The Environment Institute
in association with RDA Barossa, DPLG and PIRSA

Re-connecting agriculture with land use policy:
observations from Canada and Spain

The Environment Institute’s proposal to seek World Heritage status for agrarian landscapes around the Mt Lofty Ranges has generated interest and debate across the region. In the course of discussions with stakeholder groups, interest has emerged about how this might work in practice, and the implications for farmers. Such interest is understandable at a time when the farming community is coming to grips with proposals for “right-to-farm” legislation and special Character Preservation Districts, and while issues, such as buffering and land use conflict, seek resolution.

However, the prospect of World Heritage listing is also an opportunity for farmers and farmer groups to re-consider how they currently participate in the governance of agrarian landscapes, and the role they might play in future. An important principle of World Heritage listing is that UNESCO does not become involved in day-to-day governance arrangements: local policy-making and regulation will continue to guide decision-making about land use and environmental management in the listed areas. This gives primary producers important bargaining power because Local, State and Commonwealth governments are unlikely to proceed with an application to UNESCO if a key stakeholder group does not support the proposal. In short, this is an opportunity for farmers to think about how to put the “agriculture” into agrarian landscapes.

To stimulate discussion about the options for re-connecting agriculture with land use policy, the Institute is convening a seminar with speakers representing two very different but innovative case studies of agricultural land use policy-making.

Since the mid 1970s, the British Columbia Agricultural Land Reserve has been one of North America’s leading farmland protection projects, and credited with indirectly helping to keep Vancouver at the top international “liveable cities” lists. Strong farmer representation is evident not only in the membership of the Agricultural Land Commission and in regional panels that advise the Commission, but also in local Agricultural Advisory Committees that assist local government in policy-making and decision-making. Dave Sands spent 30 years with the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries where he was closely involved in development of MAFF’s Strengthening Farming and Edge Planning programs. In this role, he worked closely with the BC Agricultural Land Commission, which oversees the management of the BCALR and collaborates with MAFF on policy development and program delivery relating to agricultural land. Since retirement he has continued an active advocacy and advisory role in relation to planning for sustainable agriculture.
The **Baix Llobregat Agricultural Park** is part of a traditional farming district in the Llobregat River delta on the southern edge of Barcelona. Despite now being almost surrounded by urban development, it is a stable and intensively utilised farm landscape, producing fruit, vegetables and livestock almost exclusively for its neighbouring metropolitan market. The Catalonia Farmers Union played a major part in the establishment of the Park in 1998 and continues to participate actively in the multi-stakeholder consortium that supports the Park in practical ways, as well as in policy and governance. **Sonia Callau** is Head of the Agricultural Areas Unit at the **Parc Agrari del Baix Llobregat** and a member of the Technical-Scientific Committee of the **Agroterritori** Foundation; a non-profit organisation which aims to foster initiatives for preserving, developing and managing peri-urban agricultural areas in the EU region.

**WHEN:** Friday October 28, 1.45pm – 5.00pm.

**WHERE:** University of Adelaide, Waite Campus, Plant Research Centre Auditorium, 2b Hartley Grove, Urrbrae (via Gate 2 off Waite Road). It is recommended that first-time visitors to the Waite Campus print this [map](#) and arrive early to find parking.

**WHAT:** Seminar with afternoon tea

**BOOKINGS:** Thanks to sponsors* this event is **FREE** but seating is limited. Please reserve your place [here](#).

**MORE INFO:** Anne Moroney  (08) 8563 3603

Find out more about planning for agriculture in British Columbia:

http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/

http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/

http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/edge/index.htm

http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/alr/alr_main.htm

... and the Baix Llobregat Agricultural Park:

http://www.diba.cat/parcsn/parcs/plana.asp?parc=9&m=297&o=1


http://www.vlm.be/SiteCollectionDocuments/Rurality%20near%20the%20city/rnc_proceeding_callau_06.08.08.pdf

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLycxUQJQ&feature=BF&list=UL2moEEwd7y8&index=4

*This event is made possible through sponsorship of RDA Barossa, DPLG, PIRSA and the Mt Lofty Ranges World Heritage Bid Working Group, which comprises the Adelaide Hills Council, The Barossa Council, the District Council of Mt Barker, the City of Onkaparinga and the University of Adelaide’s Environment Institute. We also thank the Waite Plant Research Centre for their support in hosting the event.