Community Transition Strategies: The Missing Link in the Guide to the MDBP

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Six Lessons

• Importance of engaging communities in any process the outcome of which will have a direct impact upon them & reminder of community anger when excluded
• Need for time and space for local deliberation to consider ramifications of planned change
• Value of local knowledge, expertise & experience and importance of bringing this alongside of scientific knowledge
• Holistic approach required: work across disciplinary, departmental & jurisdictional boundaries
• Anything less than comprehensive & thoroughgoing response will be exposed as much for its omissions as what is included
• Cannot ignore impacts on people & communities but if you want people to change they need to believe future could be better than what they currently experience
Transitional Strategy Objectives

- Retention of local capital
- Attract new capital investment
- Maximisation of sustainable food production
- Foster development of new products & services
- Extension of community ownership of local services & enterprises
- Encourage new migration
- Retain young people and skilled workforce
- Build human, social and cultural capital
- Collaboration across Basin communities
- Local, state & federal government partnership
- Integrate with natural resource management
Role of Government

- Murray-Darling Basin Investment Fund
- Expert Technical Advice
  - Community Secondments
- Multi-disciplinary Basin Task-Force
- Government - Community Partnership
- Framework: structures; processes, governance, time frames
MDB Investment Fund: Purposes

- Design & testing of new products & services, including drawing up business plans & marketing strategies
- Rural laboratories for the development of innovative solutions
- Supporting individuals with scholarships for tertiary education or skills training
- Development of arts, culture and heritage projects
- Extension of community service sector including
- Support for local community initiatives
- Investment in connectivity infrastructure, including transport & telecommunications.
Role of Communities

- Determine what structures work best
- Build community leadership
  - *Basin Community Leaders Forum*
- Combine local with scientific knowledge
  - *Local Adjustment Action Plans for a Sustainable Livelihoods Future*
- Whole of Community Approach
- Maximum Participation
  - *Deliberative Dialogues*
- Underpinned by research
Would it Work?

- Three Pre-conditions: Recognition + Trust + Resources
- What are the alternatives?
- No instant solutions; no magic bullets
- Long-term, sustained & incremental investment
- Framework of confidence
- Institutionally embedded
Global Examples

- Canadian Community Futures Program
- 90 initiatives across four provinces: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba
- Operating since the mid-1980s
- British Columbia: 34 CFPs
- 1995-2010 issued a total of 11,442 loans, worth $330.8m that leveraged in another $618.9m and created 44,680 jobs
- Average of just under 3000 per year
Australian Feint-Heartedness

- Bad track-record of structural adjustment in Australia
- European not an Australian sensitivity
- Outstanding Practitioners
- Outstanding academics: researchers & community engaged - really useful knowledge
- Outstanding Community Leaders
- Outstanding public servants
- Task is to harness that talent for what is a nation building project