

# Native Vegetation

*Project Fact Sheet 9*

*UNE4-1*

## Stakeholder values, institutional change and formulating vegetation management policies.

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*Duration of project:*

March 2001 to September 2004

### *Project Summary*

Recent research under the Native Vegetation R & D Program (project UNE26) showed that people who manage remnant native vegetation in agricultural areas hold different social values - that is, different ideals about how our society or community should be. These value differences were reflected in:

- the degree of support that people expressed for different approaches to conserving the natural environment;
- the degree of confidence people expressed in the ability of various natural resource management institutions to contribute to sustainable natural resource management; and
- the characteristics of native vegetation that people found appealing in agricultural landscapes.

These findings shed some light on why people hold different views about the need for conserving native vegetation in agricultural landscapes and what they feel are appropriate conservation strategies. The findings also suggest that value conflicts in the community are likely to hinder the formulation of policies aimed at conserving native vegetation in agricultural landscapes, unless these conflicts are identified and strategically managed.

This PhD project will investigate native vegetation policy and the role of stakeholders' values in the process of policy formulation. In particular, the influence of value differences on stakeholder engagement in the policy process will be investigated.

The research findings will enhance the capacity of institutions and stakeholders to understand and resolve conflicts over native vegetation management in Australia.

### *Project Objectives*

The project's objectives are:

- to describe the role of values in the process of policy formulation, which involves –
  - a) identifying and describing the values held by stakeholders;
  - b) mapping the process of policy formulation; and
  - c) tracing the influence of values on the structure and conduct of the policy formation process;
- to work with stakeholders to develop mechanisms for identifying and strategically managing value differences (among stakeholders) in the policy formulation process, which involves –
  - a) identifying impediments to collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders;
  - b) identifying impediments to the constructive engagement of stakeholders in the policy formulation process;
  - c) identifying impediments to the institutional change required to engage stakeholders in the policy formulation process; and
  - d) developing strategies to address these impediments that are sensitive to the value differences of those involved;

- to obtain feedback from stakeholders who participate in the study about the impact of the value clarification process, covering –
  - a) the influence of this process on their approach to other stakeholders;
  - b) their engagement in the policy formulation process; and
  - c) opportunities for appropriate institutional reform.

### *Approach and Methods*

The approach begins with a review of the literature to develop and refine a conceptual framework for identifying stakeholders' values and their impact on the policy formulation process. Interviews with stakeholders will be conducted to identify their values and elicit their experiences of the policy process. Content analysis of available documentation on the policy process will also be undertaken. The approach includes extensive consultation with stakeholders throughout the project.


### *Benefits*


The project will improve general understanding of the role of values in the formulation of vegetation management policies, providing a basis for better

management of value conflicts by institutions and stakeholders. The project will document and analyze the existing policy formulation process allowing stakeholders to develop improved processes and initiate institutional change necessary to support them. Finally, for institutions, the project will provide approaches to constructively engaging stakeholders and resolving conflicts in the policy formulation process. These benefits should lead to a greater acceptance of vegetation management policies among stakeholders, as well as more effective policies.


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