

## **Rural studies study group sponsored session**

### **Rural Adaptation under Conditions of Uncertainty**

**Convener: Tony Sorensen (University of New England)**

Rural Australia is operating under conditions of systemic shock. Several overlapping and occasionally intersecting change processes have the capacity to modify rural production systems at a pace and intensity rarely seen over the last 50 years:

- Wild swings in currency values;
- Galloping competition between mining, agriculture, leisure and recreation and alternate energy sectors;
- Burgeoning environmental regulation – land clearing, water availability and pricing, ecosystem management, CO2 emissions trading, etc;
- Climate changes under way (evidence in exceptional drought / deluge events?);
- The China, India (and SE Asia) factor in shifting demand for ag commodities;
- The massive R & D effort in the farm sector and its implications for what is produced where;
- Accelerating corporatisation of farming (increasingly large and integrated scale of operations);
- On-going decline in the number of people on the land;
- And so on.

This session will ask authors to dust off their ‘crystal balls’ and think about the implications of these events separately and collectively for Australia’s rural regions.