Conclusion

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The National Party, a political party that explicitly represents rural interests, experienced vastly different results on different sides of Australia in a single weekend of September 2008. In a by-election for the northern NSW federal electorate of Lyne, a seat formerly held by the National Party leader and Deputy Prime Minister, Mark Vaile, an independent candidate, himself a former National Party member, won the seat. In attempting to explain the reasons for this result, Senator Barnaby Joyce, a federal National Party MP, refused to entertain the possibility that a 'rural vote', one that explicitly recognised agrarian values, had diminished. Joyce maintained that the National Party vote was extremely strong, there were still lots of National Party voters, but the 'wrong net' (*Radio National Breakfast*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 8 September 2008.) was being cast to try to catch them.

In Western Australia, on the same day, a quite different result emerged. There, the National Party had five of its candidates elected to each house of parliament, thereby holding the balance of power between the two major parties. Each of the major parties had no choice but to negotiate with the Nationals so as to be able to form minority government. In these negotiations, the National Party eventually sided with the Liberal Party, on the condition that the National Party's promise to deliver 'royalties to the regions' was honoured. This policy proposal sought to reallocate funds accruing to the state government from mining royalties to regional health, infrastructure and community needs.

What can such different results tell us, with the same political party experiencing such different outcomes? Obviously, they tell us that the agendas of mainstream political parties have a weak hold in regional Australia. What they also tell us is that expressions of 'countrymindedness' (Aitkin 1985) are a political, counter-state reflex and one to which the National Party does not have exclusive rights. It is clearly much easier for the National Party to occupy this counter-state ground when it is not in coalition with the Liberal Party, a party that either forms government or is the major opposition.

The contributors to this volume have asked: what are the relationships between rural communities and policy? Where and what are these rural communities, these 'regions', which there is a moral struggle to legitimately represent? How would a rural political will be realised? What are the 'policy effects', intended and unintended, of state efforts to define roles for rural areas and people and to pursue economic and environmental goals in rural locales?

In terms of efforts to realise a rural political will, let us first take the example of Stefano Di Pieri, from Mildura on the Murray River. Di Pieri achieved some profile through his role in an ABC television program that promoted the Mildura region's cuisine and the relationship between its agriculture, tourism and social life. Di Pieri runs a successful restaurant and food business in a revamped Mildura hotel. Having formerly been an advisor to the Victorian Labor Government, Di Pieri, in 2006, ran for the Victorian upper house as an independent. Unlike other politicians, Di Pieri claimed that rural towns and farms in the Sunraysia region—his region—did face inevitable decline and he opposed sustaining them indefinitely. He did, however, propose concrete policy solutions: farmers in the marginal mallee regions would inevitably leave their farms and this departure would bring new 'settlers' into small, ailing rural centres. This increase in population would help revive these towns and a great deal of local human and other resources would be dedicated to 'managing' these ex-farming lands, which would be given over to environmental purposes. In effect, Di Pieri sketched out a concrete rural scenario, in which the productivist values of agriculture were not paramount. This sketch of a rural future came from the region.

Aitkin (1972) has explored the question of what the National Party stands for in great depth. Aitkin (1985) identified country-mindedness as the central political value of the National Party, the very thing that the party was organised around. Aitkin (1985:35) clearly identified country-mindedness as an ideology, as a

> system of values and ideas that among other things presents a more or less extensive picture of the good society, and of the policies and programmes necessary to achieve it; distinguishes goodies from baddies; accounts for the historical experience of a group; and appears as 'truth' to that group while being at least plausible to outsiders. Ideologies, unlike philosophies, obtain their force very much from social experience; they cannot be proved wrong, partly because they are sufficiently elastic to accommodate awkward facts.

The empirical basis of such an ideology, argues Aitkin, can be found in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A growing primary sector, the basis of Australian economic booms, underpinned the development of a country-minded ethos. The crucial aspects of country-mindedness were, in equal parts, a distrust of urban and foreign outsiders and a mutual respect between graziers and farmers across different regions. Monopolistic commodity buyers allowed farmers and graziers to easily identify 'baddies' and to feel affinity with fellow growers. Railways and communications, in which Australian governments invested heavily, enhanced the possibility for political communities whose shared interests were based in the social experience of farming and grazing.

These conditions that have been the basis of country-mindedness have, Aitkin contends, been in retreat since the 1870s. The proportion of the population that is non-urban has steadily declined, farming numbers have fallen and technology has collapsed the spatial and cultural distances that formerly separated country and city. Aitkin (1985:40) thinks that country-mindedness is finished as an ideology, 'even though its institutional and administrative arrangements will continue indefinitely'. These institutional and administrative arrangements mean, presumably, political parties, community organisations and lobby groups. The foundation of organised rural politics—larger rural populations, farmers and graziers beholden to single buyers and country people prohibitively distanced from cities—has collapsed, as has the ideology that framed these empirical events in cultural terms.

If country-mindedness exists in remnant form only at administrative and institutional levels, what has taken its place? Is there a rural ideology that is dominant, a set of ideas and values that appears as 'truth' to that group while being at least plausible to outsiders (Aitkin 1985:35)? If country-mindedness has been uncoupled from the empirical conditions that gave rise to it initially, then what relationships between rural communities, rural land use and political organisation are being reconfigured?

The 'uncoupling' thesis, in its simplest form, posits that rural towns are disconnecting from the trajectories of major agricultural industries (Stayner and Reeve 1990; Rural Profile 1990; Campbell and Phillips 1993). Instead, the prosperity of rural towns is enmeshed with other economic activities (Campbell and Phillips 1993:47). Political parties rarely speak about this uncoupling of the rural from the agricultural. Moreover, 're-coupling', or the processes by which rural communities become wedded to the activities of non-agricultural industries, is seldom a topic of political debate. What also need clear specification are the different 'ruralisms' that are undergoing such transitions. In the introduction to this volume, we referred to the recognised ambiguity and variability of this term. In attempting to understand change, it is of little value to collapse all non-metropolitan regions into a category of ruralism that posits an equal distribution of resources, development opportunities and social capital.

The space opened up by this uncoupling of the agricultural from the rural is the ground that contributors to this volume are exploring. Clearly, there has been no complete de-coupling of agriculture from ruralism. Rather, agriculture's position in relation to the rural space and communities is more contested, qualified and partial.

Modalities of change

This volume has documented different modalities of change in rural Australia, New Zealand and Europe. We have been concerned with rural transitions at the

community level, whether these be within rural communities (Peace, Stehlik) themselves, or in the political contest for values over the 'rural' (Botterill, Morris, J. Gray). Let us briefly review tensions and dimensions that authors have identified in the processes of rural transformation in the settings they have considered.

John Gray identified the constant pressure on policymakers in the European Union to ensure the viability of rural areas through changing policy schemes, demonstrating the gradual broadening of what he called a 'policy effect'. Gray's chapter charts a shift from agriculture as the 'primary vehicle' for the construction of European communal space and presents a view of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) as a 'history' of the concept of rurality as it moves through various forms. The CAP was concerned to underscore the importance of rural areas not only as primarily agricultural regions, but as bearers of national identity. It also sought to ensure that goals of national food self-sufficiency were achieved. Another distinct phase of 'policy effect' becomes visible in the struggles to balance social equity and economic efficiency concerns: the focus of value in the operation of the CAP shifts from material production per se to the question of the economic viability of farming ventures that often tend towards overproduction. Lastly, there emerges an emphasis on forms of rurality no longer grounded in agrarian production but in a diversity of activities and spaces that have value as alternatives to urban forms of life. These transitions that Gray describes are accompanied and partly prompted by new forms of representation at the bureaucratic level. These new definitions of rural land use emphasise regional diversification and can involve the break up of larger landholdings into areas that are evaluated in terms of their potential for agriculture and for other activities. This uncoupling of agriculture and rurality creates a space in which diversification of activities can figure more prominently. In Europe, such diversification can take place because bureaucratic categories for such changes exist and many European regions have strong and effective traditions of local and regional government.

Gray indicates that the relationship between social and economic activities on farms on the one hand, and government actions to define, direct and support particular modes of economic production on the other, is a dialectical one, and thus is a relationship that requires constant 'adjustment'. What Gray also underlines is that the economic goals that initially drove the CAP—ensuring a food supply, guaranteeing affordable prices for European consumers and maintaining a social equity among farmers so as to achieve these two goals—have been superseded by more diverse and less measurable goals. Not only does ruralism, in the eyes of the European Union, comprise 'heterogeneous activities and types of spaces' (Gray this volume), its importance now involves environmental preservation and recreational amenity for urban populations,

with each of these goals being defined as critical to the benefit of society as a whole.

Importantly, the history of the efforts to sponsor or legislate for the survival of rural communities within nations, and national rural sectors within the European Union, has its background in the evolution of distinct regions into nation-states and in the integration of the nation-states into the European Union. While local and regional political legacies are very strong in some parts of Europe, they are much less so in Australia and New Zealand. The rural economies of Australia and New Zealand that came to dominate indigenous societies were never closely wedded to the political power that was located in colonial capitals, and later, national, state and provincial governments. There is little tradition of effective regional governance in Australia (Gray and Lawrence 2001); unlike Europe, governance has been fomented from the outside in or from the top down.

Ian Gray's paper is an assessment of the legacy of this situation in Australia: he sees the nation as characterised by its administrative centrism and, correspondingly, rural administrative dependency. His examination of this dependency through several key forms of rural infrastructure reveals a disparity between the enthusiasm of farmers to acquire Graincorp, which they can envision as the capture of a government function, with the low levels of their real ownership of it; the difficulty farmers have in reimagining water management in localist and regionalist terms; and the lack of preparedness to engage in local ownership and management of railway systems. This leads him to the crux of the political potential generated in such a situation: there is no local government to which governmental functions might suitably devolve. At the same time, there is popular sentiment for rural regionalism. This can be the overt message of such vehicles of ruralism as the National Party, but with no realistic possibility of regional control and institutionalisation of government functions.

A memorable feature of Botterill's chapter is her argument that agrarianism, or country-mindedness (Aitkin 1985), is a value that has so thoroughly permeated Australian thinking that its existence and effects often go unrecognised. Now, in the often-painful struggles over rural viability and various forms of the uncoupling of agrarian activity from rural spaces—especially at a small, familial scale—agrarian sentiment and representation resurface. This is often epitomised by prime ministerial appearances in those troubled rural areas in an Akubra hat and R. M. Williams bush clothing. While this is taken as a 'natural' expression of government inclination, Botterill brings us to see this deep-seated country-mindedness as something that contributes to a lack of critical scrutiny of rural problems and prospects. It could contribute to supporting a continuously agonised process of uncoupling, which, on the other hand, has been driven for nearly three decades now by the ideological vehicle of neo-liberalisation.

Adrian Peace's chapter has given us the means to critically understand an often staged scenario. The non-viability of rural spaces deemed 'marginal' from an agrarian perspective makes them the object of projects of biodiversification and conservation, with their familiar modalities of national parks and wilderness areas. In Peace's case, biodiversification explicitly involves the issue of 'return' of a natural species and the practice of reversing the extinction and disappearance of species. In the Yorke Peninsula of South Australia, however, which is Peace's ethnographic focus, agrarian activity continues and his chapter shows the tensions that arise in the effort to merge the goals of different land uses. The superior institutional power of government proponents of biodiversity, compared with local farmers, results in what he calls 'rituals' of consultation. These consultations are rituals that are performed, but without genuine hearing or acceptance of the forms of local knowledge earned through lives of farming activity.

We can, however, neither merely point to the need for ethnographic research to better understand the nature of rural transitions nor uncritically champion the perspectives of long-term locals. While the immediate experience of rural populations and communities is crucial in understanding the nature of transitions and competing perspectives and interests, there must be a critical understanding of the framework of competing interests that converge in contests for legitimate identification with ruralism.

Carolyn Morris's chapter foregrounds a theme that also is relevant to the situation that Peace describes, but which is not his focus. Her chapter pivots on the anthropological theme of the mutual constitution of people and place. She discusses legal forms of land tenure in New Zealand grazing regions that, aside from defining and allowing particular land uses, are integral to the production of personal subjectivities. The topography and the pioneer history of the New Zealand high country have produced a form of agrarian activity in which farmers have been able to see themselves, and to be seen by others, as pioneers occupying a cultural position that dominates the lower valleys. The high country is home to a distinctive form of activity and those who live in and work this country are thus seen as stewards of lands that have been crucial to New Zealand imaginings of self, place and nation. In recent times, the high country has been admitted to prevailing processes of rural market liberalisation. This has meant the valuation of lands to determine their potential conversion to freehold or to conservation estate. Through this process, some high country graziers have come to regard themselves as business operators. Many others have had their morally sanctioned position as stewards of the high country challenged by conservationists, tourism operators and other non-agricultural actors. Morris reports a sense among high country graziers and others that liberalisation undercuts the kinds of personal and national imaginings fundamental to New Zealand.

Lesley Hunt's chapter also focuses on mutual constitution of people and place in New Zealand, but in other circumstances. She writes of ageing baby boomers, many of them former farmers, opting in their later years to become orchardists of kiwifruit. She examines differing kinds of relationships that these farmers establish between themselves and their orchards. She shows that the choices they make are based not only on economic calculations, but are, very importantly, oriented to creating continuity in their lives between their earlier, and usually more intensive, careers and those they adopt towards retirement. Hunt argues that the resulting diversity of farming modes is an important source of rural sustainability. This chapter might lead us to ask how consistent is later 'lifestyle' occupational choice among ageing baby boomers with other economic and aesthetic choices that have accompanied the trajectory of this large demographic cohort. It might also lead us to ask, more broadly, how this sort of development compares and contrasts in its implications for rural areas with early retirement schemes that have been used in some places (for Europe, see Shucksmith et. al. 2005) to achieve social and structural objectives.

Related to this, Daniela Stehlik's chapter takes up what has been a longstanding issue in rural sociology: the challenge posed by an ageing rural population. Her research on the rural farming populations of the Great Southern region of Western Australia takes as its original focus the problem of the transfer of social capital and knowledge at an intergenerational level. Now, as ever, this raises questions about the future demographic trajectory of rural areas. The pivotal sociological feature of her chapter is the proposal that we model various kinds of resources and relationships—including non-land goods, dimensions of information, social membership and position—within a more diversified framework that can better explore the challenges of intergenerational transfer as they will relate to rural areas.

Lyons and Scrinis, finally, emphasise how much technological change of relevance to rural production goes under the regulatory radar. Practically, their argument concerns the need for a present and forward-looking regulatory framework capable of dealing with the challenges of nanotechnology. Their chapter also, however, raises the wider anthropological question of the relationship of the public to scientific innovation—and here there is a growing literature on the range of orientations to biotechnology. In a New Zealand-based study, Fairweather et al. (2007) consider a range of ethical public positions and also the importance of 'post-materialist' values, as they relate to the practice of biotechnology and the prospect of nanotechnology. Fairweather et al. (2007) conclude that biotechnological applications in agriculture and food technology are perceived to be risky and the benefits of such applications are seen as flowing to commercial interests, not to individuals or communities. Importantly, though, Fairweather et al. (2007:17) stress that evaluations of the benefits and risks of scientific applications to agriculture and food are made in a context in which

'technological optimism' has diminished and the dominance of productivist agricultural values is in retreat. The social evaluation of risk, costs and benefits takes place alongside the evaluation of claims of productivist agriculture. What, then, could be an effective modality in the management and oversight of rural technological activities? Given the ubiquitous character of nanotechnological applications—in spheres of production and consumption—how can the regulation of its operation be fixed in place? Given the high level of technical expertise and political cooperation already demanded by the advent of genetically modified crops in Australia, we would foresee that one or more regulatory bodies would be created to manage nanotechnological developments. This would be another step along the path of administrative centrism to which Gray sees rural communities as subject. Lyons and Scrinis invite research on what policy structures can best fill the roles created by such novel developments.

These contributions illustrate that rural space and people who reside in rural areas are being progressively integrated with economic, cultural and social influences that are larger, more diverse and often contradictory. Or, to put it another way, at a societal level, more is being asked of rural spaces and people than ever before. The role of primary production that has been assigned to country areas has declined in terms of political priority, yet the food, fibre and fuel needs around which rural economies are organised are arguably greater now than in the period that Aitkin (1985) identifies as the high point of country-mindedness in Australia: 1925–60.

Technology and rural transitions

In Australian and New Zealand contexts, the colonisation and development of rural regions have been achieved through the interplay of international commodity trade, emerging provincial and national governments and evolving agricultural technologies. It is these factors that, with varying degrees of success and failure, have dominated the indigenous societies and ecological conditions found in Australia and New Zealand.

It would be easy to focus on the role of the technological hardware and the introduced 'livestock' of agricultural practices: the ploughing, reaping and clearing technologies, the successes of farm animal breeding and the transplantation of foreign crop varieties. A host of other technologies, however, has been crucial in determining the course of rural development in Australia. The specific planning practices of governments, such as land selection legislation, government credit schemes, sponsored rural migration programs such as soldier settlement programs and other specific features of land tenure (Meinig 1962) all underwrote particular patterns of rural life. More recently, efforts to engage indigenous people and interests in conservation and management constitute new and complex areas of activity linked to specific histories of policy and practice in Australia and New Zealand (see, for example, for Australia: Yibarbuk et al.

2001; Bowman et al. 2004; Reid et al. 2004; for New Zealand: Todd et al. 1997; Gibbs 2005).

Historical and political research has helped to contextualise the role of infrastructure in promoting and shaping the character of the colonisation of rural lands in Australia and New Zealand. Railways, roads, ports, distribution networks, bulk handling and storage facilities and telecommunications have all been contextualised in wider patterns of urban and rural development (Wade-Marshall 1988; Eversole and Martin 2005; Denoon 1983; Williams 1974). This need for economic infrastructure is a constant refrain in the lobbying efforts of agricultural and resource industries and in the promises or complaints of governments. Removal of so-called 'capacity constraints' is put forward as crucial to the enhancement of export prospects in a competitive trading environment.

At a less visible level, though, are technologies that cut deep into agricultural practices. The application of fertilisers and pesticides in cropping and horticulture and the development and use of selected or cloned seed and plant varieties all potentially bring a new level of biotechnological dependence to agriculture. The patenting of biotechnologies and the willingness of patent-holders to enforce the rights associated with patenting ensure that agriculture's dependence on biotechnologies is grounded in a strong commercial imperative. Regulating the rights and interests in the agricultural sector has proved a significant challenge for governments and has sparked much controversy among rural communities. Regulation of the nano-level, where the objects of regulation are so deeply enmeshed in so many facets of production, distribution and consumption, is a challenge for which there is simply no precedent.

It would be too easy to focus on the specifically economic aspects of technology at the expense of an examination of the social and cultural possibilities and constraints that are afforded to rural communities through infrastructure such as telecommunications. Currently, there is a big emphasis on telecommunications (Commonwealth of Australia 2008); broadband and telephony services to regional and rural areas are seen as key factors not just in the productivity of rural-based industries, but in their potential social and cultural composition. Aitkin (2007) argues that broadband services would enable more people to operate businesses that have a wide geographical reach while residing in rural areas. With such business practices enabled by broadband technology, the very composition of a rural community would be less dependent on the industries traditionally associated with rural areas: agriculture, mining and associated service industries. Equally, in parts of Europe, for instance, this technological decoupling allows people to live outside urban areas and still perform jobs typically associated with urban living. In this way, the knowledge economy facilitated by telecommunications makes redundant not only the rural–agricultural nexus, but the knowledge economy–urban nexus also. This 'double de-coupling', with

the cultural impacts it brings to rural communities, is an unprecedented phenomenon.

There is now a technological ability to financialise almost all rural/agricultural phenomena, to make land and its produce assets that can be the object of speculation and other forms of financial investment. Importantly, this is relevant not merely for agricultural products, such as the futures trading of agricultural commodities, but is something that is happening in the emerging post-carbon economy, in which ruralism has been assigned a big role. For instance, forestry plantations run by managed investment schemes, aided by generous tax concessions, have become sponges for large amounts of financial capital. There are many examples of this being a big, direct challenge to the operation of other rural enterprises (Hobson 2004; Herbohn and Harrison 2004).

Policy and rural transitions

Schusky (1989) noted the phenomenon that he dubbed the 'neo-caloric revolution': the massive increase in the economic productivity of farms and the massive increase in agricultural energy expenditure that these productive regimes demanded. In Australia, the unsustainability of such a system is heralded by the Garnaut report (2008). This report seeks to cost the externalities of an economy, in particular carbon, and reduce these carbon emissions by various schemes. This signals a determined effort to mitigate the damage of climate change and shift to a 'low-carbon economy'—one in which the production and trade of goods and services are not as heavily dependent on fossil fuels. Such a transition poses a huge set of social, technical and policy challenges, which will undoubtedly be particularly felt in rural areas, since they are host to energy-dependent primary industries and are dependent on fuel-intensive transport infrastructure. Equally important is the prospect of rural spaces being increasingly dedicated to host projects and activities that 'offset' or reverse the adverse ecological impacts wrought by carbon emissions. We have already seen much evidence of the difficulties of accommodating these competing economic agendas within rural spaces (Schirmer and Tonts 2002; Ajani 2007). Bio-sequestration of carbon is a role that Garnaut suggests Australia is well equipped to play, and he designates rural Australia as the physical space where this could happen. At the very least, this would require significant new physical infrastructure in rural Australia, acquisition of land and the importation of a high degree of technical skill to rural areas. How might these developments be hosted in a way that allows rural communities to have a stake in the new economy (see, for example, Grubb and Neuhoff 2006)?

The Salzburg Conference (2003) organised by the European Union identified three broad policy objectives in relation to the rural sector. There was consensus on the need to work towards:

- a competitive farming sector
- managing the land for future generations
- a living countryside (including promotion of its sustainability and its diversification).

The proposal is to continue to improve the competitiveness of farming and forestry; to place emphasis on land management and environmental concerns; and to support improvements in quality of life in ways that recognise the need for and the reality of livelihood diversification. Other European perspectives propose variant phrasings of fundamental priorities linking agriculture with a shift to a wider framework of sustainable development, including food security, employment and income generation, environmental and natural resource conservation and popular participation (for example, van Mansvelt and Mulder 1993). Shucksmith et al. (2005:200) propose that even more encouragement should be given to diversification and that there is a great need to integrate policies at local, regional and national levels (p. 202). It must be noted that local structures are much stronger and more functional in some parts of Europe than others, but also that there is an evident polarisation between core areas and peripheries. The European Union is committed to a policy of balanced territorial development, which also spells commitment to considerable planning and management, and certainly something other than neo-liberal self-adjustment in rural areas.

While Australia and New Zealand remain overtly committed to neo-liberal policy (Peck and Tickell 2002; Larner 2003; Harvey 2005), recent events have showed some departures from this, in the sense that government interventions have been significant. In the introduction to this volume, one signal example was mentioned: the announcement in 2007 of $10 billion, subsequently increased to $12.9 billion, for a national water plan, the aims of which included reform of irrigation and water allocation in the troubled Murray-Darling river system of south-eastern Australia (<http://www.environment.gov.au/water/mdb/index.html>). A sum of $3.9 billion has been earmarked to purchase water entitlements from willing sellers in order to try to restore some of the rivers' flow. As a second example, numerous local and federal government initiatives have been announced to reward farmers and others for biodiversity and native vegetation conservation. Third, food and other exporters are able to apply to an Australian Government scheme called Export Market Development Grants (EMDG), which provides financial and other assistance supporting development for export of a wide range of industry sectors and products. These and other 'departures' suggest that measures not consistent with neo-liberal ideals of minimal state intervention in markets are adopted where it is felt to be politically strategic and necessary. They also raise fundamental questions concerning a neo-liberal agenda as an adequate overarching framework in the face of the large

issues Australia will necessarily face in the immediate and longer term, including national resource management, population distribution, sustainability, climate change and the fostering of social and technological responses to these issues.

Le Heron and Roche (1997) apply an institutional building thesis (derived from Buttel 1997 and Redclift 1997) to the transformation of New Zealand agriculture since the 1950s. They outline the major transitions of New Zealand agriculture: first, the withdrawal of interventionist state structures from the agriculture sector; second, the 're-regulation' of agricultural sectors; and third, the paradoxical result—a proliferation of industry and region-specific governance arrangements. They chart the shift in responsibility for sustainable land use to individual landholders. The very commitment to individual responsibility, though, is unachievable without state regulation of particular regimes, including property rights, export controls and safety standards. Successful re-regulation of the agricultural industries, then, is dependent on a high degree of knowledge and empowerment among decision makers (Perry et al. 1997). Le Heron and Roche (1997) point to the need for social institutions that can meet community and commercial imperatives and the need to re-examine any singular adherence to market mechanisms in the social management of rural spaces.

It seems, in short, that although Australia and New Zealand took a bold pioneering position in initiating national neo-liberalisation projects with respect to the governance of rural areas in the 1980s, European states, in contrast, remained much more interventionist at various levels in practice and in overtly retaining a wide spectrum of policy concerns. At the same time, they have also had to participate in the reanimation of state-building projects in neo-liberal terms in the past two decades (Peck and Tickell 2002). Now that sustainability and climate change have become dominant agenda items of governance everywhere, it remains to be seen how neo-liberal regulatory methods focusing on marketisation and commoditisation can be implemented in relation to them. It seems ever more doubtful that the usual tools of the neo-liberal tool kit can be an adequate basis of coordinated approaches to the range of issues involved. The examples given above from Australia have shown the regularity and the extent of departures in practice from that position.

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