

ENTERPRISING RURAL COMMUNITIES STUDY TOUR
Australian Study Tour 2004
Draft Itinerary



AUSTRALIA – A SHOW CASE OF RURAL ENTERPRISE and INNOVATION

ENTERPRISING RURAL COMMUNITIES STUDY TOUR

Australia

November 6 – 21, 2004

(New Zealand option November 21 – 23)

BACKGROUND

The following is a draft itinerary for the **Enterprising Rural Communities Study Tour**. This tour itinerary has been prepared for consideration by interested communities, individuals, organizations and groups. This tour will be of value to community leaders, community and economic development professionals and individuals interested in the future of their community.

Tour objectives are to:

- **Expose participants to world class examples and case studies of innovative and creative approaches to rural community and economic development;**
- **Create for the participants a global community leadership network, and a body of information that will empower them to lead and tackle issues in their own community and region;**
- **Give participants a ‘once in a lifetime’ experience where they are left inspired and with the confidence to take action in their own communities.**
- **Create a very powerful and compelling learning experience. It will aim to get people out of their comfort zones, and to have rich and memorable experiences.**

The anticipated study group size is between 20 and 30 participants. The tour will be led by David Beurle, *Innovative Leadership Australia*.

COST

The tour cost will be **US \$3,950** per participant. This will include airfares, accommodation (based double occupancy), ground transport, most meals and other costs associated with the tour. There will be an additional cost for attending the optional New Zealand component. Participants will be responsible for travel insurance, miscellaneous costs and personal costs.

The attached proposed itinerary has been prepared by *Innovative Leadership Australia*. It is being run as a collaborative project with the ‘Community Progress Initiative’, (a joint initiative between the Heart of Wisconsin Business Alliance and the Community Foundation of South Wood County, WI). The tour is available for interested people from rural communities across the United States of America.

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[Itinerary may be subject to minor change]

ENTERPRISING RURAL COMMUNITIES STUDY TOUR

Draft Itinerary

It is strongly recommended that the tour group departs from USA and travels together to Australia. People electing to include additional travel or holidays should add these arrangements onto the end of their study tour.

Day 1 Friday 5th November

Tour group assembles and departs USA Friday late evening. This will allow people to catch connecting flights for a late night departure from LA.

Day 2 Saturday 6th November

Travel day (Note: lose time traveling over the International Date Line)

Day 3 Sunday 7th November

Arrive Melbourne, Victoria

- Check into hotel (in city);
- Rest and recover for remaining portion of the day;
- Options include sites of Melbourne, shopping for supplies etc.

Evening – tour briefing session by tour leader, David Beurle

- Tour logistics;
- Explanation of detailed tour program;
- Organizing debriefing and reporting procedures;

Informal evening tour group dinner.

Overnight in Melbourne

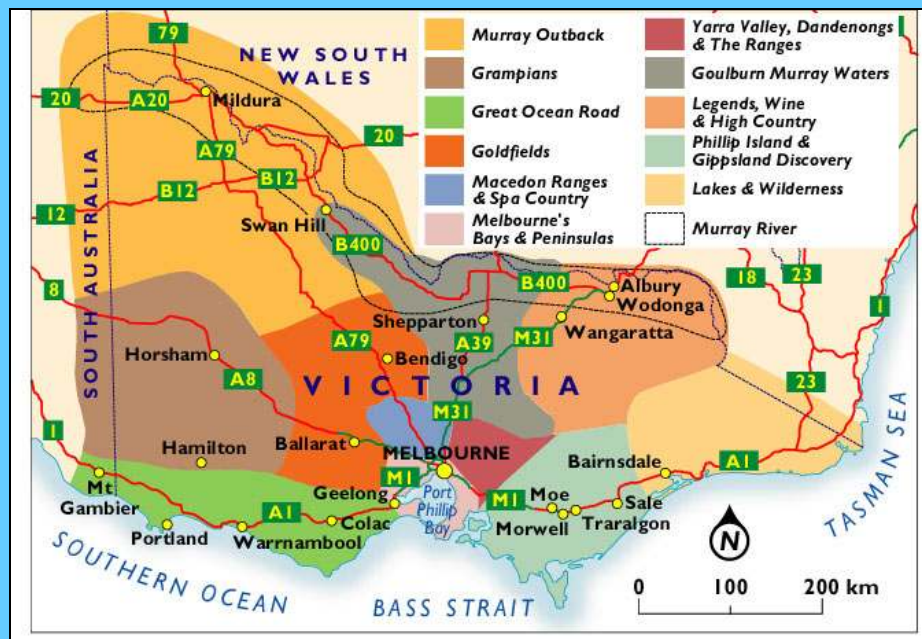


Victorian tour component

Victoria, and its capital Melbourne, are considered the cultural hub of Australia. The rural areas are typically well populated and full of heritage building and rich agricultural landscapes.

The tour group will visit the High country and Gippsland regions. In these areas, the tour group will explore case studies of:

- Innovative nature based tourism development, including trails and walks
- High value tourism, including outstanding entrepreneurial enterprises and communities
- Regional economic development models and successes



Day 4 Monday 8th November

- Depart Melbourne for the Victorian highlands. Travel through the historic Yarra Valley to the Legends, Wine and High country region of Victoria.
- Explore projects like the Murray to Mountains rail trail, where an old railway line has been turned into a successful cycling trial that links a number of towns together in a tourism network.
- Visit Beechworth. This historic town has one of the best preserved collections of buildings from the Gold Rush era. In recent years, it has undergone a revolution, with many new entrepreneurial businesses starting up and the town creating itself as a popular tourism destination.
- Study the Beechworth Bakery – a famous Australian rural enterprise. This bakery has been a driving force in the revival of Beechworth, with the owner Tom O’Toole being an inspirational entrepreneur. His vision and energy have turned this sleepy town into a showcase of rural entrepreneurship and innovation. Learn first-hand Tom’s secrets of success and how he has created a bakery that regularly draws people from hundreds of miles away, as well as being a State tourism icon!



Overnight in Beechworth

Day 5 Tuesday 9th November

- Tour the Gippsland Region, studying small town revival, and the development of local businesses and trails that have been designed around the ‘Gourmet Deli Country Trail’ and the ‘Wildlife Nature Trail’. This is an excellent case study of the creation of regional themes, and the development of high value agriculture and food industries built on the traditional agricultural base.
- Visit Phillip Island, now a major tourism destination built around a Penguin colony.

Overnight in Gippsland

Day 6 Wednesday 10th November

- Travel to Ballart and Bendigo regions to the northwest of Melbourne. Explore the development of historic town tourism, built on the historic gold rush era. This is an excellent example of a community using historical aspects to develop a thriving tourism industry.

Overnight in Bendigo

Day 7 Thursday 11th November

- Yarra Valley – explore the now famous Yarra valley which has created itself as a diverse agricultural, tourism, value added destination.
- Explore the concept of regional branding and how this works; mechanisms for community and industry co-operation and collaboration.

Overnight in the Yarra Valley

Day 8 Friday 12th November

- Morning debrief on Stage One of the tour. This will be to collect ideas, insights and information on the tour so far.
- Travel to Melbourne airport and departs around midday.
- Arrive Perth, Western Australia early afternoon
- Check into hotel.

Informal evening function, possibly including invited guests such as State leaders, Members of Parliament and community development experts.

Overnight in Perth

Day 9 Saturday 13th November

Free Day!!

- Rest and recover day
- Options include sites of Perth, shopping for supplies, visiting beaches etc.



Perth – capital city for Western Australia

Overnight in Perth

Western Australian tour component

The initial part of this itinerary covers Western Australia. This is the largest state of Australia, and with a population of 1.8 million people, it is one of the most sparsely populated regions in the world. The rural areas are typically similar to many Mid-West regions of the USA.



The tour will spend 6 days touring selected regions of Western Australia. Case studies will be explored in the following regions:

Heartlands
Great Southern
South West

These regions are uniquely different, and vary from internationally acclaimed wine regions; extensive farming and agricultural landscapes.

Rural communities across the State have found a multitude of ways to be innovative and creative in building their economy and communities.

This tour group will explore a number of communities and case studies that will be directly relevant to their own communities in the USA.

During their time in Western Australia, the tour group will have time to study outstanding examples of:

- Local community economic development
- Creating a strong regional identity and collaborative marketing
- Stimulating entrepreneurial communities
- Building community leadership and effective community structures
- Agricultural value adding and diversification
- Eco and agriculture tourism clusters and events

Tour participants will have ample opportunity to meet with local people who leading change and innovation in their towns and industries.

Day 10 Sunday 14th November

Travel to the northeast of Perth, into the famous 'Wheatbelt', a broad-scale agricultural area.

- Visit Moora – Australian Rural Community of the Year 2001.

Meet with local leaders to explore case study of how the town 'reinvented' itself and created a thriving local economy and community. This town, over the period of 4 years has turned around its economic future, created new jobs and built town spirit. There will an opportunity to study how this community has developed community leadership and an effective community decision making structure and process. During informal discussions, there will be an opportunity to explore their keys to success. Current issues include business expansion, lobbying for new medical facilities and job creation.

- Visit award winning land reclamation project that is creating new jobs and investment. Visit new high-value agricultural industries such as olive oil production.
- Travel to Wongon Hills. Tour this innovative town. New activities and projects feature major townscape revitalization project. Meet with local leaders and community innovators. Visit some local farming operations, exploring how farmers are closing the gap between producers and the marketplace.

Travel east through the extensive farming land to Wyalkatchem, Mukinbudin and then Hyden

- Day spent exploring innovative towns and enterprises as we travel east through the Western Australian wheatbelt. Towns here have to be inventive and entrepreneurial to survive. Examine case studies of how towns are building and creating their economy, retaining businesses and attracting population. In particular, visit young entrepreneurial farmers who are developing new ventures in order to stay in rural areas.
- Arrive in Hyden early evening.
- Evening session with town leaders exploring the various facets of the Hyden case study. This is one of the most entrepreneurial and innovative rural communities in the country. Discussion to be led by Jane Mouritz, local community leader and Australian Rural Entrepreneur of the Year 2002.

Overnight in Wave Rock Motel, Hyden



Wave Rock – a world famous tourism icon



Day 11 Monday 15th November

All day case study of group of wheatbelt community of Hyden. This case study will explore:

- Wave Rock - how it was marketed and promoted to become a world renowned tourism icon attracting 130,000 visitors per year.
- Development of a remote regional tourism cluster including The Tin Horse Highway.
- How local farmers have worked together to creating value added agriculture ventures such as Branded Beef and new aquaculture industries.
- Hyden Business Development Company – a community owned company that develops new business opportunities and ventures for the town;
- How towns go about creating a positive and enjoyable experience while living in remote rural communities;
- How Hyden is building local leadership and a self reliant and entrepreneurial community spirit. Includes meeting with graduates of the Rural Women in Leadership courses and other rural leadership programs.

Tour group to have evening debrief and explore key take home messages to date.

Overnight in Wave Rock Motel, Hyden

Day 12 Tuesday 16th November

Depart early and travel south to Albany, located on the coast in the Great Southern Region.

- On the way, explore the 'Tin Horse Highway' and the Kulin Bush races.



- Visit the 'Yabbie' processing facility developed by Mary Nenke. This is an inspirational venture, where Mary is creating the humble Aussie 'Yabbie' (a fresh water crustacean) as part of the top class world cuisine. The yabbies are grown by a network of nearly 300 women from across the wheatbelt, and delivered into her farm-based processing facility. From there, they are exported across the world into leading restaurants in Hong Kong, London, Paris and New York.



Yabbies being sorted for export

- Arrive in Albany

Visit the Mt Romance facility owned and run by local entrepreneur Steve Birkbeck. This company, which began as a processor and exporter of Emu Oil based products has expanded to be a world leading processor of sandalwood oil, the basis of many high value products in the cosmetics industry. Steve's processing plant on the edge of Albany now employs over 35 people and exports its products worldwide. Steve's company has won many enterprise and trade awards, including the WA Design Awards.



Albany – the centre of the Great Southern Region

- Evening meeting and meal with local producers. This will include a session with the local farmer and business based regional marketing group (including people who have been on study tours to the US). Local chefs to participate and discuss the development of a regional cuisine and its link to tourism development.

Overnight in Albany

Day 13 Wednesday 17th November

- Spend morning exploring Albany and the hinterland. This was a very depressed area until 10 years ago, when through a cornerstone investment, the town began to create itself as a major tourism destination. There has been significant townscape improvement, redevelopment of the harbor area, and the creating of world class tourism experiences. Key topics and case studies include:
 - Development of a seafood industry
 - Redevelopment of harbor area
 - Creation of a world class wine industry
 - Farmers markets and regional marketing
- Depart Albany and travel east through the coastal village of Denmark, which is developing itself as the organic food area of the state, and a niche natural tourism destination.
- Visit the 'Tree-Top Walk'. This unique facility allows people to walk on suspended walkway through the top of an impressive forest area. This is an outstanding example of creating an attraction that makes a tremendous economic impact. This facility now attracts tens of thousands of people to the south of the State and has been a major force in building an ecotourism industry in the State.



Award winning Tree-Top Walk

- Travel through the renowned Karri and Marri forests to Manjimup. This forest area has been the subject of significant controversy in the last 5 years. Logging levels have been significantly reduced in response to increasing public pressure to conserve forest resources.

- Evening session with Manjimup locals, including Shire President and community leaders (several who have been on study tours to the US). Explore local impacts on reduction of logging, and community responses.

Overnight in Manjimup



Day 14 Thursday 18th November

- Explore case study of Manjimup. Hosted by Shire President, Keith Liddelow (participated in a US study tour in 1999).
- This town is a historic timber town, and over the last 4 years much of the timber logging industry has closed down. The industry and town have worked hard to convert from a logging industry to a high value furniture industry. Several mills are now working to produce very high quality timber products. There is significant new investment, and a furniture making school has been established.
- Travel to Bridgetown; explore innovative community events aimed to boost local economy, including the Bridgetown Blues festival. Visit local entrepreneurial projects such as value-adding of fruit products, cider production facility and main-street redevelopment.
- Travel to Balingup and Nannup and explore ways communities have created unique points of difference and attraction. (e.g.: Tulip Farm and Festival, Small farms field-days, Scarecrow themes)
- Travel to Donnybrook and Collie to visit small scale manufacturing projects (e.g. fire engine building business), and town revitalization projects.
- Briefing on the regional tourism 'Tapestry' project that links town, trails, sites and events into a regional tourism cluster.

Travel to Margaret River – Overnight in Margaret River

Day 15 Friday 19th November

- Morning spent exploring and studying the world class tourism region, Margaret River. 15 years ago, this was a sleepy little dairy and beef region, but has boomed to become one of the most famous boutique winery areas of the world.

Tour participants will have the opportunity to explore local wineries and understand the benefits and issues that have come with a rapid expansion of a high value industry.

Include study of innovative local businesses and integration of agriculture into tourism.



- Return to Perth via the Forest Heritage Museum at Dwellingup.



- Evening session - debrief on tour, key take home messages and lessons. Participants to define and discuss their next step on return to communities in USA.
- Prepare draft summary points for their presentations and interviews on their returns to USA.
- **Final tour dinner and celebration.**

Overnight Perth

Day 16 Saturday 20th November

- Options to depart for the US (arrival on Sunday 21st); or other travel within Australia on way home. (Note – crossing the dateline you gain time).
- Participants selecting the option of traveling to New Zealand to attend the Martinborough Food and Wine Festival will travel to Wellington.

Day 17 Sunday 21st November

- Option of attending the famous Festival in Martinborough; a small community that has re-invented itself as a wine tourism destination location



Day 18 Monday 22nd November

- Depart for the US, or own travel arrangements.

END OF TOUR PROGRAM