

This email newsletter is produced by the Cooperative Venture for Capacity Building and Innovation in Rural Industries. The aim of the newsletter is to keep stakeholders and those involved in capacity building up-to-date with developments in this important program.

## BUSINESS PLAN

The Cooperative Venture has a business plan that explains its aims in detail. To read it go to website:

[www.rirdc.gov.au/capacitybuilding/businessplan.pdf](http://www.rirdc.gov.au/capacitybuilding/businessplan.pdf)

## BROCHURES

If you would like copies of a new brochure about the Cooperative Venture, contact:

Helen Goodall, RIRDC,  
phone 02 6272 4005,  
email [helen.goodall@rirdc.gov.au](mailto:helen.goodall@rirdc.gov.au)

## ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is published by the Cooperative Venture for Capacity Building and Innovation in Rural Industries.

For information or to contribute feedback or ideas for items to include in future issues contact Anne Currey, phone 02 6628 7079, email [anne@naturallyresourceful.com.au](mailto:anne@naturallyresourceful.com.au)

You will continue to receive this newsletter free of charge unless you decide to unsubscribe.

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# INTRODUCING THE COOPERATIVE VENTURE

**What is it?** The Cooperative Venture was established in 2001 by R&D corporations to enhance capacity building in rural industries in Australia.

**How will it do this?** By investing in R&D that focuses on; enhancing the understanding of learning, improving organisational arrangements to support rural human capacity building, and inspiring innovative farming practices.

**Who are its partners?** Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Australia; Grains Research and Development Corporation; Dairy Research and Development Corporation; Murray-Darling Basin Commission; Sugar Research and Development Corporation; Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation; Land & Water Australia; Meat & Livestock Australia; and Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation.

**What's unique about the CV?** The commitment of its partners to combine their resources, experiences and information to achieve the aim of enhancing capacity building in rural industries.

**What's the timeframe?** The CV has funding for 3 years (2001 – 04).

## STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Cooperative Venture is managed by a steering committee comprising representatives from the partners. The committee is as follows:

- Tony Gleeson, Synapse Consulting (Chairman)
- Roslyn Prinsley, Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation
- Steve Coats, Dairy Research and Development Corporation
- Victor Dobos, Grains Research and Development Corporation
- Tony Clancy, Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation
- Neale Price, Meat & Livestock Australia
- Craig Bradley, Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Australia
- Alice Roughley, Land & Water Australia
- Alison Reid, Murray-Darling Basin Commission
- Robert Troedson, Sugar Research and Development Corporation
- John McKenzie, John McKenzie and Associates (Program Manager and Executive Officer)

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## NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM – ADVANCE NOTICE

The Cooperative Venture is looking to hold a national symposium on capacity building in 2004.

Would you like to be included on an email mailing list to receive information?

Are you interested in being involved with the organising committee?

Have you any thoughts about the themes the symposium should be tackling or ideas for the program, topics and speakers?

Contact Anne Currey, phone 02 6628 7079, email [anne@natural-lyresourceful.com.au](mailto:anne@natural-lyresourceful.com.au)

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## GETTING RESULTS

One of the first activities of the Cooperative Venture was to decide where its funds would be best spent. As a result it identified four "key result areas", as follows:

1. What works and why
2. Fostering involvement
3. Optimising institutional arrangements
4. Support for rural educators.

Core projects for the first three areas were commissioned last year and results and information are now starting to flow from them.

# CORE PROJECTS

The **National Extension/ Education Evaluation core project** is evaluating the following:

- extension and education programs being implemented around Australia, looking at best practice as a means of sharing and learning
- how new guidelines, principles and tools will generate effective information and learning.

Already some significant principles are emerging from the project reviews completed to date. Extension and education programs are falling under three distinct models:

- The *Programmed Learning Model*, where courses/workshops have been developed and are being run to improve specific skills and understanding.
- The *Group Empowerment/Facilitation Model*, where groups are provided with assistance to prioritise and seek their own learning and information needs.
- The *Technological Development Model*, where a combination of methods are used (including farm visits) to help landholders to improve specific management practices and technologies (for example irrigation efficiency).

Projects falling within each of these models are being analysed to see 'what worked and why' and what would project leaders have done differently next time around. By looking at the commonalities emerging across projects, guidelines are being proposed to help funding agencies and project staff to best address extension and education needs in their industry or region.

For a project summary go to:

[www.rirdc.gov.au/capacitybuilding/project1summary.pdf](http://www.rirdc.gov.au/capacitybuilding/project1summary.pdf)

For information about the project, or if you know of a project that could be included in the review, you can contact project managers:

Jeff Coutts, email [couttsjr@bigpond.net.au](mailto:couttsjr@bigpond.net.au)

Kate Roberts, email [kroberts@robertsevaluation.com.au](mailto:kroberts@robertsevaluation.com.au)

The **Fostering Involvement core project** is studying factors that inhibit farmer participation in learning activities so we can develop new processes to encourage participation, extension and learning.

For a project summary go to:

[www.rirdc.gov.au/capacitybuilding/project2summary.pdf](http://www.rirdc.gov.au/capacitybuilding/project2summary.pdf)

For information about the project you can contact project manager Jenny Andrew, email [jenny@repol.net.au](mailto:jenny@repol.net.au)

The **Institutional Arrangements core project** is developing specific strategies to anticipate social, economic and technological changes that will influence the learning environment over the next 20 years. These changes have important implications for interest groups, industry and government.

As well, the current and possible institutions and organisations involved in learning and change are being mapped, enabling us to identify new options for inter organisational agricultural services.

For a project summary go to:

[www.rirdc.gov.au/capacitybuilding/project3summary.pdf](http://www.rirdc.gov.au/capacitybuilding/project3summary.pdf)

For information about the project you can contact project manager Neil Inall, email [inall@planet.net.au](mailto:inall@planet.net.au)

## CONTACTS

For more information about the CV and its activities contact:

Roslyn Prinsley, RIRDC, phone 02 6272 4033,  
email [roslyn.prinsley@rirdc.gov.au](mailto:roslyn.prinsley@rirdc.gov.au)

John McKenzie, John McKenzie and Associates, phone 0402 018 318,  
email [mckenzj@ix.net.au](mailto:mckenzj@ix.net.au)

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# CAPACITY BUILDING – A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME?

You might have heard the term capacity building referred to a lot around the traps lately. A small survey by the Cooperative Venture late last year asked respondents what their understanding of the term was, and the answers were many and varied. This raises the question of whether the people using the term have a common understanding of what it is.

The Cooperative Venture has a shorthand definition of capacity building as being

*“about increasing the abilities and resources of individuals, organisations and communities to manage change.”*

A more extensive definition related to capacity building in natural resources management was given in the National NRM Capacity Building Framework, as follows:

*“Capacity building relates to a range of activities by which individuals, groups and organisations improve their capacity to achieve sustainable NRM. Capacity in this context includes awareness, skills, knowledge, motivation, commitment and confidence. While regional bodies are the target audience for capacity building, it is equally an issue for diverse players such as landcare groups, indigenous communities, industry sectors, local government and State/Territory and Commonwealth Government agencies.*

*Capacity building for NRM goes beyond the traditional top down approach of enhancing skills and knowledge through training and the provision of technical advice. It focuses on enhancing genuine community engagement in all aspects of NRM from planning to on-ground actions. Therefore, in addition to the transfer of technology and technical capability, capacity building should foster social cohesion within communities, and build both human and social capital.”*

In the framework both human and social capital were described.

- **Human capital** refers to the capability of individuals
- **Social capital** refers to the level to which social networks, relationships and processes within a community support individuals to exercise their capabilities.

If we take out the specific references to NRM we probably have a pretty good definition.

We'd be interested in your thoughts. Is this what you understand capacity building to be?