbours in my street or block look out for each other.
6. There is somewhere I can go to work with others on ideas for action.
7. I have met new people on the project.
8. I have enjoyed conversations with new people from a different age or background within the last 6 months.
9. I know who to contact to help me bring about change in: voluntary groups; council; other agencies.
10. I have benefited from being involved in the project.
11. I feel safe out and about in my community/using the facility.
12. Do you think the [name of the facility] will survive?
13. Usage of the project facility: who and when (non survey indicator).
14. How many new people have been involved in the project? (non survey indicator).

While MacGillivray and Walker (2000) admit to issues with language, ambiguity and subjectivity, they argue that through comparison across communities, and within communities over time, one can begin to discern a relative degree of social capital.

A study by Onyx and Bullen (1997, cited in Winter, 2000), attempted to measure social capital in five localities across NSW. They identified eight broad elements, which they argued, could provide indicators of social capital:

- Participation rates in the local community;
- Neighbourhood connections;
- Family and friends connections;
• Work connections;
• Proactivity in a social context;
• Feelings of trust and safety;
• Tolerance of diversity; and
• Value of life.

Whittaker and Banwell (2002) examined a rural locality in NSW referred to as ‘Brady’, and attempted to measure the capacity of the community to cope with intervention or change. They developed a list of indicators:
1. Commitment to the community;
2. Awareness of community identity;
3. Caring;
4. Collective efficacy;
5. Participation in community affairs;
6. Ability to express collective views and exchange information;
7. Conflict containment;
8. Ability to use resources;
9. Networks across individuals, groups and organisations;
10. Retaining formal means of representative input in decision-making;
11. Eternal resource access; and
12. Dissemination to other communities.

Each category is broken into measurable variables. So, for example, ‘commitment to community’ was measured through a) sense of community, and b) proportion of long-term residents or members (Whittaker and Banwell, 2002). They suggest that while these indicators are still in developmental stages they “may become a standard tool for government and other agencies to determine the nature and readiness of communities for interventions” (Whittaker and Banwell, 2002:256).

In addition to indicators of social capital, there are also community characteristics that may indicate a lack of social capital (OECD, 2001). A study conducted by Baum et al. (2000) revealed that people with low incomes and educational levels were much less likely to engage with their community, in either civic or social activities. This lack of
participation seems to also directly correlate with the level of social capital that is experienced. Baum et al. (2000) argue that participation is therefore socially patterned, and that social exclusion is likely to be more prevalent among particular sectors of society. Fukuyama (1997) further supports the idea of measuring the absence of social capital as opposed to positive indicators, arguing that crime rates, family breakdowns, drug use, tax evasion etc. are all indicators of a lack of social capital. Baum et al. go on to suggest that there is considerable potential to increase the level of opportunity and support (e.g. resources) for the ‘socially disadvantaged’ to participate, thereby increasing their sense of empowerment.

The OECD (2001) argue that measures of social capital should be as comprehensive as possible in covering networks, values and norms (the key elements of social capital), while striking a balance between attitudinal or subjective elements, and behavioural or objective elements. Interpretation of social capital data should also be considered within its cultural context. Harper (2001) and Johnston and Percy-Smith (2003) argue that to avoid unfounded conclusions being drawn from indicators, researchers collecting and analysing social capital data will need to possess a high level of understanding of the community being examined, to choose the most appropriate indicators and to apply subjective interpretations.

While the literature has identified a significant number of social and economic characteristics as potential indicators of social capital within societies, the most important point is that it cannot be summarised into a single measure – it has many dimensions and will be expressed in many different ways across communities (Falk and Guenther, 1999). Further, while previous studies have provided a solid basis to inform the selection of appropriate indicators, the indicators that are chosen need to be culturally and socially relevant, and must be community dependent. Selecting the ‘right’ indicators therefore, is crucial to the correct assessment of social capital within a given community, which in turn, is critical to the development of a community landuse policy. If governments have overestimated (or simply made no attempt to estimate) the stock of social capital a community possesses to cope with an introduced landuse change, it may contribute to the further decline of the community, or even the failure of the introduced landuse change.
THE BENEFITS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL TO DECISION-MAKING

"It is becoming increasingly clear that social capital has an enormous array of practical benefits to individuals and to communities. What is more, social capital has what is called ‘positive externalities’. That is, networks of trust and reciprocity not only benefit those within them, but also those outside them. Consequently, when social capital is depleted, people suffer in clear and measurable ways, and there is a ripple effect beyond a scattering of lonely individuals. Shoring up our stocks of social capital, therefore, represents one of the most promising approaches for remedying all sorts of social ills” (Saguaro Group, 2000:4, cited in Productivity Commission, 2003:1).

Social capital brings people together for a common cause, strengthening their power as individuals: “Working together is easier in a community blessed with a substantial stock of social capital” (Putnam, 1993b). Fukuyama (2001:11) argues that social capital produces a dense civil society, serving to “balance the power of the state and to protect individuals from the state’s power”. It is through the formation of networks and coalitions that status and power is increased, thereby influencing decision-making (Gittell, et al., 2000). Conversely, a lack of networks can limit innovation and economic opportunities, ultimately reinforce existing inequalities, and prevent collective action to solve common problems (Isham and Kahkonen, 2002).

It is through social interaction that communities form. Relationships link individuals into the broader social structure, providing its members with access to group resources, such as information and knowledge (Hofferth and Iceland, 1998; Lin, 2001). Social capital contributes to mutual respect among members and supports the emergence of a shared sense of community. The networks and trust that emerge give communities the ability to coordinate action to achieve collective benefit (OECD, 2001; Oxendine et al., 2003; Serageldin and Grootaert, 2000; Sharp and Smith, 2003). By drawing on collective resources, communities can achieve greater outcomes more efficiently than the same number of individuals tackling the problem on their own (Lin, 2001; Ostrom, 2000; Ostrom and Ahn, 2001). As Lin (2001) suggests, personal (or individual) resources confer certain benefits to individuals, however for most individuals these are limited. By embedding themselves in networks, individuals have access to the resources of other members and indirectly to the resources of their networks. It therefore becomes clear that networks serve two motives: to protect resources and to gain access to additional ones (Lin, 2001). A study of five rural communities in the
USA by O’Brien et al. (1991), and O’Brien and Hassinger (1992), found that collective action was more likely to occur in communities where community leaders enjoyed more horizontal linkages with other leaders i.e. “a dense network of social interactions” (Putnam, cited in O’Brien et al., 1998:111).

Social capital therefore, plays a role in channelling information within and between communities (Coleman, 1988; 2000). The acquisition of information is costly, particularly in terms of the investment of time. Knowledge can be transferred between members of a network to an extent that “no outsider can aspire to achieve” (Maskell, 2000:114). Hence, individuals and government agencies can save considerable resources by using social networks to relay information.

Putnam (1993a; 1993b) argues that the simple act of belonging to a social club of any type, regardless of the club’s objectives (e.g. bird watching, soccer clubs), will lead to individuals who engage in collective action for mutual benefit, and who will therefore become more demanding of government. If members of a community have established a full array of face-to-face relationships they have taken the first step in forming associations to undertake long-term collective action (Ostrom, 2000). In essence, Putnam argues that civic engagement builds trust among citizens: trust is generated by norms and networks, which are generated by social groupings.

However, as Levi (1996) and Putzel (1997) suggest, it does not seem likely that the social clubs that Putnam refers to such as bowling leagues and bird watching clubs, will meet such an expectation, existing as they often do for singular purposes. Norms, networks, and trust will almost certainly be nurtured, but whether these are likely to lead to generalised benefits, external to the club, remains questionable (Levi, 1996). Levi (1996) instead argues that trust is more likely to emerge from experiences and involvement in institutions beyond small, single-objective associations. A capacity to collectively solve problems needs more than scattered membership in social groupings to grow. I would suggest that involvement in social institutions does produce localised social capital, particularly beneficial for the dynamics and success of the club or group. However, individuals need to experience the benefits of norms and networks throughout their life experiences for this to develop into generalised social capital. This is important for policy development and for the introduction of landuse change.

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Encouraging involvement in social groupings may not be enough to build productive social capital – capital that will help in the smooth transition of landuse change. However, in the long-term and combined with other measures, it may contribute to a growth in social capital. This will however, be highly dependent on existing social structures, community size and diversity, and the ‘openness’ of the community to outside influence (Levi, 1996).

Of particular relevance to this thesis therefore, is the role that social capital can play in increasing a community’s capacity to adapt to changing environments such as landuse change. Through interaction, social capital can increase learning within communities and individuals, which in turn can lead to an increased capacity to cope with change (Brooks, 2003; Falk and Kilpatrick, 2000; Kilpatrick et al., 2002). Particularly, networks have been found to be instrumental in assisting communities through transitional changes, such as landuse change: communities with extensive networks that are inclusive of people from diverse backgrounds add to community capacity by increasing the range of knowledge, skills and expertise available to the group (Kilpatrick and Falk, 2001; Kilpatrick et al., 2003). By drawing on social capital, government agencies are able to utilise an existing set of community resources to ease the transition of landuse change. Social capital becomes a resource that can contribute to sustained autonomous development after the intervention (or landuse change) is complete. Societies rich in social capital are more able to withstand external or internal shocks, which may eventuate from significant landuse changes (Kilpatrick et al., 2003).

A Pretty and Ward (2001) study concluded that the success of agricultural projects (or the introduction of landuse change), has a clear relationship with the strength of local community institutions, suggesting that social capital as experienced in group-based programs can lead to environmental improvements. In a later study (2004) Pretty and Smith suggest that it is only by changing social norms that long-term changes can be achieved in environmental behaviour. Additionally, Gittell et al. (2000) argue that networks are fundamental to the realisation of positive social change in a community, as the denser the networks the greater the capacity for cooperation. Networks therefore, become powerful tools in any attempt to introduce landuse change into a community.

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From a government perspective social capital is important to ensure cooperation between the community and government agencies to avoid the predation of programs by interest groups. By empowering communities to participate in decision-making, governments can devolve responsibilities, potentially leading to lower expenditures (Jansen and Rowley, 1993; Warner, 1999).

In a study by Oxendine et al. (2003) that examined two rural communities tasked with the introduction of a community electronic network, it was found that the success of the project was largely dependent on the level of social capital already existing in each of the communities. They found that the community that experienced significantly more success in the introduction of the network, tended to be more trusting, have more cohesive social ties, and be more prone towards collaboration (Oxendine et al., 2003). This offers an interesting perspective for landuse change, particularly given that many landuse changes are far more likely to result in the inequitable distribution of social impacts than the introduction of a community electronic network. It can probably be assumed that the need for trust, collaboration and networks will be even more pronounced than in the Oxendine et al. (2003) study.

Sharp and Smith (2003) examined whether social capital could enhance relationships between farmers and non-farmers. They found that a community rich in social capital was supportive of its agricultural members, and that this was experienced through land regeneration/preservation activities. They also found that social capital reduced the poor perceptions of environmental impact of agriculture among non-farmers. Sharp and Smith (2003) believed this to be linked to trust. Sharp and Smith’s research indicates that by introducing a landuse change into a community already stocked with social capital, and by actively working to build trust between the new landuse agency and the community, perceptions of impact may improve. Obviously, the agency’s actions need to be trustworthy for community support to be maintained.

As trustworthiness builds trust, social capital is also credited with increasing economic efficiency: “A society that relies on generalised reciprocity is more efficient than a distrustful society” (Putnam, 1993b). Aspects of social capital – particularly norms and trust – are argued to reduce transaction costs and promote productive efficiency (Hogan and Owen, 2000; Maskell, 2000; Offe and Fuchs, 2002). As social capital

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produces trust, reciprocity, and a common understanding of social norms, it limits the need for formalities such as legal contracts. It liberates resources as individuals are not compelled to invest in monitoring others – they can trust them to act as expected (Pretty and Ward, 2001). It can reduce transaction costs by generating expectations that allow people to conduct interactions with a degree of certainty. Social ties can exert influence on members of a society, acting as signposts to ‘strangers’ that an individual is trustworthy, by exposing and reinforcing a trusted group identity (Lin, 2001). This serves not only to provide the individual with social standing, but also leads to associated social and economic savings for the group.

Networks can also act to distribute information, which improves the efficiency of market decisions (Serageldin and Grootaert, 2000). Communities that are rich in social capital are able to contribute to problem solving that might otherwise appear as market, legal or state failures. A community that understands its members and their likely behaviour, capacities, and needs, can overcome problems arising from insufficient resources by utilising trust, solidarity, reciprocity, and respect to contribute to governance (Bowles and Gintis, 2002).

Fukuyama (2001) argues that informal norms are an integral component of any economic system, becoming more important as the nature of economic activity increases in complexity. For example, the rising cost of public liability insurance presents a significant problem for many volunteer groups. Individuals are beginning to expect compensation for personal or property injuries regardless of their own role in causing the harm. However, in the past, societal norms emphasised an individual’s responsibility for their own actions; lawsuits were reserved for genuine cases of irresponsibility or recklessness on the part of another. The contemporary move away from this societal norm has resulted in significant burdens on the public, as they struggle to finance rising public liability costs. This has occurred in parallel with an increasing need to hold public liability insurance. This is threatening the existence of many volunteer groups on which civil society depends. This example illustrates how the erosion of a societal norm can impact on markets, and in turn impact on social capital itself – the social capital feedback loop. It is important that governments recognise the role that social capital can play in overcoming problems that are significant challenges for both markets and the legal system.

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Social capital can provide benefits even to non-participants who are able to enjoy the benefits of living in a trusting (and therefore trustworthy), cohesive, cooperative, efficient society. As Coleman (1988:116) argues, “the kinds of social structures that make possible social norms and the sanctions that enforce them do not benefit primarily... [those] whose efforts would be necessary to bring them about, but benefit all those who are part of such a structure”. This is termed positive externalities (OECD, 2001).

Social capital is also believed to be beneficial for public health. Leyden (2003) argues that social networks and community engagement – key aspects of social capital – are associated with health benefits for individuals who participate. The OECD (2001) cites a nineteenth century Durkheim study which found that the incidence of suicide was linked to the degree to which individuals were integrated into society, while Putnam (2000) cites numerous studies indicating links between social integration and health and well-being. Veenstra and Lomas (1999) suggest that social capital gives people access to relationships and support systems that can directly influence their health. Social isolation is also correlated with illness, although it is unclear which is the causal factor (OECD, 2001). Lochner et al. (1999) further suggests a correlation between health and social characteristics such as capital, cohesion and collective efficacy, but concludes that the relationship is unclear. While health is primarily experienced as an individual benefit, it has flow-on benefits for communities, while also contributing to the further increase of social capital – an example of the social capital feedback loop.

While it has not been researched in great detail social capital is also being credited with lower crime rates, better educational attainment, increased income equality, lower levels of income inequality, and lower rates of child abuse (Putnam, 2000; Harper, 2001; Productivity Commission, 2003). Woolcock (2001) argues that individuals in communities rich in social capital are more likely to be “housed, healthy, hired and happy” (p.12).

So, there is clearly a relationship between social capital, and networks, trust and sustainability. By maintaining and potentially increasing social capital, governments can contribute to healthier, sustainable communities. Hence, when introducing
landuse change, government agencies should employ social capital enhancing strategies as part of their overall community landuse policy approach.

THE 'DARK' SIDE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

While many authors extol the virtues of social capital, most notably Putnam's earlier work, there is also an acknowledged 'dark' side of social capital. Social capital is believed to produce social ills, and contribute to increased polarization and inequities.

The first criticism concerns the exclusive nature of social capital, which can emerge in small, homogenous communities. As Allan and Holland (2003), Flora (1998), and Fyfe and Milligan (2003) suggest, the same ties that bind communities also exclude others. The unity of a group may be dependent on its exclusiveness. For example, groups with strong bonds, feelings of dependency, and distrust towards outsiders, may reject newcomers to the detriment of both the ostracised individual as well as the growth of the community. If no new people and/or ideas are introduced (exclusivity), the community runs the risk of becoming stagnant, unresponsive to change, and susceptible to the growth of parochial narrow-mindedness (Bowles and Gintis, 2002; Brooks, 2003; Fukuyama, 2001, 1995; Productivity Commission, 2003). Innovative ideas, such as sustainable farming techniques, may be rejected by highly bonded, 'closed' communities (Coleman, 1988; Levi, 1996).

Closed and bonded communities tend to demand conformity from their members, restricting personal freedoms and limiting the potential for change and growth. Exclusive networks also serve to create or reinforce inequalities, especially given the tendency for social interactions to occur between individuals who already share similar lifestyles and socio-economic circumstances (Lin, 2001). DeFilippis (2001) lends further support to this argument, suggesting that it is in the best interests of those who benefit from social capital to retain its exclusivity: social capital is essentially about who has power, and like any other power relations, those who have it will always fight to retain it. Fyfe and Milligan (2003) raise similar concerns, arguing that initiatives to encourage social capital, such as volunteerism, favour those who are already powerful and articulate, and who already possess capacity to engage. They argue therefore, that attempts to increase social capital need to be scrutinised to highlight the likelihood of
creating negative social outcomes or inequitable power distribution, with a focus on creating diverse networks and open transmission of information and trust.

This introduces a further dimension. While a community may be composed of many active social groupings, each containing strong networks, norms and trust, there may be little linkage across community groups and/or sectors. This leads to a situation where it is difficult to develop the level of trust and networking necessary for effective collective action (Bridger and Luloff, 1999). As Putnam (1993) and Harriss and DeRenzio (1997) argue, it is the networks that cut across ‘social cleavages’ that nourish the type of cooperation that produces societal benefit. If community ‘problems’ remain at a level that can be tackled by a single group, this will not pose a problem. However, if genuine cross-sector collaboration is necessary – as is usually the case with natural resource and landuse change challenges – the level of social capital may not be adequate. Realistically, social capital usually exists in ‘pockets’, and the real challenge lies not in increasing social capital, but in bridging existing social capital.

Fukuyama (2001) also suggests that much of what constitutes collective civil action is less about achieving societal outcomes and more about achieving individual agendas, by diverting public resources to their own interests. Social capital becomes a tool for self-interest. As a result, a community that appears to be rich in social capital may actually represent an excessive politicisation of community life.

While social capital within one sector of society might serve the interests of its members, it may cause harm to the rest of the community (Grootaert and van Bastelaer, 2002). “Communities work because they are good at enforcing norms and whether this is a good thing depends on what the norms are” (Bowles and Gintis, 2002:425). Fukuyama (2001) refers to these as negative externalities of social capital. For example, gangs, the Mafia and the Ku Klux Klan, rely heavily on strong social capital within their memberships to achieve a common purpose. However, the norms upon which they rely have highly detrimental effects on the remainder of society. Fukuyama (2001) identifies a ‘radius of trust’ – the larger the radius of distrust, the greater liability a group presents to the remainder of society. According to Fukuyama

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measures of social capital have to be qualified by the external harm that it causes; social capital, by its definition, should include an element of common good.

Moreover, Cox and Caldwell (2000) propose that social capital is always positive and suggest that forms of solidarity that reject transferable and general trust for localised trust, should not be classified as social capital. This view conforms to Fukuyama’s suggestion that social capital must have a generalised social good outcome or it fails to meet the criteria of social capital. Under this rationale, a gang operating under established social norms and networks, with high levels of trust, cannot be deemed to be rich in social capital if their outputs are detrimental to society. Therefore, the gaining of localised benefits, at the expense of a general detriment to society, is not social capital. However, at what point can the outputs of a social grouping be classified as localised benefits with generalised negatives? For example, the cotton industry in the southern states of America prospered from its reliance on African-American slave labour. The economic benefits were felt across the nation, while the negatives tended to be localised – the reverse of Cox and Caldwell’s position, yet it is very unlikely that they would consider this to be an example of social capital.

Additionally, the declaration of an output as negative is highly subjective, and based on societal norms and biases which are subject to change over time. Using the same example, it was considered a social norm of early contemporary American society to exploit the African-American race for economic gain. Arguably, white southern American society was a highly bonded and well-networked society, with high levels of trust and reciprocity. Was it a society however, that was rich in social capital? Under the social norms and values of the period, the exploitation of African Americans was not viewed as a negative – or at least not by white society generally. From the luxurious position of over a century later, under Cox and Caldwell’s (2002) definition, such an exploitative form of solidarity would not be considered an example of social capital in action. However, this would suggest that social capital could not be gauged without the perspective of a different historical, social and cultural setting, which renders the concept somewhat useless. I would argue therefore, that such a social system was rich in social capital; however, slavery was a highly negative expression of their social capital. Had those same social groupings used their highly evolved social networks, systems of reciprocity, and localised trust, for a different end, our historical
judgement would not be so harsh. Putzell (1997) suggests a need to distinguish between the operation of networks and norms, what he terms the mechanics of trust, and the ideas and political content that are transmitted through such networks. Whether or not networks will contribute to democracy or equity is dependent on the ideas and norms that arise from them.

This thesis therefore, takes the position that social capital is always a positive addition to a community – it is how that community chooses to express their social capital, and the norms that become integral to their social interactions, which can be negative if they result in social harm to others. So, while an ‘old boys’ network exclusive to those who attended a particular private school may be used to favour members for jobs over other more qualified individuals, it may also be used to raise money for charities, and assist its members in times of crisis. The network itself is not negative; it is the norms and behaviours that its members choose to promote which may be considered negative. As Putnam (1995:665) suggests, “Social capital...networks, norms and trust – enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives. Whether or not their shared goals are praiseworthy is, of course, entirely another matter”.

A further criticism of social capital lies mostly in the way it is defined by some authors. McClenaghan (2000) argues that the emphasis on social cohesion as being a key element of social capital, “discounts community organisation and mobilisation in defence of citizenship rights and the political articulation of rights-based demands which inevitably generate conflict, in favour of activities designed to enhance social cohesiveness and, by implication, social control” (McClenaghan, 2000:582). While I believe that this is a problem of definition, rather than a negative aspect of social capital, it does raise an important consideration for the introduction of landuse change – an issue that has been raised previously in this thesis. As for public participation and impact assessment, institutions and government agencies need to recognise that conflict is not always a negative outcome and that social cohesiveness should not necessarily be their core objective. Conflict can be productive, and in the context of social capital can indicate a society willing and able to articulate and defend their beliefs and/or rights. For example, a community that actively protests the introduction of a particular landuse is a community utilising their stocks of social capital. This should be enhanced through community landuse change policy, not diminished.

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Government agencies can have some role in directing social capital into positive outcomes, by developing policies that work to redistribute power across communities and societies. Brooks (2003) argues that maximising social capital through the encouragement of heavily integrated relationships is not likely to achieve healthy social capital. Instead, social capital can be optimised through strong but autonomous relationships, and through defining community boundaries broadly and flexibly (Flora, 1998). As Flora (1998:490) suggests:

“Networks are most effective for the community as a whole when they are diverse, inclusive, flexible, horizontal (linking those of similar status) and vertical (linking those of different status, particularly local organisations or individuals with external organisations and institutions that have resources not available within the community”).

When social capital is present communities are able to draw on the benefits of a well-networked and trusting community, which can help them cope and adapt to landuse change. By enhancing social capital governments can go some way towards meeting the fifth community need – to be a part of a well-networked and trusting community.

**ENHANCING SOCIAL CAPITAL TO COPE WITH POLICY-DRIVEN LANDUSE CHANGE**

**Do governments have a role?**

Social capital is increasingly being touted as the new means for building sustainable communities (Brooks, 2003). While it is widely acknowledged as an important component of community building, the role of governments in building social capital is complex and contentious (Woolcock et al., 2004). Some argue (Bridger and Luloff, 2001; Fukuyama, 2001; Heffron, 2000; Latham, 2000; Stewart-Weeks, 2000) that the interference of governments into the social and cultural lives of its constituents may weaken networks, and potentially diminish the power of social norms by attempting to institutionalise them. Bridger and Luloff (2001) for example, argue that aside from the high cost associated with state intervention, it may also create animosity between groups, depressing the likelihood of voluntary collective action. Heffron (2000) suggests that government interference may erode coherence and internal integrity of some groups, diminishing the distinction between civil society and the state.
Attempting to influence norms and encourage compliance to achieve a particular outcome, such as natural resource management, can undermine reciprocity and other social motives (Bowles and Gintis, 2002). By enforcing a particular behaviour it can detract from the presumption that others will ‘do right’, and, therefore, undermine levels of social trust (Heffron, 2000). Fukuyama (1999, cited in Productivity Commission, 2003) proposes that while government can be aware of already existing levels of social capital, it cannot duplicate that which is essentially a by-product of factors lying outside of government influence. Additionally, state-community relationships are subject to the same weaknesses of communities – if trust does not exist between the players, social capital is unlikely to grow (Bridger and Luloff, 2001). Alternatively, basing governance on equality, a commitment to welfare, and participatory decision-making practices, can help strengthen trust and confidence in the government and in the future, thereby contributing to healthy social capital (Cavaye, 1997; Cox and Caldwell, 2000; Levi, 1996; MacGillivray and Walker, 2000; Productivity Commission, 2003; Woolcock, 1998). For example, government can define and enforce property rights that arguably make trust among its citizenry possible (Levi, 1996). Further, policies with a larger public purpose as the intent – protection of civil rights, provision of food and shelter, public health, and education – can all help to create conditions for social capital to be nurtured (Heffron, 2000).

Grootaert and van Bastelaer (2002) and Hall (2002) argue that state institutions can provide an environment for local networks and groups to flourish, by cultivating volunteerism. This is particularly important given the inequitable starting base of communities – local capacities, power bases and resources differ enormously, and it is one role of government agencies to counter these inequalities (Cox and Caldwell, 2000). Social capital therefore, acts as a powerful means to identify community strengths and weaknesses and where community capacity building measures might be appropriate (Kilpatrick et al., 2003). Government agencies, in cooperation with regional and local communities, can also empower communities by enhancing rather than replacing community-based networks, emphasising trust and responsiveness and ensuring the development of policy that supports the sustainability of rural and regional Australia (Brooks, 2003; Heffron, 2000).
Cox and Caldwell (2000) argue that it may be the withdrawal of governments from society, with moves towards privatisation and away from some areas of social policy, that is a major factor in falling levels of trust in Australian society, directly contributing to a decline of social capital. They suggest that social impact statements with a component of social auditing need to be the driving forces of policy formation. Governments need to begin asking: Will this policy be likely to increase or decrease trust within and between social and governmental groupings? Will this policy strengthen or weaken social networks, and will the outputs from strengthened networks or increased trust, result in healthy social relationships? (Cox and Caldwell, 2000).

The Productivity Commission (2003) argues that because social capital achieves benefits for individuals and society beyond its active members – positive externalities – then this provides a partial justification for the intervention of government agencies. As Putnam (1993 cited in Putzel, 1997:948) suggests:

“Wise policy can encourage social capital formation and social capital itself enhances the effectiveness of government action. From agricultural extension services in the last century to tax exemptions for community organisations in this one, American government has often promoted investments in social capital, and it must renew that effort now. A new administration that is at long last more willing to use public power and the public purse for public purpose should not overlook the importance of social connectedness as a vital backdrop for effective policy”.

There are many social and economic factors that limit the ability of individuals and/or communities to participate in landuse change decisions. Essentially, they are lacking the collective ability to contribute; they are lacking social capital (Laurian, 2004). It is therefore the opinion of this author that it is a responsibility of government, prior to introducing landuse changes, to develop community policies that attempt to enhance social capital, and thus increase a community’s capacity to engage with decision-making and cope with government introduced landuse changes.

**Governments enhancing social capital**

So, governments have a role in enhancing social capital, but in a practical sense how should that be realised? Much of the literature to date has been highly theoretical, focusing on whether governments have a role, with little exploration of how that might
be implemented. This section is an attempt to begin exploring how government agencies can influence social capital, focusing particularly on how it can be enhanced for the benefit of introducing landuse change.

It is important to accurately assess the degree of social capital present in a community, and predict the level to which this can realistically be raised in a community. As Allan and Holland (2003) argue, if government agencies overestimate the degree to which a community can become involved in the design, and particularly the implementation of policy, then their attempts are likely to fail. While government agencies understand the relationship between financial capital and success, they are seemingly reluctant to make this same link as it applies to social capital. This is particularly relevant in recent times as governments increasingly rely on communities to implement natural resource management actions, but have little knowledge of the capacity of these communities to actually achieve the desired aims.

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges that governments and institutions face when attempting to build social capital is the lack of control that they can actually exert over the process. As Uphoff (2000:227) argues, by simply laying the seeds there is no certainty of outcome – “there is need for whatever is planted to ‘take root’”. Many processes contribute to the build-up of social capital and government agencies have influence over only a fraction of these. There is very little certainty that investments in social capital will be met with success. Attributes of social organisations tend to be unplanned, and are unlikely to have the building of social capital as their objective. Whether the features of social organisation, such as networks, norms and trust, will lead to social capital, and even more importantly whether this will lead to collective action, will vary significantly (Uphoff, 2000).

While it takes a long time for social capital to build, it can take very little time for it to erode (Roseland, 2000; Schuller et al., 2000). It is fragile, and can erode quickly if neglected or undermined (Roseland, 2000). Attempts to enhance social capital, therefore, need to consider the following (Kilpatrick et al., 2003):

- Finding the right balance between internal and external networks or bonding and bridging ties;
- The presence of norms that may deliver negative outcomes of social capital;

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• Existing conflict, and power imbalances; and
• The extent to which a community has, or can develop, shared visions for their future.

Social capital is unlikely to grow or be enhanced from a single policy or a single government intervention. Cavaye (1997:42) argues that the “institutional demarcation of government departments, often based on professional disciplines, has reinforced a disparate government response to broad community issues”. Cavaye suggests that governments rarely see communities as complex and interrelated, and instead view them as their separate components e.g. labour, transport, education, roads etc. Hence, we need a whole-of-government approach to policy development and to social capital enhancing strategies. A single government agency with very specific responsibilities, cannot hope to achieve significant gains in social capital. Instead, by agencies working together, governments can begin to develop a wider perspective that allows the development of inter-agency policy. Communities are highly complex entities, and to effect change governments need to take somewhat radical steps. Whole-of-government planning and policy will be explored in more detail in Chapter 7.

Government agencies need to develop an implicit appreciation of the role social capital can play in decision-making and policy implementation, incorporating social considerations into all decision-making to ensure that policies aim to increase social capital, or at worst, merely have a neutral rather than negative impact. Such an approach, with its emphasis on sustainable communities, should underpin all decision-making (Hancock, 2001).

Social capital enhancement is not an exclusive, one-way process. Governments have a responsibility to develop their own social capital and their own capacity to cope with change. As such, the following discussion should be considered as an open, two-way process, that facilitates government’s role as being one of mutual development, where attempts to enhance social capital within a community are met by equal attempts to build agency capacity (Cavaye, 1997). While this will not be dwelled upon for the purpose of this thesis, it is an underlying assumption.

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The Productivity Commission (2003) has outlined three ways that social capital can be considered in policy. The first is the development of policies that have the enhancement of social capital as one of their explicit aims, such as education, communications, arts, etc. Second, government agencies can work outside of their own policy agenda to support those community driven services that provide a social capital service e.g. Meals-on-wheels, guide dog training. And finally, government agencies may build in to policies that do not have social capital as an underlying aim, the implicit inclusion of social capital to ensure that social capital is not depleted as an unfortunate by-product (Productivity Commission, 2003). These will be explored in more detail below.

**Developing explicit social capital policy**

Governments have a multitude of portfolios in which they can develop policy to influence social capital: education, environment, transport, families, welfare, urban design etc. Governments for example, can develop strong welfare policies that not only support the unemployed but also encourage their participation in society. Government agencies can provide fiscal support, flexibility in working hours, and paid maternity leave, all of which encourage parental involvement in family lives, while allowing more time to explore social activities. This can be taken further, by arguing that governments have a responsibility to assist parents in acquiring parenting skills, as some evidence suggests that parents play a significant role in developing their children’s capacity to take part in community life (Productivity Commission, 2003).

Governments can enhance social capital by providing strong leadership and direction to achieve social good (Krishna, 2000; Woolcock et al., 2004). People in a community might already have the willingness to engage in collective action, but lack a coordinated response. This can be provided through formal structures, roles and support – an institutional role – to achieve coordinated, goal-oriented behaviours (Krishna, 2000). For example, during the 2003 Canberra bushfires, the ACT government led a collective and coordinated assistance response. Arguably, without government support, the community would likely have worked together anyway to assist those in need, however government and institutional support meant that efforts were coordinated and more efficient. Additionally, endorsement by local leadership
gives people the confidence to join assistance efforts that they might otherwise lack the confidence and/or social networks to participate in. There is a point however, where government efforts should stop, if social capital is to be enhanced. If government agencies provide all assistance necessary, without any need for informal community support, then social capital is not likely to be nurtured – individuals have no need to act, and nobody experiences the societal benefits that eventuate through the actions of working together. Social capital is not fostered or retained for future times of crisis.

Social capital can be enhanced through involving the community in decision-making, facilitating the establishment and maintenance of community groups, providing opportunities to develop skills, facilitating constructive resolution of conflict, and embracing shared challenges e.g. the Landcare movement. Lane et al. (1997) advocate the use of a Strategic Perspectives Analysis (SPA) procedure to improve landuse planning. SPA encourages stakeholders to formulate their own preferred landuse strategies, allowing the identification of all stakeholders and interests, thereby helping to determine the appropriateness of current planning objectives. This procedure can be particularly useful in assisting less powerful community sectors to participate in the decision-making process.

According to Leyden (2003), social capital is strongly influenced by neighbourhood design. Autonomous communities (those that have access to basic services within their ‘walkable’ community), versus dependent communities (those that have to go outside their ‘walkable’ community for basic services), are richer in social capital because residents are more likely to interact through informal and formal means (Leyden, 2003). Further, urban design can attract mixed activities, while providing spaces for recreational and community activity (Productivity Commission, 2003). The provision of dog parks (enclosed areas where people meet to exercise and socialise dogs) and children play areas across suburban areas of major cities, are examples of urban design that encourage interaction between people. This suggests that governments have a key role to play in social planning when introducing landuse change. Important to the case studies explored later in this thesis, is the idea that by maintaining or even introducing services into the local community, government agencies can explicitly enhance social capital.

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Providing support for social capital to flourish

Governments can invest in communities to help increase their social capital stock, by directly investing in capacity building and the development of human capital (Mitraud, 2001; Pretty and Ward, 2001; Veenstra and Lomas, 1999). Government agencies can work with individuals to increase knowledge and skills, and their leadership capacity (Pretty and Ward, 2001). They can also work with communities to produce the right conditions for new associations to emerge, or old associations to be strengthened. Governments can provide support for programs that encourage interaction and lower barriers between diverse community groups (Cavaye, 1997; Flora and Flora, 1995; Veenstra and Lomas, 1999). Governments can invest in social capital by providing extension services, or tax exemptions for community organisations (Roseland, 2000). They can also develop schemes to support volunteering, particularly targeted at the unemployed, young people, and the elderly. Governments can provide opportunities for communities to influence local decision-making, facilitating the formation of networks (Wallis and Dollery, 2002). By providing support to local community groups (e.g. rural bushfire brigades), through encouraging employees to participate, or providing resources, government agencies can contribute to the maintenance of social capital. From a landuse change perspective, government agencies can foster public participation in decision-making, empowering local communities and bringing citizens together.

Roseland (2000) argues that governments have a role in community development, by allocating resources for the growth of social groups. Sobel et al. (2001) further support this by suggesting that government support of Landcare groups is pivotal in their continued success. Governments can provide finances and resources, such as the use of school buildings for community meetings, or funding social events such as local dances (Productivity Commission, 2003).

Governments that invest in education can facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge, for both individual and collective learning – characteristics that are vital for the growth of social capital (Roseland, 2000). Education is potentially the area where governments have the greatest ability to generate social capital. From a landuse
change perspective, government agencies can provide training opportunities to locals to encourage their participation in the new landuse.

Public sector employees also have a key role to play in providing support for social capital. Extension workers, social welfare workers, public health providers and teachers, all have a role to play in supporting social capital in a community. Governments can support and encourage their employees to develop relationships with the community, contributing to the implementation of social capital policy (Cavaye, 1997). Chapters 8 and 9 will explore two case studies where public sector employees played very different roles in their respective communities, thereby providing quite variable influences on social capital.

**Ensuring policies do not erode social capital**

Woolcock *et al.* (2004) in a study designed to examine the usefulness of the social capital concept to local government, recommended that local government policies be reviewed, to assess the degree to which they might enhance or inhibit levels of social capital.

Unintentionally, governments can erode social capital by designing public policies without considering potential impacts. Policies that centralise services, such as libraries and schools, can lead to decreasing community interaction. Privatisation of public goods places an economic imperative on their performance, with management focusing more on increased economic efficiency than on the quality of the service or equitable access. Transport systems operated solely for profit do not consider social needs: communities become more reliant on private transport, or begin to modify their involvement in activities that depend on transportation.

Public liability laws again offer a useful example (Productivity Commission, 2003). While public liability laws are intended to generate incentives for organisations to provide safe environments and to provide a mechanism for compensation for those who suffer harm, the reality is that these laws have increased public liability insurance costs, which has in turn, financially constrained many social groups. This has clear ramifications for social capital, given that networks and social groups are a key
component. Licensing and registration requirements have similar effects on the volunteer and social sector.

It is imperative that government agencies begin to include in policy analysis an investigation of the potential impacts of policies on social capital (Roseland, 2000). Social capital should be considered a foundation principle informing all decision-making. For example, policies that are primarily concerned with economic outcomes, such as tax reforms, need to consider the potential impact on social capital. Cox and Caldwell (2000) suggest a series of questions that can be asked of all policy proposals to assess their potential impact on social capital. These questions should focus both on what the policy can offer social capital, as well as whether the policy proposal detracts from social capital:

- Does the policy increase (or detract from) people’s skills to engage in social activities with people they do not know?
- Does the policy target some groups at the expense of others, or create feelings of exclusion?
- Do the proposed forms of service delivery allow the building of informal relationships and trust between stakeholders?
- Does the project help extend networks, confidence, and optimism, among participants?
- Do participants increase their capacity to deal with conflict and diversity?
- Does the program evaluation include social, as well as financial, outputs and outcomes?
- What message does the program offer to people about their own roles and values?

It is highly likely that simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers will not be possible to such questions. However, by at least addressing these questions, and beginning to explore the potential impacts and benefits that a policy can present to social capital, policy makers can at the very least begin to identify sectors of society that may need support through the introduction and ongoing implementation of the policy, while also providing evidence for the possible discontinuation or adaptation of the policy. This has significant relevance for landuse change. As a component of community landuse

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policies, government agencies need to evaluate the degree to which decisions impact on social capital. Governments can ensure that a landuse change will not detract from a community’s sustainability by conducting social impact assessments and implementing mitigation and promotion strategies to manage predicted impacts. Decisions will most likely be improved, and social capital nurtured. Moreover, they need to ensure that the management philosophies influencing management decisions do not erode social capital. For example, Chapter 8 explores the expansion of pine plantations into a rural community. Certain policies that were introduced in concert with the landuse change have contributed to an erosion of social capital in the community. For example, policies contributed to the displacement of people, and the subsequent discontinuing of certain social practices – practices that clearly helped build social capital. This might have been avoided or lessened by conducting a social impact assessment (Chapter 4) and involving the community in the process (Chapter 5). Also, by developing management philosophies that respect the needs of a community, the agency could have avoided management decisions that detracted from these.

**SUMMARY**

Chapter 3 proposed six conditions that if met, can help communities to cope with the introduction of landuse change and ease the transition of an introduced landuse change into a community. This chapter has argued that governments can go some way towards enhancing community networks and trust – the fifth need – through the promotion and enhancement of social capital.

Regardless of debate surrounding the definition of social capital, it undoubtedly consists of three key components: networks, trust and norms. A community that is rich in social capital is a community that is well-networked, trusting (while its members are trustworthy), and reliant on norms such as reciprocity. By utilising networks, individuals in communities have increased access to support, information, resources, and opportunities to act collectively. Networks are fundamental therefore, to the realisation of positive social change in a community, as the denser the networks the greater the capacity for cooperation, and the greater the capacity to cope with change.
Networks become powerful tools for government agencies in any attempt to introduce landuse change into a community.

Governments have a powerful role to play in the maintenance and enhancement of social capital in rural communities. How government agencies attempt to enhance social capital will differ between situations: “The threats and opportunities and types of changes required for communities to move toward their preferred vision for the future will vary from community to community” (Kilpatrick et al., 2003). Governments have a responsibility to introduce landuse change policies that are respectful of and sensitive to existing social capital, while providing resources and strategic policies that attempt to further enhance it. There is no magic formula; however, by designing explicit social capital oriented policies, by providing resources to community groups that can potentially contribute to social capital, and by re-evaluating policies with consideration of social capital needs, government agencies can facilitate new networks, and increase trust.

The following chapter will explore the concept of a community landuse policy, and how it contributes to healthy, sustainable communities. It will conclude by describing how a community landuse policy might be applied in practice when introducing landuse changes.

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This chapter will explore how a community landuse policy contributes to the sixth condition that governments need to meet to contribute to sustainable communities – for communities to be healthy and sustainable – while bringing together the tools used to achieve the other community needs into a strategic approach. This chapter will argue, that by fully arming the managers of landuse change with knowledge about the potential impacts of the change before its introduction (SIA), by involving the community in the entire process (public participation), and by equipping communities with the skills, knowledge and resources to cope (social capital), governments can contribute to healthy and sustainable communities. The chapter will also argue that five key management philosophies should influence landuse change decision-making.
INTRODUCTION

Previous chapters have examined the importance of rural communities and argued that it is the responsibility of governments to promote sustainable communities when introducing policy-driven landuse changes. As detailed in Chapter 3, rural communities are already facing pressures that threaten their social, economic, and environmental sustainability. It is the responsibility of governments to ensure wherever possible that policy-driven landuse change does not introduce yet another pressure on the sustainability of rural communities. While any landuse change, and indeed change more generally, has the potential to cause impact on rural communities, this thesis focuses on policy-driven landuse change, as it is largely within control of government agencies to introduce in a sensitive and considered manner, potentially enhancing the sustainability of rural communities.

This chapter advocates two steps to introducing landuse change: First, the application of a community landuse policy\(^{29}\) to ensure that the ‘best-fit’ landuse is introduced to a community; and second, that the community landuse policy (and strategy) be encapsulated within appropriate management philosophies, namely place-based management, local scale management, the triple-bottom-line, public participation, and whole-of-government policy and planning. Figure 7.1 reintroduces the community landuse policy approach, utilising all of the tools explored in this thesis, and encapsulated within the key management philosophies. It illustrates how the approach meets the six conditions for community sustainability when introducing landuse change.

\(^{29}\) This chapter will refer to both community landuse policies and community landuse strategies. The community landuse policy is the overarching approach to introducing the landuse change, while the community landuse strategy is the culmination of the policy into a strategy for managing the landuse change into the future, based on appropriate management philosophies that meet the needs, values and expectations of the community.
BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO COPE WITH CHANGE THROUGH STRATEGIC COMMUNITY LANDUSE POLICIES

Landuse change needs to be appropriate for the community receiving it – it needs to ‘fit’ with community expectations, goals, and visions. By utilising social impact assessment and public participation principles, and by assessing the degree of social capital existent in a community and designing strategies to build on, enhance, or utilise existing social capital stocks, government agencies can develop a community landuse strategy that ‘fits’ the community it has been designed for. There is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to preparing communities for landuse change. Instead, government agencies should develop community landuse policies based on basic principles and a common process, but individually tailored for each community experiencing a landuse change. This is not to say that we cannot learn from previous cases; many of the impacts of a landuse change are repeated across communities, and these previous examples should be used to help identify potential impacts.

There are two possible scenarios when introducing landuse change. Scenario A is when government agencies have an intended landuse but are unsure as to the best location. This is usually the case with pine plantation development or national park acquisitions. The government policy might be to expand softwood plantations or increase conservation reserves. Usually, the landuse is non-negotiable. However, the actual location of the landuse might be uncertain, and can probably be negotiated to fit with community or societal needs. Alternatively, Scenario B is when government agencies possess or have acquired land and are unsure as to the future use of that land. The location is defined, the landuse is uncertain. If managed appropriately, both scenarios provide opportunities for communities to control landuse change and to have a say in the future of their landscapes.

This thesis will provide a management model for each of the possible scenarios. Model A provides a simple process to improve the ability of government agencies to wisely locate defined landuses. It guides the government to select the most appropriate location for a defined landuse. Model B provides a simple process to improve the ability of government agencies to wisely select a landuse for a defined location.
Both models utilise the tools discussed in the thesis thus far, namely social impact assessment, public participation, and social capital enhancing strategies. The models are primarily about “bringing the social relationships of community into alignment with the pursuit of locally preferred economic and political ends” (Day, 1998:102). These models focus primarily on selecting the right landuse for the right community. Such an approach allows flexible and targeted decision-making and coordination of services, while also promoting a partnership approach between key agencies and communities (Walsh, 2001).

An important distinction can be drawn between the ends and the means of policy-driven landuse change. For example, if regional economic development is the ultimate goal of a landuse change policy, then theoretically governments should be more willing to negotiate the landuse that will achieve this. Pine plantation may be one option, but when considered with other social and environmental goals, a nature reserve may be more appropriate. If the protection of a species or habitat is the end goal, this might be achieved through a variety of landuse options, including (but not only) a national park. Too often, governments become focused on the means losing sight of the end goal. The community landuse policy approach advocated in this thesis simply requires governments to define their goal and remain flexible and imaginative in the way that they achieve it. The thesis argues that to improve the sustainability of rural communities and to ensure that ‘best-fit’ landuse for a community and its landscape, governments need to avoid firmly entrenched ideas of location or landuse.

**Scenario A: Selecting a location for a defined policy-driven landuse change**

**The current approach**

Scenario A is the most common approach of Commonwealth and State governments to introducing landuse change. The portfolio responsibilities of individual government agencies usually require a pre-determined landuse. One example is detailed in Chapter 9, which resulted from a NSW NPWS intention to increase the area of land under reserve. With the landuse defined, the agency began to identify potential locations that...
might meet the needs of the agency, these being to capture particular landscape types or fauna or flora species that could be purchased within budgetary constraints. The agency had an intended landuse, but was unsure as to the best location. This is also usually the case with pine plantation development, an example of which is provided in Chapter 8. Forests NSW had a clearly defined imperative to increase softwood plantation to meet various economic and physical needs. The government policy was to expand softwood plantations, with consideration of key internal and environmental considerations – the location remained open to negotiation.

With the landuse clearly defined, potential sites are identified and usually narrowed down to one or two options. The agency begins to scope the sites’ potential, based on availability of land, environmental considerations (e.g. soil type, rainfall, habitat, etc) and internal economic criteria, such as the cost of transportation, proximity to central offices, proximity to necessary infrastructure and support, availability of workforce, or ability to support a transplanted workforce. They may then be required to do an EIA, depending on the landuse in question and the likelihood of environmental impacts. As discussed in Chapter 4, an SIA is only required as a component of an EIA and even then requirements are limited. Effectively, the development of national park does not usually require an SIA, while softwood plantation expansion requires a limited investigation into potential impacts with no obligation to mitigate these. This assessment is usually done at a regional scale with little consideration of the effect of the proposal on local communities.

The land purchases are made once it is determined that the location meets environmental needs. The introduction of the landuse commences. Participatory techniques at this stage are likely to be limited to consultation, particularly the transfer of information from the agency to the community. The community are rarely granted genuine control of the decision; at best they may be given some input into minor management details. While consultation attempts are improving across most government agencies, generally government agencies tend not to actively seek genuine community input prior to finalisation of the decisions.

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The likely outcomes for the community will involve some attempt on behalf of the
government agency to introduce mitigation or management reactions to problems as
they emerge – a reactive management approach. In summary, a typical approach to
Scenario A is outlined in Box 7.1.

This approach rarely involves a comprehensive SIA, has a limited attempt to engage
the public, and has no consideration of the effects of the change on stocks of social
capital. Most attempts to meet community needs are done *ad hoc*, and are rarely
incorporated into a considered, strategic and sensitive community landuse strategy.
The following outlines a model for a community landuse policy, to better introduce
landuse change while still working within the limitations of Scenario A; a defined
landuse, with an uncertain location.

**Box 7.1: The current approach to introducing landuse change under Scenario A**

1. A government agency identifies a need to develop a particular landuse, 
   relevant to their portfolio responsibilities (e.g. plantation expansion or national 
   park development);
2. The agency identifies potential sites;
3. The sites are scoped on the basis of environmental and internal economic 
   criteria, rarely social or external economic criteria;
4. An EIA might be required. If so, a limited SIA might also be required at a 
   regional scale, but rarely at a local scale;
5. The land is purchased. Some consultation will occur at this point;
6. As problems emerge, the agency may employ mitigation techniques.
7. The landuse may remain a point of contention in the community with the 
   agency facing ongoing attempts to reduce hostility.

**Community landuse policy Model A: Finding the best location for
a defined landuse**

The first step in the community landuse policy is for the government agency to clearly
define their objectives. That is, what are they aiming to achieve from the introduction
of the landuse? Using our case study of plantation expansion several questions need to

*Chapter 7: Developing community landuse policies for the introduction of policy-driven landuse
change: Increasing community capacity to cope with change*
be asked: first, is the goal to produce timber or is it actually a regional development objective? If it is the latter, then potential landuses rapidly expand. However, if it is the former – to produce timber – it is necessary to further refine the objectives. For example, is there a requirement to produce softwood, or is there some scope to explore the possibilities of hardwood plantation? Are land acquisitions necessary to achieve agency objectives, or can cooperative private forestry produce the same outcomes?

In the example of national park development, the objective may simply be to expand the State’s conservation reserve. Alternatively, the objective of the national park development may be to protect a particular species, habitat type, cultural interest or tourist value. If this is the case, it greatly limits the flexibility of the agency in determining the location, but may expand government options to consider alternative landuses. The agency needs to be clear about the degree to which they can be flexible on these issues. Definitive answers to these questions, or objectives that must be met, can provide boundaries for future decisions.

Once the agency is clear about what they wish to achieve out of the landuse introduction, they should begin to scope out potential geographical locations for the landuse with consideration of:

- Agency objectives;
- Availability of land for purchase (is compulsory acquisition an option?);
- Biophysical features e.g. soil type, gradient, climate and general suitability for intended landuse;
- Potential environmental impacts;
- Internal economic factors e.g. cost of land, cost of transportation, proximity to central offices, infrastructure and support, availability of workforce, or ability to support a transplanted workforce.
- Legal considerations e.g. zoning, vegetation clearing legislation.

It is at this point that agencies generally feel that they have sufficient information to decide the placement of the landuse. Community consultation may occur after the land has been purchased, effectively limiting the community’s capacity to alter decision-making. However, Model A adds further dimensions to agency decision-making,
requiring that the community’s social and economic needs and expectations be considered equally with other factors.

By now, the agency will have short-listed potential locations. The next stage is to begin a timely and strategic public participation process at each of the locations. As discussed in Chapter 5, while public participation needs to be weaved throughout the entire process, the agency needs to be strategic in the use of the public by providing an opportunity to participate, but not an expectation to participate: community interests should be protected regardless of their degree of engagement. The rationale behind a strategic public participation process as opposed to a comprehensive process is the need to maintain community interest and momentum through what may be a lengthy process.

To begin with, the agency should release information about the proposed land use change and what the objectives of the change are. The agency needs to be careful to clarify that it is just a proposal, that other locations are being considered, and that community involvement in the decision is sought. It is also recommended at this stage that the agency actively seek the involvement of other government agencies through the establishment of an interagency taskforce. Agencies dealing with communities, education, health, roads etc. may be essential players in ‘getting the land use right’. This is part of a whole-of-government philosophy underpinning these models (discussed later in this chapter).

Once the communities have been fully informed of the proposal, a rapid, open and transparent social and economic impact assessment can be conducted in each of the locations. An EIA\(^\text{30}\) should be conducted concurrently to ensure that the land use is environmentally sustainable, as well as socially and economically sustainable – a core component of the triple-bottom-line approach. An SIA should consider:

- What scale of community will be affected?
- Who is likely to be affected?

\(^{30}\) As discussed in Chapter 4, it is imperative that SIA and EIA process are conducted separately to ensure that social and economic values are still considered even when environmental impacts are unlikely. For a more detailed discussion of EIA, see Carroll and Pearson, 2002; Institute of Environmental Assessment, UK, 1999; Petts, 1999; Thomas, 2001.
• What are the political imperatives?
• Does the community have its own visions for the land?
• What are the potential social and economic costs?
• What are the potential social and economic benefits?
• Ultimately, which of the short-listed communities is in the best position to benefit from the change (with mitigation techniques employed)?

Public participation should continue through the SIA process by providing varied and timely opportunities for communities to participate. While this is essential to the continuation of the informational level public participation commenced earlier in the process, it now involves exploration of issues, values, expectations, needs and potential impacts. As discussed in Chapter 5, involving the public early in the decision-making process can avoid disputes and quickly determine the level of acceptability of the proposal. This can save the agency a costly process that does not achieve its objectives. The participation process needs to be properly resourced, flexible, and targeted to include the interests of all stakeholders (even if they choose not to participate). Public participation can be used to determine the level of community interest in the proposal and probable reaction to the landuse change, and whether the issues raised can be mitigated, or a compromise reached. This should be a primary consideration when deciding where to locate the landuse. Chapter 5 suggested that communities should be encouraged to define what they see as the issues surrounding the landuse change, and how they envision the future of their landscape. Ultimately, however, the government agency needs to be honest about how flexible they can be in the decision-making surrounding the landuse change.

A triple-bottom-line analysis\textsuperscript{31} can then be conducted, allowing consideration of all of the potential social, economic (internal and external) and environmental costs and benefits that have been identified. During this process it might be determined that the location which provides the ideal biophysical environment for the landuse, has social and economic impacts which would be costly or difficult to mitigate, making the

\textsuperscript{31} As will be argued later in this chapter, decision-makers are increasingly expected to incorporate the triple-bottom-line into decision-making. It is not the purpose of this thesis to contribute to discussions on the process of weighing up each of the ‘lines’ to reach the end-decision, only to advocate that decision-making should be considerate of all three broad spheres.

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proposal socially unacceptable. Alternatively, a location which is more expensive in terms of infrastructure costs, might have a community highly receptive to the change, reducing mitigation costs and making it the more economically and socially viable alternative. Essentially, the community and the agency need to accept that trade-offs must occur between the biophysical, the economic (internal and external), and the social. As Appelstrand (2002) suggests, a balance between conflicting interests must be reached in decision-making surrounding land use change, and it is only through participation that multiple uses can be identified and a balanced solution achieved. Model A does not suggest that social and economic factors must be considered ahead of biophysical factors, only that they are treated equally when considering placement of a new land use. In the same way that an agency might reject a location based on biophysical needs (such as rainfall, climate, soils), a triple-bottom-line approach also asserts the rejection of a location based on poorly matched social and economic factors.

So, when the location has been selected, the agency should then complete a comprehensive social, economic and environmental impact assessment, which includes constructing a ‘profile’ of the community. As outlined in Chapter 4, SIA as it is currently practiced needs to be improved. The necessary improvements discussed in detail in Chapter 4, included: adequately resourcing SIA, increasing the technical capacity held within the agency to conduct SIA, increasing public participation, consideration of cumulative and local impacts, and entrenching monitoring of impacts into the ongoing management of the land use. By implementing these improvements, it becomes possible for SIA to genuinely inform decision-making, and guide the sensitive selection of a location for a land use, and the successful introduction of the land use into the community.

While predicting potential environmental impacts lies within the scope of an environmental IA (which should also be conducted), assessing a community’s perceptions of environmental impacts is part of a social IA process. As discussed previously, community perceptions on environmental impacts need to be managed for even if they conflict with the findings of an EIA. As such, Chapters 8 and 9, in their

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Chapter 4 introduced ‘community profiles’ and outlined the characteristics that should be considered.
discussion of perceived impacts surrounding two case studies of landuse change, will include the environmental impacts as the community perceived them.

The impact assessment at this stage becomes less about determining the appropriateness of the landuse, and more about developing ways to more sensitively introduce the landuse into the community. While withdrawing from the location needs to remain an option at this stage, the process thus far should allow the agency to begin ‘firming up’ their decision.

Within the impact assessment process the agency needs to consider:

- What social, economic and environmental impacts do the community perceive may result from the proposed landuse change for this community?
- What are the perceived social, economic and environmental benefits?
- Is there any factor unique to the region that might affect the level or type of impact?
- How likely are the impacts to occur?
- Who are the winners and losers?
- How are they likely to be affected and to what severity?
- Does it increase social inequities?
- Can the landuse retain existing social and economic values?
- Can it enhance values?
- What is the scope of the community that will be affected – the agency should identify regional communities as well as local communities which might be affected by the proposed landuse change.
- How long will the impacts last?
- Will there be cumulative impacts? A landuse change on its own may not have significant impact but when combined with external influences there may be significant cumulative impact.
- What ‘flow-on’ effects might occur?
- What might happen if the proposal does not go ahead? A picture of the community without the proposal and with the proposal should be compiled.

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A significant part of this stage is to determine the scope of the community that will be affected. While there will almost certainly be impacts felt at a regional level, often the most significant impacts are experienced at a local scale. It is this scale that is often neglected in an impact assessment process. Government agencies are not well equipped to identify local communities in the broad, and non-participative approaches they usually adopt. However, by involving the public from the earliest possible stage, and using participative techniques that explore the communities that people identify with (geographic or of interest), local communities affected should soon emerge.

The agency then needs to consider the capacity of the community to cope with the landuse change. Communities have different capacities to cope and what might be relatively insignificant to one community might destroy social values, capital and identity, in another. If community identity is strongly linked to a sense of place based on aesthetic landscape values, radically changing the landscape may diminish a community's sense of their own identity, reducing their capacity to cope.

As discussed in Chapter 6, social capital is strongly linked to a community's capacity to cope with change. It is useful for government agencies attempting to introduce landuse changes to determine the strength of social capital within a region or community. They can do this by conducting a social capital analysis to establish what the community needs to cope with the landuse change, what the agency needs from the community, and where on the scale of social capital this might fall; that is, what level of social capital is necessary to achieve both the government agency's and the community's objectives? Engaging the cross-agency taskforce is useful at this stage, allowing agencies with expertise in community development and capacity building strategies to contribute to understanding community capacity.

From a social capital analysis governments can develop ways to utilise existing networks and trust if these are strong, or develop ways to help build social capital (or at least avoid destabilising it). As Chapter 6 outlined, the government has three overarching ways to influence social capital within a community: 1) by developing explicit social capital building policy e.g. creating explicit policies to place employees within the community to maintain population dynamics and thus services and

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*Chapter 7: Developing community landuse policies for the introduction of policy-driven landuse change: Increasing community capacity to cope with change*
infrastructure; 2) by providing support for social capital to flourish e.g. supporting the formation of bridging ties to facilitate the transfer of knowledge, skills, norms and networks; and 3) ensuring that policies do not erode social capital e.g. ensuring that the introduction of the landuse does not lead to the collapse of social networks or the erosion of trust. This should be included in the agency’s strategy to build the capacity of the community to cope with the change, by mitigating the impacts or providing support and infrastructure to assist the community with the transition.

Given all of the information collected at this point – social, economic and environmental – government agencies must then ensure that the site in question is both the best site for the intended landuse, and that the intended landuse is the best option for this location. An important component of Model A is that it requires agencies to be willing to alter their decision up to this stage. This is where inter-agency relationships, established earlier in the process, become crucial. Community landuse policies must be a whole-of-government objective. For example, if a parcel of land has already been acquired for hardwood timber extraction, and an analysis of the community’s social and economic capacity to accept the change (as well as the ecological sensitivity of the site), reveals that national park would be more appropriate, then a whole-of-government approach makes adapting the intended landuse possible – as other land management agencies are already engaged in the process adapting the land for another purpose is simplified. Alternatively, retaining the original purpose, but expanding or refining the permitted activities, might also be an option under place-based management.

So, when the landuse and location have been finalised, the final stage of the community landuse policy is reached, and culminates in a community landuse strategy, which details:

- Potential impacts and benefits;
- Mitigation strategies for potential negative impacts;
- Enhancement strategies for potential benefits;
- Social capital enhancing techniques;
- Monitoring of potential impacts; and
- Future participation and engagement strategies.

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Chapter 7: Developing community landuse policies for the introduction of policy-driven landuse change: Increasing community capacity to cope with change
The strategy should be based on developed and considered management philosophies that will underpin future management decisions. These are:

- Place-based management philosophies as opposed to the application of generic agency policy;
- Managing landuse change at a local and regional level;
- A triple-bottom-line approach;
- Adopting a participatory approach; and
- Whole-of-government decision-making.

These will be detailed later in the chapter.

Model A is summarised in Figure 7.2:
Figure 7.2: Community landuse policy Model A – A guide to locating defined landuses

Consider:
- Objectives of the landuse
- Biophysical features
- Availability of land
- Potential environmental impacts
- Internal economic factors
- Legislative limitations
- Other agencies that might contribute to decision-making.

Clearly define the objectives of the landuse

Scope potential geographic locations and establish interagency taskforce

Implement strategic and timely public participation strategies at each location

Complete a rapid social and environmental impact assessment at each location

Triple-bottom-line analysis of the locations

Location selected

Conduct comprehensive SIA [and EIA]

Detail:
- The social and economic characteristics of the community in a ‘profile’
- Social and economic impacts and benefits
- Likelihood of impacts occurring
- Who are the winners and losers?
- The scope of the affected community
- How long the impacts are likely to last
- Will the impacts be cumulative?
- What is the capacity of the community to cope with the change?

Provide analysis of social capital and community sustainability

Develop mitigation strategies for impacts

Utilise existing stocks of social capital

OR

Develop social capital enhancement and community sustainability strategies

Produce a community landuse strategy for introducing the landuse change

Ensure that the best ‘fit’ for both the community and the landuse is being achieved

Location of landuse finalised and community landuse strategy implemented

The community landuse policy will:
- Detail impacts and benefits
- Outline social capital building strategies
- Detail ongoing monitoring of impacts
- Detail future participation and engagement strategies

Future decision-making should be based on the following management philosophies:
- Place-based management
- Local versus regional decision-making
- The triple-bottom-line
- Public participation
- Whole-of-government policy and planning

It is not in the scope of this thesis to explore the role of EIA however, it is acknowledged as an important component of a triple-bottom-line, sustainable community approach to community landuse policy development.

Consider social, economic and environmental costs and benefits for each location to determine which provides the ‘best fit’, socially, economically and environmentally, while still meeting agency objectives.

This is the last chance for the government to ensure that this location best meets the objectives of the landuse AND that this is the best landuse option for this community. A whole-of-government approach is necessary to ensure that options are kept open.
Adhering to the approach outlined in Model A does not guarantee that the landuse will be successfully introduced. It can only increase the likelihood of acceptance by the community. The benefit of using such an approach is that impacts are determined before the land is purchased, or before a final decision is made as to its future, which allows the agency to develop a more adaptive management strategy. If it appears that the social and economic risk is too high, and that the community will resist the introduction of the landuse beyond mitigation, then the cost of the agency withdrawing is not prohibitive. Additionally, such an approach gives the community some ownership of the decision-making process, which promotes a feeling of control over the future of their community, their landscape and their own identity. Because the impacts were defined and mitigation strategies adopted wherever possible, the community will likely be more accepting of those impacts that could not be mitigated. Finally, if the impact assessment and public participation process reveals a lack of capacity to cope with the change, then the agency has an opportunity to build capacity if they determine that that location still suits their purpose, by implementing capacity building strategies within the community landuse policy.

**Scenario B: Selecting a landuse for a defined location**

**The current approach**

Scenario B is when a government agency owns or controls an area of land for which a landuse has not been clearly defined. This may occur when an industry or landuse moves out of an area leaving vacated land for which a future landuse is undecided. An example of this is currently in play in southeast Queensland, where CSIRO has vacated their research facility in Samford, a rural village on the outskirts of Brisbane. The land was donated to the Pine Rivers Shire Council who has been tasked with finding an appropriate landuse. The potential uses of the land are numerous, especially given the fast expanding population of the southeast corner of Queensland, and local land values. Developmental pressures are significant, but so too are community demands to retain the ecological, aesthetic and recreational values of the site.

So, a government has an area of land for which a landuse is not yet defined – what happens next? Depending on the value of the land it is likely that stakeholders will
approach the government with their interests, using power relations and political motivations to pressure the government into meeting these interests. Stakeholders might include developers pursuing residential or industrial interests on the site, environmental groups lobbying to protect ecological values, or local community groups wishing to protect recreational or aesthetic values.

Faced with various options, the government begins to scope the potential of the site for each of the proposed landuses based on their economic value, environmental suitability and general community values (although these are often considered at a regional, state or even national level, depending on the governmental level). While planning laws and zoning schemes may be key influences, to a large extent market forces also drive this process. Developers for example, frequently have the economic capacity to purchase land, while environmental groups may not. This economic power may be strengthened by a governmental need to raise revenue. The decision may become an economic one, rather than one founded on the triple-bottom-line.

From this process a landuse is selected, although potential to change this decision will likely remain. Depending on the landuse selected, the responsibility for the introduction of the landuse might be placed in the hands of a relevant government agency or a private developer. If the landuse selected has private interests, such as residential development, the government may hand over control of the remainder of the process. An EIA might then be required, within which the proponent may have to identify social impacts. Again, this is done at a regional scale rather than a local scale. The community is then informed of the landuse proposal and consultation takes place. Despite the best intentions of the proponent, consultation is almost always limited to the dissemination of information on the new landuse, and the defence of its apparent benefits. If the landuse is considered unacceptable to the community, or even a small sector of it, hostility may emerge and the introduction of the landuse delayed, while the proponents attempt to increase the attractiveness of the new landuse to its opponents. Depending on how successfully the proponent addresses these concerns, the landuse may be introduced into a climate of hostility. It may lack support, and attempts to thwart its success may be ongoing. The proponent may expend significant resources

Chapter 7: Developing community policies for the introduction of landuse change: increasing community capacity to cope
Box 7.2: The current approach to introducing landuse change under Scenario B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>A government agency identifies an area of land for which a landuse is unidentified;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The agency identifies potential landuses;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The landuses are scoped on the basis of environmental, economic and to some extent social criteria;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>A landuse is selected. The responsibility for the landuse might now be placed in the hands of a relevant government agency, or a private developer;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>An EIA might be required. If so, a limited SIA might also be required at a regional scale, but rarely at a local scale;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The landuse is confirmed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Consultation will occur at this stage;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>As issues and contention emerge, the proponents attempt to increase the attractiveness of the landuse to its critics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>The landuse may be introduced into a hostile environment and may remain a point of contention in the community. The proponent of the landuse will face ongoing attempts to reduce conflict.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scenario B is often met by government agencies in a reasonably conscientious manner, with varying intents to meet community interests. However, the power of some lobby groups often means that minority interests are pursued in the misguided belief that the loudest voice supports the biggest majority. This is because governments almost always fail to engage the community early enough in the process and tend to begin participation once the decision is almost finalised. Additionally, participation techniques may not represent community interests, limited instead to a powerful minority. This is not because governments are intent on making decisions without community input, but tends to be because governments believe that they are saving the community stress and time by moving the decision towards an outcome in a decisive and efficient way. The following model provides government agencies with guidance on how to get the right mix of public involvement, impact assessment, and...
representation of community interests, so as to make the best decision for the community and for the land in question.

**Community landuse policy Model B: Finding the best landuse for a defined location**

Model B is about finding the ‘right’ landuse for a chosen location. It potentially provides the opportunity to increase the capacity of the community to control their landscape, to provide input to their own future and to engage in the decision-making process. This stage is also based on a whole-of-government philosophy, as interagency collaboration regarding the future of the site is necessary to ensure the best outcome.

The first step in the process therefore, is to establish an interagency and stakeholder representative taskforce that will be responsible for developing and implementing the community landuse policy. It is essential that this taskforce be established with transparent and strategic links across all relevant agencies and stakeholders. In Model B the taskforce plays a more prominent role than in Model A (Model A is necessarily driven more by a single agency with cross-agency collaboration). The first task of the taskforce is to clearly define the geographic, political, legal, social and economic boundaries of the site. They need to be up-front about the degree to which they can explore potential landuses on the location. They need to clarify what rights and responsibilities already exist on the site, to ensure that unrealistic expectations for the site are not raised, and that the landuse selected is in harmony with other uses of the land. For example, is there a native title claim on the land, or are there legitimate Indigenous access rights that should be acknowledged? Is there a known ecological value that must be protected under legislation? Is the area zoned to exclude development? This stage of the process is concerned with identifying values which are non-negotiable, and which must be integrated into the future use of the site. This provides boundaries for decision-making.

The next stage of the process is to examine the environmental, social and economic characteristics and values of the site in its current state. A strategic public engagement
process should be commenced, providing the best opportunity to capture community interests and values. Hostilities towards government may exist due to previous policy conflicts or lack of consultation in the past. This increases the challenge of implementing public participation strategies (Singleton, 2000). However, rather than avoiding the challenge, governments should embrace the opportunity to build community confidence.

The taskforce needs to clearly articulate any limitations on future landuses. The purpose of this stage is to collect as much information as possible about the value of the site ecologically, economically and socially to provide a base line against which to find the ‘best-fit’ landuse for the community. The information can be compiled in a community or regional ‘profile’. The following questions can be addressed:

- What are the biophysical features e.g. soil type, gradient, climate and general suitability for various landuses;
- What ecological values exist on the site? (e.g. is it part of a habitat network? Does it provide habitat for endangered species?)
- What are the social characteristics, values and expectations of the site? (e.g. who are its neighbours? What is it currently being used for? Does the community value it for any purpose? Do other sites provide the same value?)
- What are the economic values of the site?

Once the taskforce is clear about the boundaries of the site for future landuses, in conjunction with the broader community they can begin to actively scope out potential landuses for the site, with further consideration of the above, as well as:

- External interest in the site for a particular landuse (e.g. development);
- Internal economic factors (e.g. does the agency responsible have the necessary resources to manage a site for a chosen landuse? This is particularly relevant for nature conservation as conservation agencies are often funds limited).
- Legal considerations (e.g. zoning, environmental legislation that prevents tree clearing, Indigenous access or native title rights).

It is likely at this stage that the responsible government will be pressured from various sources to pursue a particular landuse. It is the responsibility of the taskforce to ensure
that this remains an open and transparent process, and that decisions are not made prematurely without consideration of all factors. Potential landuses can be short-listed based on the factors identified above. A rapid, open and transparent social and economic impact assessment, as well as an environmental impact assessment, can be conducted for each of the landuses. The SIA should consider:

- Community interest and support of the landuse
- Who will be the winners and losers from the landuse change?
- What scale of community will be affected?
- Who is likely to be affected?
- What are the political imperatives?
- What are the potential social and economic costs?
- What are the potential social and economic benefits?
- Ultimately, which of the short-listed landuses will provide the most benefit and produce the least harm for the community?

The taskforce should continue to actively seek the community’s participation. As discussed in Model A, involving the public strategically in the decision-making process can avoid conflict and identify a landuse which will be accepted by the community and fit community values. It needs to be resourced and targeted to represent the interests of all stakeholders. Public participation can be used to determine the level of community interest in the proposal and probable reaction to the landuse change, and whether the issues raised can be mitigated or a compromise reached. This is a primary consideration when determining the site’s future landuse. Communities should be encouraged and facilitated to define what they see as the issues surrounding the landuse change, and how they envision the future of the site. Ultimately, the government needs to be honest about the degree to which they can be flexible in their decision-making surrounding the future of that landscape.

A triple-bottom-line analysis can then be conducted, which allows consideration of all of the potential social, economic (internal and external), and environmental costs and benefits that have been identified, as well as limitations on the future direction of the site. By considering all of the social, economic and environmental information, the community and the government combined can reach a decision on the future of the

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site. While the triple-bottom-line approach requires equal consideration of social, economic and environmental factors, both the community and the government should accept that trade-offs must occur between biophysical, economic, and social values when considering the future of the site.

When the landuse has been selected, a comprehensive SIA, as well as a comprehensive EIA\textsuperscript{33}, should be conducted. The impact assessment process at this stage becomes less about selecting the right landuse, and more about developing ways to more sensitively introduce the landuse into the community. The social and economic impact assessment process needs to consider:

- What social, economic and environmental impacts do the community perceive may result from the proposed landuse change for this community?
- What are the perceived social, economic and environmental benefits?
- Is there any factor unique to the region that might affect the level or type of impact?
- How likely are the impacts to occur?
- Who are the winners and losers?
- How are they likely to be affected and to what severity?
- Does it increase social inequities?
- Can the landuse retain existing social and economic values?
- Can it enhance values?
- What is the scope of the community that will be affected – the agency should identify regional communities as well as local communities that might be affected by the proposed landuse change.
- How long will the impacts last?
- Will there be cumulative impacts? A landuse change on its own may not have significant impact but when combined with external influences there may be significant cumulative impact.
- What ‘flow-on’ effects might occur?
- What might happen if the proposal does not go ahead? A picture of the community with and without the changed landuse, should be compiled.

\textsuperscript{33} As discussed in Model A, community perceptions of environmental impacts are included in an SIA.

\textit{Chapter 7: Developing community policies for the introduction of landuse change: increasing community capacity to cope}
Again, as for Model A, the overall capacity of the community to cope with the landuse change should be gauged. By examining a community’s stock of social capital we can have some insight into how well equipped that community is to manage and benefit from the introduced landuse; that is, its capacity to cope with change. This is highly variable across communities. From a social capital analysis we can either develop ways to utilise existing networks and trust if these are strong, or to develop ways to help build social capital (or at least avoid destabilising it). The three ways that governments can influence social capital within a community were discussed in Model A and apply equally here. Attempts to enhance social capital should be included in the taskforce’s strategy to build the capacity of the community to cope with the change, by mitigating the impacts, or providing support and infrastructure to assist the community with the transition. Social and economic impacts can often be mitigated if strategic and sensitive policies are developed.

Given all of the information collected at this point – social economic and environmental criteria – the taskforce must then ensure that the landuse selected is indeed the best landuse for this location. As for Model A, Model B requires governments to be willing to alter their decision at any stage prior to the introduction of the landuse. This is when a whole-of-government approach becomes important, making changes to the intended landuse possible. Because the landuse selection was a cross-agency collaborative decision, it becomes relatively simple to alter the landscape’s direction, as the appropriate agency should already be engaged in the process. This concept will be explored in depth in the following section.

As for Model A, when the landuse has been finalised, the final stage of the community landuse policy is reached, and will culminate in a community landuse strategy that aims to improve the capacity of the community to cope with the change by detailing:

- Potential impacts and benefits;
- Mitigation strategies for potential negative impacts;
- Enhancement strategies for potential benefits;
- Social capital enhancing techniques;
- Monitoring of potential impacts; and
- Future participation and engagement strategies.

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Five key management philosophies should influence future management decisions pertaining to the introduced landuse. These include:

- Place-based management philosophies as opposed to the application of generic agency policy;
- Managing landuse change at a local and regional level;
- A triple-bottom-line approach;
- Adopting a participatory approach; and
- Whole-of-government decision-making.

If appropriate, the process can now be handed to an external third party. For example, if the future landuse identified is housing development and the intention is to sell the land to a developer, this should not be done until the full process has been completed. The developer can then be subject to conditions that include the implementation of the community landuse strategy. Model B is summarised in Figure 7.3:
Figure 7.3: Community landuse policy Model B – A guide to selecting a landuse for a defined location

1. **Establish an inter-agency and stakeholder taskforce**
   - What are the geographic, political, legal, social and economic boundaries
   - Clarify existing rights and responsibilities on the site.

2. **Examine social, economic and environmental values of the site**

3. **Scope potential landuses**

4. **Complete a rapid social and environmental impact assessment for each of the landuses**

5. **Triple-bottom-line analysis of the landuses**

6. **Landuse selected**

7. **Conduct comprehensive SIA [and EIA]**

8. **Provide analysis of social capital and community sustainability**

9. **Develop mitigation strategies for impacts**

10. **Utilise existing stocks of social capital**

11. **Produce a community landuse strategy for introducing the landuse change**

12. **Ensure that the best ‘fit’ for both the community and the landuse is being achieved**

13. **Location of landuse finalised and community landuse strategy implemented**

**The community landuse strategy should:**
- Detail impacts and benefits
- Outline mitigation strategies for potential impacts
- Detail ongoing monitoring of impacts
- Provide enhancement strategies for potential benefits
- Outline social capital building strategies
- Detail future participation and engagement strategies.

**The community landuse strategy:***
- Detail impacts and benefits
- Outline mitigation strategies for potential impacts
- Detail ongoing monitoring of impacts
- Provide enhancement strategies for potential benefits
- Outline social capital building strategies
- Detail future participation and engagement strategies.

**Develop social capital building and community sustainability strategies**

**This is the last chance for the government to ensure that the landuse best meets community expectations for the site. A whole-of-government approach is necessary to ensure that options are kept open.**

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Ultimately, in both Model A and Model B, even the use of SIA, public participation and capacity building tools is unlikely to increase the acceptance of the change unless the local community into which it is being introduced can see that the change will result in beneficial outcomes, or at worst neutral outcomes (Ostrom, 1990, as cited in Blyth et al., 1995). So, community landuse policies are not simply about increasing a proposal’s acceptability, but primarily about developing the most appropriate landuse for the community.

While the tools discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 can ease the transition of a policy-driven landuse change into a community, the ideal process involves the community even before the landuse change is determined. In reality this is unlikely. There are few instances where a government agency has acquired land without an intended purpose e.g. national park or forest plantation. This thesis will argue however, that the purpose of a community landuse policy is to ensure that the ‘intended purpose’ is indeed the most appropriate for the selected location given the social, economic, and environmental conditions, which is why it involves communities before decisions are made, while leaving the ‘window of opportunity’ to change direction on the location or the landuse open as long as possible.

In Model A and Model B, involving people in decision-making from the outset, identifying impacts and addressing ways to mitigate these, and developing the community’s capacity to cope with the change, must be a whole-of-government commitment. Community policies need to be developed within the wider context of government decision-making. The success of the community landuse policy lies with garnering support across agencies, allowing agencies to adapt preconceived management goals if they are revealed to be inappropriate. We expect communities to cope with enforced landuse change, so at the very least government should be able to adapt what is likely a short-term policy to accept a new management direction.

As argued earlier, it is important that governments remain focused on the end goal rather than the means; the community landuse policy approach ensures that governments remain flexible and imaginative in their attempts to achieve the end goal.

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Moreover, a poorly placed landuse that does not consider social goals, expectations and values will likely fail anyway.

The community landuse policy is the first step in the process of introducing and managing a landuse change; it enables the government agency to find the ‘best-fit’ landuse for a given community. The community landuse strategy that emerges from the community landuse policy is the second step in the process, ensuring that management decisions surrounding the new landuse are appropriate to the community. The community landuse strategy details the government’s responsibility and commitment to retaining community values and meeting community expectations. Both the process of matching a community with a landuse and the ongoing management decisions surrounding the landuse should be based on appropriate management philosophies.

**Basing decisions on appropriate management philosophies**

Management philosophies underlie all management decisions, including decisions that influence how a community will be affected by a landuse change. While management decisions are certainly relevant to a landuse change outcome ultimately determining its success, it is the management philosophies that influence these that are of most interest to this thesis. By applying appropriate management philosophies to decision-making, philosophies that respect and consider community values, needs and expectations, management decisions can contribute to community sustainability. These management philosophies should influence all decision-making surrounding the landuse change.

The different management philosophies that will be examined are:

- Place-based management philosophies as opposed to the application of generic agency policy;
- Managing landuse change at a local and regional level;
- Adopting a triple-bottom-line approach;
- Adopting a participatory approach; and
- Whole-of-government decision-making.
‘Place-based’ management: avoiding generic, state-wide policies

Regional decision-making is often at the expense of local communities. As will be illustrated in the case studies (Part 3), when governments are unwilling to consider the specific needs and expectations of a community in the design of management decisions, conflict is virtually inevitable. Aside from the many challenges that make genuine public participation difficult, a further reason for the often-poor incorporation of a community’s needs into decision-making is the tendency for government agencies to develop and apply statewide, generic policies to their decision-making. These policies are often unsuitable for the community, or simply at conflict with a community’s needs, values and expectations. Part of the solution to this problem lies in the use of a place-based management philosophy. Chapter 3 explored the concept of ‘place’, and suggested that while it may mean different things to different people, a sense of place is often shared across a community.

Place-based management is a core principle of the community landuse policy approach, and requires managing the introduction of a landuse according to the specific social, economic and environmental needs – the triple-bottom-line – of the community and landscape into which it being introduced. Place-based management rejects the use of pre-determined, generic policies when introducing landuse change, and instead requires adaptive and responsive management solutions. It requires government agencies to have community needs, values, visions and expectations at the heart of landuse change decision-making. An example of non place-based management in action is the Forests NSW’ generic policy of removing all infrastructures from landscapes prior to the introduction of pine plantations. Place-based management however, permits a local community’s need to retain locally significant infrastructure to be built into the community landuse strategy: a negotiated adaptation of the generic agency policy is possible under place-based management.

There is growing recognition that the acknowledgement of place should be extended to the way that places are managed. As Ellemor (1998) argues, an important component of incorporating social and cultural values into natural resource management is recognising the importance of place to people. Read (1996) discusses the importance of retaining the values of places when attempting to protect ecological values. Kingma
(2002) suggests that policy responses should be place-based and grounded in local needs and circumstances. Gill (1994), in a discussion of national park management, suggests that people’s attachment to place can have consequences for environmental policy. Place-based management is beginning to influence the way that city councils manage resources and meet diverse needs (see City of Swan Place based management factsheet; Brisbane City Councils’ Brisbane Place Projects, Bourke, 2004). Place-based management is a concept being applied to marine and coastal management: it is a recognised management technique of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, in an attempt to manage and prevent impacts (Wachenfeld et al., 1998); the Coastal CRC are funding place-based research in Port Curtis, the Fitzroy and southeast Queensland, demonstrating its growing importance in the coastal research arena (Coastal CRC, 2004); and a book edited by Norse and Crowder, Marine Conservation Biology, recognises the importance of managing human interactions with marine resources, and advocates place-based management to achieve this.

Place-based management is designed to avoid the application of generic, statewide policies, if they are not suitable for the specific location. Therefore, management policies, strategies, and thus decisions, can be responsive to the social and economic needs of the local community, as well as the environmental needs of the landscape.

The primary criticism of place-based management is that it raises the question of whose ‘place’ to recognise (Ellemor, 1998). Because of the many, often conflicting values ascribed to a place by a range of community sectors and individuals, place-based management necessarily has to make trade-offs between values. While there is some debate concerning the legitimacy of some values over others (see Boyd et al., 1996; Ellemor, 1998; Jacobs, 1993), as Ellemor (1998) argues, the emphasis should not be on demonstrating the validity of an individual’s or sector’s sense of place, but on identifying the values and meanings, and the context from which they emanate. While trade-offs between values will need to be made, they can be negotiated through the public participation process. At the very least, by managing for specific values of a place, the trade-offs made will be informed and can be accompanied by mitigation strategies.

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A further criticism is that place-based management risks the possibility of management becoming embedded in the needs of a place and losing sight of broader objectives. However, the community landuse policy approach clearly respects broader agency objectives and does not intend for the needs of a place to become all-consuming. Instead, I argue that place-based management should influence landuse change management, so that place needs are considered, but not necessarily dictate all decision-making.

Given the importance of a community’s sense of place to retaining a community identity, and ultimately contributing to their long-term sustainability as a community, it is essential that government agencies become more adaptive and more responsive to place-based community needs.

**Scale of management: Managing landuse change at a local and regional level**

Social, economic and environmental impacts are frequently experienced at a local scale, while decisions are made at a regional state, or even national scale. The problems that this creates have already been explored in this thesis. Basing landuse decisions on local and regional needs is an important component of place-based management. It is argued that by managing landuse change at the local level in addition to the regional level, it enhances the likelihood of government agencies identifying communities and their various sub-groupings. This is an important step in the community landuse policy approach, and is a crucial part of enhancing the sustainability of communities through landuse change.

Localised landuse decision-making is a challenge for government. However, it is one that is usually addressed environmentally. Governments are quite comfortable acknowledging local environmental conditions when introducing landuse change, and ensuring that these meet the needs of the landuse. However, they are considerably less comfortable applying this same principle to social and economic conditions.

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*Chapter 7: Developing community policies for the introduction of landuse change: increasing community capacity to cope*
Developing a management philosophy that does not detract from local community sustainability at the expense of regional development is a core philosophy underlying the community landuse policy approach. It is only by managing policy-driven landuse change at the level at which it is experienced, can we hope to introduce changes without risking the sustainability of local communities. As such, adapting generic policies to meet the needs of a particular place, and being prepared to meet these needs at a local level, are both core management philosophies influencing the community landuse policy and strategy.

**Adopting a triple-bottom-line approach**

A triple-bottom-line approach, also often referred to as *policy integration* (Dovers, 2005), requires the integration of environmental, social and economic characteristics, conditions, impacts and benefits, into decision-making. Successful decision-making is attained through the achievement of objectives, without compromising the balance of the relationship between these three core dimensions (Mahoney and Potter, 2004). Figure 7.4 illustrates the systemic approach that triple-bottom-line management requires.

**Figure 7.4: The triple-bottom-line (Flora, 2004)**

*Growing each, but not at the expense of the other*

The triple-bottom-line was an ethical business concept originally applied to the commercial world in the mid 1990s (Flora, 2004; Rogers and Ryan, 2001). It promoted the idea that the success of a business or corporation should be measured not only by its financial bottom line, but also by its social and economic performance.
It is a concept that has rapidly been adopted by corporations, governments, and activist groups, and has increasingly been applied across the natural resource management agenda (Norman and MacDonald, 2004).

Rogers and Ryan (2001) claim that the inclusion of the triple-bottom-line concept on the rural community development agenda, focusing on the integration of social well-being, environmental protection and economic viability goals, is critical for the revitalisation and enhanced sustainability of rural communities. The triple-bottom-line is a core concept behind most principles of sustainability that now recognise that environmental sustainability can only be achieved if social and economic sustainability are also achieved (Auditor-General Victoria, 2004; Mahoney and Potter, 2004). As most of the environmental problems facing human societies today are a direct result of society-nature interactions, it is clear that economic, social and environmental concerns need to be considered in the context of each other, and that this requires an interdisciplinary approach that traverses traditional boundaries (Haberl et al., 2004).

The influence of the triple-bottom-line concept to governments is summarised by Senator Robert Hill, Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage (2000): “We must develop a culture where the environmental value and social value added by an action, is as significant in assessing its worth to the nation as the economic value it brings”.

Criticisms of the triple-bottom-line concept arise because of its tendency to break down complex social, economic and environmental relationships and concepts into an accounting and reporting framework (Norman and MacDonald, 2004). As such, many values, particularly intrinsic values, may not be ‘accounted’ for. The challenge of the triple-bottom-line approach is how to ‘weigh up’ the various values so that the full repercussions of a decision emerge, while also developing acceptable trade-offs. While social, economic and environmental characteristics can be assigned numerical values, and these can be weighted against each other to assign an overall value (or

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impact) it is unlikely that decisions will ever be made on a perfectly constructed metric, with genuinely equal consideration of all values, including intrinsic values\textsuperscript{34}. Methodologies for triple-bottom-line accounting are not well developed (Dovers, 2005), and most references focus more on its importance to ethical decision-making, and less on how to genuinely integrate consideration of social, economic and environmental values into decision-making, or even establish what a social ‘bottom-line’ should consist of (Norman and MacDonald, 2004). This is a universally accepted challenge, but does not detract from the purpose of integrating the triple-bottom-line concept into the community landuse policy framework. The inclusion of the triple-bottom-line concept aims to emphasise the importance of governments integrating social, economic and environmental values into decision-making without necessarily conducting an audit, or applying numerical values. In reality, decision-makers make trade-offs across the social, economic and environmental ‘bottom-lines’ everyday. This is despite the fact that a comprehensive process to ethically and appropriately weigh up the various values and assign trade-offs, does not exist. More often than not, it becomes a political decision. However, while the system is far from perfect, triple-bottom-line management at least provides an increased likelihood of community values being incorporated into decision-making.

So, in the case of policy-driven landuse change, triple-bottom-line management simply requires landuse managers to think beyond a single management objective and to consider how a landuse ‘fits’ with a community and its landscape. Environmental conditions are obviously core considerations for landuse decision-making. Ensuring that environmental conditions such as climate, soil, rainfall etc. are suitable for the new landuse is necessary to ensure the success of the introduced landuse. Increasing in

\textsuperscript{34} As mentioned previously, it is not the purpose of this thesis to provide a methodology for ‘weighting’ the three core values. It is a concept that needs considerably more research, is unlikely to ever produce a ‘perfect’ matrix and will likely always involve politically motivated trade-offs. See Dovers (2005) for a discussion of the major policy integration methods available, such as extended cost-benefit analyses, multi-criteria analysis, citizens’ juries, collaborative planning etc; and Rogers and Ryan (2001) and Rogers (2001; 2003) for a discussion of the triple-bottom-line community audit process. The process involves producing a matrix of interlocking bottom-lines or scenarios upon which decisions are made. To do this, community-based progress indicators across the triple-bottom-line, such as housing, unemployment levels, health, pollution levels etc., are developed and monitored. These indicators can be subjective or objective, and must be relevant and meaningful to the community (Rogers, 2001). Measuring and monitoring local conditions indicates whether things are improving, getting worse, or staying the same. Over time, this ‘community report card’ can be used to make decisions that contribute to the community’s sustainability.

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importance, as a result of growing pressure from the public, is consideration of how the landuse might impact on the environment. Arguably, the latter is not always addressed adequately, but most landuse managers acknowledge its importance.

However, while governments espouse triple-bottom-line principles, in practice economic, environmental, and social conditions and impacts are not often treated with an equal degree of consideration. Biophysical needs of the landuse (e.g. soils, climate) and an agency’s internal economic factors (e.g. transport needs, access to mills) will certainly play a role in landuse change decision-making. However, external economic factors, and social conditions and impacts may not be adequately considered and rarely influence decision-making. As a result, landuse change is frequently introduced to communities who are not socially and economically suited to the landuse, or who will experience social, economic and environmental impacts that may threaten their sustainability. As such, the community landuse policy approach is based on a triple-bottom-line principle. While trade-offs will be necessary, a triple-bottom-line approach offers a way to acknowledge and consider what trade-offs are necessary.

**Adopting a participatory approach: Involving the community in landuse management**

As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, involving communities in landuse change decision-making processes is now widely considered to be a necessary way of avoiding conflict between government agencies and communities. As discussed in Chapter 5, consultation and participation differ enormously in the degree to which the community is involved. Methods used and the timing of participation events both have the potential to contribute to the success or otherwise of a public participation process. Chapter 5 therefore advocated a timely and strategic public participation process as a tool in the community landuse policy process. However, the importance of public participation is such that it provides not only a decision-making tool, but is also a management philosophy that should inform and influence all decision-making.

As communities become more demanding and aware of their right to actively participate in decision-making, most government agencies and corporate organisations
have developed policies on community relationships. When decisions and management outcomes may impact on a local community – socially, economically or environmentally – government agencies need to acknowledge the community and its various sectors as stakeholders. Government agencies introducing landuse change need to have a genuine participation philosophy influencing all decision-making.

**Whole-of-government decision-making**

At the same time as governance moves towards increased public participation, governments are under increasing pressure to collaborate between agencies to further improve decision-making abilities. While this thesis does not intend to provide an in-depth examination of whole-of-government public administration theory, the following provides some insight into the usefulness of such an approach, the barriers to adoption, and some way forward to achieve a more integrated government philosophy for sustainable landuse changes. The following is a pragmatic discussion rather than a theoretical exploration of ‘joined-up’ governance.

‘Whole-of-government’, ‘joined up government’ or ‘collaborative government’, are all terms to describe coordinated and collaborative decision-making between government departments or agencies. Whole-of-government decision-making aims to improve coordination and information exchange within and across governments (Edwards, 2002; 6, 2004). Many problems facing government do not fit into neat departmental boundaries (usually defined by functions or services). Whole-of-government or joined-up government is essentially a problem solving strategy designed to deal with issues or problems that are not confined to a single department and which need an interdepartmental approach to manage (Clark, 2002; Ling, 2002; Meijers and Stead, 2004; Mulgan, 2002; Peters, 1998). By working across agencies, the links between social, economic and environmental well-being are more likely to be recognised and managed for – recognising linkages across departments can lead to the development of shared perspectives and combined responses (McKenzie, 2003).

This thesis is primarily concerned with horizontal coordination across a single tier of government, but the discussion may relate also to state-federal relations, or to vertical
coordination within single agencies (Meijers and Stead, 2004; Shergold, 2004). Whole-of-government decision-making therefore, refers to the development of ideas, joint information systems, inter-agency dialogue, and joint planning between agencies, with the aim of developing coordinated, collaborative and cohesive decisions (6, 2004). This is increasingly considered to be critical in developing a comprehensive understanding of issues and development of policies (McKenzie, 2003).

**Advantages of a whole-of-government approach to policy and planning**

The tendency for governments to divide functions into departmental silos (departmentalism) is primarily about increasing efficiency and clarifying accountability. Departmentalism allows agencies to specialise in a particular government stream, which may result in the neglect of issues which are not highly specialised and do not slot easily into a single portfolio (Richards and Kavanagh, 2000). Departmentalism tends to increase governmental insensitivity to issues that do not lie solely within their departmental functions. Shergold (2004) and Richards and Kavanagh (2000) argue that effective development of policy and efficient delivery of services are hindered by departmentalism. This is particularly evident when the ‘solution’ to a problem lies with shifting the responsibility to another department. As Mulgan (2002:26) argues, “it encourages departments to dump problems onto each other – like schools dumping unruly children onto the streets where they become a problem for the police, or prisons dumping ex-prisoners into the community without adequate job preparation or housing to become a burden for social security”. To avoid this, government departments need common goals, communication and rewards for solving problems together rather than shifting the responsibility elsewhere.

Attempts to achieve sustainable, triple-bottom-line outcomes necessitate broader and more collaborative approaches (McKenzie, 2003). The complexity of social or environmental issues means that a narrow departmental or portfolio response will almost certainly restrict the likelihood of a sustainable outcome. Whole-of-government is based on the premise that complex systems (or issues) need to be examined and managed holistically. Meijers and Stead (2004) and Newman (n.d.) argue that environmental policy-making in particular requires policy integration: “By
its very nature the concept of sustainability integrates environmental, economic and social into one (not balancing them off against each other) and must therefore be integrative” (Newman, n.d.: 9).

Whole-of-government policy and planning has four key goals: first, to eliminate contradictions and inconsistencies between policies; second, to more strategically use resources; third, to create synergies between stakeholders or departments to improve cooperation and information exchange; and finally, to offer communities less fragmented and more collaborative access to government services and decisions (Pollitt, 2003).

In reference to landuse change, a whole-of-government philosophy allows governments to be flexible in their decisions and to change the direction of landuse change proposals if they are not conducive to sustainable decisions. This increases the options available to both communities and governments to achieve the ‘best-fit’ landuse outcome. Inter-agency collaboration allows governments to take a wider perspective on decision-making surrounding landuse change, to tackle social and economic impacts that might otherwise lie outside of their departmental expertise, to promote innovation, to broaden the range of decisions available to achieve community goals and meet community needs, and to improve the cost-effectiveness of the end decision (Comptroller and Auditor General, 2001). Ultimately, it increases the likelihood of achieving sustainable communities. Figure 7.5 illustrates the potential stages for interagency collaboration in the design and delivery of government policies.

Chapter 7: Developing community policies for the introduction of landuse change: increasing community capacity to cope
Barriers to whole-of-government policy and planning

Despite the recognised advantages of inter-agency collaboration it remains a significant challenge. Edwards (2002:56) argues that “breaking down departmental silos” is one of the greatest challenges for public sectors. “Finding ways for organisations that are organised differently to work together is eternal and ubiquitous not only in public management but in every part of social life” (6, 2004:123).

Many of the barriers to effective whole-of-government decision-making are political in nature (McKenzie, 2003). Traditionally, government agencies have been reluctant to share resources and information or surrender autonomy, particularly given competition between agencies for limited budgets and media coverage (Armstrong and Francis, 2002). Peters (1998) suggests that ‘turf’ problems are more likely to arise between agencies with similar policy areas, as they are more likely to feel threatened over policy and budgetary crossovers than agencies with highly disparate agendas. However, lack of clarity about goals or insurmountable differences in goals between agencies also makes integrated governance highly problematic (Peters, 1998). Meijers
and Stead (2004) suggest that collaboration across agencies will only occur if four key factors are present: the willingness to collaborate, the need for expertise, the need for funds, and the need for adaptive efficiency.

Political barriers, however, are not the only challenges; project management difficulties also arise, especially given that departments are accountable for their own decisions and are reluctant to take on the onerous responsibility of inter-departmental decision-making (McKenzie, 2003). Administration and time costs also present barriers to integration (Meijers and Stead, 2004). Problems of coordination — how to encourage diverse and multiple departments to point in broadly the same direction — and problems of organisation — how to align cultures and authority structures to achieve shared goals — remain significant challenges for developing a whole-of-government approach (Mulgan, 2002).

Meijers and Stead (2004) refer also to ‘behavioural barriers’, as hindering coordination; factors such as difficult personalities, professional defensiveness and divergent philosophies. Podger (2004) refers to the same problem, arguing that whole-of-government responses are not simply about establishing the right structure but about changing the culture that supports the structure. Unless the individuals responsible for the implementation of integrated policies support whole-of-government approaches, then success is unlikely — strong departmental cultures work against greater integration (Richards and Kavanagh, 2000).

McKenzie also highlights what she terms ‘intellectual barriers’ to whole-of-government decision-making. She suggests that making sense of complex, cross-portfolio concerns requires a particular type of creative thinker — one who is prepared and able to apply interdisciplinary principles to decision-making. McKenzie (2003:27) suggests that the intellectual difficulty in “synthesising vast amounts of information from what may be unfamiliar disciplines” means that there is a tendency to separate the economic, social and environmental elements, with little application of the triple-bottom-line. So, while social, economic and environmental information might be available, it needs people with unified knowledge and understanding of the complex interrelationships to synthesise the information to provide genuine triple-bottom-line

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*Chapter 7: Developing community policies for the introduction of landuse change: increasing community capacity to cope*
solutions to policy dilemmas. A potential lack of such skills in the public sector means that such individuals may not be readily available in agencies tasked with very specific portfolio responsibilities (Adams and Wiseman, 2003).

Moving forward: whole-of-government management in action

There are many examples of whole-of-government approaches to decision-making. Interdepartmental committees, taskforces, and the recent Australian experience of clustering broad subject areas into single portfolios are all examples of governments attempting policy integration (Podger, 2002). The Council of Australian Governments (COAG), established under Bob Hawke’s leadership, has provided a formal structure for progressing inter-governmental policy issues (Podger, 2002). More recently (1997), the Howard government established Centrelink, tasked with delivering integrated services for sixteen Commonwealth agencies and all state housing authorities (Ling, 2002; Podger, 2002). Growing Victoria Together is a recent Victorian government initiative that has developed a whole-of-government framework for tackling key priority areas, based on principles of triple-bottom-line and engaged communities (Adams and Wiseman, 2003). The Tasmanian government is attempting a whole-of-government approach to youth policy, by strategically linking portfolios of relevance to young people into a strategic planning framework.

The United Kingdom has also seen a significant shift towards a ‘joined-up’ governance approach, with moves to increase government focus on outcomes rather than process, the development of central government units to analyse problems and provide solutions, the introduction of ‘joined up’ delivery units and budgets, and the creation of cross-cutting portfolios (Kavanagh and Richards, 2001; Mulgan, 2002). This push towards joined-up government is summarised in the British Labour Government’s reform program, with one of its three aims being “to ensure that policy making is more joined up and strategic” (Cabinet Office, 1999, cited in Cope and Goodship, 1999:3). The Cabinet Office (1999, cited in Cope and Goodship, 1999:3) further stated, that to improve the provision of services “we need all parts of government to work together better. We need joined-up government. We need integrated government”. The contemporary change in governance began in the United Kingdom with the release of
the 1970 White Paper, which highlighted the need for a reorganisation of government, by amalgamating departments to assist Cabinet to develop a broader strategic overview of policy and to break apart ‘departmentalism’ (Kavanagh and Richards, 2001).

The establishment of taskforces to deal with problems is often an attempt to counter departmentalism and solve problems that fall across agencies (Shergold, 2004). A natural resource management taskforce established in the Queensland state government to deal with regional NRM issues is one such example. While it was primarily managed by a single agency – Department of Natural Resources and Mines – individuals were seconded from other key agencies (Departments of Primary Industries, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Communities, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, and Department of Premiers and Cabinet) to foster interagency relationships and interdisciplinary solutions. The establishment of a landuse taskforce is a key component of Model B and a less significant component of Model A, both of which aim to coordinate government departments for landuse decisions. The taskforce can consist of representatives from across agencies and key stakeholder groups, and would be tasked with implementing the community landuse policy approach.

Edwards (2002) suggests that establishing networks based on common policy or research interests could also encourage more integrated governance. An example of such a relationship exists between the social science staff of three Queensland state departments – Environmental Protection Agency, Natural Resources and Mines, and Primary Industries. Disciplinary commonalities facilitated a relationship allowing the transfer of information across differing portfolios. However, the informal nature of the network means that it is highly dependent on individual personalities to maintain, and remains a tenuous link across agencies. The importance of networks for forming social capital at a community level was discussed in detail in Chapter 6; it is equally relevant here. Policy networks across agencies can coordinate efforts to solve problems (or make decisions) within existing organisational structures (Meijers and Stead, 2004). Such networks need to be further refined, encouraged and institutionalised across government agencies.

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Mulgan (2002) suggests a number of changes to achieve integrated governance. First, it requires allocating funding based on issues and problems rather than bureaucratic functions. This applies to landuse decisions, as much of what prevents the transfer of land to a different agency (when a landuse proposal is deemed inappropriate) is the difficulty inherent in the cross-agency transfer of funds. Funding must be flexible, allowing place-based funding rather than agency siloed funding when appropriate. Second, it requires reforms to career based rewards, so that bureaucrats are rewarded for acting collaboratively with other agencies. Expectations for members of the Senior Executive Service to promote interagency cooperation are set down in the New South Wales Public Service Act 1999 (Podger, 2002). This has been encouraged under the NSW Carr government by basing performance rewards for senior executives on the degree that they can demonstrate collaboration and integration with other agencies. Third, targets and goals should be consistent across agencies. This is particularly relevant to the community landuse policy approach, as it advocates consistent and shared goals for communities based on six needs, which importantly include sustainability. This thesis argues that these should underpin landuse decisions regardless of the agency with primary control. Finally, Mulgan (2002) argues that information and knowledge must be shared across, and within, agencies.

Meijers and Stead (2004) provide some broad recommendations for enhancing whole-of-government decision-making. They argue, that for integrated governance to work, some key factors should be present:

- A commitment by the political leadership;
- A strategic policy framework to ensure that individual policies are consistent with wider government goals and objectives;
- A central overview and coordination unit to ensure horizontal consistency;
- Advice based on a clear definition and analysis of issues;
- Mechanisms to resolve conflict across agencies;
- Organisation to achieve policy priorities;
- An administrative culture that promotes cooperation and dialogue between agencies.
Bardach (1998) suggests five key factors are necessary for collaborative government:

- A government operating system that promotes flexibility, mutual intelligibility and accountability, and performance linked financial exchange between the agencies;
- Adequate resources;
- The creation of a steering process;
- A culture of trust and joint problem solving; and
- A strategically sequenced development process that facilitates cooperation not just the achievement of an established outcome.

Ling (2002) suggests that there are four main dimensions of joined-up governance, illustrated in Figure 7.6 below:

**Figure 7.6: Dimensions of joined up government (adapted from Ling, 2002:626)**

This thesis suggests that the community landuse policy relies on components of all four of the core dimensions identified by Ling (Figure 7.6): first, new ways of working...
across organisations (i), second, new types of organisation (ii), third, the adaptation of accountabilities and incentives (iii), and finally new ways of delivering services (iv).

The first dimension requires a partnership approach, allowing two (or more) agencies to work together on a shared agenda, while keeping their own organisational identity (Ling, 2002). Agencies can work together to identify the best environmental, social and economic landuse decision for a chosen community. The second dimension requires a cultural shift in public sector management, with the forming of new organisations. While this thesis does not suggest that this is necessary for the community landuse policy approach, a more constrained version of government integration values several components of Ling’s suggestion. For example, leaders could be rewarded for interagency collaboration as highly as for achieving departmental objectives, and secondments across agencies could also be actively encouraged to facilitate networks and collaboration. The third dimension requires changes to accountability and incentives, with focus changing from a single department being accountable for a landuse decision to several departments being responsible for an integrated landuse decision. Ultimately, government should be accountable to the public, and landuse decisions should be evaluated as much on their ability to achieve triple-bottom-line success for a community, as whether they met a specific departmental goal. Budgetary incentives need to be implemented that encourage integration across agencies, with external auditing procedures containing positive incentives for agencies to collaborate (Ling, 2002). The final dimension requires decision makers to collaborate, to achieve a coordinated and consistent public service. Government departments need to be consistent with their delivery of services, and whether a chosen landuse is national park, forestry or some other government sponsored landuse, communities should expect consistency in the degree to which they are included in decision-making and ongoing management.

Whether governments are attempting to determine the best location for a landuse (Scenario A), or the best landuse for a location (Scenario B), they need to work across all organisations which might contribute to the decision. If, after the landuse is introduced, ongoing management necessitates a cross-agency response, this should be built into the community landuse strategy. Essentially, for community landuse policies

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to result in sensitive community landuse strategies, they need to be placed within a communicative, coordinated system of governance. As Shergold (2004) articulated in reference to Indigenous policy, and which can be adapted to this discussion, decisions must be based on regional need, be flexible, and be jointly led. For a community landuse policy to be successful in contributing to sustainable communities, they need to be implemented in an integrated, cross agency manner.

This thesis is not advocating a fundamental change to governance. Radical departmental breakdowns and the development of new departments are not necessary to successfully implement the models. Instead, it simply calls for already existing government departments to establish protocols and frameworks to increase communication between agencies, and to establish procedures that allow landuse decisions to be informed by all portfolios, and to be easily modified if the community landuse policy reveals that a proposal is inappropriate. Essentially, community landuse policies should be place-based and goals oriented rather than agency based.

Whole-of-government responses are not always necessary. As for public participation, integrated government should only be utilised when there is a strategic need for a cross-agency effort. However, a whole-of-government management philosophy provides government agencies with the scope to tackle issues in an integrated way if appropriate.

All of these management philosophies – managing landuse change at a local and regional level; place-based management as opposed to the application of generic agency policy; developing flexible, timely participative strategies; and utilising a whole-of-government decision-making approach when appropriate – interact to influence the introduction, and ongoing management, of policy-driven landuse changes. It is the approach that government agencies use when introducing landuse change, and the management philosophies that inform management decisions, that will determine whether a community accepts an introduced landuse change as a legitimate landuse practice within the community, and ultimately whether the landuse change can contribute to the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the community.

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HOW DOES THE COMMUNITY LANDUSE POLICY APPROACH CONTRIBUTE TO HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES?

There is ever increasing pressure for governments to develop policies that are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable: “It makes sound economic, social and environmental sense to develop ways of working, ways of doing business and ways of making policy which start by valuing and understanding the complex relationships between environmental, social and economic logics, values and forces” (Adams and Hess, 2003:22). So, does a community landuse policy utilising social impact assessment, public participation and social capital, and incorporating appropriate management philosophies, help build sustainable communities – the last of our community ‘needs’?

The concept of sustainable communities was first introduced in Chapter 1, while Chapter 3 further explored the importance of fostering sustainable communities: A sustainable community is one that can persist over generations, enjoying a healthy environment, prosperous economy and vibrant civic life. It does not undermine its social or physical systems of support. Rather, it develops in harmony with the ecological patterns it thrives in. Essentially, a sustainable community is one that is ecologically, socially and economically in balance.

Chapter 3 introduced indicators of community sustainability developed by Pepperdine (2000), and suggested that sustainable communities will demonstrate most or all of these characteristics:

- Ability to work together;
- Community mindedness;
- Active participation;
- Economic and social prosperity;
- Neighbourliness;
- Acceptance of new ideas;
- Opportunities to participate in social activities and public affairs;
- Employment opportunities;
- Social integration;

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• Attachment to the area and a shared ‘sense of place’;
• Economic viability;
• Active community groups, community self-reliance;
• Communication;
• Common values, volunteerism;
• Population stability.

These indicators can facilitate the integration of social and economic factors into planning and decision-making regarding policy-driven landuse change. By understanding the degree to which communities demonstrate these characteristics, policy-makers are able to develop policies that do not undermine, or erode social sustainability. By utilising a community landuse policy, these community characteristics can be maintained, protected, and potentially promoted, particularly through minimising social and economic impacts and by actively pursuing public participation. Social capital – a core component of the community landuse policy approach – can help enhance a community’s resilience to change, contributing to their long-term sustainability. If introduced without consideration of its effect on social capital, policy-driven landuse change has the potential to detract from a community’s stock of social capital, by eroding trust, creating harmful conflict, and potentially breaking down existing networks, thereby detracting from a community’s long-term sustainability. Basing decisions on the core management philosophies can help to protect these characteristics.

Introducing landuse change into communities can contribute to their long-term sustainability. Most of the community sustainability indicators above are ‘locally meaningful’ (Pepperdine, 2000). This is reflected in the community landuse policy’s focus on place-based decision-making and management. Walsh (2001) suggests that communities increasingly seek policy decisions that genuinely meet the needs and circumstances of local and regional areas, particularly in the face of community breakdown across rural and regional Australia. He suggests that many issues of disadvantage and inequity are locally generated and need to be locally managed. The NSW government has some history in place-based community management, with the establishment of a Strengthening Communities Unit in the Premier’s Department.

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tasked with place management pilot projects (Walsh, 2001). Additionally, policies have been developed for specific ‘problem’ localities with the view of implementing short interventions to achieve place-based objectives (Walsh, 2001).

Place-based management can be easily applied to landuse decisions. Landuse decisions tend to have the most impact at the local level, requiring localised management. By utilising a wide range of techniques to achieve objectives (Walsh, 2001), a community landuse policy with its focus on place and the local scale, provides government with a management approach that can genuinely meet community needs, while also meeting government objectives. Place-based and local-scale management increase the chances of a whole-of-government response, as objectives can be clearly defined without ascribing to any particular set of agency principles and objectives.

Additionally, the purpose of the community landuse policy is to guide the government, in conjunction with the community, to make landuse decisions that consider the triple-bottom-line; that is, landuse decisions that ‘fit’ a community socially, economically and environmentally. This is solidly embedded in a commitment to sustainable communities. This thesis has argued that to provide the best ‘fit’ for an introduced landuse, governments need to acknowledge and meet six basic conditions when introducing and managing landuse change:

1. Community values and expectations for the social and economic future of their community to be understood by policy makers.
2. The impacts of the landuse change to be identified and mitigated (or enhanced) wherever possible to promote or protect economic prosperity, social systems (including their sense of place, identity and heritage), and ecological integrity.
3. A knowledge and understanding of the landuse change, how it might affect them and how it can benefit them (community learning).
4. Opportunities to have their say, express their concerns, and share in the decision-making process.
5. A well-networked and trusting community.
6. A healthy, sustainable community.

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The first five of these are met by the strategic incorporation of social impact assessment, public participation and social capital building strategies into community landuse policies. Governments can contribute to the sixth need by acknowledging and respecting community values; reducing potential social, economic and environmental impacts of the landuse introduction ensuring that landuses are economically, socially and economically sustainable; empowering communities to control the future of their own landscapes by actively engaging them in decision-making and ongoing management of the landuse change; and by equipping them with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to maximise social and economic benefit from the landuse change. Governments contribute to the sixth need by meeting the first five needs, and by continuing to base future decision-making on appropriate management philosophies founded on principles of sustainability.

What is important to understand about the community landuse policy approach is that it is not a community development policy. As discussed in Chapter 3, it is not the responsibility of agencies introducing landuse change to ‘build’ and develop sustainable communities, rather it is their responsibility to introduce their respective landuse changes to ensure that communities are not eroded or diminished – they are therefore designed to contribute to or enhance sustainable communities, not build sustainable communities. The community landuse policy aspires to achieve the best possible landuse outcome for rural and regional communities, by ‘fitting’ landuse change to community needs, and by basing decisions on appropriate management philosophies. If all government policies are introduced in similarly sensitive ways, then governments will have done all that they can do to ensure rural community sustainability.

It is important to note that the community landuse policy approach will not guarantee the successful integration of social, economic and environmental needs, nor will it guarantee that community needs and values will be protected. Even after implementing this approach and adopting appropriate management philosophies, a landuse change is unlikely to ‘fit’ a community absolutely across all three dimensions – social, economic and environment. It is likely that trade-offs will need to be made and that conflict will still be evident. What the community landuse policy approach

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does provide is a means to identify the best-fit for the community across the three dimensions, by instigating a process whereby problems and impacts can be identified early in the process, alternative strategies adopted, and/or mitigation strategies put in place if appropriate.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter has detailed the community landuse policy approach, designed to meet six conditions to assist rural and regional communities to cope with landuse change. This chapter has argued that by fully arming the managers of landuse change with knowledge about the potential impacts of the change before its introduction (SIA), by involving the community in the entire process (public participation), by equipping them with the skills, knowledge and resources to cope (enhancing social capital), and basing decisions on appropriate management philosophies, governments can contribute to healthy and sustainable communities – the final community need. The chapter has argued that community landuse policies should culminate in a community landuse strategy which provides a sensitive way forward for the introduction of the landuse change, so as to build the capacity of the community to cope with the change.

Part 3 will examine two case studies where governments introduced landuse changes into communities, with varying levels of success/failure. These two case studies both offer examples of Scenario A – cases when the landuses were defined but the locations were negotiable. It will suggest that the long-term sustainability of the communities has been influenced by the way in which the government agencies introduced and continue to manage their respective landuse changes.
Part 3: The Changing Nature of Rural Communities: Case studies of policy-driven landuse change
Chapter 8
A Community Under Threat: The introduction of state forest reserves to the Adjungbilly community

INTRODUCTION

“To the Hispanic people who live in and around the National Forests... these lands are a geographic and political entity in many ways more powerful than their country... with a shrug of its immense bureaucratic shoulders, the Forest Service can create or destroy, move or let stay nearly everything that matters: jobs, roads, livestock, even landscapes” (deBuys, 1985, cited in Carey, 1999:42).

The above quote represents a perception among rural communities in many regions of the world that state forest agencies have the capacity to change much of what communities value about their landscapes, environments, and social and economic character and identity. However, I would argue that along with their capacity to create impacts, is an equal capacity to introduce forests in a way that enhances and supports the sustainability of surrounding rural communities.

Parts 1 and 2 have examined the concept of landuse change and suggested theoretically that its introduction into a community can impact in both negative and positive ways. This thesis has proposed a community landuse policy approach that aims to find the ‘best-fit’ location for a landuse, thereby avoiding many of the negative impacts, and potentially promoting significant benefits, for the community. It has also argued that the management philosophies, on which governments base their management decisions before, during and after introducing a landuse, can also significantly influence the social outcome.

The following chapters (8 and 9) examine two case studies of policy-driven landuse change, which experienced varying degrees of success and failure. This chapter will examine the community of Adjungbilly – a community experiencing the expansion of pine plantation across their predominantly grazing community. The process of introducing the change will be examined, as well as the conflicts that have emerged. It will be argued that much of the conflict could have been avoided if Forests NSW – the
agency responsible – had developed policies to mitigate the reasonably predictable impacts that have occurred. Chapter 10 will argue that by following a community landuse policy for the introduction of a landuse change, and basing decision-making on appropriate management philosophies, opportunities could have been created to contribute to the social sustainability of the Adjungbilly community.

While this chapter is primarily based on interviews held with members of the Adjungbilly community, several studies on socio-economic impacts of forest plantations mirror these findings (see Barlow and Cocklin, 2003; Dwyer Leslie Pty Ltd and Powell, 1995; Meister, 1987; Mercer and Underwood, 2002; Schirmer, 2002a, 2002b; Spencer and Jellinek, 1995). These will be referred to when appropriate as support for the impacts that the Adjungbilly community has identified.

**INTRODUCTION TO ADJUNGBILLY, NSW**

The community of Adjungbilly is located approximately 30km northeast of Gundagai and 50km north of Tumut in NSW. Adjungbilly is a locality as opposed to a town, as it does not have the defining service providers that typically constitute a ‘town’, such as post-office, police station etc. For the purposes of this research it is not particularly important to geographically define the boundaries of the Adjungbilly locality, as many people who identify as ‘Adjungbillians’ do not actually reside within the official boundaries of the locality. Therefore, Figure 8.1 shows the approximate location of Adjungbilly. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.
Figure 8.1: Location of Adjungbilly, New South Wales

Locality Map
Adjungbilly (NSW)

Legend
- Australian State and Territory Borders
- Australian National Highways

Map produced: 14 May 2004
For research purposes only
Data sourced: Geoscience Australia 2005.
Physical geography of the region

Adjungbilly is located in the wheat-sheep zone of southeastern Australia. The geology of the Adjungbilly region is primarily late Silurian volcanics and sediments, occasionally covered by thin layers of basalt (Fischer, 2000). Elevation ranges from between 500m and 700m above sea level. The area is characterised climatically by hot summers and cold winters, with an average annual rainfall of around 900mm (Fischer, 2000). Rainfall is considered reliable, and the area is rarely affected by drought (Bongongo Centenary Committee, 1987). Adjungbilly is a highly fragmented and variegated pastoral landscape dominated by *Eucalyptus melliodora*/*E. blakelyi* and *E. albens* woodlands. More recently the landscape has come to be dominated by *Pinus radiata*, due to the expansion of pine plantation across the region (Fischer, 2000).

A brief history of the region

The amount of historical data available on the Adjungbilly area was significantly less than the amount of historical data that was available for the Bourke case study (Chapter 9). The Adjungbilly community has not been widely recognised as a substantive community by either decision-makers or historians, so their history and social structure have not been well recorded.

The Adjungbilly district was explored by Hume and Hovell in 1824, and first ‘settled’ in the late 1820s by ‘squatters’\(^\text{35}\) (Bongongo Centenary Committee, 1987). The traditional owners are the Wiradjuri and Ngunawal people (Bongongo Centenary Committee, 1987). In the early years of European settlement the area was (and still is), primarily grazed for sheep and cattle (Nix *et al.*, n.d). Legitimacy was given to landholders by the *1836 Land Act* (repealed and modified in 1839), with the first official record of settlement in 1837 (Bongongo Centenary Committee, 1987). The Robertson Land Acts of 1861 resulted in a reduction of property size to encourage closer settlement. The Soldier Settlement Schemes after the two World Wars further reduced property size and increased the number of pastoralists on the land (Bongongo

\(^\text{35}\) *Squatting* here refers to its first Australian meaning of settling on crown land to run stock without legal title (Johansen, 1996).
Some left the land, unable to survive on the small holdings allocated to them. Forest plantations have dominated the area south and east of the Adjungbilly region since the 1920s. The Forestry Commission first began planting in the Batlow area in 1921 (south of Adjungbilly) and the Tumut-Wee Jasper area in 1928 (south-east of Adjungbilly). More recently, Forests NSW have expanded their plantations into the immediate Adjungbilly region, commencing with the purchase of Red Hill Station in 1986 (Bongongo Centenary Committee, 1987).

**The community of Adjungbilly**

The community of Adjungbilly is difficult to define as it is not based on a defined geographical location, nor is there a town that people strongly and consistently identify with. In the earlier stages of this research, when the area was referred to as the Tumut region, many people reacted strongly as they consider Adjungbilly a quite distinct community. Most of the people interviewed said that they came from Adjungbilly, with occasional references to Gundagai. Hence, the geographic location identified in Figure 8.1 is a loose interpretation of the Adjungbilly community’s location:

“I would say Adjungbilly if I thought anyone would know. Because you can’t get anything there we don’t always say Adjungbilly... We’re the Gundagai district, certainly NOT Tumut” (ALH15).

“I’d say we’re part of the Gundagai community, with a mini community of Adjungbilly... no, that makes it sound like it’s not so important, we’re definitely Adjungbilly” (ALH12).

Like many rural communities, Adjungbilly is highly bonded. The prominent social institution is the local primary school; most respondents identified the school as the most significant social structure in the community. Individuals or families do not have to have children attending the school to become involved, so it does not exclude people from the community based on this. Alternatively, some people residing within this geographic area are not active members of the community, as they may not participate in the running of the school and other defining community institutions:

“The school would be the focal point absolutely. It’s the only thing that’s there, as we don’t have a post office or store or anything...” (ALH19).

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*Chapter 8: A Community Under Threat: The introduction of state forest reserves to the Adjungbilly community*
“The school would be the focal point. It’s a different area to most as it’s big properties with a few smaller ones. It’s reasonably strong. Properties aren’t changing hands. There’s a strong sense of community” (ALH13).

“The school [connects the community]. That’s the only thing that’s there” (ALH15).

Despite the problems defining the boundaries of the community, on some levels it is quite uncomplicated. It is made up almost entirely of wool or beef graziers, with most of the remainder of the community employed in primary production. As a result, the culture of the community is reasonably uncomplicated, with relatively homogenous values and attitudes towards land and production. Community division is minimal and sub-communities are not clearly evident. The Wiradjuri and Ngunawal people do not have a strong contemporary presence in the immediate region (Bongongo Centenary Committee, 1987).

THE BUCCLEUCH STATE FOREST

The Buccleuch State Forest is located approximately 100km west of Canberra, and covers an area of approximately 100,000 hectares (Fischer, 2004). Approximately 30,000 hectares is considered to lie within the Adjungbilly locality. The forest reserves are managed by Forests NSW, located in Tumut. Figure 8.2 shows the approximate extent of state forest across the Adjungbilly region.
Figure 8.2: Extent of State Forests in Adjungbilly Region

Land Use Map

Adjungbilly (NSW)

Legend
- National Park(s)
- State Forest(s)
- Natura Reserve(s) - Other
- Reserve(s) - Other
- Australian National Highway(s)
- Australian State and Territory Border(s)

Map produced: 16 May 2005
For research purposes only
Data sourced: Geoscience Australia 2005
A changing landscape

The Adjungbilly district has a long pastoral history dating back to the early 1800s, with a focus on wool production. However, recent large-scale changes in the landscape cover have arisen from the establishment of new Radiata Pine (*Pinus radiata*) plantations at four former grazing properties acquired by Forests NSW. The properties had been grazing properties for almost 200 years, so their transfer to the state forest estate was a significant local event. The properties were subsumed into the Buccleuch State Forest.

The portion of the Buccleuch State Forest that lies within the Adjungbilly region was purchased under a NSW State Government initiative to expand the state forest estate across NSW. Under the Regional Forest Agreement (RFAs) between State and Commonwealth governments, the NSW government is obliged to manage forest reserves in an ecologically sustainable way to safeguard biodiversity, old growth, wilderness and cultural values (RACAC, 2000). The NSW government has, therefore, been working towards the development of both a comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) reserve system of forests, and an ecologically sustainable, value-added and secure native forest timber industry (RACAC, 2000).

As such, some natural forests are to be converted to the protected area estate and excluded from logging. As legislation disallows individuals, corporations or agencies from clearing large areas of native vegetation to establish pine forest, Forests NSW began looking towards cleared, and semi-cleared, agricultural land to establish forest plantations. In addition, the *Plantation 2020 Vision* seeks a trebling of the national estate by 2020, which requires an annual establishment rate of 80,000 ha. Most of this new establishment is focused on traditional rural lands – particularly cleared farm and grazing lands (Drielsma, 2001).

In 1986, Forests NSW purchased 9008 hectares of grazing land in the region north of Tumut – Adjungbilly. The property, *Red Hill Station*, was cleared of almost all remaining vegetation, and a pine plantation was established. Since then, Forests NSW has expanded their interests in the area, purchasing several other properties. In 1997,
Forests NSW purchased Nanangroe Station, a 3660 hectare property. A large portion of this has been cleared and planted to pines. The community of Adjungbilly were largely hostile to the Forests NSW purchase, and the expansion of pine plantation across their landscape.

The community complained that first, Forests NSW had driven up the prices, and that second, the sale of the properties was not publicised on the property market:

“The purchase of Red Hill was very underhanded – it sold the night before the auction, when it went under it all got very antagonistic” (ALH4).

“We found out [about Red Hill] a few days before going to auction in 1986. It was a private sale to Forestry 36. The wealthy ones kept quiet. A few tried on historical grounds [Kiley’s Run] 37 we made representation to Parliament, wrote letters to Fed/State forestry ministers. People all over Australia wrote because of Kiley’s Run. Jack Kiley was still alive and got very involved” (ALH3).

At the time, the community protested heavily about the purchase of Red Hill Station, however, they do not believe that much was achieved, and energy waned over the next decade:

“We felt we didn’t get anywhere” (ALH7)

“They have left 200 acres in the end where Kiley’s house used to be [the homestead was removed by the previous owner, not Forests NSW]… Someone else was going to do something but it all fizzled out. We lost motivation. We were going to rebuild the homestead – people promised money… Forestry promised to co-operate but it didn’t eventuate” (ALH4).

“Red Hill was the only real protest. We only have so much energy… There were only a handful of people battling and they [Forests NSW] have all the answers… we weren’t happy, just felt useless” (ALH13).

However, when Nanangroe was purchased in 1997, community protest was sparked once more, but again, little was achieved:

36 The term ‘Forestry’ is used colloquially when referring to Forests NSW.
37 One of the most revered poets in Australian history – Banjo Patterson – spent a considerable amount of time in the Snowy Mountains region. It is believed that Paterson’s poem Kiley’s Run (see appendix L) was written about Red Hill Station – one of the properties purchased by Forests NSW in the Adjungbilly region (Bongongo Centenary Committee, 1987).

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"People were really unhappy about Nanangroe being bought up. There were lots of meetings – people were talking about it. People were upset to see grazing land lost forever. There were petitions going but there was a problem that some of the people who signed it didn’t come from here... they came from Canberra... nothing happened, they [Forests NSW] just went ahead anyway" (ALH9).

The expansion of Buccleuch State Forest into the Adjungbilly landscape, has seen the landscape of Adjungbilly undergo changes from a fairly well-treed, but open rural landscape, such as shown in the foreground of Figure 8.3, to a closely planted, pine forest landscape, as shown on the horizon of Figure 8.3. This happened in a relatively short period of time, and is aesthetically distinctive. The effects on the community have been significant, and they consider it a controversial issue. As the changes have been directed by state policy, the area offers an ideal case study to examine the impacts of policy-driven landuse change on a rural community, and to theoretically test the usefulness of the community landuse policy model for increasing a community’s capacity to cope with change.

Figure 8.3. The increasing dominance of pine plantation on the landscape
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORESTS NSW AND THE COMMUNITY OF ADJUNGBILLY

The following section examines the relationship between Forests NSW and the local community of Adjungbilly. Most of the issues raised are shared across communities experiencing expansion of pine plantation. As Mercer and Underwood (2002) argue, tree plantations (soft or hardwood) represent a radical change in the character and economic activity of many rural landscapes. They suggest that as much as 25 percent of some parts of Australia’s regional landscapes have become dominated by plantations in a very short period. Attitudes towards such large-scale changes are varied, and in many cases local government authorities have been unprepared for the planning and management mechanisms that such changes necessitate (Mercer and Underwood, 2002).

Research examining five case studies of communities where disputes had arisen with the forestry agency, has identified the following commonly perceived issues (Schirmer, 2002b):

- Loss of community and services;
- Changes to rural culture and lifestyle;
- Changes to the amount and type of employment available;
- Pressures on local council rate bases, and therefore on their service provision;
- Changes to land prices;
- The amount of ‘good’ land being subsumed for forestry;
- Neighbour issues: fencing, weeds, pests, shading, herbicides;
- Impacts on water supplies;
- Increased fire risk;
- Impacts on landscapes and tourist values; and
- Vegetation clearance for the expansion of pine.

The relationship between the Adjungbilly community and Forests NSW share many of the issues identified by Schirmer (2002b), both positive and negative. Importantly, feelings towards Forests NSW are not unanimous – different landholders perceive the relationship in different ways. However, most community members believe that a
number of issues are preventing them from accepting Forests NSW as a legitimate landuser. The relationship is complex, and as such, some impacts may be perceived as equally beneficial as they are detrimental to the local environment and community. However, while risking generalisations, it is fair to say that the relationship between Forests NSW and the local community of Adjungbilly, is a largely negative one. The impacts identified by the community will be explored later in this chapter.

There are three fundamental changes that have taken place in Adjungbilly, since the change in landuse from grazing to forest plantation. These are, physical changes as the landscape has changed from an open, grazed landscape with scattered native trees, to a closed, closely-planted, pine forest landscape; a governance change, from privately owned land, to publicly, state-owned land; and, changes to the community’s local agricultural economy as the landscape changes from grazing to pine plantation. These are the ‘higher level’ changes which have taken place; however, these changes have practical ramifications for the community which will be explored before moving to a discussion of the impacts of the changes.

The process of change from grazing land to pine plantation

This section is not intended to provide a description of the political process, but rather, the on-the-ground changes that occur when grazing properties are purchased by Forests NSW to establish pine plantations.

Change 1: Access – The most immediate change that takes place when a property is purchased by Forests NSW is the change in tenure or governance, as the property changes from a private resource to a public resource. Practically, this had two immediate ramifications for the Adjungbilly community. First, access to the properties fundamentally changed. As a private property access could be limited, and at least somewhat controlled, by the private owner. However, as a state owned resource, the land could be accessed and used in a variety of ways by any member of the public (within some Forests NSW imposed limits of legitimate use and subject to the limited enforcement of those limits). The impacts this has had on the community will be discussed shortly.
Change 2: Management responsibility – The second issue for the Adjungbilly community that has arisen from the change in governance, is that the responsibility of maintenance has changed from a private responsibility to a state responsibility. This may seem obvious, but it has an important consequence for the community. Instead of a single, identifiable person being responsible for implementing weed and pest control, maintaining fences etc. it is now the responsibility of a ‘faceless’ government agency (see Spencer and Jellinek, 1995 for a similar discussion). Practically, this means that landholders wishing to discuss neighbour-related issues, now have to pursue a bureaucratic process, as opposed to dropping in for a ‘beer and a chat’. In some ways it becomes much harder to hold a government agency accountable for poor management, as they are much less susceptible to community disapproval than a farmer whose social links and networks are bound up within the community.

Change 3: People Leave – The second change to take place is that families who owned or managed the properties vacate the homesteads, as do any farm employees who were residing on the property. For a range of reasons, Forests NSW employees do not move in to the vacated houses. In the case of Adjungbilly, this has resulted in up to 10 people leaving the community from a single property. Because there is no township of Adjungbilly, there is nowhere for people to move to in the immediate region. While the numbers may not appear significant, this is relative to the community size – it is difficult to determine the actual size of the community, but community members estimate it to be less than 100. Losing these people from the community permanently, is contributing to a declining population, with consequent implications such as changes to the school and community infrastructure, which will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Change 4: Removal of physical infrastructure and vegetation – Within a relatively short period of time, the majority of the remaining native vegetation is removed. This ranges from single paddock trees, to small stands of remnant bush. Also removed, under generic Forests NSW policy, is the existing physical infrastructure. This includes houses, cottages, shearing sheds, and fences. The consequence of this is that by removing the residences, the opportunity for people to move into the region is removed, thereby indirectly contributing to a declining community. The range of

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impacts that the Adjungbilly community has identified as resulting from this practice will be discussed in the following section. Chapter 10 discusses some of the perceived problems arising from such generic management practices; problems that can be largely overcome by implementing place-based management of landuse change.

**Change 5: Creation of a pine forest** – Once the land is cleared of vegetation and farm infrastructure, the planting process begins. The important feature of this stage for the community is the creation of an artificially constructed forest. While ‘barriers’ of native bushland are occasionally left alongside roadways, this is not a standard practice. As a result, the community feels that the aesthetic impact on the region is significant, as is the impact on their sense of place and their sense of identity. Again, this will be discussed in the following section.

For practical and aesthetic purposes these are the changes that take place when transforming a property from grazing to pine plantation. These ‘steps’ in the process frequently have long-lasting impacts on the community.

**Impacts identified by the community**

The issues that the community has identified can be broken into three broad categories: environmental impacts, economic impacts, and social impacts. While there are many overlaps between categories, it is a widely accepted way of categorising impacts, under a triple-bottom line approach. It is important to remember that the following is a discussion of community perceptions, which means that misunderstandings, or lack of scientific knowledge, may bias community attitudes. However, when managing for a harmonious and sustainable community, management must consider and act on beliefs regardless of their basis in reality. Perceptions are the reality for management purposes.

Figure 8.4 illustrates the complex and inter-woven relationship that has eventuated in these impacts, demonstrating the challenge of describing the relationship.
Figure 8.4: The impacts of the change in landuse from grazing to pine forest plantation in Adjungbilly

**A CHANGING LANDUSE**
Transition from grazing to forestry

**PHILOSOPHICAL CHANGES:**
Minimal – still agricultural production

**BIOPHYSICAL CHANGES:**
Open grazing land to pine plantation

**AESTHETIC CHANGES:**
Environmental impacts

**Health concerns**

Increased pests and weeds e.g. pigs

**Loss of sense of place**

**Decreasing property values**

**Fire management issues**

**Increased public access**

**Resource needs change**

Shire council loses revenue

**Declining population**

**Fire management issues**

**Increased public access**

**Loss of productive land**

**AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIC STRUCTURE CHANGES:**
Grazing to forestry

**NEW COMPETITIVE FORCE INCREASES PROPERTY VALUES**

**Employment structure changes**

**Locals forced out of property market**

**Isolation**

**Loss of community infrastructure and services**

**Loss of local history**

**Safety concerns**

**Council road costs increase**

**Loss of sense of place**

**Decreasing property values**

**Loss of local history**

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Environmental impacts

As mentioned in Chapter 7, while scientific measurements of potential environmental impacts is part of the environmental impact assessment process, identifying community perceptions on environmental impacts is a part of the social impact assessment process – these are however, strongly interlinked. As such, community perceptions on environmental impacts will be included in this discussion as they played a significant role in developing the relationship between Forests NSW and the Adjungbilly community.

There are a variety of ways that the community perceives Forests NSW as impacting on the local environment. These are:

- Disturbances to biodiversity;
- Effects on water flow and quality;
- Human health effects;
- Loss of aesthetic value; and
- Increased fire risk.

While the majority of environmental impacts identified are considered negative, the community has also identified benefits. Therefore, the following discussion includes both positive and negative impacts.

Disturbances to biodiversity

The majority of community members interviewed for this research believe that the change in Adjungbilly from grazing to pine forest has had significant impacts on biodiversity\(^{38}\), particularly on native wildlife, and the introduction of pests and weeds.

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\(^{38}\) There is increasing evidence that such perceptions are unfounded; for example, Lindenmayer et al., (2000) research in the Tumut region has found that eucalypt remnants surrounded by pine plantations are supporting a rich diversity of plants and animals (Lindenmayer et al., 2000). However, this thesis will not dwell on the scientific evidence of impacts, and will instead draw on community perceptions of impacts. The rationale for this is discussed above.

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Wildlife
Forest plantation management is perceived by many community members as affecting wildlife diversity in the region, in two ways. First, they believe that larger, more aggressive species, such as cockatoos, are increasing in number at the expense of smaller, more vulnerable species, such as wrens, thornbills etc. They argue that the change in habitat and food sources has provided some species with a more favourable habitat, while making it almost impossible for other species to survive. This is believed to be leading to an unbalanced species composition:

“There are definitely effects on birds particularly. There used to be heaps of ground birds that you just don’t see any more. There are different types now, definitely more kookaburras, they seem to do well, and more cockatoos” (ALH19).

“... it just makes sense, if a bird needs a hollow to nest, and pines don’t have hollows, then of course they can’t survive – it hardly takes a rocket scientist to work that out” (ALH19).

“If you ‘doze down gums that are hundreds of years old, what happens to the fauna?... there’s been a real loss in native fauna around here – they’ve got nowhere to live. I don’t care what anyone says if you take away their hollows what can they do? You may spot birds in the forest, but I bet they’re not breeding. If we give it another ten years, there will be nothing left as the birds alive now won’t be replaced” (ALH7).

In addition, some species such as grey kangaroos are believed to be increasing in number as a result of pine plantation expansion and are considered pest species for graziers:

“Roos [kangaroos] are on the increase, especially since we [the community] lost Nanangroe, and they’re starting to congregate in much larger numbers than we’re used to... they hang out in the pines during the day where they feel safe, and come and eat our pasture at night” (ALH13).

Pests and weeds
The increase of pests and weeds are key environmental concerns of communities surrounded by pine plantation (Mercer and Underwood; Schirmer, 2002b; Spencer and Jellinek, 1995). The community of Adjungbilly is no exception. The community argue that feral pest species, particularly pigs and to a lesser extent rabbits and foxes, are increasing in number since the change from grazing to forest plantation:

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“Pigs are definitely increasing in numbers. There was a pig hunter and he would shoot/trap but he’s gone and the nearest person is in Tumbarumba. Now they tell us to do it ourselves. If you have lambs and kids [young goats] the pigs will try and kill them” (ALH3).

“Feral pigs are a big problem for us, problem is they don’t do a lot of damage in there [pine forest], so they don’t do anything about it” (ALH15).

“Foxes are harboured in there because you can’t get at them in the pine forest. They’re impossible to control because we can’t get through there” (ALH12).

“Foxes can hide in there and have untold litters and never even get wet, then they come out and eat the lambs. The rabbits and wild pigs are also a problem, they root up the ground and the creeks and eat the lambs” (ALH18).

Forests NSW do not dispute these claims. As one representative said:

“Pigs are a very real issue, but we just don’t have the capacity to drive around catching pigs...our primary goal is to grow trees and then we have to manage all these other things. I’m not saying these issues are not important, just that they’re secondary to our goals” (ASF2).

Aside from the significant environmental damage that pigs cause to pastures, there is a further dimension to this issue. With the growth in pig numbers, there has been a corresponding increase in the number of recreational pig shooters visiting the area. Such associated issues will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

An increase in common farm weeds is also believed to be occurring. Most landholders believe that Forests NSW efforts at weed control are poor, with claims that introduced weed species, such as blackberry (Rubus fruticosus agg.) and St John’s wort (Hypericum perforatum), are spreading to neighbouring properties from plantations. Pine trees (Pinus radiata) are also considered a weed species that is encroaching on surrounding properties. The community believes that Forests NSW attempts to control weeds are tokenistic, and only implemented if actively pursued by community members:

“Forestry is not very vigilant about controlling blackberries and St John’s Wort. Birds carry seeds so they’re spreading it and effecting neighbouring [to plantation] properties... They aren't really doing anything; I
would like to see them take more control of weeds. How can we control our weeds if they don’t” (ALH13).

“Blackberries come down the creeks and Forestry don’t care. Weeds don’t make any difference to pines, they’ll grow anyway” (ALH18).

“There is no actual spraying in the forest, just the perimeter, and St John’s Wort will travel quite a distance, so the perimeter is not enough... we had to ring Forestry three times to get them to spray – they only do something if people complain loud and often” (ALH4).

“There’s been a real growth in noxious weeds – Blackberries, St John’s Wort... if you ring Forestry they will supply chemical to do the boundary, but you have to ring them. Then they usually come to some arrangement, but you shouldn’t have to ring them, they should be responsible on their own accord... Border spraying is not enough; the weeds are coming down the creeks (ALH7).

“Pines do encroach on surrounding areas. They’re [Forestry] creating an unnatural sterile environment - I don’t think pines even breakdown very well and there’s no real understorey” (ALH19).

Forests NSW do not dispute the community’s claim that some weeds have increased with pine plantation development. One Forests NSW representative said:

“We have a weed control program but it’s mostly in the early stages of plantation development when the seedlings are vulnerable... in environmental terms we have blackberry, St John’s wort and serrated tussock... we’re not the only one’s with weeds, but yes, I’ll concede that we have probably exacerbated the problem” (ASF4).

Forests NSW agree that weed control programs tend to be in reaction to community claims:

“We don’t actually have to provide squat... when farmers ring we may send a unit out or send spray to the farmer for them to do the spraying, that makes them go away and they don’t come whingeing to us again – people like to whinge but they don’t ask what we can do for them...farmers who are prepared to negotiate do get more assistance, especially if they’re prepared to do the spraying for us – that’s a win-win for everyone” (ASF4).

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Effects on water flow and quality

The community response to the impacts of forest plantations on water quality, tended to be strong and virtually unanimous. However, most people conceded that the evidence was anecdotal and not yet manifested in an obvious way. They argue, that as Forests NSW rip furrows to plant trees, water runs down the furrow and takes soil with it, resulting in small amounts of sand out of each furrow ending up in the creek, thereby increasing siltation. Landholders also argue, that as pines use large amounts of water, runoff that would have previously made it into the creeks is being taken up by the pines before getting there, thereby reducing the creek’s flow. Schirmer (2002b) has identified a similar concern in Victorian communities.

“The creeks are in a mess – they’re silted badly. It gets worse every year. When Forestry first came the creeks were very clear with lots of fish. The area was renowned for trout fishing. Now they’re silted, they have poor flow and are almost dried up” (ALH3).

“They are taking the excess water off the catchment, which means that the creeks are starting to dry up” (ALH4).

“I can’t claim to have evidence of any effects, but some people would say that Forestry has reduced creek flows in the Adjungbilly Creek” (ALH13).

“They’re trees suck up water so the springs stop, so areas that were permanent water supply are now dry. The creek behind the house has stopped for the first time ever” (ALH15).

Some members of the community also argue, that the chemicals used in forest plantations are contaminating the creek system:

“They were aerial spraying for a pine disease, which was getting in the creek, so I rang up [name deleted] and he reacted instantly to stop it, to his credit. There were a heap of dead fish in the creek anyway though” (ALH4).

“We’re concerned about the chemicals they’re using and whether they’ll break down... We’ve always been able to drink the water; it’s always been in a very healthy state. So far we haven’t noticed any problems with the water, but I guess we’ll have to wait a few more years to see” (ALH19).

One Forests NSW representative conceded that the expansion of pine plantation may have reduced water flow:
"The problem is that people are used to a certain amount of rainfall which they lose...that's a change which they'll have to be able to manage" (ASF4).

The community argues, however, that their landuse was the established landuse, and that as the new landuse, Forests NSW should be the one adapting to the already established needs of an existing community.

Health effects

The health impact of pine plantations is not a concern expressed by the majority of the community. However, several landholders raised it as a significant issue, thereby requiring some attention. Spencer and Jellinek (1995), and Tonts et al. (2001), also identified this concern among communities experiencing forest plantation expansion. There is some concern that the regional increase in pine trees has introduced associated health problems such as allergies, hay fever and asthma, in reaction to the seasonal increase in pollen. Some landholders claim that the incidence of asthma in local children has increased since the establishment of pines:

"Pollen is a problem with asthma. This is now a very high asthma area. Some days you just see a haze of yellow in the air" (ALH3).

"There has been a huge increase in pollen, so there's lots more hay fever and asthma in the area. It's not recognised by everyone as a health issue, but it will only get worse" (ALH7).

"The pine dust is like chalk in the air, it's just awful...it's talk at this stage, maybe we're being sensitive, but it stands to reason that it's causing problems with asthma" (ALH17).

Changes to fire risk and management

Fire management as an issue is complex, with both positive and negative impacts perceived by the community. Forest plantation is believed to increase the risk of wild fires as well as the intensity of fire events, but confidence in State Forests’ ability to fight fires and willingness to assist the community in the event of wild fires, is still reasonably high. However, this confidence is starting to be questioned as more land is planted to pines. This issue has three components.
First, landholders are concerned that converting land from open grassland with scattered vegetation to a pine plantation directly increases the risk of fire starting in the plantation and moving onto neighbouring land. The perception is that fires within pine plantations spread quicker, and gain more intensity, than open grassland (Schirmer, 2002b; Spencer and Jellinek, 1995). The same fires that devastated suburbs of Canberra in January 2003 – fires that were arguably fuelled by pine plantation, threatened the Adjungbilly community. Some members of the Adjungbilly community argue, that as pine plantations increasingly surround them, a devastating bushfire event is inevitable:

“There is definitely a feeling of worry around here, there’s so many pines, all it needs is a lightning strike from a summer storm to ignite it... once it’s in there, there’ll be no stopping it – it’s like they’re surrounding us with kindling and there’s someone standing nearby with a box of matches” (ALH17).

“I worry about people setting fires in the forests, or lightning strikes. How would they be?...I don’t know how we would get out of a fire now – there’s too many pines, thousands of hectares are going under” (ALH3).

Second, the expansion of pine plantation may result in rural depopulation at the expense of rural fire brigade membership (Schirmer, 2002b; Spencer and Jellinek, 1995; Tonts et al., 2001). Hence, Adjungbilly landholders are concerned that the community’s capability to fight fires is decreasing. They argue that as Forests NSW increase the land under pines in the region, they are decreasing the number of people living in the district who are available, both to notice fires, and to help fight them. This perception is exacerbated by management policies that decrease the number of on-ground staff in Forests NSW. The perception, is that this adds up to more land to monitor and protect, with fewer people to do it:

“Because the area is breaking up, there are fewer members in the Bush Fire Brigade. It would be helpful if we had reps from State Forestry but we don’t” (ALH3).

“It’s a big worry with the downgrading of staff [in Forests NSW], there’s new staff with no experience in the district. There’s less staff and more land” (ALH4).

“In the past, Forestry have been great with their fire management, but the system is changing to contractors. Fire never used to be a concern, but
staffing may not be high enough any more. They certainly have the resources to cope, but maybe not the people numbers” (ALH6).

“So far they’ve been the best fire brigade, but they don’t have the manpower like they used to. They move people around a lot to deal with fires – I hope they can maintain it” (ALH12).

“We’ve always looked at Forestry as a safeguard, but cost-cutting has led to less people to watch for fires, but more land to watch. They’re also under contract, so there’s no workers just for fire fighting...They used to help with fires, they were fantastic, you could always rely on them, but now, I don’t know. It’s such a big area and there’s less people to manage it...If there’s a bad fire season they won’t be able to get to all the fires” (ALH18).

“We’re getting very worried about fire - Forestry are cutting back on fire management... There used to be 11 families out here now there’s two, there’s just not enough people to fight fires. While they would be here quite quick, it’s still a worry” (ALH19).

Finally, while the community have expressed the above concerns, most landholders do believe that Forests NSW will act quickly and effectively to protect their own resources, thereby helping to protect neighbouring properties as well, due to the risk of fire moving from private land into the pine plantation. Most of the community does not believe that Forests NSW would act out of an interest in assisting the community, but that they have a vested interest in protecting their own resources. This was supported by comments from State Forests:

“We’re desperate to protect our resource, we have money invested...landholders are the same; obviously our first priority is to our own land, absolutely. If it is a strategic location for State Forests to be involved, we will be...we generally won’t turn up if it’s not of strategic interest for us to do so, we don’t want to tread on any one’s toes...they don’t want us jumping on their land and putting out fires” (ASF2).

While some people commented that they would appreciate a more community-oriented Forests NSW, most agree that this adds up to the same thing – a reactive agency response to the risk of fire:

“They would certainly be here right away if there was a fire, although they’re only inspired by protecting their own pines...There would have to be a threat to pines for them to react, but who cares, so long as they show up” (ALH7).
“They help a lot with fires. They help the farmers with fire fighting. They have a tower where they watch for fires... their fire monitoring is very good” (ALH9).

“They do help out with fires on properties. They’re basically just doing it to protect their own property. It’s an insurance policy, and the spin-off is good PR” (ALH12).

“This is one very good thing about Forestry – they’re very fire conscious as it would cost them millions. They keep good lookout and have men and equipment standing by. This is a very big plus” (ALH14).

“They’re not obliged to help us but they would, but I wouldn’t kid myself that it was to help me” (ALH16).

These are the environmental impacts that the community of Adjungbilly has identified and perceive to be resulting from the growth of forest plantation within their community. It is not the intention of this thesis to engage in the scientific merit of these community perceptions. If landholders believe particular changes to be occurring, then it must be a concern of the agency, and must be managed for accordingly. It is not appropriate for Forests NSW to wait until scientific evidence is conclusive before acting on community concerns. Moreover, Schirmer (2002b), and Tonts et al. (2001), have identified similar concerns in other case study communities experiencing pine plantation development.

The following section will examine the perceived economic impacts identified by the community.

**Economic impacts**

The community believes that the growth in forest reserves in the Adjungbilly area has affected the economy of the immediate community in a number of ways. They are concerned about:

- Fluctuating property values;
- Changes in employment structure;
• Effects on the Gundagai Shire Council; and
• The loss of productive grazing land from the region.

Fluctuating property values

The Adjungbilly community claim that state-owned forest plantations affect property values in two ways. First, if Forests NSW identifies a property as a potential purchase, the property’s value becomes inflated to a much higher value than its value as a grazing property. This is arguably, a result of Forests NSW’ higher buying power in the market as compared to graziers. The community argues, that landholders are unable to afford the inflated price, effectively pricing them ‘out of the market’. Other studies into the socio-economic impact of pine plantation expansion have identified similar concerns (Black et al., 2000; Cocklin and Wall, 1997; Drielsma, 2001; Schirmer, 2001, 2002b; Tonts et al., 2001). Adjungbilly landholders claim that it is becoming increasingly harder to expand their grazing interests in the region, as they are forced to compete with inflated property values, which are unlikely to provide adequate return on their investment. The community agrees that these inflated prices are a positive for people wishing to sell their properties:

“We’re getting bigger, but Forestry made it more expensive to become bigger” (ALH18).

“Forestry has placed an unrealistic value on existing properties, they usually pay the current market price plus 10%. We just can’t compete. We’ll probably sell when they start offering us those sort of prices” (ALH6).

“Their effect on property prices is probably a positive with a bit of a catch... They pay good money for land that they can use... unfortunately, this is higher than it’s worth for grazing, which cuts us out of the market... It’s a bonus to sell to Forestry as you’ll certainly get more money” (ALH13).

“Up to a point, Forestry push them up... Forestry have put a floor in the market that wouldn’t have been there” (ALH15).

“Property prices are on the increase – we had to pay an extra $100/acre, and even still the people [sellers] would have been better off selling to Forestry money-wise. They just didn’t want to see it go that way” (ALH18).
“Forestry have made it very hard to buy property in the area. Farmers don’t have a chance as Forestry always goes one better... we have to pay enormous amounts which the land isn’t really worth” (ALH19).

Alternatively, the community claim that if a property is bordered by pine plantation, and Forests NSW are not interested in purchasing it, the property’s worth is deflated. As discussed earlier, there are believed to be extensive environmental and aesthetic issues commonly associated with pine forest plantations; grazing properties which border pine plantation are considered at higher risk for these problems, decreasing their value.

“If a property has pines next door it’s a real minus when they’re selling...it definitely decreases the worth of the property, nobody wants them [Forests NSW] next door” (ALH6)

“It definitely brings the price down, if you’re trying to sell land Forestry doesn’t want, but yet they surround - no one else wants it” (ALH16).

“There’s a property up the road that’s 40 acres, surrounded by pines, that they can’t sell. It’s been on the market for ages, but it looks awful, and is completely closed in... The little blocks like that one are especially decreasing in value” (ALH18)

Changes to employment structure

The community has expressed concern regarding the change in employment structure that they perceive to have occurred in the region. This particular issue is where the differences in community versus regional benefits, become particularly obvious – as discussed in previous chapters, many landuse change decisions are made at a regional level or higher. Regionally, a change might offer significant employment opportunities (Tonts et al., 2001) and as Mercer and Underwood (2002) found when investigating community perspectives in the township of Dartmoor, pine plantations were seen as providing significant employment opportunities. However, scant attention is paid to local impacts. Barlow and Cocklin (2003), Schirmer (2002b), Spencer and Jellinek (1995), and Tonts et al. (2001), observed the tendency for employment to be concentrated in regional centres at the expense of smaller communities. The lack of place-based management when introducing landuse change exacerbates this problem.
Regionally, Forests NSW is perceived as being highly beneficial. Employment opportunities in the town of Tumut are considered good, both within the forest industry as well as with other service providers, who gain the benefits from a major industry in the town. No Adjungbilly community member disputed the benefits that Forests NSW offers the Tumut region, and particularly, the town of Tumut. However, changes in employment structure, and a noticeable decrease in employment opportunities locally, are considered to be problems:

“While Forestry does inject a lot of money into Tumut; locally, in the immediate vicinity they have had a negative effect as stockmen have had to move away. Some have gone to work for Forestry I suppose. Lots of people have got a job, but not the one they wanted. They’ve ended up working for Forestry when they wanted to farm” (ALH15).

The problem is perceived as having a number of elements. First, as Forests NSW purchases properties, grazing-associated employment is lost from these properties. Because of the small size of the community, there is rarely any opportunity to take up employment on another grazing property. Therefore, the people who previously resided and/or worked on them are forced to leave the community. The community considers the potential for these displaced people to be replaced by Forests NSW workers, to be low, as few opportunities exist for them to reside in the community. The effect that this is having on the community as the population decreases, will be discussed later in this chapter.

Additionally, the community consider that there have been very few examples of Forests NSW offering employment to local people (from Adjungbilly). In fact, some argue that even regionally, Forests NSW is employing few locals, as locals tend to lack the necessary skills. The increasing contractual nature of the forest industry, means that many positions are going to contractors who stay only for the period of their contract, making little contribution to the community:

“When Forestry took Red Hill [property] they said they would employ [local] people but they didn’t. They’re downgrading all the time so they’re just taking away from employment” (ALH4).

“People think immediately that it’s [Forestry] good for jobs, but there are lots of negatives too. When Forestry came they were going to bring employment to us but they didn’t. It’s just Tumut workers, nothing for us” (ALH6).
“Pines don’t offer local people employment which means that many people have left... the cutbacks in Forestry have led to them contracting people in. Often they’re not even Tumut contractors, so they just leave when they’re finished” (ALH19).

As one Forests NSW employee said:

“We hire the best person for the job, it depends on the role...we probably won’t pick up a forester locally, but we might get a field-based person... administrative staff tend to be local [Tumut]... professionals tend to be from outside...contractors tend to come from further afield... and, labour contracting tends to come from New Zealand and Victoria” (ASF3).

The community claims that grazing-related jobs, such as shearing, wool classing, fencing etc., are being lost directly from the community, and are not being replaced by forest industry employment. In addition, there is concern within the community that the decreasing number, and increasing isolation, of the remaining grazing properties, means that it becomes a much more unattractive region for nomadic employees, such as shearsers. Therefore, not only has casual employment potential decreased, it is feared that the remaining graziers may not be able to find the necessary workers to meet their demand:

“There were associated businesses with grazing such as shearers, fencers etc, which are losing work, and although employment has fluctuated for other reasons, this is one more pressure on those industries” (ALH3)

“Shearers are a problem because they come through the area moving from place to place. They might stop coming once there aren’t enough sheep in the area to make it worth their while... Local shearers have no chance of getting enough employment to stay locally” (ALH7).

“When Nanangroe was operating as a wool producer they had 34,000 sheep, so they employed many people for shearing and fencing. Now they don’t...” (ALH19).

“People who do casual work are starting to feel the pinch as they have to try to get other work just so they can stay [in the community]” (ALH22).

While the community recognise that much of the decline in job opportunities in rural areas comes from a general decline in the rural industry, they believe that Forests NSW have contributed to a loss of employment opportunities in the community.

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Chapter 8: A Community Under Threat: The introduction of state forest reserves to the Adjungbilly community
Effects on the local council

Rural communities frequently express concern about the increasing pressures placed on local shire councils, as a result of the expansion of pine plantation, particularly the reduced rate base and damage to roads by logging trucks (Drielsma, 2001; Edmonds, 1981; Schirmer, 2001, 2002b; Spencer and Jellinek, 1995; Tonts et al., 2001). The local council that services most of the Adjungbilly community is the Gundagai Shire Council, with some parts of the community in the Tumut shire. While it is generally recognised that the Tumut Shire Council is economically advantaged from the growth in forest plantations, most of the community believes that the Gundagai Council is disadvantaged. The community claims that the problem is manifested in two ways. First, as Forests NSW purchases properties, the rate-base decreases because government agencies are not required to pay rates (Spencer and Jellinek, 1995). As the land owned by Forests NSW increases in the shire, the revenue base lost from the Council’s operating budget may be significant. As one Gundagai Council employee said:

“As more land goes over to Forestry we lose revenue... At first it was easier to see the advantages for the region as a whole – more jobs, and the revenue lost wasn’t significant, but as they’re expanding it’s beginning to seem like it’s us that’s carrying the full load... if they buy much more land, it’s hard to imagine how we can continue to fund it” (AGC2).

Local landholders are also concerned about this trend:

“The local shire have lost a huge chunk of income from losing land to Forestry, and at the end of the day we’ll have to carry the slack” (ALH7).

“Because Forestry don’t pay rates, we’re losing a lot of money. Nanangroe alone represents 9000 acres of rates that the Council doesn’t get, which means there is less to spend on council issues” (ALH13).

In addition to a decreasing rate base, the Gundagai Council is also perceived to be carrying extra financial load as Forests NSW place pressure on resources, particularly on shire roads. Some landholders are concerned that Forests NSW machinery and trucks are damaging roads, and are concerned as to the potential financial load on local councils. The community feels that the Council is carrying an additional burden with little advantage to the local community:
"There has been a dramatic effect. No sooner are they [roads] fixed up than they need to be fixed again. The council can’t afford to fix the roads. They’re losing their rate base as Forestry don’t pay rates...Large numbers of Forestry trucks, which is going to get worse. Some roads they travel along 24 hours a day... The roads are not built for logging trucks, nor are the bridges.” (ALH3).

"It will certainly effect the local shire, once they start carting out. They’re losing rate-paying country, but the roads are being damaged. They’re losing revenue but increasing road maintenance costs” (ALH12).

"There’s been a really heavy increase in traffic... They [Forestry] don’t pay rates so they tend to wreck the roads and Council tends to fix them” (ALH15).

While some of the community believes that Forests NSW is contributing to an overall increase in road quality, many argue that this will only lead to an increase in traffic, with all of the ramifications this would bring, such as road safety issues:

"We don’t really want the road upgraded, it’ll just increase the traffic which makes it more dangerous for kids and the stock... we would rather a low grade road than logging trucks” (ALH18).

"Once they bitumen the road to cope with the forest trucks it will bring more people and hunters into the area... aside from the traffic issues, we just don’t need people wandering through, it brings all sorts of problems with it” (ALH13).

"I wish the traffic wasn’t there. It’s hard to move sheep along the road, as they [Forests NSW workers] won’t slow down and they won’t drive their trucks or their smaller vehicles off the road. Right on knock-off time they all head back to Tumut and they drive so fast. So, we can’t move sheep around ‘cause they’re going so fast they’d never be able to stop in time and we’d end up losing sheep, or worse, dogs” (ALH15).

Loss of productive land

There is concern within the community about the loss of productive grazing country to pine plantation. Some landholders believe that such a trend in the region removes opportunities for expansion of grazing properties. Some claim that it is simply ‘offensive’ that in a country where so much of the landscape is unsuitable for grazing,
that land that has suitable soil structure and reliable rainfall is being taken out of production. They are concerned that this trend may be irreversible, with pine plantation unable to revert back to grazing country because of long-term effects on soil:

“I hated seeing Red Hill and Nanangroe ‘go over’... I hate seeing good land disappear” (ALH3).

“I guess it upsets me because I’m a grazier at heart, and they’ve taken some of the best grazing country in Australia. If I took a more broad-minded attitude I would probably say it’s positive, but they shouldn’t have ploughed up beautiful grazing country” (ALH15).

“They tend to take prime grazing land. Why? There’s not much available, why not grow pines in more degraded areas... There are plenty of inefficient farmers – buy their land!” (ALH17).

“You have to worry about what’s going to happen to an area with such good soil. We’ve just lost some of the best country in Adjungbilly... rich, basalt soil... it’s final - you can’t turn the clock back when we come to our senses” (ALH18).

While Schirmer (2002b; 2001), and Spencer and Jellinek (1995), recorded the same concern in Victorian communities dominated by pine plantation, Mercer and Underwood (2002) in their study in the Victorian community of Dartmoor found community support for the use of marginal farming land as it value-added to the region’s economy.

In summary, these are the economic impacts that the community of Adjungbilly perceive as resulting from the expansion of pine plantation within their community. The community perceives fluctuating property prices; changes in employment structure and overall employment decline; a decrease in the rate base for the local council, with overall increases in council costs; and, a loss of productive, grazing country, all as negative effects of the expansion of pine plantation. However, arguably the most negative impacts identified by the community are the perceived effects on the community’s sense of place, loss of history and overall loss of community – the social impacts.

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Social impacts

While the environmental and economic impacts identified by the community are numerous, respondents reacted much more emotively to social impacts, expressing sadness and anger at what they saw as the decline and transformation of their social and physical landscapes.

The community identified the following broad categories of perceived social impacts. Each of these has the potential to contribute to a decline in social capital and are discussed in detail in the following section:

- Declining population;
- Loss of community infrastructure and services;
- Loss of local history;
- Loss of aesthetic value and sense of place; and
- Introduction of (anti)social subgroups into the community.

Declining population

The Adjungbilly community perceives a general sense of population decline. Barlow and Cocklin (2003), Cocklin and Wall (1997), Schirmer (2002a, 2002b), Smith (1981), Smith and Wilson (1982), Spencer and Jellinek (1995), and Tonts et al. (2001) have documented similar concerns for declining populations in communities where plantation has been introduced. The Adjungbilly community believes that a general population decline can be attributed to a number of reasons. First, once Forests NSW purchases properties, the people residing on them – both the owners and any employees – leave the property. Because there is nowhere for them to move, they leave the community permanently, moving either to one of the nearby towns, or away from the region altogether. These people are considered ‘lost’ from the local community. Second, because Forests NSW remove the existing housing infrastructure, it is not possible for another family (such as a Forests NSW family), to move into the region to replace those who have left:

39 Importantly, these same studies document a regional increase in population, again demonstrating the disparity that often exists between regional and local impacts.

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“There hasn’t been any accommodation when people have wanted to stay so they’ve had to move. People are always asking about renting but there’s no where left” (ALH3).

“The community is shrinking. When Forestry buys a property they take the houses so no one can live here. The employees go, everyone goes” (ALH4).

“The houses were all sold off and removed so there’s no opportunity to move here, there are no houses. Forestry staff don’t want to live out here - they all live in Tumut. There was an incident of a Forestry family wanting to move in but there was nowhere for them to live” (ALH19).

This, combined with the perceived decreasing opportunities for employment in the community, is leading to a declining population, which in turn, is leading to feelings of isolation:

“There is an increased isolation in the area as more people go... the lack of people around presents problems as there’s no one to attend fires or community things” (ALH5).

“There’s a growing sense of isolation because there are less people in the area... We’re getting smaller and farther apart... It’s getting hard to even call us a community any more” (ALH19).

Barlow and Cocklin (2003) also documented community concerns regarding the isolation effect of expanding pine plantations. When questioned on this practice of removing infrastructure, particularly houses, one Forests NSW representative said:

“We don’t have a policy of knocking down houses, it’s just that our role is to grow trees, not be real estate agents. We would end up losing money and the hassle wouldn’t be worth it... We just don’t want to be landlords” (ASF4).

This impact is a result of generic, statewide Forests NSW policy, applied at a local level. A place-based management approach, combined with locally-scaled management, advocated as part of the community landuse policy (Chapter 7), is designed to avoid generic policy, and instead manage a landuse change based on local community needs, values and expectations.

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The community perception that employment opportunities are decreasing, that families are departing as properties are acquired, and that the difficulty of moving into an area is increasing due to the removal of housing, are all combining to result in a perceived population decline with no evident opportunities for growth. Aside from feelings of isolation, this declining population is also perceived to be having effects on community infrastructure and services. Black et al. (2000) argue, that many farmers are opposed to moves to turn farms into forest plantations for this precise reason: it leads to further rural depopulation with subsequent social impacts.

**Losing local infrastructure, services and community institutions**

The potential demographic decline caused by plantation expansion, has raised some concerns about the impacts on local and regional services and infrastructure (Barlow and Cocklin, 2003; Cocklin and Wall, 1997; Curtis and Race, 1996; Schirmer, 2002a; Spencer and Jellinek, 1995; Tonts et al., 2001). The community of Adjungbilly had few services or physical infrastructure prior to the expansion of pine plantation, so the possibility of impacts could be considered minimal. However, as the expanding forest plantations impact on population size, there is concern that services within the town of Gundagai that are utilised by the Adjungbilly community, may be lost or substantially cut back. Such services as the supermarket, post office, rural supply store, etc, may not have the population base to be financially viable. The loss of these services is frequently associated with declining rural areas, but the community is concerned that this general rural trend is being exacerbated by the expansion of state forest estate (also noted by Schirmer, 2002a):

> “When Nanangroe was operating as a wool producer they had 34,000 sheep, so they employed many people for shearing and fencing. Now they don’t…of course it makes a difference and not just to us. There’s also been a big effect on local [Gundagai] agricultural agents with drenching and fencing supplies. I suppose they’ll shut down eventually which means we’ll have to go elsewhere for supplies…more expense” (ALH19).

Again, there is disparity in the perception of impacts on small outlying communities versus the region more generally. The town of Tumut is considered to be thriving.

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Schirmer (2002a) and Tonts et al., (2001) also note that there is little evidence to demonstrate a clear link between the loss of community services and pine plantation expansion.
Tumut is not perceived as experiencing any of the declines in services that are being felt across many Australian rural communities. The township population of around 6000 (total regional population is around 11,000 (ABS, 2001) enjoys four major banking institutions – Commonwealth Bank, Westpac, National Australia Bank, and St George; and, three major supermarkets/grocers – Coles, Festival and Woolworths. In addition, Tumut’s proximity to the Snowy Mountains supports a thriving tourist industry.

In combination with the increasingly centralised nature of the forest industry, the financial growth of Tumut may lead to the economic and service demise of surrounding towns. The eventual expected effect of this trend is that communities such as Adjungbilly may have to travel to Tumut for services they previously had available in Gundagai.

In addition to these concerns, the most significant concern is the loss of those few community institutions located within the Adjungbilly community itself. These institutions are the local school, the local community hall, and a community event – the Gaelic Summer School exchange.

**The local school**

Perhaps the most passionate response to a single issue in the course of this research came when discussing the perceived impacts that the growth in forest plantation is having on the local primary school. The community claim that since the last Forests NSW purchase in the area in 1998 – *Nanangroe Station* – a drop in students (approximately 27 students to 16 students) at the Bongongo Public Primary School (Figure 8.5) has resulted in a reduction of teaching staff from 2 full-time teachers, to 1 full-time teacher and a casual staff member. The community blames this drop in students directly on Forests NSW.
The community claim that the problem is twofold. First, as Forests NSW purchases properties, the families residing on these leave the area, taking their children out of the school. Second, as Forests NSW remove the existing infrastructure, such as houses, they also remove the possibility of another family, such as a forest sector family, moving to the vacated house. Hence, the children are not replaced at the local school:

"The decreasing population is having an effect on the school. We can only blame Forestry for some of that, as rural decline generally plays a part, but this is certainly not helping" (ALH3).

"If houses had not been removed then people could have lived in the area and put their kids in the school... the houses are knocked down and families leave. No one can come back" (ALH3).

"People leave when they sell their land to Forestry, so the community has decreased in size... The school has suffered as people have taken their kids away" (ALH10).

"The effects of Forestry on the school are negative not positive. It would be good if they [foresters] lived around here with kids to go to the school. But it's largely done under contract and then they leave, therefore there's no [positive] effect on the school... it's [of] much more benefit to the town of Tumut as more employees reside there... there are less graziers [left in Adjungbilly], and while there's more foresters poking around the area they just go after they've finished and never bring their families" (ALH14).
“Four families were living and working on Nanangroe alone, with their kids going to the school. Numbers at the school were never a problem before this... but now we’ve gone from 2 full time teachers to 1 full time and a casual, and it’s just going to keep on dropping” (ALH19).

The community are concerned that if the trend continues the school may be closed, and the children forced to travel to Tumut or Gundagai – for some children a 60 kilometre return trip. Because of transport issues, home schooling and boarding school may become the only viable options for some families.

In addition to these perceived issues, there is another equally important, but less tangible, potential outcome from the school closure. As mentioned previously, the school is arguably the most important social institution in the Adjungbilly community. Most members of the community are involved in fundraising and general social events at the school regardless of whether they actually have children attending:

“It’s what ties us together... we don’t have much but we do have the school, and if we lost that, well, I don’t know, maybe we’d find something else, but maybe we wouldn’t” (ALH3).

At present there does not appear to be any potential replacement of such an important community institution. Therefore, if the school does close this could lead to the decline of the Adjungbilly community, further increasing their isolation and threatening their sustainability as a vibrant rural community.

The community hall
There are similar issues concerning the local community hall, although this does not appear to be considered as significant a loss as the school. However, as the community decreases in size and is perceived to become more isolated there is some concern that people are no longer willing to come together for community events. As a result, events held at the community hall are attracting fewer people:

“It’s a battle to keep it going. There’s only a few members... we have to work very hard to organise functions to attract people... the community is breaking up” (ALH3).
Community events

Aside from impacts on the use of the community hall, there are two community events that the community believe they have ‘lost’, both as a result of an increasingly inactive community, as well as being another outcome of the removal of infrastructure. As a small, relatively isolated community, Adjungbilly relies heavily on community events to sustain it. However, the infrastructure loss that occurs with the transition to forest plantation, is believed to be impacting on the events that the community can hold.

The first community event that has been lost is the Gaelic Summer School, which was held annually in the Adjungbilly region. This was a cultural celebration that went for two weeks and included many social events such as barbeques, dances, children’s activities and other ‘festival’ type activities. It was an event that was not only enjoyed by the local community, but also brought visitors into the area. Most of the celebrations were held in the woolshed of the Nanangroe property. However, according to community sources, since the Forests NSW’ purchase of the property and the subsequent removal of infrastructure, the event has not been held. One landholder said:

“The Gaelic Summer School used to be in the area, it used to come for two weeks – it was a very big community thing. That’s gone now because the woolshed’s gone. It’s a small thing, but it’s just one more thing. The whole community loved it. Because it’s a little bit isolated you grab these things as there isn’t a whole lot of opportunity for cultural things. There is nothing on the same scale as the Gaelic Summer School” (ALH19).

Additionally, as one landholder said:

“It’s not just losing the woolshed that’s done it, really that’s just a practical excuse, I’m sure if we put our heads together we’d find somewhere... I think it’s more that the ‘oomph’ has gone out of us, it all just seemed so hard and so inevitable” (ALH17).

The second event that the community claim to have ‘lost’ as a result of forest plantation expansion was an exchange program with a school in Cabramatta, Sydney. Families in the Adjungbilly area billeted children providing them with a ‘country life’ experience. As inner-city children from low-income homes, many lived in units with large extended families, and their trip to Adjungbilly was an important event. However, as the community’s sense of isolation increases, and as significant
participants in the exchange program left the area, there was no longer the necessary community participation levels. While many members of the community would have liked to continue the program, there is not enough accommodation within an appropriate distance to accommodate adequate numbers of children. The removal of infrastructure is being blamed for the loss of a valuable community event:

“*These kids would come out here, and some of them had never seen cows or sheep before. We all had a ball just showing them stuff – you could keep them interested for hours just showing them things that we do every day – they loved it. But that’s all gone, there’s nowhere for them to sleep as the buildings are all gone... And now we can’t exactly ask the Cabramatta people to take our kids anyway, when we can’t give anything back. So our kids miss out too*” (ALH19).

In addition to losing social opportunities, community institutions such as these contribute to a community’s identity and social life (Spencer and Jellinek, 1995). The social networks that develop from community institutions are fundamental to social capital. Social capital provides a community with the resilience and capacity to cope with changes, pressures and crisis. By contributing to the decline of these community institutions, Forests NSW has detracted from the community’s stock of social capital.

**The loss of local history**

The community perception of isolation and loss of valuable social institutions, is leading to an increasing concern that the local history of the community may also be lost. Firstly, as people leave the area in response to the growth in forest plantation (discussed earlier), they take their knowledge of local history with them. In many cases families have left the region altogether, taking away their own memorabilia and oral histories. Oral histories are important ways of maintaining local histories, and when a community loses people, they risk losing the only existing record of those histories. In some cases, the families who have left have been farming in the community for several generations, and hold significant historical information about the community. The community has identified several other examples of the loss of history from the Adjungbilly community, namely the removal of historic infrastructure and the limited use of local names.
Removal of historic infrastructure and landscapes

Rural communities, such as Adjungbilly, have a long history in Australia. Associated infrastructure and landscapes offer important insights into the history and social identity of an area. By removing this infrastructure and changing the landscape, these values may be lost. Social constructions of rurality are influenced by the surrounding landscape; as such, changes to this landscape threaten a community idea of what defines ‘rural’, and even more importantly what defines the community (Argent 2002; Barlow and Cocklin, 2003; Halfacree, 1993; Phillips et al., 2001). One person said:

“The place has become unrecognisable. We can’t find places any more, as it all looks the same. It was like no one was ever here… They make no attempt to leave remnants of history. They could preserve the homesteads, which have been there many generations, but they don’t, they just knock ‘em down” (ALH4).

“The buildings are always destroyed which takes away that bit of history” (ALH19).

The local community are concerned that Forests NSW has little or no respect for the maintenance of their history and identity, which they believe is reflected in the way that Forests NSW remove symbolic features to plant pine plantations. They are concerned that if these features disappear then the stories that those features represent are lost from the community’s memory:

“They’ve destroyed the history... they’ve [Forests NSW] removed massive elms, pushed down old houses and trees, Currajong trees and Cassidy’s house... They took the cricket pitch out at Adelong and removed all the trees... there was lots of history out there – they should have left elm trees to mark where it was... we’ll remember where those things were for a while but eventually we’ll just forget. Our kids definitely won’t remember those things; so then it’s all gone... They [Forests NSW] didn’t care, they didn’t really go into all that” (ALH9).

As discussed in Chapter 3, a community’s identity is strongly linked to a shared sense of place, which is embedded in a shared past. As links to the past are lost, communities begin to lose a sense of their own identity. While many communities cope by adopting a new identity, based on their changing social and natural environment, those communities facing other societal pressures may simply withdraw from active community life, as they become unable to cope with the introduced change.

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Limited use of local names

One method that can be used to help hold on to local stories and memories is the use of local names when naming Forests NSW landmarks. However, this method of retaining a community’s sense of place is not always used by organisations like Forests NSW. In the case of Adjungbilly, the community are particularly concerned about the naming of forest plantation roads in the area. One landholder gave this example:

“On Nanangroe, before Forestry took it over, there used to be this paddock – it was legendary, everyone in the district knew where it was and had for generations... whenever we went in there to round up the sheep, we would always come out with way less than we knew we should have. We’d just have to keep going back and looking for them – even the dogs couldn’t find ‘em... we knew it as Lose’em’all Paddock. It had always been called that. When Forestry came in they put a road through where the paddock was, and named it 'Tyre and Truck Rd'. Why couldn’t they just ask us. Sure, the paddock had to go, but the story didn’t... it was insulting” (ALH19).

“There’s no history taken into account with the signage... it’s pathetic... it’s bad PR - it’s easy to please the community and keep history going... We’re going to lose all identity. The signage issue was just wrong” (ALH3).

Using names associated with the ‘new’ landuse, may remove the ‘old’ history or landuse from the collective memory. While the above example is unlikely to be a conscious attempt to remove a history from the region, it is a historically common method of ‘removing’ an unwanted past – by supplanting the old with the new. Arguably, the ‘Europeanisation’ of the east coast of Australia on settlement through the use of European names rather than Indigenous names, was such an attempt to ‘eliminate’ the past history and recreate a more desirable memory. This has been recognised in recent years with moves to rename Australian landmarks such as Uluru (previously Ayer’s Rock) using local Indigenous names. Regardless of whether the Adjungbilly case is an example of such an attempt, organisations such as Forests NSW need to recognise that the effect is the same, whether it was the original intention or not – the effect being the loss of a community’s history and sense of identity.

Changing landscapes

The Adjungbilly community is also concerned about changes in their landscape, both aesthetically and by losing a connection to ‘place’. Schirmer (2001) also identified
changing landscapes as a key impact perceived by rural communities experiencing plantation development. The Adjungbilly community argues, that it is becoming increasingly difficult to identify places, as pine plantations are quite featureless:

"You drive down a road you’ve used for forty years and you don’t know where you are. It’s a really awful feeling. Whatever direction you look, you see the same thing, just row after row. It’s not the same place anymore... I haven’t got lost yet, but I reckon one of these days my wife’s gonna get a call to come and find me" (ALH22).

"I can remember watching the trees get knocked over in the paddock at Nanangroe one day after they bought it and it was just so sad... it all felt so hopeless, there was nothing you could do but watch" (ALH19).

"It’s not that the trees themselves are particularly valuable, we’ve certainly been responsible for knocking down more than our share, it’s that the whole place is so different now... we’re not living in a rural landscape anymore, we’re living in a pine forest and I never made a choice to live in that” (ALH17).

With this change in the physical environment from an open grazed landscape, to a closed, closely planted one, there has been a dramatic change in aesthetics. Virtually the entire community believes that this change is negative:

"It’s horrible. I just think of them [pines] as a weed... the aesthetic value of the area is very important and that’s being lost" (ALH3).

"They’re terrible and horrible... We put a very high value on aesthetic value... Nanangroe was beautiful – it was parklike, now look at it” (ALH7).

"Forestry has changed the character of the place... it’s dreadful. It was such a pretty area before pines. I would much prefer a grazing landscape than pines... I wouldn’t mind a few on a hill, but not to take over the whole district” (ALH15).

"People comment positively on pines when they visit, they think it’s pretty, but it’s hard to see their attractiveness when you live in it... if they were hardwood plantations they would be fantastic, I don’t know why... I guess it’s our consumer living – we wouldn’t have to lop it [cut it down] if we were more aware. As humans we want things and yet the environment is the cost, places like Adjungbilly are the cost” (ALH18).
“If it’s all about pines we have lost the connection. Many simple pleasures will be gone... we need beauty around us. Its [Forestry] really affected the aesthetic value of the area enormously... I used to find pines okay, until Red Hill was sold and then the penny dropped and I realised what it really was looking like” (ALH/9).

History is an important part of a community’s identity. Threatening this history, by removing infrastructure, changing local names and changing important landscapes, threatens a community’s connection to their past. This can change their sense of place and their own sense of identity. If a community does not have the capacity to adopt a transformed identity in concert with the new landuse, they risk becoming socially unsustainable. It, therefore, becomes important to the sustainability of communities that introduced landuses are compatible with community values and are able to be incorporated into an expanded identity.

Introduction of (anti) social subgroups into the community

As discussed earlier in this chapter, when Forests NSW purchase a private property, the governance changes from a privately owned resource to a publicly owned resource. With this change comes a shift in the level of public access. The community believe that public access to the region has been significantly increased, particularly for the purposes of firewood collection, pig hunting, and to a lesser extent, drug growing. It is often unclear where plantation land begins and ends, and much of Forest NSW land is accessed via private property. The community believe that this has exacerbated problems such as visitors who leave farm gates open, safety issues, privacy, and to a much lesser degree, theft and vandalism.

Firewood collection

Collecting firewood from State Forest plantations is a permitted practice (under permit). When a property transfers to the State Forest estate, an accessible resource becomes available. People collecting firewood from the plantation, either not knowing or not caring about where forest plantation land begins and ends, frequently end up on...
private, adjoining land\textsuperscript{41}. Aside from the resource ownership issues, there are also issues associated with general farm management. A common complaint is that gates are frequently left open by forest users, which can have significant impacts on farm management, as stock either escape or end up in areas/paddocks that they were intentionally being kept out of. In one instance, a landholder ended up with rams being released into a paddock of ewes resulting in poorly timed pregnancies.

"When they open a property up, they [Forests NSW] let people come and take wood, some people take advantage. Because it's semi-public they think they can do anything they like and they end up coming on private land...they're always leaving the gates open" (ALH13).

Moreover, there are perceptions of a loss of privacy as adjoining landholders find their properties being accessed by the public. For example, landholders have found people swimming in waterholes on their properties, waterholes previously only used by their own family. This is being viewed as an invasion of privacy:

"Farmers are at heart pretty reclusive people, we like our privacy and we pay for it in the things we give up, so when someone invades that, well they're really stealing something quite valuable from us" (ALH3).

"They [Forests NSW] opened up for firewood, some weekends there are 100 vehicles out here... we still have a very strong sense of ownership. We get very emotional and find it very devastating" (ALH19).

**Drug growers**

Some people also perceive problems with the supposed increasing number of people using the Adjungbilly forest reserves to grow drugs, due to their isolation and limited management presence. The community is concerned that an undesirable social element is being introduced into their community. This presents issues of safety, as some members are starting to feel threatened:

"There's a lot of drug growing in pines. A neighbour came across chaps in camo [camouflage clothing] who threatened to kill him over a drug crop" (ALH3).

"The dope growers in the Forestry are quite dangerous" (ALH4).

\textsuperscript{41} While Forests NSW do have locked gates scattered throughout their plantations, and collection is limited through a permit system, the reality is that there is little enforcement of the permits and still a large area able to be accessed without disturbing locked gates.

*Chapter 8: A Community Under Threat: The introduction of state forest reserves to the Adjungbilly community*
**Recreational pig hunters**

Another unwanted social dimension is the perceived growth of recreational pig hunters in the area. Arguably, pine plantations offer a haven for feral pigs. Forests NSW admit that pig control is not a priority of management. Added to this, is that pine plantations (and grazing land) offer good hunting conditions, with roads and fire trails granting easy movement through the forest. While recreational hunters are required to have a permit to hunt on Forests NSW land, this is not actively enforced. As one Forests NSW employee said:

“There’s a real culture in pine plantations of pig hunting without permits, we know that, but not only do we not have the capacity to drive around catching them, as a manager I’m not particularly inclined to send my unarmed and sometimes female, employees into a situation which is potentially dangerous... truck loads of drunken men with guns, we’re just not paid enough to face” (ASF4).

However, the community also argues that they should not have to deal with this particular societal group and tensions are increasing within the community:

“I get the feeling that people are more vulnerable with pig hunters around. We’re more isolated anyway and they’re pretty unsavoury people... I wish Forestry would control that aspect a little more” (ALH19).

“I would also like to see pig shooters controlled more, it’s very tricky but they’re very undesirable people... we’ve had to lock a few gates because of the shooters, they were dropping pigs closer so that they can hunt them later, wild pigs are a big problem... they [Forests NSW] see past us, we’re too hard to keep happy and it’s easier to just keep looking the other way” (ALH13).

In addition, pig hunters occasionally leave dogs behind. The dogs are left to wander the plantation, and inevitably the adjoining properties. These dogs are physically built to tackle large wild boars, so domestic sheep present little challenge when the dogs become hungry. There is a perception that sheep losses may increase, due to an increase in wild dog numbers:

“Unfortunately Forestry brings feral animals like pigs, which in turn brings pig hunters... often their dogs go feral and end up killing sheep. We’re not really seeing big problems yet but can foresee it” (ALH13).

“Pig hunters come in, lose dogs and the dogs kill stock. Some shooters are okay but some are irresponsible. Many just leave their dogs...” (ALH13).
SUMMARY

This chapter has examined the relationship between Forests NSW and the community of Adjungbilly, which has arisen from the expansion of pine plantation across the Adjungbilly region. This relationship has been broken into three key areas – environmental impacts, economic impacts, and social impacts. As this section has demonstrated, the relationship between Forests NSW and the Adjungbilly community is complex. While there is some perceived impacts that have been described as positive by members of the community, there are many more perceived issues that the community have identified as barriers to their acceptance of Forests NSW as a legitimate landuser.

Management decisions and generic management protocols have contributed to establishing this relationship. Landuse change is inevitable. It is not the position of this thesis that agricultural properties should not be resumed for other uses, instead it is argued, that government agencies have a responsibility to be more sensitive and respectful of the community which they are changing. As the implementer of policy-driven landuse change, government agencies are able to manage the change and its impacts, from the conception of the change. They have control over most aspects including the impacts on the rural community. Therefore, they are in a position to minimise the impacts of the change on the local community, and to contribute to the long-term sustainability of rural communities. Chapter 10 will examine how using a community landuse policy might have contributed to a more successful introduction of this landuse change into the Adjungbilly community.

But first, the following chapter will examine a case study of a policy-driven landuse change that was embraced by its community – the introduction of Gundabooka National Park into the community of Bourke, NSW.
Chapter 9
A Community Embracing Change: The introduction of Gundabooka National Park to the Bourke community

Back’o’Bourke:
“a very long way away” (KoalaNet, 2003)
“The farthest distance known” (Partridge, 2002)
“... the edge of civilisation” (Green, 1998)

“Where the Mulga paddocks are wild and wide,
That’s where the pick of the stockmen ride,
At the Back’o’Bourke”

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter examined the Adjungbilly community, where the introduction of government-sponsored pine plantation created a range of impacts. The Adjungbilly case study is just one example of an increasingly evident problem – government agencies struggling to introduce landuse changes into reluctant communities.

This chapter examines the introduction of Gundabooka National Park into the community of Bourke. While a community landuse policy was not instigated in this case, much of what was done in the early stages of the introduction, as well as ongoing management decisions, has informally followed the community landuse policy approach. As such, the introduction of the landuse has been received positively by the community and has contributed to its economic and social sustainability. This chapter will examine the process of the change, the perceived benefits and issues associated with the change, and the reasons for its successful introduction. Chapter 10 will compare and contrast the Bourke and Adjungbilly case studies, two quite different examples of policy-driven landuse change, and examine the potential role of a community landuse policy.
INTRODUCTION TO BOURKE, NSW

Bourke is located along the Darling River, 160 kilometres north of Cobar (Figure 9.1), and has a special place in Australian folklore. The expression, *the Back’o’Bourke*, has long been used to describe remote or sparsely populated parts of Australia (The Australian Oxford Dictionary, 2001). Bourke was, and for many still is, seen as the ‘gateway to the outback’ – the last ‘civilised’ place before venturing into the ‘inhospitable’ Australian outback. However, with recent improvements in roads, particularly the sealing of the Kidman Way (a single stretch of road from Victoria to Bourke), Bourke has now become an easily accessible tourist destination.

The physical geography of the Bourke region

Understanding the physical conditions of the Bourke region is key to understanding much of why the introduced landuse was received so well by the community.

Bourke is located in the Western Division of NSW, which represents 40% of the land mass of NSW, lying north and west of a line from about Balranald to Mungindi (see Figure 9.1) (IDC STR, 1969; NSW Government, 1982-83). The Western Division is generally viewed as a transitional zone, between the deserts of central Australia and the more productive, fertile regions of NSW.

The NSW Government issued a report in 1982-83, summarising the physical characteristics of the Western Division:

- Rainfall is low [average 350mm (NSW NPWS, 2003)] and unreliable, resulting in variable vegetation growth;
- High temperatures in summer and mild temperatures in winter;
- Low relative humidity and high evaporation;
- Droughts and floods are common;
- Soil fertility is low and highly susceptible to wind and water erosion. The country is primarily red-brown and red sandy clay loams and sandy loam soils (NSW Government, 1982-83; WLLMP, 1972).

Chapter 9: A Community Embracing Change: The introduction of Gundabooka National Park to the Bourke community
Figure 9.1: Location of Bourke, New South Wales

Locality Map
Bourke (NSW)

Legend
- Australian State and Territory Borders
- Australian National Highways

Map produced: 14 May 2004
For research purposes only
Data sourced: Geoscience Australia 2005.
Much of the vegetation of the Western Division has undergone a transition from open grassland to invaded woodland, frequently referred to as ‘woody weed’ (NSW Government 1982-83). By the 1960s, woody weed invasion was acknowledged as a significant problem throughout the region (IDC STR, 1969). Woody weeds, while native flora species, are considered weed to pastoralists as they limit grazing potential and the economic viability of pastoral land. Woody weed is a predominant feature of the landscape, with huge repercussions for the grazing industry as much of the land is unpalatable to grazing stock.

While the degradation of the landscape is a contemporary issue, the invasion of woody weed at the expense of grassland, was becoming apparent as early as the 1870s, as graziers began to report the advance of native shrub species of little nutritional value for stock (Main, 2000). By 1945, it was clearly evident that Western Division country was unable to sustain grazing as then practiced:

“If there is one lesson that this disastrous drought should have taught... the NSW Government... it is that light-carrying sheep country in low and unreliable rainfall areas is not suitable for closer settlement. A large part of the Western Division today furnishes proof of that... Most properties are absolutely bare of feed and denuded of stock... the country is being destroyed... They [NSW Government] have however ignored all warnings... The result has been obvious in the past, is horribly evident today, and will be seen in ever increasing severity in the future unless the whole government policy governing the Western Division is immediately and radically changed (Pastoral Review, 1945:183).

It has been suggested that the encroachment of woody weed is in large part a result of the removal of Indigenous fire regimes from the landscape, as well as the introduction of grazing stock and rabbits (Downing, 1986; Harrington cited in Campbell, 1979; Main, 2000). However, Main (2000) comments, that woody weed encroachment is frequently viewed as a ‘natural’ problem, separate to pastoral land practices:

“These people seemed not to consider scrub encroachment a consequence of pastoralism’s alteration of ecological systems, but a management problem externally imposed” (Main, 2000:62).

This dry, highly variable landscape, which was poorly understood by its European inhabitants, would play a major role in the history of the Bourke region and the shaping of its community. To a large degree, it is through interaction with their
physical environment that rural communities form or collapse, and Bourke illustrates this well. The following two sections provide a brief history of the township of Bourke over the last 150 years and the community/ies that have emerged as a result of this history and the physical environment.

A brief history of Bourke

Europeans first settled Bourke in the late 1850s (Erskine, 1998; Historical Society of Bourke, 1988; IDC STR, 1969). The first licensed Station – Gundabooka Station – was established in 1857 (Erskine, 1998), although there is some evidence of squatting in the region from the late 1840s (Historical Society of Bourke, 1988). The region, however, was not devoid of human occupation and was already home to two Indigenous groups, the Ngemba ‘stone country people’ and the Paakantji ‘river people’ (Erskine, 1998). Their first known contact with Europeans was in 1829, when Charles Sturt’s exploration party made contact with local Aboriginal people, and then again in 1835, with the Thomas Mitchell expedition (Historical Society of Bourke, 1988; Rural Bank of NSW, 1957). By the turn of the century, due to the large-scale up take of leases by European landholders, most of the Indigenous population had moved from the southern part of the region. It is unclear exactly what happened during this period, but it is believed that some people settled in the Bourke township, while others were forcibly removed to the Brewarrina Mission Station. An influx of people returning to their country, as well as migration from south west Queensland, has led to a large Indigenous population in the region, mostly living in Bourke or Brewarrina (approximately 95 kilometres east of Bourke – see Figure 9.1) (Historical Society of Bourke, 1988).

In the early days of settlement in the region, the landscape was significantly different to what exists today, or even what existed as little as 20 years after settlement began:

“...the number of stock run varied but usually were stocked with 3000 some sometimes up to 5000 sheep and before the rabbit invasion these numbers in most years made little impression on the pasture that

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42 Much of the Australian rural landscape is held under lease arrangements. The land is legally owned by the Australian government but leased to primary producers who have purchased the lease not the land itself. While this does mean that managers of leasehold land can be controlled somewhat through the use of lease caveats and conditions, in reality, this mechanism is rarely used.
grew. *In fact at many times there was far too much long rank grass a potential bush fire danger and also for sheep as they would become badly grass seed infested in passing through it*" (White, 1946).

In the 1850s, prior to settlement, Captain William Randell (cited in Main, 2000:27) described the landscape as:

> "Sheep carrying qualities can scarcely be overrated, the grass for miles and miles together in many of the bends being so thick and long that it can only be walked through with difficulty, and is as thick and close in the bottom as the meadows of England".

However, while the region enjoyed a prosperous few decades of grazing, by the 1890s the land was showing signs of pressure. This, combined with the arrival of rabbits in the 1880s and the onset of severe drought, meant that the landscape began to take on a very different appearance:

> "In 1895 the Western Division presented a very different aspect from that which met the eyes of settlers in 1880; many of the grasses and much of the edible scrub had gone" (Cain, 1962:438).

An inquiry into the condition of Western Division pastoralism in 1900, strongly suggested that the region was not suitable for grazing, that its viability depended upon the maintenance of the physical environment, and that this would only be achieved by a change in land practices (NSW Legislative Council, 1901; Quinn, 2000). It was argued that land degradation in the Western Division was caused by a combination of physical, economic, and management factors – low rainfall (recognised as characteristic of the region), rabbits, overstocking, sand storms, growth of woody weed, a fall in wool prices, and leases that were too small (Quinn, 2000). However, the region continued to pursue grazing without significant changes to grazing practices, and continues to do so today. In fact, despite the lack of reliable rainfall in the region, heavily water-dependent agriculture, such as citrus and cotton is still practiced. As Stafford Smith *et al.* (2000) argue, land managers are currently experiencing a range of pressures that ensures that many will 'discount' the future viability of their land for immediate productive gain.

While wool and beef production were the predominant agricultural production in the early years of settlement, the sinking of bores along the stock routes in the 1880s, to
take advantage of the Great Artesian Basin, meant that water became viewed as an endless resource. As a result, substantial orchards were operating by the 1880s (Historical Society of Bourke, 1988). In recent decades, fruit growing has moved to north of the town, as water from the Darling River has become the main source of irrigation, rather than the variably salt-laden Artesian Basin. The northern part of the region also started to grow cotton in the 1970s, relying heavily on irrigation from the Darling River.

In recent years, fluctuating wool prices, drought, and the encroachment of woody weed to the detriment of grasses, have seen some graziers move towards the harvesting of feral goats to supplement or replace more traditional grazing (pers comm. Bourke landholders). In addition to maintaining a reliable market price, goats can consume more of the vegetation and can survive when sheep and cattle are unable (Downing, 1986). Important to later parts of this chapter, is that goats are not only being bred from domestic stock, but are also being harvested from the feral population (Kearins and Carberry, 1979). Goats are being considered by many of the landholders in the Bourke region, to be their only chance of remaining on their properties, as their land is becoming environmentally and economically unviable for sheep and cattle.

The community of Bourke

The community of Bourke (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) has seen much upheaval throughout its history. Having to cope both with drought and flood has meant that many landholders are unable to maintain production, and each subsequent climatic and/or market ‘event’ has seen the abandonment of leases.

While the period leading up to the 1890s saw Bourke described as the ‘Chicago of the west’ (Heathcote, 1965), the town experienced a major slump in the 1890s, from both an economic recession and a major drought, resulting in the loss of two thirds of the population (Historical Society of Bourke, 1988). This was, in large part, a result of land holdings that were too small to make a living (approximately 10,000 acres), overstocking, and the introduction of rabbits (Condon, 1997; Rural Bank of NSW, 1957). Heathcote (1965) also attributes a drop in Bourke’s population to competition
from its Queensland rival, Charleville. The population never really recovered, although the township population rose steadily in the 1930s. The district population remains considerably lower than pre-1890s with a current population of approximately 4000 residents in the local government area (ABS, 2001).

Soldier settlement schemes led to a temporary rise in population as larger properties were subdivided. However, many of these holdings were abandoned due to their uneconomic size, and the catastrophic spread of rabbits (Condon, 1997). As well as being disastrous for the newly settled landholder, as Peart (1997) acknowledges, soldier re-settlement schemes had effects on the entire community:

"Many of these closer settlement schemes took away land from large landholders who had economies of scale, good connection into the market, and a village life on the station which provided a community and support to the people who worked on larger properties. The decision to cut them up into single family units to scatter them in isolation with no education facilities, no market focus and no economies of scale was a torture which has often proved worse than the camaraderie and danger of their battalions in two world wars".

Land degradation was felt across the community. By the 1960s, some graziers started leaving the land, unable to sustain the fight against woody weeds. People began to look for off-farm income as a means of supplementing their grazing income. All three properties – Belah, Ben Lomond and Mulgowan – that were eventually bought by NSW NPWS to form Gundabooka National Park, changed hands a number of times in the decades preceding the purchases. The neighbouring properties, which are still leased privately, are all experiencing varying degrees of success, but many have started to look towards goat harvesting and/or goat farming. More landholders in the region may succumb to the financial pressures currently imposed by drought and low wool prices. The financial strain on the rural community is being felt within the township as expenditure decreases. However, along with regular, seasonal tourist trade and government contractors, town businesses are surviving.

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43 The soldier settlement schemes were introduced to compensate returning World War servicemen with land, while also attempting to increase rural populations and agricultural production in isolated areas. Perhaps the most significant legacy of the schemes was the small size of allotments. Large rural holdings were divided into several smaller ones, often rendering them economically unviable and therefore driving many of the returned soldiers off the land (Industry Commission, 1998; Linn, 1999).
The Indigenous population of the Bourke region also experienced upheaval. While European settlers did not arrive in the Bourke region until the 1850s, European diseases such as smallpox (for which Aborigines had little natural immunity) ravaged the population in the 1820s (Main, 2000). It is unclear what effect this had on the population, but at the very least it would have limited movement and interaction with the local environment. Whatever its effect, it was overshadowed by the arrival of graziers in the late 1800s, when land became increasingly inaccessible to local Indigenous people. Most were forced to move to the Brewarrina Mission that operated from 1887 (Erskine et al., 1997). This, in conjunction with numerous documented massacres or ‘buck shoots’, led to both a displaced Aboriginal community, as well as a diminished one. Moreover, because of the movement of people from Queensland and other NSW regions to the Brewarrina Mission in the 1930s, a significant proportion of the Bourke population is now comprised of Indigenous people from other areas (Martin, 1991b). Despite this, many people of the local tribes survive in the district today, and while much traditional knowledge has been lost, an affinity with the natural landscape, and particularly Gunderbooka Range, remains.

After the initial wave of altercation between locals and Europeans, an uneasy truce began as pastoralists began to recognise the value of Indigenous knowledge of the landscape. By the 1900s, many Aborigines were working on local stations, contributing to pastoralism. Both Gundabooka Station and Yanda (one of the original stations which occupied part of the Gunderbooka Range) were both large employers of Aboriginal workers, who were recognised for their skills working with stock and managing property (Main, 2000). A community atmosphere grew on many of these stations. Unfortunately, the soldier settlement schemes of the 1920s reduced the size of stations – large numbers of employees were no longer necessary to work the land, and people were moved on again, either to Aboriginal reserves or the fringes of Bourke.

While Indigenous people and white pastoralists were beginning to coexist, they still remained quite distinct ‘communities’. They interacted with each other, depended on each other, and even shared goals, but ultimately they remained apart. As one Indigenous person (BI3) interviewed for this research said:

Chapter 9: A Community Embracing Change: The introduction of Gundabooka National Park to the Bourke community
"They [whites] were alright, but they never really understood us... never knew what made us tick, probably still don't... are we a community? Yeah, for the most part, but sometimes we're not even close, sometimes we see things so different..."

Today, the community of Bourke remains a complex entity. While there is a strong level of identification with Bourke, this has different meanings to different people. Town-dwellers when speaking of ‘belonging’ to Bourke tend to be referring to the township of Bourke and the community within and around it. However, many of the outlying landholders spoke of Bourke meaning the landscape of the region, the culture of the outback, and the people in the region. These landholders tended to have a much broader definition of the Bourke region, understanding it to encompass several hundred kilometres around the township. They spoke of being in a ‘community of graziers’. They tended to place little emphasis on regular contact being an important part of a community’s bonding process. They tended not to strongly associate with the town itself, and in many cases used Cobar as their main service town. The main reason for this was cited as being the social problems in the town, and most expressed regret that they did not support the town as much as they could:

"There are problems in Bourke but lots of towns have problems and ours are always exaggerated by the media... still it’s hard to completely identify with a place you’re a little nervous of" (BLH10).

Alternatively, local business owners identified strongly with the town. They placed less emphasis on the landscape, but still spoke of an ‘outback’ identity as being a strong part of Bourke’s, and hence their own, identity.

Local Indigenous people, when discussing their ‘community’, tended to identify strongly with the Aboriginal community of the Bourke region, again, like the landholders, defining the scope of the Bourke region broadly. This concept of community was sometimes further divided into different kinship groups within the region, although as one person said:

"Internally we may be spilt, we may be divided all the time, but to outsiders we’re one community..." (BI3).
So, the community of Bourke has various sub-communities and some division. But despite this, a feeling of belonging, and a strong, shared sense of place is evident – two of the most important factors in community identity.

“It’s hard to describe [us as a community]. Bourke is so split sometimes… but when you know you all come from the same place, when you can all look at the same country and say, ‘hey, that’s something special’ then there’s something there that outsiders will never understand” (BLH5).

As discussed in Chapter 3, communities are complex and are rarely homogenous. Complex social relationships are one of the key challenges for government agencies introducing landuse change, as they need to consider all values and negotiate an outcome that enhances the sustainability of the community. The remainder of this chapter will explore the introduction of Gundabooka National Park into the Bourke community, and the relationship that has developed between the community and the NSW NPWS.

**Gundabooka National Park**

Gundabooka National Park\(^{44}\) is located approximately 50km south of Bourke, and 80km north of Cobar, in western NSW (Figure 9.2). It has a total area of 64,322 hectares. The Gunderbooka Range (Figure 9.3), the predominant landscape feature of the Park, rises over 360 metres above the surrounding Cobar Peneplain and 495m above sea level. The Park is accessed via the Kidman Way, a sealed road between Cobar and Bourke, or alternatively can be accessed via Louth, a small town west of the Park. Two thirds of the Park has been gazetted since 1996, with the final third in 2003. The Park is managed by the Bourke office of the NSW NPWS, and is located within the Bourke Shire.

\(^{44}\) While there are several accepted spellings those that will be used for this thesis, and which are most commonly used locally are ‘Gunderbooka’ when referring to ‘Mount Gunderbooka’ or ‘Gunderbooka Range’, and ‘Gundabooka’ for ‘Gundabooka National Park’ or ‘Gundabooka Station’ (the local pastoral leasehold adjoining the National Park).

*Chapter 9: A Community Embracing Change: The introduction of Gundabooka National Park to the Bourke community*
Figure 9.2: Location of Gundabooka National Park, New South Wales
A changing landscape

While the community of Bourke has recently seen the introduction of NSW NPWS into the landscape, the region is still dominated by agricultural landuses. In 1996, NSW NPWS purchased two former grazing properties, Belah and Ben Lomond. When Mulgowan was purchased in 1998, Gundabooka National Park was created, totalling over 60,000 hectares. Figure 9.4 shows the former locations of each of the homesteads.

An Aboriginal Corporation – Gunda-Ah-Myro – has been formed as the primary consultative body regarding Park management decisions. It is envisaged that the Park will eventually be handed back to its Indigenous owners and jointly managed with NSW NPWS (Erskine, 1998). The Sydney Morning Herald reported soon after the acquisition of the Mulgowan property, that “The Minister for the Environment... said there would be discussions on returning the land to its traditional owners” (Clennell, 1998).

The process that eventuated in the purchase of the properties is important in understanding its eventual acceptance by the Bourke community as a legitimate landuser in the region. The following section outlines this process.
A history of the establishment of Gundabooka National Park

The primary objective for proclaiming a national park at this time, was a NSW state government initiative to reserve natural systems considered under-represented in the National Park reserve system. Two equally important factors provided the rationale for choosing Gundabooka National Park to meet the NSW NPWS objective; first, its Indigenous cultural value, and second, its natural value. Both of these values were being officially recognised in the 1980s, through quite different channels. This section will briefly describe the political and institutional process that eventuated in the selection of Gundabooka National Park.

In 1980, the Widjeri Aboriginal Housing Co-Operative of Bourke lodged a land claim for the Western Lands Lease, *Mulgowan Station*:

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*Chapter 9: A Community Embracing Change: The introduction of Gundabooka National Park to the Bourke community*
“We the undersigned members of the Management Board of Widjeri call on you and your government to investigate the transfer of the Western Lands Lease currently held by Mr O’Malley to the Aboriginal people of Bourke. The 17,580 hectares of the lease contain Mt Gunderbooka, which has cave paintings of traditional and contemporary significance to the Aboriginal people of Bourke.

The Management Board of Widjeri feel that this valuable site should be placed under the control of Aboriginal people and that a cultural centre be established near the caves to teach Aboriginal children their language and culture which the whites of NSW have attempted since 1788 to eradicate…”

It was hoped that the pastoral lease would be withdrawn and that Widjeri and the NSW NPWS could jointly manage the land (Martin, 1991b; Smith, cited by anon. in Identity, 1982). When this claim was unsuccessful, the Local Aboriginal Land Council attempted to buy the property, but was unsuccessful. The local Indigenous people continued to pressure the local council, and particularly the NSW NPWS, to purchase the land. Their cause was helped by successful claims on other sites by groups in the region, namely the Brewarrina Aboriginal Land Council, the Wilcannia Aboriginal community, and the Nulla Nulla Aboriginal Land Council (Main, 2000).

In the meantime, in a quite separate move, a Wilderness Working Group (WWG) had been formed in 1986, to identify areas of natural and/or cultural significance that were under-represented in the National Parks reserve system. The WWG identified 36 areas of sufficient value to be included in their report to the Minister (Bob Carr, now Premier of NSW). Among these was the Gunderbooka Ranges – “Vegetation of the area... form a particularly interesting assemblage of species which is poorly represented in the New South Wales National Parks system” (WWG, 1986:40).

Community pressure on the NSW government was not, however, all pushing towards a national park. When the WWG announced its recommendations in 1986, the NSW Government faced pressure from a highly vocal and politically mobilised National Farmers’ Federation who was leading what, in retrospect, has proven to be a hysterical reaction to the recommendations. Headlines such as “Half of Bourke Shire Could Go!” (March 20, 1987) and “Leave Western Lands Alone!” (March 27, 1987), featured in issues of The Western Herald. A poem was published in The Western Herald, around this time protesting that:

Chapter 9: A Community Embracing Change: The introduction of Gundabooka National Park to the Bourke community
“...Now the conservationists have us within their sights;
Our land they’ll take away from us as if it were their right...”
(“Paroo Pen”, 1987)
(For the full text see Appendix M)

Inflammatory language such as NSW NPWS’s ‘intimidating land grab’ was used to describe the WWG’s report. In most areas of the Western Division, this remains an issue today, as western landholders fear that their land may be compulsorily acquired for conservation purposes. This is despite the fact that in the 15 years since the Working Group made its recommendations, very little land has actually been purchased, and the Western Division remains under-represented in the reserve system.

However, by the mid 1990s, the NSW Premier, Bob Carr, was facing increasing pressure to increase the reserve system as a result of the RFA process and general political pressure. The NSW government developed a policy to comprehensively protect a representative sample of all vegetation types within the state, with the priority directed at those systems inadequately represented.

The NSW NPWS were aware of the cultural importance of the Gunderbooka Range, and the previous Indigenous land claim on it (Main, 2000). Moreover, it had been estimated that western pastoralists with woody weed problems were holding an average debt of almost half a million dollars – the three properties surrounding the range were being ‘consumed’ by woody weeds (Main, 2000). Therefore, when NSW NPWS began to show interest, the landholders of both Belah and Ben Lomond were quick to respond. While many landholders in the Western Division region were generally opposed to the purchase, landholders in the Bourke region saw it as an opportunity (The Western Herald, 1996).

NSW NPWS purchased both properties in 1996, with very little negative response from any community sector. At this time, Mulgowan was not available for sale, and it would be a further two years before the property, and thus the Gunderbooka Ranges, would be purchased, and another four years (2003) before the Mulgowan section would be gazetted into the National Park (NSW NPWS, 2003).

Chapter 9: A Community Embracing Change: The introduction of Gundabooka National Park to the Bourke community
Chapter 7 introduced two possible scenarios for the introduction of policy-driven landuse change – when the landuse is defined but the location is negotiable (Scenario A); and when the location is defined and the landuse is negotiable (Scenario B). The introduction of Gundabooka National Park is unusual, in that it fits both scenarios. From the government agency perspective, it fits Scenario A: NSW NPWS’ objective was to increase land under reserve in the Western Division and the Bourke region fulfilled that criterion. However, from a community perspective, it also fits Scenario B: here was an area of land that the community felt strongly about, and were attempting to have some input into its future. They sought a national park outcome as the best way to meet their need to protect the values of the landscape, both cultural and natural. The community actively pursued this particular landuse for their location, while the agency sought a location for their landuse, and the objectives were complementary. This demonstrates that policy-driven landuse change can meet community and government objectives.

**Indigenous significance of Gundabooka National Park**

The cultural value of the Gunderbooka Range was a key factor in its selection by NSW NPWS to locate a national park. Cultural significance is defined as the:

> "Cultural value which a place holds for a community, or for sections of the community and includes the spiritual, social, aesthetic, historic or scientific value of the place for the present, past or future generations"  
> (Erskine et al., 1997:5).

Moreover, the *New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife (Aboriginal Ownership) Amendment Act 1996*, states that:

> "land is of cultural significance to Aboriginals if the lands are significant in terms of the traditions, observances, customs, beliefs, or history of the Aboriginal people of the area".

The two tribal groups who claim association with Gunderbooka Range are the Ngemba people, and the Pakaantji people. There are further breakdowns defined by language within these groups, which will not be explored here (see Donaldson, 1984; Erskine, 1998; Erskine *et al.*, 1997).
Erskine (1998) has summarised the significance of the Gunderbooka Ranges as:

- A place of settlement and a safe haven for Aboriginal groups;
- An important source of plants, both for medicinal and nutritional reasons;
- A teaching place;
- Both a traditional men’s and women’s place;
- A place of spiritual significance;
- An important meeting place;
- A hiding place (used as a sanctuary from Europeans during massacres);
- Part of a social and cultural complex of significant places; and
- As a place of symbolic and political importance being representative of places that became inaccessible to Indigenous people after European settlement.

The significance of the Gunderbooka Ranges for Indigenous people is complex. As a single geographic entity it is significant, however, its absolute value is encapsulated by its context within the larger landscape. Places are linked to other places and it is through this linkage that Gundabooka’s true significance emerges (Erskine, 1998).

“Every one of those mountains, them places, have got a story to them, you know all were formed at different times with a lot of other little places that connect one place to another... it’s not that important [Gundabooka] by itself, you know, but when it’s tied in with everything else, that’s when it’s an important place... if we were to look at it in straight terms Gundabooka and the art isn’t as important as some of the other places but when you put it all together, you can’t separate one place from another, because what you learn there will take you to the next place, and without them first places you can’t go to them other places” (Paul Gordon, cited in Erskine et al., 1997: 13-14).

Much of the traditional significance of the Gunderbooka Ranges is unknown because of the large degree of alienation from land experienced by Indigenous people. However, it holds contemporary significance, and some memories and stories hint towards the Mountains’ historical significance (Martin, 1991b). The contemporary significance of the Gunderbooka Ranges often extends beyond the two major tribes, to those who are relative ‘newcomers’ to the region. Because many displaced Aborigines worked on the stations around Gunderbooka Mountain, particularly Gundabooka Station and Mulgowan, the Mountain has taken on a new significance, and a new history. Much of this history is surrounded in tragedy, in the form of massacres and removal from family.

Chapter 9: A Community Embracing Change: The introduction of Gundabooka National Park to the Bourke community
Mulgowan has been mentioned as particularly significant, particularly as a place of refuge during hot weather. In extended dry times, the Gunderbooka Ranges provided one of the few sources of water, and served as a major travelling route, as well as a gathering place for people. The water sources in the Ranges also were used to hunt animals drawn to the limited water sources (Erskine, 1998). Gunderbooka Mountain was frequently used as a hiding place, a place people could go to be safe from ‘white men’ (Erskine, 1998; Martin, 1991b). Mulgowan is associated with both men’s and women’s sites. It is believed that the art sites at Mulgowan were used to teach the children about Aboriginal law (Erskine, 1998). As well, it is believed that a burial ground exists on Gunderbooka Mountain where bones were carried and buried, although the location is unknown (Martin, 1991b). This would help explain one translation of ‘Gundabooka’ as “the smell of the dead”\(^45\) (Martin, 1991b:19). There are a number of stories and mythologies that involve the Gunderbooka Ranges and its connection to other places. Some versions of these have been included in Appendix N.

**The Mulgowan art sites**

The Gunderbooka Range has Aboriginal art sites scattered throughout. Many of these are located on Mulgowan, which was the last property to be added to the National Park. The Mulgowan art sites were listed in 1980 on the Register of the National Estate, and are described on the database as “some of the most visually outstanding in NSW” (RNED, 1980). The sites are recognised as having contemporary and historic significance to the Indigenous people of the Bourke region.

The Mulgowan Rock Art complex is located along the Mullareeny Creek at the southeastern corner of the Gunderbooka Range (Figure 9.4), and consists of two clusters of art sites (RNED, 1980). It is unclear to the author the full extent of the rock art across the Park\(^46\), however, the location of the Mulgowan Rock Art complex was widely and

\(^{45}\) Several meanings for the name Gundabooka have been recorded. According to Joe Murray who pronounced it Gandabooka, Ganda means sweet, and buka means a smell, like the smell of the dead (recorded by Marie Reay, cited in Erskine, 1998). It has also been said to translate as “stinking guts” or “stinking vagina”, or in a quite different vein, “a place where mothers taught their children” (Martin, 1991b:19).

\(^{46}\) The location of most of the art sites throughout the Park is not public knowledge. It was not in the interests of the thesis to pursue this information.
publicly known before the National Park acquisition. These have remained the 'sacrificial' sites, and are actively promoted as tourist destinations (BI-3, 2001). The management implications of this will be discussed later in this chapter.

**European significance of Gundabooka National Park**

As all three properties acquired to create Gundabooka National Park were long-established pastoral properties, many of the buildings and farming infrastructure also hold historical European value. While examples of early 20th century farming infrastructure are common throughout the area, many of the buildings on Gundabooka are intact (Figures 9.5 and 9.6). Unlike other buildings in the region, these will not undergo any future changes, and offer insight into a unique period of Australian history that may not be captured elsewhere.

**Figure 9.5: Former Belah homestead**
In addition, many people in the Bourke region, of both European and Aboriginal heritage, have close associations with the three properties as pastoral enterprises. It can be expected that European engagement with the Gundabooka environment also hold great meaning and personal connections.

**Natural significance of Gundabooka National Park**

Gundabooka National Park has important biological and ecological value. Surveys conducted on the Park have found 10 species (6 fauna and 4 flora species) that are listed under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (Main, 2000; NSW NPWS, 2003). Fauna surveys have identified 137 species of bird, 26 species of reptiles and amphibians, and 18 species of mammal (NSW NPWS, 2003).

Five land systems have been identified in Gundabooka National Park, including Ranges; hills and footslopes; rolling downs and lowlands; alluvial plains; and colluvial plains (NSW NPWS, 2003). Mount Gunderbooka is one of the most dominant geographic features in the Bourke region. As the Park is comprised of landscapes and vegetation alliances poorly represented in the reserve estate, it holds significant ecological value.

It is generally accepted that the proclamation of Gundabooka National Park has been a positive step towards preserving its cultural and natural values. However, NSW NPWS have responsibilities beyond this – responsibilities that extend to the community in which it is embedded. The remainder of this chapter will examine the
largely positive relationship that has been forged between the community/ies of Bourke and the NSW NPWS.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NSW NPWS AND THE BOURKE COMMUNITY

The relationship between NSW NPWS and the Bourke community is largely positive, which is, in itself, quite unusual. Traditionally, farmers are hostile towards NSW NPWS and tend to see them as poor land managers, and even poorer neighbours (Annears, 1998). Hence, this case study offers an important and relatively rare insight into the successful introduction of policy-driven landuse change into rural communities.

As for the Adjungbilly community, the changes that have taken place since the change in landuse from grazing to national park in Bourke, can be broken into three broad categories. These are, philosophical changes as the priorities shift from production driven to conservation focused, thereby changing management goals and priorities; a governance change, from privately owned land, to publicly owned and accessible land; and economic changes. These are the ‘higher level’ changes which have taken place; however, these changes have practical ramifications for the community.

The practical or ‘real’ changes that have occurred within the immediate region, to both the physical and human environments, are important to recognise. The most significant reflections are the ways the process differs between the Adjungbilly and Bourke case studies. Chapter 10 will examine the differences in management approaches and how an informal community landuse policy and appropriate management philosophies benefited the Bourke community. Before discussing the impacts that the community has identified, the following section will briefly outline the on-the-ground changes that have taken place in Bourke, with the change in landuse from grazing to national park.

Chapter 9: A Community Embracing Change: The introduction of Gundabooka National Park to the Bourke community
The process of change from grazing to National Park

This section provides a description of the on-the-ground changes that occurred. These changes happened simultaneously, so the following summary does not describe a sequential process.

**Change 1: Access** – The most immediate change that took place was the change in governance or tenure of the properties, as they changed from privately owned and managed resources to public resources. This had two immediate ramifications. The first consequence is that access changed. Prior to the NSW NPWS purchase, access to these properties was limited, and at least somewhat controlled, by the private owners. However, as a National Park, it is a state-owned resource and is now able to be accessed by the general public. Access, however, is also controlled and limited by NSW NPWS. This has impacts on the community, as arrangements that they previously had with private owners to access some areas are no longer valid. The community now has to deal with agency procedures to gain access to important cultural areas. Second, activities able to be conducted in the Park have also changed; hunting, horse-riding etc. are now prohibited activities. The change to access and user rights has had some impacts on the surrounding community, which will be discussed in the following section.

**Change 2: Management responsibility** – The second issue that arose from the change in governance is that the responsibility of maintenance changed from a private responsibility to a state responsibility. In the case of Gundabooka National Park, the actual consequences of this are not as significant as might be predicted. This is because key management decisions have remained within the control of a single, identifiable person – the ranger who resides in the community. Therefore, arrangements for implementing weed and pest control, maintaining fences, conducting controlled burns etc. can be made with this one individual. There is some increase in difficulty due to the fact that they do not reside in the Park. However, this is common in the region as properties and residences are frequently uninhabited for periods of time. The ranger does reside in the community and is, therefore, more likely to be responsive to community concerns. The ranger is also easily contactable (Monday-
Fridays). Staff turnover has been low, so the ranger has remained consistently in the community for relatively long periods.

**Change 3: People Leave… and others arrive** – The third change that took place is that the families who owned or managed the properties vacated the homestead, as did any farm employees who were residing on the property. However, most of these homesteads are now inhabited by NSW NPWS staff – some of whom are locals – so the impact on the community in respect of isolation and decreasing community size is minimal. Moreover, there are options to stay within the community in the nearby towns of Bourke and Cobar.

**Change 4: Restoration of infrastructure** – This is an important step in the process of change. Unlike the Adjungbilly case study where farming infrastructure such as houses were removed from the newly established plantations, in Gundabooka National Park much of the infrastructure has been retained and in many cases, restored. The vegetation and the appearance of the landscape also remains the same. These are key distinctions between the landuse changes that will be explored in Chapter 10.

The following section will explore the perceived benefits and impacts for the community from this transition.

**Benefits and issues identified by the Bourke community**

The relationship between the community of Bourke and the NSW NPWS is complex. While the community perceive some positive outcomes from the change, it is not a simple relationship. The ‘practical’ and higher level changes that have taken place with the change in landuse have led to a perception of a series of interacting impacts and benefits. Figure 9.7 illustrates the complex and inter-woven relationship that has eventuated in these impacts.
A CHANGING LANDUSE
Transition from grazing to national park

PHYSICAL CHANGES:
Minimal

PHILOSOPHICAL CHANGES:
Production-driven to conservation

GOVERNANCE CHANGES:
Private to public ownership

ECONOMIC CHANGES:
Grazing to national park

Increased nature conservation

Management priorities change

Cultural heritage protection increases

Decreased access to Aboriginal art sites for some stakeholders

Neighbour dynamics change

Bureaucratic procedures increase

Changed public access

Consultation procedure established

Some community activities prohibited

Increased promotion of region

Increased tourism opportunities

Increased employment opportunities

Changing population

Employment opportunities change

People leaving

People arriving

Increased public access

General public access increases

Some community activities prohibited

Chapter 9: A Community Embracing Change: The introduction of Gundabooka National Park to the Bourke community
Due to a range of economic, ecological and social conditions that have been identified by the local community, it seems that Gundabooka National Park has the distinction of being a national park that is well accepted by its neighbours, the local council and the community in general. Indeed, it has been enthusiastically embraced, as it is perceived by the local community as a largely positive landuse change. As one council member commented:

“There is no doubt that they [NSW NPWS] are a welcome addition to the local region [of Bourke]... While there are exceptions, on the whole I would think that the image of National Parks, out here, has improved a hell of a lot” (BC2).

This section will examine those characteristics, possibly unique to this region, which created a community that was responsive to the introduction of a national park. The benefits that the community has identified can be broken down into three broad categories: environmental, economic and social. These will be discussed in detail.

Several neighbouring landholders did voice generic concerns about national parks, concerns that were not tied to any particular incident or management decision within Gundabooka National Park, but which are commonly directed at NSW NPWS. These generic concerns include (BUGV, 2002; NSWFA, 2003; NSW NPWS, 1997):

- High populations of pest animals, including unsustainable populations of native animals
- Exotic and noxious weed control;
- Land access arrangements, in particular limitations of access;
- Bush fire suppression management;
- Bush fire hazard reduction efforts; and
- Boundary fencing and other maintenance costs.

These concerns have not been focused on in the thesis, as they are believed to be a result of the general rural attitude towards NSW NPWS rather than a result of any management decision or philosophy pertaining to Gundabooka National Park. These complaints were always offset by a majority of landholders disagreeing with the comments.
Environmental benefits and issues

There are a variety of ways that the community perceives NSW NPWS to be benefiting the physical environment. These are:

- Use of unproductive land;
- Fire management; and
- Pest animal control.

Use of unproductive land

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the natural environment of the Bourke region has undergone significant landscape change since European settlement. The removal of fire, and the introduction of grazing and rabbits, has combined to create an environment dominated by woody weeds, which has exacerbated the marginal nature of the country. This, combined with unreliable wool prices at the time of the acquisitions, meant that many graziers were struggling to survive. As a result, there was virtually no interest in the properties to continue them as grazing enterprises:

“They were hard properties to make a living off... a real struggle... let’s just say that no one was exactly up in arms about it going over to [National] Parks” (BLH12).

“There wasn’t any opposition at the time, although 15-20 years ago there was some noise and we all perked up our ears about it, but when it finally happened it suddenly didn’t seem so bad” (BLH8).

The properties that were purchased were considered by many landholders in the region to be economically marginal for grazing:

“Woody weed has destroyed grazing practices for many western division properties... it has ruined the viability of many properties including those ones... nobody wanted them” (BLH15).

One landholder said, in reference to the former owners of one of the properties:

“They were damn lucky that National Parks wanted that place; nobody else would have and they would have sunk in the very near future if they hadn’t got out” (BLH6).
The community considered that NSW NPWS were making use of land that would otherwise go to waste. NSW NPWS were not perceived to be ‘taking land out of production’, instead they were considered to be “taking land that has been grazed to the upmost limits, and giving it a new life” (BLH2).

Because of these pre-existing economic and physical conditions, the Bourke community was predisposed to accepting NSW NPWS as a welcome and legitimate land user. In this respect, the managers of Gundabooka National Park have simply been lucky – they arrived in a climate that was sympathetic to any landuse that could make use of unproductive land. While it may not have been their intention, they have located their landuse in a community that was highly receptive to the change; a community whose values, needs and expectations ‘fit’ with the introduced landuse. This greatly enhanced their chances of success, minimised conflict, and made the transition a smooth process for the agency and the community.

**Fire management**

The Australian climate and susceptibility to wild fires, makes fire management a key issue between rural communities and land management agencies such as NSW NPWS. It is considered extremely important to manage landscapes to prevent wild fires, while also reacting swiftly and strategically when one does occur. In recent years, NSW NPWS have received much negative public reaction regarding their fire management strategies, particularly in respect of reducing fuel loads (e.g. BUGV, 2002; Limb, 2002). As an example, the January 2003 bushfires through south-east Australia, which were viewed by some as being fuelled by both the NSW NPWS and State Forest estates, impacted on both urban and rural communities. It is, therefore, quite significant that the Bourke community is seemingly satisfied with fire management strategies in Gundabooka National Park. It is important to recognise however, that as yet no wild fires have originated in the Park. It can be expected that opinions may change if large fires occur.

The community believe that fuel reduction efforts by NSW NPWS are adequate, and neighbours feel they are kept well informed of burn-offs:

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“They [NSW NPWS] always let us know [if they’re burning off], they’re good like that...I think they probably keep the place better burnt than most of us, it’s a job that a lot of us don’t keep on top of” (BLH12).

Perhaps most importantly, the community is enthusiastic about the involvement of NSW NPWS staff in the rural bush-fire brigade with several of the Bourke NPWS staff actively involved. This is in addition to their more formal involvement in NPWS fire management. As one landholder said:

“It's good to see them [NSW NPWS staff] showing up to things, they're involved... we expected them to be more stand-offish, you know, keep to themselves and that, but they seem alright... they’re involved” (BLH9).

Aside from the benefit of having additional active and trained volunteer staff to help fight local wild-fires, the involvement of NSW NPWS staff in local events, clubs etc. also helps to maintain a sense of community which is vital when landuse change occurs in rural communities. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

**Pest animal control**

Pest animal species were not considered to be a significant effect of Gundabooka National Park by most of the landholders interviewed. Neighbouring landholders frequently perceive national parks in other regions as supporting high numbers of pest species. That this was not perceived to be the case by the Bourke community is unusual. However, several landholders do consider it a major issue, so it will be briefly discussed here. This discussion will also include the benefits of high goat numbers as viewed by many neighbours.

Most of the concern regarding pest animal control is in reaction to a NSW NPWS management strategy to fence off several of the major artificial water sources within the Park. Figure 9.8 shows one fenced off water source near the former Belah homestead, while Figure 9.9 shows a dried out, fenced water source, on the former Mulgowan property. The majority of water sources on the Park (37 of 39) were artificially constructed for pastoralism. A total of 29 of these will be decommissioned as they are believed by NSW NPWS to be creating unstable ecosystems, resulting in...
an overabundance of pest species such as kangaroos, goats and pigs, which have come to rely on the water sources. It is hoped that gradually closing these sources off will lead to a reduction in density (BNP1; NSW NPWS, 2003).

**Figure 9.8: Farm dam on the former Belah property**

![Farm dam on the former Belah property](image)

**Figure 9.9: Fenced off farm dam on the former Mulgowan property**

![Fenced off farm dam on the former Mulgowan property](image)
Some neighbouring landholders are concerned that for the short-term at least, numbers of pest species may increase on their own properties as animals disperse for water:

“It’s a big problem, they’re driving ferals and ‘roos over here because they’re shutting off the waterholes. They’re hardly going to just lie down and die right there in the Park... where else would they go? (BLH3)”.

NPWS acknowledged that the decision to close water holes to decrease numbers of pest species might have short-term effects on neighbouring landholders, as animals disperse to find water. It is envisaged that eventually the population would succumb to a shortage of water and numbers would decrease. NSW NPWS claim that the short-term negative impacts are for the eventual benefit of everybody, but particularly for the long-term conservation value of the Park – this being one of their top priorities.

Certainly pest species such as goats and pigs are in large numbers throughout the Park. However, there is little evidence, even anecdotal, that these have increased since the gazetting of the properties by NSW NPWS:

“As neighbours WE need to do more, we can’t just sit back and expect them [NSW NPWS] to take care of it. There is nothing to say that goats or pigs or ‘roos have increased at all since national parks bought it... most of the problems with ferals and kangaroos is the terrain, it’s so scrubby they can hide easier. It doesn’t matter whether you’re national parks or a farmer, they can still hide from you” (BLH2).

“They are better than the previous owners at controlling ferals” (BLH5).

The issue of pest animal control is further complicated by the perception that feral goats may be an advantage to neighbouring landholders. As mentioned previously in this chapter, the live capture of feral goats is a growth industry in the Bourke region. A number of the neighbours to the Park perceive the movement of goats from the Park onto their private properties as a benefit: “Goats are to my advantage – I’ll take them!” (BLH8). NSW NPWS have even installed one-way gates (Figure 9.10) between several of the private properties and the Park, which allows movement from the Park, but not back again. In uncertain economic times, the additional revenue opportunity created by goat harvesting and farming is believed to be significant.
In summary, the community of Bourke does not perceive that NSW NPWS have had a significant impact on the local environment. The condition of the country before the purchase was such that it was considered unproductive and ‘wasted’ land anyway. While some concerns were raised regarding feral animal control methods, in the main, NSW NPWS are considered to be doing an adequate job. The community also recognised the abundance of goats in the Park as providing harvesting opportunities. Fire management is believed to be adequate, and the community appreciates that NSW NPWS employees are involved with the local bush fire brigade. Overall, in regards to the environment, NSW NPWS are considered to be at least a neutral addition, and at best, a positive land manager.

**Economic benefits and issues**

The community believes that the arrival of NSW NPWS in the region has benefited the local and regional economy in a number of ways. These are:

- Increasing property values;
- They are considered a ‘known quantity’;
- Tourism; and
- Local employment.
Increasing property values

As already discussed, NSW NPWS were welcomed into the region as they were considered to be making use of land that would otherwise be ‘wasted’. But there were two other perceived benefits of NSW NPWS purchasing unproductive land. First, it was seen as allowing the landholders that owned the acquired properties to leave:

“with dignity... we’re a proud bunch, nobody likes to be pushed out by a bank, it’s not just that you have to go which is bad enough, but you leave feeling stupid, like you failed, nobody wants to see that...I’m not saying they were about to be foreclosed, I wouldn’t know, but most of us are on the edge” (BLH7).

Second, other landholders in the region began to recognise that the introduction of a major land purchaser into the district might actually benefit them if they needed to sell their own properties in the future. One landholder likened NSW NPWS to “a saviour; someone who just might bail me out if it all gets too much” (BLH10).

Landholders have, therefore, begun to perceive NSW NPWS as a positive addition to the local real-estate market, because they will consider purchasing land that is of marginal pastoral value.

NSW NPWS as a known quantity

The following was not stated as a significant benefit of the Park by very many of the landholders interviewed. However, several did express the view that because of the uncertainty of the future of Western Division pastoralism, having NSW NPWS as a neighbour presented a certainty of management type. They are a known tenure, and while they are sometimes perceived as being inconsistent with management decisions, neighbours were at least somewhat assured that if they pursued an issue it would be dealt with according to government policy. One landholder said:

“These days there’s so little money to be spent that you can’t be at all assured that your neighbour is going to hold up his end of the bargain on weeds, ferals, fencing, and really what can you do about it? If they don’t have the money, they don’t have it... at least with Parks you know that if you push it they have to eventually do the right thing” (BLH2).
Moreover, it was considered by most landholders that the Bourke office of NPWS provided effective and fair cost sharing arrangements for such expenses as fencing and feral animal control:

“They provide the materials, we do the labour – it’s a great arrangement” (BLH12).

As a result, there were feelings of security associated with having NSW NPWS as a neighbour. One landholder felt that, in the case of the Bourke region, it might even increase property values. As discussed, NSW NPWS were already perceived to have paid more for the properties than they were worth as grazing properties, but several people also suggested that NSW NPWS might contribute to increasing the value of properties that they neighbour. It was suggested that this was because potential purchasers could access documentation assuring them of NSW NPWS obligations, whereas other neighbours would not be able to offer this assurance.

Tourism

Tourism was considered by many of the people interviewed to be the most important future industry for Bourke. Bourke’s tourist information centre, in conjunction with the local council, is embracing the ‘Back’o’Bourke’ character and is keen to support anything that can be marketed as a tourist venture. Local business owners, as well as the local council, believe that if properly promoted, Gundabooka National Park may act as a drawcard to keep visitors in the region longer, increasing expenditure on local services. As such, Gundabooka National Park is actively promoted by the local council and the tourist information centre (BTIC, 1999; KWPC, 2000). The Bourke Shire Council considered the addition of a national park into the region to be a positive addition to the community. While NSW NPWS also does not pay rates on its land, as one council member said:

“There are no disadvantages to having national parks in the shire… any negative is more than compensated for by the many benefits they provide” (BC1).

Another Council member said:

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“National Parks is yet another thing we can sell to the public; it's one more thing that just might bring them out this way, when they could choose to go somewhere else... Every additional piece of equipment we have in our armour to encourage tourists has got to be good” (BC2).

A landholder also acknowledged the benefits provided by a potential increase in tourism to the region:

“National Parks are a good thing. They create tourist opportunities which is good for the town which just might turn this community around, give them something to get excited about” (BLH7).

Moreover, NSW NPWS claim that:

“many park visitors [are] using visitor accommodation and service industries in Bourke” (NSW NPWS, 2003:5).

As part of this research, surveys were conducted to monitor national park visitor expenditure. These support the community and council perceptions to some extent. Most visitors to Gundabooka National Park used the camping facilities provided within the Park, and, therefore, did not contribute to the accommodation industry. However, most visitors said that they would take advantage of the laundromat, service stations, newsagency and grocery stores in Bourke. A small number said that they also would use restaurants in Bourke. It would be very difficult to determine how much revenue national park visitors bring to Bourke, but the interviews suggested that it could significantly increase once the Park is actively promoted.

A representative from NSW NPWS stated that Gundabooka National Park would eventually “act as an economic drawcard... we bring visitors who then spend money in the town” (BNP1). While interviews conducted with Park visitors suggest that they rarely came to Bourke because of the Park, it did act to keep them in the region for 1-3 days longer. So, with future promotion and some improvement of facilities, locals believe that visitation will increase. Gundabooka National Park in conjunction with a number of other parks in western New South Wales – Kinchega, Willandra, Mungo, Peery, Sturt and Mutawintji – offer visitors both a cultural and natural experience, and therefore has the potential to assist in the future development of nature-based tourism.
in Bourke. NSW NPWS have acknowledged this as an important contribution that the presence of the Park can make:

"The significance of the Park... it is an additional attraction to the Bourke/Cobar region and therefore enhances the value of the region as a tourist destination... has the potential to contribute to the economic well-being of Bourke and the surrounding region" (NSW NPWS, 2003:6).

Several tourist operators in Bourke see the possibility of including the National Park in their tours as highly positive. The complicated bureaucratic process has meant that these operators are yet to gain accreditation (as of March 2005), which may contribute to waning enthusiasm. One tour operator claimed that he had been receiving enquiries for several years about the possibility of eco-tours that would include Gundabooka National Park. He estimated that the inclusion of the Park into his tours could increase clients by up to fifty percent. This was supported by interviews conducted with visitors at the Bourke Tourist Information Centre, where the majority of people interviewed expressed interest in the National Park if there was a guided tour. These same interviews highlighted that many visitors to Bourke are in the over 60s age group and tend to arrive in large tour groups. They are often left in Bourke for up to 24 hours with no vehicle. This particular tourist ‘type’ tended to enthusiastically sign-up for any organised activity, such as tours, and expressed particular interest in nature tours. According to one operator, a tour of the cotton and citrus industries that has been operating in Bourke for several years, has consistently been booked out for the months it is run, indicating that there is huge potential for organised tours in Bourke.

Several landholders who neighbour the Park have indicated that they would like to start farmstay businesses, and believe that their proximity to the National Park will be of benefit. It was considered that in the competitive world of ‘bed and breakfast’s’ and farm stays, a national park was one of the best drawcards:

"Without the National Park next door we wouldn’t even consider it... with the Park where it is we can start a farm-stay, and if one’s established then our property value will take-off" (BLH3).

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*Chapter 9: A Community Embracing Change: The introduction of Gundabooka National Park to the Bourke community*
Gundabooka National Park also offers local Indigenous people the opportunity to retain or establish a connection to the Park. Erskine (1998) argues, that the involvement of local Indigenous people in tourism is paramount to their involvement in management. She argues that it:

"presents an opportunity for the Aboriginal community not to be on ‘cultural display’ but to maintain control over tourism ventures and to educate tourists about many aspects of Aboriginal culture that are important to them..." (Erskine, 1998:40).

The community perceives that economic opportunities have been created which were not so accessible prior to the landuse change, thereby increasing the National Park’s acceptance in the community.

**Local employment**

The contribution that NSW NPWS can make to local employment is perceived by the local community to be significant. The Bourke NPWS staff consists of 3 rangers, 2 administrative staff, 3 field officers, and 3 Indigenous officers. Aside from the ranger positions, all of the staff has been recruited locally. This is considered to be a significant employer for Bourke. There also have been several employment opportunities for contract jobs, such as removal of dangerous infrastructure, restoration of buildings, and goat harvesting. These have predominantly gone to local contractors, and in some cases, neighbours to the Park. The good will that this fosters between NSW NPWS and the community cannot be overemphasised. This was recognised by one NSW NPWS employee:

"We don’t have a strict policy to employ locals, but it certainly works to our benefit if we do" (BNP1).

NSW NPWS also have another, indirect role in local employment. As relatively large resource users, they create employment opportunities through their expenditure. While this benefit was recognised by some local businesses and also by the shire council, these people also believe that NSW NPWS could increase their expenditure to include
more local service and goods providers\textsuperscript{47}. However generally, the local community are supportive of NSW NPWS as an employer in the community.

In summary, Gundabooka National Park is seen as a positive addition to Bourke's local economy. The purchase price of properties for the national park is believed to have been higher than landowners would otherwise have received for the properties as grazing properties. In addition, having NSW NPWS as a neighbour is considered to be a positive economic advantage, as they represent a certainty of management type, thereby further increasing surrounding property prices. The potential to develop the Park as a major tourist attraction with benefits for the town, neighbours and tour operators is considered to be a significant benefit of the National Park. And finally, NSW NPWS are considered to be a relatively significant local employer and user of local services, which has fostered much goodwill within the community.

\textbf{Social benefits and issues}

The community has identified three ways that they believe that NSW NPWS have contributed to the social sustainability of the community. These are:

- Cultural heritage protection;
- Indigenous co-management of Gundabooka National Park; and
- Maintenance of ‘community’.

\textbf{Cultural heritage protection}

Community members across all sectors were positive about the protection of Aboriginal cultural sites that the National Park can provide. Most people agree, at least in principle, that including the sites within a national park is an effective way to

\textsuperscript{47} Increasing expenditure with local service providers may be difficult given requirements that public agencies use compulsory competitive tendering. Under Australia’s National Competition Policy government agencies are obliged to seek the most competitive tender when filling contract positions. As a result, local suppliers, who may be less competitive, are overlooked. This presents a barrier to local employment. However, the isolation of Bourke means that locals tend to be more competitive as they have the advantage of low travel and transporting costs. The relatively small scale of tenders/contracts offered by NSW NPWS also typically does not attract external service providers.
afford them protection. A large number of people believe that by placing the sites under NSW NPWS protection issues such as access became more equitable:

"Before [it was a national park] you had to know the cocky who owned it to get access, now at least everyone has the same chance" (BLH8).

In addition to protecting the Aboriginal art sites, the European farming infrastructure found throughout the Park is also protected, with restoration being undertaken on several of the Park’s buildings:

- On the former Belah property, the shearer’s quarters have been restored to provide visitor accommodation, which is also providing a source of income for NSW NPWS (Figure 9.11).
- The Belah homestead has been restored and provides temporary accommodation for staff and contractors (Figure 9.12).
- A former governess’ cottage on Belah has been restored to provide ‘couples’ accommodation (Figure 9.13).
- The Ben Lomond homestead is used as accommodation for on-Park staff, as is a further homestead on the former Mulgowan property.

The majority of people interviewed from the Bourke community identified cultural heritage protection as the most important benefit provided by the National Park.

**Figure 9.11: Belah Shearer’s quarters, restored for visitor accommodation**
Figure 9.12: *Belah* homestead, restored for staff accommodation

Figure 9.13: *Belah* Governess' cottage, which has since been restored
Indigenous co-management
In addition to protecting the physical cultural artefacts within the Park, there have also been attempts by NSW NPWS to facilitate an on-going relationship between the Park and its Indigenous owners. The declaration of Gundabooka National Park recognising its Indigenous past has, in itself, had quite meaningful repercussions, above and beyond its day-to-day management for the Indigenous community. The recognition of the Aboriginal connection to the Gunderbooka Ranges has helped build relations between NSW NPWS and the Indigenous community. This was acknowledged by all of the Indigenous people interviewed. However, some concerns regarding consultation and access to art sites also were expressed which will be discussed below.

Consultation versus Participation
While joint management between the traditional owners of Gundabooka and the NSW NPWS has been an aspirational goal since the formation of the Park (Erskine, 1998), at present this is perceived as only extending to a consultative role:

“We get a say on how its run but we don’t feel that we own it. They’ve not recognised our capacity to run the country... on the other hand, it still gives our people rights to voice their opinion on management issues which we didn’t have in the past... it’s better, but it’s not enough” (BJ4).

“We really wanted to buy it ourselves, we didn’t want them [NSW NPWS] to own it... like they say – ‘if you want to destroy an Aboriginal site let National Parks know about it’... but then there wasn’t a choice, we’d already tried and failed, so it’s better than nothing, and they’re doing a better job than we expected anyhow” (BJ2).

Several Indigenous people interviewed were complimentary of the NSW NPWS staff involved in decision-making:

“They [NSW NPWS] are really quite sensitive to art sites, they really seem to want to do the right thing” (Bll).

All Indigenous people interviewed would like more of a role in the management of the Park, but they also believed that it was better than the previous situation of private, white ownership. Co-management is extremely complex, and it does appear that NSW NPWS has some way to go before the community will perceive this to be a success.

Chapter 9: A Community Embracing Change: The introduction of Gundabooka National Park to the Bourke community
The perception of the Indigenous community is that consultation has been extensive. There has been regular contact with the local Indigenous communities since the purchase of the properties, commencing in 1996 with an information day specifically to discuss Indigenous involvement in management (Erskine, 1998). They were briefed on the new national park and discussed issues of future management. It was at this meeting that the idea was first raised – by the NSW NPWS – to establish an independent Aboriginal Management Committee for the Park (B11; B12; Erskine, 1998). The consequent Gunda-Ah-Myro Aboriginal Corporation acts as the official channel for consultation.

Consultation with the local community and particularly the Gunda-Ah-Myro Aboriginal Corporation has been identified as a top priority in the Draft Management Plan, and this was verbally supported by the NSW NPWS staff interviewed (NSW NPWS, 2003). However, as one Gunda-Ah-Myro Aboriginal Corporation member said:

"There needs to be real consultation – don’t just ask us, listen to what we say... then do something about it... they come to us for advice over most things... no complaints about that, but they often don’t listen to it" (B12).

Additionally, it was said that:

"They [NSW NPWS] don’t always tell us when they’re doing things in the Park that might matter, like burn-offs..." (B12).

There are some issues that make adequate Indigenous consultation quite difficult. For example, it may be difficult to determine who should be contacted when informing the Indigenous community about routine management decisions. There have been several examples of where information provided by NSW NPWS to Indigenous representatives, has not filtered through the Corporation, leaving members feeling uninformed. Moreover, the Gunda-Ah-Myro Aboriginal Corporation was given the Draft Plan of Management for the Park, six months before it was released for public comment. As B11 said: "We have been consulted... they gave us copies of it but they didn’t call a meeting, so neither did we, so it was never discussed in any detail". Consequently, the Indigenous community’s input into the Plan was limited.
Problems with information dissemination are not restricted to Indigenous groups. Due to time and resource constraints, government agencies tend to consult with representatives from community groups, and rely on these representatives to relay the information to those they represent. If this process falters, it then may appear that they did not adequately consult the community. As discussed in Chapter 5, it is the responsibility of government agencies to ensure that community sectors are represented, and that participative strategies are engaged to ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity to be involved in decision-making. To enhance the relationship between NSW NPWS and the Indigenous community, NSW NPWS need to better accommodate the needs of the Indigenous community, and to become better acquainted with the internal politics of the Gunda-Ah-Myro Aboriginal Corporation and its relationship with the Aboriginal community, to ensure that information filters through to all interested parties. A negotiated agreement on participation strategies should have been a component of a formal community landuse strategy.

Access to Aboriginal sites
In an effort to promote co-management of the Mullareenya Creek art sites, NSW NPWS have consulted the Indigenous community to determine the most appropriate way to protect the sites. Like most communities, however, the Indigenous community is not unanimous on how best to protect the sites. Most of the disagreement is related to the best way to protect the sites, while still affording access to the Indigenous community. Most of the community agrees that protecting the sites within the National Park was the first step in the process. Indigenous people interviewed, spoke of the feelings of loss associated with not being able to freely access the Gunderbooka Ranges, or the art sites on them, prior to the NSW NPWS purchase of the Mulgowan property in 1998 (BII-6). In interviews with Erskine (1997), Gordon (a local Indigenous person) commented that “we used to have to sneak on to visit the art sites” (Erskine et al., 1997). In some ways, access is believed to have improved since the change in governance, but in many respects it is perceived as logistically more difficult.
To understand this issue, it is necessary to understand where the art sites are found, and the process of visiting them. While there are Aboriginal art sites found throughout the Park, the only ones that are promoted as publicly accessible are found on the former Mulgowan property. The complicated procedure to gain access to the sites has raised some issues. The procedure includes collecting the key to a locked gate from the Bourke NPWS office (open only Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm). The site can also only be accessed with a 4WD vehicle.

NSW NPWS claim that the rationale for the locked gate policy is motivated by the need to protect the art sites, particularly by:

- Limiting the number of visitors;
- Allowing NSW NPWS to keep track of who visits the sites so that if any damage does occur, people can be tracked down. This has the added advantage of dissuading most would-be vandals;
- Allowing NSW NPWS to keep track of the number of visitors to the site;
- Effectively forcing visitors to visit the NSW NPWS office and receive any information that they should be exposed to; and
- To ultimately protect the sites from intentional and accidental damage.

This procedure is a direct result of the change in governance from private to publicly owned and managed resources, with a resulting change in access. Some locals (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) complain that before it was a national park they were able to freely visit the art sites. Now that they have to obtain a key, the freedom to visit has been reduced, particularly because the NSW NPWS office is not open on weekends – the time they are most likely to visit. This is particularly relevant to the local Aboriginal population, some of who have suggested that they are being denied free and easy access to sites that belong to them:

"Since National Parks have taken it over, they've locked it up... the local community are finding it harder to get there... Access was easier under the old management, 'cause although he charged white fellas to go there, that made them respect it" (BII).

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Moreover, several of the Indigenous people had arrangements with the previous landholder that allowed them to take groups of people to visit the art sites. School groups were frequently taken to visit the sites in an effort to re-introduce local Aboriginal children to their culture. The Indigenous community believe that that has become more complicated and more bureaucratic:

"I used to be able to take people down there anytime, 'cause I had an arrangement with the old fella [previous owner], now the Parkies are saying I need to have liability insurance and a tour operators licence. These things cost money" (B12).

Additionally, there are claims that because NSW NPWS have not improved the track down to the Mullareenya Creek art sites, this has precluded many people from visiting the sites:

"We don't really mind it being locked, we don't mind picking up the key, but we don't have four-wheel drives... now we can't take school kids like we used to. It's easier for some rich white bastard from Sydney to see OUR sites, than it is for our own kids" (B15).

"They have their priorities all wrong, they spent $50,000 on a fire trail but haven't fixed up the track to go down to the art sites" (B12).

There is the added complication that many of the traditional owners also believe access should be limited to the general public, and that the way to do this is to keep the locked gate in place, and to keep the road in poor condition, thereby dissuading all but the most dedicated:

"They're doing it right now, I reckon, keep 'em out... No vandal would go to that much trouble" (B13).

Clearly there are issues concerning Indigenous co-management of Gundabooka National Park, and it is important that NSW NPWS work to find the most suitable resolution. However, despite these issues, support for the national park is still strong. This suggests that while conflict regarding management might be present, the overall objective of NSW NPWS, to protect the art sites, is supported by the community. The conflict is in the detail of management, not the overall objective or management philosophies.

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*Chapter 9: A Community Embracing Change: The introduction of Gundabooka National Park to the Bourke community*
Maintenance of community

After working with the Adjungbilly community (some of who anticipate the possible demise of their community due to increasing isolation and the loss of social institutions), I was interested to see if the same pattern was emerging in the community of Bourke. It is unlikely that the people interviewed would have addressed this issue without some prompting. Again, like the absence of complaints concerning feral animal control etc. the absence of complaints regarding the maintenance of community is important.

The community strongly believes that NSW NPWS is not contributing to any breakdown in community structure or cohesion. Because the people who left the community when their properties were purchased were ‘replaced’ by NSW NPWS employees, the community does not perceive any decline in population, or any increase in isolation. Most of the houses vacated by the departing graziers now have resident Park employees. Importantly, NSW NPWS staff have utilised local services such as schools, thereby contributing to the maintenance of social institutions. They are perceived as active members of the community, participating in sporting teams and other local events. As mentioned previously, several members of the community commented on the involvement of NSW NPWS staff in the local rural fire brigade:

"It's [the fire brigade that is] important...if people are involved you know they care, that they have a stake, so when one of the parkies [NSW NPWS staff] turn up, you're kind of surprised... but yeah, they come to various things, they try and be a part [of the community] and that's not a bad thing" (BLH9).

While involvement in community institutions, clubs and local events has been an initiative of the individuals and not NSW NPWS policy, the result has been a more positive attitude towards the agency as a whole. This highlights the importance of individuals who represent government agencies in facilitating positive relationships within communities (NSW NPWS, 1997). It also demonstrates the importance of locating employees within the affected community, so as to limit the impacts of the landuse change on population dynamics and local services. As representatives, their presence and their involvement in the community establishes much of the feeling towards the agency, and in the case of Bourke, has significantly contributed to the general goodwill between NSW NPWS and the community.
SUMMARY

This chapter has examined the relationship that exists between NSW NPWS and the local community of Bourke. This relationship has been broken into three key areas – environmental, economic, and social benefits. As this section has demonstrated, the relationship between NSW NPWS and the Bourke community is mostly positive. This has been a result of both a well-chosen location, as well as flexible and appropriate management philosophies.

This chapter has demonstrated that landuse change can be introduced in such a way as to facilitate a positive relationship between a new landuse and the surrounding community. Unintentionally, NSW NPWS incorporated much of the community landuse policy approach into the introduction of Gundabooka National Park. While the objective of the introduced landuse was wider than the Bourke community – to increase the area of land under reserve in the Western Division – the introduction was also responsive to community needs. As such, the national park fitted well into the Bourke community. Management has also been ‘place-based’, and responsive to local community needs. Ultimately, the introduction of Gundabooka National Park has enhanced, albeit in a relatively small way, the economic and social sustainability of the Bourke community, thereby meeting the primary objective of the community landuse policy approach.

The following chapter will examine how the differences in management approaches between SFNSW and NSW NPWS, resulted in such different outcomes for their respective communities. It will examine the community landuse policy approach, and how it might have/has helped in the introduction of these two landuses, and the contribution it has/might have made to the sustainability of the Bourke and Adjungbilly communities.
Chapter 10
Introducing Landuse Change to Adjungbilly and Bourke: Using community landuse policies to contribute to community sustainability

INTRODUCTION
This thesis has advocated a community landuse policy approach for the introduction of policy-driven landuse change. The approach integrates social impact assessment, timely and strategic public participation, and social capital enhancing techniques. The thesis has argued, to enhance the social and economic sustainability of rural and regional communities facing landuse change, government agencies have a responsibility to find the ‘best-fit’ for the landuse and the community. Management decisions surrounding the landuse change need also to be based on appropriate and sensitive management philosophies, namely place-based management philosophies; managing landuse change at a local and regional level; adopting a triple-bottom-line approach; adopting a participatory approach; and utilising a whole-of-government decision-making strategy.

In Chapter 7 the community landuse policy approach was detailed and two models were proposed. These were designed to manage the two potential landuse change scenarios: Scenario A, when a landuse is defined (to meet agency objectives) but the location is negotiable; and Scenario B, when the location is defined but the landuse is negotiable. Scenario A, provides a government agency with the opportunity to select a location that meets social, economic and environmental needs. While impacts may still arise, the agency is in a position to manage these, as the landuse is complementary to the community’s values, needs and expectations. Scenario B provides an opportunity to evaluate a community’s expectations for a site, and to build these into the selection of a landuse. If the community is amenable to the change, then it stands a much higher chance of success. Again, impacts may arise, but if the community feel some ownership over the landuse selected, they are more likely to accept the changes. Moreover, the government responsible for the landuse change can identify impacts early in the process, and develop strategies to mitigate or promote these.
The previous two chapters examined two case studies of policy-driven landuse change. The first – the introduction of pine plantation to the Adjungbilly community – clearly fits Scenario A. Forests NSW – a government agency – had a clear imperative to increase the plantation estate in NSW. Forests NSW had the opportunity to locate the plantations in a community that not only could have coped with the change, but also could have embraced the opportunities it provided. However, Forests NSW selected the location for the expansion of pine plantation, based primarily on biophysical considerations. While Forests NSW could possibly have been more strategic in the choice of location, their second failure lies in the lack of a place-based approach to the introduction of the change, and their reluctance to deviate from generic, statewide policy and practice. The lack of even an informal social impact assessment, poor participation and no consideration of social capital, all contributed to the poor reception that the landuse change received.

The second case study – the introduction of Gundabooka National Park to the Bourke community – was an example of both Scenario A and Scenario B. From the government agency’s perspective, it fits Scenario B. NSW NPWS’ objective was to increase the area of land under reserve in the Western Division of NSW, and Bourke offered a suitable location to meet this objective. Concurrently, sectors of the Bourke community had been working towards finding a suitable landuse for the Gunderbooka Ranges. The community had a location, and were hoping to attract a landuse that could protect the site’s cultural and natural values; a national park provided the best opportunity.

This chapter will examine the two different approaches that Forests NSW and NSW NPWS adopted when introducing their landuse changes. It will examine how these two case studies did, or did not, follow the community landuse policy approach, and how the different management philosophies that underpinned their decision-making contributed to the responses of Adjungbilly and Bourke; that is, how well the two agencies met the six community needs identified in Chapter 3. The chapter will begin by briefly summarising the impacts and benefits that emerged from the two case studies.

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Chapter 10: Introducing landuse change to Adjungbilly and Bourke: Using community landuse policies to contribute to community sustainability
THE CASE STUDIES RE-VISITED

The following section summarises the key differences between the introduction of State Forest to Adjungbilly, and the introduction of Gundabooka National Park to Bourke, and the different changes and impacts that the two communities experienced.

The Adjungbilly community perceived a range of impacts as having resulted from the expansion of state forest into the immediate region. These are summarised in Table 10.1.

Table 10.1: The perceived impacts of landuse change for the Adjungbilly community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived impacts of the landuse change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Disturbances to biodiversity (impacts on wildlife; increase in farm pests and weeds);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Effects on water flow and quality (chemicals; siltation; decreased water flow);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Human health effects (allergies; hayfever; asthma); and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Changes to fire risk and management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fluctuating property values;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Changes in employment structure (loss of local grazing related jobs; increase in regional employment);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Effects on Shire Council (lost rate base; increase in road costs); and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The loss of productive land from the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Declining population (people associated with grazing leave and are not replaced by forestry workers);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Loss of community institutions and services (local school; community hall; local community events);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Loss of local history (local knowledge leaving community; removal of historic infrastructure; limited use of local names);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Loss of aesthetic value and sense of place (dramatic change in landscape); and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction of anti-social practices into the community (public access increases; drug growing; recreational pig hunters).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Bourke community identified a range of perceived benefits of the introduction of Gundabooka National Park to their region, which are summarised in Table 10.2.

**Table 10.2: The benefits of landuse change for the Bourke community**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived benefits of the landuse change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use of unproductive land;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fire management (involved in rural fire brigade; conduct regular burns to reduce fuel load); and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Goat control and harvesting (neighbours able to harvest GNP goats).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increasing property values (introduction of major land purchaser to region; purchasing unproductive land at prices it would not realise as a grazing property);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Known quantity (certainty of management type; financial agreements);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tourism (development of nature-based tourism; use of local services by tourists; potential for farmstays; potential for tourism opportunities for Indigenous people); and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local employment (hiring of locals – administrative staff, field officers, contractors, Indigenous officers; use of local services thereby indirectly increasing employment opportunities).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cultural heritage protection (protection of both Indigenous and European heritage);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Indigenous co-management of Gundabooka National Park (opportunities increased for Indigenous community to be involved; some access issues; some consultation issues);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Maintenance of community (replacing ‘lost’ locals with NSW NPWS staff; involvement in local events etc).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By examining the different approaches adopted by the two government agencies – Forests NSW and NSW NPWS – and the management philosophies that influenced decision-making, we can examine how closely the two processes followed the community landuse policy approach advocated in this thesis. From this, lessons can be drawn for future policy-driven landuse changes.

Table 10.3 provides a summary of the differences between the two case studies. This is not an examination of the introduction process followed – this will be explored in the following section. Rather, Table 10.3 provides a comparison of the different outcomes that were achieved for the two case studies. It demonstrates how a national park ‘fits’ into the Bourke community, as a result of both the selection of the location

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*Chapter 10: Introducing landuse change to Adjungbilly and Bourke: Using community landuse policies to contribute to community sustainability*
and the management decisions made during and after the introduction of the landuse change. In contrast it shows how pine plantation did not ‘fit’ the Adjungbilly community, partly because of a poorly selected location for the plantations, and partly because of ill-considered management decisions during and after the introduction of the landuse change – management decisions based on inappropriate management philosophies.

These two case studies – Adjungbilly and Bourke – represent different landuse changes, and as a result many of the differences in management experienced by these two communities cannot be compared. However, there are many ways that we can compare them. Generalisations about management philosophies can be made that can be applied to many quite different examples of landuse change. The purpose of this chapter is to identify what worked and what did not in the introduction of these two landuse changes.
Table 10.3: A Summary of the Differences in Management Decisions and Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>ISSUE</th>
<th>ADJUNGBILLY</th>
<th>BOURKE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>Productivity of land</td>
<td>• The land purchased was perceived as highly productive grazing country;</td>
<td>• The land purchased was believed to be degraded, almost un-useable grazing country;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Grazing was a competing landuse.</td>
<td>• No competing landuses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pest species control</td>
<td>• Pest species believed to have increased;</td>
<td>• Pest species believed to have decreased or stayed the same;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Community believe that control methods are inadequate.</td>
<td>• Control methods believed to be adequate;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fire management techniques</td>
<td>• Considered quite effective, although community doubts beginning to form;</td>
<td>• Community impressed with level of consultation over burn-offs;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Forests NSW not perceived to be involved in local bush fire brigade;</td>
<td>• Local staff perceived to be involved in rural bush fire brigade;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Perceived as unlikely to assist with wild fires that do not affect state forest reserves;</td>
<td>• Perceived as likely to assist in wild fires outside the national park;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The Forests NSW estate is perceived as highly combustible.</td>
<td>• Community confident that NSW NPWS burn-offs have lowered the combustion level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Employment opportunities for community</td>
<td>• Regionally employment opportunities are perceived to have increased;</td>
<td>• Locally and regionally employment opportunities are believed to have increased;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Locally employment opportunities are believed to have decreased;</td>
<td>• NSW NPWS perceived as hiring locals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Forests NSW perceived as tending to hire ‘outsiders’.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Property values</td>
<td>• Believed to have decreased neighbouring property values;</td>
<td>• Believed to have increased neighbouring property values;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Believed to be driving prices of sought after properties out of reach of local community.</td>
<td>• There was perceived to be minimal competition for purchased properties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tourism potential</td>
<td>• Tourism is not considered a priority of the local community, but somewhat of a priority for the regional community;</td>
<td>• Community at local and regional level have high tourism focus;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Perceived to have minimal potential to develop tourism in the local community, forestry is not seen to be helping.</td>
<td>• Tourists believed to use local services;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>• Public access is perceived to have increased;</td>
<td>• Considered to be high potential as a tourist attraction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>• Public access is perceived as generally uncontrolled;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Anti-social community subgroups are seen to have been introduced.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level of bureaucracy</td>
<td>• Forests NSW perceived to have substantially increased levels of bureaucracy;</td>
<td>• NSW NSW NPWS perceived to have led to some increase in bureaucracy;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Community contact person not perceived as the decision-maker as decisions need to go through chain-of-command;</td>
<td>• Community contact person perceived as being the day-to-day decision-maker – chain-of-command is less obvious to the community;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Community contact person does not live locally; community consider them to be easily contactable by phone, but not in person.</td>
<td>• Community contact person lives locally and is perceived as being easily contactable both by phone and in person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognition of sub-communities – regional benefits vs local impacts</td>
<td>• Forests NSW not seen as recognising sub communities, whether geographic, industry-based, or cultural, and therefore neither are their differing needs and interests.</td>
<td>• NSW NPWS perceived to recognise the differing interests of many sub-communities within the region e.g. landholders, neighbours, businesses, Indigenous.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 10: Introducing landuse change to Adjungbilly and Bourke: Using community landuse policies to contribute to community sustainability
### Table 10.3: A Summary of the Differences in Management Decisions and Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>ISSUE</th>
<th>ADJUNGBILLY</th>
<th>BOURKE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social cont...</td>
<td>Maintenance of population size</td>
<td>• Considered a tight-knit geographically close community before purchases;</td>
<td>• Considered a geographically isolated community before purchase;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Believed to be becoming a spread out, isolated community after purchase as nobody moves into vacated homesteads;</td>
<td>• Perceived to remain the same as most of the vacated homesteads now have NSW NPWS employees residing in them;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The community perceive a noticeable population decrease as many people leave and are not replaced.</td>
<td>• The community believe the population to have remained steady as people who do leave are replaced by NSW NPWS employees or through associated employment increases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of local services</td>
<td>• Forests NSW not seen to be utilising local (Gundagai) service providers;</td>
<td>• NSW NPWS believed to utilise local service providers e.g. fencing contractors, local hardware and produce supply stores etc;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Local school not used by Forests NSW employees' children.</td>
<td>• A perceived increase in tourists also result in increase in the use of service providers;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural heritage and local history protection</td>
<td>• Cultural heritage seen by community to be being destroyed;</td>
<td>• NSW NPWS believed to utilise local service providers e.g. fencing contractors, local hardware and produce supply stores etc;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• All European infrastructure removed e.g. homesteads, fences, sheds etc;</td>
<td>• •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Local names not believed to be used</td>
<td>• NSW NPWS employees' children use local school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintenance of 'place'</td>
<td>• Perceived radical aesthetic physical landscape changes in short period of time;</td>
<td>• Community believe NSW NPWS consider maintenance and promotion of local Indigenous history a top priority;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 'Place' considered unrecognisable.</td>
<td>• NSW NPWS perceived to have retained and even restored significant European infrastructure e.g. homesteads, cottages, shearer's quarters;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consultation levels</td>
<td>• Forests NSW perceived to have a formal policy of consulting community;</td>
<td>• Local names retained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Community believe that only pro-active community members attend consultation events;</td>
<td>• There are perceived to be minimal physical changes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Tends to be restricted to community forums;</td>
<td>• 'Place' still considered very recognisable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Community view the process as consultation rather than participation.</td>
<td>• NSW NPWS perceived to have a formal policy of consulting community;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• NSW NPWS perceived to actively seek out involvement from some sectors of the community;</td>
<td>• NSW NPWS perceived to actively seek out involvement from some sectors of the community;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• They are believed to use a range of consultation methods, directed at the relevant community group;</td>
<td>• They are believed to use a range of consultation methods, directed at the relevant community group;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• NSW NPWS are perceived as actively encouraging some level of community participation.</td>
<td>• NSW NPWS are perceived as actively encouraging some level of community participation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS WHEN INTRODUCING LANDUSE CHANGE

Chapter 3 identified six conditions that if met, can help communities cope with landuse change. Communities' need:

1. Their values and expectations for the social and economic future of their community to be understood by policy makers.
2. The impacts of the landuse change to be identified and mitigated (or enhanced) wherever possible to promote or protect economic prosperity, social systems (including their sense of place, identity and heritage), and ecological integrity.
3. A knowledge and understanding of the landuse change, how it might affect them and how it can benefit them (community learning).
4. Opportunities to have their say, express their concerns, and share in the decision-making process.
5. A well-networked and trusting community.
6. A healthy, sustainable community.

So, how well did the two agencies – Forests NSW and NSW NPWS – meet community needs? Earlier in this chapter the different management outcomes that the two landuses created were examined. Clearly, from a sustainable community perspective, NSW NPWS was more successful in the introduction of national park to Bourke than Forests NSW was in introducing pine plantation to Adjungbilly. Aside from obvious differences in the landuse types, the two agencies adopted very different processes for introducing their respective landuses, and different management philosophies for managing the landuse. This section will firstly examine the approaches adopted by each of the agencies in selecting the locations for their respective landuse changes and examine how closely these followed the community landuse policy approach developed in Chapter 7. The section will then examine the different management philosophies that each of the agencies adopted and how these contributed to the current relationship with their respective communities.
Selecting the ‘right’ location

It is imperative that an introduced landuse is located in a suitable location that fits the community and the landuse socially, economically and environmentally. To find the best-fit location for a landuse change, the thesis has proposed a community landuse policy approach, essentially consisting of social impact assessment, public participation, and social capital enhancing strategies.

Figures 10.1 (Adjungbilly) and 10.2 (Bourke) illustrate the community landuse policy approach, and the degree to which this was followed by the two agencies when selecting the location of their landuse changes. Through the use of different coloured text, these figures show which stages of the approach each of the government agencies adopted.
Figure 10.1: What stages of the community landuse policy did Forests NSW adopt when introducing plantation to the Adjungbilly community?

Clearly define the objectives of the landuse
Scope potential geographic locations and engage other relevant government agencies
Implement strategic and timely public participation strategies at each location
Complete a rapid social and environmental impact assessment at each location
Triple-bottom-line analysis of the locations
Location selected
Conduct comprehensive SIA [and EIA]
Develop mitigation strategies for impacts
Utilise existing stocks of social capital OR Develop social capital enhancement and community sustainability strategies
Produce a community landuse strategy for introducing the landuse change
Ensure that the best ‘fit’ for both the community and the landuse is being achieved
Location of landuse finalised and community landuse strategy implemented

Legend:
Blue text indicates a stage that was formally completed;
Green text indicates a stage that was informally completed;
Black text indicates a stage that was partially completed; and
Red text indicates a stage that was not attempted.

While other locations were considered for the expansion of pine plantation, they were only considered with respect to their environmental suitability, their availability, and internal economic factors (such as proximity to timber processing, transport issues etc. The social and economic needs were not considered.

A formal impact assessment for either social or environmental impacts was not conducted at the proposed locations. Impact assessment did not inform the decision-making.

An environmental impact assessment was conducted. It is not the purpose of this thesis to evaluate the merit of this process. As part of the EIA, regional economic impacts were considered. It therefore failed to address local level impacts.

SFNSW have made some attempt to address some community concerns regarding environmental impacts e.g. providing chemicals to control weeds. They also eventually responded to the community’s request to keep a building on Red Hill Station to maintain historic values.

SFNSW have adopted a reactive strategy that largely consists of responding to impacts after they have occurred e.g. weed control. They did not develop a strategy up-front to proactively manage potential impacts.

Other government agencies were not engaged in the process.
Participation strategies were not conducted at other potential sites. The decision was kept in-house.
As mentioned above, only environmental factors and internal economic needs were considered. Regional economic development was also considered, but not local social and economic factors.

As provided analysis of social capital and community sustainability
Develop social capital enhancement and community sustainability strategies
The stock of existing social capital was not considered, the potential to enhance social capital was not considered, and potential impacts on social capital were not considered.

Because most of the above stages had not been attempted SFNSW had no way of evaluating whether the location was suitable for their intended landuse. Certainly community reaction at the time indicated that it was not.

Public participation has been limited to a consultative role at best. SFNSW inform neighbours of day-to-day management decisions that might effect them, however, they provide little opportunity for the community to contribute to decision-making.

Chapter 10: Introducing landuse change to Adjungbilly and Bourke: Using community landuse policies to contribute to community sustainability
Figure 10.2: What stages of the community landuse policy did NSW NPWS adopt when introducing national park to the Bourke community?

Clearly define the objectives of the landuse

The Western Division generally was examined to identify a location that met agency objectives

Scope potential geographic locations and engage other relevant government agencies

A formal impact assessment for either social or environmental impacts was not conducted at the proposed locations. Formal impact assessment did not inform the decision-making.

Implement strategic and timely public participation strategies at each location

An environmental impact assessment was not conducted. While a formal SIA was not conducted, public participation provided an opportunity for the community to voice their concerns. Moreover, NPWS staff considered impacts from other national park introductions informally, as claimed by them, and as evidenced by their proactive approach to certain common problems, such as weed and pest control. So, while not captured in a formal assessment, NPWS were aware of the more common community concerns.

Complete a rapid social and environmental impact assessment at each location

Again, while a formal SIA process was not conducted, NPWS were responsive to the key concerns raised during public participation. Moreover, they have continued to be responsive to issues as they have been raised. For example, the one-way goat gates is an example of the promotion of a benefit in response to community needs.

Triple-bottom-line analysis of the locations

As will be discussed below, NPWS' management philosophies have contributed to an informal landuse strategy. Hiring locals, protecting cultural heritage, and implementing one-way goat gates, are all examples of the landuse strategy in progress. In this respect, NPWS are being responsive, rather than proactive, but this does appear to be meeting community needs.

Location selected

Provide analysis of social capital and community sustainability

Develop social capital enhancement and community sustainability strategies

This was done informally, as NSW NPWS were aware of the Bourke community's receptiveness to a national park; this played a part in its selection for the Park.

Conduct comprehensive SIA [and EIA]

While formal participation strategies were not conducted at other potential sites, information and some consultation has been undertaken across the Western Division region for some time, in an attempt to improve relationships between landholders and NPWS. As a result, NPWS were aware of those locations that would not have been amenable to a national park

Develop mitigation strategies for impacts

Utilise existing stocks of social capital OR

While formal social capital analysis has not been conducted, NSW NPWS do appear to be respectful of community values and have incorporated these into management. For example, protecting Indigenous art sites, retains community values, while helping to establish the gunda-Ah-Myro corporation, has facilitated community networks.

Produce a community landuse strategy for introducing the landuse change

As a result, NPWS' responsiveness to community requests that were in line with their agency objectives, in reality did ensure that the landuse 'fit' the community.

Ensure that the best 'fit' for both the community and the landuse is being achieved

Again, this was not formalised, however, NPWS' responsiveness to community requests that were in line with their agency objectives, in reality did ensure that the landuse 'fit' the community.

Location of landuse finalised and community landuse strategy implemented

While some sectors have been neglected generally the community feel that participation has been adequate at identifying community values and needs. For example, from participation, NPWS are aware of the high regard of the community towards the Aboriginal art sites
As shown in Figures 10.1 and 10.2, the three ‘tools’ that form the methodological process for the community landuse policy, were used (or not used), quite differently by Forests NSW and NSW NPWS. As such, their respective understanding of their community’s needs and values also were quite different. This was reflected in many of their decisions. While NSW NPWS did not attempt a formal SIA process, their public participation process did identify community needs. For example, they have demonstrated responsiveness to local values and needs by the installation of one-way goat gates to facilitate goat harvesting for neighbours. Public participation highlighted the importance of tourism to the community, while also highlighting the importance of cultural heritage across the community. Maintaining and creating opportunities for these values has been a management priority of the NSW NPWS.

While the lack of a formal SIA meant that NSW NPWS never formally identified the community’s attachment to place and landscape values, these were protected anyway by the nature of the landuse change. However, not formally completing an SIA risked missing other important values and potential impacts.

Again, while NSW NPWS were not likely to have formally considered social capital and its role in building community sustainability while also being a tool at their disposal, public participation did reveal community strengths and vulnerabilities. NSW NPWS for example, developed an understanding of the stakeholder groups and their core values. By assisting with the establishment of the Gunda-ah-myro Aboriginal Corporation, NSW NPWS demonstrated an understanding of and commitment to, increasing the power of networks and coordinated action.

NSW NPWS unintentionally adopted some aspects of a community landuse policy approach to select the location for the national park. As such, the landuse ‘fitted’ with community needs and expectations. However, much of the success of the introduced landuse has been the result of a well-chosen location helped largely by the existing receptiveness of the community to a national park. A national park met the Bourke community’s needs; whether by luck or design, the outcome was the same. The community has been willing to embrace the new landuse, and to embrace the opportunities it provided. Finding the right location for the landuse was a key factor in

Chapter 10: Introducing landuse change to Adjungbilly and Bourke: Using community landuse policies to contribute to community sustainability
the success of its introduction. While some issues have arisen during the seven-year management of Gundabooka National Park, its acceptance by the community has been generally positive.

Alternatively, Forests NSW did not adopt most aspects of the community landuse policy approach, so the selection of location for the landuse, when considered across the triple-bottom-line, was not optimal. A regionally-based (as opposed to locally based) EIA, with consideration given only to regional economic development, and poor public participation generally, meant that Forests NSW never identified that the Adjungbilly community first, existed as a community, and that secondly they placed high value on:

- The local school;
- Maintaining population size;
- Maintaining community networks;
- Maintaining community independence;
- Retaining local services;
- Protecting local history; and
- Retaining and protecting ecological values.

Forests NSW were not attuned to community needs and much of their decision-making reflects this, as they have impacted on all of these values to some degree. Forests NSW demonstrated little appreciation of the Adjungbilly’s stock of social capital, and how it might have been affected by the landuse change. By understanding the social capital values of the community and developing strategies to protect these, Forests NSW could have progressed significantly towards a more successful community outcome. A social capital analysis, for example, would likely have revealed that the Adjungbilly community possessed quite high ‘stocks’ of social capital, mostly of the bonding variety (as opposed to bridging), and that while networking was very high in the community, it was less so across other communities. By understanding this, Forests NSW could have facilitated the building of bridging ties across local schools for example, to facilitate the exchange of resources and potentially the sharing of teachers, which may help the school to remain viable. This would have also required cross-agency collaboration between the Department of Education and Forests NSW.

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Moreover, Forests NSW could have provided resources to retain or restore infrastructure. There was much interest in the community for rebuilding the *Red Hill Station* homestead where *Kiley’s Run* (by Banjo Patterson) was penned (Appendix L). This building could have then been used to house a local historical society. This would have helped Adjungbilly cope with much of the change by a) feeling confident that their history has been collected and recorded; b) feeling confident that Forests NSW respect the community’s history; and c) building their capacity to provide input on local naming, and restoring and maintaining old buildings. Given the degree of community bonding that already existed in the Adjungbilly community, the community could have taken on much of the responsibility for managing significant historical infrastructure. Forests NSW could have further used the highly bonded community to their advantage by utilising social networks to disseminate information, and building coordinated action to tackle weed, pest and fire management. At the very least, Forests NSW should have ensured that decision-making would not detract from social capital by ensuring that decisions did not break down community networks, or lead to the decline of community institutions. While Forests NSW would argue that such policies are not part of their core business, Chapter 7 clearly argued that government agencies should develop policies with consideration of the range of social, economic and environmental considerations even if these lie outside of departmental portfolios; this is the essence of a whole-of-government approach to decision-making.

As advocated throughout this thesis, the design of a community landuse policy utilising SIA, public participation, and social capital enhancing strategies, is crucial to finding the best-fit landuse for a community, and to introducing a landuse change with the best social, environmental and economical outcome. By informally adopting such an approach NSW NPWS were ahead from the start, which significantly eased the development of on-going management. However, getting the ‘best-fit’ is simply the first stage in a successful landuse introduction; it eases the introduction but it is not the only influencing factor. Introducing the landuse change, and managing it into the future, with consideration of social and economic needs, values and expectations, is equally important. Had Forests NSW adopted very different management philosophies, that were more responsive to community needs, the outcome for the Adjungbilly community might have been improved.

*Chapter 10: Introducing landuse change to Adjungbilly and Bourke: Using community landuse policies to contribute to community sustainability*
Developing appropriate, adaptive and flexible management philosophies

This section will explore the different management philosophies that influenced Forests NSW and NSW NPWS in the decision-making surrounding their respective landuse changes. This section will not explore the intricate differences in management decisions adopted by the two agencies. For example, it is not going to examine the different weed and pest strategies adopted by the agencies, or the varying employment opportunities they each created. Instead, the remainder of this chapter will explore the management philosophies that influenced management decisions, as these are the more generic lessons that can be taken from the case studies. The difference between management decisions (case study relevant), and management philosophies (generic lessons), can be explained through the following example: NSW NPWS’ decision to retain European infrastructure on the Park, as opposed to Forests NSW’ decision to remove all infrastructure from the plantations, were management decisions. While these are interesting, in that they produced very different outcomes for their communities, the real lesson comes from the management philosophies that lie behind these decisions, one of which is the application of generic policies to landuse change, as opposed to place-based management.

This thesis has argued that the development and articulation of management philosophies is an important component of the community landuse policy approach. The different management philosophies that have been explored are:

- Place-based management philosophies as opposed to the application of generic agency policy;
- Managing landuse change at a local and regional level;
- Adopting a triple-bottom-line management philosophy;
- Adopting a participatory approach; and
- Whole-of-government decision-making.

Chapter 10: Introducing landuse change to Adjungbilly and Bourke: Using community landuse policies to contribute to community sustainability
Managing landuse change according to ‘place’: avoiding generic, state-wide policies

A significant reason for conflict between government agencies and communities is the incapacity of agencies to adapt policies and practices for each community they engage with. There is a tendency to apply generic policies and practices to every location; policies that are determined at a high level of the agency, usually from a centralised location, with very little adaptation. As a result, community needs and expectations are frequently not met. However, place-based management requires designing and implementing management strategies that are relevant and responsive to the social and economic needs of the local community, as well as the environmental needs of the landscape. Place-based management is designed to avoid the application of generic, statewide policies if they are not suitable for the specific location.

Government agencies appear to be comfortable with this concept when it is applied to environmental needs. Forests NSW are careful for example, not to plant pines in an area that does not receive enough rainfall, or is highly vulnerable to fire. This is because they recognise that the landuse will fail if environmental conditions are not suitable. However, they seem reluctant to apply this same principle to social and economic conditions.

One reason for the successful introduction of Gundabooka National Park to Bourke is that NSW NPWS had the willingness and capacity to work outside generic, statewide policies, and to manage the landuse according to the needs of the community. For example, retaining infrastructure for its historic value helped retain local values. Developing tailored relationships with key stakeholders such as neighbouring landholders and the Indigenous community, and responding to their needs, demonstrates NSW NPWS’ capacity to manage their landuse based on the needs of a specific ‘place’. Erecting one-way goat gates to facilitate the local goat industry for neighbours is a further example. Facilitating goat production – a feral pest – is not a policy that NSW NPWS would be willing to apply across the state, however they were willing to adapt their usual policy position to meet a place-based community need.

Employees of the two agencies also played quite different roles in their respective communities. To a large extent, the role that these individuals played was determined

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by their respective agency policies – one of which was to situate staff within the community and employ locals wherever possible, while the other agency approach largely employed external contractors and did not encourage employees to live within the community.

While NSW NPWS were willing to adapt some generic policies to meet community needs in this instance, there are certainly examples outside of this case study where NSW NPWS have not been willing to do so. One example comes from a case study examined by this author as part of a study into visitor needs at Cudmirrah National Park, Cudmirrah NSW (Stanley, 1997). This was a newly declared national park on land that had previously been vacant crown land. The Park was immediately adjacent to a small, coastal community that experienced seasonally high visitor numbers. The main access road into the Park, which ran along the southern side of the township, had been a highly frequented dog-walking area for locals and visitors for many years. However, generic NSW NPWS policy does not permit dogs within national parks. NSW NPWS were not willing to adapt this policy to meet the needs and values of the local community. As such, it was a source of hostility between the community and NSW NPWS who were unable to control the activity anyway. One visitor commented that: “When it [CNP] changed from crown land, nothing got better, it just meant you couldn’t do things anymore”. There was some indication that hostility was being vented through acts of vandalism with concern that this would be extended to Indigenous cultural sites located in the Park. Had NSW NPWS been willing to adapt this generic policy across a small, cleared section of the Park they would have made significant moves to establish a conciliatory relationship with the local community.

In the Adjungbilly case study, Forests NSW were unwilling to adapt generic policy to meet local needs. One example is the Forests NSW generic practice of removing infrastructure when converting an area from grazing to pine plantation. Leaving significant buildings for community use and/or some houses, would have gone a significant way to easing conflict between the Adjungbilly community and Forests NSW, while also helping to sustain several important community institutions. However, there is very little scope within the agency to make place-based decisions that are against generic agency policy, and which may increase agency costs. As a

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result, Forests NSW is viewed as ‘anti-community’, whereas they are really just adhering to long-established agency practices.

An important aspect of place-based management is its potential to preserve a community’s sense of place, an intangible and immeasurable value, which is difficult to protect when introducing a landuse change. A sense of place can be individual or shared and may be connected to the landscape, the people, or any other intrinsic or extrinsic value. However, the most common variable that the Adjungbilly and Bourke communities identified when talking about ‘place’ was the landscape. In both cases, significant value was placed on the ‘created’ landscape of their grazing pasts.

The perceived differences in how the respective government agencies – NSW NPWS and Forests NSW – maintained or destroyed ‘place’ in these two case studies, is not so much a result of differing management actions, or levels of respect, but a result of the very different landscapes that these two agencies create. In the case of Forests NSW, the replacement of open grazing landscape by a pine plantation necessitates a radical change in the landscape. This is in contrast to NSW NPWS, who usually maintain the landscape they inherit, and any changes (regrowth etc) are usually gradual and not dramatic. The aesthetic landscape is not noticeably different. To the community of Bourke, therefore, the character of the place is still maintained.

The difference in the degree of landscape change experienced by the two communities has had important repercussions for their respective levels of community acceptance. Where the change has resulted in a reduction of the community’s sense of place, some hostility has resulted, and where the sense of place is maintained through retention of the original landscape, conflict was avoided. This is extremely difficult to manage, however, by implementing place-based management, some parts of a place’s value can be retained. An example is Forests NSW use of names for the created landscape that did not reflect the community’s memories or identity. Alternatively, NSW NPWS have retained the former property names for features throughout the Park, so while changes may take place, the community is able to locate places, and therefore retain their collective memories and their sense of place to some degree.

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Government agencies need to become more responsive to place-based community needs. They need to recognise that while some issues and needs will probably be common across all communities exposed to plantation development, others will be community-specific. As such, agencies need to identify these needs, and establish a protocol that allows them to be responsive regardless of what is ‘usually’ done.

**Managing landuse change at a local and regional level**

Scale of management is closely related to place-based management. The issue of regional versus local decision-making was first explored theoretically in Chapter 3, and has been a recurrent theme throughout this thesis. Many social, economic and environmental impacts are felt at a local scale; it is also at the local scale that introduced landuses can fail if they are not socially, economically and environmentally appropriate. While state agency decisions are necessarily aimed at meeting statewide objectives, the implementation of those decisions can be localised. This is an important component of place-based management. It is argued, that by managing landuse change at a local level, as well as at a regional level, it enhances the likelihood of government agencies identifying communities and their various sub-groupings. This is an important step in the community landuse policy approach, and is a crucial part of enhancing the sustainability of communities through landuse change.

The issue of scale is perhaps the most significant reason for conflict in small communities such as Adjungbilly. The reality is that local landuse management is challenging. While government agencies have become comfortable with regional decision-making, they have not yet embraced the concept of local decision-making. Spencer and Jellinek (1995) made this same observation, arguing that broad benefits of the forest industry are usually promoted while ignoring the negative impacts on individuals and communities. For various administrative reasons, government agencies tend to design and implement policy at a regional, state, or even national level. It is difficult for government agencies, or other large-scale organisations, to identify the complex layers and geographic boundaries of community that exist locally, regionally, and nationally. The literature on community examined in Chapter 3,

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**Chapter 10: Introducing landuse change to Adjungbilly and Bourke: Using community landuse policies to contribute to community sustainability**
suggests that the concept of ‘community’ means different things to different people. As discussed earlier, this is certainly the case for the Adjungbilly community.

Adjungbilly as a community is not recognised by Forests NSW. Forests NSW have recognised the region of Tumut as a ‘community’ and attempts to identify community impacts were made at this regional level. Assuming that Forests NSW actually had the intention of implementing community landuse policies, it is likely that a community such as Adjungbilly would fail to emerge as a cohesive, defined community, unless it was implemented within a management philosophy that respected local and regional needs.

The development of policy at a regional level has significant implications for all of the communities within the region, all of who may have very different needs and expectations. If local communities are not recognised, then obviously neither are their differing needs. If the Adjungbilly community collapses altogether it may not even be noticed by Forests NSW or the rest of the region. It will, however, be noticed by the community of Adjungbilly.

By examining social, economic and environmental issues at the community, or local scale, strong identification away from the region can be detected. As one landholder said:

"I guess I’d say we’re part of the Gundagai community, I’d say Adjungbilly if I thought anyone would know of it... certainly NOT Tumut even though we’re just as close to Tumut as we are Gundagai... we don’t see things the same at all" (ALH15).

He went on to say that it was mainly because of what “goes on in the town”, that it was not a “farmers town, but a forestry town”. This was supported by much of the Adjungbilly community who felt that Tumut does not represent them as a community.

Adjungbilly residents mostly agree that the forest industry has been a major contributor to Tumut’s current period of economic growth. Forests NSW have provided employment and attracted both permanent and temporary staff into the town, which has obvious benefits for local service and produce providers. Therefore, the

Chapter 10: Introducing landuse change to Adjungbilly and Bourke: Using community landuse policies to contribute to community sustainability
policy assumption that forest plantation expansion would be ‘good for the region’ is partially correct. However, Forests NSW’s claim of community benefit ignores the smaller local communities who may not experience the landuse change in the same way. The Adjungbilly community for example, claim that local employment opportunities have decreased. A Forests NSW employee when asked to describe the benefits of forest plantation expansion to the local community highlighted this issue of regional benefit versus local cost. He gave an extremely comprehensive reply about the many economic benefits that Forests NSW provide on “three levels – the local, the state and the national” (ASF2). When asked to describe what he meant by ‘local’, he replied “Well, Tumut”. The challenge therefore, is to examine the micro impacts of policy interventions conceived and implemented at regional scales. It cannot be assumed that all of the outlying communities that exist geographically within the Tumut region, will enjoy the same benefits of major landuse changes such as forest plantation, or perceive the same negative impacts.

While there is some recognition within Forests NSW that local issues are important, ultimately the priorities of Forests NSW and that of the community are fundamentally different. There is some recognition within the Adjungbilly community that their own values are not significantly different than that of Forests NSW – to produce a quality product in the most economically efficient manner. However, corporate values rarely reflect community values; there are fundamental differences in how large corporations and government agencies value a local community, as opposed to the value placed on it by those who live within it. This is further exacerbated if the decision-makers in the corporation/agency do not actually reside in the community their organisation is impacting on, which is the case in Adjungbilly. As one Forests NSW employee said:

“We [Forests NSW] will consider neighbour and community issues. We’re a government trading enterprise so we have to justify everything we do...[But] we have to be prudent with our funds as well. We don’t have the capacity to really cater to the community as our primary goal is to grow and sell trees... our main aim is to make money” (ASF4).

Therefore, retaining and protecting the sustainability of local communities is not a prioritised goal of Forests NSW. As a result, conflicts will arise over prioritising of environmental, economic and social values.

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**Chapter 10: Introducing landuse change to Adjungbilly and Bourke: Using community landuse policies to contribute to community sustainability**
NSW NPWS alternatively, have more of an institutional tendency to recognise local communities within regions. Bourke NPWS does not treat the entire Bourke region as a single community entity. They recognise and respect sub-communities and their varying needs and expectations. There are several reasons for this. NSW NPWS employees tend to be more of a presence in the community and are therefore much more likely to observe and understand sub-communities and the complexities of local community politics, than policy-makers who manage from a distance. Additionally, in the case of Bourke NPWS, there has been low staff turnover. Therefore, community bonds are more established and the employees have a stake in avoiding community conflict. As a result, there is a much higher tendency for Bourke NPWS to think on both a local and regional level.

An example is the use of public participation. Because Indigenous needs and neighbouring landholder needs are quite different, NSW NPWS have developed consultative strategies that recognise these different needs. They are not both expected, for instance, to attend a single, regional public forum to address all regional issues. Instead, NSW NPWS may deal directly with the Gunda-Ah-Myro Aboriginal Corporation for Indigenous issues, while holding barbeques or issuing notices of management practices to address neighbour issues. By recognising the sub-communities within the region (whether geographic, cultural, or industry-based), NSW NPWS have been able to identify the different needs and expectations of the communities, allowing them to develop more considered and sensitive policy and management practices. Alternatively, much of the consultation attempted by Forests NSW has tended to be regional public forums, to address wider issues, and to inform the public more generally of decisions. As a result, local needs are not identified.

The introduction of a national park to Bourke, while a regional and state decision based on wider societal benefits, has provided local benefits. Because the landuse ‘fit’ local needs, and because NSW NPWS were prepared to manage the introduction of the Park based on local needs, benefits have been felt locally. The informal (and unintentional) use of a community landuse policy has overcome the problems often inherent in regional, state, and national decision-making, demonstrating the potential success of the community landuse policy approach.

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Alternatively, the lack of recognition of Adjungbilly as a community and the low priority that Forests NSW place on protecting local values, are not the result of a callous or disrespectful attitude from Forests NSW. It is simply the result of an institutional tendency to think, act and develop policy regionally, without considering local needs.

Adopting a triple-bottom-line management philosophy

A management philosophy genuinely based on the triple-bottom-line ensures that equal value is applied to social, economic and environmental characteristics in decision-making.

Forests NSW demonstrated little commitment to the triple-bottom-line. The decision to expand plantation into the Adjungbilly area was essentially based on suitable environmental conditions and internal economic factors (such as transport issues). Ongoing management, by their own admission, is primarily concerned with “growing trees” to meet an agency defined, and state-government imposed, economic objective. While environmental conditions are a core consideration of selecting a site, perceived environmental impacts are not a primary management concern, as demonstrated by Forests NSW’ lack of commitment to weed and pest control, and their lack of responsiveness to water quality concerns. Forests NSW’ failure to make management decisions based on social needs (such as retaining housing) also demonstrates a lack of capacity to genuinely consider the triple-bottom-line.

The rationale for declaring Gundabooka National Park demonstrated an agency commitment to retaining both cultural and natural values. While not an intentional management decision, the creation of economic and social benefits from the landuse change was instrumental in facilitating a positive relationship between Bourke and NSW NPWS. As such, NSW NPWS created and enhanced positive outcomes across the triple-bottom-line at both a regional and local level.

In theory at least, this is changing. Forests NSW in their “Sustaining the forest: social, environmental and economic (seeing) report 2003/04” espouse a commitment to the
principles of sustainability and to the triple-bottom-line. The report argues that the key
to sustainable forest management is managing forests for a large number of values
across the broad performance areas of social, environmental, economic and
sustainability. This demonstrates an emerging theoretical commitment to triple-
bottom-line and sustainability principles. This thesis is therefore, timely and relevant,
and can contribute to the practical achievement of this commitment.

**Adopting a participatory approach: involving the community in landuse management**

Involving communities in decision-making processes is now widely considered to be
necessary to avoid conflict between government agencies and communities (see
Chapter 4). However, as argued in chapter 5, genuine involvement of communities is
rare, with most playing a consultative role as opposed to a true participatory role. The
level of acceptance of a landuse change by a community can be dependent on the
degree to which they are involved in management decisions.

Both NSW NPWS and Forests NSW have policies to encourage the involvement of
communities, and formally recognise the rights and responsibilities of communities to
participate in decisions that will affect them. While both agencies still have
considerable improvements to make in their public participation practices, there are
differences in how the communities have perceived the agencies’ philosophical
positions on public participation.

NSW NPWS have generally been successful in their attempts to engage the local
community. In fact, the selection of Bourke to locate the national park was partly in
response to community demands. NSW NPWS have managed to broadly engage the
key stakeholder groups, actively seeking their involvement (for example, Indigenous
community, tourist groups, shire council, etc). By targeting individuals and particular
sectors of the community with personal invitations and notices of public meetings,
they increased the likelihood of attendance, and thus the level of participation. When
referring to the process of consultation regarding the establishment of the Park, one
council member commented:

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“They [NPWS] managed it very well. They did lots of community education about how it would be good for us, which helped what they were doing. It certainly convinced us”

Virtually all of the neighbours claim to be adequately contacted regarding the major decisions, such as fox baiting, fires etc, and all have reported regular meetings to discuss management decisions that may affect them. NSW NPWS have tried a range of consultative techniques to target sectors of the community. They have held community forums and neighbour barbeques, while also giving the community opportunities to comment on draft management plans and management practices. By using a range of consultation methods, directed at the relevant sub-community group, there is a higher chance of involvement from a wider range of the community. However the community, particularly the Indigenous community, feel that the relationship has largely been consultative rather than genuinely participative.

As discussed in Chapter 5, there is a significant difference between consultation and participation and the degree to which the community is involved. Forests NSW have tended towards a consultative approach, limited mostly to one-way information transfer (from the agency to the community). There are also issues of initial versus ongoing participation. Government agencies may consult adequately with the community in the earlier stages of a policy development, but fail to maintain momentum throughout the implementation process. However, this may be when a community will be the most affected. Furthermore, the method of consultation can determine its effectiveness in understanding community needs and thus avoiding conflict.

While Forests NSW claim that they have instigated community consultation procedures, the Adjungbilly community is dissatisfied with the methods used. Forests NSW are seen as restricting their community consultation to regional forums and comments on publicly released documents. Calls for these are made through public newspapers and local radio stations. Hence, it therefore requires a pro-active community member to become involved. The process tends to be restricted to consultation, and the community is given little opportunity to become actively involved in decision-making or management.

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Many members of the community claim that this sort of consultation fails to include many sectors of the community. Indeed, one of the major criticisms of forums as a participative technique is that they tend only to capture the views of the outspoken members of a community, those who feel comfortable expressing their opinions in a public meeting. The limited number and poor timing of public forums also place limitations on the community’s participation in the consultation process. Several community members claimed that Forests NSW meetings had frequently coincided with high activity periods in the grazing sector, such as lambing and shearing, which made it difficult to attend. This is an example of regional management as opposed to local management: Forests NSW call region-wide meetings and therefore fail to recognise local needs.

Moreover, public forums tend to be held about the ‘big’ issues, the policy decisions, and not so frequently about day-to-day management decisions and activities. The community believes that they are inadequately informed about management decisions that may affect them, such as aerial spraying and feral animal control, particularly as neighbours to the forest reserves.

What this amounts to from the community perspective is that Forests NSW is a visibly obvious community member, with no real presence in the community:

“If you have a next-door neighbour you can just go and talk to him, but with Forestry you have to go all the way into Tumut to talk to someone or turn up at one of their meetings. They're not a presence here at all” (ALH19).

This is in stark contrast to NSW NPWS who have employees residing in the community and are, therefore, perceived to be available and approachable for neighbour and general community issues.

As communities are becoming more demanding and more aware of their rights to actively participate in decision-making, most government agencies and corporate organisations have developed policies on community relationships. These policies usually acknowledge the community as a stakeholder and recognise their right to be heard, and to contribute to (and participate in) decision-making. Any organisation (be it private or government), whose decisions and management outcomes or processes

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will impact on the local community – socially, economically or environmentally – needs to acknowledge the community and its various sectors as stakeholders.

Forests NSW is no exception. Recognising that good community relations, and particularly good neighbour relations will contribute to a more cohesive management environment and to future acceptance of its activities, Forests NSW developed a ‘Good Neighbour Policy’, which outlines their attitude towards the community – Box 10.1 contains the policy.

**Box 10.1: Forests NSW’ ‘Good Neighbour Policy’ (SFNSW, n.d.)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Forests and its people will:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Be recognised in our communities as environmentally responsible, professional forest managers;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Develop and maintain excellent relationships with our neighbours;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Be recognised as a good corporate citizen;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Work with and gain the confidence and support of neighbours in managing the community’s forests;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Understand our neighbours and their needs, and nurture their trust and respect; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Actively engage and involve our neighbours in management of the community’s forests.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To achieve this, we will:

➢ Communicate and consult with our neighbours;
➢ Seek every opportunity to explain and interpret State Forests’ management practices;
➢ Provide detailed information about proposed activities or works in progress;
➢ Actively participate in community forums on issues relating to forests, forest management and community values;
➢ Be responsive to neighbour’s concerns and professionally conciliate any issues;
➢ Co-operate with neighbours to resolve issues; and
➢ Encourage and motivate our employees, forest user groups, interest groups, agents and licensees of State Forests to develop a good neighbourly ethic.

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*Chapter 10: Introducing land use change to Adjungbilly and Bourke: Using community land use policies to contribute to community sustainability*
At the time of the landuse introduction, this policy was the only source of guidance for Forests NSW staff to manage neighbour and community relations. While these statements indicated a responsible, 'corporate citizen' philosophy towards community relations, they tended to be 'motherhood' statements, with little explanation as to what these statements actually meant or how they could be operationalised. Moreover, the Adjungbilly community would argue that there is little evidence that this policy was actually implemented. Certainly they argue that their needs are not understood, nor are they 'actively engaged and involved' in managing the adjoining forests. This demonstrates that developing appropriate management philosophies is not enough; they must also be actively implemented, and be evident in all decision-making. As mentioned previously, Forests NSW are now progressing towards such a philosophy.

In contrast, NSW NPWS had compiled a detailed strategy on neighbour relations, and mechanisms to ease neighbour relationships (NSW NPWS, 1997). The strategy details benchmarking and performance measures to critique their performance as neighbours. Rogers (2002) has documented a detailed community relationship exercise designed to rebuild relationships with neighbours to Myall Lakes National Park that arose from this strategy, demonstrating a park-level commitment to the principles. NSW NPWS define neighbours quite broadly as including whole communities that adjoin a national park. Individuals do not have to share a common boundary to be included as genuine stakeholders (NSW NPWS, 1997). While problems certainly still exist, NPWS have at least demonstrated a genuine commitment to managing stakeholder relationships.

It is not the intention of this thesis to claim that Forests NSW lacked respect and good intentions towards the Adjungbilly community. Their policies suggest that they do recognise communities (albeit at a regional level) as important stakeholders and that they are attempting to develop good relations with communities. However, there is a strong differentiation between having a policy, and implementing a policy. Moreover, there is little process in place to identify the true extent of local communities.

By involving a community in the decision-making process, conflict can be identified and, in many cases, overcome. Moreover, local communities can be identified as genuine stakeholders. Chapter 5 discussed the importance of public participation and
its effectiveness in avoiding on-going conflict in landuse change. This has been supported by examination of public consultation and participation policies and practice in the two case studies.

**Whole-of-government decision-making**

In the same way that governments face increasing pressure to develop participative philosophies for decision-making, they face increasing pressure to collaborate *between* agencies to further improve outcomes for communities. Attempts to achieve triple-bottom-line outcomes for communities when introducing landuse change are increasingly necessitating broader and more collaborative approaches. By working across agencies, the links between social and economic and environmental well-being are more likely to be recognised and managed for.

In reference to landuse change, a whole-of-government response promotes flexible decision-making by allowing the development of policies that might fall outside of an agency’s responsibilities if this is necessary to protect social, economic and environmental values. Collaboration allows government agencies to take a wider perspective on decision-making surrounding landuse change, to tackle social and economic impacts that might otherwise lie outside of their departmental expertise. Ultimately, it increases the likelihood of achieving sustainable communities.

In neither of the case studies was a whole-of-government philosophy utilised for the introduction of the landuse changes. The decision to locate both landuses in their chosen locations was made independently of other government agencies. However, after the introduction of the National Park, NSW NPWS have developed a working relationship with the Bourke Shire Council to promote tourism. This is an example of cross-government collaboration, which has provided benefits for the local community by potentially increasing visitor numbers to the region. Forests NSW have developed similar relationships with local councils to manage road maintenance.

Both case studies however, could have benefited from cross-agency collaboration particularly for the development of impact mitigation and promotion techniques. For

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example, the removal of houses, preventing people from moving into the community and replacing those who had left, was a major point of contention in the Adjungbilly community. As indicated in Chapter 8, Forests NSW do not consider it their responsibility or within their portfolio to be real estate agents.

Population decline however, is a major issue in the Adjungbilly community. While Forests NSW arguably may not have the resources and skills to manage public housing, other agencies do. Houses might have been maintained, and their long-term management negotiated, if Forests NSW had been willing to work outside their own agency to meet community needs. It was their lack of willingness and capacity to assign the management of housing to another agency that contributed to this impact.

All of these management philosophies – place-based management as opposed to the application of generic agency policy; managing landuse change at a local and regional level; adopting triple-bottom-line management; developing flexible, timely participative strategies; and utilising a whole-of-government decision-making approach when appropriate – interact to influence the introduction and ongoing management of policy-driven landuse changes. It is the approach that government agencies use when introducing landuse change, and the management philosophies that inform management decisions, that will determine whether a community accepts an introduced landuse change as a legitimate landuse practice.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter has argued that government agencies essentially have two key opportunities to enhance the sustainability of communities when introducing landuse change. The first lies in the selection of location for their defined landuse: by locating a landuse change in the right place, and by fitting the landuse with community needs, values and expectations, opportunities to contribute to the sustainability of the community are greatly enhanced. Secondly, by basing management decisions before, during and after the introduction of the landuse change on appropriate management philosophies, the landuse change has a further opportunity to contribute to community sustainability.

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The chapter has examined these two steps and how they were or were not adhered to by Forests NSW and NSW NPWS in introducing their respective landuse changes. It has clearly demonstrated that finding the 'best-fit' location for their landuse change and by basing management decisions on sensitive and locally responsive management philosophies, NSW NPWS were able to enhance community sustainability in a way that Forests NSW were not. Many of the reasons for the different outcomes experienced by the communities are directly related to the introduction approaches adopted, and the degree to which the agencies considered social and economic needs of their communities in their management philosophies. 

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48 As discussed in Chapter 9, however, NSW NPWS also had the advantage of a community that was pre-disposed to a national park for a variety of reasons. So, while implementing a community landuse policy, and adopting appropriate management philosophies would likely have improved the introduction of pine plantation into the Adjungbilly community, it is unlikely that Forests NSW ever would have enjoyed the same level of success that NSW NPWS have enjoyed in Bourke.
Part 4: Community Landuse Policies: Concluding remarks and wider implications
INTRODUCTION

Landuse change is occurring across rural Australia, with implications for rural communities socially, economically and environmentally. Some of this change is the result of explicit, government policy. Frequently this change is quite dramatic, altering and often destroying the ‘heart and soul’ of the affected community. Policy-driven landuse change has the potential to change landscapes, alter local and regional economies, and change social dynamics. In some cases, the changes that take place are unable to be absorbed by local communities, who may not have the resilience or ‘stocks’ of social capital to cope with and adapt to the changes. Policy-driven landuse change may therefore, threaten the social and economic sustainability of surrounding communities.

Alternatively, the change may be ‘embraced’ by the local community, as a positive alteration to the existing economic, social and physical landscape, and can offer economic and social opportunities for communities under pressure from highly variable market and climatic conditions.

In some cases, policy-driven landuse change may be embraced at a regional level, while at the local community level the change may be considered destructive. This highlights the issue of scale, frequently examined throughout this thesis: decision-making surrounding landuse change is usually implemented at a regional level where the economic benefits and flow-on social benefits of the change may be enjoyed, while local community/ies may experience the negative effects.

To introduce policy-driven landuse change in a way that contributes to a community’s long-term sustainability, and offers economic and social opportunities for the community, this thesis has proposed a community landuse policy approach, encapsulated within five key management philosophies. This has been presented as a potential means to overcome the inherent problems of policy-driven landuse change.
The framework evolved primarily from the case studies (explored in Chapters 8 and 9) by evaluating the management processes instigated in the two case studies, and comparing and contrasting their relative successes and failures. From this, bodies of theory were explored to support the practical recommendations – namely, social impact assessment, public participation, social capital, whole-of-government, place-based management, and triple-bottom-line management – and the result is a framework that evolved from a highly pragmatic evaluation of real-life scenarios of land use change, that is also firmly embedded in strong theoretical boundaries.

This chapter will briefly summarise the thesis, how it has met the objectives, and how it has answered the research question outlined in Chapter 1. The thesis will conclude by exploring the wider relevance and implications beyond the case studies for policy-driven land use change more generally.

**SUMMARY OF THESIS**

Policy-driven land use change has the potential to create significant impacts for rural communities already facing a multitude of social and economic pressures. The importance of rural communities, particularly for implementing Australia’s natural resource management agenda, was highlighted in Chapter 3, which argued that it is the responsibility of governments when introducing land use change to ensure that they do not detract from the social and economic sustainability of rural communities. This research identified six conditions that can help communities cope with land use change:

1. Community values and expectations for the social and economic future of their community to be understood by policy makers.
2. The impacts of the land use change to be identified and mitigated (or enhanced) wherever possible to promote or protect economic prosperity, social systems (including their sense of place, identity and heritage), and ecological integrity.
3. A knowledge and understanding of the land use change, how it might affect them and how it can benefit them (community learning).
4. Opportunities to have their say, express their concerns, and share in the decision-making process.
5. A well-networked and trusting community.
6. A healthy, sustainable community.

*Chapter 11: Conclusion*
When introducing landuse change governments need to ensure that the landuse change ‘fits’ with social and economic needs, values and aspirations in the same way that they would ensure it ‘fits’ with environmental characteristics – the triple-bottom-line. The community landuse policy culminates in a community landuse strategy that details future management strategies, management philosophies, mitigation actions and capacity building programs. The community landuse policy utilises social impact assessment, public participation, and social capital analysis and enhancing strategies, as tools to meet community needs (Chapters 4, 5 and 6). By adhering to the community landuse policy approach (Chapter 7), governments can determine whether the landuse change fits with social, economic and environmental goals of the community, while also meeting their own agency objectives.

The thesis has also argued that the sensitive introduction of a landuse change is dependent on the management philosophies that underpin landuse change decision-making (Chapter 7). These are:

- Place-based management philosophies as opposed to the application of generic agency policy;
- Managing landuse change at a local and regional level;
- A triple-bottom-line approach;
- Adopting a participatory approach; and
- Whole-of-government decision-making.

The thesis then presented two case studies of policy-driven landuse change (Chapters 8 and 9) and examined the various impacts and benefits identified by the communities as arising from the introduced landuses. Both of these were examples of direct policy-driven landuse change in the form of grazing land acquisitions, and as such the management approaches adopted by the two agencies – Forests NSW and NSW NPWS – could be compared and contrasted. The thesis avoided comparison of those management decisions that were a result of the fundamentally different landuses or landscapes, and instead focused on those impacts and benefits that arose from the disparate management philosophies and introduction processes followed by the two agencies.

*Chapter 11: Conclusion*
The thesis has argued that the very different responses of the two communities – Adjungbilly continue to oppose the change, while Bourke have embraced the change – was largely determined by the contrasting ways that the landuse changes were introduced, and the disparate management philosophies that influenced decision-making.

**The research objectives met**

The key objective of this research was to provide recommendations to government agencies when introducing landuse change to enhance the capacity of a community to cope with the change, and enhance their social, economic and environmental sustainability. To achieve this, the thesis met a number of micro-objectives:

a) The thesis provided a detailed examination of the perceived social, economic and environmental impacts on two rural communities that had experienced policy-driven landuse change. This contributes to our understanding of how communities might experience an introduced landuse change, and provides governments with some guidance on the range of impacts that might emerge from a policy-driven landuse change;

b) By exploring and synthesising three core areas of theory and practice and exploring case study evidence, this thesis has been able to make both a practical and theoretical contribution. As the research was not constrained by a single disciplinary focus it has been able to draw on a range of social theories and provides practical, flexible and pragmatic policy recommendations that can be applied to a multitude of policy decisions;

c) The thesis detailed a community landuse policy approach designed to meet community needs when introducing landuse change, and provided two management models for governments to follow when planning to introduce landuse changes into rural communities. Model A provided guidance for when the *landuse* is defined but the *location* is negotiable; while Model B provided guidance for when the *place* is defined and the *landuse* is negotiable. By adopting these models government agencies can introduce

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*Chapter 11: Conclusion*
landuse change so as to contribute to the sustainability of the rural community, rather than contributing to their decline. Following these Models may not always be possible given various time and resource constraints. However, it is better that government agencies acknowledge limitations in their approaches to introducing landuse change, than to be unaware of the limitations, further increasing the risk of a poorly introduced landuse change;

d) The thesis strongly advocated the concept of a ‘best-fit’ landuse change – socially, economically and environmentally – presenting a strong case that governments are responsible for introducing landuse change with consideration of the triple-bottom-line. By embedding the community landuse policy recommendations on the triple-bottom-line principle, the thesis has provided government agencies with guidance on how to achieve a social, economic and environmental ‘best-fit’;

e) The thesis has explored five key management philosophies namely, place-based management, consideration of the local and regional scale, the triple-bottom-line, public participation, and whole of government policy and planning. The thesis has presented both a rationale for the importance of these philosophies when introducing landuse change, while also providing guidance to government on how they can be incorporated into decision-making;

f) By providing recommendations for government agencies, and advocating the importance of meeting community needs and respecting community values and aspirations, this thesis has promoted opportunities for rural communities to enhance their capacity to cope with change and to contribute to their ongoing sustainability through the introduction of policy-driven landuse change.

The research question answered

How can governments introduce landuse change to communities in a way that does not detract from their long-term sustainability? By meeting the above objectives the
research question was answered: by following the community landuse policy approach developed and detailed in this thesis, and by basing all management decisions on five management philosophies also detailed in the thesis, governments can introduce landuse change in a way that enhances the sustainability of rural communities.

**WIDER IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH LESSONS**

While this thesis has focused on direct, policy-driven landuse change particularly land acquisitions, the findings and recommendations have wider relevance and implications for policy. The underlying themes, philosophies and principles are relevant to all forms of policy-driven landuse change, and even the introduction of other policies that may result in social or economic change. Whether introducing a landuse change or policy decisions more generally, governments have a responsibility to respect and consider a number of broad policy lessons. The generic lessons that can be adapted across the policy and decision-making environment are:

**Policy lesson 1:** Communities play an important role in society, by providing a ‘venue’ for social interaction, and offering an outlet for achieving wider social goals, such as natural resource management objectives, at a local level. *Governments have a role and responsibility to protect and wherever possible to enhance the sustainability of communities through all decision-making.*

**Policy lesson 2:** Defining communities for the purpose of developing policies, and identifying potential impacts, is a challenge for decision-makers. *Governments have a responsibility to make efforts to identify all affected communities even if they may not be immediately obvious as a substantive community.*

**Policy lesson 3:** Social, economic and environmental impacts have the potential to detract from a community’s sustainability. *Governments have a responsibility to understand a community’s values and needs, and to identify and mitigate wherever possible the potential impacts on these created by policy and management decisions.*

**Policy lesson 4:** The public can contribute to improved decision-making while also having a basic right to participate in decisions that affect them. Socially just decision-
making can only be achieved by considering the values, needs and opinions of all community sectors. Governments have a responsibility to provide opportunities for communities to participate in decision-making that might affect them (and to continue to protect and promote their interests if they choose not to engage).

**Policy lesson 5:** Societies rich in social capital are more able to withstand external or internal shocks, making social capital a resource that can contribute to the maintenance of healthy communities. Governments have a responsibility to introduce policies and decisions that are respectful of, and sensitive to, existing social capital, while providing resources and strategic policies that attempt to further enhance it.

**Policy lesson 6:** ‘Place’ plays an important role in social identity both individually and as a collective. Governments have a responsibility to consider the specific needs, character and value of a ‘place’ in all decision-making.

**Policy lesson 7:** While governmental decision-making, particularly by states and the Commonwealth, necessarily requires consideration of wide societal needs, many policy decisions are designed at a regional, state or national level but implemented at a local level, with local and regional affects. Governments have a responsibility to consider the ‘right’ scale when developing and introducing policy changes, whether this is local, regional, state, or national.

**Policy lesson 8:** Genuine sustainability can only be achieved through equal consideration of social, economic and environmental issues and conditions. Governments have a responsibility to adopt a triple-bottom-line approach to all decision-making.

**Policy lesson 9:** Many policy decisions affecting societies are best made through integrated, interagency collaboration. Governments have a responsibility to strengthen their capacity to engage in genuine whole-of-government policy and planning, so that all decision-making can be made in this context. This will achieve improved outcomes that are not limited by the capacity of a single government agency.

Chapter 11: Conclusion
Policy lesson 10: Developing and implementing policy decisions without a strategic and considered approach will inevitably result in impacts, for which the government agency and the community are ill prepared. Governments have a responsibility to frame decision-making and policy development within a considered and strategic approach.

Perhaps the most significant values of this thesis are its placement within a policy context, and the provision of a policy framework to guide decision-making. The findings are directly relevant to government agencies introducing landuse change, and the recommendations are achievable, realistic, and embedded within the constraints and limitations of the current policy environment. As discussed in Chapter 1, the complex systems into which policy-driven landuse changes are introduced presents a contemporary challenge for decision-makers. Arguably, the most significant barrier to adopting a more holistic approach to landuse change decision-making is that government agencies lack a simple framework to guide the integration of complex social, economic and environmental systems. The thesis provides a framework whereby problems can be identified and mitigation strategies employed across social, economic and environmental needs and values, while offering practical recommendations for governments to more successfully introduce landuse change into communities. Moreover, these recommendations can be adapted to fit virtually any policy decision that has the potential to impact on community values, needs and aspirations.

While previous research has examined the impacts of forest plantation on rural communities, and some limited research has examined the potential impacts of national parks on rural communities, this research offers the first attempt to compare and contrast these two different landuse changes to see how management decisions, philosophies and strategies may actually influence the outcomes for communities. The thesis therefore, offers insight beyond the case studies, and beyond specific types of landuse changes, such as forestry or national park expansion. Moreover, previous research that has examined the impacts of landuse change on communities has rarely identified communities where the change has been received positively. This research, therefore, allowed comparison between a landuse change received positively, and one received negatively.

Chapter 11: Conclusion
The thesis provides an examination and analysis of impacts at a local scale, as opposed to the more common regional approach to examining impacts and providing recommendations. However, the thesis does not discount the value and importance of considering the regional, state, and national scale in addition to the micro or community scale.

The thesis provides a detailed synthesis of three core bodies of literature: social impact assessment, public participation and social capital. In addition, it also draws on whole-of-government, community development, principles of sustainability particularly social sustainability, capacity building, landuse change, rural social change and triple-bottom-line management theories. This is the first research to mesh these theoretical bodies of literature into a single framework for practical application, as well as discussing their combined value for decision-making. The thesis therefore, provides an empirical and pragmatic contribution, while also being solidly founded on a strong, theoretical framework.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The thesis has argued that a comprehensive impact assessment process, when combined with public participation and social capital building strategies, can effectively prepare a community for a proposed landuse change. These ‘tools’ have been synthesised into a community landuse policy approach. In addition, management philosophies that influence decision-making have also been discussed.

By following the community landuse policy approach developed through this thesis, and developing appropriate management philosophies, governments and communities have the potential to benefit from landuse change, by providing opportunities for communities to meet their needs and adapt positively to change. Sustainable communities have the potential to contribute to managing the new landuse rather than reacting to its introduction in a hostile manner and potentially creating management burdens for the government agency. By meeting community needs, government objectives are also enhanced. Policy-driven landuse change can be a positive experience for communities, enhancing their long-term sustainability.

Chapter 11: Conclusion
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Appendix A: Adjungbilly landholder survey – semi-structured (approximate schedule of questions)

Landholders name:

Property name:

Owner-operator/Manager?

Property Size:

What sort of agriculture do you practice? Has your farming mix changed in the past ten years? Do you expect to change farming type in the future?

How long have you owned this property? (1st generation etc?) and how long have you been living in this region?

What do you see as the major environmental, economical and community changes, occurring in the Tumut region?

Are there any effects from these changes on your property, employment and/or lifestyle?

Would you describe your feelings towards the growth of forestry in the area, as positive or negative on the whole?

Do you think forestry have had any effect on the region's economy (prompts: employment, property prices, tourism?)

Roads
Has there been any effect of forestry on roads and traffic throughout the region?

Fire
Do you believe forestry is effective with their fire management practices?

Wildlife
Do you think forestry have had any effect on the region's wildlife?

Weeds and Pests
Do you think forestry have had any effect on the region's weeds and feral pests? What do you think of Forestry's attempts to counter effects of weeds, feral animals and or pest natives?

Water and Soils
Do you feel Forestry have had any impact on water and/or soil quality?

Community
How would you define your community?

What are the social institutions which connect your community?

Do you believe Forestry have had any effects on the sense of community? (School, isolation etc)

Did you, as a member of the community, foresee any problems or issues with the growth of Forestry? Was anything done at the time to stop it?

Were you happy with the outcomes? Did you feel empowered?
Do you think Forestry value the community? How do they show/not show this?

Aesthetic/character
Do you feel the growth of pines is affecting the aesthetic value of the area?

Sum Up
Is there anything in particular that you would like to see Forestry do or change about their practices?

Are there any landholders in the region who you think might consider being interviewed also?
Ex-landholders?

Appendix A: Adjungbilly landholder survey
Appendix B: Bourke landholder survey – semi-structured (approximate schedule of questions)

Landholders name:

Property name:

Owner-operator/Manager?

Property Size:

What sort of agriculture do you practice? Has your farming mix changed in the past ten years? Do you expect to change farming type in the future?

How long have you owned this property? (1st generation etc?) and how long have you been living in this region?

What do you see as the major environmental and economical changes, occurring in the region?

National Park acquisition
When the NPWS purchased the 3 properties for Gundabooka National Park, was there any opposition from you personally, or the community as a whole? If there was opposition, was anything done to stop it?

Was there interest in the properties to continue them as grazing enterprises?

Have the previous owners remained within the local community, or have they left the region? If they have left the region, would you consider this a loss to the local community?

Would you describe your feelings towards the introduction of National Parks in the area, as positive or negative on the whole?

Economic
Do you think NPWS have had any effect on the region's economy (prompts: employment, property prices, tourism?)

Are you satisfied with financial arrangements regarding management issues such as fencing etc, with National Parks

Do you think NPWS is a positive or negative addition to the local economy?

Roads
Has there been any effect from the National Park on roads and traffic throughout the region?

How well maintained do you believe the roads are within GNP, particularly the main thoroughfare?

Fire
Do you believe NPWS are effective with their fire management practices? Is there any management practices you would like to see changed?

Do you think National Parks adequately assist with fires on private property? Would you like to see any practices changed? How involved would you like the NPWS to be in the local rural fire brigade?

Wildlife
Has NPWS had any effect on the region's wildlife?
Weeds and Pests
Has NPWS had any effect on the region's weeds and feral pests? Goats, pigs, rabbits etc

What do you think of NSW NPWS attempts to counter effects of weeds, feral animals and or pest natives?

Access
Since NSW NPWS have acquired the 3 properties has access to the area changed? Is this a good or a bad thing?

Changes
Have you noticed any changes, good or bad, since NSW NPWS acquired the properties?

Communication
Do you consider that the Bourke office of NSW NPWS keep you adequately informed about management decisions regarding Gundabooka National Park?

Are you consulted regarding management decisions? If so, do you believe that your input is considered?

Community
How would you define your community?

What are the social institutions that connect your community?

Do you believe NSW NPWS had any effects on the sense of community? (eg. isolation)

Did you, as a member of the community, foresee any problems or issues with the arrival of NSW NPWS? Was anything done at the time to stop it?

Were you happy with the outcomes? Did you feel empowered?

Do you think NSW NPWS value the community? How do they show/not show this?

Historic value
Would you like to see the maintenance of either or both, the European and Aboriginal artefacts/infrastructure in Gundabooka? Eg. houses, fences etc.

Sum Up
Are there any other concerns or issues you have regarding the management of GNP? Is there anything in particular that you would like to see NSW NPWS do or change about their practices? Overall, would you consider NSW NPWS to be good or bad neighbours?

Appendix B: Bourke landholder survey
Appendix C: Tumut and Gundagai shire council survey – semi-structured (approximate schedule of questions)

Interviewees name:

Position:

How long have you been living in this region? How long have you been working on the Council? How long do you think you will remain in the Tumut/Gundagai region?

Briefly, what do you consider are the major positive and negative effects of Forests NSW in the region?

Was there any consultation with local councils before purchasing the land to exoand state forest plantations?

Did the Council have any objection to Forests NSW within the shire?

Employment

Does the Council consider Forests NSW as an important employer within the shire? Do they employ locals?

Council Issues

Does Forests NSW pay rates to the local shires?

How important is the lost rate base from the acquired properties?

Does Forests NSW contribute to council revenue? Does Forests NSW contribute to the financial cost of maintaining shire roads?

Do you consider Forests NSW to have a good working relationship with your council?

Weeds/Pigs

Is there any cooperation between Forests NSW and the Council to control weeds within and around the state forest reserves?

Is there any cooperation between Forests NSW and the Council to control pests such as pigs?

Fires

Is there a cooperative approach to wild fire control between Forests NSW and the Council?

Community

Do you believe that there have been any positive or negative affects of SF on the local community? Eg. isolation, smaller community

If so, has this been discussed with Forests NSW, and what was their response?

Is there much input from the Council regarding the management of the state forest reserves?

Does Forests NSW 'get involved' with the community? Ie. Do they formally support local community events eg. fetes etc?

Do you believe that Forests NSW are 'good' members of the community?

General comments

Appendix C: Tumut and Gundagai Shire Council survey
Appendix D: Bourke and Cobar shire council survey – semi-structured (approximate schedule of questions)

Interviewees name:

Position:

How long have you been living in this region? How long have you been working on the Council? How long do you think you will remain in the Bourke/Cobar region?

Briefly, what do you consider are the major positive and negative effects of NSW NPWS in the region?

Was there any consultation with local councils before purchasing the land to make Gundabooka NP?

Did the Council have any objection to NP within the shire?

Employment
Does the Council consider NSW NPWS as an important employer within the shire? Do they employ locals?

Council Issues
Does NSW NPWS pay rates to the local shires?

How important is the lost rate base from the acquired properties?

Does NSW NPWS contribute to council revenue? Does NSW NPWS contribute to the financial cost of maintaining shire roads?

Do you consider NSW NPWS to have a good working relationship with your council?

Weeds/Pigs
Is there any cooperation between NSW NPWS and the Council to control weeds within and around the National Park?

Is there any cooperation between NSW NPWS and the Council to control pests species?

Fires
Is there a cooperative approach to wild fire control between NSW NPWS and the Council?

Community
Do you believe that there have been any positive or negative affects of NP on the local community? Eg. isolation, smaller community

If so, has this been discussed with NSW NPWS, and what was their response?

Is there much input from the Council regarding the management of Gundabooka National Park?

Does NSW NPWS 'get involved' with the community? Ie. Do they formally support local community events eg. fetes etc?

Do you believe that NSW NPWS are 'good' members of the community?

General comments

Appendix D: Bourke and Cobar Shire Council survey
Appendix E: Forests NSW survey (Adjungbilly) – semi-structured (approximate schedule of questions)

Interviewees name:

Position:

How long have you been living in this region? How long have you been working for Forestry (both in Tumut and elsewhere)? How long do you think you will remain in the Tumut region?

Briefly, what do you consider are the major positive and negative effects of forestry in the region?

How did NSW NPWS decide what properties would be purchased for plantation?

How were each of the properties purchased?

Was there much competition in the market for the properties, particularly from locals?

Were the previous owners happy to sell to Forests NSW?

**Employment**

Is there any employment policy regarding the employment of locals?

**Council Issues**

Do Forestry pay rates to the local shires?

Does Forestry contribute in any way to council revenue? Does Forestry contribute to the financial cost of maintaining shire roads?

Do you consider Forestry to have a good working relationship with the local councils?

**Weeds/Pigs**

What sort of attempt is made to control weeds within and around Forestry?

Is there any sort of assistance given to farmers who border Forestry to help control the encroachment of weeds?

What sort of attempt is made to control pigs within and around Forestry

**Fires**

What is Forestry’s policy towards assisting with fires on private properties?

Are Forestry involved in any form with local fire brigades?

**Community**

Is there any analysis of community impacts before planting an area to pines? Is there any community consultation?

How does forestry go about defining a community for the purposes of consultation etc.?

Is there ongoing community consultation with affected communities?

Has Forestry identified any community concerns regarding Forestry?

If so, what has Forestry done to alleviate these problems?

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Appendix E: Forests NSW survey
Do Forestry have a formal policy regarding their commitment to a community?

Does Forestry 'get involved' with the community? I.e. Do they formally support local community events eg. fetes etc?

Do you think individual employees of Forestry attempt to become active members of the local community?

Does Forestry encourage its workers to reside in the community?

Is there any consultation with communities before removing infrastructure which may be of social or historical significance to the community?

Do you believe that Forestry are 'good' members of the community?

General comments

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Appendix E: Forests NSW survey
Appendix F: NSW NPWS survey (Bourke) – semi-structured (approximate schedule of questions)

Interviewee's name:

Position:

How long have you been living in this region? How long have you been working for NSW NPWS (both in Bourke and elsewhere)? How long do you think you will remain in the Bourke region?

Briefly, what do you consider are the major positive and negative effects of NSW NPWS in the region?

How did NSW NPWS decide what properties would be purchased for National Park?

How were each of the properties purchased?

Was there much competition in the market for the properties, particularly from locals?

Were the previous owners happy to sell to NSW NPWS?

Have the previous owners remained within the community?

**Employment**

Is there any employment policy in NSW NPWS regarding the employment of locals?

**Council Issues**

Does NSW NPWS pay rates to the local shires?

Does NSW NPWS contribute in any way to council revenue? Does NSW NPWS contribute to the financial cost of maintaining shire roads?

Do you consider NSW NPWS to have a good working relationship with the local councils?

**Weeds/Pigs**

What sort of attempt is made to control weeds within and around the National Park?

Is there any assistance given to farmers who border National Park to help control the encroachment of weeds?

What sort of attempt is made to control pests such as goats, pigs and rabbits within and around the National Park?

**Fires**

What is the current policy towards fire as a management tool in Gundabooka NP?

What is NSW NPWS's policy towards assisting with wildfires on private properties?

Is NSW NPWS involved in any form with local fire brigades?

**Community**

Is there any analysis of community impacts before purchasing land for national park? Is there any community consultation?

Is there ongoing community consultation with affected communities?

How does NSW NPWS go about defining a community for the purposes of consultation etc.?
Is there much input from locals regarding the management of Gundabooka National Park?

Has NSW NPWS identified any community concerns regarding National Parks?

If so, what has NSW NPWS done to alleviate these problems?

Do NSW NPWS have a formal policy regarding their commitment to a community?

Does NSW NPWS 'get involved' with the community? I.e. Do they formally support local community events eg. fetes etc?

Do you think individual employees of NSW NPWS attempt to become active members of the local community?

What is NSW NPWS policy towards pre-existing infrastructure in the park eg. houses, sheds etc? Are they planning to remove, maintain, or 'let go'?

Is there any consultation with communities before removing infrastructure which may be of social or historical significance to the community?

Do you believe that NSW NPWS are 'good' members of the community?

General comments

Appendix F: NSW NPWS survey (Bourke)
Appendix G: Indigenous survey (Bourke) – unstructured (approximate schedule of questions)

Interviewees name:
Position/organization (if relevant):
How long have you been living in this region?
How long have you been working in this organization (if relevant)
How long do you think you will remain in the Bourke/Cobar region?
Briefly, what do you consider are the major positive and negative effects of NSW NPWS in the region?
Would you describe your feelings towards NP as positive or negative on the whole?

Issues to cover:
Consultation
History of the Gunderbooka range
Feelings about it becoming a national park
Other potential landuses?
Level of support towards NSW NPWS
Relationship with NSW NPWS
Historic value – impacts, protection etc
Employment of locals
Weed and pest control
Fire management
Community issues

Other people to interview
Appendix H: Local business survey (Bourke) – structured (approximate schedule of questions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Business</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type and location of Business</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

What percentage of your total clientele would you estimate for each of the following groups?

| Locals (individuals) | Locals (industry/business) | Tourists/visitors | Other |

Do you consider tourists/visitors to be a substantial part of your clientele?

Do you consider Bourke/Cobar to be a ‘tourist’ town?

Do you notice an increase in business during peak visitor times?

What features of the region do you believe attract visitors?

What do you believe to be the most important visitor attraction in the region?

Do you consider that the regional National Parks are important in attracting visitors?

Do you think that Gundabooka National Park has increased visitation to the region?

Do you think that National Parks generally have increased visitation to the region?

Do you think that local businesses have benefited: From Gundabooka NP? From NPs generally?

Do you think that visitors to the region extend their visit because of Gundabooka National Park? If yes, do you think that local businesses have benefited?

Do you believe that Gundabooka National Park has increased visitor expenditure in your business? In the region generally?

How would you rate the promotional success of Gundabooka National Park? (circle)

| Over publicised | Excellent | Adequate | Inadequate | Very poor | Don't know |

Has NSW NPWS been welcomed by the business community of Bourke/Cobar?

Overall, how would you rate the economic potential to the region, of Gundabooka National Park?

| Very significant | Significant | Insignificant | Absent |

Do you believe that that potential is being realised?

Is there anything that you would like to see done to increase the tourism & economic potential of Gundabooka National Park? Is there any changes that you would like to see NSW NPWS make to their management strategy?
Appendix I: Bourke Tourist Information Centre visitor survey – structured (approximate schedule of questions)

Are you a local or a visitor to the region?

Where are you visiting from?

What age group are you?

18-30  30-45  45-60  60+

How would you describe your employment status?

Employed  Unemployed  Home-based  Student  Retired  Other

What is your main form of transportation while visiting this region?

Is your visit to this region part of a larger trip?

If yes, where else are you visiting?

How long do you plan to be away from home?

What is your main reason for visiting this region?

Friends/family  Tourist activities  Business  Travel stop  Other

What do you consider are the main tourist attractions that brought you to this region?

National Park  Other nature based activities  Local industry  Local folklore  Other

Have you visited, or do you plan on visiting Gundabooka National Park? (if no, end of interview)

Did you know about GNP before arriving in the region? No  Yes  From where?

If yes, how much did it factor in your decision to visit the region?

Driving factor  One of several factors  Only slightly important  Made no difference

How many days/night do you plan to spend in Bourke?  In Cobar?

Are you staying or have you stayed, overnight in the National Park? Yes  No

Will your visit to the National Park lengthen your overall stay in the region? Yes  By how much?

Are National Parks a main component of your overall trip? Yes  No

What other National Parks have you visited, or intend to visit on this trip?

__________________________________________________________________________________________

Appendix I: Bourke Tourist Information Centre visitor survey
(If the interviewee has already been to GNP) How would you rate your Gundabooka National Park experience in the following categories?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information available</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of natural experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In-park services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park maintenance</td>
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<td>Roads</td>
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<td>Number of visitors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

What are you interested in, within Gundabooka National Park?
- Aboriginal Rock Art
- Flora and Fauna
- Scenery/landscape
- Natural experience
- European Farming relics
- Other ____________

Have you visited the NSW NPWS office in Bourke?

What have been the highlights of your visit to this region?

What has been your overall experience of the region?
- Excellent__
- Good__
- Average__
- Poor__

On the map below, please make an approximate indication of the towns and National Parks you have visited on this trip:

Which of the following goods/services have you used, or plan to use in both Bourke and Cobar?

Bourke
- Fuel purchase
- Accommodation
- Restaurants/cafes
- Local tours
- Tourist or gift items
- Car servicing/maintenance
- Groceries
- Car rental
- Pharmaceutical’s
- Leisure activities (golf, bowls)
- Other, please specify:

Cobar
- Fuel purchase
- Accommodation
- Restaurants/cafes
- Local tours
- Tourist or gift items
- Car servicing/maintenance
- Groceries
- Car rental
- Pharmaceutical’s
- Leisure activities (golf, bowls)
- Other, please specify:

Appendix I: Bourke Tourist Information Centre visitor survey
Appendix J: Gundabooka National Park visitor survey (locals) – structured (approximate schedule of questions)

Are you a local or a visitor to the region? Local_____ Visitor_____

Where do you live?

What age group are you? 18-30_____ 30-45_____ 45-60_____ 60+_____

How would you describe your employment status? 
Employed____ Unemployed____ Home-based____ Student____ Retired____
Other____

What do you consider are the main tourist attractions in this region?
National Park
Other nature based activities
Local industry
Local folklore
Other_____________________

Do you visit Gundabooka National Park: 
Regularly____ Occasionally____ Seldom____ First time_____ 

What are you interested in, within Gundabooka National Park?
Aboriginal Rock Art
Flora and Fauna
Scenery/landscape
Natural experience
European Farming relics
Other____

Do you ever visit the NSW NPWS office in Bourke to update information on Gundabooka National Park?

How did you initially feel about these three properties being bought by NSW NPWS?

Do you think that Gundabooka National Park has increased visitation to the region?

Do you think that local businesses and the town generally have benefited from Gundabooka National Park?

Is Gundabooka National Park an important site for the local community, or for you personally for recreation etc?

Would you like to see the maintenance of either or both the Aboriginal and European artefacts/infrastructure in Gundabooka National Park?

How would you rate Gundabooka National Park in the following categories?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information available</td>
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Appendix J: Gundabooka National Park visitor survey (locals)
Is there any input from the local community regarding the management of Gundabooka National Park?

Do you have any positive or negative issues regarding the management of Gundabooka National Park?

Are there any changes that you would like to see NSW NPWS make to their management practices?

All things considered, do you consider Gundabooka National Park to be a positive or negative addition to the region?

Appendix J: Gundabooka National Park visitor survey (locals)
Appendix K: Gundabook National Park visitor survey (non-locals) –structured (approximate schedule of questions)

Are you a local or a visitor to the region? Local Visitor (If local go to other sheet)

Where are you visiting from?

How would you describe your employment status?
Employed Unemployed Home-based Student Retired Other

What is your main form of transportation while visiting this region?

Is your visit to this region part of a larger trip? Yes No

If yes, where else are you visiting?

How long do you plan to be away from home?

What is your main reason for visiting this region?
Friends/family Tourist activities Business Travel stop Other

What do you consider are the main tourist attractions that attracted you to this region?
National Park Other nature based activities Local industry Local history Other

How did you hear about Gundabooka National Park?

Did you know about GNP before arriving in the region? Yes No

If yes, how much did it factor in your decision to visit the region?
Driving factor One of several factors Only slightly important Made no difference

How many days/ nights do you plan to spend in Bourke? In Cobar?

Are you staying overnight in the National Park? Yes No

Have you, or will you use any of the accommodation in Bourke or Cobar?
Where

Has your visit to the National Park lengthened your overall stay in the region?
No Yes By how much

Are National Parks a main component of your overall trip? Yes No

What other National Parks have you visited, or intend to visit on this trip?

How would you rate your Gundabooka National Park experience in the following categories?

Appendix K: Gundabooka National Park visitor survey (non-locals)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information available</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of natural experience</td>
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What are you interested in, within Gundabooka National Park?
- Aboriginal Rock Art
- Flora and Fauna
- Scenery/landscape
- Natural experience
- European Farming relics
- Other: __________

Have you visited the NSW NPWS office in Bourke? _______ The Tourism Bureau? _______

What have been the highlights of your visit to this region?

What has been your overall experience of the region?
- Excellent______ Good_____ Average______ Poor_____

On the map below, please make an approximate indication of the towns and National Parks you have visited on this trip:

Which of the following goods/services have you used, or plan to use in both Bourke and Cobar?

Bourke
- Fuel purchase
- Accommodation
- Restaurants/cafes
- Local tours
- Tourist or gift items
- Car servicing/maintenance
- Groceries
- Car rental
- Pharmaceutical’s
- Leisure activities (golf, bowls)
- Other, please specify: __________

Cobar
- Fuel purchase
- Accommodation
- Restaurants/cafes
- Local tours
- Tourist or gift items
- Car servicing/maintenance
- Groceries
- Car rental
- Pharmaceutical’s
- Leisure activities (golf, bowls)
- Other, please specify: __________

Appendix K: Gundabooka National Park visitor survey (non-locals)
Appendix L: A Banjo Patterson Poem Inspired by *Red Hill Station*, Adjungbilly, On Kiley’s Run

*On Kiley’s Run*

by A.B."Banjo" Paterson (1864 - 1941)

The roving breezes come and go
On Kiley’s Run,
The sleepy river murmurs low,
And far away one dimly sees
Beyond the stretch of forest trees —
Beyond the foothills dusk and dun —
The ranges sleeping in the sun
On Kiley’s Run.

’Tis many years since first I came
To Kiley’s Run,
More years than I would care to name
Since I, a stripling, used to ride
For miles and miles at Kiley’s side,
The while in stirring tones he told
The stories of the days of old
On Kiley’s Run.

I see the old bush homestead now
On Kiley’s Run,
Just nestled down beneath the brow
Of one small ridge above the sweep
Of river-flat, where willows weep
And jasmine flowers and roses bloom,
The air was laden with perfume
On Kiley’s Run.

We lived the good old station life
On Kiley’s Run,
With little thought of care or strife.
Old Kiley seldom used to roam,
He liked to make the Run his home,
The swagman never turned away
With empty hand at close of day
From Kiley’s Run.

We kept a racehorse now and then
On Kiley’s Run,
And neighb’ring stations brought their men
To meetings where the sport was free,
And dainty ladies came to see
Their champions ride; with laugh and song
The old house rang the whole night long
On Kiley’s Run.
The station hands were friends I wot
On Kiley’s Run,
A reckless, merry-hearted lot —
All splendid riders, and they knew
The ‘boss’ was kindness through and through.
Old Kiley always stood their friend,
And so they served him to the end
On Kiley’s Run.

But droughts and losses came apace
To Kiley’s Run,
Till ruin stared him in the face;
He toiled and toiled while lived the light,
He dreamed of overdrafts at night:
At length, because he could not pay,
His bankers took the stock away
From Kiley’s Run.

Old Kiley stood and saw them go
From Kiley’s Run.
The well-bred cattle marching slow;
His stockmen, mates for many a day,
They wrung his hand and went away.
Too old to make another start,
Old Kiley died — of broken heart,
On Kiley’s Run.

The owner lives in England now
Of Kiley’s Run.
He knows a racehorse from a cow;
But that is all he knows of stock:
His chiefest care is how to dock
Expenses, and he sends from town
To cut the shearers’ wages down
On Kiley’s Run.

There are no neighbours anywhere
Near Kiley’s Run.
The hospitable homes are bare,
The gardens gone; for no pretence
Must hinder cutting down expense:
The homestead that we held so dear
Contains a half-paid overseer
On Kiley’s Run.

All life and sport and hope have died
On Kiley’s Run.
No longer there the stockmen ride;
For sour-faced boundary riders creep
On mongrel horses after sheep,
Through ranges where, at racing speed,
Old Kiley used to ‘wheel the lead’
On Kiley’s Run.

Appendix L: A Banjo Patterson poem inspired by Red Hill Station, Adjungbilly: Kiley’s Run
There runs a lane for thirty miles
Through Kiley's Run.
On either side the herbage smiles,
But wretched trav'ling sheep must pass
Without a drink or blade of grass
Thro' that long lane of death and shame:
The weary drovers curse the name
Of Kiley's Run.

The name itself is changed of late
Of Kiley's Run.
They call it 'Chandos Park Estate'.
The lonely swagman through the dark
Must hump his swag past Chandos Park.
The name is English, don't you see,
The old name sweeter sounds to me
Of 'Kiley's Run'.

I cannot guess what fate will bring
To Kiley's Run —
For chances come and changes ring —
I scarcely think 'twill always be
Locked up to suit an absentee;
And if he lets it out in farms
His tenants soon will carry arms
On Kiley's Run.

Appendix L: A Banjo Patterson poem inspired by Red Hill Station, Adjungbilly: Kiley's Run
Appendix M: A Poem in Response to the Expansion of NSW NPWS into the Western Division, NSW

Leave Western Lands Alone!

("Paroo Pen", 1987)

Tonight while all the family sleeps I stare into the fire;
I prod the embers 'round a bit and watch the smoke curl higher;
What does the future hold for us? What troubles do we face?
I settle further in my chair and stare out into space;
High taxes and recession, droughts and flood and fire;
Banks are calling in their loans as interest rates go higher.
We've faced it all before you say, and always ridden out,
The ups and downs of seasons be they fire, flood or drought.
But now the conservationists have us within their sights;
Our land they'll take away from us as if it were their right.
This land they'll turn to 'Wilderness' and nothing must remain,
No trace of man, or buildings, no roads, no phones, no trains;
No mark to show man's efforts in generations past
Of bullock teams or campfires or fences built to last;
No bores or troughs or windmills, no tanks to catch the rain;
You must sell your sheep and cattle and fill in all your drains;
You must shoot down all your horses, they have no place out here,
For wilderness and national parks are making it quite clear,
This land it is for solitude, for peace and consolation
For renewal of the troubled soul, for rest and recreation.
But take a word of warning before you come and find -
Tranquillity comes from within, it is your state of mind;
If it's not in your heart and mind or in your family home,
it won't be found out Back'o'Bourke or anywhere you roam;
And one more thing before you come to eject us from our land,
We may not move as easily as you seem to have it planned.
We're stubborn and pig-headed and have fought better men than you;
Our fathers fought in wars before to keep this country true.
This land was won by brave men, with blood and sweat and tears;
They've toiled and worked this land out here for 120 years;
We're proud of all their efforts, our own we're proud of too!
And you're not taking it from us, no matter what you do.
Go home you conservationists, take your politicians too,
The western lands are not for you, the votes out here are few,
But we'll fight you to a standstill, till not one of you remains
Then if necessary we'll do it all again!"
Appendix N: A Collection of Aboriginal Stories from the Gunderbooka Ranges

The Seven Sisters

“There were seven sisters and a man with a big doonga [penis] who wanted them and chased them all over the place from Pitjantjatjara to Pintupi to Ngemba country. The girls got on the other side of where the turtle is at Gunderbooka [Ranges]. This is also the turtle that guards the entrance to the spirit world. Four of the girls hid underground and three stayed on guard above the ground. The man’s doonga led him underground across the turtle and into the spirit world, but he was so angry he turned three girls into stone [the three sisters site]. The other four girls are waiting under the ground to be told that it is safe to come up” (Fran Bodkin, as told to Erskine, 1998).

The Creation of the Cobar Peneplain

Biaime had animal spirits to help him create the landscape, Kangaroo, Emu, Goanna, and the Porcupine [Echidna] who was the most important. Big Goanna formed the Gunderbooka Ranges, when he had finished that he went to sleep and from certain situations you can see his form where he is sleeping, see his legs, tail and body. Mt Oxley was formed by the Porcupine, who then went to sleep. At Mt Drysdale Biaime layed down where West Billigoe is. Wuttagoona is the place where all the lesser animals went to sleep, frogs, lizards, crocodile. Biaime made a spring at Wuttagoona for them and if you go up there at night time with a light all those rocks will take the form of all those animals. They all had different jobs and all had a part in ceremonies after they all went back into the rocks.

The Emu and Kangaroo they created the Milky Way and the constellations, what we call scorpio is the broken-necked turkey, in part of the Milky Way you can see the Emu which at this time of the year [late April – early May] is standing up, which means that this is the time that they start to lay their eggs. At Coronga Peak Biaime made it that shape so it’s in the centre of all the other places and he could view all his other creations. At Coronga Peak there used to be his big arse prints in the rock before that got blown up by Telecom when they put their tower on the mountain in the middle 1970s. Biaime stepped up into the sky from Mt Oxley which was originally round, when he stepped up he made it flat like it is today (Paul Gordon, as told to Erskine, 1998).
A Story of Baiame

"...another legend deals with a mythical ancestor who stepped from Cobar to Gundabooka Mountain to Byrock and then to the Brewarrina fish trap. His footprint is visible on Gundabooka Mountain and on a flat rock near Byrock, and hidden in the river bed at Brewarrina. This legendary man speared a Darling River bream in the then waterhole above the fishery and only wounded it. It dived into the ground and he followed it by digging. Where he dug is now the Darling River. Where the fish doubled back on him is where the billabongs are situated. Where the natural rock barrages are across the river, there he rested at night because he was exhausted. When he struck at the fish with his spear, he caused it to grunt with pain which it still does. The spines on the back are the spear thrusts, and it still grunts when removed from the water. The fish known in the Darling as the black bream grunts when removed from the water. The water has ever since flowed in the Darling, and the fishery at Brewarrina was made to cover the footprint and deceive the fish, which if left free to follow the river, would all have gone beyond the tribal boundaries" (Dunbar, 1943-45, cited in Martin, 1991:12).

A Paakantji Creation Myth for the Darling River

"The mudlarks started the water flowing by picking up the soft mud to build their homes, as they took the mud the water was coming up out of the ground... the two Ngatji came to see what was happening to the water... they left their home at Gunderbooka Mountain and followed the gundabloui trees to the Paroo... the gundabloui trees grow along in a zig-zag where the Ngatji went and these trees are always green... when they reached the Darling they followed after the mudlarks and the water thus creating the winding channel of the darling River... where they stopped for a rest a wriggled around they made the big bends with the deep holes which are still known as places where the Ngatji lives...” (Elsie Jones as told to Martin, 1991).

Thuyika myth

The Thuyika is said to live in the caves at Gunderbooka Mountain, This is a term for a “large and dangerous man-like creature that lives in special places in the hills and the deep scrub. It carries a bag over its shoulder and will catch any children it can and put them in the bag and carry them off. It has a haunting call and the ground shakes when it walks around at night” (Elsie Jones, cited in Martin, 1991).