

A course developed by ...



RANGELANDS AUSTRALIA

GLOBAL AND NATIONAL TRENDS, LOCAL SCENARIOS

Postgraduate Course – MKTG7965

Available Semester 1

In External, Internal or Intensive Mode

(Subject to minimum numbers)

OVERVIEW

There are many forces driving economic, environmental, technological and social change in the world that impact directly and indirectly on enterprises and communities in the rangelands. The consequences can come as a complete surprise to many people, and can have far reaching effects on livelihood and lifestyle. This course provides tools and processes to assist in understanding and analysing the major forces of change in Australia's rangelands today, and assist in supporting people living in the rangelands in their quest for profitable businesses, sustainable production systems and sustainable regions.

Information and content in this area is changing rapidly – almost daily. For this reason, this course provides a depth of processes, tools and application that will enable students to walk through their own 'futures project', identifying, researching and applying issues that are relevant to them in their communities, industries and workplaces.

The skills nurtured in this course create the thinking processes and motivation required to respond to change in proactive and positive ways. Developing these skills draws on knowledge from three key areas – strategic planning, change management and foresight.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

On completion of this course you will be able to:

- Analyse technological, social, environmental and scientific trends, policy, political, institutional and market trends influencing change in the rangelands
- Examine and apply tools and processes used in futures and foresight methodologies
- Build scenarios and explore futures for the rangelands
- Analyse and evaluate complex scenarios for the rangelands, their risks and probabilities and their likely impact
- Identify potential threats and opportunities that individuals, their regions and/or industry might need to address
- Identify, explore and develop action plans and strategies to minimize or counter threats and risk to business and sustainable futures in the rangelands.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Course modules include:

- Introduction to futures in the rangelands
- Thinking about the future
- Putting the task into context
- Starting to explore the rangelands of Australia
- Scanning the environment
- Analysing patterns and structures
- Developing scenarios
- Identifying options and responses
- Deciding a course of action

LEARNING FACILITATOR

Ms Emma Robinson (BAppSc, MSc, GradCert RurExt, GradCert TechMgmt). Emma and her husband run a beef property, in the rangelands south of Charters Towers, Qld. Emma also works as a freelance consultant specialising in the areas of environmental scanning, long-term thinking, facilitation and strategy. Previously Emma has undertaken futuring work for the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Central Queensland University.

REQUIRED TEXT BOOKS

There are no textbooks required for this course. Students are supplied with a book of readings that includes essential materials required for completion of learning activities and assessment items. The Australian Rangeland Society has kindly supplied copies of a report on the future of the rangelands.

ASSESSMENT

There are no 'examinations', just three assessment items for this course.

Assessment 1: Online discussions and contribution – 35%

Throughout the course you will be required to complete a number of learning activities online. This will involve responding to readings and other stimuli, and reading and responding to the postings of other students and the course coordinator.

Assessment 2: Defining purpose and environmental scanning framework – 25%

You are to provide a rationale for exploring a particular rangeland issue, conduct an environmental scan of that issue, and provide a report (maximum 2,500 words) on an analysis of the scan.

Assessment 3: Scenario development and analysis – 40%

Using tools and methodologies learnt, you will develop a series of scenarios with respect to your chosen issue and provide analysis and a summary of intended actions in a 3000 word report.

BACKGROUND TO THIS COURSE

The need for this course was identified by a national survey of education and skills needs for success in the rangelands. The structure, content and resources used in this course were influenced by experienced agribusiness managers, advisors and/or researchers from CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems, Q Department Primary Industries & Fisheries, Rabobank, SA Department of Land, Water and Biodiversity Conservation and The University of Queensland.

A draft of the course was reviewed by business and sustainable development consultants, agribusiness managers, Landcare facilitators; CSIRO, QDNR&M and QDPI&F futures researchers; and Land & Water Australia staff.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Students completing this course in 2006-10 were asked to evaluate the perceived relevance, practicality and quality of the course and its delivery (on a 1-5 scale, with 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree). The following average ratings were received:

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| • Clear and relevant learning objectives | 4.9/5.0 |
| • Satisfied with the course content | 4.7/5.0 |
| • Satisfied with the amount of contact with the Learning facilitator | 4.5/5.0 |
| • The Learning Facilitator provided useful guidance and support | 4.2/5.0 |
| • I gained new skills and knowledge | 4.5/5.0 |
| • Learning and assessment activities challenged me to think | 4.9/5.0 |
| • Course is well structured and components well integrated | 4.4/5.0 |
| • Course is relevant to my workplace/business | 4.8/5.0 |
| • Course is relevant to my future in the rangelands | 4.7/5.0 |
| • Overall, I'm satisfied with this course | 4.8/5.0 |

Students have also provided the following general comments on this course:

- *“Allowed examination of issues...at a depth not ordinarily possible and provided insights not readily obvious”*
- *“I really enjoyed the course – it has made me look at the rangelands in a different way and see all the different angles”*
- *“This course was simply life changing...this course has given me the confidence and the tools to not only think broadly, but to enjoy doing it. I'm now using the thinking tools from this course in my every day work to contribute to management and planning decisions”*
- *“These learning activities not only challenged me in my thinking about the NSW Australian and international rangelands, but also about the world in which I live, how I would like to see it develop and my place within it. It has touched me on a personal level and challenged me to evaluate not only my work/study position but my personal response to everyday situations and my worldview.”*
- *“The course has not only met my needs but it has exceeded my expectations”*
- *“Very useful in preparing a strategic plan for the family business in preparation of a preferred future. Also useful for the knowledge gained... in industry, political and research planning.”*
- *“This is the best course I have done as part of my Masters and the most relevant to my work”.*
- *“Very demanding but satisfying subject.”*
- *“An excellent course which will change the way I think about information and consider issues from different angles.”*