

Learning to manage change: Developing regional communities for a local-global millennium

Learning to manage change

Developing regional communities for
a local-global millennium



edited
Ian Falk



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Foreword

Learning to manage change: Developing regional communities for a local–global millennium is a book that illustrates the benefits of integrating different approaches to community and regional development for rural Australia. The intention is to illustrate the theoretical, practical and strategic backdrop to community and regional change. The key theme is the value of lifelong learning to community capacity building, where learning is taken as the integration of formal, non-formal and informal education and training at all levels.

The importance for rural development and sustainability in the socioeconomic context of rural decline is a contentious issue. Some argue that decline is the inevitable result of the playing out of market forces. Others, including those represented in this book, take a different view. The view is that something can—and should—be done, and that working towards a lifelong learning society is our best chance of achieving a vibrant and sustainable rural Australia. In order to achieve these goals, fundamental concerns related to re-building social trust and social capital must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

The book avoids a rhetorical exhortation to action, but instead sets out the rationale for a constructive approach to developing communities and regions using an integrated and cross-sectoral approach. From the theoretical underpinnings established early in the book, the issue of the participation of specific sectors in these processes is described. Then there is a section where practical and proven strategies, cases and examples are described from different sectors and perspectives. In all, what I hope is that the book will provide the start of a reasoned, constructive way forward for regional and community development through learning.

Learning to manage change: Developing regional communities for a local–global millennium has four parts, and 24 chapters overall. In these chapters, there is a richness of issues, background information and practical strategies related to rural communities and their development in the 21st century. The world in which rural communities are located is characterised by a nexus between a concern and valuing of local communities, and the pressure cooker forces for change and responsiveness imposed by an instantly communicating global economy.

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Preface

This book has been prepared according to standard academic book publishing procedures. The individual chapters were initially edited and screened, and were returned to the authors for amendment as required. At this stage, some chapters submitted were rejected.

After initial revisions, all chapters were sent to two independent and blind reviewers, one from the economics and social development field (Australia) and one from community and regional development (USA). Each of these reviewers commented on all chapters, their individual integrity and the overlaps and coherence of the assembled work. These comments were returned via the Editor for authorial amendment once again.

My thanks go to the independent reviewers for their time and trouble in helping shape this book into a coherent whole.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to all those who assisted in various ways with the preparation and production of this book. Many people worked behind the scenes to coordinate the chapter contributors and the flow of paperwork associated with that process. Deborah Wagner coordinated the electronic formation of the chapters. Glenda Holloway worked hard from her rural retreat on the stages of unification of style and appearance. Susan Johns and Margaret Kreft edited the chapters to their final version guided by Bron Power. Carol Cheshire from NCVET guided the process to its fruition.

Particular thanks go to the independent reviewers from Australia and the USA, who spent many hours of time and expertise assisting the book reach its final form.