

# MIDDLE BLACKWOOD BASIN GROUP (Afternoon)

**Location:** Boyup Brook

**Date:** March 19, 2014

**Time:** Afternoon 1:30pm to 4:40pm

## ***View of the Catchment***

The whole group did not have a clear catchment boundary and thought in terms of the BBG or wider local area systems (Collie to Bridgetown - around Boyup Brook). The NRM professionals tended to have a clearer boundary but this was probably more related to their work areas and did not limit their boundaries.

## ***Community responses***

### **GROUP A**

#### **Where are we now?**

- Degraded
- Lack of people
- Weakened
- Lack of awareness of what is around them (i.e. Biodiversity hotspot – people don't know it is)
- Absentee landholdings (lack of management) → lots of vacant/unmanaged blocks
- Vibrant lifestyle
- Different population to the past – losing farming heritage and no succession on farm
- Some farming innovation
- Lots of opportunity, but people don't see it
- Big gap between 'haves' and 'have nots'
- Lack of enthusiasm for work and in general
- Things are not very accessible
- Complacency – get rich quick, rather than work
- Lack of long term commitment/vision more focussed on quick fix instant gratification
- Dusty! Dust everywhere
- In good condition in comparison to other areas physically
- Kids leaving town sooner
- Not a lot for teenagers (perception of teenagers)

## What's changing?

- Traffic going through town is busier-more trucks and traffic in general
- Things in general happening faster/going faster
- Disregarding the little things, in order to get the newest, best, most recent stuff
- More throw-away society than we used to be
- Gone from producers to consumers
- Gone from quality to quantity
- More complicated and stressful lifestyle
- More dependent on technology
- Don't need to think to use common sense anymore – not allowed to and not given the opportunity given to follow
- Regulation is way more prevalent than it was (i.e. horse riding, swings etc.). It makes it harder to do things
- Trees being cut down for roads, development, and urban development
- People are more afraid of native vegetation than they used to be (i.e. fire) more so regulators than the community

## Where are we going?

- Recycling depot at Boyup Brook transfer station is not working now and hasn't been for some time
- Crazy amounts of packaging → buying in bulk = less packaging
- Tip in Bridgetown is going downhill – can't afford to management
- BIG, BIG, BIGGER not necessarily better – sometimes it is though, (i.e. buy in bulk – less packaging)
- Awareness is growing - more people desiring to be healthy
- Climate change cynicism – based on the fact that everything changes. Human vs non-human. People don't care and does it really matter?
- Realising that it's good to have trees – as they bring rain, but oversimplifying by putting it under the 'catch-all' of 'climate change'

## What are the points of change?

- Something drastic needs to happen
- Need to have the discussion about what the term climate change is
  - the term and associations can be red herrings
  - Is it the term 'climate change' that needs to change?
  - Is it more resource use?
  - Climate change fatigue and cynicism needs to be flipped
- Increase the value of small contributions
  - Stop saying 'I can't make a difference'
  - Attitude and ↑ value of own contribution; will lead to greater acceptance and increased contribution → snowball effect

## GROUP B

### What changes are you noticing?

- Boggy areas are not boggy anymore in winter
- Waterlogging through salty groundwater rise is increasing (about 1 metre a year)
- Water tanks have started running out = catchment rainwater off roof ↓ (the last two years the tanks have gone dry in early March and the backup tank is v low/ dry too)
- Explosions in population of certain species (e.g. Muir's corellas, kangaroos) due to stable food source = agriculture
- Grass trees being decimated by 28's parrots
- Plantations ↓
- Wetter summers may impact on dieback
- Tree stress from climatic conditions
- Farm size = get bigger or not be viable any more
- Farming communities are getting smaller
- City → rural relationship ↓ - not running as many initiatives anymore
- Locally produced food seems to be getting bigger /more awareness, but not making it back to the farm gate of most farmers.
  - → more people are reading labels
- How to value time and labour as a farmer?
- Combination of stresses leads to tipping point on natural populations
- Everyone's busy! It's effort to contribute to community or do extra 'environmental' work
- Hard to get voluntary input and participants
- Struggle to maintain viability of livelihood
- Farm succession Plan (not such a sure thing to have child to take on the farm)
  - There is young people farming → may not fill in surveys or take part in community activities due to work schedule

### If the climate changes.....

- Expect more frosts → adaptation with technology and research
- Need to be prepared to change
- Opportunities with in a changed climate, but conditions need to be stable and predictable to inform agricultural decisions.
- Long-term weather forecast →something to bank on!
- Technology vital to future decisions and planning
- Opportunities for new crops – sandalwood, summer crops
- Natural areas/resources
  - Hard time adapting to rapid changes
  - Impacts of urbanisation = nowhere to adapt to
  - Less water, more desert?
  - Competition for natural resources – mining
  - Food security & foreign investment
- It may be the tipping point → one more stress on the natural environment

## Tipping points or Change agents

- Stage in life (personal)
- Changes to agriculture and rise in markets (e.g. plantations in 1990's)
- Start losing icons through degradation – social and environmental impacts (e.g. marron in the river, swimming in the river, skiing at Lake Moodiyarrup)
- Loss of remnant patches → insidious and over long periods
- Blackwood River
- Reduced water quality in surface water → dams on agricultural land.
- Agricultural viability
  - Foreign investment
  - Prices for commodities
  - Stable markets
  - →if it keeps going ↓ we won't have local produce or rural communities
  - Flows on to
    - Decline of small communities
    - Increased isolation →mental health issues?
    - Food security (no local produce) and biosecurity (weeds)
    - Decline in LGA services (e.g. recycling depot)
    - Decline in mass population to attract investment, technology, research? = not heard in Canberra!

## BBG COMBINED GROUP

### So what can we do?

- Each community has facilities to compost green waste and animal waste into green manure
  - ↓ Environmental damage with eutrophication, land fill or burning
  - ↑ value of compost leading to ↑ production of crops using the compost
  - ↓ transport of waste and fertilizer
  - ↓ Tasmanian blue gums – can use left overs
  - Lawn clippings
  - Suggest use a co-op approach for the facility
  - Need someone in the community to drive it
  - \$ needed to set up - maybe a grant
  - Bureaucratical impediments
  - Boyup Brook used to have a wood chipper at the tip – residents could take in green waste have it chipped and take it home or leave it for the shire use.
  - Current LGA thinking is divided between recycling and burning waste to create useable energy.
- Plant a tree today for a strainer post tomorrow
  - The difference between photos from 80 years ago and now is the horses have been replaced by machinery. Going forward the difference may well be there will be few if any trees in the landscape.
  - Don't need to plant huge areas and number of trees but put in small patches regularly.

- Removing trees for fence posts so put in trees to replace them
- Relate tree planting to a practical use (more acceptable)
- Environmental education
  - School opportunities – garden, vegetable patch, chooks and recycling
  - Tree planting by local groups (e.g. junior hockey club)
  - Hot Rocks – very successful NFP arrangement – metro schools propagate seedlings then come to a BBG farm to plant them out. This is a whole experience where the students have a camp out, camp fire, go spot lighting, mill grain to make pancakes in the morning, milk a cow for fresh milk etc. Has been very well received!
- Encourage everyone to do their bit and praise them for it
  - General motivation – everyone gets disheartened
  - Perceptions are powerful – need to fight common perceptions
  - Motivate people to make a difference and then praise when they do something
  - Small differences add up
  - Idea that small improvements are not important has been fed by NRM by focussing on large ‘important’ assets and saying little ones not worthwhile
  - Need a big vision like Gondwana Link – then look at the tiny steps needed to get there
  - Break the big vision into smaller pieces so people can see where they fit – we can take the first step and break it down into little pieces for them
  - Give praise for all the attempts and changes

### **Notes taken by the facilitator**

- Everyone is getting busier – people do not have time to contribute
  - Town people less likely to contribute
  - Farmers tend to be the ones who usually ‘get things done’ but are getting too busy with farming activities
- Farm Succession
  - Adrian said when they did a survey of succession planning around Boyup Brook and found that of the 36 interviewed only 2 were sure a child was taking over the farm
- Marron
  - After the 1982 flood there was no marron in the Blackwood possibly due to flushing salt from outer regions like Dumblebung into the lower fresher areas.
- Agricultural industry decline
  - The changing land use from agriculture to blue gums –
    - Before blue gums many small towns like Tonbridge, Jindalup and Channup Had schools, town halls and a shop.
    - Now the families bus children and travel to shop about 40 to 45 minutes.
    - This increased distance has led to fatigue, isolation and increased mental illness.

- The harvested areas now have limited value as the roots are difficult to remove, so the areas are growing weeds, and feeding roos, contract sprays do not care about spray drift onto neighbouring farms

# MIDDLE BLACKWOOD SYSTEM DIAGRAM

BLACKWOOD BASIN GROUP  
 Boyup Brook  
 March 19, 2014

- Theme
- Component of system
- Positive opportunity/good change

