LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Report on Attendance at Conferences

THE 9TH PUR$L CONFERENCE
THE 21ST COMMONWEALTH AGRICULTURAL CONFERENCE

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Terms of Reference

(a) current disincentives that exist for ecologically sustainable land and water use in New South Wales;

(b) options for the removal of such disincentives and any consequences in doing so;

(c) approaches to land use management on farms which both reduce salinity and mitigate the effects of drought;

(d) ways of increasing the up-take of such land use management practices;

(e) the effectiveness of management systems for ensuring that sustainability measures for the management of natural resources in New South Wales are achieved;

(f) the impact of water management arrangements on the management of salinity in NSW.

Chairman's Foreword

During the 2003/2004 financial year, the Standing Committee on Natural Resource Management attended two conferences: the 9th National PUR$L Conference; and, the Commonwealth Agricultural Society Conference.

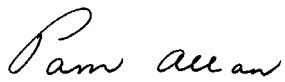
The theme of the 9th National PUR$L Conference was *Salinity under the sun – investing in the prevention and rehabilitation of saline lands in Australia.*

The conference focussed on investment in the science, the planning, the policies and the community partnerships behind preventing and rehabilitating the effects of dryland salinity.

The 21st Commonwealth Agricultural Conference conducted by the Royal Agricultural Socities of the Commonwealth had as its theme ' The Power of Water'.

Australian and international speakers presented a range of topics under the terms of reference of the committee, including water management; river health and environmental sustainability; water partnerships; and, the private sector and water rights and trade.

Both conferences were timely and pertinent for the committee.



The Hon Pam Allan MP
Chairman

Chapter One - 9th PUR$L National Conference

Background

1.1 The 9th PUR$L National Conference was held in Yeppoon, Queensland on 29 September to 2 October 2003. The theme of the conference was "Salinity under the sun – investing in the prevention and rehabilitation of saline lands in Australia" This conference built on the progress made at previous PUR$L conferences. Presenters at the conference included leading scientists, policy makers, industry, community and landholders. The conference was supported by 2 field trips, 'Industry and Historic' covering the Mount Morgan mine and local environs, and 'Dryland salinity' to Marmor dryland salinity site and Cheetham Salt production site.

1.2 At this conference the committee was represented by Mr Don Page, MP, Member for Ballina, Mr Tony McGrane, MP, Member for Dubbo and Mr Mervyn Sheather, Committee Manager.

1.3 These members made full use of their opportunity to ask question from the floor on a range of issues material to the committee's ongoing inquiry.

Principal Issues Examined at the Conference

Salinity hazard and risk assessment

1.4 Messrs Walker, CSIRO Land and Water, Gordon, Consortium for Integrated Resource Management and Gilfedder, CSIRO Land and Water dealt with methods for assessing salinity hazard and risk to agriculture, rivers, infrastructure and environmental assets. They said there was no readily accepted and adopted approach for the prediction of salinity hazard and risk at a regional scale.

1.5 The core to all the methods is the availability of data-sets at the scale of the analysis. They said these need to relate to three main risk-factors: recharge potential, quantity of salt, and discharge sensitivity.

Use of computer models as management strategies

1.6 Dr Littleboy, Professor, CRC for Catchment Hydrology, Vertessy and Dr Lawrence presented a paper on the use in Australia of computer models to support the development and implementation of salinity management strategies. They concluded that these were valuable tools to support the development and implementation of natural resource management strategies to combat salinity. They said models enable the impacts of salinity management options to be assessed, and the outcomes of implementation to be quantified. These can be used to:

- identify priority areas for salinity intervention;
- quantify the hydrological impacts of salinity management scenarios; and
- forecast future trends in both stream and landscape salinity.

Mapping surface indicators of dryland salinity

1.7 A paper on this subject was presented by Anna Dutkiewicz, University of Adelaide, Megan Lewis and Bertram Ostendorf. Their paper evaluated the potential of HyMap hyperspectral imagery to map the extent of surface symptoms of dryland salinity. They

said increasingly research groups and government agencies are acknowledging the importance of improved remote sensing technologies for high-resolution salinity mapping over large areas.

Supporting role of science in salinity management planning

1.8 The paper by Ms Claire Rodgers, Fitzroy Basin Association, Science and knowledge Co-ordinator, Fitzroy Basin Association spoke of the need for the community to embrace science in a way that will build their capacity for better decision-making.

Need for integrated approach

1.9 The paper by Jane Coram CRC for Landscape, Environments and Mineral Exploration and Craig Beverly, Department of Primary Industries.

1.10 These presenters argued that in almost all locations we lack the specific knowledge to enable us to prioritise management actions on the basis of salinity risk and amelioration potential. They said that we have the necessary technology to acquire this knowledge, but we are critically lacking in data and resources. They said there was a need to acquire an integrated understanding of catchment surface water flows, groundwater dynamics, salt distribution and salt transport processes within different parts of the landscape.

Risks to biodiversity from salinity

1.11 Jacqueline Goudkamp, University of Sydney, Susannah Lam, Karen Wong, Dr Glenda M Wardle said few studies have investigated the impact of salinity on biodiversity. They examined two case studies, the first dealing with dryland salinity in the Western Australia wheatbelt and the second concerning irrigation salinity in the Murray Darling Basin.They said these studies highlight the lack of knowledge about the impact of salinity on species loss, altered distributions of native biota and ecosystem processes. Salinity induced habitat fragmentation is a risk factor for species loss and reduction in biodiversity. They said the protection and management of native vegetation beyond protected areas is not only vital for directly conserving biodiversity, it is also essential in terms of its role in combating salinity and thus preventing further indirect biodiversity loss.

Determining the full cost of dryland salinity

1.12 Dr Suzanne Wilson, Wilson Land Management Services, said salinity was not just a 'farm-level' problem, causing a reduction in dryland agricultural production and lower property values. She said the majority of salinity damage is imposed on non-agricultural stakeholder groups owing or managing infrastructure located across the rural and urban landscapes.

1.13 Dr Wilson said the focus of most Regional Strategies and Local Action Plans at present is to address salinity problems in rural areas. However, given the importance that urban salinity appears to make to total salinity costs, the results appear to have important implications for the majority of salinity programs and catchment plans being implemented across the eastern States of Australia.

1.14 She said that even where broad land use changes are implemented, many decades may be needed before any noticeable impact on salinity outbreaks can be realised in

areas characterised by intermediate or regional groundwater flow systems. There may be increasing merit in investigating the viability of engineering works – rather than broadscale land use change – to protect high value infrastructure from salinity damage in many of our rural and urban landscapes.

Use of pasture species to manage salt.

1.15 J.D. Hoffmann, CRC for Plant-based Management for Dryland Salinity, P.L. Eberbach, J. Virgona and A. Katupitiya, School of Agriculture, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga.

1.16 These presenters argued that the inclusion of perennial pasture species in rotation with annual crops is one of the most promising agricultural solutions to the dryland salinity problem. Lucerne is the preferred species.

Development of salt tolerant plants by genetic engineering

1.17 Messrs Glen Dale, Saltgrow Pty Ltd, and Robert Henry said salt tolerant plants developed through genetic engineering were already a reality, and continuing progress is expected in existing areas of investigation, together with anticipated advances in biotechnology itself, will lead to further significant advances, with commercial release of abiotic stress tolerant plant varieties expected within the next decade. They said Canola may potentially be the first genetically modified species with broad-acre application to areas affected by dryland salinity in Australia.

Alternative industries for saline land

1.18 The paper by Andrew Brown, Cheetham Salt Ltd, examined the potential use of saline lands or a salt-water resource for the manufacture of salt (sodium chloride) on a commercial basis. He said the establishment of a sodium chloride based harvesting facility needs to consider the brine chemistry, the transport logistics, the target market and the by products produced. High value low volume products can be used to supplement the business case for development but ultimately the larger volume of sodium chloride must be placed into a market, stored indefinitely or disposed of.

Re-use of saline groundwater

1.19 Bruce Gill, Department of Primary Industries –Victoria, presented a paper on the re-use of groundwater in the Shepparton Irrigation Region .He said in most cases, irrigation farmers are able to use substantial quantities of groundwater for irrigation by mixing it with fresh channel water to limit the salinity of applied water, thus protecting productivity.

1.20 However, where groundwater salinity is over 5 dS/m, safe re-use becomes more difficult and useful volumes cannot be readily used or disposed. He discussed several trials that had been established to determine the viability and impacts of irrigation with higher salinity waters. The paper provided an overview of the status of these studies and summarised the main findings from them.

Sustainable grazing on saline lands

1.21 Jock McFarlane, Rural Solutions, SA, John Collins and Justin Hardy in their paper discussed the Sustainable Grazing on Saline Lands Program involving scientific and on-farm producer group research.

1.22 They said there has been a good response from growers and interest in the program is rapidly increasing. Many farmers had come to a point where there was general acceptance of salinity and they are adapting to it by find ways of productively using salt affected land. They said interest in the project can also be attributed to the way it is structured through the formation of partnerships between researchers and scientists. One of the outcomes of the projects will be to raise producer's awareness of research methodology.

Developing a wider range of salt tolerant plants

1.23 D.S. Loch, Department of Primary Industries, E. Barrett-Lennard and P. Truong said we need to develop a wider range of salt tolerant plants than is currently available.

1.24 They said the range of choices for productive saltland plants must be broadened if we are to address soil salinity issues successfully across Australia, given the wide range of conditions and uses that must be covered. At the same time, we need to develop a better physiological understanding of these plants (as a basis for developing better management practices) and to define more clearly their adaptation to saline soil and water conditions

The potential of farm forestry

1.25 Drs Lewis, Faye Lewis Consulting, Lott and Prinsley discussed the potential of farm forestry to become a standard part of agricultural landscapes. Generally, planting trees on large proportions of the landscape is not economically acceptable outside of the few agricultural regions where tree crop industries have been established. Therefore, it is important to identify any situations where planting small proportions of the landscape to trees could have relatively large impacts on salinity.

Improving water use efficiency

1.26 Craig Henderson, Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Ted Gardner in their paper made a detailed examination of improving water use efficiency in irrigated agriculture. They said this can assist in preventing salinity by reducing water extraction from natural systems; generating increased profits that can be directed to resource protection; and changing water and salt flows at field scales.

The Australian Landcare Management System

1.27 Jock Douglas, Grazier Industry Perspective, and Tony Gleeson discussed the new approach being proposed through the Australian Landcare Management System (ALMS). Under this program salinity and water quality have been identified as major issues and are to be addressed through a national program. Strategies, priorities and targets are being identified at catchment and sub-catchment scale. However, they said it is unresolved how these will be linked to farm and paddock scales of management - a necessity for achieving outcomes. ALMS will provide the missing link between farm scale and catchment scales of management and more - it will provide a

management mechanism that will go beyond Government initiated programs. They said that through ALMS soils, water and vegetation can all be managed holistically at multiple scales and in a way which serves the aspirations of landholders.

Market based incentives

1.28 Associate Professor John Rolfe, Central Queensland University, and Dr Thilak Mallawaarachchi in their paper discussed the developing interest in Australia in the use of incentive based policies to deal with widespread natural resource management conflicts. A preference by governments for market-like mechanisms to achieve targeted outcomes indicates a growing realisation that the regulatory controls adopted in the past are less effective. The focus of emerging policies is to provide better incentives to land managers and individual resource users to encourage practices that may lead to greater individual and collective benefits.

1.29 Copies of conference papers are held by the Committee secretariat.

Chapter Two - 21st Commonwealth Agricultural Conference

Background

2.1 The 21st Commonwealth Agricultural Conference was held in Albury, New South Wales on 24 to 27 March 2004.

Conference theme

2.2 The theme of the conference was 'The Power of Water' which aimed to consider environmental and economic issues related to water management facing agricultural communities in the Commonwealth.

2.3 The Conference was attended by 220 delegates from 18 Commonwealth countries, including a staff from the Commonwealth Secretariat and a number of African Ministers of State for Agriculture who went on to Canberra for informal discussion with Commonwealth members.

2.4 The conference provided an opportunity for Commonwealth countries to explore issues that they have in common and the differences that they share with regard to water management.

2.5 The conference provided a Commonwealth perspective on water availability, access and it's management. Attendance was appreciated by all and facilitated the gathering of information for the Committee's work program. Important contacts with members of parliament and others with similar interests in other Commonwealth Countries, including South Africa, Canada and New Zealand were made.

2.6 NSW Parliament attendees at the conference included three members of the Committee: the Member for Bathurst, Mr Martin, the Member for Albury, Mr Aplin and the Member for Dubbo, Mr McGrane and the Committee Project Officer, Ms Louise Armstrong.

2.7 The Committee members played an important role. Mr Aplin was invited to participate in the Conference opening, with the Governer-General, Major General Michael Jefferies AC CVO MC (Retd). Mr Aplin highlighted the importance of the raised Conference to the House, especially in light of the National Water Initiative, currently the subject of discussion with COAG.

2.8 Mr McGrane provided a summary to the conference of important points raised and Mr Martin made contact with delegates with similar interests in Canada, New Zealand and African nations. Upon his return, Mr McGrane gave a speech to the House on the important issues raised at the conference and highlighted that Australia is a world leader in information and technology in this area.

2.9 Mr McGrane also highlighted the challenge for legislators to provide frameworks and drive best practice, including the need to undertake legislative review and promote proactive, rather than reactive solutions. The Parliamentary Secretary responded to Mr McGrane's speech and thanked him for bringing the matter for the attention of the House.

Conference Papers

2.10 Conference papers[1] were presented on a number of topics covering issues from effective far reaching sustainable water management, public private water partnerships and conservation.

2.11 The following issues were highlighted by eminent speakers:

- The Philosophy of Water – "Water is Life" – Professor David Mitchell (Charles Sturt University), a wetland ecologist, raised the importance of conservation of vital water resources and promoting the connection of all people and their dependence on already stressed systems. Professor Mitchell also highlighted that the health of Australian water resources are mainly affected by environmental variability (natural drought and flood cycles) and the response of implementing inappropriate and expensive European ideals on a variable landscape.
- The role of water in sustainable agricultural development – Dr Albert Thembinkosi Modi (KwaZulu-Natal University, RSA) provided an important insight to sustainable development approaches in South Africa – highlighting the issues of poverty and multi-cropping approaches to utilising small land parcels. Solutions raised included low cost drip systems, water harvesting techniques, breeding crops with increased water efficiency and drought tolerance, integrated pest management and an overall approach that facilitates improvements in soil health, crop diversity and irrigation management.
- The Water Balance – effective farming versus sustainability - Mr John Blackwell, (CSIRO) demonstrated how technology can assist with water saving approaches but highlighted the need for balanced economic and environmental outputs. Mr Blackwell argues that 'engineering must combine with a conservation ethic that can provide solutions that can be arrived at in no other way' and that waste water must be seen as a resource to be harvested.
- Maintaining river health and environmental sustainability – Mr Andrew Campbell (CEO, Land and Water Australia) – highlighting the importance of ecosystem protection to support economic development. Land and Water Australia support a number of research projects that aim to produce world's best practice and appropriate solutions in a variable landscape that promotes ecologically sustainable development. A key point raised was the importance of linking "on-farm practices" with catchment targets and that incentives are inadequate and those who do the 'wrong thing' are not adequately punished. He also argues also that the legislation is 'illiterate' and that management of the landscape needs to consider 'social constructions' and deal with 'ecological apartheid'. To Mr Campbell, natural resources management means people management.
- Managing the World's finite resource – Mr Stephen Litner (World Bank, Washington) – promoting ecological outcomes improves social and economic equity and justice. The World Bank raised the issue that global action is needed to secure access to safe water supply and sanitation; meet food, energy and industrial needs; and maintain ecosystems.

[1] Conference papers are available on the RAS of NSW website http://www.rasnsw.com.au/RoyalAgriculturalSocietyofNSWEvents.htm

- Sustainable Water Management – urban perspectives – Mr Chris Davis (Australian Water Association) raised that urban water systems in Australia are unsustainable and that given the challenge of retrofitting more effort needs to be put into facilitating urban catchments to value and reuse stormwater and greywater.
- Australia's role in water management - Mr Don Blackmore (CEO, MDBC) discussed issues related to the Murray-Darling system. Australia's waterways are the most regulated country per capita in the world and highlighted that better approaches to flow management are required and not just putting in "more dams".
- Public Private Water Partnerships – Dr Bill Hurditch (Pratt Water Group) demonstrating that private enterprise can work with both community and government to achieve cost effective management approaches and water savings devices.
- World's Best Urban Practice – Andrzej Listowski (Sydney Olympic Park) highlighted best practice approaches for water catchment and reuse in new urban developments.
- Farming and Community Initiatives for Environmental Management – Water Catchment Plans/Landcare/Community Involvement – Ms Leith Boully (Community Advisory Committee, MDBC) highlighted the importance of appropriate community involvement in issues management and decision making – the importance of developing between good relationships between all stakeholders, including Indigenous people, scientists, land managers and users to facilitate better government outputs.
- The Importance of Water to Future World Trade – Mr Graham Blight (Producer and Past President of National Farmer's Federation) – highlighting expected water export issues (via produce) and changes over the next 20 years. Mr Blight highlighted that irrigation is crucial to the world's food supply and that developing countries have an important role to play.
- Water Rights – Mr Mike Young (CSIRO) demonstrated the importance of economic signals to determine rights management and decision making.
- Is Water Life? – Reverend Mark Walker (Elgin Community College, RSA) highlighted the importance of equipping young South African people with land management skills.

Other forums

2.12 Expert panel discussion also took place where delegates were able to explore the issues more informally.

2.13 Breakout sessions resulted in the production of the several main themes, including: the role of the Commonwealth Royal Agricultural Society – to support programs and act as an information broker and to ask the question of really, who does own the water?

2.14 A youth panel raised issues of concern to young professionals and land managers, making a Youth Declaration and developing a 10-point plan[2]. The Youth Declaration highlighted that access, quality and security of water are an essential aspect of development and that Commonwealth countries could provide support to ensure that environmental and social aspects of water are addressed.

2.15 The 10-point plan discussed networking and provision of information, encouraging people's confidence, support research, provide education, developed tailored programmes that address the needs of different nations, seek government and private sponsorship, include environmental and social awareness programs as part of the Royal Agriculture Show scene, provide mentoring and succession planning and to encourage a formal Youth involvement as part of each Commonwealth Agricultural Conference.

2.16 Other papers 3 available from the conference include:

- Committee for the Economic Development of Australia (CEDA), March 2004, Water and the Australian Economy. This document details the challenges for water policy for Australia, including the National Water Initiative, Water reform issues, environmental flows, water trading, urban water cycling, irrigation and technology and urban water regulatory practices.
- Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth (2004) Agriculture in the Commonwealth3 – includes a paper by Warren Truss, MP. "Sustainable agriculture for the environment – Australia shows the way" and other papers on issues relevant to Commonwealth countries.
- CSIRO Land and Water (2003) Sustainable Irrigation Systems. This document looks at research and adoption highlights in the irrigation sector. Chapters include: irrigated cropping systems, drainage, wastewater and reuse, spatial hydrology and economics, student projects.

Actions

2.17 The Committee used information arising from this Conference to inform its deliberations on proposed the report on the impact of water management arrangements on salinity.

2.18 Copies of Water and the Australian Economy were provided to Committee Members.

2.19 Copies of the other documents are held by the Committee Secretariat.

[2] Put the website here.

[3] Also available from the Commonwealth Secretariat via www.thecommonwealth.org

Appendix – Albury Youth Declaration

21st Commonwealth Agricultural Conference

We, the young people of the 21st Commonwealth Agricultural Conference from eight nations, united in one voice, express our commitment to addressing the issue of water in the Commonwealth.

Water is life. Access, quality and security of water are all essential aspects of development. We dream of a world where all people have access to freshwater, with globally integrated water and resource management, and local solutions for local problems using global information.

Water is life. There is a need to address the environmental and social aspects of water in both urban and rural areas. We dream of a world where Commonwealth countries give support to one another to help meet these conflicting requirements.

Water is life. Agriculture feeds the world, and water is essential to agriculture. We dream of a world where there is global recognition of society's water use, one that is economically viable, with a holistic approach to water management, food production and the environment. Water will be valued as the important resource that it is.

New ideas and innovation are essential to our continued and common future. We dream of a world where invention is encouraged, and ideas cross national and international boundaries.

In order to help us realise our dream, we urge the Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth and local agricultural societies to:

1. Improve local networking across the Commonwealth, and improve understanding and support between Commonwealth nations

   In order to do this:

   - We ask the RASC to develop and support exchange programmes for young people and RAS members between organisations. There is such a huge opportunity for international co-operation and partnerships that we do not believe it would be that hard for the RASC to help develop standard networks.
   - The RASC could use the Internet to improve access to communications and networks. This could also involve the creation of links between younger groups' web sites.
   - We could also make the rural achievers programme an international programme. Invite young people to seminars for all interim events.
   - Finally we commit to creating a youth network from the delegates of this Conference.

2. Improve networking with in the community

   We have 1000s of people who attend our shows, of which we are each involved. This could be a key way to push issues of water management and security within the community:

   - We suggest that there be a central theme for each of the different shows, and the first theme could be water. This may be a way to involve the community in

this important issue. Also, we could encourage field days to be focused on water issues.

- We also suggest that the RASC could encourage rural ambassadors to help develop and communicate water issues.
- We believe that water issues should be communicated to the media. The local media love a story, and we could have everyone from this Conference go back and contact their local media about the outcomes of this Conference.
- In order to accomplish this, the RASC could develop resources for each of the different shows, field days and media packs.
- Finally, the RASC could communicate to other organisations within the Commonwealth, such as the Commonwealth Engineering Council and the Commonwealth Business Council. They could also communicate to other agricultural groups such as young farmers and AY-Team.

3. Encourage confidence of agriculturalists, young and old

Young people need to have the confidence to become full participants in their RAS committees. In order to do this:

- The RASs could target young agriculturalists, and encourage them to participate.
- The RASC could strengthen programmes such as young achievers, young ambassadors and young farmers, as well as encourage groups such as the AY-Team around the Commonwealth.
- The RASC could also start competitions for young people to demonstrate their abilities and to gain confidence, and develop international fellowships and scholarships for university students.
- There could also be show exchanges developed within regions and across regions (for example state or regional show meetings).
- Confidence is not just limited to youth. All agriculturalists should be encouraged to be proud of what they do. There should be recognition systems for people who are using water to the best of their abilities, and awards for people who are using water efficiently.

4. Support and distribute innovation and local research

In order to do this:

- There should be facilities for country technology transfer between developing and developed nations, as well as technology transfer between developing countries.
- There are a lot of people around the world who have done a lot of work in areas such as water management, but their outputs are hidden away. We could use the RASs as skills centres with developed skills registers to assist with fixing problems.
- We believe that research and development should be tempered by application. There are a lot of people at universities that have to do research projects – the RASs could help to focus this research on practical issues.

- Finally, there could be a commonwealth-wide database of research that is needed, and the outcomes of this research when completed.
- Local show societies could support community research projects, focusing on local solutions to local problems.

5. Develop wider education for urban and rural communities, and education in show societies in the short and long term. There is a need to understand the value of water in the community.

   We suggest developing relationships within the community at the lowest level, by:

- Members of RASs could address schools, TAFEs, colleges, technical schools, universities and the media to talk about water issues. The RASC may want to develop media kits and education material about the importance of water in order to assist this.
- We could educate human beings about the real price of water, changing behaviour by focusing on questions such as "Where does water come from?" and "What is the real cost of products?"
- We could also educate all of the broad disciplines involved in agriculture, in order to reduce conflicts and address vested groups, and understand their different points of view. Everyone needs a voice.
- We could also use the networks of the RASs to educate rural users in best practice and new technologies. We could develop "How not tos" as well as "How tos" and create alliances for opportunities in developing countries. Overall, we need to benefit from each-others experiences.

6. Identify the development status of different nations and needs, and tailor development programmes to this.

   In order to do this:

- We suggest a stocktake of each of the local problems at the country level. We suggest that the RASC could develop a list of core problems and requirements for each country.
- We suggest that this information be placed on a web forum nation-by-nation, to share information, ask questions and seek solutions.
- We believe that the key is to try to find local solutions for local problems using global information – there is no one solution.

7. Seek government and private sponsorship for issue awareness and form industry alliances

   In order to do this:

- The RASC could identify the bodies that need to be targeted, whether private or public.
- The RASC could create a body that could be accessed by a young person or someone in a developing country with a potential idea or issue, which could be put in contact with the private or public body that could assist them to address this issue. The RASs could also work with lobbyist to help address issues of national concern.

- Indeed, the RASC could help work as a sounding board for issues, and the best way to help implement projects, from microfinance projects to new initiatives. In addition, the RASC could encourage young farmers to contact them through outreach programmes to get involved in these programmes.

8. Include environmental, social and economic interrelations in shows

In order to do this:

- We believe that the RASC should be in contact with local show societies with this ten-point plan in order to market it to the different show societies.
- We also suggest that we could use the shows to help the community understand their impact on the environment. Each show may also wish to stage an exhibit highlighting the benefits and issues surrounding the water debate.
- Finally, we believe that the RASC could encourage each show to become more sensitive to its environmental and social impact, reducing the show's water, waste and energy consumption.

9. Mentoring and succession planning, transfer of knowledge and address intergenerational issues

In order to do this:

- Develop youth committees at the RAS level, with council representation to facilitate mentoring and succession planning.
- Utilise the current knowledge that is within the RASC and local show committees and unite this with youthful enthusiasm.
- There should be an official relay of information from similar youth caucuses and committees back to general show committees, highlighting the ideas and efforts of young people around the Commonwealth.
- Indeed, it might be possible to have an under-35 executive for the RASC. The RASC might consider running a youth executive parallel to the main executive.

10. Encouraging youth through formal youth involvement in the Commonwealth Agricultural Conference (CAC)

We believe that there should be better promotion of the CAC, and the role of the youth caucus within this programme. In order to do this:

- The RASC could formalise youth involvement in the CAC. Some past youth participants may be involved in consecutive CACs to remove the need to "reinvent the wheel", in order to mentor current participants.
- The RASC could let people know what their expectations are before the Conference, and be more specific about the role of the Conference in order to allow the young people to prepare for their role.
- The RASC could strengthen rural achiever programmes and have young people attend this Conference. In addition, it could continue to give support to countries that may not be able to afford their young people participation.
- The RASC could advertise this Conference and the youth caucus to youth groups and the role of the RASC at the different shows.

- Finally, we ask that there by time for specific youth events within the overall Conference.

Water is life. Together we can ensure that this valuable resource will be accessible, for the prosperity of future communities throughout the Commonwealth.

Adopted in Albury, Australia on 26th March 2004