
Socio-economic impacts of land use change in the Green Triangle and Central Victoria

Project Update # 2 – April 2007

Welcome to the second update for the ‘Socio-economic impacts of land use change in the Green Triangle and Central Victoria’ research project. Updates are being provided at key points throughout the project to keep you in touch with its progress, including the following subprojects:

- Community attitudes and values
- Quantifying and analysing land use and socio-economic change
- Landholders who have changed land use to plantation forestry

This update includes an overview of activities since the September 2006 update, and forthcoming activities of the project.

What’s been happening?

Oct
2006

A new project partner

Southern Grampians Shire Council has provided funding towards the research, bringing the number of contributing partners to eleven (as listed at the foot of this page).

Dec
2006

Website

The project website is live at:

www.crcforestry.com.au/land_use_change.htm

This website, hosted by one of the project’s partners, includes information on the project goals and objectives, researchers and funding, project news, links to other resources, and the opportunity to send the research team your views on land use change. It will be updated in the next month to provide more detail on the land use changes and types of socio-economic impacts being studied.

Dec
2006

Deciding which land use changes to study

Our goal is to study the issues of greatest relevance to the communities living in the study region. For this reason, we held a series of focus groups at the start of the project to find out from



Some of the participants at the April 2007 workshop discussing supply chains for different industries. From L to R: Phil Franklin, Chris Bluett, Jacki Schirmer and Bernard Noonan.

local residents the most important types of land use and socio-economic change to include in the study.

In December, the types of change and impacts to be examined were decided, after the researchers presented outcomes of focus group discussions to the Advisory Group and Steering Committee.

The *Community attitudes and values survey*, which aims to understand how people perceive and understand land use change, will focus on studying land use change to:

- blue gum plantations
- cropping
- dairying, and
- rural residential development.

The *Quantifying and analysing change* part of the project, which will gather and analyse statistical data to identify the extent of land use and social and economic change in the region, will focus on studying change within and between the following land uses:

- beef grazing
- cropping
- dairying
- horticulture (exact types to be studied are currently being identified)

The project’s research providers are: The Australian National University, the University of Melbourne, and Victorian Government Department of Primary Industries. The following organisations are contributing cash or in-kind funding to the project (in alphabetical order): Central Victorian Farm Plantations, Cooperative Research Centre for Forestry, Corangamite Catchment Management Authority, Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation, Glenelg Shire Council, Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority, Green Triangle Regional Plantation Committee, Moyne Shire Council, Southern Grampians Shire Council, Victorian Government Department of Primary Industries, and Wattle Range Council.

- plantation forestry
- sheep grazing (wool and prime lamb), and
- viticulture.

Mar
2007

Peer review

After the land use changes and socioeconomic impacts being studied were identified, the researchers developed detailed research proposals. These were submitted for independent peer review in February this year, as part of the process for ensuring our methods meet the highest academic standards as well as being the most appropriate for the goals of the project.

The peer reviewers were selected by the project Steering Committee from a list of experts with experience in analysing land use change using both survey methodologies and statistical analysis. Peer reviewers were given the option to remain anonymous to ensure they could comment freely on the proposals.

All three peer reviewers fully endorsed the methods being proposed for the research. We plan to post the peer reviewers' comments, the researchers' response to reviewer comments, and our research methodology documentations, on the website in the near future.

April
2007

Attitudes and values survey pre-testing

A sample of residents from across the region has pre-tested the draft questionnaire for the community attitudes and values research component. This 'pre-test' has helped us to fine-tune the questionnaire, and so maximise the value of the actual survey to be conducted in May. This survey will help meet the aim of understanding the relative acceptability of new and existing land uses in the study region, by asking residents about what outcomes they value from land uses in the study region, and how they believe different land uses affect these valued outcomes.

April
2007

Comparing industries workshop

On April 17th, a group of experts with in-depth knowledge of the beef grazing, sheep grazing (prime lamb and wool), dairy, cropping, plantation forestry and viticulture industries participated in a workshop in Hamilton. The purpose of the workshop was to develop a framework for comparing the employment and

spending these different industries generate in the study region. Participants helped researchers identify comparable points in the chain of production for different industries, which will enable us to compare employment and spending generated to equivalent stages of production across the diverse industries being studied. There is still further work to be done on the framework, and we will produce papers describing the framework being used once it is fully developed.

April
2007

Survey of landholders who have changed land use to plantation forestry

Interviews are underway with landholders who have chosen to sell or lease land for plantation forestry, or to self-fund farm forestry on their property. The series of interviews will help the development of a survey to be distributed mid this year to a larger number of landholders who have recently changed land use to farm forestry or plantation forestry.

The survey will identify the types of shifts in population that result from land use change to plantation forestry, and how satisfied landholders are with their decision to change land use.

What's coming up in the project?

May
2007

Community attitudes and values survey

In May, 3000 randomly selected residents of the study region will be sent a postal survey asking them about their attitudes and values relating to different land uses.

Quantifying and analysing land use and socio-economic change

In this part of the project, we are working to get large databanks together to enable our analysis of land use and socio-economic change. We are awaiting the first releases of data from the 2006 *Census of Population and Housing*, which will let us complete analysing change over time from 1991 to 2006 across the study region.

June
2007

Landholder survey

During May and June, survey questions will be completed and tested. This will be followed by delivery of the survey to a large number of landholders who have changed land use to farm forestry or plantation forestry.

For further information, or to unsubscribe from these updates, please contact:

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