

Transcript

Station: **ABC CAPRICORNIA** Date: **16/03/2012**
 Program: **MORNINGS** Time: **08:51 AM**
 Compere: **JACQUIE MACKAY** Summary ID: **W00047912141**

Item: **DISCUSSION WITH PROFESSOR JOHN COLE ABOUT WHAT THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS WILL LOOK LIKE BEYOND THE BOOM. HE EXPLAINS THAT AT TODAY'S CONFERENCE HE WILL BE TALKING ABOUT BUILDING DIVERSITY IN THE COMMUNITY AND MAKING COMMUNITIES SUSTAINABLE INTO THE FUTURE.**

INTERVIEWEES: PROFESSOR JOHN COLE, DIRECTOR, AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS AND DEVELOPMENT.

Audience:	Male 16+	Female 16+	All people
	N/A	N/A	N/A

JACQUIE MACKAY: Now ultimately I guess the goal of this Investing in the Future conference here in Emerald is to try and provide some ideas which will result in the region staying healthy and strong. But what will the Central Highlands look like in 10 or 20 years from now? Will it be a strong community or will people have moved away because they're unable to deal with the demands and costs of this mining boom?

Now that's a question that Professor John Cole, who's the director of the Australian Centre for Sustainable Business and Development, will be putting out there. He'll be speaking this afternoon about making the Central Highlands more sustainable. He's with me now. Good morning.

PROFESSOR JOHN COLE: Good morning, Jacquie.

JACQUIE MACKAY: First of all, I guess, how do areas like the Central Highlands cope with it, what do they need to be doing to ensure that there's still great communities 20 years down the track?

PROFESSOR JOHN COLE: Well look beyond the boom is the first thing. Today I want to talk about three things, I want to remind people that booms are all about the price of the commodities we're selling at the moment, they're very popular, they're in demand, but that won't necessarily always be the case.

For a community like the Central Highlands we've got to be thinking about what are all the other ingredients that make up the place? And really the people are the most important thing.

I'm going to talk a little bit about building diversity, making sure that we keep the cornerstones of a community in place because at the moment the push is all about mining and resources and the pace of investment is overwhelming, it's overwhelming governments, it's overwhelming communities and we're trying to play catch up all the time.

The third thing I'll talk about is once we understand what a sustainable community is, and that's really about making sure that we keep that balance too between the environment, between social wellbeing and economic development. It can't just be all about economics, and that's again one of the things I'll be talking about, that communities have to put themselves in the picture. At the moment it's all about

economic process, and we're judging our future in GDP terms and using all the indices that economists might use, and really, as communities we're struggling.

Even here with rents at \$500 a week on average, you know, \$60,000 a year average pay, all the economic indices are great, but in the long term what happens when the Asian economic miracle starts to stabilise and settle down and we won't see the kind of double digit growth that we've seen over the past decade? We've already had an outstanding decade nationally of economic growth, and yet at the end of it all our governments are in debt.

And the message there too I'll be giving people is that hey we're going to have to do this largely by ourselves by being creative, by working with people like ourselves, not necessarily looking to the cities for the answers because the cities, frankly, don't understand regional Australia, and when we want to look for good models of best practice look elsewhere in the world for places like ourselves or indeed develop it right here by being creative.

Certainly leverage off the mining boom in terms of mining services, equipment manufacturing. Don't forget our farmers, I mean farmers this year will still export \$35 billion worth of commodities, and food security will be a big issue in the future because we're thinking at the moment that the Asian middle class - it's the steel intensity of the Asian economy that's driving the minerals boom, along with that, of course, they want different types of food. This part of the

world is in a good place to be providing that food, it's one of the places in future with climate change that will still get rain.

As we see the Murray Darling food bowl for example dry out more, I mean at the moment with record rains in the last two years we've tended to forget that one of the mega-trends, all those CSIRO this week just remind us, is that much of Australia will be in a drying, warming phase in the next 30 or 40 years. That presents opportunities for places like northern Australia.

So I come here today to challenge people to think about themselves differently to the way politicians in Brisbane and Canberra might want them to think. To challenge the companies and to demand more of the companies that are seeking to exploit the resources of this region. At the moment, to my view, we do not have a decent investment in the social fabric of communities by these miners, by these resource companies. They will claim that they are spending a million dollars a week on communities and RSL clubs and all the different things that you do for communities; scouts and sports clubs etcetera. That's not investing in sustainable communities.

Sustainable communities means that we've got diversity, we've got old people as well as young people, we've got families, we've got affordable housing, we've got futures that people can be confident about, we've got educational facilities, health facilities. A lot of those

things at the moment you have to leave the regions for. And that's, again, not a sustainable proposition.

My worry is that places like - places like the Central Highlands in 30 or 40 years will be failed colonies because I see this whole thing with the Australian resources boom at the moment, we people that live in the cities treat the regions as an empire, as a place to go and work.

I flew here yesterday on a plane full of people, 80 people, four women, 76 men, I was the one wearing the tie, and the rest were coming to work. They were fly in fly out, they don't live here, their families don't know even know where they work. How can those people have a real stake in the future of this place? They come to make their income, and spend it somewhere else. That doesn't benefit this part of the world.

And, you know, Bernard Salt the demographer talks about the population of Australia in the next 20 years increasing by another 10 million people, but in regional Australia we'll see all up one million increase and it runs a line from Adelaide to Cairns, basically the people are still living in the south east and the cities, they're not coming here to live and we've got to, to my mind, reverse that concept and make regional Australia the future of Australia and do it in a way that invests - we see invest but it is sustainable, that really anchors communities in the place.

JACQUIE MACKAY:

Professor John Cole it's going to be a fascinating insight that you give a little later today at the Investing in our Future conference. Thanks so much. We could talk for hours, but as the Director for the Australian Centre for Sustainable Business and Development he'll have many insights to pass on to the communities here of the Central Highlands and coalfields. Thank you very much for your time.

* * END * *

TRANSCRIPT PRODUCED BY MEDIA MONITORS

www.mediamonitors.com.au

CLIENT SERVICE CENTRE

1300 880 082

AGENCY REPORT For private research and not to be disseminated. Every effort made to ensure accuracy for the benefit of our clients but no legal responsibility is taken for errors or omissions. (*) - Indicates unknown spelling or phonetic spelling. Metro TV demographics are supplied by OzTAM, Radio and Non-Metro TV demographics are supplied by Nielsen Media Research.

ABs = Managers, administrators, professions. GBs = Grocery buyers.
