

19 November 2007

SEVENTY ATTEND BOURKE CLIMATE CHANGE FORUM

Approximately seventy people attended a climate change forum held in Bourke on November 14, including landholders, twenty-five Indigenous Land Management students from TAFE, interested locals and government agency staff and. The forum was organised by the NSW Department of Primary Industries and the Western Catchment Management Authority.

Participants heard from experts in the climate variability field and the general feeling of the group was one of optimism, reflecting people's love of the land and their intention to stay.

Bourke Councillor and local landholder, Wally Mitchell, said "We are a resilient community used to dealing with extremes of climate. We just have to do what we do, and look for ways to do that better," he said.

When asked about the opportunity to come and hear the latest information about climate change, Indigenous Land Management student, Rodney Edwards, commented that "It was great".

Speakers included Dr Roger Stone from the University of Southern Queensland who spoke about trends in weather patterns from a global, national and regional perspective.

"Changes are occurring, but those changes are likely to be different from one region to the next," Dr Stone said.

Richard Beecham from the Department of Water and Energy spoke about the future availability of water resources in the Murray-Darling basin and the expectation of more variability of flow and of more extreme flow events in the future.

Other keynote speakers from the Department of Primary Industries included Paul Carberry, Michael Cashen and Graeme McIntosh. Paul Carberry talked about his "Betting on Rain" publication, a useful tool for the grazier looking at the odds of rainfall events, which is available from the DPI or the Western Catchment Management Authority.

During the afternoon, the audience broke into smaller interest groups, which provided participants with an opportunity to discuss issues closer to home.

Mitch Abbo of Clyde Agriculture spoke to the irrigated cropping group about the value of good business planning. "If you plan that the effects of climate change may happen, then you will be better able to respond to seasonal variability. It's about looking for opportunities and remaining positive and it just makes good business sense," Mr Abbo said.

The group interested in conservation in the rangelands learned more about the Enterprise Based Conservation Agreements program being administered by the Western CMA. Heidi Doyle of the Western CMA said that "land managers are interested in looking after their land and conservation can be a financially viable part of their overall farm business".



MEDIA RELEASE



People interested in dryland farming systems heard about native grasses from Cathy Waters and about stock from Gemma Junk, both Department of Primary Industries staff. Both emphasised that any change to rainfall and temperatures is likely to have varying impacts on both stock and ground cover.

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Captions:

Gary Allan of DPI and Roger Stone of University of Queensland

DPI staffers, Gemma Junk, Sally Ceeney and Garry Giddings

Rangeland Management Breakout Session

