

PROCEEDINGS OF THE AUSTRALIAN RANGELAND SOCIETY

19th BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

Official publication of The Australian Rangeland Society

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Form of Reference

The reference for this article should be in this general form:

Author family name, initials (year). Title. In: Proceedings of the 19th Australian Rangeland Society Biennial Conference. Pages. (Australian Rangeland Society: Australia).

For example:

Bastin, G., Sparrow, A., Scarth, P., Gill, T., Barnetson, J. and Staben, G. (2015). Are we there yet? Tracking state and change in Australia's rangelands. In: 'Innovation in the Rangelands. Proceedings of the 18th Australian Rangeland Society Biennial Conference, Alice Springs'. (Ed. M.H. Friedel) 5 pages. (Australian Rangeland Society: Parkside, SA).

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The Australian Rangeland Society

Transition to Transformation

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‘Transformation’ is a powerful and even frightening term. Yet we live in a world full of pressures for change. Rangelands globally, and in Australia, have been homes to long-lived stable cultures, at the same time as experiencing major past changes, so these can be reconciled. Today, rangelands in lower income countries tend to be facing challenges from increasing populations, climate change and conflict. By contrast, in high income countries like Australia, the mirror tends to be decreasing populations, climate change and political disinterest. Both are underpinned by failures of governance, usually due to limited understanding in those governing from afar.

Our conceptualisation of change has also evolved in recent decades – once it asked how to return to some supposed past stable state; then it evolved to asking how change to some new, but stable, state; now at least we are starting to embrace issues that arise when you start to accept the reality of on-going change.

In this, narratives – the stories we tell ourselves, implicitly or explicitly, about our lives and our opportunities – are deeply important. What is the positive narrative of the Australian rangelands that can help us navigate an ever-changing future?