

Along the Road

News from the project "Sustainable Use of Rangelands in the 21st Century"

March 1998



Project status report

Thanks to your support the project has made good progress. Participants, ourselves included, are developing fresh ideas about the potentials of the Western Division, and the role of policies and institutions in promoting new uses.

Some of you have been asking about how the workshops on land use, policies and institutions you have been attending, and the ideas you have given us, will contribute to the project. The diagram below shows the activities you are participating in and the time lines we are working to. The paragraphs below it give more detail about where we are up to with each aspect of the project.

Activity	96	97	98	99	'00
Analysis and Design of Institutions and Policies					
Stakeholder's Land Use Preferences					
Development of Sustainability Indicators					
Negotiation of Stakeholders Consensus Land Use Pattern					
Implementation Strategy					
Reporting					

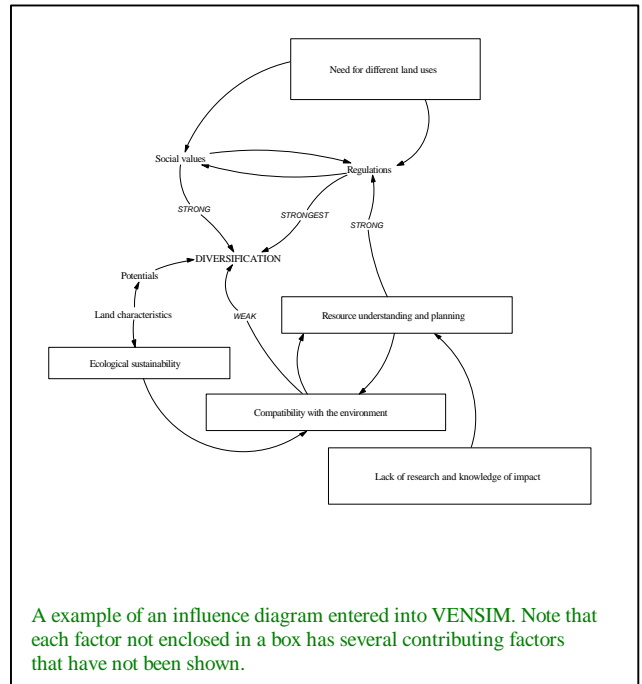
Project time lines

1. Analysis and design of institutions and policies

The aim of this activity is to understand the role policies and institutions play in maintaining the current pattern of land use. This will enable participants to propose changes in policies and institutions that promote land uses that are socially, economically and ecologically sustainable.

We have run two policy workshops. One involved policy makers from within the Western Division (Dubbo – December 97), the other involved policy makers with a State and Federal focus (Sydney – February 98).

At each workshop participants worked in teams to produce "influence diagrams" of the factors that affect specific land uses. Many people commented that they found this a stimulating way of drawing out their knowledge as it combined their's with the knowledge of people from other organisations.



We have put the influence diagrams from the two policy workshops into a computer program (Vensim), where they can be stored, modified or amalgamated.

Relationships among the multitude of policies that affect land use in the Western Division are becoming clearer. So are the policy-conflicts!

Our next task is to interview individual policy makers to build more substance into the models. We will also combine the models from the various groups. At the next set of policy meetings we will ask for your feedback on the



way we have developed your models. The meetings are scheduled for the middle of the year.

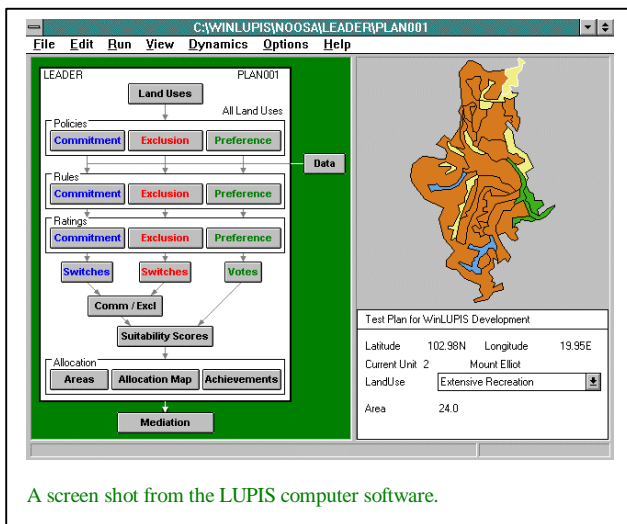
2. Stakeholder's land use preferences

In this activity stakeholders are generating their preferred scenarios of land allocation, one for each stakeholder group (pastoralists, Aboriginal people, conservationists, mining and tourism industries, and "diversifiers"). They will also negotiate a compromise scenario.

In "Along the Road" No 1 we reported on the stakeholder workshop at Cobar, and follow-up discussions in Wilcannia, Wentworth, Cobar, Broken Hill, Bourke, Dubbo and Sydney. Over Christmas and early this year we have been forming guidelines based on preference rules that were developed by stakeholders at these meetings. These will be sent to stakeholders by May.

Inspection of these guidelines tells us what information is needed to be able to apply them to the land use plans we will generate. Having done this, we are now busy collecting that information.

Once stakeholders are happy with the guidelines we will begin to feed the guidelines into the land use planning computer software (LUPIS). This will enable us to produce maps of preferred land uses. More importantly it will enable us to explore where compatible land uses can occur together and identify potential areas of conflict. Both will be sent to stakeholders for refinement and as input to the consensus land use scenario workshop to be held towards the end of 1998.



A screen shot from the LUPIS computer software.

3. Sustainability Indicators

The "Sustainability" of a land use must be considered in terms of ecological, social and economic viability. We have been working with project participants to define sustainability and generate a set of indicators that measure land use plans in these terms.

One of our sustainability indicators is the impact of land allocation on biological conservation. A team of key people from CSIRO, NPWS and DLWC is modelling spatial variation in biological diversity so we will be able to estimate these impacts. We are also investigating a model capable of estimating the regional consequences for jobs and incomes of changing to a new pattern of land use.

We believe that climate change may threaten the sustainability of future land uses. To verify this Mark Howden from Bureau of Resource Science is collaborating with us to develop ways of estimating the effects of climate change on stakeholders' land use scenarios. He is also working on a woody vegetation model for estimating the potential of rangelands as a carbon sink, a process that could help in a small way to minimise climate change.

We're not in this alone

This project is only one of several initiatives aimed at promoting the sustainability of land uses. For example the Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation fund another two land use projects in the rangelands, one in Queensland and the other in Western Australia. Also we have important links to the Western and to the Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Committees, to West 2000, and to a number of the other regional initiatives that many of our stakeholders and policy makers represent. This integration of ideas is critical and will underpin any successful regional planning exercise.

The organisations represented in the recent policy workshops are –

- Arid Lands Environment Centre
- Australian Heritage Commission
- Australian Labor Party
- Bureau of Transport Economics
- Department of Aboriginal Affairs
- Department of Urban Affairs and Planning
- Environment Australia
- Greening Australia
- Inland Rivers Network
- National Landcare Program
- National Australia Bank
- NSW Aboriginal Land Council
- NSW Agriculture
- NSW Department of Land & Water Conservation
- NSW Environmental Protection Authority
- NSW Minerals Council
- NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service
- NSW Premier's Department
- NSW Road Traffic Authority
- Resource and Conservation Assessment Council
- Rural Industry Research and Development Corporation
- West Farmers Dalgety
- Westpac



Now, tell me again, how do chandeliers influence land allocation?



A plenary session. Mostly we worked in groups.

People along the road
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Pictures from the Sydney workshop



Sitting in rooms with whiteboards is not the only way to get a handle on the Western Division!



Ok. Suppose we massage this policy a bit



Who said policies for the Western Division are simple?

People along the road - Pictures from the Sydney workshop



Bill Tatnell sets the scene.



No really, this is how it works.



Well the facilitators have to relax sometime.