



The Green Challenger

Official Newsletter
of the
Willunga Hillsface
Landcare Group

Willunga Hillsface Landcare Group

Working towards a healthy, vibrant and sustainable Willunga Basin

Spring 2014

Richard St Barbe Baker was an extraordinary man (1889–1982)

ABC Radio National's *Science Show* celebrated its 39th birthday (presented by Robyn Williams) by digging out an old recording made in 1979 by Barrie Oldfield from *Men of the Trees* with Richard St Barbe Baker, three years before the old man died. *The following is my edited transcript from this talk.*

Richard St Barbe Baker: ... trees worked for millions of years making it possible for men to arrive on this planet, but man, who owes his existence to trees, has been cutting and burning greedily and recklessly, he has turned the forest into desert, and we are now being faced not only with a famine in food but a famine in timber.

He is now exploiting the last best forest of the world at such a colossal pace that there won't be much left in a few years' time. At the rate things are going in Jakarta and in the Amazon they say that there will be no virgin forest left. They haven't considered what's going to happen. You are making desert conditions, and the big machinery goes into the forest to fell the trees and this heavy machinery forms a pan in the soil as the engines are ticking over, enough to reduce survival of the next generation of trees.

Barrie Oldfield: You like to get people together at big meetings to make important occasions of tree planting.

Richard St Barbe Baker: ...

Tree planting is really originally a royal prerogative. In England in the old days, only royalty were allowed to plant trees, or the lords of the

"If a man loses one-third of his skin he dies; if a tree loses one-third of its bark, it too dies. If the Earth is a 'sentient being', would it not be reasonable to expect that if it loses one-third of its trees and vegetable covering, it will also die?"

Richard St Barbe Baker

realm who were given land by the royal family. So it's really a great honour to be allowed to plant a tree. ...In Africa in 1922 the desert was coming on. I had been alerted by the fact that away to the north of the gold coast in the French sphere of influence whole tribes were dying out, trapped in a triangle of forest with a desert in front of them for 1,000 miles, desert behind for 1,000 miles. The chiefs had forbidden marriage, the women refused to bear children, racial suicide on a bigger scale than the world had ever yet seen, directly as a result of forest destruction. Something had to be done about it.

So in Kenya I started this voluntary movement known as Watu wa Miti, Men of the Trees, and

this stuck to us because we were always planting trees. And this gradually grew until tribes who were hostile between each other and used to fight each other, they came together, vying with each other to see how many trees they could plant...

We have a ritual in planting, and I believe the point of having a ritual and a ceremony, as we did the day before yesterday in Mooloolaba, I welcomed 400 schoolchildren and we planted 200 trees in a very few minutes in the rain, under ideal conditions, 200 Casuarina, with some Mexican pines and other pines that were given by the Forestry Commission for experimental purposes. I did this with these children, and I opened the ceremony by quoting those lovely lines of Lady Janet Bailey. It's called 'Laus Deo'.

We praise thee O God, that we who have no skill or power to paint or sing may yet express, by humble toil, creativeness.

Not ours to trace the loveliest flower nor translate into melody the music of a leafing tree.

But we can plant, and planting make pictures to fill a painter's soul with envy of our yokel role.

For Nature's pigments we can take, and steep them in the brooding earth so subtly that when hence they break sweet patterned loveliness has birth.

Deo Gratias, we thank thee O God.

Continued on Page 4

Editorial

Having just returned from a short holiday in Griffith, NSW, the dryness of our state was greatly emphasised. Griffith is in the Murrumbidgee irrigation area of course which has its own set of problems, but they certainly use a lot of water. There was a garden festival

on whilst we were there which included 9 gardens. We didn't see them all, but one in particular struck me because the owner flood irrigates it. How nice!

I could go on for hours about the open irrigation channels and evaporation, but it has to be remembered that things were very

different here 100 years ago when these channels were first being dug, so I'll say no more.

The future for funding our group still seems a little uncertain with the changes the Abbot government is making, but for the time being we are OK.

BRIAN

Bringing military thinking to modern issues

Major General The Honourable Michael Jeffery delivered the second in Victoria University's series of public lectures from past and present Australian Governors General. His lecture was an insightful look at modern problems from a military perspective. The following is part of the transcript.

...I entered the Royal Military College Duntroon in 1955 and since then have had the privilege of being continuously involved with the Australian Defence Force as a soldier, Governor, and Governor-General and through other associations including as Honorary Colonel of the Special Air Service Regiment and as the Patron of the United Services Institute of the ACT.

From my earliest days as a Duntroon Cadet we were taught a problem solving thought process, later common to the whole of the Australian Defence Force which provided a logic system that over the years I have found second to none. It is called the military appreciation and had its roots in the complexity and dimension of WWI.

It is a process based on setting a clear aim, followed by a thorough examination of all the factors that impact on it. Consideration of the factors then lead to a single or a number of courses of action to achieve the aim, from which the best course is chosen to then be developed into an effective operational plan.

The core of the appreciation process is to be really specific about the aim or objective to be achieved, because if that is got wrong, then there will be policy failure, with its

inevitable cost in time, treasure, and morale, and in the case of the military environment, perhaps in unnecessary casualties sustained. Thus defining the aim accurately is key to success, must always be short, singular in intent, focused and contain any constraints or limitations on it. Time and budget imperatives are often two common constraints.

It is then a matter of compiling the factors that affect or impact on the aim and ensuring that any other factors are ruthlessly discarded from further consideration as a result. It is important then to group these factors by type which might include economic, social, timing, risk, resource allocation and so on. From those grouped factors, it is then possible to establish a summary of key deductions. From that summary might flow an obvious single course of action, or there might be several alternatives. In the latter case each course should then be analysed in terms of its advantages or disadvantages, leading to a decision on the best course of action to be taken. From that is then developed an outline plan of how to actually implement the agreed course of action.

It is an immensely powerful decision making process, but it depends for success on decision makers who know their subject, are confident of their authority and don't mind being challenged by their subordinates when testing the proposed courses of action intellectually or in the case of military operational planning through war

gaming. An important part of using such a powerful tool is knowledge of, and familiarity with, the process, to the extent that when there is a time imperative, then less essential parts of the process can be forgone.

The ability to make it work depends as much on culture as it does on training, and the big question today is whether this disciplined culture can be transferred satisfactorily or engendered within a bureaucracy that can tend to focus on process, rather than good policy formulation and measurable outcomes, and where the ultimate decision makers - for example, politicians - can sometimes display disinterest in that process.

...if we look at the history of the Malayan Emergency fought between 1948 and 1960 when the British Government and the Malaysian people had to deal with a Chinese communist insurgency which had infiltrated right through the Malay Peninsula to Singapore. The situation was very serious and was only rectified through clear British Government direction to deal with that issue employing an agreed counter insurgency strategy developed by the then General Templer as High Commissioner, who had been granted emergency administrative, police and military powers. The strategy involved providing security to the largely Malayan and Indian rubber plantation workforce by housing them in protected villages, so that the terrorists after being forced out of the villages through intensive cordon and search operations, could not

regain access to them for essential food and recruiting purposes. The terrorists were thus forced into the jungle where they were either killed, surrendered, or withered on the vine through lack of logistic support. After 12 years Malaya was freed from that menace and in 1957 became an independent nation. Key to dealing with that insurgency were well-trained and disciplined police and military forces operating under the rule of law and an emergency governance system that was non-corrupt, effective and temporary. This was very much a case of the political, military and police arms of government working to the same strategic aim and policy.

...I now want to turn my attention as to how the Appreciation Process might be utilised in dealing with what I and many others see as a problem of great significance. I speak here of the impending global food/water crisis.

But first some background to the problem. Fundamentally the world has to almost double its sustainable food production by 2050 to meet a projected population increase from 7bn to perhaps 10bn, and it has to do this when the globe is losing around 1 percent of its arable land annually, where critical aquifer water supply for irrigated agriculture in China, India, Africa, and the Middle East is running out, and where most of the great rivers passing through populated areas of the developed countries in particular, are heavily polluted.

We should also note that soils are becoming less fertile through over-use of pesticides and chemicals, eroded through overgrazing and ground cover removal, and where wildfires are burning the equivalent of the continent of India every year and emitting prodigious quantities of CO₂ in the process.

I note with great sadness that today already some 27,000 children die daily from starvation whilst millions more are malnourished. The ramifications of malnourish-

Continued on Page 6

Regreen The Range Report

The Willunga Landcare Group have successfully completed another year of revegetating sections of the Willunga escarpment. Fifteen hectares were revegetated across two properties with funding from the Federal Govt's biodiversity fund and approximately 10ha was revegetated with funding from the AMLR NRM Board.

Twelve enclosures were also planted out with small shrubs and ground covers with funding from the Biodiversity fund. This brings to a total of 51 enclosures which have been planted out across the hills face over the past three years. Not all species have survived within the enclosures, due to a number of reasons, but good survival rates are being obtained and the biodiversity of the revegetated areas is being increased significantly.

The revegetation the landcare group have planted this year is going to be in for a tough year. The rainfall recorded at Sellicks in August and September this year was only 47mm compared to the average 110mm. In August we received only 19.2mm and over half of that, 9.8mm, was in one rainfall event on the 1st of August. September wasn't much better we received only 27.8 mm for the month and over half of that, 14mm fell in two rainfall events on the 1st and 4th of the month.

Apart from the lack of rain we also have had to deal with what certainly appeared to be a significant outbreak of Salvation Jane. A number of landholders, and the wider public, have commented on Salvation Jane being a lot more prolific than in recent years. It did appear to be that way from the number of properties I visited this season. Talking with people at the NRM they mentioned that there may have been 3 or 4 different pulses of germination throughout the year and this may have contributed to the number of plants seen across the hills. The rainfall pattern may have contributed to this and the rainfall patterns may also have had a negative impact on the biological controls that have been released to control Salvation Jane. On smaller properties this may have been an opportunity to undertake control of Salvation Jane as it may deplete the seed source in the soil. Controlling Salvation Jane with herbicide or slashing the plants before they have the opportunity to set seed and replenish the seed bank may help to lessen the impact of this weed in the long term. Like all persistent weeds in the landscape it is a long term prospect and a number of management processes need to be employed to remove the plant altogether. Wayne Lawrence

The Green Light Festival
Celebrating Sustainability, Environment,
Music & Art, Food stalls and guest speakers
on 15th November, 10 am to 5 pm in Willunga
Recreation Park, Aldinga Rd.

Entry by donation

Willunga Hillsface Landcare Group will have a
photographic display showcasing work they have
done and celebrating 25 years of Landcare
An Annual General Meeting will be held at 2pm for
election of officers. All welcome

Richard St Barbe Baker: an extraordinary man

Continued from Page 1

Then I got all the 400 children to repeat after me, all standing up there in the rain, 'He that planteth a tree is the servant of God, he provideth a kindness for many generations, and faces that he hath not seen shall bless him.' Good luck to your planting. Off they went to plant their trees. Those children will never forget this ceremony.

Barrie Oldfield: I'd like to take you up on a comment you made, St Barbe, yesterday about planting tree belts in order to increase the productivity of agricultural land. To me that seems to be an argument against itself. How does this work?

Richard St Barbe Baker: Well, a couple of years ago I was conducting a series of seminars at my old university of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, and farmers came from different parts of the country, and farm research people. And the following July a man by the name of Ramsden wrote to me and he said, 'Is this what you're getting at? Dr. So-and-so has shown that if you devote 22% of a quarter section, that's 160 acres, to trees, you can double the crops.' It's a question of planting trees strategically. The trees reduce the speed of the wind, modify the climate, they modify the difference in temperature from day and night, and above all the trees make it possible for the earthworms to come into the land, and the earthworm casts its own weight every 24 hours. And a well-populated acre of worms casts 30 tonnes of worm castings per acre per year. That's equal to 30 tonnes of farmyard manure on that land.

The worms go up and down in the soil, taking the compost, the leaf fall from the trees, they go down and mix it in their bodies with the mineral from perhaps 12 or 15 feet depth below, and they travel up and down every 24 hours, and they not only aerate the soil but they feed it. They feed it with humus from the bodies of the worms and they water

it, because what comes out of the worm is wet. Now, this is what you get from your shelterbelts of trees, of mixed species, including a preponderance of broad-leafed trees.

...I'm sure you could double your wheat crop in Western Australia if you dedicated 22% of the farms to shelterbelts. You could even get better results than they do in Alberta.

Barrie Oldfield: ...I'm wondering what sort of soil they have in Canada compared with ours. For instance, ours is not a clay soil at all, it's a very sandy soil. Number two, it has a very low phosphorus content, we have to add a lot of superphosphate in order to get the productivity from the land which we enjoy at the present. We are running into a problem; the superphosphate supplies are running out, we are putting nothing back on the land, we have no source of humus, as it were, to put back there. Your idea of the tree belts, I'm wondering whether we are too late, whether the tree belts, even if planted, would generate sufficient humus to create the right environment for the worms to survive. My experience, for instance, with West Australian soils is that worms are not very common...

Richard St Barbe Baker: The worm is the best farm worker. Darwin told us all there was to be known about the life history of the worm, but what he didn't teach us was how to harness the worm, and this I've been trying to do for the last 40 years, to teach people how to use the worm on their farms and in their gardens by helping them to increase the humus, aerate the soil.

On the fringe of the Sahara and in Israel where I started planting trees over 50 years ago, we put a stone or a couple of stones for every tree on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho in our plantations in the Judean hills, and if a goat knocked a stone off, the tree would die. The stone is there to

water the tree. This is what we call stone mulching or top mulching. The stone draws down the heat and draws out the moisture and will protect the worm. The worm will come up and down or worms enjoy a cool night under the stone in the moisture, and in the morning the worm goes down again. If you pick up that stone you'll see two or three worms just underneath, all in the cool and damp.

Barrie Oldfield: You recommend that if we plant trees in hostile sandy soils we should also cover the ground with stone as well.

Richard St Barbe Baker: In countries around the Sahara, ...we use the black mulch from the oil to take the place of stones. ... as soon as they are planted, Esso ...sprays the whole area. This stabilises the dunes. The black mulch draws down the heat from above, and that heat draws up the moisture from underneath, and there is no top watering at all. For years and years we've been planting trees like this on the fringes of the Sahara without any top watering...

- By some estimates, organisations St. Barbe Baker founded or assisted have been responsible for planting at least 26 trillion trees internationally.
- *Published in The Ecologist Vol. 9 No. 7, October–November 1979:* "You can gauge a country's wealth, its real wealth, by its tree cover. In spite of our beautiful parks, Britain is only 6.5 percent wooded, whilst France is 26 percent wooded, Germany 28 percent and Sweden 57 percent.
- We are almost at the bottom of the list: there is only one country worse than ourselves and that is Ireland. A country's very poor that doesn't have trees.

The full transcript is available at: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/scienceshow/richard-st-barbe-bakere28099s-environmental-fears/5706672>

Let's reap the economic benefits of local food over big farming

While Australia's national food and agriculture debate centres on boosting production and increasing exports, our local food industry is being neglected. That's a shame because countries such as the United States and Canada, which have explicitly prioritised local food, are now reaping the economic benefits.

A few weeks ago, the federal government decided to scrap the A\$1.5 million Community Food Grants program (*Actually around March 20, 2014*).

This meant that 364 community gardens, farmers' markets, food rescue organisations, community kitchens and other groups - more than 200 of whom had already been approved for grants up to A\$20,000 - were informed that the program would be wound up and no funds disbursed due to the "tight fiscal environment".

The grants were originally part of the now-defunct National Food Plan, a key Labor initiative launched in May 2013.

The food bowl myth

It has been said that a "dining boom" awaits our farmers and food manufacturers, brought about by the swelling ranks of the Asian middle classes who are demanding our agricultural commodities.

This is the thinking that informs the federal government's White Paper on Agriculture, which was calling for submissions in April.

Its primary motivation has nothing to do with "feeding the world", although that provides an ideological fig leaf. Rather, bipartisan food and agricultural policy in this country is above all about meeting corporate hunger for profit.

What is lost in this myopic drive for growth and profit are the many other dimensions and functions of our food and agricultural systems, including local food systems.

The United States: local food makes economic sense

Overseas, things are done a little differently.

For more than 20 years, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has made tens of millions of dollars available in grants and low-interest loans to the local food sector. Here are some of the results of the return on this public investment:

- The numbers of farmers' markets in the US rose from 340 in 1970 to 8144 in 2013.

- In 1997-8 there were two farm-to-school programs; now there are over 2000; and 46 states have either enacted or proposed legislation to support farm-to-school programs in their jurisdiction.

- Over 200 Food Hubs now exist across the country from under ten a few years ago, providing distribution and marketing solutions at scale for many farmers and businesses.

- Total local food sales reached US\$4.8 billion in 2008/9, with US\$1.2 billion being direct-to-consumer sales.

The USDA's own economists explain the solid economic case:

"Fruit and vegetable farms selling into local and regional markets employ 13 full-time workers per US\$1 million in revenue earned... In comparison, fruit and vegetable farms not engaged in local food sales employed three full-time workers per US\$1 million in revenue."

This translates into local food economy job-creation rates being three times higher than national and/or global food economies.

In terms of the multiplier effect, studies suggest that the percentage of money spent in local businesses that is retained in the local economy is typically more than 50%, compared with only 15-30%

of money spent in non-local businesses.

In Illinois, according to a 2009 local food report, a 20% increase in local food production will generate US\$20 billion to US\$30 billion of new economic activity, resulting in thousands of new jobs.

Applying the same logic across all Australian states (with a total combined annual spend on food of US\$158 billion, compared with US\$48 billion in Illinois) would mean that the same 20% shift to local food in Australia would lead to at least A\$50 billion of new economic activity, with consequent major job-creation and local business impacts.

Compare that figure with food imports, which in 2010 reached A\$10.6 billion, a near-tripling since 1991.

I haven't even touched on the non-economic benefits of local food: the increased consumption of fruit and vegetables, the reduced environmental impact, and the enhanced social capital.

Canada: local food and the law

It's for all these reasons that Canada is following the same path. The Local Food Act passed the Ontario Provincial legislature last year with unanimous, bipartisan support.

In Ontario, and throughout much of Canada, local food is non-contentious. Every political party supports it, as does Walmart Canada, Cisco and other multinational food service providers, hospitals, schools, chefs, farmers and local communities.

It's no longer a political issue: it's just good, common sense. As the preamble to the Act acknowledges:

"The variety of food produced, harvested and made in Ontario reflects the diversity of its people. This variety is something to be cel-

Continued on Page 7

Bringing military thinking to modern issues

Continued from Page 3

ment are, potentially, that many of these children will be impaired both mentally and physically such that they will be virtually unemployable. In India it is possible that 20% of poorly nourished children will suffer some sort of brain damage. This is an alarming statistic.

The social implications of a lack of food and water globally will also impact on world social stability and security, as indeed has already been demonstrated in the food riots in Egypt that contributed to the overthrow of President Mubarek. Indeed the President of the World Bank stated earlier this year that in five to ten years we will be fighting the food and water wars, and I think he is right...

Urgent challenge

This is perhaps the most urgent challenge facing humanity in the twenty first century. Countries that produce food will now have to produce significantly more of it. And this, in a world that will be experiencing the impacts of climate variability and increasing scarcity of natural resources such as water, soil and energy – all factors impacting on food production. Meeting this challenge will demand innovative solutions, including from Australia.

But to play our part, we have to overcome some land management issues of our own, including: an increasingly arid landscape particularly in the southern half of the continent where 60% of our arable land is degraded – much of it seriously; along with significant loss of soil organic carbon and declining soil health; erosion and excision of one million kilometres of our streams and rivers - whilst the kidneys of any river system, our wetlands have been largely drained for farming and urbanisation purposes; severe salinity, particularly in Western Australia more urban growth and larger cities that are taking up good agricultural land and act as urban

“hotspots” negatively influencing our climate, especially the small water cycle; and more erratic and unreliable rainfall, bigger floods, longer droughts and consequently more wildfires.

These are indeed very serious and complex challenges. But what I am excited about is that in Australia we have the answers. We can reverse land degradation and equip ourselves to better deal with impending challenges. It is all in how we manage the landscape, and for which as yet we do not have a simple, clearly postulated aim or “light on the hill” to quote Ben Chifley.

Ladies and gentlemen I would suggest that such an aim might go something like this: “to restore and maintain an Australian landscape that is fit for purpose”; that is fit for agriculture, for catchment, for mining, for cities, etc.

Following the logical thought or appreciation process that I have earlier outlined, the next step is to identify the key factors that have the potential to impact on the achievement of the aim, the first of which I suggest is soil, with a focus on soil carbon.

1. Healthy Soils

The carbon content of soil is one of the key indicators of its health and is a master variable that controls numerous processes.

It is the carbon content of soils that largely governs their capacity to absorb, retain and supply moisture within the soil and to sustain active plant growth. Soil carbon helps support a healthy balance of nutrients, minerals and soil microbial and fungal ecologies, improving soil fertility. Through this, healthy soils promote vigorous plant growth and plant animal resistance to disease and insect infestation. Increased soil carbon levels therefore also have the means to reduce our reliance on costly fossil fuels and other farming inputs.

However, across the Australian dry land cropping and grazing sector, it would be unusual to find

actively farmed soils with a carbon content of 1.5% or more. Indeed the State of the Environment Report of 2011 states that of 39 soil types across the country, only four have adequate carbon levels. Current rates of soil erosion by wind and water across much of Australia now greatly exceed soil formation, by a factor of hundreds, and in some cases thousands.

To most effectively deliver its myriad of benefits soil carbon levels for quality agriculture should be around 3 to 5%.

Additionally, soil acidification affects about half of Australia’s agriculturally productive soils and this is in part, attributable to current agricultural practices of excessive use of non-organic fertilizers. Acidification restricts options for land management and growing acid-sensitive crops and looms as a major constraint in Australia’s capacity to increase carbon in agricultural soils.

How we manage our agricultural land, can either accelerate or moderate such degradation.

2. Water

Water is the next key issue and soil and water use efficiency are inextricably linked.

A primary outcome of a good level of organic carbon is its ability to absorb moisture. Broadly speaking, every gram of soil carbon can help hold up to 8 grams of water and of course vice versa. A well-structured soil, high in organic matter and soil carbon thus acts as an essential sponge, improving infiltration and retention of rainfall. This retained moisture is then released slowly for plants and animals to maintain production over a much longer period.

The benefits of this are enormous, not only to maintain production but to maximize absorption in times of drought when rainfall is minimal, and in times of flood when significant rainfall can be drawn back into groundwater, rather than running overland creating inland seas.

In future, securing a safe, reliable water supply for agriculture will become a strategic determinant for communities, regions and nations worldwide and remains fundamental for our farmers to sustain production. So we must be highly efficient in capturing and using the rainfall we get.

Rainfall

So what is the current situation in respect to rainfall?

You should note that for every 100 drops of rain that fall on our landscape, only ten go into rivers and streams, two end up in dams, two fall on our roads and roofs and are largely wasted as run – off. So what happens to the remaining 86 drops that fall on the land?

Some penetrates the soil with 6 going into groundwater and 30 are used by vegetation. But the remaining 50 drops, that is a staggering 50% of Australia's rainfall is unnecessarily lost to evaporation. This is 25 times the quantity stored in all our dams every year. We must make use of rainfall where it falls and not let it be lost to excessive evaporation or flow rapidly away. And the means to achieve effective retention and efficient use of water lies substantially in healthy carbon-enriched soil.

Some innovative techniques that farmers are using to hold water in the soil longer include construction of 'leaky' weirs to slow down water flow and the repairing of eroded water courses. The soil is then better able to support vegetation regeneration and pasture growth, streams are reconnected to their natural floodplains and wetlands rehydrated, so that maximum ground cover can be better sustained over prolonged dry periods for stock use and soil protection.

My apologies for cutting this speech so much, but there was no alternative this time. The full transcript is well worth reading and is available at: <http://www.vu.edu.au/transcript/transcript-bringing-mil-litary-thinking-to-modern-issues>

National Landcare Conference

At the National Landcare Conference in Melbourne... Bob Hawke, one of the fathers of Landcare, was a special guest speaker.

Bob Hawke, former Prime Minister: The basic point that I think should underlie all our thinking is that the good people of Australia have demonstrated over 25 years the widespread commitment there is in the community to deal with these fundamental issues of protecting our environment and we mustn't do anything which is going to interfere with that commitment.



I said to business and trade unions, "You each have legitimate objectives. Business, to grow your businesses, unions, to gradually improve the wages and conditions of your members. You're much more likely to achieve those objectives if you work together." ...I used the same approach ...to the environment. I was fortunate then, having two great men to work with, the late Rick Farley and Phillip Toyne. Remarkable Australians. ...I brought them together and we formed a tripartite approach, which brought the strengths of government, the conservation movement and the farmers together and, well, we've seen the results.

Pip Courtney: Did it feel good tonight, looking out there at all those people at an organisation that's been so successful and lasted 25 years?

Bob Hawke: It was. I don't like to be boastful..., but I did feel proud that something we started 25 years ago has proved such a success.

Full speech at: <http://www.abc.net.au/landline/content/2014/s4091734.htm>

Let's reap the benefits...

Continued from Page 5

celebrated, cherished and supported. Strong local and regional food systems deliver economic benefits and build strong communities".

The Local Food Act mandates the Minister of Agriculture and Food to set goals or targets with respect to:

- Improving food literacy in respect of local food
- Encouraging increased use of local food by public sector organisations
- Increasing access to local food

The Local Food Act also creates a 25% tax credit for farmers who donate produce to local food banks, directly improving their bottom line while getting more good food to those who need it. With food relief agencies in Australia experiencing unprecedented levels of demand, this is also a major opportunity and need.

Another plank of the Canadian strategy is a dedicated Local Food Fund, worth up to C\$30 million over three years to support innovative projects that enhance the purchase of local food and contribute to economic development.

Expanding local food

In Australia, local government has begun to analyse the benefits of a bigger local food industry. Victoria's Mornington Peninsula Shire found in preliminary modelling that expanding its local food industry by 5% would bring in A\$15 million and create nearly 200 jobs.

This is an invitation to any politician or political party with the courage to expand this thinking to state and national scale. It doesn't have to be either exports or just local food: it can be both. If the US and Canada can do it, so can we.

There's never been a better time.

Author: Nicholas Rose

Research Fellow at Deakin University

<http://theconversation.com/lets-reap-the-economic-benefits-of-local-food-over-big-farming>



Willunga Hillsface Landcare Group

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Meeting dates vary, but are usually held on Mondays monthly at 5 p.m. in the Willunga Hub, cnr. St. Peters Terrace, Willunga.

All members are welcome to attend these meetings.

If you would prefer to receive your copy in PDF format (via email) please let me know at this address: 2garfy94@gmail.com.

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