



Enabling communities & governments
to live with change

CORe Identity

for when managing water
is about managing people

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Context

Project undertaken '04-'07: Translating conjunctive ('one resource') water management from concept to practice in the mature irrigation systems of the Murray-Darling Basin.

Method: action research based on 3 cycles

1. Conjunctive use: quantitative effort to ascertain how farmers match soil type with water source/quality, with crop.
2. Conjunctive water management*: qualitative effort to look at realisation of local cooperative management of groundwater and surface water
3. International review of findings (Australia, Europe, USA)

'One resource management'

Requires people to centralise resource trade-offs and cooperate across publicly & privately owned infrastructure.

Mukherji and Shah (2005): socio-economics is an important factor in GW management (which relies on cooperative management across fully decentralised private infrastructure)

Zafirovski et. al. (1997): socio-economics is about understanding the impacts of social values on economic

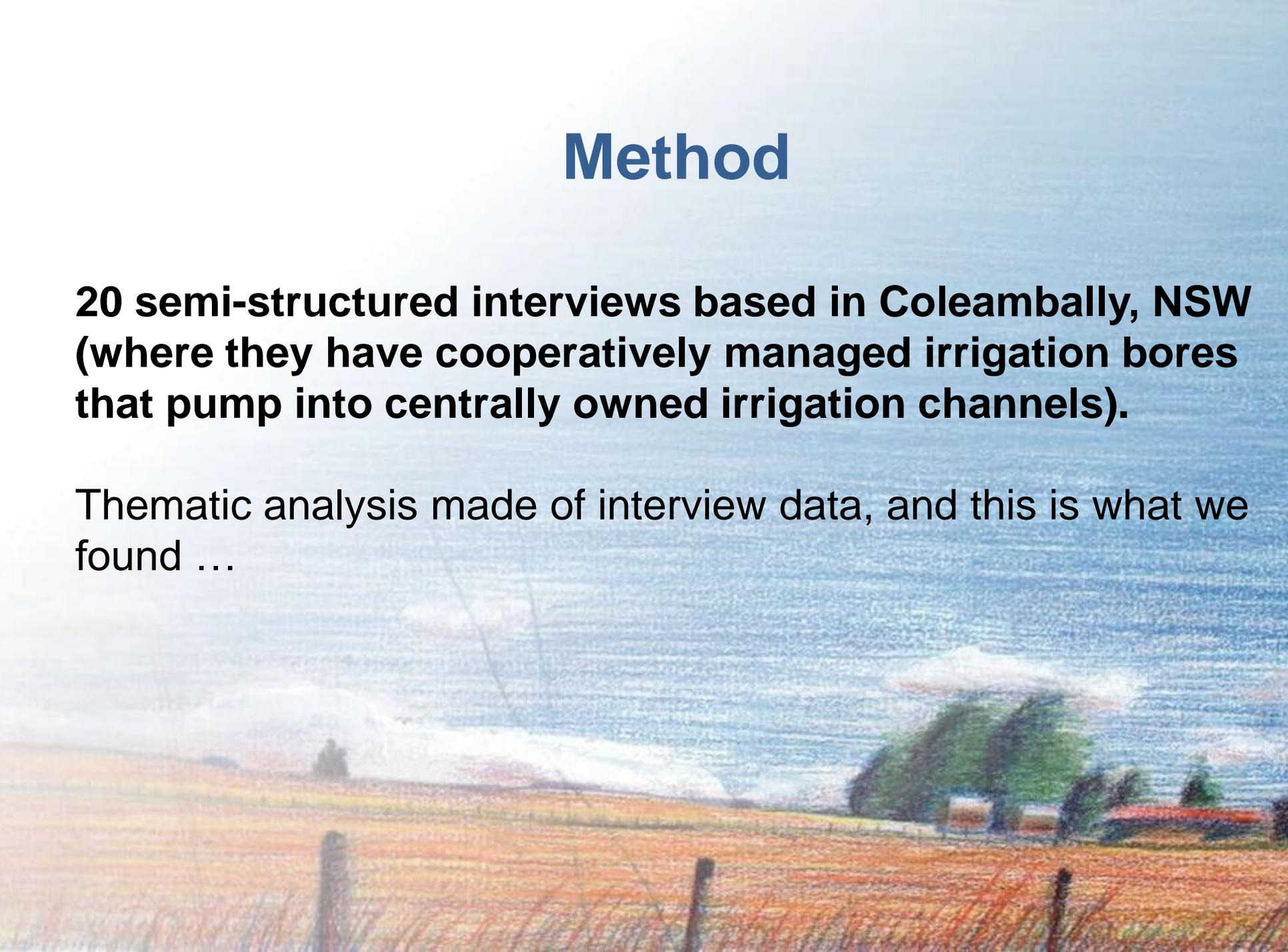
So: use social methods, make no assumptions



Method

20 semi-structured interviews based in Coleambally, NSW (where they have cooperatively managed irrigation bores that pump into centrally owned irrigation channels).

Thematic analysis made of interview data, and this is what we found ...



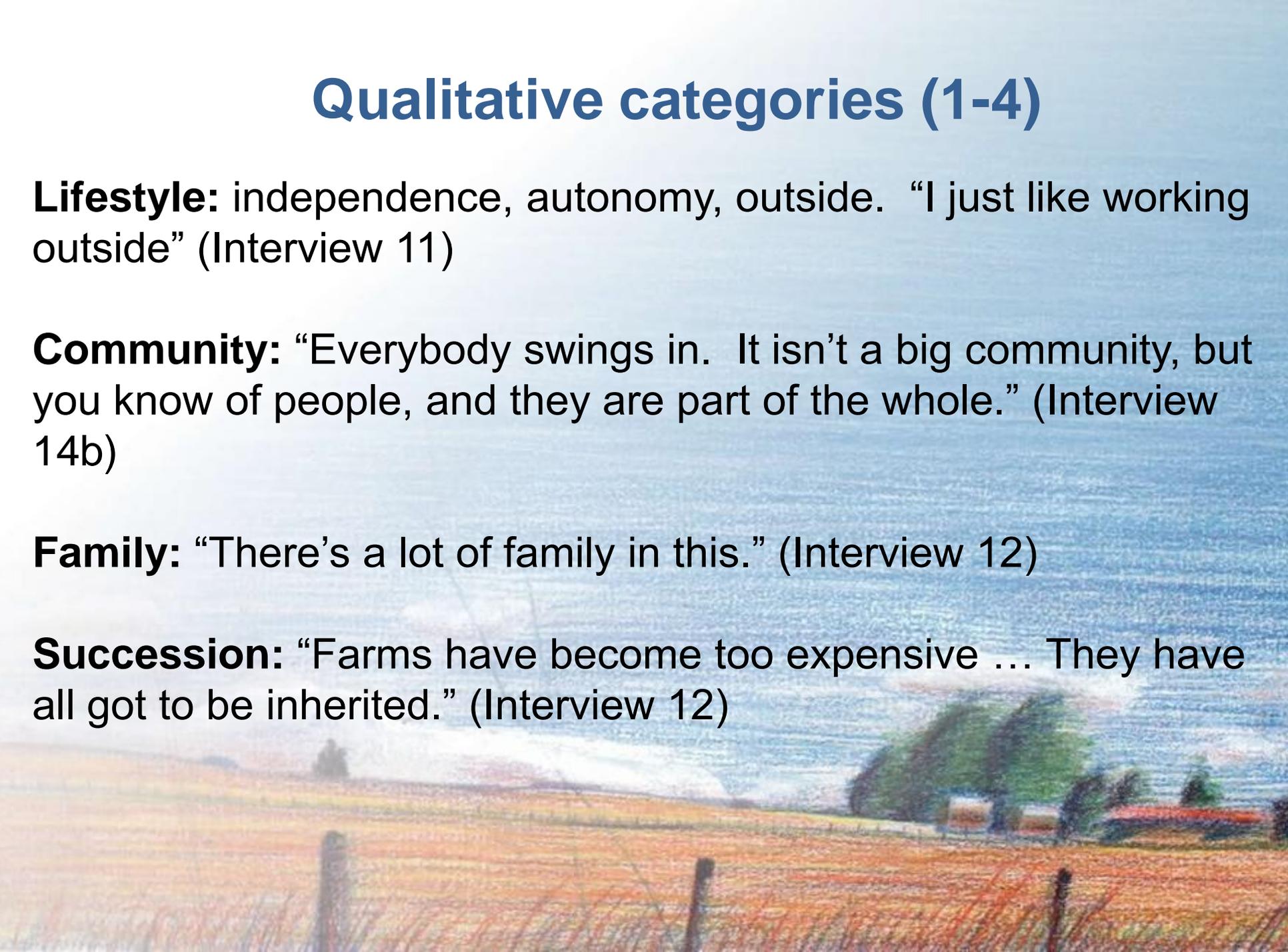
Qualitative categories (1-4)

Lifestyle: independence, autonomy, outside. “I just like working outside” (Interview 11)

Community: “Everybody swings in. It isn’t a big community, but you know of people, and they are part of the whole.” (Interview 14b)

Family: “There’s a lot of family in this.” (Interview 12)

Succession: “Farms have become too expensive ... They have all got to be inherited.” (Interview 12)



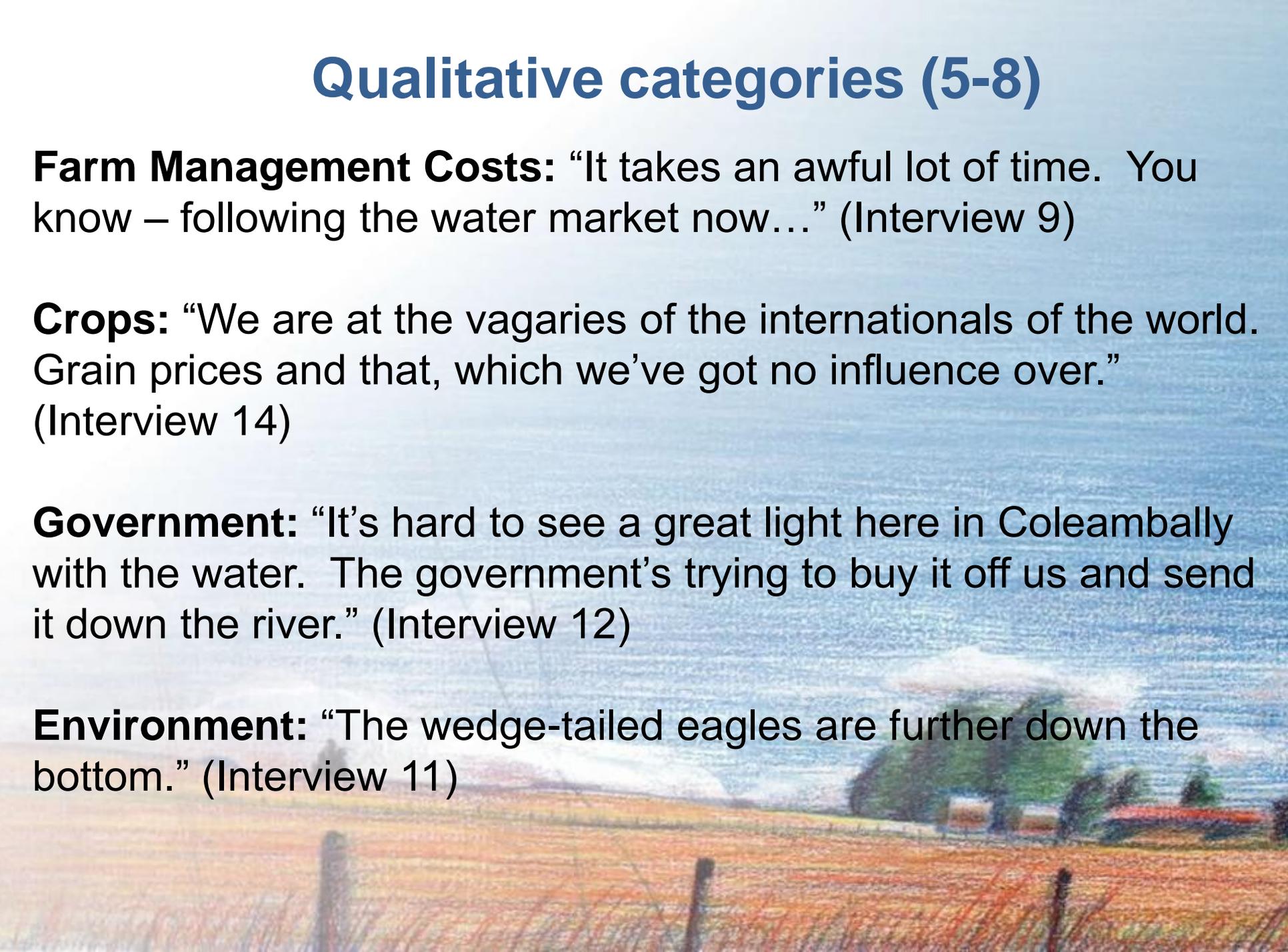
Qualitative categories (5-8)

Farm Management Costs: “It takes an awful lot of time. You know – following the water market now...” (Interview 9)

Crops: “We are at the vagaries of the internationals of the world. Grain prices and that, which we’ve got no influence over.” (Interview 14)

Government: “It’s hard to see a great light here in Coleambally with the water. The government’s trying to buy it off us and send it down the river.” (Interview 12)

Environment: “The wedge-tailed eagles are further down the bottom.” (Interview 11)



Qualitative categories (9-12)

Innovation: "...they are a very versatile people who live here ... they'll switch like that, you know. And I have great faith in the area for that reason."

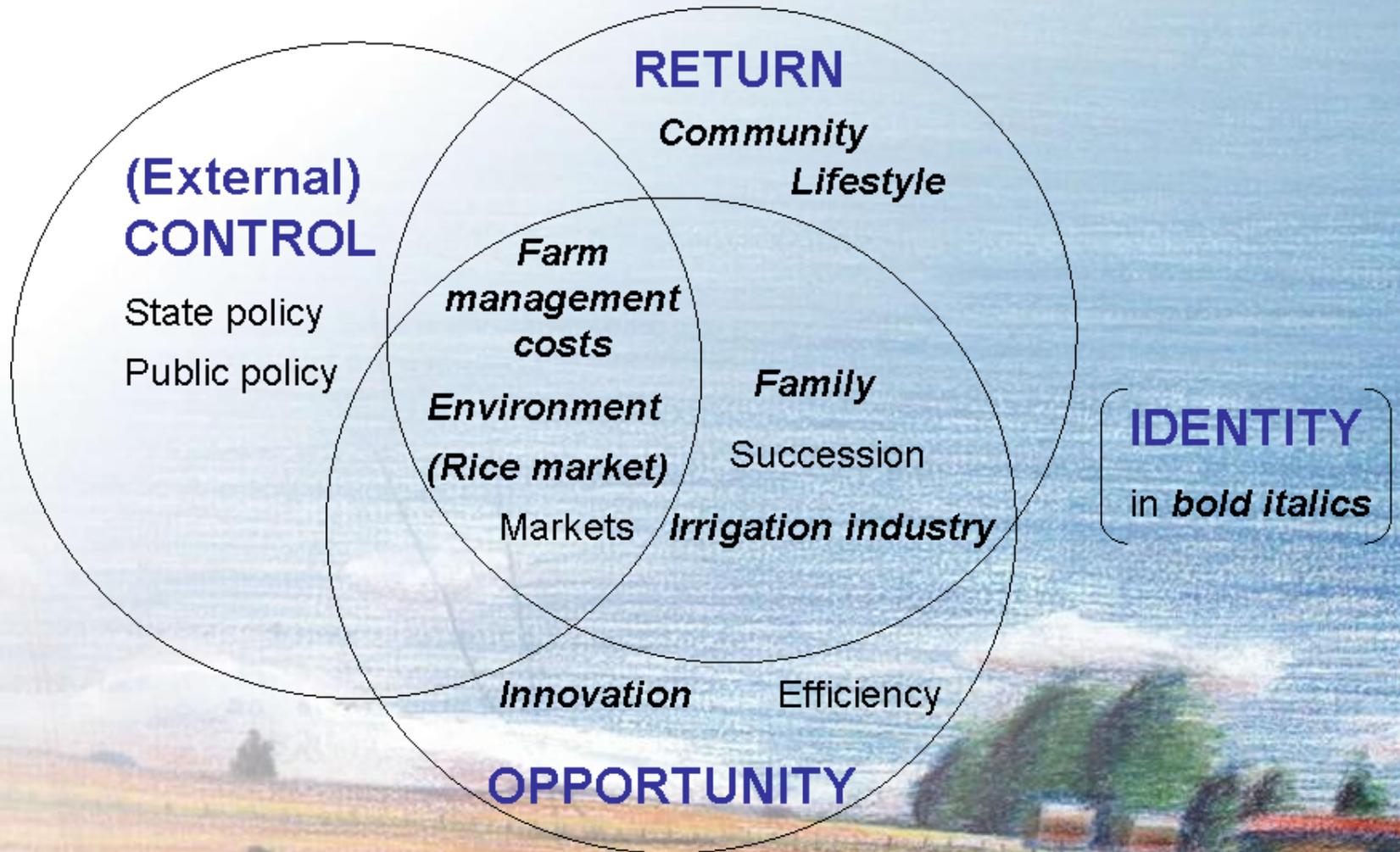
(Interview 16)

Efficiency: "...you need two farms to have an income ... either buy another farm and get bigger, or get out." (Interview 13). "(People) said I shouldn't have bought this farm because they didn't want people leaving." (Interview 12)

Irrigation: "... you would need nearly a half a million dollars behind you to make a start." (Interview 2). "I'm glad we're in irrigation." (Interview 10)

Public Policy: "I think we are slowly getting divorced from the city and coming back to this "battered farmers' syndrome", and the farmers are coming under pressure all the time, particularly with this water." (Interview 9)

CORe Identity

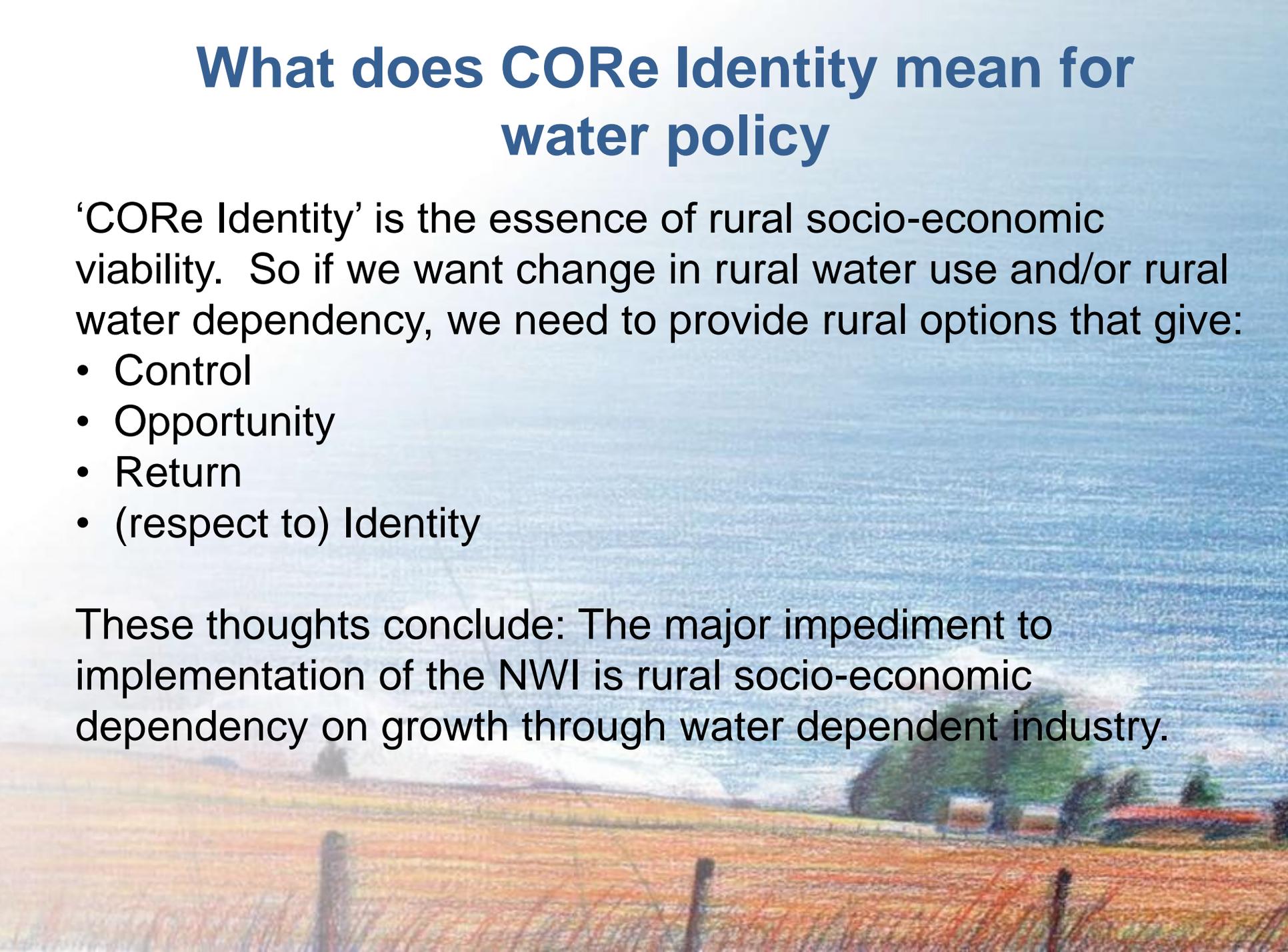


What does CORe Identity mean for water policy

‘CORe Identity’ is the essence of rural socio-economic viability. So if we want change in rural water use and/or rural water dependency, we need to provide rural options that give:

- Control
- Opportunity
- Return
- (respect to) Identity

These thoughts conclude: The major impediment to implementation of the NWI is rural socio-economic dependency on growth through water dependent industry.



Problem

Almost by definition, water management programs are structured to support reinvestment in water-dependent activities

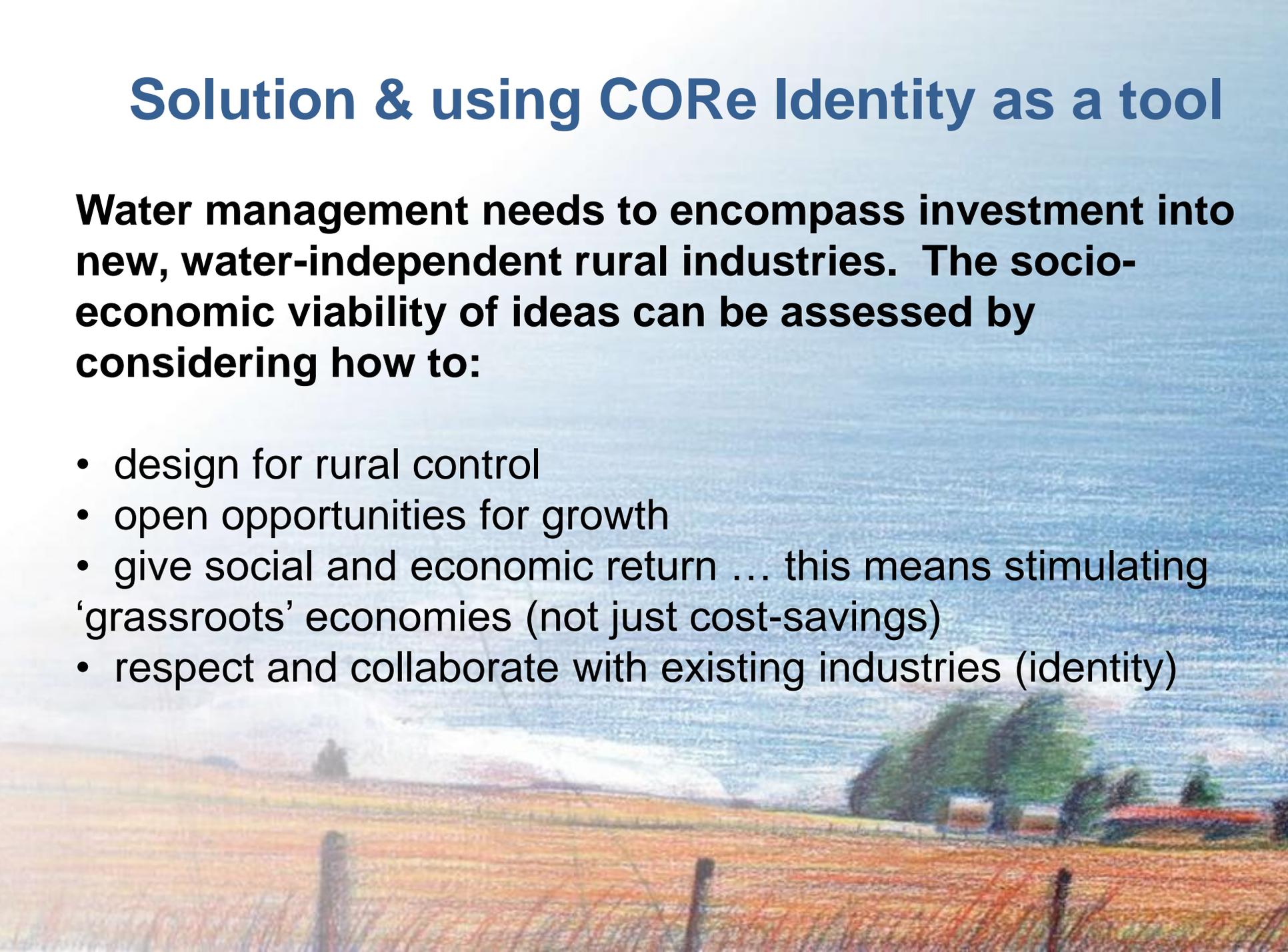
Rural water management efforts are all about supply management (security that will support existing industry) not demand management (development of alternative avenues for rural growth)

This is politically safe ... but it does not promote change and has a high risk of very expensive stranded assets.

Solution & using CORe Identity as a tool

Water management needs to encompass investment into new, water-independent rural industries. The socio-economic viability of ideas can be assessed by considering how to:

- design for rural control
- open opportunities for growth
- give social and economic return ... this means stimulating 'grassroots' economies (not just cost-savings)
- respect and collaborate with existing industries (identity)





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Australia is our country, our climate, our water, our food, our people. Finding futures and weathering change are about sharing our control, opportunity, return and identity.

Thank you

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