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Country Education Project

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Greeting

Picked up on the intro, and mentioned the defying the drift program

Horse-less carriages and Stable-less towns

As a school dropout at 15 I want to share some thoughts from my privileged position in rural Australia.

Privileged because:

- I live and have the business head office in a quiet rural community which is
 1. 20 mins from Ballarat
 2. One hour and a bit from Melbourne airport.
 3. About one and a half hours from Melbourne.
- I travel widely throughout Rural Australia
- I meet and talk to many interesting people, on farms and in rural businesses.
- I have been involved in many fascinating and personally rewarding projects.
- Apart from a few years of secondary time at school (my education was interrupted by my schooling) I have lived in rural Australia all my life.
- Agriculture has given me an opportunity to travel overseas.
- Agriculture provides a wide range of exciting careers - IVF

And I want to quote from Howard Gardner

“I crave human beings who understand the world, who gain sustenance from such understandings, and who want – ardently, perennially – to alter it for the better. Such citizens can only come into existence if students learn to understand the world as it has been portrayed by those who have studied it most carefully and lived in it most thoughtfully; if they become familiar with the range – the summits, the valleys, the straight and meandering paths – of what other humans have achieved; and if they learn always to monitor their

own lives in terms of human possibilities, including ones that have not been anticipated before. No doubt there are various routes to this wisdom.”

My challenge is that it is your role to identify and explore routes or pathways. As they apply to education in country Victoria.

And then I want to lead a work session where we look at

- What have some small towns done to attract and retain people?
- How can you manage with less?
- How do we develop virtual communities
- How do we get new measures of success
- Lets map some unconnected communities

Introduce the Trans trip

Across Australia's Nullarbor

So many towns that are no more,
Across Australia's Nullarbor.
Where once you'd stop and take a look,
At Barton, Watson, Curtin, Cook.
The first three now completely gone,
And Cook, neglected, sad, forlorn.
Three hundred people lived at Cook
'Cos that's how many folk it took
To water, coal and clean the trains,
Now very little still remains,
'Cos diesel locos have no need
For coal and water, soon they'll speed
And passengers, if quick will look,
And see the sign 'This once was Cook'.

Horse-less carriages and Stable-less towns

The towns which you deal with in the country education project, have less than 5000 people are at least 20kms from a population centre of 10,000 are at least one hour from Melbourne and have access and a sense of community. If they have steam trains which need coal, water, crews, and passengers who need feeding they will have some employment opportunities. Once they were changing stations for Cobb and Co. Not anymore.

If they have a lake, a mountain, a river (with water in it) or are by the sea they have a good chance or the economic activity needed to provide employment and make them sustainable. In the absence of those criteria they will depend on agriculture. Lets distinguish between working on farm and the wider career opportunities which flow from agriculture. EXPAND

As a mining town– St Arnaud 58000 population
Buninyong 30/40,000

Year	Population	Rural Population
1810	12,000	All
1910	4.3 Million	Approximately 1 million
1960	10.3 million	Approximately 1 million
2010	22,393,141 (12.30 est 20/07/10)	????

130000 Farmers – 13 Volunteers

Australian farmers are the best in the world and of the best farmers in the world I suggest that there are six myths.

Myth One: Drought is an unlucky and unexpected event.

Myth Two: Australian farmers are poor.

Myth Three: If I struggle and get one good season, all will be OK.

Myth Four: Family farms have no future.

Myth Five: Agriculture has no future.

And then there's the Sixth. Rural communities are cohesive.

Myth one: Drought is an unlucky and unexpected event

Wrong. Drought is part of doing business in Australia. The publication 'Beyond Drought' shows that there has been a major drought in Australia every 20 years since recorded history (over the whole continent) began (1864-66, 1880-86, 1895-1903, 1911-16, 1918-20, 1939-45, 1963-68, 1972-73, 1982-83, 1991-95, 2002-10). Climate change will mean that more areas will get more long dry spells. (that is 55 years out of 150 or 1 in 3).

Myth two: Australian farms are poor.

Somewhere up to 100,000 have little cash but 'Homeless people are the most marginalized people in Australia – on any one night 99,000 Australians are homeless' (Chamberlain & Mackenzie 2003).

Myth three: If I struggle and get one good season

- skill, scale, training, off-farm income

Myth four: Family farms have no future

Abare reports the 97% of farms with a GFI >\$K500 are family owned.

Myth five: Agriculture has no future

'The first was the real importance of the rural and related industries. While agricultural production today contributes only 3.1 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), the farm-dependent economy – the farm services sector, food and fibre processing, and similar industries – account for a massive 12.1 per cent of GDP. Similarly, while agriculture accounts for only about 4 per cent of employment directly, it keeps 1.6 million people in work nationally – around 17 per cent of the work force. Even more striking is the contribution to export earnings. The Australian Farm Institute shows that the 4 per cent of workers employed in the rural industries contribute as much to Australia's export earnings as the 85 percent of the work force employed in the services sector (Thomson 2005). Australia may no longer ride on the sheep's back in the traditional sense, but agriculture still more than pulls its weight.' But the 2000 drought caused a fall in the gross value of agricultural production of 19% (around \$32 billion) as a result of the drought would lead to a decline in Australian GDP of around 1% and a loss of 44,800 jobs (11% of employment in the sector) in the five years to February 2004.

Introduce Churchill fellowship and the meeting with Dan Cherrington.

Australian farmers are the best; we hear our leaders holler,
But I've just got one simple test - it's can you make a dollar?
The most efficient in the world - a statement not sustained,
You're not efficient going broke, no matter what is claimed.

Some people always make a buck no matter what they sell,
While others always blame bad luck, a tale of woe they tell,
And what is it about the best that keeps them at the top?
They concentrate and seldom rest, with pasture stock or crop.

They push production on their land, yet keep their costs controlled,
They sell things at a premium; their gross is more I'm told,
They run more stock to spread their costs; don't pull that spending back,
They're very focussed in their aims and keep themselves on track.

That doesn't mean they can't have fun and still enjoy their life,
Nor does it mean that they're immune from every kind of strife,
They still get fire and flood and drought and every kind of pest,
But still they have a holiday, they organize some rest.

It's not the vision splendid stuff that Clancy used to know,
The sunlit plains extended, nor the wondrous evening glow,
Those things are still there to enjoy, but in a harsher deal,
You might not like the picture but you must admit it's real.

MICHELAGO MICK ABC Country Hour – 30 July 1993

© Mike Stephens 1993

Myth six: Is that rural communities are united and cohesive.

In many rural communities there are townies and cockies, some but not many now have graziers as well.

The notion is that although the population in Rural Australia is growing the population of many small towns is not and probably won't.

Faced with the reality of this situation

- What have some small towns done to attract and retain people?
 1. Birchip
 2. Lake Bolac
 3. Rushworth
 4. Balmoral
- How can you manage with less?
- How do we develop virtual communities
- How do we get new measures of success
- Lets map some unconnected communities

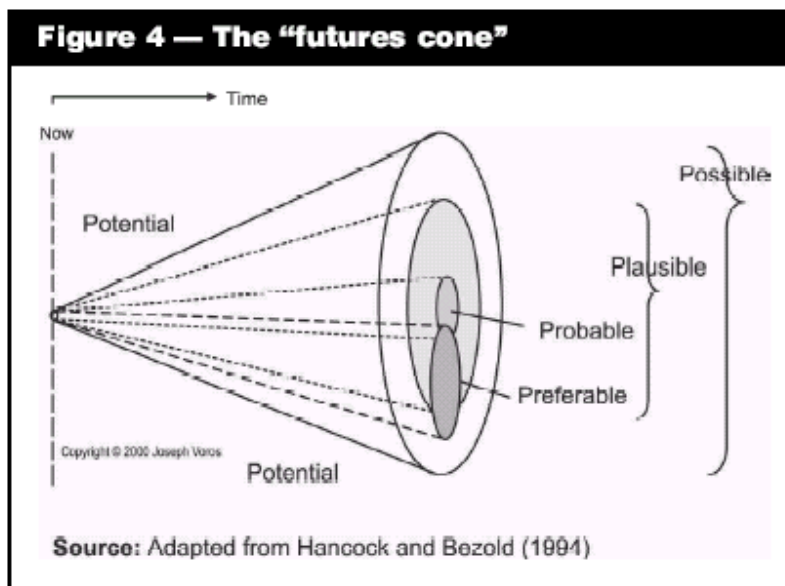
The View from the veranda.

The futures cone with probable, preferred and possible.

The change formula.

$$R < D * V * P * E$$

The Futures Cone



View from the Verandah



	1 year	5 years	10 years
How do you want to spend your time?			
What do you want the view from the verandah to be?			
If you were run over by a bus how do you want to be remembered?			

