Royce Sample

Thesis topic
The role of regional experience in shaping environmental policy in Victoria

Summary
Royce’s Masters research project explored the extent that adaptive management (implementing policies as experiments with active learning feedback loops) is a desirable method of dealing with natural resource management (NRM) issues at a regional scale, and the extent that policy learning (accruing lessons in a positive and proactive way) is occurring through regional NRM programs. The research used a case study of Operation Blue Hills (OBH) – a 1992 regional Victorian pest plant program – which had incorporated adaptive management principles and marked a distinct departure from previous weed control programs. Using interviews, document review and personal experience, Royce concluded that OBH had implemented adaptive management and had a major influence on subsequent Victorian pest plant programs and policy. Lessons from this experience included that leadership in a position of authority with political support may be necessary for adaptive management to thrive and that NRM agency training in monitoring and adaptive management is required. It is also necessary to respond the constraints of short term funding and high staff turnover.