

## SEGRA Conference 2009

Joe Ripepi

### Presenter's Profile

Joe Ripepi commenced part time studies at Curtin University of Technology in 1998, and over this period, has obtained post graduate qualifications in management, business and policy. In 2003, Joe was awarded a Master of Policy Sciences degree by the University.

Since 2004, Joe has been employed as a policy and research officer in the State public service and prior to that time, had a long standing career in local government. These factors contributed significantly to Joe undertaking this PhD research project involving customer perceptions of essential functions and services delivery in selected rural communities in WA.

In today's presentation, Joe is seeking to take particular elements of his research to date, to outline some of the issues for these rural communities arising from the devolution of responsibility for essential functions and services delivery from a traditional government context to that of a deregulated, highly competitive, market based framework.

### Abstract

#### **Leveraging on population mobility to generate local solutions to community needs and issues**

Population mobility has produced both positive and negative consequences throughout regional and rural Western Australia. Among such developments, those concerning essential functions and services delivery have demanded innovative responses and strategies, both at the higher policy level and locally in many communities. This is considered necessary both in promoting the continued viability of the communities, coupled with an enhanced capacity to address future challenges.

Previous research involving case study rural communities in Western Australia suggests that solutions to problems such those involving essential functions and services delivery are commonly sought through strategies that revolve around local government and its use of informal relationships and the voluntary networks operating at a grass roots level. Three of these case study communities are cited in this paper. Recently published Australian Bureau of Statistics data identifies one community as having recorded a population increase while the other two have experienced some decline.

This paper draws upon the earlier research findings to explain the potential implications for the roles and responsibilities of the local governments, service groups and voluntary organizations operating within the three case study communities. Changes in the population dynamic of these communities however, also presents invaluable opportunities by which stakeholders can seek to capitalize on local level relationships as a means of addressing essential functions and services delivery issues. In doing so, these communities can generate the social capital needed to create an identity that is not only relevant to their circumstances, but is also adaptable and responsive in the contemporary environment.