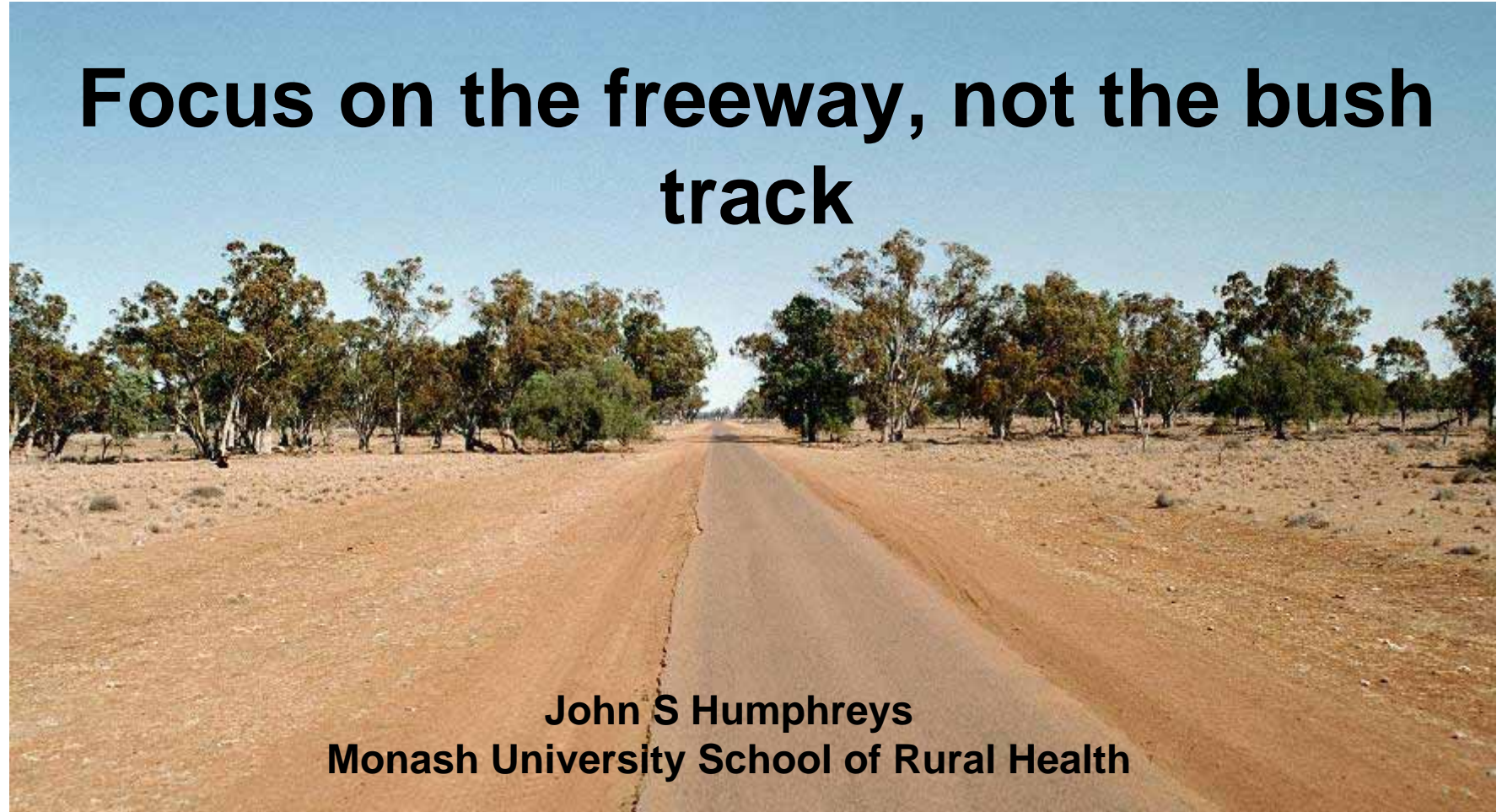


**“Building bridges ... Crossing borders”  
The National SARRAH Conference 2006**

# **Focus on the freeway, not the bush track**

A photograph of a long, straight road stretching into the distance, flanked by dry, scrubby vegetation under a clear blue sky. The road is a mix of asphalt and dirt, and the surrounding landscape is arid with sparse trees and bushes.

**John S Humphreys  
Monash University School of Rural Health**

# “Building bridges ... Crossing borders”

**Recruitment and retention of suitably trained health professionals are the key to quality health services in rural Australia.**



# “Building bridges ... Crossing borders”

Why would any qualified allied health professional want to live and work in rural and remote Australia?



# “Building bridges ... Crossing borders”

**Why are not more allied health graduates queuing up for rural and remote practice?**



# Getting the roads in place

## Government initiatives

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- **Specific rural initiatives**
- **Education and training programs**
- **Inter-professional education and workforce substitution**

# What is happening in rural and remote destinations to which these roads lead?



# The determining forces

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- **The economic impact of globalisation on rural communities**
- **Social aspects of human behaviour**
- **Community images**
- **Policy initiatives versus market forces**

# Amenity-led rural revival or a bleak economic picture?

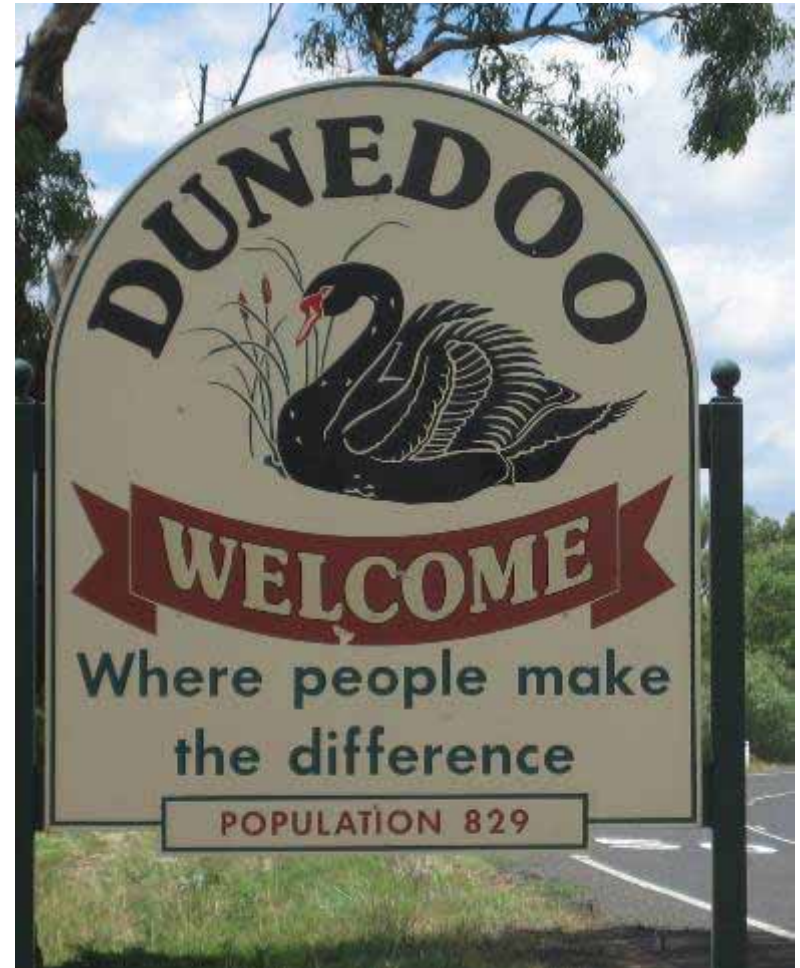
- **‘Sea change’**



- **Population loss**
- **Poorer well-being**
- **Lacking infrastructure**
- **Risk for private capital**
- **Rural resignation**

# What would make you more satisfied with your life?

- 66% - more time with family and friends
- 56% - less stress in life
- 47% - making a difference in the community



# Our role in directing the ship

- Nothing ever happens!
- You can't change the system!
- That's Canberra's fault!
- It's all too big!
- It's too hard!



# The importance of values

**“Can people please stop whingeing about high petrol prices, expensive bananas, interest rate rises, banks that make obscene profits and soaring executive salaries? It’s the free market, people. You voted for it”**

(The Age, 11 August, 2006)



# The need for a collective response

**“The impetus for change will not come from our leaders, but from ordinary people ... Change will come about from choices, individually taken as citizens and consumers, parents and professionals, which reflect a collective will to think and do things differently”**



# Looking beyond the local level



“The idea of nice, safe, friendly communities, detached from the social and economic realities that surround them, is both a delusion and a time bomb”

# What more can we do?

- **Determine the vision for rural Australia**
- **Active involvement in determining policies and programs**
- **Broaden the education and experience of graduates**
- **Broadcast exemplars**



# Be the champion!

The principal reason for the lack of adequate and equitable access to the health-care system, irrespective of where, is the political environment in which it is embedded.



# Thank you

