



Activity 15. Salt – what if?

Aims

To develop receptivity to other perspectives and acquire an understanding of the systemic nature of the world.

Materials required

- Role cards
- Chart with scenario (below) written up or on handouts or blackboard
- Students may wish to present using a variety of media such as posters, photographs and charts.

Scenario

A farm in the middle of a catchment has a salinity problem. There are farmers upstream and down who are yet to discover any salinity. There are the typical problems on the farm of trees dying, loss of farming potential, water logged ground and salty bore water. The local town relies on farm produce and on farmers spending their money in the town. Town people rely on work on the local farms. People in the not-too-far away large city also rely on the farm products. The Landcare or Waterwatch facilitator has called a meeting for these people to attend to discuss the salinity problem.

Roles

- *Farmer with salt problem* - You have lost land to salt, reduced land for crops and stock. The water from your bores is salty.
- *Farmer upstream* - No salt yet; lots of cleared farming land.
- *Farm downstream* - No salt yet.
- *Animals, domestic and native, on farm* – Loss of habitat, feed and water
- *Stock hand* – From the small town; may lose job if land is not able to be farmed; no other qualifications
- *Shopkeeper* – May lose trade from farmer, stockhands and others in community if farms lost productivity.

- *Local government councillor* – has to help solve problems with limited funds.
- *Social worker/religious minister* – Have to respond to increasing number of people in crisis
- *Consumer in large city* – has to pay more for items to come from farther away
- *Landcare facilitator* – Helps community decide what they are to do, if anything.

Procedure

1. Students choose a role individually, or preferably in pairs or small groups and discuss their roles.
2. Then all come together for the meeting to discuss the following:
 - What should the farmer with the salt problem do, if anything?
 - What is the role of others?

The Landcare/Waterwatch facilitator (possibly the teacher, especially for younger students) needs to run the meeting ensuring all groups have an opportunity to speak and to encourage ideas being built on other ideas. The facilitator should not influence the group decisions directly by voicing his/her opinion but by questioning and drawing out ideas.

The areas which should be considered by each role taker involve:

- Income for food, shelter and clothing
- Implications of loss of income and how this affects individuals, local community, nation and globe
- Source of funds for implementation of correction measure or changed farming techniques

Individuals changing their work practices and how they can get help or training in doing this.