

Climate change adaptation and mitigation in Victorian drylands

Meeting Summary

Roger Jones
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Acknowledgements Peter Gell, Jasmyn Lynch, WIDCORP,
Rod Keenan, Serenity Hill and workshop scribes

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**A NEW
SCHOOL OF
THOUGHT.**

Wimmera – Mallee focus

Organised by the University of Ballarat (Prof Peter Gell, Centre for Environmental Management) and WIDCORP (Water in Drylands Collaborative Research Program)

Held in Horsham April 8–9

Developed 15 “burning questions”

Presentations on regional and topical themes

Working groups on six themes (Patrice Braun, Uni Ballarat):

Primary Industry; Natural environment; Recreation & industry/business; Urban development; Transport; Community health and well-being

1. Assets, vulnerabilities, challenges, knowledge gaps
2. Discussion on key challenges

Speakers included

Rod Keenan, VCCCAR	Overview
Peter Gell, Uni Ballarat	Paleo-perspectives
Rob Wilby, Uni Loughborough, UK	International perspective
Roger Jones, Victoria Uni	Climate risk assessment
Aillie Gallant, Uni Melbourne	Climate processes
Rob Gell, TV Geomorphologist	Climate communication
Dave Watson, DSE	Regional planning
Graeme Anderson, DPI	Adaptation planning
Sophie Bickford, Carbon Planet	Carbon markets
La Vergne Lehmann, WIDCORP	Farmer attitudes
Andrew Barton, GWM Water	Water industry adaptations
Jo Bourke, Wimmera Development Association	Regional partnerships

Presentations synthesis

- Adaptation (mitigation) planning is the central theme, not prediction and response
 - E.g. Adaptation scenarios with goals, not climate scenarios
- Test adaptation plans for likely success in achieving goals under uncertain change (e.g. climate, demography, economy)
- Different adaptation responses include incremental change, wait and see, prepare up front (climate proof)
- Adaptations can be generic, specific or transformative – each type is different and requires different levels of belief, information and effort
- Lots of regional plans and groups – need to combine efforts by better networking and inclusion, locally driven
- Focus on innovation and success to build regional investment (economic, social and environmental) in adaptive capacity and actions

Working group conclusions

- Strong regional networks and collaboration exist, but need to build on them.
- More leadership needs to come from the local and regional levels.
- Be flexible and strategic in engagement with different groups.
- Need to identify and build trusted sources for information delivery.
- Focus on what can be done now – and tangible actions.
- Celebrate achievement – use working examples to communicate solutions.
- Younger people need to be included in planning and decision-making.
- Need network map of local groups, actions and influence to link efforts.
- Develop live plans that are continually updated.