

A course developed by ...



RANGELANDS AUSTRALIA

GLOBAL AND NATIONAL TRENDS, LOCAL SCENARIOS

Postgraduate Course – MKTG7965

Available Semester 1
(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.

REVIEWERS' COMMENTS

External reviewers have provided the following general comments on a draft of this course:

- *"Very good, really interesting and stimulating"* (NRM consultant, Perth WA)
- *"Really impressed ... I think you have everything I can think of covered"* (Program manager, Land & Water Australia, Canberra ACT)
- *"The Global and National Trends course ... very relevant to the future of our family property. There are drivers and trends from within Australia and overseas that I had never thought about."* (Beef producer, Yuleba Q)
- *"A great thinking and exploring course that will have life-long relevance to students regardless of their future involvement in the rangelands"* (CSIRO Scientist, Canberra ACT)
- *"Overall this is a valuable contribution. You have pulled together a very nice mix of the theoretical and practical"*
- *"Learners will be encouraged to 'think outside the box' utilizing innovative and exciting thinking"* (Landcare facilitator, QMDC, Toowoomba Q)

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Students completing this course in 2006 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:

- | | |
|--|---------|
| • Clear and relevant learning objectives | 4.5/5.0 |
| • Satisfied with the course content | 4.5/5.0 |
| • Satisfied with the amount of contact with the Learning facilitator | 4.3/5.0 |
| • The Learning Facilitator provided useful guidance and support | 4.0/5.0 |
| • I gained new skills and knowledge | 4.3/5.0 |
| • Learning and assessment activities challenged me to think | 4.6/5.0 |
| • Course is well structured and components well integrated | 4.3/5.0 |
| • Course is relevant to my workplace/business | 4.3/5.0 |
| • Course is relevant to my future in the rangelands | 4.3/5.0 |
| • Overall, I'm satisfied with this course | 4.3/5.0 |

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”* (Grazier, Trundle NSW)
- *“I really enjoyed the course – it has made me look at the rangelands in a different way and see all the different angles”* (Advisor, Carnarvon WA)
- *“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”* (Consultant, Hughendon Q).