

## PRESS RELEASE



### **“Reframing the climate change problem: the adaptive capacity of rural communities”**

10<sup>th</sup> August 2007

“We need to reframe our conversations about climate change away from trends in rainfall and temperature,” states Dr Rohan Nelson, a Resource Economist with CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems. Instead, we need to look “toward enhancing the adaptive capacity that already exists in your community.”

Dr Rohan Nelson is one of the many very impressive speakers at this year’s Murrumbidgee Landcare Annual Forum. Landcarers come from a broad cross-section of our communities, representing farmers, urban dwellers and people on the peri-urban boundaries of our towns. Their common goal is environmental sustainability, and their work covers a wide range of activities, including sustainable agriculture practices; revegetation of erosion damaged land; wetland reclamation and protection of endangered species. Climate change impacts upon all of our activities and for many of us, directly on our livelihoods. Dr Nelson’s presentation offers us a positive approach to this problem.

Dr Nelson will review our current scientific understanding of the risks from climate variability and change in your region. “But it isn’t necessarily helpful to focus on changes in rainfall and temperature,” argues Dr Nelson, “because there’s not much we can do to change them in the short term. A much more useful focus for agriculture and natural resource management is identifying and building our capacity to adapt to the challenges of an uncertain future. Adaptation options include changes to farm management. This can include changes in enterprise mix and off-farm sources of livelihoods.”

Dr Nelson’s presentation will show how an approach called *rural livelihoods analysis* can be used to help identify the sources of adaptive capacity in your community so that we can build on them.”

The Murrumbidgee Landcare Annual Forum, hosted by the Central Riverina Landcare Network, is to be held in Narrandera on August 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>. The Forum is open to the public and covers issues such as carbon sequestration, climate change, sustainable agriculture and endangered species which are pertinent in some way to all of us. The speakers represent a diverse range of organisations: non-government, including National Parks Association, Narrandera Landcare, Greening Australia; government, including Department of Environment and Climate Change, Department of Primary Industry and catchment management authorities; environment and community researchers from Charles Sturt University and Australian National University; private enterprise carbon traders; regenerative farmers; and CSIRO scientists.

The Annual Forum is a highlight of the landcare year in the Murrumbidgee catchment. Murrumbidgee Landcare is the umbrella organisation which represents community-based landcare throughout the catchment.

The theme of this year’s Forum is “Landcare Partnerships.” The Forum offers a significant opportunity for some of Australia’s top environmental researchers to “return their research to the community,” explains Peter Holding, Chair of Murrumbidgee Landcare. “We want to share knowledge but also encourage debate. We will be hoping on some new partnerships coming out of this program. It has something for everyone with the common goal of a sustainable future.”

**Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> – 17th August

**Venue:** Narrandera Ex-Serviceman’s Club

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Full program:

<http://www.murrumbidgeelandcare.asn.au/AnnualForum/program>

Media:

<http://www.murrumbidgeelandcare.asn.au/media>