

Bio Note: Dr Greg Walsh

Greg is Chairman of Champions of the Bush, a small but influential group of businesses based in regional Australia. He is also Chairman of SED Consulting, a regionally-based network of over 50 consultants who advise regional businesses, communities and governments.

Greg has devoted much of his professional life to the food industry and to the environmental and institutional factors that influence the production of food in regional economies, particularly in Australia.

He lives in Warrnambool, a coastal city in the Western Victorian region of Australia, where he is involved in the dairy, livestock and baking industries. In addition to wide ranging consulting work in these industries over the past twenty five years, he has also been heavily involved in farming as a part owner of three large dairy farms in South West Victoria. The relationship between food production, climate change, the rural economy, and public policy has long been of practical and theoretical interest to Greg.

In addition to his involvement in consulting and farming, Greg is also a director of VLE Pty.Ltd., a company that builds and operates livestock marketing facilities in the Gippsland area of Australia. He is also a Director of HEC Foods Pty Ltd, a small research and development company in the food ingredients sector, with a particular focus on regional foods.

Greg's published research includes a chapter on "The regional economy of the Australian food industry" for Regional Foods, a book published in 2005 by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation. In October 2003, Greg presented a paper on the relationship between Regional Foods and Provincial Economies to an international meeting at Hangzhou in China sponsored by the Zhejiang Association of Science and Technology, the International Union of Nutritional Science, the World Health Organisation and FAO. The paper was later published in the Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition. (APJCN 2004, Vol 13, No 2).

In August 2009, he was invited to speak at an international meeting of food and health specialists in Taiwan concerned with the emerging global food crisis. The meeting was sponsored by the Australian Academy of Science, Academia Sinica, the National Health Research Institute and the Taiwan Council of Agriculture.

As a regional economist, Greg has completed over 100 major consulting assignments for a wide range of industry and public sector bodies connected to the food industry in Australia. These have included large food processing companies such as Nestle

(Australia), and corporatized public sector bodies in the food industry such as the Melbourne Market Authority. In 1987, Greg's Victorian Small Towns Study (conducted in conjunction with Henshall Hanson for the Victorian Minister for Agriculture, Evan Walker) won a Royal Australian Planning Institute Award.

Institutional reform in food producing regional areas of Australia has been a particular focus of Greg's career. In 1992, he was appointed by the Victorian Government as the inaugural Chairman of Southern Rural Water, a new corporatised irrigation authority established in place of the Rural Water Commission. SRW assumed responsibility for the harvesting and distributing irrigation water to farms from eight major storages located across Western Victoria and Gippsland. Nine years later in 2001, he voluntarily stood down from the Board of SRW. Over this period Southern Rural Water achieved: financial viability and self sufficiency, significant upgrades of water infrastructure, improved customer services through the introduction of new pricing practices and water trading, and the introduction of bulk water entitlement schemes to protect river and stream flows.

From 1994 to 1997 Greg played a key role in what Professor Brian Galligan from Melbourne University in Australia has described as "the most sweeping local government reforms ever made". Greg was the Victorian Treasurer's nominee on the Local Government Board of Review that redrew local government boundaries amalgamating 202 small councils into 75 large ones in this period. He has chaired an intergovernmental commission of inquiry into the establishment of cross border councils in Australia, with a particular focus on Albury Wodonga. As a consultant to the New South Wales Government he has played a significant role in shaping the current boundaries of Sydney City Council and other inner city councils in NSW.

Greg has a PH.D from Monash University where he once lectured and an MA and BA (Hons) from Latrobe University.