



VEG FUTURES 06 - SYNTHESIS OF BIG QUESTION

HOW DO WE INTEGRATE CONSERVATION AND PRODUCTION?

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At the heart of any knowledge system, or any new understanding, lies a question. All of the Big Questions at the Conference inter-relate and should not be seen in isolation from each other.

This question began as: 'How do we balance conservation and production?' As we progressed through workshops, paddock sessions and colloquia this was reframed to:
'How do we integrate conservation and production?'

This is a significant shift:

- Balance implies that the two are separate and poised around a fulcrum – when one comes up, the other must go down (a zero sum game)
- Integrate implies that the two are parts of a whole and the boundaries between them may be blurred – when one comes up, they can both come up (hand in glove)

In the context of the conference:

- 'Integrate' is taken to mean bringing together people (and their ideas and information) in ways which bring new insights to old problems.
- 'Production' is taken to encompass endeavours such as agriculture, mining, farm forestry, and subsistence, where benefits flow from development and use
- 'Conservation' is taken to embrace all benefits from managing for habitat, water and ecosystem services

Landscapes – Lifestyles – Livelihoods as a 'triple helix'

Health promotion encourages a diet conducive to a healthy and active lifestyle by exhorting us to 'Go for 2 + 5'.

In synthesising much of what has been said at the Conference on integrating conservation and production, perhaps this can be a guide to acting in the interests of healthy, vital and sustainable landscapes, as we go for 2 Principles and 5 Statements.

2 PRINCIPLES

It's a mosaic of altered landscapes

- We are not just dealing with management of pieces of land, but management in the context of whole landscapes.
- We are dealing with a mosaic of altered landscapes (have been, are still being, and will continue to be, altered).
- We are managing for change in landscapes.
- Our choices relate to the impacts of alteration (and this includes both development for production and restoration of environments).
- It's not just about trees - we are dealing with a whole ecology (terrestrial and aquatic, biotic and abiotic, and dynamic interaction between all these, over time).
- We need to integrate thinking on a range of scales, taking a helicopter view to gain a broader horizon, and then coming back to earth for action.
- A mosaic of alteration offers a mosaic of choices (no 'one size fits all' approach)
- This 'experimental framework' is dynamic and adaptive, as new knowledge emerges.

It's fundamentally about people

- At its heart, no matter how much intrinsic value we find in the environment, natural resource management is about people and relationships.
- People make the choices about how things are managed – (hopefully) not in isolation, but open to others, across sectors.
- We need to be inclusive, engaging and encouraging - everyone has a piece of the puzzle (and may be wearing multiple hats) and everyone can be part of the solution.
- Conflicts between people and their respective interests are inevitable and instructive, and we need to let these surface and deal with them.

Diversity of approach and structure really does bring biodiversity

5 STATEMENTS

1 We need to work with what we have, right where we are

- We need to make use of all the capital in the landscape, both natural and social.

Every time you make a capital purchase you are laying a debt on the landscape that biodiversity has to make repayments on.

- David Marsh, Landholder, Boorowa NSW

There is no room for preciousness. Those who get precious about their piece are taking themselves out of the picture. This is not either/or. We can only work solutions if we join up the pieces.

- David Lindenmayer, ANU

2 It's more than information and science

[Relates also to Big Question 1: What is the role and value of vegetation in the regional landscape?]

There's no point greening a landscape if you don't have a relationship with it, and it doesn't need it.

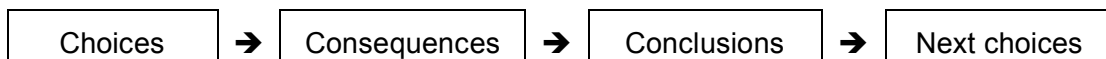
- Leanne Liddle

Let science be an informing and empowering tool for individual and collective action.

- Carl Binning, Greening Australia

- There is an 'information ecosystem' of Funders; Information generators; Information deliverers; and Information end users
- all of these are interacting all of the time by asking questions.

- Information is not the only factor shaping our choices:



Consequences are perceived:

- through a body of knowledge (an 'information lens');
and then Conclusions (meaning) is derived
- through the values held by people (a 'values lens').

Values held by people affect the Conclusions we reach about the Consequences of the Choices we make, and this feeds back to affect our next set of Choices

3 Investment in conservation is most likely to be driven by production

[Relates also to Big Question 2: Who pays for vegetation management?]

- 'We are a hundred years behind':
 - physically, with so much ground to make up; and
 - conceptually, with relatively poor understanding of true economic value of conservation.

- Productive landscapes and profitable endeavours may become the primary driver for conservation investment, so we may need to consider 'Production as a partner, not the enemy, and not a dirty word'
- In turn, we may need to consider 'Conservation as a parasite'. This is not such a scary prospect because: *A parasite that kills its host is not real smart – it would be as clever as a flea that kills dogs (Dave Watson, mistletoe researcher)*

I manage sunlight, plants and time. I thought I was managing stock
 - David Marsh, landholder, Boorowa

If we have the economic value in the land, we have resources to reconstruct.
 - Carl Binning, Greening Australia

4 There are threats also in ignorance, taking refuge in uncertainty, or blaming other types of stakeholder

[Relates also to Big Question 4: What are we doing about the threats to native vegetation (action and on-ground works)?]

- There are many ways of knowing, beyond 'the experts', and all need to be valued
- We need to be allowed to try and fail in order to learn
- We need to really listen to each other – there is no 'them', just another 'us'
- We need dollars in the NRM system to support transmission of practice change

5 There are benefits both to and from biodiversity conservation

[Relates also to Big Question 5: How do we know if we are making a difference (monitoring and evaluation)?]

- We need to hear more about benefits from – telling the stories better, with data
- We need to hear more about what works and what doesn't (funding champions to share the journey and spread the messages)

Revegetation and rebirding is a long term investment that will eventually benefit not just me but the whole catchment

- Jonathan Hassall, landholder, Holbrook

NSW

Closing thought – a bumper sticker from the '70s:

<p>No ecology = No economy No planet = No profit</p>
