Rural stories: how embracing cultural and natural heritage can enhance tourism and sustain regional communities

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Research background:
History and ecology of Travelling Stock Routes

The NSW travelling stock routes and reserves network

Heritage – Habitat – Livelihood

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Cover photo: TSR near Coonabarabran, Milimera Judd
TSRs and other roadsides provide a vital network which link rural communities.
Many old roads and TSRs were former indigenous pathways.

Song lines, language and physical evidence of pathways, some of which passed on to early European explorers.
Indigenous pathways were often used to great advantage by early pastoralists.

Pathways linked campsites and water, so if come across, were naturally used by early stockmen.

Native guides often helped show the way.

(Harrison 2004)
The Long Paddock Touring Route
Cobb Highway NSW

Encompassing The Murray, Deniliquin, Conargo, Hay and Central Darling Regions

TheLongPaddock
Cobb Highway Touring Route
www.thelongpaddock.com.au
Sharing a regions story can help rural economies thrive

- In many regions, declining economic activity and out-migration of youth has led to the adoption of **tourism** as an alternative development strategy,

- Tourism is the worlds’ largest industry, which can lead to flow on benefits to local economies,

- The **arts, environment and cultural activities** are often targeted in the strategy process.

- However to be successful, **a vital component is the stories, and a sense of place**..
Tourism routes – the vital thread

• The concept of rural trails or heritage routes has gained increasing attention throughout the world.

• Drive market. 53 million drive holidays are taken in Australia each year (17 million for 4+ nights).

• Research by Taylor (1999) suggests that the drive market is looking to meet a local and find out the ‘real’ story of the region (Carson et al. 2002).

• Extremely important to link rural assets along a route and convey a story.
To be more effective, tourist routes should connect all the regions ‘countryside capital’

- **Tourism** should build on existing local amenities like historical sites, natural beauty, and clean air (e.g. Fredericks 1993)

- **Heritage tourism** includes cultural traditions, places, and values that groups conserve (e.g. Hardy 1988; Millar 1989)

- **Culture** includes folklore, social customs, museums, monuments, historical structures, and landmarks.

- **Cultural tourism** includes wilderness areas, landscape features, natural history and artefacts (e.g. Tassell and Tassell 1990; Prentice 1993; Garrod et al 2006).

- *Need an inventory of capital, and link to a trail with stories*
Example – use of an explorers journey to connect assets in the Lachlan valley

- John Oxley 1817
- Journeyed down the Lachlan River
- Cunningham/Evans – all 3 kept journals
- Made observations of the land, flora, fauna and indigenous people

Map: John Oxley Museum, Wellington
Present situation. Some monuments, but no linking thread
The explorers trail can highlight connections to the regions environmental assets. River features, national parks and other reserves, flora and fauna.
Trail can be used, not just as a traditional explorers story, but to highlight the regions indigenous culture.

(Wiradjuri earthen grave mound and engraved trees; Evans 1817)
Evans Vista
Wiradjuri People
The river - fish
Environment
Oxley campsite
Ben Hall bushranger
Gold and Pastoral History

Lachlan Valley Way
The benefits of understanding shared stories; the Canning Stock Route (WA).

**YIWARRA KUJU**
**THE CANNING STOCK ROUTE**

**ROXANNE ANDERSON**
CANNING STOCK ROUTE

Roxanne was born on Barridgee Station at Top Mill. She is part of a family of artists, with two brothers and four sisters who are also painters. She is an experimental artist, currently working with concepts of country in a colourful and contemporary style. Her work is sought after, attracting buyers from within Australia and overseas.
Conclusions

• Australia’s rural history is poorly known

• Old pathways (explorers) can be used to connect a region's assets

• Need to develop a good story for the trail, which embraces the region's past and present

• A journey which visitors will want to travel > means increased visitations > vital for the economy
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Relevant publications


