A process to build transformative action in Wakool Shire, Australia

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This poster presents a burgeoning framework for transformative action that is being developed by a multidisciplinary research team, a local government council in western NSW and a regional catchment management authority. The location is Wakool Shire Council in western NSW, where a rural, resource-dependent community has just come out of a severe ten year drought. At the same time, it is facing the prospect of drastic reductions in access to their natural resource base driven by changes in societal values and government policy at broader scales. Rather than simply accept such an externally imposed transformation, the council and regional catchment management authority are working in partnership with the local community to define possible future pathways wherein the community can determine their own transformations.

To support these efforts, the research team together with community partners are developing a framework for transformative action that involves a synergistic relationship between tools and theories associated with resilience thinking (e.g. Walker & Salt, 2006), collective learning (e.g. Brown, 2008) and adaptive governance (e.g. Folke et al., 2005). We have already undertaken activities towards a resilience assessment based around participatory workshop activities, and are embarking on a planning-by-doing phase drawing on the principles and techniques associated with collective learning. Through the active collaboration of two authorities operating at different scales, we are seeing changes towards adaptive governance. It is too soon to present results from these efforts. This poster therefore depicts a theoretical proposition that we believe could nurture transformative action.