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ABSTRACT

Diversifying rural economies: Identifying factors that incentivise or discourage primary producers from engaging in emerging carbon and environmental offsetting markets in Queensland, Australia

International and national level commitments to reach carbon neutrality have led to innovative market-based instruments that incentivise industry to develop technological solutions by penalising carbon intensive industrial activities. Due to the effectiveness of linking environmental goals to market base instruments, several other environmental offsetting schemes have emerged. These have wide ranging impacts for the Australian agricultural sector and associated rural communities where the large majority of carbon credits, and biodiversity credits are sourced. The introduction of carbon and environmental markets has created the opportunity for an expansion and diversification of local, rural economies beyond a traditional agricultural base. However, there is much complexity for the agricultural sector to navigate as environmental markets intersect and compete with food and fibre livelihoods, and entrenched ideologies of rural identity and purpose. As carbon and environmental markets focussed on primary producers have expanded rapidly, there is little understanding of the situated and relational impacts of these immense changes, nor of the many factors that determine whether primary producers are/will engage in carbon farming or other environmental market activities. In this study, we aim to examine these complex tensions through qualitative research methods undertaken with primary producers, local government executives and other local stakeholders located in our case study area surrounding Stanthorpe, Queensland. These findings will provide locally relevant information that can support and inform primary producers of the many options in this sector and are likely transferrable across the State. Similarly, these results will provide empirical insights embedded in a rural community context that are useful for policy makers when reviewing and developing relevant policy and programming initiatives in this sector.

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SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY

Dr Lila Singh-Peterson

The Rural Economies Centre of Excellence team includes Dr Lila Singh-Peterson, a climate adaptation specialist whose research over the last 15 years has primarily focussed on working with rural communities to enhance resilience, food security and to understand the implications of environmental change on social and cultural traditions. Lila's research has been published in top tier journals, presented in social media, and the subject of a documentary. Predominantly, Lila's research aims to inform specific policy development settings and review processes.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Andrew Drysdale

Mr Andrew Drysdale was a primary producer in South West Queensland for 35 years before moving into community based consultation work. Andrew was the Chair of the Lake Eyre Basin Community Advisory Board, and Chair of the Rangelands Advisory Alliance prior to taking on the role of Implementation Support Coordinator with the Rural Economies Centre for Excellence.

Fynn De Daunton

Fynn De Daunton is a researcher at Rural Economies, UniSQ. She completed her Bachelors of Agricultural Science (Honours), Diploma of Global Issues and Masters of Governance and Public Policy at the University of Queensland. Her Honours thesis looked at the intersection and competition between commercial cattle production and ceremonial consumption on the island of Espiritu Santo, Vanuatu. Her current project areas are farm diversification, women on farm, climate smart agricultural production and China-Australia agricultural collaborations.

Dr Saleena Ham

Dr Saleena Ham has worked in rural and regional sector for two decades. She holds a PhD in Rural Sociology, Masters in International Studies (Peace and Conflict Resolution) and a strong foundation in research, strategic communication, project management and community engagement. Saleena is a highly experienced facilitator working in both contested and collaborative contexts.

Assoc. Prof Ben Lyons

Associate Professor Ben Lyons is the Executive Director of the Rural Economies Centre for Excellence which facilitates a five way research and translation partnership between four universities and the Queensland Government. Ben has a PhD in agricultural economics and is highly experienced in regional, rural and remote research and development, and in the international agribusiness research & development investment sector.