Intergenerational Family-Farm Transfer: Family Members' Experiences and Rural Social Issues

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Abstract

The thesis provides a liberal feminist critique of the socio-political structure of farming families and their approaches to and management of the phenomenon of intergenerational family farm transfer. It examines how issues of gender are implicated in family members' decision-making and actions directing farm transfers. It further examines how these decisions affect the opportunities for family members in the next generation, the relationships between siblings after farm transfers, the relationships between members of the older and younger generations within families and the social consequences ensuing from these relationships following farm transfers. Hence, this thesis engages with how family members negotiate farm transfers and the social consequences of these transfers. This research engages different members of farming families to provide a rich and nuanced view of issues associated with/ensuing from farm transfers.

The second focus of the thesis is on the changes to rural communities that are directly and/or indirectly linked to families' decisions and actions at the time of intergenerational family farm transfer. This requires an examination of the interdependent relationship between farming communities and members of farming families within the districts of those communities. Again, the thesis provides a critique of the socio-political structure of farming communities and issues of gender that appear to uphold masculine hegemony that fosters decisions farm owners make regarding intergenerational farm transfers. The third focus of the thesis is on the implications for natural resource management in farming regions arising from intergenerational family farm transfers and subsequent changes to rural communities.

This thesis examines the relationality between farm family decisions and actions to institute intergenerational family farm transfers and changes to families, changes to rural farming communities, changes to management of the natural resource on which farming depends and the management of the remaining natural environment. The thesis argues that the supposed private domain of family business decisions regarding intergenerational farm transfers cannot be considered in isolation from possible impacts on the social well-being of family members, the relationships between family members, the viability of family farms, the sustainability of services, facilities and amenities of rural farming communities, and the management of natural resources and environments within farming districts.

Qualitative data is derived from one-one-one interviews with farm family members and other members of rural communities associated with farm family members in some way relating to their decision-making or instituting family farm transfer and/or dealing with the effects of these transfers on individual family members. The thesis also draws on the author's insider status as a non-successor daughter, a local teacher of farm family children, an environmentalist active in Landcare projects for local environmental conservation and restoration, and a resident in one of the regional towns dependent on farming to support its businesses.

The analytical chapters emerged from the grounded theory method of thematic analysis based on open-coding of transcripts and other materials provided by interviewees. The themes were reviewed and augmented by employing a "plurality of theories" (Garnier 2014: 458) – Lefebvre's (1991) theory on the 'production of space'; Massey's (1994, 1995) concept of 'relationality' between agents within and across particular spaces; Latour's (2005) 'actor-network' theory; and Symon's (2007) concept of 'emotional spacetime'. While Lefebvre's (1991) theory of the production of space with its reference to hegemony and hierarchy in agency contradicts Latour's (2005) argument that all actors are considered to exist within a flat field where hierarchy is not considered in the analysis of social events, they both have merit in this thesis. They complement each other to allow the actors/factors enabling and/or constraining farm transfers to be identified and the effects of transfers to be examined. By employing Lefebvre's (1991) theory on the production of space, the role of the state in supporting and maintaining conditions favourable to farming families or in constraining or disabling families from owning or running farms is exposed. Latour's (2005) actor-network theory directs attention to the multitude of factors/actors – human and non-human – enabling or constraining the phenomenon of farm transfer. Massey's (1994, 1995) theory of relationality and porous fields further enhances the explanation of relational factors affecting the processes and outcomes of farm transfers. Symon's concept of emotional spacetime provides a way of understanding why emotions arise during and endure after the process of farm transfer – a process that necessarily comprises the three elements of space (the farm), time (the duration of the transfer process) and emotions (family member responses to the intergenerational transfers of their farms).

The thesis concludes that Australian State and Federal Governments through their farm policies and programs, the farm family and members of rural communities are all complicit in enabling farms to operate (or not) and to be transferred (or not) to the next generation. They are also all complicit in maintaining the masculine hegemony of rural farming communities which in turn contributes to the declining rural populations, the loss of community services and amenity in broadacre farming districts and to the lack of personnel to manage the natural resources in these areas. Farm owners, by their attitudes to and methods of instituting intergenerational farm

transfers, are also responsible for the state of intrafamilial relationships and the wellbeing of family members during and after farm transfers.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

[redacted]

Diane Elizabeth Luhrs

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Abbreviations and key terms

Abbreviation/term	Meaning
DF	Daughter of farmer – usually resident on the farm as a child.
FA	Associate of farmer – Someone who engages with farmers on matters related to farm business structure and financial management issues (lawyer, accountant, rural counsellor), or a non-farming relative who assists in farm planning and decision making or a local business person who may rely on farmers for trade.
FP	Farm parent/spouse of farmer – usually living on farm and raising children.
SC	Serendipitous conversation – an unplanned conversation occurring in a public place.
SF	Son of farmer – usually resident on the farm as a child.
SR	Survey respondent.
a	Acres
ABARES	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ARC	Australian Red Cross
CFA	Country Fire Authority
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Research Organization
DEPI	Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries
DPI	Victorian Department of Primary Industries
FMD	Farm Management Deposits
ha	Hectares
Landcare	A co-operative, community-based network premised on sustainable natural resource management (Claringbould 1999)
LGAs	Local Government Areas (Shires or Rural Cities)
MUHREC	Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee
P-12 school	State school catering for primary and secondary students
RIRDC	Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation
WoFG	Women on Farms Gathering (an annual event in Victoria, Australia)

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Farming families moving through the process of intergenerational family farm transfer, the social relations involved and the effects of the process on individuals, the family**, t**he farm and the local community provide opportunities to study and enhance understandings of human nature. In Australia, as in comparable Western countries, some members of families are successors to family farms and others are not; and most successors are the sons of farming families. Previous research has shown that it is in the pattern of intergenerational family farm transfer where the differential treatment of sons and daughters and the distinction between successor sons and non-successor sons in farming families occurs (Barclay et al. 2007).

This thesis investigates the effects and enduring consequences of the differential treatments of family members that processes and patterns of intergenerational family farm transfer usually entail. It examines the relationships between parents and their children leading up to, during and after intergenerational farm transfer, relationships between siblings (both successors and non-successors) and relationships between family members and their local communities that are subject to change through the transfers. The thesis also examines the implications for natural resource management when a significant proportion of family members (that is, the non-successors and/or retiring parents) departs from districts as a consequence of farm transfers. In taking a critical stance to the processes of family farm transfers, the thesis illuminates adverse events that must be acknowledged and addressed so that families and communities may accomplish more socially, economically and environmentally favourable outcomes than are currently happening.

By including farming families on multigenerational farms (that is, farms which have been owned and operated by successive family members over a number of generations) and those who have purchased farms in the current generation, this thesis provides new light on the issues farm owners, their families and local communities must address to ensure family cohesion, farm continuity and local community sustainability. Owners running smaller broadacre farms not providing the total annual incomes for families and first-time farm-owner families having no history of farm transfers are included in the scope of this research because they also face farm transfer decisions that have the potential to disrupt family cohesion, farm viability, local community sustainability and natural resource management.

1.1 Background

Family farming as an industry in Victoria (as in other states of Australia) has for the most part resulted from the combined effects of individual entrepreneurism and the policies and programs of both Commonwealth and State governments (whether under Liberal, Labour or Coalition/Liberal-National Party governments). While family farming has a history of various forms (from intensively-farmed small plots including orchards, piggeries and poultry farms to large broadacre properties required for cropping and/or mixed farming combining grazing and cropping), family farming on broadacre and dairy farms became a significant social phenomenon in Victoria from the late 1800s through to the 1950s, when sections of lands previously devoted to pastoralism and Crown lands were made available for purchase (with government-funded concessions) to provide enterprising farmers the means to support themselves and their families through agriculture (Brett 2011, Powell and Macintyre 2017). Hard-working, responsible people were sought to populate rural regions of Australia's interior and to work the land more productively than grazing had allowed on the argument that "civilisation rests mainly on the plough" (Cherry 1913: 10). The land of the interior was viewed by both Federal and State governments not only as an economic resource to enable agricultural production – production that was to be more economically productive than grazing, it was also viewed as a region for population growth and the development of civil society (Brett 2011, Cannon 1978, Harvey and Learmonth 1966, Mortlake Historical Society 1985). Closer settlement of former grazing lands by farming families was also seen as the means to address perceived threats to national security arising from underpopulated rural spaces (Mortlake Historical Society 1985).

The World War 1 and World War 2 the Soldier Settlement Schemes, schemes that settled farming families onto either leasehold or freehold farming properties, enacted in most Australian States served to reward returned soldiers for their commitment to the country through their war services (The Rural Reconstruction Commission 1944). Furthermore, for social reasons, soldier settlement repatriation onto farming land was considered an effective program to pre-empt possible and reduce actual social and political disturbances in the major cities created by returning soldiers (Fedorowich 2002). The Soldier Settlement Schemes were funded by the Commonwealth with varying contributions from participating States, and they were administered differently in each State through the particular arrangements between each State and Commonwealth according to the dispersal and value of the agricultural land (Fedorowich 2002; Powell and Macintyre 2017; Rost 2008; Smallwood 2011).

The Rural Reconstruction Commission's (1944: 105–107) report on land settlement programs for agriculture in the late 19th C and early 20th C and the World War 1 Soldier Settlement Scheme concluded that these programs were mostly unsuccessful, variously because of the small size and poor quality of lands selected for settlement, the lack of sufficient finances

to enable clearing and/or farm development and the lack of farm management experience of the people taking on these farm enterprises, but mostly because of the "short-sighted policies adopted in the initial settlement planning" (see also Brett 2011, Mortlake Historical Society 1985; Smallwood 2011). According to The Rural Reconstruction Commission (1944: 8), the task of settling the land was "extremely complex" and required arranging "the occupation of lands so as to make the most profitable use of them economically and socially without prejudicing the interests of future populations". The Victorian Soldier Settlement Commission, following World War 2, was aware of and mindful not to repeat the failings of the first scheme, as reported by the Commission.

The Victorian post-World War 2 Soldier Settlement Scheme (based on the 1945 War Service Land Settlement Agreement between the Commonwealth and the participating States) was considered successful for settling many families into agricultural districts and for contributing to a productive agricultural industry (Smallwood 2011). However, it was not without its short-comings (Smallwood 2011). It was costly both to the Commonwealth and to the State of Victoria and it involved protracted negotiations, often with "major divergence" of opinion, between the State and the Commonwealth over funding contributions (Smallwood 2011: 43). Although haggling over funding contributions between the State of Victoria and the Commonwealth continued to the end of the Soldier Settlement Scheme in 1962 and beyond into later settlement programs (Smallwood 2011), the soldier settlers and the communities they created contributed to the increase in rural populations and increases in community organisations, facilities, infrastructure and amenity (Brett 2011; PROV n.d.; Smallwood 2011).

After the extensive rural/farming settlement programs in the first half of the 20th C supported by both Commonwealth and State government funding and assisted by farm subsidies and tariffs on imported products, the political imperative for such programs changed as Australia engaged in the competitive global market during the latter half of the 20th C (Lawrence 2005a). The early 1990s, particularly, represents a watershed between the subsidised, and tariff-protected era of agriculture in Australia to one of exposure to global competition and Australia's Federal Government's reluctance to intervene in the farming sector's economic activity (Lawrence 2005a). During this time, many Australian farming families were supported through the rural adjustment schemes to exit farming and to sell their farms. The message of "get big or get out" was taken up by many farm owners (Argent and Tonts 2015). Farm families able to survive this period of rural adjustment were encouraged to manage their farming enterprises in a more responsible and businesslike manner. Part of responsible management required farm owners to institute succession plans so that not only were farms using the natural resource of agricultural land more productively, farmers were also publicly encouraged to ensure that there were successors to maintain and continue to improve the productivity of family farms. Owners of

viable farms bought up farms of departing neighbours, thereby increasing their own land holdings. The consequence of selling up family farms to neighbours – or to out-of-district investors – was (and continues to be) the outmigration of farming families from rural places and the reduction in the populations of rural communities (Lawrence 2005a).

Family farms are diverse in financial structure, location, size and operation. This thesis focuses on families on broadacre farms and those on dry-land dairy farms in western Victoria, Australia. The term 'broadacre farm' refers to farming enterprises that require a large amount of land from which to generate sufficient income to cover costs of production and to provide a family with sufficient funds to supposedly support the family and to maintain production from year to year. Currently in Victoria, this is typically greater than 1000 acres for sheep and cattle grazing or for cropping properties and about 300 acres for dryland dairying properties (Alan-FA20 real estate agent, 2015). Although the number of Victorian farms has fallen from around 70,000 in 1969–1970 to 32,357 in 2010–2011 (Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI) 2013), Victoria is Australia's largest food and fibre exporting state (Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) 2013). According to DEPI (2013), during 2012–13, Victoria accounted for 29 per cent of Australia's total food (for example, milk, grain and meat) and fibre (for example, wool) exports. Other details from DEPI (2013) indicate that while the number of farms is smaller than in previous decades, this is not due to a loss of farming area but due to the consolidation of farming properties through amalgamations as farms are sold and families move off the land (DEPI 2013). According to DEPI (2013) the dairy industry is Victoria's largest rural industry and acknowledged to be well-organised, well-resourced, mature and internationally competitive. It is for this status and the fact that dairy farms are also transferred intergenerationally that dairy farming families are also included in this research.

This research includes farms with histories of intergenerational family farm transfer and farms with new owners whose owners each will face decisions and issues relating to intergenerational farm transfer. Of the farms surviving the 1990s rural adjustment schemes, many have been passed down through the same family, some are now six-generation farms. Although farms have changed in size through selling or buying up land, many multigenerational farm families live on the same properties owned by previous generations of the family. Even with the rural adjustment programs to create more efficient farming, family farms are presented by the government as the most significant sector for agricultural production in Australian (Australian Bureau of Agricultural Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) 2016), and therefore as enterprises deserving of political attention for policies and programs to ensure continued food and fibre production for local and international markets.

1.2 Family farms as sites of inclusion and exclusion, conflict and contestation

Following Lefebvre (1991), this thesis comprehends the space of family farms as a complex of the physical, the social and the mental (that is, the logical and formal representations of farms) which are inextricably entwined such that to understand the effects of intergenerational farm transfer all three aspects must be considered. As social spaces, family farms are places where individuals (family members and others such as contractors and seasonal workers) work together to achieve the primary goal of agricultural production. Furthermore, farms are sites of personal achievement through commitment to agricultural production, sites of connection to family, family history and local community, and sites of privilege. However, farms can also be sites of exclusion – a significant factor explored in this thesis – where particular family members are denied the opportunity for continued association with the farm as a physical space or with farming as a career as owners determine who the successors are to be.

Broadacre and dairy farming require enormous capital investment to secure ownership or leasehold rights of farming enterprises. This is generally not readily available to farming children without the support from their parents through farm-succession opportunities (Gasson and Errington 1993). Non-successor children, by virtue of not being included in the succession process of intergenerational family farm transfer, are effectively locked out of opportunities to live and work as farmers on family farms (Shortall 2005). That some farm children may marry into other farming families and take on the role of farmer's spouse, or to take up other careers in mainstream agriculture off the family farm (see Alston 2003) appears not to address the issue of providing equal opportunity to all children who wish to be and are capable of being farmers or who wish to remain in contact with the farms of their childhood.

Therefore, farms may be viewed as sites of individuality and agency and sites of shared projects and common identity. They may become sites to fight for or sites to escape from. Family farms and farming families present at the same time the pursuit of a common project and issues of conflict. The changes to ownership and management of family farms through intergenerational transfer is, for many family members, an extremely stressful and relationship-changing time. How families manage or work through the various issues they meet or that confront them when negotiating the phenomenon of intergenerational farm transfer is critical to retaining positive social relations, to retaining family connections with these farms, and in ensuring the continued economic viability of these farms.

1.3 An insider's reflection

As a work located in a critical feminist tradition, it is important at the outset to explain the position of the researcher in relation to the research and to reveal the unavoidably situated nature of the

project. Haraway (1991) argues researchers, through setting the topic, framing the questions, selecting participants and setting the locations for the research encounters, are just as much part of the research as are the researched. This section explains the researcher's social and emotional association with farming and her commitment to conservation of the State's natural resources through her involvement in Landcare activities with the Hamilton Field Naturalists Club.

My engagement with exploring and examining the social issues arising from intergenerational family farm transfers has its origin in my particular experiences of family stress and discord during and continuing after the determination of the transfer of the farm of my childhood. The farm in southwest Victoria, Australia, with distant views to the Grampians through red gum trees and with sheep and cattle in the immediate view, was (and remains) special to me (see Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2). I enjoyed it as a beautiful and spacious place to play in, relax in and work on with my parents and siblings. Until the age of fifteen I lived permanently with my parents and siblings on the farm, enjoyed the farm as a place of shared and divided responsibilities, a place of beauty, a place of family social engagement and fun, while also gaining an appreciation of the economic productivity supporting our lifestyle and the effects that weather patterns and market prices for our farm's wool clips had on our lived experiences. From the age of fifteen years onwards, I lived part-time on the farm and part-time in other places while attending boarding school and then university, and finally leaving home at the age of twenty-one years on taking up paid employment as a teacher over three hundred kilometres away from the farm.

After leaving home, the farm was a place to which I would return regularly for weekends and holidays to enjoy family get-togethers and to catch up with local social events. It was still my home to return to even after I had married and established a new life in suburban Melbourne, Victoria. Returning home to visit my parents on the farm for me was returning home. Suburban Melbourne was not home for me, with no distant views through red gums to the Grampians mountain range. I longed to live in the country of my childhood. Eventually, in my thirties, my husband and I did return to the regional city within half an hour of my childhood family farm. However, as a returning adult, my memories of my family and the farm were tested and challenged.

Figure 1.1 Author's childhood home (from 1953 to 1970). Set within a farm property comprising a fenced home and garden, dairy, garage, wood-heap and hen-house bounded by pine plantations and paddocks and farm machinery beyond the plantations. (Luhrs family archive 1963)

Figure 1.2. Farm view through red gum trees (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) to the Grampians. (Diane Luhrs 1964)

It was on my return to the region that I saw the family I belonged to was not the cohesive supportive family I had remembered or imagined it to be. My experiences from this time inform me that parents, successors and non-successors may each have different views on their statuses within the family and their statuses with respect to the farm at the time of farm transfer. Although the family members living within the space of a farming family are often referred to as a 'farm family' and, therefore, as comprising a single social unit, they do not necessarily act to maintain the family as a social unit. My parents and siblings' differing views became evident at two very

distinct times: firstly, when the successors were each brought into the farm partnership with my parents, and secondly, when the partnership was split after the elder brother decided he wanted to farm separately from his brother. The split entailed splitting the business partnership and dividing the farm property, farm plant and animals and all another associated assets between my two brothers. The reasons for the split and the split itself still create ill-feeling between some family members – successor sons – and a sense of loss for others – non-successor daughters and my father.

The legacy from the farm transfer is still evident more than twenty years after the formal and complete transfer to the successor sons. Part of the farm I grew up on has since been sold and therefore is no longer in the family, and the successor to that section of the farm and his family moved out of the district after selling the farm. Now, the family rarely comes together as the complete unit (that is, surviving parent – our father – and siblings) to share, what for others, are commonly understood as family occasions (Christmases and birthdays). Moreover, the local community lost four active members after my second brother and his family shifted from the district. The new owners are not resident in the district, and they employ a farm manager who resides out of the district and who also socialises elsewhere. The farm remains an economically productive farm, but does not add population to the local community. It is an agricultural entity, but not a social entity contributing to the local community.

Reflecting on this outcome also prompts other reflections. My return-to-home visits came to a close when my parents retired off the farm and my second brother and his wife moved into the family home and the new wife took over the management of the home and the garden to make it *hers* and not *ours*. I became a visitor to the home of another family. All that was precious about the place for me: the garden, the rooms, and the space around the domestic area of the farm were all altered to suit a new life-style not represented by my parents' establishment of the house, garden and places nearby. This experience for me brought the revelation that while many speak of multiple generations of family ownership, in fact at any one time, it is only the immediate family located in the place who is considered as the farming family. My sister and I, as adults, are no longer representatives of farming families. The farming family membership designation appears only to extend vertically through the generations but not horizontally to non-farm-owning siblings.

Through my teaching of environmental studies in the local secondary school (1987-2007) and my involvement with the Hamilton Field Naturalists Club (beginning in 1997 and on-going), I became aware of the issues of local land and water management issues (such as land erosion, salt-affected land and polluted waterways) that were affecting not only farming properties but also roadsides and state forests and parks and national parks. Since my return to the district, I

have engaged in many projects annually (including revegetation and weed-eradication) to conserve and restore public lands and waterways.

These experiences combined have influenced the thesis's overall orientation in four principal ways. First, to seek knowledge about the changes to relationships members of farming families may have experienced through intergenerational family farm transfers and of how these changes may have impacted on them, their families and their local farming communities. Second, to ask how farm owners approach the process of farm transfer and whether the processes and timing also affect family members' relationships. Thirdly, to ask which factors are considered, what plans are made by owners for themselves and how owners manage to provide for their children while also providing for themselves after transferring the farm? Finally, to understand the complexities and significance of changes experienced by family members, their farms and local farming communities through what are considered essentially farm owners' private business matter to enable an informed situated liberal feminist perspective of intergenerational farm transfer to emerge.

1.4 Rationale for research and focus of thesis

Research at the time of transition exposes the array of factors involved in such transfers and provides opportunities to examine the social consequences arising from family members' attitudes to, desires for and processes of transfer. Furthermore, examining family members' enduring memories of, reflections about and embodied reactions to farm transfers provides greater evidence of farm transfer as a complex social phenomenon which not only impacts on family members and their farms but also the local farming communities. This research, while focusing on the social consequences of farm transfers, does not deny or ignore the importance of securing/ensuring continued farm viability and maintaining an efficient agricultural industry. To provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complex processes and effects of these intergenerational farm transfer processes on individuals, families, farms (including their viability), rural communities and the environment, my research engages with farmers and their family members, people who advise and/or counsel them on various personal and business matters and with people who rely on local farming communities for their own livelihoods.

The focus of most previous research placed the family farm at the centre of the research with investigations into who does which work on the farms (including a feminist exposé of the masculine hegemony that tended to erase or mask the contribution of women to the productivity on farms) (Alston 1995; Gasson and Errington 1993; Shortall 2006), who contributes to the financial security of the farm through off-farm work and/or diversification of on-farm work (Calus and Van Huylenbroek 2010; Cheshire et al. 2013), who is nominated as the successor(s) to the farms (Luhrs 2015), how succession occurs (Errington 1998, 2002), how the patterns of

farm ownerships are structured (Johnsen 2004; McAllister and Geno 2004), the roles of family farm members within the local rural communities and the enduring social institutions and physical amenities within farming communities (Dempsey 1992; Pini and Shortall 2006; Poiner 1990). The primacy placed on limiting the number of farm successors is evident in the emphasis in government policies and programs directed towards assisting farm owners to prepare for, negotiate and institute succession of their farms while also providing for their own retirements from farming and maintaining farm viability (Dwyer, 1998).

My own experience of family farm succession highlights the deficiencies in earlier social research into family farm transfers. What is not given light in this earlier research and policy discussion are the effects on individual family members, the family as a social unit of individual members and the effect on the sustainability of rural farming communities, effects attributable to how farm owners determine and institute the process of farm transfer for their families. This thesis, while recognising the importance of the farm as a family social and economic institution with a history as a place of work and connection to the local community, focuses attention on the individuals within farming families and their social and emotional attachments to places and people, the survival of farming family as a social unit and on the sustainability of farming communities when transfers occur in each generation. In critically examining the relational aspects of farming families, as family members live and work on their farms, negotiate farm transfers and interact with members of the local communities (Liljeström and Paasonen 2010), the thesis provides a richer account of family farm transfer than has previously been possible. By embracing the concept of the "intimate co-dependence" of "materiality, affect and embodiment" new kinds of knowledges of family memberships and relationships and rural sustainability are advanced (Liljeström and Paasonen 2010: 1). This new knowledge can inform and assist farm family members, policy makers and rural advisors and counsellors as they confront and anticipate the effects of the phenomenon of family farm transfer on the individual, the family and sustainability of farm viability and of the rural community.

1.5 Research aims

1.5.1 Critiquing the socio-politics of farming families in neoliberalist times

My primary aim in writing this thesis is to provide a feminist critique of the socio-political phenomenon of intergenerational farm transfer in the context of today's neoliberalist political agenda and in the context of continuing masculine hegemony in rural farming regions of Australia. In an era where feminism has brought changes to legislation espousing equal opportunity for women and men in the workforce, the decreased labour required for farming and the high costs associated with purchasing farm properties appears to limit not only the opportunity for women to take up farming and but also to limit their opportunities to work on or

purchase farms. Neoliberalism, through its market-driven logic, not only encourages farm owners to restrict siblings from sharing succession, it also, thereby, appears to uphold the masculine hegemony over farming as a career.

By looking at farm succession through a feminist perspective, I aim to contribute to feminist literature that continues to be critical of masculine domination of farm ownership, even in a time when women have taken up other roles in agriculture and they undertake training for farming at colleges and compete university degrees in agriculture (Alston 2009, 2014; Bock 2014; Hankivsky 2008). Specifically, the thesis argues for the possibility of a different model for farm succession and farm ownership that, while maintaining farm viability, is inclusive of siblings who wish to be involved in the discussion and planning for intergenerational family farm transfer.

In particular, the thesis engages with how the socio-economic and socio-political construct of the family farm is used as a political tactic to manage farm owners as they approach and determine the time to consider farm succession. The thesis argues that such a tactic grounded in the notion of individualism, one that encourages individuals to enhance the productive capacity of their farms for their own benefit while also upholding their responsibility to supporting the national economy, actually contributes to rural outmigration from farming regions, the loss of rural community amenity and services and a reduction in natural resource management.

Farming and the rewards from farming are now tied to the global competitive market, and farm succession is predicated on maintaining the viability of the farm to enable farm owners to enjoy these rewards. Maintaining the viability of the farm is largely interpreted by farm owners and their economic advisors as limiting the number of successors to the farm. Members of farm families are supposedly socialized to understand that farm viability is linked to a limited number of successors. Farm owners are encouraged to nominate a successor early so that children will not be in conflict over this choice rather than to consider other means of maintaining farm viability and to consider other family members and members of their local communities. It is farm owners' transfer decisions based on assumptions such as these that lead to the complexity of farming – socially and economically – for families and rural communities.

1.5.2 Specific research aims

The first aim of this research is to explore deeper into the social processes of intergenerational broadacre family-farm transfer than previous research has done (for example, Barclay et al. 2007; Crockett 2004; Crosby 1998; Errington 2002; Foskey 2005; Gasson and Errington 1993) to examine the effects of farm transfer on relationships between members of farm families, the continuity of the family farm sector and the relationships between families and their rural communities. The second aim is to determine whether families can be better helped to address

the issues and family tensions that may arise through farm transfers. The third aim is to examine the direct and indirect effects of farm transfers on local farming communities and to determine whether farming family members exercise any responsibility to rural farming communities in their decision making. The fourth and subsequent aim, given the sustainable farming sector's reliance on farming families (Commonwealth of Australia 2015), is to determine whether more needs to be done to ensure sustainable rural farming communities and, by implication, sustainable natural resources.

1.6 Thesis structure

There are eight chapters in this thesis. In the seven chapters that follow, Chapter 2 provides an overview and critique of the literature-to-date on family farming, feminist research and critiques of farming and rural farming communities, and introduces emotions as a means of gaining insight into family relationships and of issues arising from social practices. The chapter also outlines the liberal feminist theory (Hekman 1992, 1999; Hirschmann 1999) underpinning the thesis, and the four theoretical perspectives guiding the discussion and interpretation of data: Lefebvre's (1991) theory on the 'production of space', Massey's (1994, 1995) theory of relationality, Latour's (2005) 'actor-network' theory and Symons (2007) concept of 'emotional spacetime'. Chapter 3 outlines methodology adopted for the qualitative research based on grounded theory method (Charmaz 2006). Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 constitute the analysis chapters. Chapter 4, employing Lefebvre's (1991) theory on the production of space, specifically examines the social and political factors contributing to the production of farms and the legal instruments used by farm owners to secure what they perceive to be the most effective ownership structures for their farms which in turn may have implications for the intergenerational transfer of the farms. This chapter establishes that family farms are produced as a result of many intersecting factors, exist in various legal arrangements, and that different ownership arrangements either enable or constrain family member access to and benefits from the family farm. Chapter 5 employs Latour's (2005) actor-network theory to examine the multifarious actants involved in the process of intergenerational farm transfer and also examines the various approaches farm principles undertake in planning for and implementing intergenerational farm transfer. Specifically, this chapter seeks to understand how, why and when various farm owners act as they do when navigating the phenomenon of farm transfer. This chapter concludes that farm transfer decisions and processes occur as a complex of factors ranging from the deeply personal – including adherence to family traditions – to the farm policies of particular Federal Governments. Chapter 6 engages with the emotional and social issues arising from families' experiences of farm transfer. It returns to Lefebvre's (1991) theory on the production of space and family members' relationships with spaces of their farms. This chapter establishes that intergenerational farm transfer is a significant emotional

spacetime event for each family (Symons 2007) and that family members are all affected in some way by farm transfer decisions and/or processes. Specifically, this chapter concludes that families' engagement with the phenomenon of farm transfer affects individual family member wellbeing and family cohesion and function. In the last of the analytical chapters, Chapter 7, I employ Lefebvre (1991) and Latour (2005) analyse the factors contributing to depopulated rural farming spaces and the issues arising from this depopulation, a depopulation produced by farming families in concert with Federal Government policies. Specifically, I establish that local farming communities are affected by families' farm transfer decisions and processes, and conclude that rural out-migration is partly due to farm owners and farm policies adhering to the notion that farms can only remain viable if families limit the number of successors to their farms. Finally, in Chapter 8, I conclude by providing a summary of key findings emergent in the analysis and relate their importance in contributing to existing and further research by feminist and rural geographers.

By investigating the emotional responses of successors, non-successors and the parental generation in farming families, I provide a more comprehensive analysis and nuanced understanding of the complexities of the phenomenon of intergenerational family farm transfer than previous research has done. And by linking the phenomena of family farm transfer processes and decisions to rural population out-migration, I provide another perspective on the issue of rural out-migration that may help farm family members, rural people in general and rural policy makers think and act differently or act with knowledge that their actions may be contributing to and/or exacerbating issues arising from rural depopulation. The significance of this thesis is that it offers insights into issues associated with farm transfers that affect individual wellbeing,[1] the health of family relationships and rural farming community sustainability, and this thesis suggests other ways of approaching farm succession that may alter the issues associated with increasing rural depopulation.

[1] In this thesis, I adopt Atkinson et al.'s (2012) of definition 'wellbeing' – "a holistic conception of positive human functioning … extending beyond a physiological or biomedical notion of health to encompass the emotional, social and, in some cases, spiritual dimensions of what it means to be human".

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Family farming is a complex social enterprise encompassing many varied social activities and relationships (Gasson and Errington 1993; Schwarz 2004). These activities and relationships are inextricably linked to on-farm production (Schwarz 2004), management of the natural resource on which agricultural production depends (Fulton and Vanclay 2011) and to the political and economic contexts of particular places and eras (Wallerstein 2012). Furthermore, family farms are not only places of productive activity but are also, generally, the homes and places of recreation and relaxation; responsibility; economic and productive activity; asset protection and improvement; and a social hierarchy that is usually gendered and which affords primacy to the senior member(s) of the family (Alston 1995; Gasson and Errington 1993; Poiner 1990; Schwarz 2004). Much as the 'family farm' and the 'farming family' are terms with long histories within Australian literature and government policy and which may conjure up particular images for readers, family farming is an ever-evolving industry responding and adapting to national and international political and economic regimes as well as to the social factors at play within and around the family (Davison 2005; Tonts 2005). Therefore, the definitions as to what constitutes a family farm (hereafter farm) and what constitutes a farming family (hereafter family) reflect the notions of particular times and places. And, importantly for this thesis, the particular notions held by family members of particular places and eras contribute to their deliberations on and actions to institute intergenerational farm transfer. Family farming is usually conducted on privately-owned properties in western Victoria, Australia – the region of my research; in other parts of Australia, farms or stations may be operated on long-term leasehold properties. Hence, intergenerational farm transfer may involve either the transfer of legal ownership of property or of long-term leases.

The literature informing this research covers previous research on family farms and farming families in Western countries, farm succession, the roles (and perceived roles) of men and women on family farms, and the intangible elements of family farming that distinguish it from other family businesses. Literature on the changing dynamics and demographics of rural spaces is relevant in informing the context in which decisions on intergenerational farm transfers are made. Also important are the changing government policies that apply to and affect family members enabling or constraining them in their pursuit of economic gain and their farming lifestyles. In order to explore the contexts in which farm transfer decisions are made, I employ

Lefebvre's (1991) theory on the production of space and Massey's (1994, 1995) concept of 'relationality' between agents within and across particular spaces. I also employ Latour's (2005) 'actor-network' theory to examine the factors that are necessarily involved in the process of family farm transfer. And to understand the ramifications of intergenerational transfers of family farms, I refer to Symon's (2007) concept of emotional spacetime that place emotions to the fore in any process of institutional change.

This review is divided into five main sections. The first section 'Family farming and local farming communities' introduces literature focused on defining the elements that constitute family farms, including the factors linked to the ideology of family farming, responses to changing economic and climatic conditions, and the future of family farming as an economic enterprise. It examines the role families have in their local farming communities. This section also examines issues arising through depopulation, as well as recent discussion on the apparent blurring of rural and urban boundaries that suggests rural is not so different from urban in this era of advanced communications technologies. The second section, 'Farm women' examines the research into the differential gender roles and statuses accorded members of farming families. Specifically, this section focuses on the literature that seeks to make visible the role of family members not formerly recognised as contributing to family farming enterprises: women. Thirdly, 'Intergenerational farm transfer' reviews the literature on farm succession to examine how the issues of equality and equity as fairness for members of farming families are addressed within countries adhering to capitalist economic regimes. The fourth section examines recent literature on 'Emotions and emotional geographies' and the knowledge that is gained by including emotional responses to particular phenomena and relationships. Including emotions as sources of knowledge in this research on family members' responses to family farming and farm transfers allows for a richer and deeper understanding of the complexities and enduring legacies associated with farm transfers than previous research has provided. It also discusses the researcher's emotional involvement with the research and possible implications for eliciting and analysing data. The fifth section outlines the theoretical perspectives underpinning the research, informing the research process and guiding the analysis of data.

2.2 Family farming and local farming communities

2.2.1 An overview of family farming in Australia

Family farming in developed Western nations, particularly since the 1900s, is regarded as a small business operation (Wallerstein 2012) that is inextricably associated with the land on which it occurs. The farmed property provides not only the resource but is also the place where a family lives and where children are socialized by their parents into roles related to the land (Wallerstein 2012). Some children are afforded the opportunities to be successors to the family farm while

others are denied opportunities to be successors. Non-successors are expected to depart the farm and to create adult lives elsewhere.

According to Whitehead et al. (2012) farms in Australia and other capitalist countries exist in a wide variety of family organisational arrangements. They display diverse patterns of engagement and management, legal structures, farm productivity, size, location and personal attachment (Whitehead et al. 2012), and successive Federal Governments have promoted and/or supported farming and farming families through favourable-to-farmer policies on tariffs and trade and financial assistance to retain a viable and productive farming sector in rural Australia (Brett 2011). From relatively small (albeit still regarded as broadacre enterprises), single-family, one-focus productive units bought by the current owners to large cropping and livestock estates passed down to family successors over many generations, the permutations of farm operations, family members, patterns of intergenerational transfer and economic productivity are numerous (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2013). Furthermore, and importantly for considerations of natural resource management, they occupy vast tracts of rural land (ABS 2016; Brett 2011; Curtis et al. 2014). For most of White settlement in Australia, the farm has also been regarded as a significant contributor to rural resource utilization, management and governance (Lockie et al. 2006; Voyce 2008).

Many family farms in Victoria (as in other states of Australia) were established through three successive periods of closer settlement programs. Initially, closer settlement, as described by Lake (1984: 1), was a project aimed at establishing a "yeoman class" throughout Australia. The project was supposed to establish hardworking people of good character in the rural regions of the country (Lake 1984; Keneley 2000). The Australian Soldier Settlement scheme following World War 1 was one such schemes and they had different outcomes. The largely unsuccessful World War 1 program failed because of a variety of factors, including that the acreage granted was too small to produce a livelihood for the returned soldiers and their families and lack of capital to fund the work necessary to bring the farms into production (Fry 1973; Fry 1985; Rural Reconstruction Commission 1944). Most soldier settlers left their farms and returned to the cities within ten years (Hilton 1982; Lake 1984). Following the failure of the first soldier settlement scheme, the World War 2 Soldier Settlement Scheme was developed with a goal of capitalist production and not settlement of a yeoman class (Smallwood 2011). The successful implementation of this scheme brought many people into rural areas who stayed and contributed greatly to rural communities and to the nation's economic growth (Hilton 1982; Mortlake Historical Society 1985; Smallwood 2011). However, with changing markets and changing policies with respect to farm subsidies and tariff protection against imported produce, many of these settlers also eventually succumbed to having too little land to maintain the farm and the family. While many families moved off their farms and the farms were bought up by neighbours

to create larger and more profitable farm properties, family members did stay in the region by moving into the nearby towns thereby remaining in the local networks of social and economic activities (see, for example, Mortlake Historical Society 1985).

Australia's rural farming populations, the number of farms and the populations of many small towns supporting and relying on local agricultural activity reached their peak in what became known as the 'baby-boom' era of the late 1940s to the mid-1960s, following the successful implementation of the post-World War 2 Soldier Settlement program (Davison 2005; Keneley 2005; Lake 1984, 1985; Lewis 1988; Stayner 2005). These years were not only the baby-boom years, they were also the boom years for Australian agricultural products (Davison 2005). Families were able to live comfortably on Australia's export earnings, albeit with government subsidies to farmers and tariffs on imported goods that made Australian produce more attractive to Australian consumers than imported produce (Brett 2011; Davison 2005). Even after the success of the World War 2 closer settlement program and increase to farm production and export earnings, Australia's reliance on the farm sector's ability to cover the rising costs of imports remained an issue with further intensification and increased production called for (Strong 1956).

Since the boom years of the mid-20th C, rural farming regions have endured many changes: the continuing downturn in Australia's agricultural economy (from the 1970s on), subsequent changes to national policies supporting farmers and the farming industry, continuing net loss of rural populations from broadacre farming districts, the changing rural economy in a globalized market place, and the effects of change on farming families and other rural residents in a world undergoing climate change (Hicks et al. 2012; Stayner 2005; Tonts 2005; Tonts et al. 2012). The factors contributing to and effects of the changes to economic performance through more competitive and globalized markets and changes in government policy on financial support for farming families and rural communities have been comprehensively covered by many authors and, therefore, need not be covered here (for example, Almas and Lawrence 2003; Alston 2004a; Barraket 2005; Brett 2011; Cockfield and Botterill 2012; Davison 2005; Davison and Brodie 2005; Garnaut and Lim-Applegate 1998; Hugo 2005; Jones and Tonts 1995; Lawrence 1994, 2005a; Stayner 2005; Stayner and Barclay 2002; Vanclay 2011; Wheeler et al. 2012). Nonetheless, it is important to note the shift in successive Australian Commonwealth Government (hereafter Federal Government) policies, representing variously the Australian Labor Party 1945–1949, 1972–1975, 1983–1996, 2007–2013, and the Coalition Governments of the Liberal and National Parties 1949–1972, 1975–1983, 1996–2007, 2013–...., from protectionist and small-farm enabling policies to policies based on efficiency and global market competition.

Since the 1990s, the restructuring of the agricultural industry has resulted in farm amalgamations, altered governance regimes and depopulation of rural farming spaces (Alston 2004a; Cheshire and Lawrence 2005; Lockie et al. 2006; Pritchard et al. 2007; Stayner 2005; Tonts 2005; Tonts and Jones 1997). Governance on farms refers to the factors that influence and/or control how farmers produce foods and fibre; for example: policy networks, public oversight and management, coordination of the farming sector, corporate prescriptions, industry partnerships, self-help groups and government funding for projects (Higgins and Lawrence 2005: Higgins et al. 2008b). In this discussion on changes to the policies directed at the agricultural sector, it is important to remember that Australia has relied on and continues to rely on the export earnings from the rural agriculture sector to balance its trade with other nations (ABARES 2016).

Further to these changes are changes to the assessment of the value of particular farms to the Australian economy. Farms, albeit accorded with multifunctional values (Potter and Tilzey 2005), are assessed according to their economic contribution to the national economy. The recent uptake by many farmers of the institution of certification by agri-food networks and their modifications to their productive enterprises, production processes and/or standards of their produce is evidence of their responses to the new regime under which farming is conducted: that of a restructure that regards attention to efficiency as essential for an economically productive agricultural industry (Hicks et al. 2012; Higgins et al. 2008a). The assessment of the current value to the Australian economy of farms is found in the following passage from ABARES (2016):

> **Small farms**: … account for 70 per cent of Australian broadacre and dairy farms and around 24 per cent of the total value of sales (receipts) from broadacre and dairy farms [with a total value of sales of less than $450,000]. …
>
> **Medium farms**: … account for 20 per cent of Australian broadacre and dairy farms and around 27 per cent of the total sales from broadacre and dairy farms [with a total value of sales of between $450,000 and $1 million]. …
>
> **Large farms**: … account for ten per cent of Australian broadacre and dairy farms and around 49 per cent of the total value of sales from broadacre and dairy farms [with a total value of sales exceeding $1 million].
>
> Generally, larger farms generate higher rates of return, as result of increasing returns to scale, greater access to superior technologies and greater management skill. (ABARES 2016: 179)

The focus on the profitability of particular farms assesses larger farms as contributing more to the national economy than smaller farms. Small farms outnumber large farms, but large farms out-perform the combined contributions of small and medium farms to the national economy.

Following the restructuring of the agricultural sector and Australia's deregulated approach to international markets (beginning in the 1970s), many farmers responded to the reduction in government subsidies and removal of tariff protection by seeking greater financial support (and, therefore, investment) from other sources; that is, through loans from banks and other corporate institutions (Lawrence 2005a). Farms sold by farmers not able to exist or compete in the deregulated market have variously been bought up by neighbours expanding their properties (ABS 2003) or, in more recent times, by corporate entities with a view to profiting from the agricultural production or for ensuring food and fibre security for national or international markets (Graham 2014; Magnan 2015). In the last decade, in particular, the non-farming corporate business sector has ventured to invest in farming by buying up large tracts of farmland as a means of generating capital return for their investors; the farms have become "financialized" by merchant and investment banks purchasing farms for "long-term capital gain" (Larder et al. 2015; Lawrence 2015). However, the majority of farms in Australia are still family-owned and are still subject to intergenerational transfer decisions (ABARES 2016), albeit in a political regime that strongly holds to the belief that free markets and little government intervention provide the "best outcomes for individuals and, ultimately for society" (Lawrence 2015; see also Cheshire and Lawrence 2005).

For the many who leave farming rather than staying to accommodate and adapt to change, loss is a significant emotional factor. According to Stayner and Barclay (2002: 72, 77), they lose "the intimate connection between the farm as a place of work, career and family tradition", and they lose their connection to the home, the community, friends, family history and self-identity all which can lead to the development of "profound grief". Their findings support the contention that leaving the family farm is, for many farming families, a very difficult and confronting time, both emotionally and socially. Farmers who decide to move off their farms and out of communities often create a two-fold loss: often a deep personal loss and a community loss. Stayner and Barclay (2002) find the loss of people from farming affects the viability of local rural communities and local small-town functions.

On this issue Elbert (1988) asks us to consider not only why so many farmers must leave the land despite their years of hard work and their acceptance of scientific advice about the best business and farming practices, but also what she considers as the more important question: why family labour on a farm can be so persistent in an advanced capitalism dominated by large-scale corporate production? Calus and Van Huylenbroek (2010) account for this persistence in terms of the family involvement in farm production and their off-farm labour and other capital-producing mechanisms that allows the farm to remain viable and for the family farm to remain as an agricultural institution (see also Losch 2015, Marzin et al. 2015). In this sense farm viability and sustainability relies on access to off-farm finance to support or subsidize the families'

productive work on the farm. Share et al. (1991: 1–2) argue the very character of the capitalist family farming that makes it "flexible and durable in times of crisis" also contributes to the "deteriorating quality of life" of families and to the loss of status of farming as an occupation and way of life. That family members have to pursue finance through off-farm work and/or through raising capital by borrowing from banks and other institutions to support the farming activities adds stress to family relations and reduces personal involvement with the farm.

The number of registered farms continues to fall each year as more families sell up and farms are amalgamated. Nevertheless, despite falling rates of farm succession in Australia, and the prognosis family farm businesses are unlikely to survive the "ongoing and repeated threats to their survival", Fulton and Vanclay (2011: 95) note the contribution of families to the farming sector is still acknowledged to be "the backbone of Australian agriculture" (see also ABARES 2016; McAllister and Geno 2004; Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) 1998). Calus and Van Huylenbroek's (2010: 639) discussion of trends in farming in Europe resonates with family farming in Australia; that is, farms, as cultural and economic units, persist to remain the economic "cornerstone" on which agricultural policy is based. This sentiment is express in two of the Government's key objectives on farming policy in the recent Federal Government White Paper stating the Government regards farm families to be of continuing importance for farm production:

> To achieve a better return at the farm gate to ensure a sustainable and competitive Australian agricultural sector. … The government's role is to set the right policy environment to support this outcome for farmers. …
>
> [To keep] families as the cornerstone of farming – by establishing career paths based on financial stability, training and succession options. (Commonwealth of Australia. 2015: 1-4)

The White Paper indicates the tension between current government policy and farming families and their communities in attending to the economic drivers of farm policy – that is, "in ensuring a sustainable and agricultural sector" - and the needs of members of farming communities to retain sufficient population to attract funding for services and resource management – to keep "families as the cornerstone of farming". While farming remains a significant contributor to the national economy (albeit, proportionally much reduced since the mid-20th C), its role in supporting local communities and commerce in nearby towns and rural cities is changing. Agriculture now employs only four percent of the Australian workforce and produces about four percent of the country's economic output, very different from the time when farming was the largest single sector of the economy in the early to mid-20th C (Davison and Brodie 2005; Keneley 2005).

On the other hand, rather than focusing on the possible negative aspects of out-migration and rural population decline, other reports accept that rural population decline is the outcome of rationalization of the industry to make it leaner, more efficient and in the hands of operators who can be the most productive on the land they manage (Alston 2004a; Garnaut and Lim-Applegate 1998; Keneley 2005; Wheeler et al. 2012). Cheshire et al. (2013) in discussing globally engaged family farmers also provide a contrary view to the experience of a sense of loss or grief when families give up the farm and move from their former places of work and family living. They state "globally engaged" farmers may retain attachments, albeit weaker, to the activity of agricultural production, their family traditions of farming and to associations with farming spaces, even when they no longer retain ownership or association with particular farming places. Cheshire et al. (2013) and Cheshire and Woods (2013) do accede that such a group is not representative of the majority of Australian family farmers as only a very small number of farmers, so far, have developed transnational business relationships. The next section examines the role of ideologies in promoting and sustaining farming in Australia.

2.2.2 Ideologies underpinning farming and the agricultural industry

In order to discuss ideology as it relates to farming families, farm owners, members of rural communities and political parties in government, it is important to explain the concept of ideology. Aitken (1985) defines 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 … 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. (Aitken 1985: 35)

Ideologies, whether express or implied through actions, representing particular ideas and values, are evident in the actions and patterns of behaviour as individuals and groups. While ideologies may be codified, for many citizens of particular groups or regions, they exist as a "system of values and ideas" passed between members of families and their communities by their deeds and by the policies and programs that are informed by these values and ideas (Aitken 1985).

According to Thompson (1990, 1994), two principal and significantly different forms are linked to the concept termed 'ideology'. Thomson (1994: 133) calls one form a "neutral" conception and the other a "critical" conception of ideology. A neutral conception of ideology represents ideology as described by Aitken above – that is, a defining concept that characterizes a particular way of being, belonging, acting and thinking. Conversely, a critical conception of ideology, presents ideology in a pejorative light, something that is viewed as "misleading, illusory or one-sided" (Thompson 1994: 133). This critical conception of ideology, according to

Thompson (1994: 134), is based on particular "criteria of negativity"; for example, "erroneous and impractical" ideas, or as presenting the ideas of the dominant class such as to serve to "sustain relations of domination". In this thesis, I use the term ideology as a descriptive neutral concept to distinguish particular behaviours and beliefs of individuals within farming communities from other non-farming communities, and to distinguish national and state government policies based on particular ideologies that affect rural communities. In this use, I do not use the term ideology in the pejorative sense *per se*, but I do critique the effects produced through the behaviours of people and the effects of government policies representing particular ideologies.

Family farming in Australia is very much determined by ideologies – competing ideologies. Farming including the failed Soldier Settlement Scheme of World War 1 involving government intervention to populate rural regions, has been and continues to exist in ideological tension between ideals of liberalism, agrarianism and productivism. On the one hand, farmers have been described as adhering to both liberalism and agrarianism where individualist goals of capital improvement through individual endeavours of production are tempered by their collective efforts to ensure the sustainability of their communities and industry (Aitken 1985; Botterill 2009). On the other hand, State and Federal Governments not only focus on the need to continually improve economic performance of the farming sector through policies and programs to research new and improved methods of farming, extension programs to educate farmers in these new improved methods and intervention in markets for agricultural products, they have also intervened to provide financial assistance to farmers for a variety of reasons, set tariffs to ensure high returns to farmers - up to 1990 (Botterill 2009; Davison 2005), and in the 1990s to assist small inefficient farmers to move off their farms – either through retirement or selling up the farm (Tonts 2005). Agriculture as an important export earner for the Federal Government, as an employer of many rural and urban people and as an industry occupying and utilising vast areas of the country leads to the entanglement between State and Federal Governments, local governments and the farming sector that affects not only the productive activities and the commodities produced but also the populations and communities in rural spaces.

That farmers have been affected by a change in the overarching ideology of successive Federal Governments towards a narrow focus on the economy is recognised by many (Alston 2004a; Cheshire and Lawrence 2005; Lockie et al. 2006; Pritchard et al. 2007; Stayner 2005; Tonts 2005; Tonts and Jones 1997). This contraction to economic rationalism, often conflated with 'neoliberalism' by many explaining the changes in governmental policies and programs (Weller and O'Neill 2014), has emerged as the dominant ideology informing policies and programs affecting the agricultural industry and, by extension, farmers and their communities. Economic rationalism involves a calculative approach to determining best outcomes in economic terms and differs from neoliberalism which justifies possible negative social effects resulting

from reduced government intervention on the basis of the overall optimal outcomes (Weller and O'Neill 2014). Tonts and Jones (1997) describe neoliberalism as:

> Essentially, the ideology of neoliberalism suggests a *laissez-faire* approach to economic management … [with] reduced levels of government economic intervention and regulation, and replaced this with regulation by the market.
>
> …
>
> Neoliberal policy approaches hold that revenues collected by the state for the provision of public goods and services necessarily detract from private investment, saving and consumption and thus interfere with the mechanics of the free market. … The response by neoliberal governments has been to impose flatter (less distorting) taxes and charges on private industry and to reduce the levels of personal income tax. … [T]he capacity to deliver tax cuts depends, at least partly, on a reduction in the level of public expenditure. (Tonts and Jones 1997: 174)

This ideology presumes that the most desirable outcomes for the nation's economic growth occur through private entrepreneurism and marketization and not by government intervention, and that the economic gains overweigh the losses in terms of population and community. However, according to Botterill (2009) it is evident, through contradictory policies directed at the agricultural sector, that neoliberalism in its pure form does not obtain in Australia. For example:

> [A]pparent contradiction is not uncommon in rural policy – using neo-liberal language of the NDP [National Drought Policy] while welcoming an inequitable increase to support farmers that is unrelated to economic outcomes. (Botterill 2009: 67)

So, although many in farming communities have been subject to and affected by the rural restructuring agendas of successive Federal Governments since the 1990s, farmers have not been without financial assistance in some form or other from Local, State and Federal Governments. During the late 1990s and until September 2000, as outmigration from family farming came to government attention, government funding was provided to assist low-income farm-owners to retire from farming so that they could 'gift' their farms to their successors where, without such funding, succession could not have occurred (Voyce 1999). This program to attract farmers in the next generation to remain on their farms seems to contradict the neoliberalist ideology for efficiency and high productivity, to force inefficient farmers off their lands.

Weller and O'Neill (2014) offer a different account of the changing policies and programs impacting on the nation in general and therefore also on rural people. They question whether adopting reform policies that others call neoliberalist is actually evidence of Australia adopting neoliberalism *per se*. Rather they consider the changes brought about by instituting reform

policies as indicative of adhering to "a developmental project"; with policies and programs that incorporate economic rationalist thinking while also incorporating government intervention to service community interests (Weller and O'Neill 2014). They conclude:

> Whilst neo-liberal forces have been present in both sides of Australian politics … attempts to install neo-liberal regimes have consistently failed to be endorsed by the wider electorate … [T]he formation of neo-liberal subjectivities has had little traction in the social realm. (Weller and O'Neill 2014: 114).

The important discussion for this thesis is not so much about the identification of which particular ideologies inform policies and hence impact on the management of the farming industry, rural communities and natural resources, rather it is about the policies themselves and the effects they create in the enactment of them. In this thesis, I acknowledge the argument by Weller and O'Neill, and hence instead of examining the neoliberalist ideology *per se*, I examine the effects on families, farms and rural communities of "recognizably neoliberal"/ "neoliberal-like" policies (Weller and O'Neill 2014: 110, 112) applied to the agricultural industry. The following section examines the demographic changes in broadacre farming regions and the associated problems and issues experienced by family members.

2.2.3 The family farm

Many authors, nationally and internationally, have contributed to the discussion on what constitutes a family farm and the ideology associated with it. As the focus of the research is on the dynamics within families on the phenomenon of intergenerational farm transfers, that is the transfer of a privately-owned farm business from the parental generation to someone in their family in the next generation, international authors have much to contribute to research in the Australian context, even though their research cohorts may exist within different agricultural, political and economic contexts. Most authors agree family farms are different from other family businesses in that they are complex structures and systems incorporating property and plant; productive, income-generating activities; family living spaces; and farm principals who are the owners of the farm property (ABS 2003; Fulton and Vanclay 2011; Gasson et al. 1988; Gasson and Errington 1993; Gray 1991; Schwarz 2004). They also generally agree that family farms foster personal commitments to tradition, the farm property, livestock and farm family history (ABS 2003; Fulton and Vanclay 2011; Gasson et al. 1988; Gasson and Errington 1993; Gray 1991; Schwarz 2004). Others include the financial and legal ownership structures of farm businesses in their definitions of farms as important factors relevant to farm production and income generation as well as having bearing on decisions regarding farm succession (McAllister and Geno 2004; Hicks et al. 2012; Weller et al. 2013). Weller et al. (2013) argue Australian farmers use different legal and business arrangements to navigate their way through "contemporary circumstances" of their particular contexts. Hicks et al. (2012) assert the different

legal instruments employed by farmers to structure their farms indicate the relationship between the owners and the control they exert over the farming enterprise and property. McAllister and Geno (2004), Hicks et al. (2012) and Weller et al. (2013) alert us to the different considerations and processes families may have to undertake to ensure their farms are transferred successfully to the next generation – a central consideration of this thesis.

Family farming is considered by some authors to share many features of other small family business operations, particularly in its use of both paid and non-paid labour and where family members are "unlikely to be listed as paid employees" (Astrachan and Shanker 2006: 59). Even so, it must be acknowledged there has been considerable difficulty for scholars to come to a consensus as to what constitutes a family business, and there are still wide variations in what may be included in the field of family businesses (Astrachan and Shanker 2006; Heck et al. 2006; Poutziouris et al. 2006; Sharma 2006). According to McAllister and Geno (2004), family farming businesses in Australia reflect this variation. This is significant for developing an understanding of what occurs during intergenerational farm business transfer; variations in business structure and operation imply variations in intergenerational transfer processes. However, as shall be discussed below, family farms differ markedly from most other small businesses in that they involve not only family member engagement in a business but also that the business entity involves for many families the home such that public and private life are integrated in the space of the farm business. And this integration of private family life also has a significant bearing on the processes and outcomes of family farm transfers.

The ABS (2003) provides a useful starting point from which to consider factors characterizing broadacre family farms to enable an appreciation of what is transferred when intergenerational transfer occurs. This definition describes which farming enterprises the Federal Government recognizes as family farming enterprises and therefore to qualify for particular taxation deductions, reduced income tax charges and other concessions and financial assistance (Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources 2016; Australian Government Department of Human Services 2016). The ABS (2003) definition is such that an entity is considered a family farm if three main factors relating to the people on the farm and the property itself are evident. Firstly, a family is comprised of two or more persons who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, one of whom is at least fifteen years of age, and who are usually resident in the same household. Secondly, families are defined as farming families when the family reference person (the family spokesperson or the principal on the census from) and/or their spouse or partner, reports their main occupation as a farmer or a farm manager. Thirdly, broadacre farms are large farming properties where the productive enterprises focus on sheep, beef, mixed livestock, wheat and other crop farms and mixed livestock-crop farms. Dairy farm businesses are not included in the category of broadacre

farms because they usually operate on small acreages (Garnaut and Lim-Applegate 1998). However, for the purposes of this research I consider family dairy farms as equivalent to broadacre family farms because they each rely on family members' work and/or financial contributions, they are places that combine the business and home, and they are subject to intergenerational farm transfer.

The ABS (2003) definition does not incorporate a number of tangible aspects other authors, both nationally and internationally, consider to be part of the family farm complex, and it certainly does not include the intangible aspects of the farm owners put forward to explain their reasons for actions and responses to farm transfers (Grubbström and Sooväli-Sepping, 2012; Stayner and Barclay 2002). Fulton and Vanclay (2011) and Gray (1991), theorizing family farming in Australia, and Gasson and Errington (1993), Gasson et al. (1988) and Schwarz (2004), theorizing family farming in the United Kingdom, all refer to other more subjective aspects that make family farms as businesses different from other family businesses. For instance, Gray (1991) notes both the tangible and intangible aspects within the summary that the family farm is revered as a place in which generations are nurtured and raised, and as a place combining the ideals of tradition, lifestyle and agrarian livelihood. Schwarz (2004) emphasizes the complexity of family farms in her tripartite model describing the farm as an asset; the farm as a unit of production; and the farm as an employer providing a livelihood that also is a source of intrinsic value. The farm, according to Schwarz (2004), is all-encompassing in that any one family member living on, working on and being engaged in the management of this asset has a greater commitment or expected obligation to the entity than would family members in most other family business enterprises. As a "provider/employer" the farm not only gives "rewards, emotional security, financial security, [and] a 'home' feeling", it also demands "loyalty … [and] sacrifices" (Schwarz, 2004: 21). In this explanation, Schwarz (2004) provides the background for the many possible and varied reasons that family members become attached to family farms and for the occasions of family disputes over farm succession and inheritance (see also De Groot and Nickel 2012). Other factors and values attributed to farms by Schwarz (2004) may also be applicable to non-farm family businesses; for example, the business (property and enterprise, combined or separate) has a market value; a tax-value against which income can be off-set or against which taxes can be raised and a future value which depends on the possible future land uses (Baxter 2013). Additionally, parallels between farm and non-farm family businesses exist in encouraging and grooming successors and instituting intergenerational business transfer and the possibility for sibling relationships to become rivalries (Friedman 1991). Further values described by Schwarz (2004) appear to be particular to farms, for example, the associated leisure value for family members and their visitors, particular places and memories associated with them, and

other items (such as, for example, ground water provision) contributing to the farm's consideration as an asset.

Gasson and Errington (1993), like Schwarz (2004), recognise that the farm is not only a place of residence for the farming family, it is also a place of consumption and leisure. Activities regarded as "recreational" can also be regarded as functional for the business, thereby blurring the line between productive and other activities (Gasson and Errington 1993: 38); for example, kangaroo-culling has recently been added to the list of activities allowed on farms in Victoria that presents as a cross-over between recreation and an income-generating activity (Peters 2016).

According to Gasson and Errington (1993: 94), the aims and activities of the farm business will "inevitably" become embedded in the general aims of the family such that farm investments may interfere with other family activities or vice versa, thereby making it difficult to distinguish between productive (business) activities and reproductive (child-rearing and home-making) activities. Hence, in their view, family farming business raises a number of considerations that do not arise in other family-run businesses or other businesses that are conducted at a distance from the home place. It is the embeddedness of aims and activities of farming into family that make succession-planning and intergenerational transfer of the farm very difficult for many families (Barclay et al 2007; Foskey 2005). Dahl and Sorenson's (2011) insights from their research into mobility in the Danish population may help further explain the difficulties families have in addressing succession. They find family members' social attachments to place (that is, social attachments to their family and friends) often override individuals' desires to improve their financial wellbeing (see also Scannell and Gifford 2010). Given the tightly-woven nature of many family members' social commitments and attachments to their farms, farming and to their families, perhaps it may also be the case for retiring farmers and non-successor children that moving from their farms to enable succession to occur is not an attractive proposition or viewed as contributing to their sense of wellbeing (Atkinson et al 2012; Jack 2012; Tomaney 2013).

Fulton and Vanclay (2011) generally agree with Schwarz's (2004) and Gasson and Errington's (1993) descriptions of the social and affective factors associated with farms. However, in prioritising the business and the family components, Fulton and Vanclay (2011) find some definitions ignore the usually strong relationship between the family and the land, as well as the link between the economic success of the business with the farms' natural resources and biophysical constraints, and the contribution the farming population makes to the local community. The importance of these factors becomes apparent when families (and individuals) are forced or make the decision to leave their farms or they institute changes to the way the land is used (Scannell and Gifford 2010). For example, changing the use of farm land from grazing to cropping or from farming to forestry or from agriculture or forestry to mining makes a significant impact on employment, economic return, production and environmental (natural

resource) sustainability (Cocklin 2005; Millar, 2011; Stewart et al. 2011). Luck (2011: 103), theorizing demographic changes to farming communities in Australia, provides a clear exposition of this issue:

> Because humans are the driving force of environmental change, the dynamics of rural ecosystems are directly linked to the demographic characteristics and behaviour of local communities and indirectly to the socio-economic and cultural trends of broader society. Understanding these links is crucially important for developing ecologically sustainable land management that ensures the persistence of rural ecosystem and the health and wellbeing of the human communities that rely on them.

So, while changes to farm management or enterprise may be instituted for economic reasons, the ramifications of these changes can be much broader, affecting the natural resources on which farming depends and the rural communities which sustain and provide benefits for families.

For this thesis, farms may be considered as family farms if they share a number of characteristics. Following Johnsen (2004), these characteristics comprise:

> [T]he four factors of production – land, capital, management and labour – together with household consumption and the reproduction of labour power. … [T]here is an emphasis on the coincidence of the farm enterprise and the household, and by extension the interdependency of the two domains. (Johnsen 2004: 420)

Firstly, the farm enterprises are operated by one or more members of a family. If operated by more than one, then the family members may be in the same generation or they may represent different generations within the same family. If the farm is run by a sole operator, then it is still considered a family farm if other members of the family live on the farm with the farmer, and or they contribute to the farm in other ways (for example, by financing the farm through off-farm income or by caring for the farmer). Farms may be family farms, even when the family lives off-farm, if members of the family work on the farm property and/or share an ongoing interest (financial or otherwise) in the farm property or enterprise. A farm for this thesis is not considered a family farm when the family lives off the farm and there is no association with the farm by other family members (that is, not working or sharing an interest in the farm – financial or otherwise). Nor is a farm a family farm when there is only one person living and/or working on the farm and no other persons related to this person share an interest in the farm. Secondly, a farm is defined as a family farm when the farm property, plant and associated farm assets are owned by the farmer; the farm property is under purchase or loan arrangements by the current farmer with previous owners, financial institutions and/or other persons; and/or the farm is an enterprise operating on properties under long-term lease arrangements. Thirdly, family farms can be set up under arrangements as sole owners or as partnerships, family trusts or family companies such that the people managing and belonging to the partnerships, trusts and companies are directly involved in some way in the farm enterprises. Fourthly, it is not necessary that current

family farmers are operating farms that have passed to them from the previous generation, the important point is that a family has one or more members whose primary activity is farming on a particular property whether the property is owned or under mortgage or leasehold arrangements by family members. This definition provides for particular members of family to not only be active in the business of farming, but also by virtue of being associated with a particular property, to be residents within a particular community. The relationship between farm family members and the local community is discussed briefly below and in more detail in Section 2.5.

The relationship between farming families and their communities is often exposed or made apparent when families leave farming districts. Stayner and Barclay (2002: 79), state the exit of farm families from the farm and the family's departure from Australian rural communities can have profound and enduring negative effects on the "viability of small town functions": the loss of working-age people creates in the remaining population a disproportionate number of dependent people (those aged over 65 and under 18). Furthermore, much of this loss to the community occurs because of the loss of farm women when families leave. According to Dempsey (1992), Poiner (1990) and Schwarz (2004), farm women are usually the social connectors with developed social capital and who are most likely responsible of social organization for the nurturing and caring activities within the community. Social capital refers to "features such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam 1995: 67). Loss is also felt through the lack of volunteers to undertake many of the activities ensuring the amenity of rural spaces and the maintenance and development infrastructure (Race et al. 2011). In contrast, Black (2005: 34) notes many rural towns and their businesses may not experience the loss of farming families as much as the rural farming communities themselves do because they have become "decoupled" from the surrounding farming populations and agricultural production. They have achieved this decoupling through developing associations with non-farming businesses to ensure there is a "wider [and more secure] range of employment opportunities for their people" (Black 2005: 35); for example, tourism, and niche market products (arts, crafts and festivals) not necessarily related to farming (Gibson 2014).

While the effects of loss when whole families leave their farms and the rural communities in which they have lived is acknowledged in research as are the effects of general population decline, as demonstrated above, much research leaves unexamined the loss of particular family members who depart because they are not involved in farm succession. Nowhere is there any specific discussion on the effect of the loss of particular members from the family or from the rural community in which they have spent their childhoods. This thesis addresses this gap.

Research over the previous three decades has opened up the social institution of farm family, previously discussed as a unit, to highlight the importance of women's contributions to

family farms and to farming communities (Alston 2004a). The next section discusses the literature on the contributions of women to agricultural productivity, family reproduction and the community. It also discusses the differential statuses of men and women in farming families and farming communities. This in turn will assist in the discussion that follows, namely of the patterns of family farm succession and the out-migration of farming daughters and non-successor sons.

2.2.4 Family farms and their importance to local communities

Farming family members each, in some way, by virtue of their presence within farming districts contribute to the need for and/or the provision of rural facilities and services which in turn contribute to the amenity of rural places and wellbeing of community members. They are part of the network of actors that not only create rural communities, they are vital constituents of the network – they maintain the social, physical and economic environments in which the local communities exist. Furthermore, through their activities they to contribute to the national economy and provide goods for wider society nationally and internationally. Family members resident in the farming districts are most often responsible for the initiation and development of facilities (for example, schools, churches, sporting and social clubs) and services (for example, ARC and CFA) within those districts and are the people who contribute to the ongoing maintenance and development of these facilities and services (Dibden et al. 2009; Milestad et al. 2010; Potter and Tilzey 2005). If the farming industry focused solely on economic performance, then having fewer larger farms would be favoured over the many small and medium-sized family farms that are currently in operation, many of which came into being through early to mid-20th C government closer settlement programs.

In Australia, broadacre and dairy farms combined are responsible for the management of most of the natural resource on which farm enterprises are conducted – over "90 percent of the total area of agricultural land" (ABARES 2016: 173; see also McManus et al. 2012). As the work on family farms involves various people, all people who work the farms, by their productive use of the land, are directly involved in the maintenance, development and sustainability of this natural resource. Furthermore, as privately-owned farmlands are usually contiguous to Crown Land or other public reserves, the farming sector is often called upon to manage the public natural resources, often in a voluntary capacity (for example, through Landcare programs directed towards pest plant and vermin control, and CFA works for fire suppression, and other volunteer activities) (Curtis et al. 2014; Lawrence 2005b). However, current farm transfer practices of most families limiting the numbers of successor and others selling up to farmers expanding their properties or selling to out-of-district investors contributes to the declining rural populations and changes to landscape use and management (Luck et al. 2011). Luck et al. (2011: 382) conclude "the challenges of managing declining rural communities and their landscapes are immense".

They further conclude that "abandoning these communities and the landscapes that support them is not an option" (Luck at al: 382). According to Luck et al. (2011) there is an obligation to maintain and support these communities and landscapes.

Addressing the issue of rural out-migration has been argued as possible through a model of rural governance engaging the skills and knowledge of local rural people (Cheshire et al. 2007). This participatory theory of governance considers the onus for regional sustainability and development is best placed firmly within the hands of local community actors (Eversole and Martin 2005: 4; see also Argent 2011). However, the model of rural governance requires not only investment (both time and money) by community members and government in local farming districts (Black 2005), it also requires attention to how the relations of governance actually impact on these goals (Cheshire at al. 2007); that is, attention to the capacity of local populations to participate and to agree on what to do and how to do whatever is decided upon. A major obstacle to engaging regional people to participate in rural development to sustain their communities, to use their social capital and local knowledges to conserve and enhance their resources and sustain their populations, institutions and amenities (Cheshire et al. 2007; Eversole and Martin 2005), is the continued outmigration that undermines such engagement. In many broadacre farming districts there is not the population to retain social amenity, local institutions and infrastructure and manage natural resources. This is usually ignored in government policies which refer to capacity building and local resource management as the responsibility of local citizens (Tonts 2005).

2.2.5 Rurality and declining rural populations

As described above, populations in many broadacre farming districts are declining and the demographics of farming are changing with the increase in corporate ownership and financialization of farms. Much political comment and social research has focused on rural out-migration from broadacre farming districts in Australia (see, for example, Argent and Walmsley 2008; Barr 2014; Dufty-Jones et al. 2014; Eacott and Sonn 2006; Hugo 2005; Luhrs 2015; McManus et al. 2012), and across the Western world in general (see, for example, Commins 1978; Halfacree and Boyle 1999; Johnsen 2004). It has also brought the concept of a distinctly rural space into question (Ashwood 2010; Cloke 2005; Cloke et al. 1994). The question is not whether out-migration is occurring. There are two main questions that apply both to the Australian broadacre farming regions and those in broadacre farming regions in other comparable Western nations. Firstly, what is the relationship between out-migration and the sustainability of rural communities, individual wellbeing, local amenity and infrastructure and natural resource management (Argent 2008; Argent and Walmsley 2008; Barr 2014; Black 2005; Cocklin 2005; Commins 1978; Curtis et al. 2014; Hugo 2005; Smailes et al. 2012)? Secondly, what combination of factors (for example, social, economic, political technological) may be driving this out-

migration, and can (or should) the out-migration be reversed (Alston 2004b; Cairns 2014; Dufty-Jones et al. 2014; Gabriel 2000; McGranahan et al. 2010; McManus et al. 2012)?

Complicating investigations is the question of whether a 'rural' can be defined. Although Cloke et al. (1994: v) in discussing non-urban districts in the United Kingdom find rural is a "prime and deeply felt determinant of the actions of many respondents to rural research"; they also find defining 'rural' a challenge, and thus attributing causes to effects within a rural space problematic. In contrast, Ashwood (2010) in discussing farming centres in Ireland argues the twenty-first century communication technologies overcome perceived boundaries of rural and urban such that there can no longer be rigid distinctions between the two categories. Furthermore, Ashwood (2010) argues the anticipated problems and issues (such as isolation and lack of services) associated with depopulation of rural spaces and the communities that occupy them appear to be addressed with the advent of modern communications technologies. Access to these technologies, and hence connectivity with others, appears to blur the once distinctly rural-urban boundary (Cloke 2005). Rural and urban people, through integrated communication technologies, share many common experiences, interests and ambitions (Ashwood 2010). In this view, appeals to rural ideology as creating a distinct character of rural life for rural people, different from the urban, is called into question and challenged.

However, in a country where distances between urban centres and farms are far greater and rural population densities much less than those in the United Kingdom, current and recent Australian politicians do refer to and acknowledge a cultural distinction between the country (rural) and the city (urban) (Brett 2011). Brett (2011: 3), in her essay 'Fair Share: Country and City in Australia', highlights the sentiments of two Independent Members of Parliament, Bob Katter and Tony Windsor, who refer to the distinct spaces and infrastructure of rural Australia and the need to maintain rural populations to "fill the empty land". Other social geographers do conceive of rurality as distinct from the urban given the social experiences of people living physically, socially, economically and emotionally differently from their urban counterparts; however, they do question 'rurality' as defining one uniform space instead referring to the multiple ways of perceiving and constructing rurality (Bushin et al. 2007; Cloke 2006; Dunkley and Panelli 2007). Hence, they, including Cloke (2005, 2006), defend the on-going attention to researching the rural (Cloke and Thrift 1994; Halfacree 2006; Obrien et al. 2012). Similarly, Sampson et al. (2011), in examining comparable rural places in New Zealand, argue the distinction between rural and non-rural is real and, following the effects of neoliberal policies and global changes to agricultural markets, a need exists to focus on improving rural communities' capacities to meet the challenges of economic change.

Milestad et al.'s (2010) research in Sweden also supports the contention that there are indeed differences between rural and urban spaces, albeit in an ever-evolving landscape of

population and styles of agricultural production. Although, Milestad et al. (2010) acknowledge the importance of farming families for rural community centres, they assert there is an interdependence between urban and rural communities. Rather than agreeing with others on the blurring of the differences between urban and rural, Milestad et al. (2010) argue the differences between the urban and rural contribute to better social, economic and physical spaces across whole regions.

Le Heron's (1991) view of farming regarding the relationships within farming communities and between rural and urban spaces questions the conception of the family farm as the basic unit of each farming system. Le Heron (1991) argues a need exists to acknowledge and make visible the varied social relations in terms of labour allocation to primary agriculture and the varied incomes from agriculture. In turn, this prompts the conception of family farming as an integral part in an interconnected web of economic and social relationships rather than considering the family farm as an independent isolated social and economic unit. Le Heron's (1991) suggestion that what happens between farm family members may also be affecting the wider social and economic web of farming communities and beyond motivates my research to examine the wider social effects of family members' interactions and actions to implement family farm transfer and their responses to the processes and outcomes.

Despite the changes, there are still many family farm businesses and they operate on extensive areas of Australia's natural resources. Fulton and Vanclay (2011: 95) reported there were 140,700 farm businesses in Australia in 1997. The recent ABS (2013) figures of 120,980 farm businesses indicate there has been a reduction of over 19,000 farm businesses since 1997. Alston (2004a) noted there had been about a 25% drop in the number of farms in Australia (about 40,000 farms) from 1980 to 2004 indicating this period may have been a more dramatic adjustment out of agriculture for many families than the period between 1997-2012. The land under agricultural production during this decline in the number of farming businesses remained fairly constant at around 400,000,000 hectares/988,421,526 acres until 2012 (ABS 2013). However, Thompsen (2016) reported a loss to agriculture of approximately 15 million hectares since 2012 as former agricultural land was put to different use. Nevertheless, of the registered farm businesses, the majority of these are broadacre family businesses, indicating there has been little change in the ownership styles of farm businesses in the decade since 2004 when Alston (2004a: 39) stated that broadacre farms are "still overwhelming dominated by families" with "99.6% of broadacre and dairy farms" being owned and managed by families. McAllister and Geno (2004) observe the predicted trend to large corporate farms has not eventuated to the extent anticipated for Australia.

Although various authors differ in their assessments of the proportion of family-run farm enterprises in Australia – for example, Lobley and Baker (2012) note about 94% of farms remain

family-owned and operated and Wheeler et al. (2012) estimate the proportion of family farms operating in Australia represents 82% of all farms – it is clear the proportion of family operated farms in Australia remains higher than non-family farm business operations. The high proportion of family ownership, according to Wheeler et al. (2012: 266) makes it "important to understand the interactions between farm family dynamics and [farm] performance" (see also Alston 2004a; Lobley and Baker 2012). Brett (2011) supports this view and presses an even stronger point, that the extensive use of Australia's natural resource renders the agricultural sector and its resource management accountable to the Australian people (see also Baxter 2012 on farm succession, legal institutions and sustainable food systems). Cocklin and Dibden (2005) conclude national and state governments and owners of farms working in concert have to accommodate new ways of appreciating rural spaces and to adjust productive rural enterprises to ensure families, communities and the national economy are able to survive the environmental, economic and social challenges that arise from the interdependence of the extractive activity of farm production, the markets of the neoliberalist global economy and the environment. And, finally, Barr (2014) concludes

> There is little evidence that the declining number of younger farmers has any implications for our nation's food security. There may be some minor implications for agricultural productivity. There is evidence that structural ageing is associated with declining rural populations, and increased requirements for human service for farm households with ageing residents. (Barr 2014: xix).

In other words, it is not so much agriculture itself that suffers from the changing demographics within the agricultural industry, rather there are social and service implications arising from these changes that require attention. Other authors do acknowledge these implications and losses to rural community with continuing depopulation. Combined with the hollowing out of the local community increased farm efficiency and the reduction in rural services have created a situation where there is little opportunity for work and investment by non-successor children in the same district (Alston 2005b). Consequently, not only are non-successors denied the opportunity to work on the family farm, there is little opportunity for them to gain local productive employment. This leads to a further net outmigration of population so that the only people remaining in rural farming districts are either those directly involved in farming, young family members who are being raised at home and some elderly people who remain on their farms (Argent and Tonts 2015). Exacerbating the social issues for remaining residents is the fact that more women than men out-migrate leading to an imbalance between males and females (Argent and Tonts 2015; Luhrs 2012). The issue for remaining residents is that their network of associations is much thinner than for previous generations and their quality of life is reduced through lack of social connectedness, services and local amenity (Rogers et al. 2013). Of all who leave, many may have contributed to the social and productive fabric of the rural farming society had they been

given the opportunity to remain involved in some way in the family farm (for example, as an investor, part-time worker, part owner, partner) or if there were local jobs they could fill.

Part of the social and service provisions in families and their communities has been very much provided by women in farming families. Loss of families and loss of farm women to farming communities continues the reduction in service and amenity of these communities. Until the last two decades of the 20th C, women and their contributions to rural society and to agriculture were mostly hidden and unacknowledged. The following section examines the role of women on farms and in farming communities.

2.3 Farm women

2.3.1 Making farm women visible

For most of Australia's agricultural history, women were variously referred to as the farmer's daughter, the farmer's wife, or the dependant, and were registered on the Australian Census as dependants performing 'domestic duties' (Hunter and Riney-Kehrberg 2007; McGowan 2003, Voyce 2007). As for other developed nations, the only people referred to as farmer were the adult males: fathers and sons (Fink 1988; Hunter and Riney-Kehrberg 2007; Janiewski 1988; Oeser and Emery 1954; Osterud 1988; Sachs 1988). Regardless of women's ascribed status, Alston (1995) finds much of the social, cultural and economic wealth of families and farming communities can be attributed to women who, either directly or indirectly (that is, by assisting other family members), contribute to the social, cultural and economically-productive activities both on their farms and in their communities. Poiner (1990) argues that women's emotional attachment to and embeddedness in their families and communities previously deterred women from asserting their identities as active farming women. As we shall see later in this section, even though farm women are now given greater recognition for their contributions to agriculture and to rural communities than Poiner (1990) found (Dale-Hallet et al. 2007), not much has changed to alter the disproportionate status that rural men hold over rural women (Alston 2006).

From the 1980s, national and international feminist analysis and critique has done much to bring the role of farm women into public view (Thien 2005). Thien (2005: 78) states the farmer's wife has come to hold a particular place in the feminist academic production of the rural landscape, and that this "is a nod to a feminist and materialist politics of naming". For the most part, literature on women in farming focuses on women as wives and partners of farmers (see for example Allen 2002; Alston 1995; Dale-Hallet et al. 2007; Jennings and Stehlik 2000; RIRDC 1998; Sachs 1996; Shortall 1991; Teather 1998; Whatmore 1991; Whatmore et al. 1994). The literature exposes the valuable and immense contributions wives and partners make to the local and national economies and to rural society both in terms of income-generating work they

undertake either on or off their farms and through their social activities, commitments to and wealth of social capital for the communities in which they live. It also makes known women's combined contribution to their farms and families, that is the productive (farming) work and reproductive (domestic, child-rearing and caring) work (see for example Allen 2002; Alston 1995, 1998; Dale-Hallet et al. 2007; Keating and Munro 1988; RIRDC 1998; Sachs 1988, 1996; Shortall 2006; Teather 1998; Whatmore 1988; Whatmore et al. 1994).

Other national and international gender-aware research examines the structures of rural society and the differential roles and statuses of men and women; the constraints felt and freedoms enjoyed differentially by men and women; the exercise of power in rural families, communities and regions; and how women assess and manage their situations on farms (see, for example, Bennett 2013; Bennett 2004a; Bock 2006; Gasson 1980-81, 1987; Little 2003; Little and Jones 2000; Little and Morris 2005; O'Hara 1998; Panelli 2004; Pini 2007; Poiner 1990; Sachs 1996; Shortall 2005; Whatmore 1988). For example, Poiner (1990: 128– 130) in her study on the rural region of Marulan, New South Wales, finds women for the greater part in rural areas are shackled by the Australian "ideology of male dominance" and the "ideology of the family" where a "clear differentiation of sex roles" exists within families and within the wider society (see also Whittenbury 2003). These ideologies assume women to be in the subordinate position to their male partners with respect to farm decisions and contributions to the work on farms. And, as described by Pini (2007: 45), daughters-in-law are given less regard, status, power and decision-making than other established women while the incumbent older generation and their husbands hold the view that new wives (women) are likely to be "troublesome and vexatious" to the farm and the family.

While Poiner's (1990) research may appear no longer representative of the current social structure of farming communities, especially when contrasted against Foskey's (2005) report on the improved social status of women on Australian farms, it does resonate with Alston's (1998, 2012) later findings. Where Foskey asserts that the majority of Australian farm businesses which are run as family farms show women are taking "a greater role in farm management" (Foskey, 2005: 50–3), Alston (1998; 2012) argues the continuing patriarchal nature of relations between farm men and women ensures the status quo: that farm women's work is often not recognised or, if acknowledged, not given equal status to men's farm work. Alston (2012) agrees with Poiner (1990) and Dempsey (1992) that power relations continue to favour males in social relations which not only exist within the farm families but also extend to social relations within and across farming communities in Australia such that women are still mostly regarded as subordinate to men both in terms of agricultural productivity and of social prominence and responsibility. There remains a skewed pattern of status favouring males in Australian farming communities (Alston 2012).

Some international authors find farm women complicit in maintaining patriarchal relations for the purpose of continuing their lifestyles and ensuring their sons are the successors to farms, even when such adherence entails their own secondary social status and limits farming opportunities and access to wealth-creating property for their daughters (Brandth 2002; Bennett 2004a; Price and Evans 2005; Teather 1998). The situation is further endorsed through representations in the media of strong masculine men and supportive feminine women of farming families (Morris and Evans 2001). Morris and Evans (2001: 388), based on their research in the United Kingdom on representations of farm women over 20 years from 1976 to 1996 in 'Farmlife' in the *Farmers Weekly*, argue:

> [T]he celebration of business successes of farm women thinly disguises a commodification of women's reproductive roles within farm households, helping to legitimise their participation in these businesses. Representation of hegemonic masculinity remains explicit by continued reference to the agricultural business activities of men.

Hence, according to Morris and Evans (2001), changing opportunities, political regimes and economic circumstances do little to reduce the dualistic division of status, labour and projected identity differences between men and women in rural communities. Saugeres (2002), following her investigations of embodiment in farming families in southern France, argues the dualist notions of embodiment whereby men are conceived as endowed with qualities suited to farming and women as lacking and deficient in some way are central to continuing patriarchal ideologies and unequal gender relations in farming communities. These notions are not challenged by women who can and do farm; Saugeres (2002: 649) finds they are reinforced by dismissing successful farmer women as neither real women nor real men – they are "only half a man". However, Brandth's (2006: 20–21, 23) research into Norwegian farm women who operate farm machinery, generally described as "part of the performance of masculinity", concludes this performance most often brings women respect through working competently like a man, but this does not necessarily compromise their feminine gender. In fact, Brandth finds many women resist the image imposed on them – of hard workers indicating the quality of emotional toughness (Brandth 2006). Brandth (2006: 26) concludes women farmers regard their self-identities and definitions as women, including their emotional sensitivity, important to maintain, even when their bodies work competently on tasks that are "male-coded". Brandth (2006) suggests that women who regard their identities as women and who work competently in male-coded domains challenge the association of masculinity with that work, such that the work may be repositioned as a non-gendered activity.

Bryant and Pini (2009: 55) add another dimension to the *genderedness* of Australian rural society in noting gendered social relations persist across class such that class itself not only remains within rural society, it is itself a "gendered phenomenon" affecting access and

opportunity for rural women (and men) in agriculture. Ribot and Peluso's (2003: 156) 'theory of access' defines access to mean access to "all possible means by which a person is able to benefit from things – whether that acknowledgement is by law, custom or convention". Hence, Bryant and Pini (2009) assert that women and men in rural communities continue to not share equality of access and opportunity to occupations and positions of influence, in spite of the advances since the 1980s that women have made in recognition for their contributions to agriculture and their rural communities.

Adding to understanding of the persistence of the gendered rurality in Australia, Pini and Shortall (2006) argue neoliberalist discourse is pushing gender reform into the background, as individualism, competition and efficiency take hold of the public imagination (see also Little and Jones 2000; Panelli 2007). Finally, moreover, where patriarchy supposedly supports male advantage at the expense of female opportunity and participation, Price and Evans (2009) find connections between rural patriarchy, the stress and distress suffered by farm family members, and the extension of these adverse individual effects into rural communities. Similarly, Bryant and Garnham (2015: 75,78) reveal the tensions prevalent in many farming communities, where masculinity and the masculine hero (or "heroic Aussie battler") are challenged, compromised and eventually replaced by severely distressed egos such that patriarchy does not enable the distressed male to survive "environmental, social and economic crises". Price and Evans (2009) suggest the traditional patriarchal farming way of life with its attendant stresses and distress may become untenable (see also Alston 2006). However, this seems unlikely, as patriarchy appears to reinvent itself and take hold within changed political, economic and social contexts (Alston 2006).

Patriarchy/masculine hegemony are terms with different connotations but which may be used interchangeably to describe rural social patterns where men overwhelmingly are provided greater social recognition for their work, decision-making and volunteerism and enjoy advantages that come with this recognition. Rural masculine hegemony refers to the prevailing social pattern privileging rural men over rural women. Rural men in this context are afforded more recognition, status and opportunity in terms of occupation, social leadership and decision-making both within the family and in the wider rural community than are rural women (Alston 1998, 2012; Bennett 2004a; Dempsey 1992; Poiner 1990). Bennett (2004a: 149), citing Walby (1990), provides a model of patriarchy that is apposite for this discussion, albeit with reservations on the efficacy of such a model to explain the "resilience of patriarchy". Patriarchy is defined as "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (Bennett 2004a: 148). Whether men (or women) regard their activities and rural institutions as exploitative, domineering and oppressive of women is not the question or issue for this discussion on rural farming communities and households; the issue for this discussion is the effects of activities and institutions which are exploitative, domineering and oppressive to women that

favour or uphold men's social status at the expense of women's social status in rural farming communities and households.

On the one hand, the importance of the land and the farmers' work on the land is deemed to be the determiner of self-identity for many rural men and the fundamental determiner of farm succession in many families. For women, on the other hand, self-identity is supposedly aligned with the support and care given to the farming family, even if they do undertake actual farm work. Farming men are seen and expected to be the providers for the family and are thus accorded high status, while women are viewed as responsible for, and expected to take on, the role of carer and the person responsible for household domestic activities which are accorded lower status (Whittenbury 2003). While there is a range of ways in which farming families operate, Gormon (2006: 31) concludes there are very few that "operate in a democratic fashion". Alston (1995:16) summarizes the strongly conservative nature of adhering to traditional ideologies found in farming families and farming communities as follows:

> The traditional conservatism of farm families is based on ideals which have included an acceptance of male hegemony; a belief in the inalienable human right and freedom to use the land as one sees fit; and a strong rejection of welfare mentality.

This ideology, often labelled as 'rural ideology' and which incorporates traditional family ideology (Whittenbury 2003), sees women as subordinate to men in terms of power, decision-making and farm succession (Crosby 1998). As Whittenbury (2003: 151) explains, "gendered expectations are inherent in this ideology and the discourses that surround it". According to Gullifer and Thompson (2006: 83), this ideology informs and is informed by the highly gendered image of the man on the land who possesses an idealised identity incorporating "a sense of belonging and obligation to the community" that is part of the ideal of mateship. These gendered expectations of farming identity extend to identities in farming communities such that rural men are invested with particular forms of social power; gendered expectations support and maintain hegemonic masculinities in rural farming districts (Gullifer and Thompson 2006). Sons, generally, are groomed to become farmers; that is, they are progressively tutored in and granted control of farming activities and financial management and daughters, generally, are not (Errington 2002; Gasson and Errington 1993).

Following the 1995 World Conference on Women in 1995 and after the UN endorsement of 'mainstreaming' – the political movement to incorporate women into ruling mainstream structures to promote gender equality (Diaz 2013) – feminist literature shifted to examine whether changes in government policy to address gender inequality in rural regions was evident in society (Alston 2003, 2006, 2009; Bock 2014; Shortall and Bock 2014). Alston (2009) reports mainstreaming policy has not translated into practice in Australia; that women's contributions to farming remain marginalised and hamstrung by policies that regard the family as the social unit

of concern rather than regarding the circumstances of members of the family as deserving of specific attention. Specifically, Alston's (2006, 2009) examination of Australia's mainstreaming agenda and policies, which were directed to overcome gender inequity and inequality in the time of a major drought in Australia, revealed the intransigence of rural patriarchal society and masculinist political structures. Alston (2006, 2009) argues this intransigence compromised measures of dealing with drought-affected families: women with increased off-farm workloads to save the farm continued to be regarded as secondary to their farmer husbands (see also Hankivsky 2008). Alston's (2014) later work and that of Bock (2014), Shortall and Bock (2014) and Shortall (2015) report similar findings: that mainstreaming has not translated into general practice to improve gender relations and the status of women in agriculture generally. Shortall (2015: 718) concludes that as the "business viability of agriculture depends on the exploitation of family members, particularly women", transformative change to create equality for women has little prospect. In general, from the discussion canvassed, it appears the status of women has changed little even if their contributions to farming and to rural communities are now exposed and acknowledged.

Eveline and Bacchi (2006) acknowledge the difficulties in instituting social reform through instituting gender mainstreaming and consider problems arise because of the particular reform models employed. They suggest focusing on gendering as process, that of a deliberate political process, and working towards "gendering-awareness mainstreaming" so that policy implementers attend to the contexts and situations (Eveline and Bacchi 2006: 508). Eveline and Bacchi (2006) argue that considering gender as a noun or condition of being and working to overcome particular conditions of disadvantage does not address the context of the disadvantage. Alston (2014: 292) argues "it is in the local spaces that change must occur" to accommodate gender equality; however, she also states it is in the local spaces where women have been "most powerless".

2.3.2 Farm daughters

Where once women in general were hidden from view in literature and discussion on the farm family, daughters continue to remain invisible. Most researchers give prominence to accounts from farm wives and mothers to develop social knowledge and theory of all women on farms. Many researchers, for example McGowan (2011:144) repeat what seems to be the accepted wisdom that "women usually come into farming through marriage" when attempting to analyse the reasons for the "high level of gender specialisation" in the farm workforce and family unit. What is missing from most research, including feminist research, is the inclusion of daughters of farmers as a significant and distinct group of the family and farming community. Rarely has research been undertaken to gain insights to their concerns, issues, ambitions, opportunities and emotional attachments to farming and the family farm. In some instances, they are not even

given their identity of daughter of farmer, for example, as in Garnaut et al. (1999: 17) where daughters are included in the sub-group "other relative". Sons, meanwhile, are accorded a specific identity in farming families.

Gasson's (1987) focus on careers for farmers' daughters provides space for daughters to represent their own views and concerns; still, her focus is not on daughters as farm successors but more on how their lives as daughters are influenced by their choices and other factors (such as their mothers' encouragement to leave) for their future off-farm lives. Harfull (2012) does include representations from an Australian daughter working as a farmer and the issues associated with this choice of career; but the issues of inheritance for daughters are not fully explored. The exceptions are found in Forbes-Chilibeck (2005) who examines the effects of patrilineal inheritance and the vulnerability of daughters, and my research (Luhrs 2012, 2015) that engages with daughters on their views on the issue of farm succession and inheritance. Forbes-Chilibeck (2005: 31) concludes:

> Farmers' daughters must look beyond their fathers and brothers for the approval, support, and strength to challenge the patriarchal structures found on the Prairie farm.

My own research, Luhrs (2012, 2015), resonates with Forbes-Chilibeck (2005): daughters desiring to take up farming are usually prevented from doing so because of the prevailing attitude favouring sons as successors. In my research, in only one case was a daughter included in farm succession and transferred shares in the family farm; however, the brother was granted more responsibility than the daughter over the management of the enterprise (Luhrs 2015). In this case, the brother enjoyed greater financial gain than his sister; patriarchy continued to exclude a daughter (as successor) from full operational control of the enterprise and equality in financial benefit (Luhrs 2015).

If we look at farm families with two or more children, more daughters are born into farming families than women who enter the family through marriage. These daughters are brought up embedded in farming culture, ideology and practice. Daughters are often expected to participate in the farm work, and they develop farm skills comparable to their brothers' skills. This is reflected in Hunter and Riney-Kehrberg's (2007: 58) research of Australian, American Midwest and New Zealand farming families where daughters are shown to be an "essential part of the economic fabric of the family and the farm". Riley (2009: 245), following "Philo's (1992) plea to give greater attention to rural geographies" in examining the social geographies of farm children in the Peak District of the United Kingdom, focuses on children's experiences of farming and farming practices, children's roles in these practices and of the children's exposure to wider discourses and history of the family farm. His research demonstrates "gendered relations … [are] socially constructed around certain tasks … [and bounded by] the temporal discourses at work"

(Riley 2009: 250). Interestingly, while some boys are shown to demonstrate agency in changing the narratives for their life courses, no girls are observed to challenge the life courses the farming family discourses offered, they all are seen to understand their place on the farm as transitory" (Riley 2009: 251). In Riley's (2009) view, girls' engagements with the farms are "fleeting" while the boys' engagements, through farm tasks, are regarded as "rites of passage". That is, farm daughters are not seen to develop adult personas through their engagements with farm activities whereas their brothers' engagements with farm activities provide them with status as they grow and mature. Riley (2009: 252) states:

> The future, however, impinges on gendered relations, with girls seeing their contribution as essential, but ephemeral, and boys framing identities which are much more anchored to the farm.

Riley's report appears to be supporting the gendered assumptions of farming rather than questioning these assumptions. This thesis on the other hand, does provide space for daughters and sons to each express their desires to, or not to, take up farming on their families' farms and/or of their expectations to retain some association with the farms of their childhoods as they move into adulthood. Riley's (2009) research is important for bringing children into view to present accounts of their farm lives, the spaces and freedoms they enjoy, the possible attachments they develop to their childhood life-styles and farm-lands, to articulate their positionality with respect to future careers and their connectedness to their farming heritage.

Alston's (1995) research confirms the view that many mothers consider their daughters' involvements in farming to be transitory. According to Alston (1995), the consciousness of most farm women (that is, as mothers) is such that they tend to express very traditional views in support of farm policies that will preserve the family farm, which in turn maintains the gender inequality in access to the family farming business, even when their daughters exhibit farming interest, knowledge and prowess. Alston (1995) further reports only a small number of women in her study consider inheritance should be equal for all children, and most women without sons consider the farm should be sold and not passed onto the daughters. Sachs (1996) also finds many farmers' wives (and who may also claim the title of farmer), direct their energies towards preserving the family farm. Sachs (1996), in a similar vein to Alston (1995), argues that these women, by working to preserve the farm so that their sons may have future on the farm, actually direct attention and benefits away from daughters. Hence, once again, we see that concentrating on ensuring the multigenerationality of the farm rarely improves the position of daughters (or non-successor sons) in the farming enterprise despite their childhood contributions to the farm's productivity.

The research into women's status on Australian family farms resonates with research of Fink (1988), Janiewski (1988), Osterud (1988) and Sachs (1988) into women on farms in the

United States of America (USA); that is, on comparable farms differential gendered identities exist where the men are regarded as the farmers and the women are regarded as the help-mates of the farmers. While there is evidence of some challenge to patrilineal inheritance in the USA (Trauger 2004; Trauger et al. 2010), most feminist researchers find patrilineal patterns of inheritance and succession remain common to agricultural regions, even in more recent times of bringing farm women into focus. Succession and/or inheritance are the means by which most farmers gain access to farming properties, and male farm children more likely to be part of the succession process and daughters typically miss out on opportunities to continue the family farm (Foskey 2005; Gasson and Errington 1993; Gorman 2006; Sachs 1996; Shortall 2004).

Morell and Bock (2008) through their examination of the political and social structures of rural societies offer an explanation for the continuing genderedness of farm succession. They claim that the rural gender regimes exist, that they are supported and that they maintained through the "interplay of policy formation at the national level" and its interaction with "local and regional politics and the politics of everyday life" (Morell and Bock 2008: 4).

> [S]pecific rural gender regimes are maintained through state governance at the national, regional and local levels. Laws and citizenship rights are embedded in societal norms and values that reflect prevailing power relations within society. The state, through its hegemonic position, has the power to both formulate these laws, and to implement them through its institutions. In doing so the state disseminates the inherent norms and values and contributes to either the reformulation or reconfirmation of current inequalities and gender regimes. (Morell and Bock 2008: 4)

Moreover, in their comparative study of gender regimes in rural communities across comparable Western nations, Morell and Bock (2008: 17) conclude that farming communities in Australia display a gender regime that shares with Ireland and The Netherlands characteristics of the model of the "main male breadwinner" in a liberal society such that is the men in farming families continue to be regarded as the main income earner for farming families. Morell and Bock (2008: 17) claim in such a liberal society as exists in Australia national policies demonstrate "weak and underdeveloped redistributive rights" and the family remains the greater provider of individual welfare social equality – that there is a "low priority" for equality which does little to overturn social differentiation that affects gender, class and ethnic relations. Furthermore, women's integration into the paid workforce in liberal nations is usually through part-time jobs – women provide the supplement the main male family breadwinner income (Bock and Morell 200).

Pini (2008) provides further insight into the gender regimes that promote men's status over women's status in farming districts, even when women have recently gained recognition for their contributions to and participation in rural affairs. In her research into women's participation in Australian local governments, Pini (2008: 312) finds that men adjust to changes in roles undertaken by men and women such that they recuperate their hegemonic identities:

> Men … validate, reinforce and repair their own gendered subjectivities as masculine men in local government. This recuperative identity work is complex in that it is connected, not just to women's entry to the sector, but to the changing role of local government. The process is thus one of both 'keeping women out' and 'writing men back in'. In this respect, despite rural and regional women's increased presence in the sector, local government is (re)gendered as masculine. (Pini 2008: 312)

The discussion above provides the context for considering how intergenerational farm transfer is instituted under a gender regime of that reflects men retaining higher social status than women in rural societies. The literature on patterns of farm transfer in Western nations with broadacre farms is examined in the following section.

2.4 Intergenerational family farm transfer

Discussion in the previous sections demonstrates the continuing significance of the family farming institution to personal identities, statuses and social relationships of family members, to the physical features of the natural resources and to the economy in Australia and other comparable countries. While the changing technologies and changing domestic and international markets have contributed to an ever-evolving industry, for all farm owners there remains the question of what to do when the farmer reaches the end of his/her working life. Although elderly farmers share similar end-of-farming decision-making about how to deal with the family farm, the possible decisions depend on national laws related to farm succession, farm property law, capital gain tax provisions and old-age benefits provided by governments (Hicks et al. 2012).

Transfer decisions family business principals make may involve inheritance or succession or a mix of both. For the purposes of this research, succession and inheritance are given equal consideration in examining the effects of farm transfers. It is not which process of transfer is employed by families that is the focus of research but rather the effects of the deliberations, determination and actual processes of farm transfers on parents and their successor and non-successor children, on the relationships between members of the farm family and on the local communities in which family members live. Nonetheless, we do need to be mindful of the differences in the methods of transfers as these affect the timing and processes of farm transfers. Gasson and Errington (1993) emphasize that succession (transfer of management) is conceptually distinct from inheritance (transfer of ownership), and that these processes happen at different stages in a farming family. Succession occurs during the life of farm principal and inheritance occurs after the death of the farm principal. Errington (2002) provides a useful distinction of the methods of farm transfer on which to base examination and analysis of the effects of farm transfers. Specifically, Errington (2002: 2) identifies "three distinct but related processes" as follows:

> *Inheritance* denotes the legal transfer of ownership of the business assets (including land and quota);
>
> *Succession* refers to the transfer of managerial control over the use of these assets; …
>
> *Retirement* marks the withdrawal of the present manager from active managerial control and/or involvement in manual work on the farm.

As Errington (2002) notes, succession marks the gradual withdrawal from active involvement in farm management by the older family member (the retiring farmer) and the progressive uptake of responsibilities by the younger family member (the successor). The other dimension to intergenerational transfer of farms are the pre-transfer arrangements families make to enlist possible successors to their farms (Hicks et al. 2012). Hicks et al. (2012: 108) identify five main pathways families may follow to transfer their farms to successors: employing children on the family farm (for example, as waged labour); bringing children into farm trusts, or into farm companies; making provisions for successor children to purchase the farm; or transferring ownership of the farm to successor children.

The question of how intergenerational family farm transfer occurs in Western countries has been investigated extensively both nationally (Alston 1995, Atherton and Vines 2003; Barclay et al 2007; Barclay et al 2012; Commonwealth of Australia 2000; Crockett 2004; Crosby 1998; Foskey 2005; Gray 1991; Muenstermann 2011; Poiner 1990; Teather 1998; Voyce 2007; Whittenbury 2003) and internationally (Gasson and Errington 1993; Gorman 2006; Hastings 2004; Lobley and Baker 2012; Mishra and El-Osta 2008; Pitts et al. 2009; Sachs 1996; Schwarz 2004; Shortall 2004). These studies have many findings in common. For example, all authors agree that the process of intergenerational family farm transfer is one of the most stressful activities principals of a farming business can undergo, with many of the owners and managers often leaving the decision-making until quite late in life. They also agree that patrilineal inheritance is the predominant pattern of intergenerational transfer – that daughters are rarely considered as potential successors to the family farm. The exception is Norway, where legislation provides for equal consideration of daughters for succession; despite this, the pattern of farm transfer remains similar to the pattern in other countries without such legislation (Haugen 1994). According to Haugen (1994), first-born farm daughters in Norway often cede their rights of inheritance to their brothers – thereby perpetuating the pattern of patrilineal transfer. It seems that the right to inherit is not the sole reason for the lack of daughters taking on the family farm. The question of what discourages daughters from taking on the family farm has been addressed partially by others (for example, Geldens 2007; Muenstermann 2009a, 2011), and will be addressed further later in the chapter.

Another exception to the general form of exclusionist succession is that presented by Ramos (2005: 367) of "equalitarian distribution" as set in the Civil Spanish Code of 1889.

However, according to Ramos (2005), equalitarian distribution of farm assets is contributing to a crisis of extinction of farm households as potential successors do not wish to participate in agriculture because of the imposts on the farm assets by non-farming siblings: equality of farm inheritance holds priority over farm viability. While this may be seen as an important counter argument to considering non-successor children as having some rights and continuing affiliations with the farms of their childhoods, most farms considered by Ramos (2005) were less than 200 hectares – only 0.8% were greater than 200 hectares. In Australia, the farms in Ramos's study, would be regarded as very small properties where farmers are in close proximity to each other; they do not equate with the broadacre properties and rural population densities that are the focus of this research; hence it is difficult to see a parallel between the arguments put forward by Ramos (2005) and the possible effects of partible inheritance and succession of broadacre farms in Australia. Furthermore, while the tensions Ramos (2005) observed between family members who share farm inheritances is relevant to this research, it does not acknowledge the possibility of tensions existing between family members who do not share farm inheritances, nor does it canvas issues of community sustainability arising from sole-successor farm transfers.

In Australia, there is no law directing how parents must dispose of their private farm property (Voyce 2007). Voyce (2007) states, while property law provides widows and adult sons (and presumably daughters) who have contributed to the farm are to be rewarded with significant inheritances, it is often to the detriment of non-successor daughters and sons who are seen as not having contributed equally or as significantly to the farm as their mother or successor-siblings. Voyce (Pers. com. 2013) considers acting to ensure farm viability with a male family heir appears contradictory to considerations of fair and equitable disposal of this family asset; furthermore, the decisions may be loaded with emotional factors that could present serious consequences for family relations following the succession process. It was not always the case that farm owners limited the number of children as beneficiaries of farm succession; however, recent advice to farm owners strongly advises farmers to "keep in mind that the farm is a business" and to "take into account … [the] earning capacity and assets and resale value" and therefore to maintain the viability of the farm which often involves favouring particular children for succession over other children in the family (Rural Law Online n.d.; see also Knight 2016; National Australia Bank n.d.).

As in other Western countries supporting free-hold property rights and in some places where land leases extend over many generations, three main options exist for farming families at transition: selling up and living off the asset value with the remainder to be dispersed according to testamentary wishes; remaining on the property until death of the principal owner/farmer and then dispersing the property through a will to children or other close relatives; or transferring the farming asset during the life on the farm either progressively through a succession plan or as a

one-off transfer (Coleman 2002; De Groot and Nickel 2012; Errington 2002; Gasson and Errington 1993; McAllister and Geno 2004; Swan 1998). Although most families do transfer their properties to family members, Pitts et al. (2009) note, surprisingly, that only a fifth of family farms survive the transfer to the second generation; they surmise the failure to develop a satisfactory farm-succession plan is a possible reason for this surprising fact. When families fail to nominate or identify a successor, they leave the decision of intergenerational transfer either to surviving family members to manage or to the judiciary, with the possible outcome of no family transfer (Barclay 2004). Here another gap in the sociological knowledge relating to family farm survival appears – is it the lack of a farm succession plan as Pitts et al. (2009) assert, or could other reasons such as the existing family ideology and relationships between family members or rural ideology itself, as described by Alston (1995) above, be contributory factors to the issues of loss of family connection to their farms and hence to their rural communities? This thesis explores these questions.

2.4.1 Ideology and family farm transfer

Of particular interest in this thesis is that farmers who were themselves beneficiaries of farm transfers generally adhere to an ideology that prioritises passing the farm property and enterprise to someone in the next generation of the family (Barclay 2004; Fulton and Vanclay 2011; Lobley and Baker 2012). Silvasti (2003), in her discussion of families engaged in farming in Finland, and Vanclay and Silvasti (2009) in their comparison of farmers' attitudes and decisions of succession in Australia, Finland and The Netherlands, describe the action of passing the farm on to someone in the next generation as one of following a 'script'. The script represents an ideology of patrilineal succession. The script in this case is that of "the continuity of the family farm" – "to keep the farm in the family" (Vanclay and Silvasti 2009: 155). Lequieu (2015: 40) recognises a similar, albeit gendered, imperative, which she terms "patrimonial narrative", an adherence to patrilineal inheritance in farming families of German heritage in Wisconsin, USA. As described in previous sections, many authors recognise the differential treatment of children according to their gender, arguing it arises from an ideology that supports male dominance in agriculture generally and in farm ownership in particular (see, for example, Allen 2002; Alston 1998; Crosby 1998; Gorman 2006; McAllister and Geno 2004; Whittenbury 2003). Acting in a particular way within a particular context, as if following a script, may or may not be an openly conscious choice of action. Rather as Bourdieu posits, it may be an individual's "predisposition" influenced by personal experiences within the social field: as habitus regulating the individual (Grenfell 2010: 29–30). That is, ideology may be express or hidden and only observed when particular actions are taken.

Lequieu (2015) finds the narrative (that is, script) is re-negotiated with each generation and continues even in altered economic and socio-political forces to maintain the disparity in

social relations between men and women. In contrast to Vanclay and Silvasti (2009), Lequieu (2015: 42), citing Salamon (1992), recognises that farmers of particular social backgrounds may adhere strongly to family inheritance and ideals of yeomanry while others may be more "entrepreneurial" – more profit-driven and concerned for their children's social advance than for retaining the farm in the family. Hence, the scripts may differ across families with different backgrounds. Barclay et al. (2007) recognise such differences exist between farmers of different European heritages in Australia. Even so, according to Barclay et al. (2007), many Australian families tend to follow some form of progressive transfer of assets and management to successor sons. McAllister and Geno (2004) find that new economic management instruments enable successors to be brought into many farming enterprises long before the older generation passes on or retires out of farming.

Interestingly, attending to the lack of discussion on the relationships between farming parents and their children in grooming successors, recent literature focuses on the role of parents in promoting successors to their farms. One study to look at succession and family relationships does not argue from the perspective of fairness and equity to children. Rather the authors, Fischer and Burton (2014: 424), examine what they call "endogenous" factors enabling families to create a successor identity and, in the process, to create non-successors. Where most feminist literature examines the gendered power play within families and communities and looks to changing the masculine hegemony, Fischer and Burton (2014: 420) examine the process of developing a farmer identity which appears to lend support for its continuation:

> Considering that socialisation into farming begins at an early age … and employs strong genealogical analogies, such as the notion that one is born to farm … successor identities may be constructed in similarly natural ways. Children who are identified as successors and who reaffirm this identity through farm involvement are more likely to develop a 'natural' successor identity.

Fischer and Burton (2014: 426–427) find "initial successor selves", who are "defined by their maleness and interest", become "embellished with other attributes" through their farm involvement. This provides the scaffolding for further development of their successor identity and senses of differentiation between themselves and their siblings. Children develop ideas over time about who they are and what their identities are with respect to succession: some will be afforded rights as successors and others will not (Fischer and Burton 2014). According to Fisher and Burton (2014: 427–429), being competent in farming activities alone is not sufficient for successor status as any or all children may be competent; demonstrating a commitment to farm continuity, being "practically affirmed in one's successor identity" and having the right chemistry between farmer and successor appear to be necessary co-factors for successor identity to proceed fully to actual succession. Fischer and Burton (2014) conclude farm succession is a socially constructed process dependent on endogenous factors (that is, on relationships and activities

within the family) as well as on factors related to the farm, its productivity and exogenous political, economic and social factors.

Brandth and Overrein's (2012) examination of the differences in "fathering" practices across two generations of farmers are in accord with Fischer and Burton's (2014) findings on the role of endogenous factors determining farm succession. However, they conclude the fathers in "transformed modernity" (that is the more recent generation) are less likely than the previous generation of fathers to focus on farm work in their fathering; rather they become involved in their children's non-farm activities to provide opportunities for "escap[ing] the bindings of the farm" at the expense of introducing them to and involving them in farming (Brandth and Overrein 2012: 108). Brandth and Overrein (2012) do conclude the micro-processes of intergenerational farm transfer are associated with fathering processes which in turn are determined by the strength of link between concepts of being a good farmer and being a good father. Brandth and Overrein's (2012) finding that younger fathers have a weaker link between these two concepts than the older generation provides evidence that the ideology of passing a farm onto a son is not necessarily static across generations of farmers.

In practice, farm-owners adhering to the ideology of keeping the farm in the family, paradoxically, means that more children do not inherit the farm property than do inherit (Gasson and Errington 1993). In Shortall's (2005) view, this process of farm succession and patrilineal inheritance disinherits non-successors, and more daughters than sons are disinherited from farming and the farm property. Furthermore, as Griffiths (1995) explains, and later reflected in Vanclay and Silvasti's (2009) concept of scripts or Bourdieu's concept of habitus (Grenfell 2010), once practices informed by particular ideologies become embedded in society they often continue unchallenged as invisible, 'natural' ways of being. A clear account of how rural patriarchy maintains the inequality of opportunity and, hence, differential status between men and women through patrilineal inheritance practices is presented by Forbes-Chilibeck (2005: 26) who cites Keet (1990) to argue patriarchy "does not operate in a vacuum" but has a material base:

> The material base of patriarchy involves, in part, men's control over women's access to the means of livelihood. This control is maintained through an economic dependence on males, i.e., by restricting access to productive resources [land] or subsistence activities [income generating activities].

Daughters in this context have little chance to access farm property and, therefore, economic independence from males when farm transfer is by way of patrilineal transfer.

Barclay et al. (2007: 61), although finding there has been some social change in rural Australia with women taking on more and different roles and farm businesses showing greater diversity in their management than in earlier decades, finds traditional norms and values still have a "disproportionate influence" on farm families' decisions regarding the management of the farm

business. These findings tend to refute the general impression put forward by Lawrence (2005a) of the detraditionalization occurring on family farms and the implied improved status of farm women. More specifically, for this research topic, Barclay et al. (2007: xi) find most of their respondents believed transferring the farm to a "sole heir" is the most certain way to ensure that the farm stays within the family. While two-thirds of their respondents were farming land that had been in their family or spouses' family for several generations, one-third of their respondents had purchased the land they farmed, providing evidence that the ideal of passing the farms onto the next generation is not necessarily reflected by the reality for many families as owners retire or pass away (Barclay et al. 2007).

A practical reason for promoting farm succession is provided by Lobley and Baker (2012), that of the intergenerational transfer of the knowledge specific to farming. The successor is said to not only have a head start in farming knowledge (technical and managerial) but also that this knowledge is an investment in the husbandry of the land (Lobley and Baker 2012), and implies a continuity of how this husbandry takes place. This may be an accurate assessment on the transfer of knowledge but it leaves unquestioned the prevailing gendered pattern of succession. The question to be asked is, why is it usually a son who inherits the farm? Surely, any child (son or daughter) who develops farming skills and knowledge would be eligible as a contender for farm succession? Furthermore, Lobley and Baker (2012) overlook the changes that occur in farming practice and enterprise instituted by many successors such that knowledge gained during childhood is supplanted by new knowledge to support new practices and enterprises often in line with new governance regimes and political contexts (Tonts et al. 2012).

2.4.2 Family tensions over farm transfer decisions

Legal challenges to family wills in Australia indicate not all farm family members are content or in agreement with the farm-owner testamentary decisions, nor with the social norms of farming being a male preserve (De Groot and Nickel 2012). Following industry advice for succession and retirement planning, many farm-owners have created complicated ownership structures to protect not just their land but also their machinery and business assets from adverse claims (McAllister and Geno 2004). These arrangements, in turn, have an effect on what is available for a legal challenge if any family member feels aggrieved by the farm transfer. While it is difficult to undo some of the legal structures put in place to protect farm properties from partition, non-successor children and widowed spouses have successfully challenged testators' wills so that there are adjustments to the provisions of the will such resulting in fairer distributions of assets according to each beneficiary's circumstances (De Groot and Nickel 2012). However, according to De Groot and Nickel (2001: 45), the amounts ordered by judges "tend to reflect a desire on the part of the courts not to threaten the integrity of the farm".

Barclay et al. (2007), Crosby (1998), Crockett (2004) and Foskey (2005) find many farm principals experience great stress in deciding how to be fair and equitable towards their children when attempting to pass on a viable family farm and in accepting life beyond farming for themselves. Foskey (2005) notes the emphasis on succession-planning and the financial component of this planning process can leave the possible personal, emotional and relational aspects of intergenerational farm transfer unexamined. In Crockett's (2004: 25) study, a number of parents recognised the "on-going tension" created by the inequality experienced by sons and daughters through inheritance arrangements; even so, the majority of these parents argue if the daughters are provided for in other ways, then equity in inheritance is simply "not an issue". Pitts et al. (2009: 68) consider a successful farm transfer "could mean sacrificing what was best for individual family members to ensure the future of the farm". In the words of one farmer:

> [P]eople come and go … that's not really important … What's fair is not really important. It's what happens to the farm is what is important. (Pitts et al. 2009: 68).

In this statement, the farmer holds little value in appeasing the interests of individual family members, for him maintaining the farm is the most important issue to work towards. In contrast, McGuckian et al. (1995) consider the tensions within the family arising from how the families communicate (or do not communicate) and make decisions on the processes and outcomes of intergenerational transfer of the farms as threats to the family farm – an icon in Australia. McAllister and Geno (2004: 189) suggest partible inheritance "may be fairer than male primogeniture" but they question the long-term effects of fairer dispersal of farm assets between siblings on the future of agricultural production.

Most of the critical research on family farming has focused on the disparities in opportunities between young farm men and women to undertake farming and of their relative status in farming communities. Except for Taylor and Norris's (2000) research that found family communication prior to farm transfers influenced adult sibling relationships following farm transfers, there has been little research into how non-successor daughters and sons respond to the family's decisions on succession. Neither have the successors and parents of the farming families been questioned on their perception of how these decisions affect their non-successor family members, nor have they been questioned on the effects of these perceptions on their own relationships within the family.

Although, the general pattern of farm transfer effectively maintains the subordinate position of women in farming families (Alston 1998, Shortall 2005), Alston (2012) finds the men in farming families are the very people unable to face and address external challenges such as, for example, low farm returns. Alston (2012: 515) reports Australian men are four to five times more likely to commit suicide than Australian women, and that it is rural men who are most at

risk. Alston (2012: 516) argues these tragic outcomes provide a reason to question and address "rural masculinity and gender relations in general". On this issue of male suicide, Alston (2012) finds an opening to expose not only the problems that rural masculine hegemony poses to rural men, but also to expose the wider implications that such hegemony has for all people in rural communities. The question to be asked is: What social structure can replace one founded on rural masculine hegemony to enable a more socially-just recognition of and equitable provision for all members of farming communities and still support sustainable productive farming enterprises in rural Australia?

Farming families are not only grappling with internal family issues on farm succession and issues of globalization and market access. They are also confronting major changes in their local communities accompanying rural population loss that is affecting the social services available to them and their social connectedness within and beyond their local communities (Bennett 2013; Dufty-Jones et al. 2014; Hallebone et al. 2003; Hugo 2005; Stayner 2005). Hallebone et al. (2003) argue people remaining in rural communities are often more disadvantaged than those who leave to find other opportunities and social networks beyond farming, albeit often with a sense of loss at having to leave their rural homes and communities. The next section examines literature on emotions as sources of knowledge and as important indicators of relationships and community connectedness.

2.5 Emotions and emotional geographies

2.5.1 Emotions: Valid sources of knowledge

Emotions cannot be ignored as influential factors in the lives of family members. Emotions may be drivers of actions or reactions to events, and they may colour decisions, affect relationships between farm family members and affect participation in community activities (Barbalet 2004; Connor 2007; Izard 2009). Emotions are ever-present in the lives of all – including people involved in farming. Connor (2007: 16) states:

> Emotions are a constant and necessary aspect of human existence. They infuse the actions, behaviour, thoughts, feelings and decisions made by the actors.

According to Barbalet (2004: 266), we ought to use emotions arising from social phenomena as objects of study because they present the world from the "perspective of the emoting subject's needs or preferences" – in this thesis, the needs and/or preferences of farm owners, successors and non-successors. Barbalet (2002: 3) further argues that because emotions provide "instant evaluations of circumstance" and they "influence the disposition of the person for a response to those circumstances", the study of emotions arising from relationships and events is important for developing a comprehensive knowledge and/or assessment of particular social phenomena.

Emotions and embodied responses are valuable communicators of factors and issues associated with social phenomena and for directing attention to those factors and issues that may otherwise escape examination (Ahmed 2010; Barbalet 2002, 2004; Liljeström and Paasonen 2010). Identifying and examining emotional dimensions associated with a particular phenomenon and process of change allows for a better understanding of relational processes and outcomes because the emotional responses demonstrate the "social significance and course" of the phenomenon - in this thesis, intergenerational family farm transfer (Barbalet 2002: 6).

The relationship between emotion and affect is much debated, with various definitions provided by scholars (Koivunen 2010). Some, such as Ahmed (2010), have difficulty with the notion of a distinction between emotion and affect. Ahmed (2010: 32) is especially concerned that such a distinction "under-describes the work" of emotions which for Ahmed are more than "subjective content" in that they orient the body, have intensity and are directed towards something. While not refuting the position described by Ahmed, for the purposes of this thesis, I use the terms emotion and affect in the way described by Rossi (2010) (following Elspeth Probyn's (2005) distinction as cited in Rossi 2010), that is, emotions are distinguished from affect. In this thesis, emotions are represented through interviewees' descriptions of their feelings; and affect refers to the "bodily effects of psychological feelings" (Rossi 2010: 86).

Ahmed (2010) alerts us to the possibility of unhappiness providing the opportunity to recognise significant relational factors concealed behind negative emotions and accompanying affects. Emotional responses can be used to identify power differences existing between family members hitherto not fully recognised or acknowledged let alone addressed. Liljeström and Paasonen (2010) also call us to direct the analysis towards investigating the embodied responses arising from relational events to enable more comprehensive analyses of social phenomena. Hence, emotions can be seen to link structure (the social contexts) with agency (personal decisions and responses) (Barbalet 2002; Williams 2001). Furthermore, Barbalet (2002) argues no matter what the social phenomenon, its processes and outcomes, its emotional dimensions, when identified, provide for a better understanding of the social significance of the phenomenon and its outcomes. Intergenerational family farm transfer is one such relational phenomenon where there is the potential for family members to experience various and differing emotional responses to farm transfers which would lend greater appreciation of the significance of processes and outcomes for individual family members. Such emotional responses could add to the social knowledge of what is happening to relationships between members of farming families and of factors attributable to farm transfers affecting the sustainability of rural farming communities. Instead of regarding emotions as distractors to developing knowledge about the process of a supposed 'rational' decision-making phenomenon, I employ emotions and affects as 'informants'

and as 'warning beacons' to alert us to the issues facing family members as they negotiate farm succession (Ahmed 2010).

2.5.2 Emotions and family members' responses to intergenerational farm transfer

Most literature on the cultural context of family farming shies away from delving into the emotional responses of individual farming family members to farming events. Literature tends to focus on emotional triggers that are external to the family (such for example bushfires, drought or collapsing commodity markets) (see, for example, Alston 2012), or represent triggers for family members who are the farm principles or as awareness-raising for people advising farm principals of potential sources of conflict and emotional discord (see, for example, Becker et al. 2006; Honey and Evans 2007). Other literature describes possible sources of conflict and emotional responses to differences in attitudes, opinions and behaviours related to the business and practice of farming (see, for example, Paskewitz 2015; Rasmussen 2011). None, to date, specifically acknowledge emotional responses to farm transfer as a significant source of knowledge on family dynamics involved in and ensuing from farm succession, nor have any acknowledged emotions arising from the family dynamics of intergenerational farm transfers as a source of knowledge on the sustainability of rural farming communities.

Five authors contributing to knowledge of the existence of emotions as factors in determining decisions of farm children are Cassidy and McGrath (2014) and Cassidy (2017) in the Irish farming context and Geldens (2007), Muenstermann (2009a, 2011) and Russell and Hermiston (2006) in Australian farming contexts. Geldens (2007) examines the issue of out-migration of young people from rural areas. Geldens's (2007) study focuses on the complex decision-making processes employed by young people, both male and female, deciding on their future careers and locations to live. Her work seeks to reveal the underlying complexities of their decisions and their attachments to the family farm and the broader community. Geldens (2007: 86) concludes:

> [O]ut-migration decisions and experiences cannot be understood without reference to the complexity of perceptions and attachment to the family farm and broader community … [and that] community attitudes act as barriers and/or enablers to young people's decisions.

Geldens (2007) thereby acknowledges the impact of emotional factors and attitudes on teenagers' decisions in planning for their adult lives. However, Geldens (2007) does not address the issue of differential socialising and treatment of daughters and sons with respect to opportunities for farm succession and the emotions generated through this differential social interaction. In omitting the discriminatory aspect of farm family social practice and tradition, Geldens (2007) omits a possible significant factor informing individual personal identities and emotional

responses to other family members and the place of the farm, and a possible contributing factor for the out-migration of non-successors.

Muenstermann (2009a, 2011) on researching out-migration in farming districts suggests daughters are leaving farming families to seek opportunities and careers off the family farm and out of farming altogether. The daughters interviewed cited the reasons for leaving included the isolation of farm life and that farm work was "physically too hard" (Muenstermann 2009a: 20). In her discussion, Muenstermann (2009a: 20) states, "There can be no doubt that it is hard for a woman, despite modern technology, to own and/or manage a farm on her own." This view is not borne out by other authors, or by women who have taken up careers as farmers both on broadacre and small intensive properties, thereby demonstrating women can meet the physical and physiological challenges of farming (see, for example, Doherty 2013; Harfull 2012; Luhrs 2015; Marsh 2011). The practicalities, economic factors, in fact the myriad of factors that make farming a difficult enterprise are no different for men and women, they are what make up the business of farming. While Muenstermann (2009a: 22) acknowledges many daughters object to "being married to a farmer", this does not equate to not wanting to be a successor to the family farm if that option were available to them. Muenstermann (2009a) appears to leave unexamined the emotional responses of non-successor daughters (and sons) to exclusion from succession, their personal reflections on the gendered nature of family farm succession in Australia and their reactions to the aim of keeping the farm viable at the cost of fair and equitable treatment of all children in the family.

Russell and Hermiston (2006), in their study of daughters' experiences of family farms and their individuation processes during the 1960s, find many daughters express disappointment and/or sadness at their lack of inclusion in plans for the future of family farm. Rather than seeing this as an opportunity to question the regard given to daughters as possible successors to the family farm and to challenge patrilineal inheritance, their conclusion presents a sense of resignation of "this is how life is" for daughters (Russell and Hermiston 2006: 8). Russell and Hermiston (2006: 9) refer to the exclusion of daughters as successors as the "psychology of dispossession" with attendant emotions of "feelings of longing, yearning, grieving, isolation, alienation and dislocation". This sense of dispossession resonates with Shortall's (2005) notion of disinheritance of daughters in Ireland. Despite that, where Shortall (2005) challenges the continuing adherence to patrilineal inheritance and the continuing adverse social effects, Russell and Hermiston (2006) appear to be advocating daughters can be helped to find a "sense of wholeness and meaning from their experiences" to come to terms with their emotional pain and apparent loss of connection to either the land, the family or both (Russell and Hermiston 2006: 10). This move puts the healing of dispossessed daughters solely into the female domain, and it

allows the men in the family to continue to discriminate against their female relatives in terms of farm succession.

Cassidy and McGrath (2014: 413), based on their study of daughters (as university students) from Irish family farms, argue that non-succeeding siblings endowed with emotional attachments to farms are "deeply immersed in particular scripts" of farm survival (as described by Silvasti (2003)). They contribute to the continuity of the farms by rejecting moves to sell farms as this would also create crises in self-identities constructed from their enduring associations with farming (Cassidy and McGrath 2014). According to Cassidy and McGrath (2014), the embeddedness of relationships with particular farms extend beyond the physical farm boundary and endure long after a non-successor has departed the farm.

> Identifying one member of the family as the 'farmer' … allows other siblings to pursue a life away from the farm safe in the knowledge that it will be maintained …[T]heir [non-succeeding actors'] concerns and underlying culturally scripted responsibility to the land are assuaged by the presence of a suitable heir. (Cassidy and McGrath 2014: 407)

Cassidy and McGrath (2014) admit their cohort of participants represent a limited number of post-succession experiences, associations and life-paths, but their findings also add weight to the importance of including non-successors in the social examination of intergenerational farm transfers. Cassidy (2017: 389) in follow-up research with male and female university students whose childhoods were spent on Irish family farms finds not only that non-successor offspring value their attachments to their farms and that these attachments inform their behaviours and attitudes to support the continuity of siblings on these family farms, but these attachments are vital to identity formation and to success in intergenerational farm transfers. However, and similar to Muenstermann's (2009a, 2011) cohort, the non-successor participants represent an extremely narrow range of participants – all young adults and still with access to their farms.

A valuable contribution to understanding the different emotional responses of members in farming families is provided by Osterud (1988). Osterud's (1988) examination of oral autobiographies of dairy farm women born before 1920 reveals the feelings of daughters as well as women who come into farming on marriage and provides an opportunity to compare and contrast intergenerational farm women's emotions related to their experiences of succession. Osterud (1988) finds most women's senses of identity are shaped by their relationship to the land; however, not all women share positive experiences of these relationships. Inheriting daughters of long-established families take for granted their ability to actively shape the course of their lives (Osterud 1988). Inheriting daughters' individual identities are founded upon their place in the line of generational succession; their personal goals are in accord with (and not in opposition to) familial ones (Osterud 1988). In contrast, Osterud (1988) finds daughters on marginal (poor) farms develop a very different sense of the meaning of interdependence and the possibility of

agency; in their experience, both are powerful but problematic. Women who do not share in the inheritance of the farm experience feelings of bitterness on exclusion and senses of distance (often enduring) from family members who continue on the land – this, while also taking pride in a family's distinguished past (Osterud 1988). Osterud (1988) further finds emotional relations between descendants of farm founders can be transferred during succeeding generations such that the ties between relatives can be contrasted as weak or close depending on enduring individual emotional responses to succession. Women marrying into farming families have different relationships to the farms from daughters and often report lives enhanced and much more satisfactory than lives prior to marriage (Osterud 1988). Differently from most other feminist critiques of family farming and farm succession, Osterud (1988) concludes there can be differences between women who marry into long-established farming families and those born into them. This conclusion is supported by my work, Luhrs (2015), where I argue any investigation into women and farming must include both daughters and mothers as they present different introductions to farming and develop identities and emotional attachments from different starting places.

The emotions reported by the authors above focus on attachments (Cassidy 2017; Cassidy and McGrath 2014; Geldens 2007; Osterud 1988), grief at loss of opportunity and dispossession (Russell and Hermiston 2006), bitterness (Osterud 1988) and feelings of isolation (Muenstermann (2009a). The complex institution that family farming represents – incorporating a multitude of diverse operations, social processes and emotional responses and dispositions within the "work-family overlap" (in common with many other family businesses) – appears to provide opportunities for more complex and confounding emotion layers to arise than in non-farming businesses as individuals strive to manage their various roles and responsibilities (Janjuha-Jivraj and Martin 2007: 146). The intensity of emotions over intergenerational farm transfers and their effects indicate emotions should not be discounted as a powerful lens through which to gain knowledge and to develop theory relating to rural community sustainability.

2.6 Theoretical perspectives informing the research and guiding the analysis of data

This thesis employs a plurality of theoretical perspectives and concepts (Garnier 2014: 458) to examine the phenomenon of intergenerational family farm transfer specifically to expose the factors which influence the processes undertaken and the effects of these processes on family members, the families, the farms and the local farming communities. The applicability to this research of these different perspectives and concepts in combination is discussed below.

2.6.1 A feminist perspective to uncover relations of inequality

Liberal feminist theory, with its focus on the rational argument for equal opportunity for women as citizens of equal worth within society, informs and underpins this research (Bryson 2003). In the discussion that follows, I explain the feminist theories that support this guiding principle and which allow for a close examination of what appear to be the socially discriminatory practices of inheritance and succession as occurs in Australia's farming families and which in turn may also be impacting on rural society.

I am mindful that a standpoint perspective may at first seem the logical starting point to examine the underlying relationship structures that lead to differential treatment of farm children such that there may be a successor standpoint and a non-successor standpoint. According to Tanesini (1999: 138) standpoint epistemology employs the notion of shared experiences of members of a particular category and therefore provides a "privileged perspective" to better understand the reality of the social phenomenon. However, such an approach fails to account for possible differences between non-successors and differences between successors and, hence, would not allow for the emergence and examination of the individual embodied situated/emplaced knowledges (Somerville 2004). A standpoint approach would seek to essentialize the character of successors and non-successors and indeed farm family parents, such that the research would not examine the particular character of each farming family, its social divisions, and its place within its farming community (Clough 1994; Tanesini 1999).

The arguments of Haraway (1991), Hekman (1992, 1999) and Hirschmann (1999) have enabled the development of liberal feminist theory that has progressed from its abodied, universalistic perspective to one of a situated, embodied and inclusive-of-difference perspective that still adheres to the liberal agenda of equality and rights. Their arguments are supported by Clancey (1997) who also argues that the social knowledge held by individuals is situated knowledge because the thoughts and actions of individuals are perceived, conceived and developed within their particular environmental contexts. Hekman (1992, 1999) argues for 'embodied subjective' experiences to be incorporated as valid knowledge in liberal feminist theory in defining subjects' experiences of the social world. These embodied subjective experiential knowledges could and should, according to Hekman (1992), inform social policy development. Furthermore, Hirschmann (1999) claims situated differences that may arise in subjects' situated knowledges have a place in arguing for equal rights and should not be seen as invalidating claims for equality, rather they should be the point at which the concerns for equal opportunity are raised. This newer reformulated liberal feminism is appropriate for this research project that seeks situated knowledges to inform social theory and provide a more grounded foundation on which farming families and rural advisors can base future decisions on family farm succession.

2.6.2 Grounded theory

Grounded theory is theory grounded in and emergent from the data collected and analysed, that is, data is the basis on which theory is developed and concepts are generated from analysis of the data (Charmaz 2006). For this research, a grounded theory of intergenerational family farm transfer is developed from the stories and themes of intergenerational family farm transfer drawn from the compilation of participants' narratives constructed during interviews (Tanesini 1999). Gubrium and Holstein (2012) argue each and every person involved in some way with a particular phenomenon has something of value to contribute to social theory which can be accessed through interviews.

Charmaz (2006) presents Glaser and Strauss's (1967) defining components of grounded theory practice. The final recommendation in these defining components is to "[conduct] the literature review *after* developing an independent analysis" (Charmaz 2006: 6, italics in the original text).

2.6.3 Theoretical frameworks for data analysis: Massey, Lefebvre, Latour and Symons

After completing the preliminary analysis and determining the broad topics of the analysis chapters, Lefebvre's (1991) theory on the 'production of space' resonated with my analysis of farms as spaces becoming places. Missing from previous literature on farms is the notion that farms are produced spaces, as are the communities around them that form from the combination of humans and their effects within particular socially-determined spaces. According to Lefebvre (1991), spaces are produced from the complex interplay between people active in the spaces, the governing bodies ruling the spaces and other bodies that enable or constrain the activities in these places and images or experiences of people's lives in these places. Furthermore, places are produced and modified according to the prevailing ideologies of particular eras and local resistances to these ideologies. Hence, Lefebvre (1991: 102) argues that social space is an active, mutable product, at once "work and product" – never fixed or immobile.

Lefebvre (1991) argues that to understand space it is essential to consider together the three active moments – the trialectics of space – constructing space: 'representations of space', 'representational space' and 'spatial practice'. Firstly, representations are the mental constructs – the ideas – we have of and for those spaces. Secondly, our combined perceptions and experiences as we live and act in these spaces make up the representational space for those spaces. Thirdly, spatial practice is defined by the actions and activities we undertake in these spaces. These three moments are all integral, interrelated and implicated in the production of the space such that no one factor alone can account for the social practices and social effects within those spaces – in this thesis, farms and farming communities (Lefebvre 1991; Merrifield 2000). Moreover, produced spaces become "active moments" not only in the fortunes of people

associated with them but also in the "expansion and reproduction of capitalism" (Merrifield 2000: 173).

Lefebvre (1991: 10) further argues that particular ideologies relating to spaces – in this thesis, farms – are bound up with hegemonic regimes. The regime in Australia exercising control over farm policy, the Federal Government, has experienced a change in composition since Federation from one with a high proportion of rural participation to one where rural influence is much reduced because of the declining proportion of rural to urban populations, and this change has brought reduced rural representation (Aitken 1985) and changes in conception of the rural (Davison 2005). What Lefebvre (1991) tells us is that with changing conceptions (representations), come changed daily practices (spatial practices) and changing representational spaces (experiences, sensory responses and imaginations) within particular produced spaces.

Massey (1994) complements Lefebvre's (1991) concept of space as a produced phenomenon by drawing attention to the ways in which places are constituted out of networks of social relations, and this conceptualization helps to critically examine what networks are significant to creating social places. According to Massey (1994: 121) social places are not bounded and closed, rather they are "open and porous" to outside social and political influences; they "leak":

> [P]laces … are not so much bounded areas as open and porous networks of social relations. It implies that their 'identities' are constructed through the specificity of their interaction with other places rather than by counterposition to them. … [Furthermore, what] is to be the dominant image of any place will be a matter of contestation and will change over time. (Massey 1994: 121)

Therefore, Massey (1994, see also 1995) argues that to understand the constitution of social places and the outcomes of phenomena within particular social places, it is necessary to acknowledge and accommodate the impact and influence of relations between agents both within and beyond particular geographical regions.

As I was analysing the data relating to family farm transfer I identified many events were necessary prior to the eventual farm transfer, and gained an appreciation that these events often occurred within a sequence. I also identified a multitude of actors that either enabled or constrained process of intergenerational farm transfer. Farm transfer as a process occurred within a network of actors – some human, others not human. This network of actors and a sequence of enabling prior events resembled networks described in Latour's (2005) actor-network theory. The actor, according to Latour (2005: 45), "is not the source of action but the moving target of a vast array of entities swarming around it". Latour (2005) considers non-human entities (such as – in the farming context – soil, climate, farm animals and crops, machinery, legal documents and finance) as having agency to affect outcomes of processes and events equivalent to human

agency. Differently from Lefebvre (1991) and Massey (1994, 1995), Latour (2005) allows no hierarchy of agency between actors (human and non-human) within a network of associations. Latour's (2005) theory of actor-networks provides the scaffold to unpack the associations between all factors acting on/affecting farm transfers and, thereby, to reveal the complex process confronting farm owners and their successors when they engage in farm transfers. I also employ the actor-network theory to examine the changing associations within rural farming communities and the effects these changing associations have on the wellbeing of local residents, sustainability of farming communities including the management of the natural resources in farming districts.

That emotions are valid and valuable sources of knowledge is described earlier in this in chapter. In Symons's (2007: 89) conception of "emotional spacetime", space, time and emotion are "interconnected", and their "articulation" is important for understanding how organisations operate: in this research, the complex social and business organisational entity of the family farm. Symons (2007) argues the nature of space with its physical, social and virtual components and the factor of time in both its qualitative and quantitative qualities interplay with the emotional aspects of actors engaged in social institutions. Symons's (2007) concept of emotional spacetime focuses not on the search for gender differences but on how gender plays out in the management of emotional spacetime. He argues emotional spacetime can be used to highlight the intersection of gender and emotions in the management of organisations (such as family farms). Specifically, for this research, Symons (2007) concept of 'emotional spacetime' is useful for examining and acknowledging the relationship between emotional attachments to the family farm, decisions for and processes of family farm transfer and intra-familial relations during and following the transfer, and to account for the effects of emotional legacies on the long-term continuity of the family farms, on the parents', successors' and non-successor children's wellbeing and on the sustainability of the local farming community. This approach offers an antidote to the reticence of social geographers to include emotions in their fieldwork (Bennett 2004b).

2.7 Conclusion

The continuity of family farming remains dependent largely on intergenerational farm transfer. The process of intergenerational family farm transfer most often involves differential treatment of farming children in terms of both favour and grooming for succession; and it often starts very early in a child's life (Alston 1998; Little 2006; Riley 2009). The differential treatment of children within farming families is known to create family disruption in many families (De Groot and Nickel 2001); how this differential treatment affects individual family members, the farm and rural communities is less well researched than other aspects of family farming.

While the legal system is frequently engaged in dealing with matters of conflict between members over family farm asset dispersal (De Groot and Nickel 2001), these questions have not

yet been addressed adequately in sociological research on rural farming families. The lack of research into the attitudes and emotions that inform the identities of non-successor and successor children provides the impetus to analyse the "emotional spacetime" of farm succession and to determine whether enduring emotional factors impact on farm family relations, farm productivity, natural resource management and on rural farming community sustainability (Symons 2007).

An in-depth qualitative investigation of how family members are affected by farming matters, rural ideology and intergenerational farm transfers; how they respond emotionally to experiences and prevailing attitudes; and what effects these emotional responses have on themselves as individuals, as members of the farming family and the farming community and on the family farm itself as a viable entity is timely. It is pertinent to rural research in general and to policy formation in particular to consider how these effects may relate to farming family members, the family farm and rural community sustainability. Furthermore, a researcher with insider status (albeit partial) has more social connections and greater opportunities to engage with participants to delve deeply into issues arising from the phenomena of intergenerational family farm transfers than other researchers may have. The next chapter presents the research questions directing this research and describes and discusses the methodology applied to this research.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

My initial intention, based on my insider experiences both as a non-successor eldest daughter in a farming family and as an observer of the difficulties many farming families in my local region appear to experience over the issues of family farm transfers, was to focus only on the daughters of farming families. I had planned to apply a liberal feminist lens to examine factors limiting their opportunities to pursue farming careers and/or to retain a connection to their childhood farms and to critique the effects of patrilineal farm transfer on intra-familial relations. After discussions with my supervisors and through reading the wealth of literature on farm succession, the emphasis of my feminist interest broadened to examine the effects of farm succession and rural ideology not only on daughters but on all members of farming families and on the wider rural farming community. And it broadened to examine processes of farm transfers to gain a more nuanced appreciation of the complexity of intergenerational farm transfers. By broadening my research from a liberal feminist investigation involving only daughters and their impressions of family farm transfer, my project now allows for multiple voices to be heard on the social phenomena grouped under the single banner of intergenerational family farm transfer. Hence, and building on previous research, this research serves to enable greater insight into the effects of farm succession on family relationships, career opportunities for children in farming families, farm viability and the sustainability of rural social communities and rural infrastructure.

Importantly the research presents non-successors opportunities to contribute their perspectives on the dynamics of succession planning in families and the enduring effects of farm succession on family members. Other family members (an uncle and an aunt) and family associates are included to provide observations of the context of farm family members undergoing intergenerational farm transfer. The non-family interviewees include family doctors and relationship counsellors (on the stresses reported by farm family members on the subject of family-farm succession), rural farm advisors and accountants (on the main concerns of families in determining intergenerational family farm transfer), lawyers and rural merchandisers. The research participants are listed in tables in Appendix 6.

In retaining a feminist perspective, I analyse aspects of agency and control in families through asking how successors to the family farm are chosen and by whom, the subsequent effects of this process and choice on all members of the farming family and of the effects of such decisions on the local farming communities. In order to research the topic comprehensively, and

to overcome any possible theoretical blindness on my part, I follow 'grounded theory' method as described by Charmaz and Belgrave (2012) to enable triangulation of data to support the formulation of accountable theory describing the phenomenon of farm transfer. Furthermore, drawing on the two main disciplines of sociology and geography, the research seeks to illuminate adverse effects of intergenerational family farm transfer and to suggest how families and communities may accomplish more socially, economically and environmentally favourable outcomes than is often the case. Specifically, the research sits within the field of rural studies focusing on social geography (Panelli 2004). Therefore, in conducting this research, I employ three distinct but compatible aspects of research: engaging with the field of social geography, employing a feminist perspective to analyse relationships, agency and opportunities within farming families, and following grounded theory method in designing the research process collecting and analysing data and building knowledge and theory from the data. Furthermore, my insider status informs my research and partially directs my research questions and feminist stance (Massey 1994).

The next section provides an outline of the scope of social geography and a discussion on the benefits and associated issues of a researcher's insider status. Grounded theory method is explained in Section 3.3.5.

3.2 Social geography, the feminist perspective and emotions as sources of knowledge

3.2.1 Social geography

Researching how farm family members relate and are related socially in rural spaces, specifically in the places that are important to them – their farms and their local communities – engages with social geography. Following Panelli (2004:1), this research aims to contribute to the "body of knowledge and … set of practices" of social geography. Panelli defines social geography as:

> A body of knowledge and a set of practices by which scholars look at, and seek to understand, the social world. Social geography incorporates the differences and relations between people and places and spaces they use and shape in creating their lives. (Panelli 2004: 1)

Social geography seeks to understand how individuals position themselves and/or are positioned within their social contexts, and how they act with varying degrees of agency to achieve their particular life choices (Cloke 2006).

3.2.2 The feminist perspective

As one focus of this research is to look at the underlying social structures that determine who has opportunities to undertake farming, the research project takes a feminist/critical realist approach

to examine relations of agency within farm families and between members of farming communities, and to examine the consequences of these relations (Tanesini 1999). Liberal feminist theory, with its focus on the rational argument for equal opportunity for women as citizens of equal worth within society, informs and underpins this research (Bryson 2003), and is extended to include other family members also excluded from equal opportunity, that is, non-successor sons.

This research adopts the understanding that individual farm family members' cognitive, emotional and embodied responses arising from interpersonal relations are the sources from which knowledge, in this case, relating to the farm family and its handling of intergenerational family farm transfer is derived (Tanesini 1999). Importantly, this project respects the feminist research premises of placing family members not included in farm succession in the centre of the research and asking questions that seek their perspectives of the social phenomena of farm succession as they relate to them (Pini 2003). This research, then, follows Friedan's (1973) method of interviewing the people affected by accepted social patterns, in this case of patrilineal inheritance, to expose the effects of these social patterns on siblings excluded from farm succession and to bring these effects to public attention. That is, this research seeks to make visible previously invisible family members so that they are not overlooked by people making decisions or by government policies, in this instance, on farm ownership. By adopting a critical feminist realist approach and epistemology that considers a real world occurs irrespective of the social constructions of it (McDowell and Sharp 1999; Panelli 2004), this research examines the personal, embodied, subjective accounts of experiences of individual farming family members (Somerville 2007). Differential treatment is taken to occur such that parents make real decisions about which child, if any, is to be nominated as successor to the family farm. Hence, the research, in its critical focus, questions what other ways of thinking and acting would provide fairer and more equitable arrangements of family farm succession (Longino 1995; Panelli 2004; Tanesini 1999).

The feminist ideals and methods followed are principally those outlined by Pini (2003). Five main points drive the research. First, focusing on gendered differences of farm succession and the gendered power relations that appear to determine how and why decisions are made in farming families. Second, valuing all participants' experiences and knowledge as a legitimate source of knowledge on the processes and effects of farm succession both personally and for the farm family and farm community. Third, incorporating and respecting the notion that researcher and the researched are together contributing to knowledge and theory of farm succession. Fourth, raising family members' consciousnesses of the underlying power relations of the family that may be affecting the social positions and career opportunities of farm children and social

situations of parents in farming families. And, finally, hopefully empowering participants to assess and act on new knowledge and insights that this research uncovers.

To understand the range and depth of the effects of intergenerational farm transfers on farming family members, all adult family members involved in and/or affected by farm transfers were invited to offer their situated knowledges of the phenomenon. Through this method, family members' emotional responses are revealed to show what is actually happening to family members and families engaged in and following processes of farm transfers. The method allows the emergence of knowledge of how current approaches have far-reaching effects that negatively impact on family members, families, rural communities and natural resource management. Inequalities, tensions between individuals, between individuals and families and between family farms, the collective and government are exposed.

The research specifically provides farm family offspring the opportunity to reflect on their everyday farm experiences and to construct narratives of the contextualized nature of the personal, social and cultural meanings they derived from their farming childhoods and the influences these meanings have in their current lives (Farnsworth 2010). It acknowledges that farm offspring's self-identities are constructed from their own personal involvements, of which the family farm is one of many elements of influence (Akerlof and Kranton 2000; Ansell and van Blerk 2007; Bushin et al. 2007; Ferguson 2009; Panelli 2004; Robson et al. 2007). Self-identities are important in informing how people behave and respond to events (including farm succession) around them (Akerlof and Kranton 2000).

The novelty of this research is that I am linking liberal feminist theory to the private domain of family relations. Liberal feminist theory, historically, is primarily concerned with issues of equality, opportunity and social justice within the public arena (Bryson 2003). I am extending these issues to what is usually deemed the private realm of the family because it is here that the apparent discrimination takes place (Phillips 1994). Engaging members of farming families in discussions on what could be thought of as private decisions regarding succession plans and processes within the family crosses the division between the public realm of equal opportunity in access to occupations and the private realm of family decisions on the dispersal of privately-owned family assets. Hence, the research follows Phillips (1994) call to rural researchers to breach the public and private division in linking agricultural sustainability (a state-supported, albeit changing, enterprise (Tonts 2005)) and rural community sustainability with individual farm family dynamics (that is, the private domain). This research, therefore, employs a feminism appropriate to the task of examining the politics within farming families that determine intergenerational farm succession processes (Alston 1995; Dempsey 1992; Eichler

1988; Poiner 1990), and therefore, does not hold the liberal democratic ideal that political examination must be "kept out of private life" (Bryson 2003: 155).

The approach of this research takes into account the context of experiences that contribute to similarities and differences affecting each family member's situated knowledge to provide a rich and deep knowledge of a social phenomenon often regarded as a stressful and difficult process (Becker et al. 2006; Honey and Evans 2007; Voyce 2007). In this way, the thesis provides daughters and non-successor sons a voice in sociological and human geographical literature that, until very recently, has been missing.

Engaging associates of farming families enables the compilation of a detailed data set against which family members situated, subjective, embodied representations of farm transfers can be examined, supported and/or verified. Furthermore, by including non-family associates as participants, endogenous (family) as well as exogenous (public, market, government policy) factors and their significance to the topic can be explored. It also provides a more nuanced account of farm owners' concerns and deliberations as they prepare for and institute intergenerational farm transfer.

In research that engages participants on a deeply personal level to reveal their emotional responses to and emotional states after farm transfers, the researcher must be mindful of possible effects on the participants, the researcher and the research. According to Bennett (2004b), emotions – and the relationality of emotions (Bennett 2008) – affect the research in all stages, and can arise through the interaction of the researcher and the researched:

> Emotions that mediate fieldwork (through the researcher and the researched) can provide researchers with clues … that help decipher the social worlds of those they study. Emotions that imbue fieldwork … need to be sensitively explored. … [I]t is important to recognize that it is not only the researcher who is consciously (and less consciously) aware of emotions and influencing the emotionality of fieldwork. (Bennett 2004b: 416–417)

Researchers must be aware of research participants' agency to influence which emotionality is exposed or hidden in the interaction (Bennett 2008). Furthermore, the researcher, through generating the research project and in conducting the research, can bring an emotional layer to the research well before engaging with research participants and which can inform and direct the research process. This is particularly relevant to this research and my relationship to the topic as part insider/part outsider through my subject position of a non-successor daughter holding a strong attachment to the family farm of my childhood. (Massey 1994). The significance of the researcher having insider status is discussed in the next section.

3.2.3 Status of researcher

Researchers are considered as active participants in directing research and in the generating data on which theory is constructed. Haraway (1991) is one who argues researchers through setting

the topic, framing the questions, selecting participants and setting the locations for the research encounters are just as much part of the research as are the researched. Researchers are understood to bring their particular experiences (direct or indirect) and emotional dispositions to the research which also impact on their findings (Bennett 2004b; Haraway 1991; Massey 1994). Researchers conducting research within cultures or places in which they belong, such as I am, have insider status; they are in a position of privilege with respect to locally based research (Hewitt-Taylor 2002). Insider status brings the opportunity for gathering in-depth rich data and ease of access to gaining this data (Drake 2010; Hewitt-Taylor 2002).

In this research, my position is very much one of 'insider' because of my having grown up within a broadacre farming family in the region of the research. I have personal experience with farm succession as a non-successor. My insider status extends to that of farm associate in that my occupation (school teacher) and social and civic activities have brought me into contact with farming families and the concerns they face in their everyday lives.

However, Hewitt-Taylor (2002: 33), similarly to Bennett (2008), cautions researchers with insider status to take "account of the influence their connection with the culture has on the results and how they are interpreted". Particularly, the researcher should "strike the difficult balance between engagement in the field of enquiry and objectivity in analysing and presenting the findings" (Hewitt-Taylor 2002: 35; see also Drake 2010). Moore (2012) further advises the insider's position may compromise researchers' relationships within the field such that their research status creates a power imbalance lending them the potential to exploit relationships when recruiting participants. Moreover, Taylor (2011: 15) reports the difficulty of creating space for "analytic distance" when the insider researcher is not only an occupant of in the field of research but also has a "strong personal investment in the field" and an "emotional attachment" to the participants. Therefore, according to Drake (2010), not only ought insider-researchers be aware of their positionality, they ought to remain constantly reflexive of their position during the research process and of its effects on the research findings.

Massey (1994) reminds us whatever our insider status it is always and only ever partial because researchers, like our participants, do not operate in a totally bound field. The boundaries are porous to different experiences and influences (Massey 1994; Taylor 2011). This is true of my position. My position is also one of an 'outsider' as I have not experienced the issues of farm management in the current political and economic climate directly, nor have I been involved in any family-farm transfer planning. So, on balance, my position as an insider allows privileges in research not afforded other researchers, however, my status is not one of total immersion – I do not have the privilege of identity with each and every participant. I am only ever partially aligned with my research participants. It is something of which I am acutely aware especially after my previous experience of researching daughters of farmers and their experiences of farm

inheritance (Luhrs 2015). I work with this self-knowledge to ensure my results are accountable (Taylor 2011).

In summary, the research engages family members and family associates on questions of farm transfers. It provides insight into the social phenomenon that offers opportunities in farming to selected farm family children, mostly sons, and denies opportunities to others, mostly daughters. The research allows the effects of these family practices on family members and their ongoing intra-familial relationships, and on the local communities, to emerge.

3.3 Study design

3.3.1 Research questions

The three main research questions directing the research and shaping the interview questions are:

RQ1. How do farm family members negotiate and respond to intergenerational family farm transfer?

RQ2. What are the enduring social and economic effects of family decisions and management of the processes of family farm transfer?

RQ3. What issues arise from family farm transfers which impact on local communities and natural resource management?

Related to these main questions are the following subsidiary research questions:

SRQ1. How do family members relate to their family farms emotionally, economically, physically and socially?

SRQ2. What ambitions do family members have for themselves in terms of their association with the family farm?

SRQ3. What priority does/did the farming family place on fair and equitable treatment of children in the farming family?

SRQ4. How is (did) the farming family preparing (prepare) for the process of intergenerational family-farm transfer?

SRQ5. What future relationships with the family farm, the farming family and the farming community do family members see for themselves?

SRQ6. How are local farming communities affected by families' decisions relating to intergenerational farm transfer?

SRQ7. Do rural farming communities need extra government support to remain sustainable?

The answers to these questions were sought through engaging directly with farm family members and people associated with farmers (hereafter called farm associates) in one-on-one semi-structured interviews.

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) ethics approval to conduct the research (CF14/1403 – 2014000658) was granted on 9th June 2014 (see Appendix 2).

3.3.2 Location of research

The farm family members of interest in this research are or were associated with family farming in western Victoria, Australia. This research includes farms with histories of intergenerational family farm transfer and farms with new owners whose owners each someday have faced/will face decisions and issues relating to intergenerational farm transfer. The region of western Victoria (see Figure 3.1) incorporating eleven local government areas (LGAs) has many family farms that have been passed down through generations of farming families. Most of the intergenerational farms are broadacre farms (that is greater than 400 acres/161 hectares), especially farms distant from the coast. Closer to the coast, farming families operate slightly smaller dryland dairy farms, many of which have also been passed down through the generations.

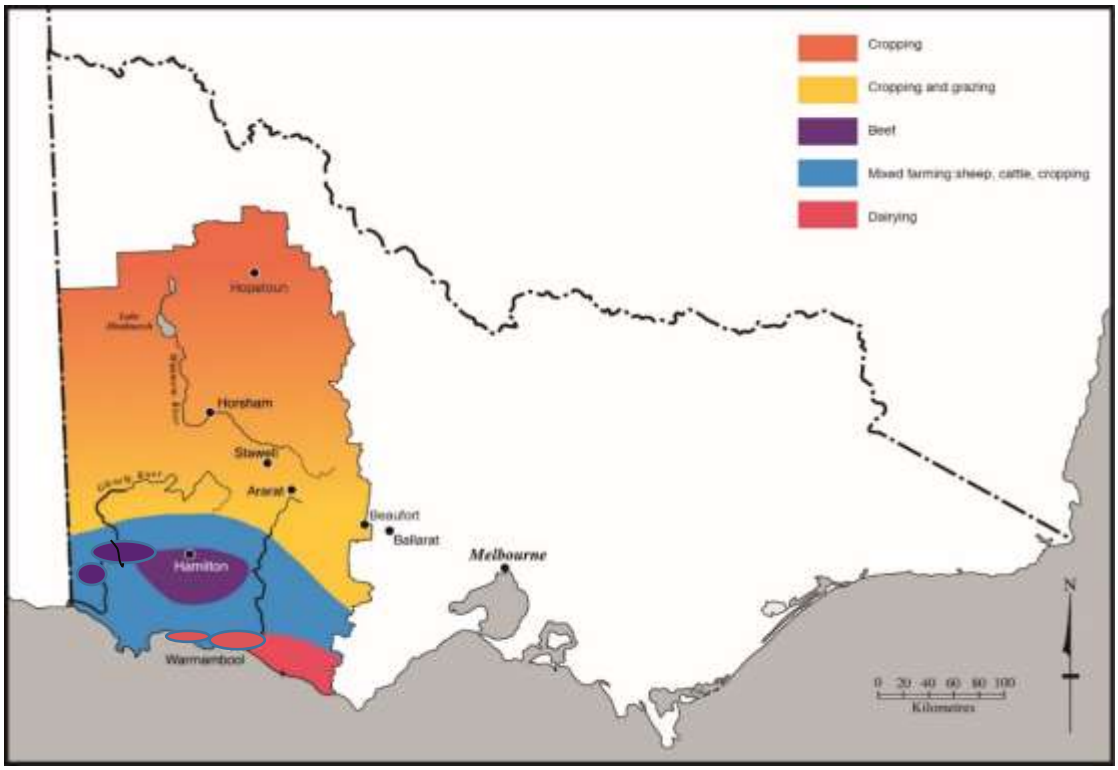


Figure 3.1. Location of research and main farming regions
The farms north of Hamilton are predominately cropping, mixed cropping and/or grazing (mostly sheep for wool and/or meat). Farms around and south of Hamilton have more beef and dairying enterprises but also include cropping and sheep enterprises.
(Map produced with assistance from Kara Rasmanis, Multimedia Technician, Monash University, 2014).

The local government areas of the farms represented in this research are shown in Figure 3.2.

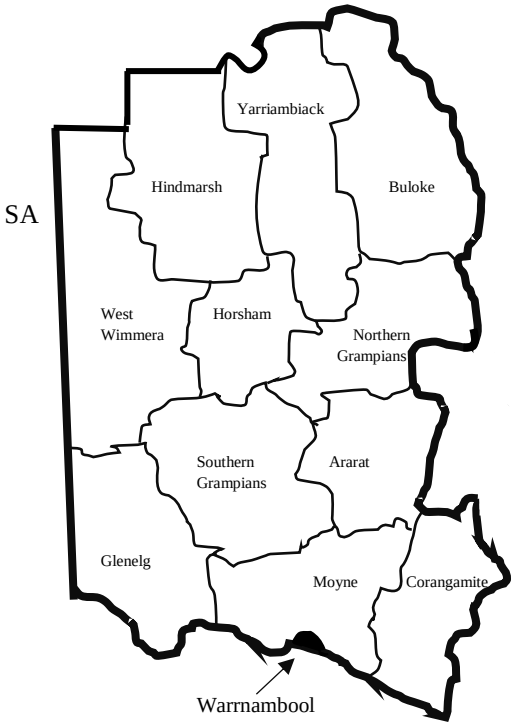


Figure 3.2 Schematic map of Local Government Areas in south and western Victoria and noting the largest city in the region, Warrnambool. SA= South Australia.
(Map, not to scale, adapted from the from the Victorian Electoral Commission's (2014a) 'Statewide Overview Map - Local Council Wards')

3.3.3 Research participants

3.3.3.1 Seeking and engaging participants

I initially advertised only in *The Spectator* (see Appendix 3) and arranged interviews with family members and farm associates in the Shire of Southern Grampians. Following these interviews, I advertised more widely, through the print media (for example, *The Weekly Times, The Wimmera Mail Times, Warrnambool Standard*), at Country Women's Association meetings and Women on Farm Gatherings during 2014 and 2015, on University student noticeboards (University of Melbourne and Monash University), through casual conversations at professional geography (Institute of Australian Geographers) and sociology (The Australian Sociological Association) conferences and on Facebook.

I also asked people I met at local social functions and knew to be farm family members or farm associates if they would like to consider participating in my research. If they gave me permission to contact them by phone, I did so and organised interviews with them, either on their farms, by phone or in their professional offices. The advertisements drew respondents from different regions and unknown to me, but once they knew I was a rural resident and one who was from a farming family, they were willing and even expressed pleasure to participate in the research interview. This was important as it gave me access to people on different farms outside my local shire. My non-successor status was useful in gaining non-successor participants no longer living in the regions of their families' farms. During the initial contact, respondents were assessed for their suitability as research participants. Respondents' were accepted if they met the

following criteria: demographic farm details (member of a farming family on a broad-acre or dairy farm in western Victoria, Australia), age (18 years or older) and/or being associated with family farming and intergenerational family farm transfer.

A condition of this research is that anonymity of participants is respected. All interviews started with the reading of an Explanatory Statement describing the research, my role as the researcher and participants' rights in the research – rights to anonymity, rights to withdraw and rights to review the transcripts of interview (see Appendix 4). Most participants either signed a Consent Form to participate and to allow me the use of the data emergent from the reviewed transcripts of interviews (see Appendix 4), or in the case of a phone interview gave verbal permission before we started talking about the issue of farm transfers. At this point I asked for permission to record the interviews. Except for one farm associate and the one phone interview, all interviews were recorded.

To ensure anonymity all participants are provided with pseudonyms and no specific details of farm enterprises or locations are given. To enable a comparison or contrast between generations of family members, each family member is also given a descriptor to show their farm successor status and their age. For example, Zac-SF34 represents a 34-year-old son of a farmer: Zac is the pseudonym, SF represents son of farmer and 34 is the age at the time of interview. Meg-DF63 represents a daughter of farmer aged 63 and Lil-FP48 represents a 48-year-old woman married to a farmer who is also a parent (FP) of farming children. Farm associate anonymity is also addressed through the use of pseudonyms with only a general description of their relationship to a district or to a farm family member provided. Zac-SF34 is one of the two sons who is also interviewed as a farm associate; this is represented as Zac-FA9 farm supplies salesperson, indicating Zac is ninth in the list of farm associates interviewed and one who works in a farm merchandise store.

3.3.3.2 Research participants' details

Sixty-eight people in total participated in interviews for this research. Twenty-two daughters and twenty-one sons and seven women who married into farming families make up the fifty farm family members interviewed. The twenty farm associates (two of whom also make up the sons of farmer cohort) make up the cohort providing data that supports data from family members and also information on a variety of issues families face as they engage with intergenerational family farm transfer. A further twenty family members responded to a mail-out survey requesting feedback (by completing the simplified questionnaire) on the issue of farm transfer plans for their farms (see Appendix 5). As some interviewees and survey respondents belong to the same family, the number of interviewees is greater than the number of farms.

Interviewees were drawn from eleven of twelve targeted LGAs in the western Victoria farming region that covers approximately 131,200 hectares (324,202 acres) and from family farms ranging in size from 40ha (100a) to 2500ha (6178a). The family-farm enterprises ranged from cropping, grazing (cattle and sheep), dairying and mixed farming. The largest properties were those belonging to families engaged in cropping and grazing and the smallest properties belonged to families involved in mixed farming and dairying. The details of all research participants (interviewees, survey respondents and informal communicants – 'serendipitous conversations' (SC)) are provided in Appendix 6. Some family member participants live on farms, others not living on farms still reside in the same region of their childhood farms, and other participants no longer live in the region of their families' farms. All farm associates live in the farming regions they service. I am mindful of confidentiality provisions in this research and hence would not like to divulge my relationship with the interviewees except to say that of the 68 interviewees, I know 28 – some I know socially through sharing various activities within the community and others I only know as acquaintances. I had not met the majority of interviewees before the interviews. The numbers of farm family interviewees, survey respondents (SR) and farms from particular local government areas represented in this research are shown in Table 3.1. Table 3.2. summarizes interviewees' status and residential connection to family farms.

Table 3.1. Farm family members and farms per LGA

LGA	Farm family member interviewees	Interviewees' farms	Survey respondents	Survey respondents' farms
West Wimmera			1	1
Hindmarsh	1	1		
Yarriambiack	1	1		
Buloke	2	1	1	1
Horsham	2*	1	1*	
Northern Grampians	2	2		
Southern Grampians	20	12	10	8
Ararat	3	2	1	1
Glenelg	11	8	2	1
Moyne	7	5	4	2
Corangamite	1	1		
TOTAL	50	34	20	14

Note. * These people belong to the same farm family

Table 3.2. Summary of interviewees' farm status and location of residence

Location / Category	Living on the family farm	Living in the farming region of the family farm	Living in a different farming region	Not living in a farming region	TOTAL
Wives/ mothers*	5	1		1	7
Successor daughters#	1			1	2
Non-successor daughters		3	2	15°	20
Successor sons – husbands/fathers	10**	1		5^	16
Successor sons – not husbands/fathers	2**				2
Non-successor sons		1		2	3
Farm associates	(2)**	18			20**
TOTAL	18 (16)	26	2	24	70**(68)

Notes. *Five wives/mothers are in farm ownership arrangements with their husbands. Two wives/mothers are not in any ownership arrangement. Six women in this category married into farming families, one wife/mother moved onto a newly purchased farm with her husband and son and then left to live in an urban centre.
No successor daughter is married or has children
° Four non-successor daughters married farmers and lived on farms in the region of their childhood farms but are now living in aged-care facilities
^ One successor son sold his farm, 4 successor sons have retired and moved off their farms
** The total number of interviewees is 68 because there is an overlap with two successor sons living on farms (one husband and one unmarried successor) also in roles as farm associates.

3.3.4 Overall approach to data collection and data analysis

3.3.4.1 Provisions for interviewee distress

As this research process engaged with people who may be distressed, inconvenienced or suffering discomfort during the interviews or who may be distressed following the interviews, all interviewees were alerted to this possibility before the interviews and informed that at any stage they were able to discontinue and they were provided with addresses to contacts should they need the services of counsellors (see Explanatory Statements, Appendix 4). During some interviews, interviewees did shed tears, but all were keen to continue their participation. Tissues were provided and time was allowed for a recess for interviewees to regain their composure. No interviewees withdrew from participation.

3.3.4.2 Grounded theory

For this research, a grounded theory of intergenerational family farm transfer is developed from the stories and themes of intergenerational family farm transfer drawn from participants' narratives constructed during interviews (Tanesini 1999). All family members and farm associates can be considered as sources of knowledge of aspects and issues of family farm

succession (Beitin 2012). So, while non-successors are not the beneficiaries of family farm succession they are, by virtue of having lived as part of a farming family, sources of knowledge. Until this research, they have rarely been granted the opportunity to contribute their knowledges and insights to social theory on farming families and rural communities.

As individual reflection and knowledge co-production between the participant and researcher formed the data for this research, the research event was structured to enable each participant to share and construct this knowledge with the researcher (Charmaz 2006). Attention was given to both preparing the participants for the interviews and in setting up the interview with and for each participant. This is discussed in the next section.

3.3.4.3 Data and data collection

I employed a multi-pronged, mixed-method approach to eliciting the data enabling family members to present a rich, personally-relevant, subjective knowledge. This approach served to triangulate both the data and the methods to ensure richness, depth and accountability of the results (Beitin, 2012; Denzin and Lincoln 2003).

Data collection was primarily through one-on-one qualitative semi-structured interviews. Interviews such as these offer all participants the opportunity to give statements of their experiences as personal situated narratives and hence allows them to become involved as active agents in the process of knowledge production (Farnsworth 2010; Griffiths 1995; Hughes 2002; Johnson and Rowlands 2012; McDowell and Sharp 1999; Morse 2012; Platt 2012). I conducted interviews of between one to three hours with the research participants as loose, conversational style discussions that, through extra questioning, also permitted in-depth constructed representations of experiences and impressions to emerge (Charmaz 2006; Charmaz and Belgrave 2012).

A significant factor in preparing for the interviews involved access to family farms. Participants fell into three very distinct categories: those with direct access to their own family farming properties (parents and farm successors), for many this was the property of their childhoods, for mothers this was not the case; participants with no access to the family farming properties of their childhoods; and participants interviewed because of their professional standing with farming families and not for their personal connections to a particular family farming. I asked participants to nominate a place for the interview that they felt best represented the significance of their farming experiences and where they could demonstrate to me the importance of this experience (Anderson 2004; Gieryn 2000; Herzog 2012). For some this was on the family farm, in a particular place significant to the participant, for others it was along a path through the property and for others the interview was conducted partly inside the farm house and partly on a driving tour of the property (Smith 2015). For other farming family members with no access to

the family farming property, participants nominated to have the interview either in their own homes or their gardens (where many had items of memorabilia from their previous farm lives) and others opted for the aged-care facility where they were now resident. For the farm associates the interviews were held in their professional offices or in nearby offices. I also conducted five interviews in my own home for people known to me and who did not wish to be interviewed in their own spaces.

Prior to the interviews, farm family members were asked to either seek out items of memorabilia (including old photographs, certificates, newspaper cuttings, farm records, trophies etc.) related to their experiences on the farm and which indicated their emotional attachments (or aversions) to their on-farm experiences, or to take a series of up to ten images of their current daily lives either on or off-farm to bring to the interview for the same purpose. Photo (memorabilia)-elicitation has been used with success in prompting participants' deep subjective responses during semi-structured interviews (Matteuci 2013; Waitt et al. 2009). Many family members produced items of memorabilia (such as certificates won at local shows and photographs of farm places special to them, of ancestors indicating the importance of family heritage and of loved pets) and five interviewees from multigenerational farm families gave me access to family records during the interviews. These were helpful to maintaining the discussion on family members' involvements in developing and working the farms. The records and photographs also served to elicit further memories, impressions and emotions of farm places and events experienced by the interviewees. Further family data were supplied through responses to the mail out-survey sent to families on other farms (see Appendix 5) and informal conversations with family members.

Two types of interviews were conducted. Farm associates were asked questions relating to their professional engagement with farm family members, their observations and concerns relating to farm transfers and what they perceived to be the effects of farm transfers on family members and on local rural communities (see Appendix 5). These interviews typically lasted between 60 to 90 minutes. Interviews with farm family members lasted from between two to three hours and were comprised of two sections: a standard one-page questionnaire and an open conversational style discussion prompted by a list of general questions (see Appendix 5).

Each meeting started with a discussion of the Explanatory Statement and securing a formal consent from the interviewees to participate in the research. All farm family member interviews started with a standard questionnaire seeking demographic data relating to the farm size, location, farm enterprise and family composition. I consider completing the questionnaire together provided a valuable introductory time for both the researcher and the interviewee. I believe that this time together spent over the standard questionnaire provided the participant time to develop confidence in the researcher and for participants to become comfortable in sharing very personal

and richly embodied subjective reflections on their situated experiences. Sometimes this questionnaire was all that was needed for interviewees to lead the conversation about their impressions of their families' histories of intergenerational farm transfers. Other family members were shown a list of possible questions that could be discussed. These questions were only used as prompts to start the discussion. Once interviewees became comfortable with discussing their experiences and impressions they usually directed the discussion and conversation on points that came to mind rather than following the sequence of question prompts presented to them. In most cases, the list of questions was used as a review to check on whether we had covered most topics I considered relevant to the research. During these interviews, the recorded discussion, notes taken, the location and bodily and emotional responses during the discussion all counted as data recorded by me and from which I interpreted as providing the situated embodied accounts of individual subjective experiences of family farming and family farm succession (Charmaz 2006).

I found when I spoke about my research as part of normal conversations at social events, other people who had not responded to my advertisements seeking participants expressed interest in sharing stories of their experiences. I asked if I could use some of what they were telling me and some granted me that permission on the understanding that all such contributions would remain anonymous. I call these conversations 'serendipitous conversations' because they were unplanned and were usually of short duration (from ten to thirty minutes, for example, in camping grounds, at local stores or even at a Women on Farms Gathering). In some instances, they yielded new data related to the research questions and in others the conversations confirmed the data already collected from interviewees.

By January 2015, after I had interviewed many family members in different age-groups from a variety of farms, I realised that I was missing data from the 50 to 60-year-old male farmers and family members between 18–20 years. I was also missing data from dairy-farm family members in the region. To overcome this absence, following Ezzy's (2002) advice on inductive theory building, I scanned the local newspaper – *The Spectator*, the local telephone directory and the internet to find look for any farm families who would be appropriate to interview to fill the gap. I mailed a general questionnaire (see Appendix 5) along with the Explanatory Statement to forty possible interviewee families in the research area to seek responses to questions about each family's approach to farm transfer and also to generate interest in participating in an interview. Members from ten farm families responded to the questionnaires (some with contributions from more than one family member) and four farm family members agreed to participate in an interview. I also mailed the Explanatory Statement and the same general questionnaire to Longerenong College students and received three replies (with completed questionnaires) from agricultural students (aged nineteen and twenty years) living on farms in the research area. This extra material completed the gap in the data (see Appendix 6 for participants' family farms'

locations and enterprises). Although it is not possible to canvass all knowledge on social phenomena, I consider the number and variety of participants in this research sufficient to supply "theoretical sufficiency" in that considerable repetition in data started to emerge during later interviews in each demographic category (Dey (1999) cited in Charmaz (2006: 114)).

As I was nearing the completion of analysing the data from interviews, one theme emerged as significant for most of the family members in the grazing and cropping regions: that of rural depopulation and a sense of isolation of the remaining family members. On the basis of this finding I asked my sister (50s), my father (80s) and a family friend (80s) to accompany me on a road trip through the district of my childhood to record our knowledges of who lived in which houses on which properties during the mid-20th C when I was a child and to contrast this with who is currently living in the region. The results of this excursion are presented in Chapter 7 and serve to confirm interviewees' impressions of their depopulated grazing and cropping regions and the issues they now face attributable to this depopulation.

3.3.4.4 Data analysis

My analysis was framed within the overarching feminist frame adopted for the research, that of a situated embodied liberalist feminist perspective that values all members and their embodied knowledges within a particular social setting (Hekman 1992; Hirschmann 1999). I also subscribe to the viewpoint that family members' experiences and relations within a family contribute to a family's cohesion and that this in turn contributes to individual well-being (Atkinson et al. 2012). In this context, I value the emotions displayed and described by interviewees as valid sources of knowledge and as such are important to extend the knowledge about and theories of farming families, farm transfers and rural community sustainability. Furthermore, I subscribe to the viewpoint that sustainable farming communities and natural resource management require people committed to more than efficient agriculture, that there needs to be a critical mass of capable and socially-connected, like-minded people resident within farming communities to sustain the communities and the natural resources within those communities (Luck 2011). Hence, these viewpoints determined the themes recognised in the data.

I transcribed the recorded interviews instead of employing other agents to do this part of the research. Transcribing the interviews myself kept me in touch with the data and allowed me to start the analysis as I transcribed each interview and reviewed the notes and other material gained from the interviews. This was done soon after each interview. Subsequent interviews were modified slightly to incorporate some of the ideas emergent in the first interviews (Ezzy 2002). The transcripts were returned to each interviewee for review. All but five interviewees returned the transcripts, some made corrections, two interviewees crossed out large sections of the transcripts advising they didn't want these sections included in my analysis and five

interviewees provided extra material describing their farms and family histories on the farms. No interviewees withdrew completely from the research project. Follow-up phone calls were made to interviewees who did not return their transcripts; they all gave permission for me to use the data in the transcripts without any modification.

Importantly, grounded theory is constructed from analytic codes and categories recognized in the data and not from preconceived ideas deduced from hypotheses (Charmaz 2006). I followed the inductive qualitative methods for identifying themes and sub-themes and used open-coding to create codes (as labels) representing the themes and sub-themes emergent in the transcripts, notes and extra material provided by interviewees (Charmaz 2006; Ezzy 2002; Riessman 2012; Ryan and Bernard 2003; Saldaña 2013). I did not employ any coding programs, instead chose to construct codes progressively as I transcribed the data (Saldaña 2013). Working this way enabled me to select codes to match the "nuanced and complex" sections of the transcripts (Gallagher 2007 quoted in Saldaña 2013: 26). I had initially thought to follow the method of coding themes emergent in the first transcripts and then apply these codes to similar themes in subsequent transcripts. However, I found as I was transcribing the recorded interviews I could identify themes in the listening (based on my knowledge gleaned from the literature and framed through my understanding of situated, embodied liberal feminism). So, I merged the two activities of transcribing and coding. This involved having two documents open: one the transcript and another representing the thematic analysis. This second document with a four-column table was used to list themes, suitable labels as codes and to copy the relevant text from the transcript alongside the theme and provide space to note affective and embodied responses – sometimes as changed text and at other times with notes provided in brackets in the text (see Table 3.3). This practice enabled me to complete a transcription as well as a data table representing the emergent themes, theme labels and supporting text from the interview at the same time. In coding, while listening to the transcript and checking with the notes taken during the interview, I was able to log the different bodily dispositions alongside the text representing the spoken words. In this way, I was able to identify and include the embodied responses of the participants to particular aspects of the interview. I listened to some more complex recordings a second time to annotate the text in the data table with marks and notes representing the tone, pitch and speed of words, pauses, and other audible elements (scratching skin, thumping or tapping the table, sucking in breath etc.) to add to the embodied responses noted during the transcribing. I found this method of listening intently to each recording to develop codes afresh with each transcription less distracting than referring to previously assigned labels. I later compared the codes when consolidating the themes and developing theory.

Table 3.3. Tabulated data: A sample of themes and sub-themes developed from the transcript of Kaz-FP41. (K = Kaz-FP41 and D = researcher in the transcript)

Main theme	Sub-theme	Status/ position/attitudes	Interview transcript
Involvement in farm	Different from other farm wives	Sister is involved with farm but Kaz-FP41 is not Parents-in-law determine level of involvement	K/ I think it depends on personalities too like I think there's ahh like this is probably going off track a little bit but my sister is married to a farmer yeah so her life sister is very different to ours in that they took over the farm when they were thirty parents moved off the land retired and have gone off travelling D/ mmmm K/ um yes so quite different and so I can see that and she's my younger sister D/ yes so she's got more freedom that you have K/ oh yeah yeah and she's involved in the farm and she does the book work and stuff like that she doesn't work off-farming though
	Off-farm work	Work off-farm to support family – separated from farm work Would have been happy to be involved in early years but not so much now Resigned to situation	D/ mm mm would you like to be more involved with the farm and do bookwork and that sort of thing K/ oh look I would have probably you know when we were first married I was quite happy to be involved but the longer it's gone on the longer it's been like I haven't felt part of it ***so why should I work to support the family here plus do work on the farm*** (laugh) to do it ***so I'm doing enough*** trying to (laugh) to do everything else and I'm not really feeling part of it and I've kind of separated look no I don't really want to (laugh)

We see in Table 3.3 that Kaz-FP41's affective state is recorded through her laughs (these often served to punctuate her narrative), changed tone and louder voice:

> ***so why should I work to support the family here plus do work on the farm*** (laugh**)** to do it ***so I'm doing enough*** trying to (laugh) to do everything else

In this passage, for example, not only is Kaz-FP41 making a statement of her status with respect to contributing to farm work and in earning off-farm income to support the family, she is also by way of her voice demonstrating the importance of this status to her – it is something she feels strongly about. By transcribing interviews in this way, I have been able to identify responses that have significance for interviewees and which contribute to my understanding of farm family relationships. The knowledge that responses such as these provide is examined and discussed in Chapter 6.

Three consequences occurred following this procedure, one related to subsequent interviews and two related to the data sets. Firstly, transcribing and identifying themes through listening early in the research process provided further insights into possible lines of questioning that I used in later interviews; this reinforced the value of grounded theory approaches to social

research (Charmaz 2006). Secondly, where an interviewee had deleted material from the returned transcript, I then had to remove the corresponding section from the data in the thematic table listing themes, codes and relevant text. This was not difficult as I had constructed a specifically labelled table of data for each transcript. Thirdly, as I was coding through listening and transcribing, the themes and codes did not necessarily match themes and codes in previously completed transcripts. Hence, following the completion of transcripts, the themes and subthemes for each data set were examined and common themes were assigned consistent thematic labels. Three statements provide an illustration of thematic codes used in my analysis of social relations between members of farming families.

Wife works to support family while husband works to develop the farm

Farm not sufficient to support children – not enough income drawn from the farm

Difficulties in relating to parents-in-law

Where interviewees mentioned similar concerns, I have linked the themes as shown in the example below, linking a theme reported by farm parent and wife Kaz-FP41 with that of a son of farmer and parent Cam-SF44.

Farm comes before family (Kaz-FP41) **= social versus farming** interest (Cam-SF44)

For a common concern, albeit often expressed differently, I devised a code appropriate to the statements. In the example above, I have used the 'social versus farming interest' as the common label.

Once all transcripts, notes and other material provided by interviewees were analysed and sorted into themes and subthemes, the data sets were further examined to refine the themes and codes and to identify main themes and the subthemes within these themes. Profiles of farming families and their approaches to family-farm transfer and profiles of successor and non-successor children's engagement with family farming were constructed from the themes emergent in the coded transcripts. These profiles provided evidence of particularities, similarities and differences in farming families' attitudes to intergenerational family-farm transfer and of farm children's opportunities in farming according to the different family circumstances and ideologies (Ryan and Bernard 2003). Data tables representing the different interviewees, family farms and farm-succession status were produced from the transcribed interviews and used to provide the context of each interviewee's discussion (see Appendix 6).

The next phase of the analysis involved constructing memos of each particular subtheme on separate sheets of paper so that they could be grouped according to the main categories they represented and then ordered according to apparent relationships within these categories

(Charmaz 2006). The next section explains the emergence of the broad topics presented in the analysis chapters.

3.4 Main themes identified

As stated in Section 3.3.4.4 my analysis is based on a triangulated method that includes my own insider experiences and knowledges, an overarching situated, embodied, feminist perspective, the extensive review of literature on farming families, their farms and farm succession, interviews with farm family members and others associated with farming families and the inclusion of emotions as valid data. Over one hundred separate relevant issues or factors were identified through the coding process. While farm-family members and farm associates all present many different and particular concerns on the processes of intergenerational family farm transfer, how people respond to these processes appear to be related to three very broad and distinct topics. I identify the following three main themes:

1. **Different family farm ownership structures**

   There is a wide variety of farm ownership structures. Some of these family farms fit within the definition provided by Gasson and Errington (1993) and appear to qualify for family farm status as defined by the Federal Government (ABS 2003). However, other farms also considered by family members to be family farms differ significantly from these broad two definitions and these appear to provide a challenge to what may be considered a 'family farm'. This data forms the basis of the first analysis chapter, Chapter 4. This chapter provides the background to factors informing farm owners in their determination of intergenerational farm transfer.

2. **The interplay between farm ownership structures and the processes farm principals follow for farm transfer**

   Family farming principals (that is, the parental generation) approach family farm succession in a variety of ways, some of which have been described well by previous authors such as Barclay et al. (2007), Errington (1998, 2002) and Foskey (2005). However, newer patterns of ownership (such as, family companies and trusts) and different pathways into farming (such as off-farm training and employment) provide for new insights into the complexities now facing family-farm principals. This is discussed in the second analysis chapter, Chapter 5. This chapter addresses the first research question: How do farm family members negotiate and respond to intergenerational family farm transfer?

3. **<u>The effects of intergenerational family-farm transfer on family members</u>**

   This research delves deeper into the dynamics of relationships between farm family members than previous research. Where the former research has either focused on the farm family as the unit of study or where former research has concentrated on a particular generation or category of farm family members (for example Alston 1995; Gasson and Errington 1993; Riley 2009), my research focuses on family members as individuals to hear of their particular experiences of and issues arising from intergenerational family-farm transfer. This research brings to light new knowledge on farm-family relationships, personal concerns (for example, opportunities, disappointments, financial and social), and family social capital in rural farming districts. This is the subject of the third analysis chapter, Chapter 6. This chapter addresses the second research question: What are the enduring social and economic effects of family decisions and management of the processes of family farm transfer?

Furthermore, and in relation to the individuals and farm families presented above, the research also uncovers new knowledge on the status of rural farming regions, communities, local infrastructure and amenity that stem from, or partly stem from, farm family decisions on intergenerational family farm transfer. Hence, a fourth analysis chapter (Chapter 7) is included to discuss the following:

4. **<u>The wider effects of intergenerational family farm transfer</u>**

   Interviews with both farm-family members and farm associates reveal the changing patterns of rural demography that stem, in part, from decisions made by farm principals and their offspring for intergenerational family-farm transfer. Chapter 7 provides an in-depth analysis of the changes to local farming populations which have affected local small town rural businesses, the provision of state-funded services to the regions (such as, schools, hospitals and other services) and the ability for local community members to maintain and retain their own volunteer-driven community services and amenities. This chapter addresses the third research question: What issues arise from family farm transfers which impact on local communities and natural resource management?

3.5 Summary

This chapter described the liberal feminist perspective accommodating embodied subjective experiences (Hekman 1992, 1999) and situated knowledges (Haraway 1991; Hirschmann 1999)

underpinning the research. It outlined the processes for selecting research participants and the methods of sourcing data. The chapter also described the grounded theory method guiding the research (Charmaz 2006) and summarized the main themes emergent from the data.

The next chapter, Chapter 4 is the first analysis chapter. It revisits and examines definitions of what constitutes a family farm and examines how farm owners structure and maintain their farms as business entities.

Chapter 4

Farms are produced spaces: Farmer agency and/or servitude

4.1 Introduction

To set the context in which farm transfers occur, this chapter examines the variety of ownership arrangements presented in the data, and compares and contrasts these structures with earlier theorizations on family farms. These ownership arrangements are necessarily involved in the production and reproduction of such farms, and they contribute to the decisions about and processes of transferring farms to the next generation. From previous literature, we also understand farming activities and relationships, among other factors, are inextricably linked to the political and economic contexts of particular places and eras (Wallerstein 2012). Departing from earlier theorisations of farms and the people associated with them, this chapter employs Lefebvre's (1991) theory of the production of space to farms and Massey's (1994) conceptualization of spaces emerging out of the networks of relations both within and without a location, thereby enabling a greater appreciation of the factors and forces shaping the production and reproduction of these rural social spaces, the enterprises undertaken on them and the people who live and work on them. The focus of this chapter is on the legal and financial arrangements instituted by owners of farm businesses and properties and who in farming families are included in these arrangements. Other factors such as the emotional attachments family members may have to their farms, the communities and/or the physical spaces in which the farms exist, and the social relationships between family members and between family members and their communities that also influence perceptions and conceptions of farms are discussed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

A number of farms represented in this thesis comprise factors previously described by Fulton and Vanclay (2011), Gasson and Errington (1993) and Schwarz (2004). However, this thesis presents other farms, regarded by their owners as family farms, that do not reflect factors previously described as characteristic of such farms; for example, farms with complex ownership arrangements, families not living on farms and the principal earnings for the family coming from off-farm sources. Using the themes emergent from the data, and building on earlier analyses of family farms, this chapter presents a revised account of the relationship between family farms, the statuses of family members and the opportunities for family members to be involved in the farming activities and farm succession.

Section 4.2 examines the variety of farm ownership structures and activities and roles of family members emergent in the data and compares and contrasts these with previous accounts

of family farms. Section 4.3 examines two main factors presented by family members – government policies and adequate finance – that contribute to the ways farmers organise their farm enterprises. Section 4.4 presents revised conceptualizations of family farms, farm families and farm family members that take into account effects of the prevailing political regimes and policies. The impact of various farm ownership structures on intergenerational transfer is examined in Section 4.5.

4.2 Different patterns of farm ownership and roles of family members

This section examines the relationship between family members' mental constructs of farms and the lived experiences of family members under different ownership arrangements. It provides examples of different ownership structures instituted by farm owners, constructed by family lawyers and defined through legal documents describing family members' entitlements and commitments. The discussion in this chapter relates to the formal arrangements and not to the sense of ownership people may develop through their occupation and association with particular tracts of farm land. Interviewees presented a variety of farm ownership arrangements: farms owned by one family member, in partnership arrangements between two or more family members (often with the land and the enterprise owned in separate parcels), or in complex legal structures whose nominated or appointed family members have rights to benefits of both or either of the enterprise and/or the land. These farm business arrangements, in turn, influence the thinking informing and actual processes of intergenerational family farm transfer. Furthermore, ownership arrangements of the properties and the enterprises may determine what family members can expect from their families in the process of intergenerational farm transfer, impact on how emotionally attached family members feel to the property and/or the enterprise or both, and inform the responses family members experience during and after farm transfers (discussed more fully in Chapter 6).

In order to compare and contrast the patterns of farm ownership and the roles of family members on those farms as exemplified by the research participants with previous accounts of ownership and roles, it is necessary to consider earlier definitions of family farms. Particular reference will be made to Gasson and Errington's (1993) comprehensive discussion of family farms which informs the definitions of family farms provided by later theorists. The Federal Government's definition of a family farm (ABS 2003) on which many of the government's family farm policies and benefits depend will also be used. The examples in this section enable a more nuanced account of what may be considered to constitute 'family farms', 'farming families', 'farm family members' and the 'farmer'. These definitions based on descriptions provided by the interviewees can then assist in the analysis (in the following chapters) of farm transfers and of responses to and effects of these transfers as informed by the interviewees.

Most farm property owners and the principals of farming enterprises stated an understanding of their need to engage professional people – accountants, lawyers, bank managers and financial advisors – to help them keep abreast of their financial commitments in their farms and to create legal structures with respect to ownership of the properties (including, land, stock and plant) to protect their assets. The emphasis of some of the advice they received focused on encouraging farmers to adopt more sophisticated ownership and operational structures to benefit from the advantages offered by the Federal Government relating to taxation and liability and to prevent loss of assets through adverse claims arising from unforeseen events (McAllister and Geno 2004). Two farm associates, lawyer Dan-FA11 and accountant Roy-FA2 echoed the need for farmers to engage their services to be kept informed and up-to-date on what business management structures they need to institute to ensure farm viability and family continuity on their farms.

4.2.1 Single-owner farms

The least complex of ownership arrangements of family farms, as exemplified by the interviewees, for considerations of intergenerational farm transfer occurs when there is a single owner to the farm property and the farm enterprise. According to legal executive officer Bob-FA12 and accountant Roy-FA2, intergenerational transfer of single-owner farms is determined by the owner either through progressive succession, gifting or through the owner's will. Two family members described their farms as examples of single-owner farms owned by their fathers.

> Dad was a World War 2 soldier settler who was sole owner of the family farm. He left the details of the farm's transfer in his will. … Once mum died the farm was to be sold and split up. (Rus-SF58, interviewed 2015)

> There was never a house on the land that dad had. … We shifted into town [when I was two years old]. … I always thought of [the farm] as our farm even though mum never worked [in a paid job or on the farm]. She was always a home person. (Jen-DF58, interviewed 2014)

In both these examples, the husbands owned and worked the land and were considered 'the farmer', while the wives attended to family care duties and maintenance of the household. The wives in these families – one living on the farm and the other in town – were accorded by their children the similar status of being housewife, or as married to the farmer. They had no ownership status related to the family farm or any rights over how the farm effects were transferred to the next generation.

The next example is of a single man owning and living on a farm property he bought from his father and which has been a family farm for four generations of his family. It could become a family farm again when he marries, forms or is part of a kin-relationship with another person.

> I've bought probably two thirds of the farm and dad's kept a third because he wants to still own a bit of land … and then I will inherit the last bit when dad passes. … My wage pays

> for me and the farm pays for itself so that means I can put more back into the farm. (Zac-SF34, interviewed 2014)

Zac-SF34's father still lives and works on one section of the former farm. Zac-SF34 (also interviewed as FA9) has a full-time off-farm job during the normal working week and does his farm work after hours during the week and on weekends. Zac-SF34 defines himself as a farmer whose main goal in life is farm-focused – to enjoy the farm, make the farm more productive and to always look to improve the standard of the farm, even if the farm income is directed at farm improvement and income for personal needs is generated off-farm. Furthermore, Zac-SF34 sees his farm as a family farm with a future beyond his own involvement in it. He expresses the wish to find a partner with whom to raise a family on the farm. Here we see that it is not the amount of time that a person devotes to farming, or the relative amount of money from the different sources of income that is earned by a person who works on- and off-farm that determines how a person regards himself.

Of the three different examples presented so far, two challenge, albeit in different ways, Gasson and Errington's (1993) generalized description of a family farm. Firstly, Jen-DF58's family did not live on the farm, but Jen-DF58 considered the farm a family farm because it was where her father spent his days working and the family derived its income from the farm. Secondly, a farmer lives on the farm he bought from his father, but he is not yet married and has no other family members living with him. Zac-SF34 earns more income off-farm in his regular wage job than he does through on-farm activities. This also challenges Gasson and Errington's (1993) and the Federal Government's (ABS 2003) descriptions of family farms. As this example demonstrates, former family farms can be in transition from a family farm to a non-family farm and possibly back to a family farm when current owners change their marital/family statuses.

In the third example, a family did live and work on a farm and reflected most of the features attributed to family farms described above. However, in Rus-SF58's family, his father did not pass the farm onto a family member, even though Rus-SF58 had worked alongside his father from a very early age for little reward, developed farm skills and knowledge, and he and (according to Rus-SF57) his mother expected that he would inherit the farm. There is more to this family's story of farm transfer that will be discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

In each of these examples, the transfer of the farms was determined solely by the owners. For two off-spring, the farm-owners' decisions are supported and understood. For Rus-SF58, his father's decision and the consequences of the transfer have left a bitter legacy of resentment and anger directed towards his father and his older brother and sister. This is evident in his description of what is to happen to the farm now that his mother has also died:

> Well, yes [the farm will be sold] but it won't be me and it won't be [my son] no. But I know someone who wants to buy some – sister, [my] older sister wants to buy some [of the farm],

> but we won't let her. … It's just bullshit it shouldn't be allowed to happen. And they [older brother and older sister] both had fulltime jobs – **it's bloody wrong**. (Rus-SF57, interviewed 2015)

Sole ownership and the testamentary freedom granted to owners of private property, and as exercised by Rus-SF58's father, reflect the Federal Government's commitment to upholding the rights of individual property owners (Voyce 1994, 2007) and to the mental construct that ownership of property confers rights to property owners and not others, others who through their physical embodied association with the land may desire continued association with that property but who hold no legal title to the property. This construct of entitlement to property as a privately-owned asset has a major impact on access to farmland and is at the root of many family disputes and personal dissatisfactions and distress over intergenerational farm transfer (Ribot and Peluso 2003). This construct also applies to or arises as a concern in other forms of farm ownership arrangements as shown in the following sections.

4.2.2 Family members in partnerships

The second type of farm ownership described by family members is one where the farms are held in partnership in some way. Family members representing three different forms of partnerships were interviewed for this research. The first form is where the whole farm (that is, the property, enterprise and all assets as well as the benefits, costs and liabilities of the farm enterprises) is held jointly by two or more farm family members. In this arrangement, the percentage of ownership may be equal between partners or different. For example, Lil-FP48 and Don-SF48 run their farm in equal partnership whereas Huw-SF87 (now retired) described his situation as having greater share than his wife in the farm partnership.

The second form of partnership involves the enterprise, its costs, liabilities and earnings, and the stock and plant, but not ownership of the farm property. In this scenario, the property is owned by one member of the family involved in the farming enterprise, or is owned by another (possibly but not necessarily a family member) not actually working the farm (as in a lease arrangement between owner and person working the farm). Meg-DF63 operates the farm enterprise in equal partnership with her husband but her husband owns the land on which the enterprise is run – he bought the farm property from his father.

A third variation on farm partnerships occurs when farm partners own titles to separate sections of the property but who work together in the farming enterprise, as exemplified by Len-SF82's and Jan-DF61's families. Jan-DF61 explains the origin of her family farm:

> The land dated back to the original selections to my great, great grandfather as part of the first wave of people into the Wimmera … it was 1875 with land titles in 45 acre lots and people could sort of link them together so five hundred acres probably has ten or twenty

> different titles … and the land came to [my mother] from her mother which was farmed as part of my grandfather's land … they had separate [titles but] she and my grandfather ran the farm together as a business or sort of worked it together as if it was one. (Jan-DF61, interviewed 2014)

The examples cited above show the progression from simple farm partnerships to more complex arrangements: farm land and farm business form one farm entity; farm land is owned by one family member of the partnership and is separate from the business partnership involving two or more family members; or farm family partners own titles to different sections of the farming property, but work as partners in the farm enterprise. Each of these ownership arrangements have implications not only for intergenerational farm transfers (as discussed later in the chapter and in the following chapter), but also for the people involved in these partnerships. How these ownership arrangements affect the family members involved is discussed below. They also demonstrate competing mental constructs of family farms and different processes of producing the spaces of family farms.

Family farms can be conceived of as complete entities comprising land and enterprise or as an enterprise operating on land that is in some way separate from the family business ownership. Owning land separately from the farming business allows people to work in a partnership in the farming enterprise and gain benefits by having the incomes split between the partners, thereby reducing the annual income tax on those incomes. Keeping the land as separate from the farm business provides the opportunity for business partners who own title to land to make other business arrangements independently of their partners, and to accommodate life events (such as illness and early death) that change relationships between family members. In this way, farm family partners still have land as a titled asset that they can use to raise capital via bank loans, exit the partnership with an asset to pursue their own different commercial interests, or an asset to sell to raise capital to leave the farming area.

Of the examples above, Lil-FP48 and Don-SF48 are enmeshed in both the farm property ownership and the farm business enterprise and can make no independent business decisions using the farm assets. Unequal status and opportunity for financial control of the farming enterprise is evident in the arrangement between Meg-DF63 and her husband. Meg-DF63's husband has more economic advantage than she does because not only is he part of their farm partnership, he also owns the farm land and has the freedom, if he chooses, to sell this land and enjoy the proceeds of the sale for himself. The other two examples provided by Len-SF82 and Jan-DF61 demonstrate the economic security and flexibility that resides in members of farming partnerships having separate titles to farm land.

That gender differences can and do exist and that these differences afford males in the farm partnership more economic privileges than females is exhibited in the example provided by Meg-

DF63. In contrast, in Lil-FP48's situation and the example of Jan-DF61's mother there appear to be no gender differences in owning farming land and benefitting both from ownership of farm land and the earnings from the farm enterprises. In particular, Jan-DF61's mother's experience provides a counter-example to the argument for ensuring farm viability through patrilineal farm transfers and masculine dominance in ownership and management of farming properties and enterprises. The farms described above are mostly in accord with the definition of family farms as described by Gasson and Errington (1993) and the Federal Government (ABS 2003) in that the farms are owned and run by family members (albeit in differing relationships of ownership), and in all cases the farms have been acquired (through inheritance of purchase) from the previous generation.

Through Meg-DF63's description of her family's changing relationship to the farm and farming we learn of the changing family dynamics and the implications for considering a farm a *family* farm. Meg-DF63 and her husband raised their children and both engaged in farming activities to produce the main source of family income. This ownership arrangement continued unchallenged until the late 1990s when Meg-DF63's husband decided he had enough of farming and wanted to sell the farm, a feeling brought on, according to Meg-DF63, by the long drought and low commodity prices of the 1990s. After changing their working relations, Meg-DF63's husband has worked off-farm bringing in a regular income and Meg-DF63 works part of the farm with occasional help from their children, particularly the youngest son who is the one they think most likely to take over the farm (now in his early 20s and undertaking farm training off-farm). Most of the farm is leased to a neighbour and will continue to be leased until the son is ready and able to take over as the principal farmer. The farm still 'in the family' and husband and wife continue to live on the farm.

Initially the farm was a family farm (albeit a single generation farm) according to the Federal Government criteria (ABS 2003), then it became a two-generation family farm with members of the parental and offspring generations working and living together on the farm. Currently, most of the farm is leased to non-family people, part of the farm is worked and managed by Meg-DF63, the likely successor lives and works off-farm, three other adult children live off-farm and have non-farming careers and the husband works in a paid job off-farm. Income for Meg-DF63 and her husband is a mix of farm produce, monies earned from the lease arrangement and off-farm income. Is the farm still a family farm? I would argue that it is because of the continued association of the family with the farm, the income derived from the farm and the likelihood of a son becoming the successor when he is ready and financially able to commit to taking over the ownership of the property from his father and the enterprise (albeit in recess while the farm is leased) from his parents.

4.2.3 Farm businesses as trusts or companies

The most complex farm ownership arrangements are those which are structured as family trusts, land trusts or family companies. According to both lawyer Dan-FA11 and accountant Roy-FA2, in these arrangements the ownership of the farm enterprise is held by a trust or company with certain family members (usually the owners of the farm property) designated roles in the trust or company and who act to determine how funds are apportioned to family members working on or for the farm. Five different examples presented in the remainder of this section demonstrate the varied statuses of family members with respect to farm ownership, farm management responsibilities and decisions about future owners of the family farms. The first example is of a mother and son trust arrangement where the son's wife is accorded no farm ownership or management status and the son has a greater share of benefit from the trust than his mother.

> [The farm ownership following father's death] is a … trust with myself and mum and me being the sole beneficiary … and in the trust [I] have two shares and [mum] has one share. … She'll hand her share over to me when she dies. … [My wife] is not part of the partnership trust and has a [business which provides for her] holiday with her friend overseas and she'll finance that out of [her business]. (Greg-SF47, interviewed 2014)

In this example, the widowed mother and son retain control of the farm property through their involvements in the farm trust. The son and his mother have assets which can be used for further investments and development of the farm or development of other investments, but the wife is not included in this aspect of the farm's operations. The son's wife has no collateral in the family farm. According to Greg-SF47, the farm's income provided for all household expenses and was managed through a household account into which Greg-SF47 deposited a sufficient portion of farm earnings as they became available. He did not think his wife contributed to the household account – except perhaps for purchasing personal items for her own use which otherwise she may not have enjoyed or which may have been paid for by the farm account. Greg-SF47 did not consider his wife an integral part of the farm (property or business) even though she contributes to the family through caring for the family and managing the household duties. This assessment indicates that hegemonic attitudes remain, regarding the role of women as wives, mothers and as contributors to their own financial well-being as subordinate to that of males who manage and work the farm (Pini 2007).

The next example also employs a company structure for the farm business and assets, and the wife is also excluded from the farm business structure. The son and his parents are directors of the farm company.

> The family farm has some in [mum's] name and then there'd be some in mum and dad's name and then I've got a thousand acres in my name that I've bought. … Well the farm's bought, I guess ... in my name … [as] foregone wages I s'pose … We trade as a company as

> a family trust [which] is a pretty common structure now. [My wife] is not in there at the moment but we're going to have to … It took a while to get me in there … into the directorship. … I would have been about 35 or 36 I reckon. (Tim-SF40, interviewed 2014)

Tim-SF40's wife has minimal involvement with the farm. Like Greg-SF47, and following advice from his accountant Tim-SF40 has kept his wife out of the business structure of the family farm to limit the possibility of splitting the farm if there is a marriage breakdown or other calls on the farm through his wife's activities. Tim-SF40 and Greg-SF47 (as successor sons) are mindful of the possibility that their marriage partners may institute divorce and divorce may entail splitting up the farms if the wives were involved in the farm businesses. Their wives are considered as possible risks or threats to their farms (Pini 2007; Price and Evans 2006). They have organised their farm ownership structures to minimise this risk or threat. For them, keeping the farm property intact and/or expanding it – not reducing it – is of prime importance.

Tim-SF40 and Greg-SF47 both express pride in their families' connection to their farming properties and enterprises and would like to see the farms pass to the next generation. Neither of their wives – Kaz-FP41 (interviewed separately from her husband Tim-SF40 2014) nor Greg-SF47's wife (joined the interview with Greg-SF47 for 10 minutes) – express any attachment to the farms as enterprises nor to the farms as places of intrinsic value to them. Kaz-FP41 works fulltime off-farm, chooses to do so and is happy to have time away from the farm and the difficult relationship she has with her parents-in-law.

These two farms could be regarded as family farms because some members of the families are in some way involved in the ownership, management and work of the farms. This would satisfy the Federal Government's description stating that family farms are those where the families are such that the family reference person and/or their spouse or partner, reported that their main occupation was a farmer or a farm manager (ABS 2003). However, Tim-SF40 and his wife Kaz-FP41 challenge the description of farm family business provided by Gasson and Errington (1993), because they and their family of two now-teenage boys have never lived together on the farm where Tim-SF40 was raised, nor do they ever expect to. If and when Tim-SF40 takes over control of the farm from his parents, he and his wife plan to continue living away from the farm, continuing the practice of Tim-SF40 heading out from their off-farm home each day to work on the farm and then return to his residence each night to be with his wife and sons. The sons have had very little direct contact with farm life except for occasionally helping their father on weekends or during school holidays, but they have not grown up as farm children, even if they are a farmer's children. A further diversion from the Gasson and Errington (1993) and Federal Government (ABS 2003) models of these two farming families relates to the wives' off-farm income-earning activities. Both wives value their off-farm business activities for the

independence they gain in not relying on farm income to provide for their personal interests, for the opportunity to use their professional skills, and for the social contact they have in pursuing their off-farm work; neither seeks to give up their work. Their incomes do contribute indirectly to the farm investments in that each wife does not draw on farm earnings to support their personal interests. Moreover, Kaz-FP41 considers her income essential – "I work to support the family" – to the household in supplying many of the items needed to support the family (her husband, herself and their two teenage sons), further adding to farm investments by not drawing on farm income to care for the family.

The wives' off-farm incomes, while adding to the total family earnings, may reduce the families' eligibility to apply for government concessions in times of economic hardship for farmers if these incomes exceed the annual limit imposed on outside earnings. As Alston (2006: 178) found, even in times of crisis, wives who earn off-farm income to supplement, augment or supply funds to care for family members may in fact be penalised by "gender blind" government policies directed to supporting farm businesses in financial distress. Gender blind policies demonstrate the Federal Government's mental construct of family farming as predominantly a male endeavour, a construct that continues to belittle or ignore the contributions that women make to their farms and families.

In contrast to the two examples above, the following example highlights a mental construct of inclusivity. Dee-DF60 was included along with her siblings and mother in a pastoral company set up by her father when she was still at school.

> Well the farm was … a soldier settler farm and so the original farm … was 450 acres. … And then my father bought the property next door and then he bought another one. … When my father started buying these other properties he set up a pastoral company and so we were all members of the pastoral company. … [It happened when] I was fourteen or something. (Dee-DF60, interviewed 2014)

Although, Dee-DF60 and her siblings all worked on the farm and felt integral to the farm's productivity, she claims her father's decision to form a company had to do with the tax benefits gained through the farm being structured as a pastoral company rather than as reward for his children's activities on the farm. In effect, the taxation levels imposed on farm incomes by the Federal Government and Dee-DF60's father's response to these imposts determined the ownership arrangements instituted by him. While the farm's structure is not a direct consequence of the Federal Government's representations of farms, it is a consequence of the interplay and relationship between the Federal Government and an individual farm owner – there is resistance to imposed national policies (Lefebvre 1991). Since Dee-DF60's father's death and her mother's retirement off the farm, three of the four children, two sisters and a brother (all with off-farm careers) have owned the farm jointly, and they have contributed to the working of the farm as

well as employing a manager for the day-to-day running of the enterprise, and they have benefitted financially from the farm enterprise. Whatever the original motive was for setting up the farm as a company, the effect of inclusivity provided the opportunity for the siblings to remain in the farming enterprise. As this family's example demonstrates, farm viability and inclusiveness of siblings in succession are not mutually exclusive goals.

Dee-DF60 regards the farm a family farm because it passed to her and her siblings from their parents and because she owns it in partnership with her siblings. Dee-DF60 does acknowledge the siblings are not full-time farmers nor do any family members regard themselves first and foremost as farmers or live permanently on the farm. These factors challenge both Gasson and Errington's (1993) and the Federal Government's (ABS 2003) descriptions of what constitutes a family farm. This example of family members sharing farm ownership in some way and contributing to the productivity of the farm and their conception that the farm is a family farm raises the question of who has the ultimate say in what actually constitutes a family farm.

The fourth example in this section highlights some of the issues that arise when farming parents are approaching retirement and their children are adults with families of their own to consider. In this next statement by a 74-year-old farming wife, who also is thinking of her children and grandchildren, the benefits of having the farm property and business as part of a complex business structure are understood and appreciated. Eva-DF74 and her 73-year-old husband are the principals of the farm trust.

> There are little bits and pieces in the boy's names and the boys themselves own separate parcel of farmland **but** Son 1 doesn't own anything yet. … The sons' titles don't list structures sheds yards etc. because everyone uses these and all help. Everyone helps this one large farming entity with each person earning a living from the farm income which is drawn as an allowance or a distribution every quarter. The sons also benefit from lots of perks in using tax deductions to provide lower costs of fuel, vehicles. (Eva-DF74, interviewed 2014)

Eva-DF74 and her husband both work the farm with three of their four sons. Eva-DF74 makes the point that farm infrastructure (for example, sheds and yards) that is integral to the shared farming operations is not partitioned off from the general farm asset into any son's farm titles. Eva-DF74 regards these assets as communal property while they all work in partnership. However, Eva-DF74 admits that it is difficult for her sons (38–44 years old) to agree to not having a fair share of personal ownership of property, which would provide them with some or greater independence of the family business and from their parents and siblings. While the sons and their families benefit in economic terms as far as having reduced taxation and greater allowances than they would otherwise have, they have little sense of personal freedom from the family to invest elsewhere, or to live and work differently. According to Eva-DF74 and her son Cam-SF44 (interviewed separately 2014), there is a lot of tension between family members over the issue of

entitlements granted to each of the sons and the issue of succession. The issues confronting this family are discussed further in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

The farm Eva-DF74 describes meets most of the criteria described by Gasson and Errington (1993) to qualify as a family farm with members across two generations working together in the farming enterprise and the fact that two of the households (parental and one son's family) are located on the farm property. However, the arrangement presents a challenge to the Federal Government's description of a family farm in that all three sons have wives who have professional careers off-farm and who may derive incomes greater than their husbands – the farm's main reference person is not necessarily the main income provider in each son's family. The Federal Government's construct of family (ABS 2003) as having one main reference person generating the family income from the farm is once again challenged by the actuality of family members' contributions to farm productivity and the other family members and their off-farm income-producing activities by non-farming members of the family. On the one hand, Eva-DF74 and her husband have arranged their farm ownership in response to the Federal Government's taxation policies to reap the benefits the company structure affords. On the other hand, their sons and their wives are unable to exercise much agency because they lack status in the farm trust to determine what happens on a farm.

Finally, Jan-DF61 attributes the identity 'family farm' to large farming enterprises which others, not familiar with local farming history, may regard as large impersonal corporate farms.

> I look at the family farms around us or the farmers around us and you could say most of them are family farms but they are business conglomerates. … One of the biggest farmers in our area … he's one of seven children and he had his own number of kids and a large number of them are all in. They've just bought up every bit of land going … they say that was a family farm but it's a massive business … I think they work that as a company structure. (Jan-DF61, interviewed 2014)

Jan-DF61's observations are supported by Muenstermann (2009b: 266–7) who states there is a distinction between "family corporate farms", which are mainly found in the grain, pastoral and dairy industries and which tend to still pass from one generation of the family to the next, and the "corporate corporate farms" which tend to be larger than family corporate farms and usually involve "an entire chain of agriculture related businesses … [with] a diverse group of shareholders/owners". Other changes to the social and economic formation of family farming include the rise of entrepreneurs in family farming who operate their farms within a neoliberal governance regime such that they are able to retain their connection with family farm units but connect to the wider economy (Pritchard et al. 2007).

The business structure described above is more in line with enabling more family members to be involved with the farm (albeit a greatly expanded farm) than most other cases of farming

families where more family members are excluded from succession than are included (Luhrs 2015; Shortall, 2005). This corporate family farm structure is one way of overcoming the choice between inclusivity of one's children on succession or keeping the farm as a viable productive entity. This example points to a way of overcoming the focus on the family farm as operated by the modern nuclear farming family to one which is more inclusive of more family members and their own partners and children (McAllister and Geno 2004).

4.2.4 One ownership arrangement, multiple enterprises

The discussion so far implies that there is one enterprise for each family and that family members work together on the same enterprise. However, as emerged in the data, family members living and working on the same farm property can run different farming enterprises. Sam-SF26 (interviewed 2015) runs a Hereford stud on the property owned by his parents (Ron-SF59 and Maz-FP56, interviewed together 2015) on which they harvest crops. Currently, they run separate enterprises while also helping each other when more labour is needed at different times of the year. Sam-SF26 understands that he may be a successor to the farm but he intends to continue a different farming business from that of his parents. A similar example was presented by Joc-SF61 (interviewed 2015), who runs one farm enterprise with his wife on most of their jointly-owned property and another enterprise in partnership with his neighbour on another section of that property.

Table 4.1 summarises the types of farming enterprises and business structures reported by the interviewees and survey respondents, and indicates the number of enterprises is greater than the number of families represented in the research. This is because members of different generations within some families have instituted different business ownership structures using the same property and others have changed the farm enterprise, such as from wool to prime lambs or cropping (see Appendix Table A6.6).

Table 4.1. Farm ownership structures for different farming enterprises across the generations

Farm enterprises	Number of enterprises	Number of generations								
		1			2			3 or more		
		Sole Owner	Partner	Trust/ Company/ Other	Sole Owner	Partner	Trust/ Company/ Other	Sole Owner	Partner	Trust/ Company/ Other
Crop	2							1		1
Mixed crop/sheep	8					1		1	5	1
Sheep (wool and/or lambs)	16	2			1	4	1	1	5	2
Mixed sheep/beef	9	1				1	1		4	2
Mixed crop/sheep/cattle	4								2	2
Beef	1		1							
Mixed dairy	4	1				1		1	1	
Dairy	4	1	1			1		1		
TOTAL	48	5	2		1	8	2	5	17	8

Note. There are four farming enterprises where the ownership structure was not presented; they are not included in this table.

Interviewees represented a variety of farm structures (variously as property and enterprise together or property and enterprise separate): eleven enterprises were solely-owned; twenty-seven enterprises were operated as partnerships; and ten enterprises were arranged as either family trusts or companies. Overall, partnerships between farm-family members outnumbered other forms of ownership. Trusts or companies appeared in families where the farm had been in the family for more than one generation; however, they represented less than a quarter of the ownership structures represented in this research.

As the Federal Government requires farmers to register their businesses for taxation purposes, the number of farm businesses are known, but my research reveals there are instances of multiple business registrations for particular people on particular farm properties. My search for the actual number of farming properties and the actual number of farm owners in Australia was not satisfied. The ABS did not have the data I sought, nor did ABARES (see Appendix 7). They were able to provide the number of Australian Business Numbers indicating the number of farm businesses registered for taxation purposes but not the number of people holding these numbers. Nor were they or local government officers (through their rate records) able to indicate how many farm properties existed within the LGAs. Registration of foreign ownership of farms is mandatory (Australian Taxation Office 2016), but the register does not shed light on the number of Australian-owned family farms. This lack of data indicates that policies directed

towards farming families may be based on inaccurate assessments of the number of farming families in Australia.

4.3 Exogenous factors contributing to farm ownership arrangements

Families and their farms, as already alluded to earlier in this chapter, are not isolated social units or places devoid of outside influence; they affect and are affected by multiple events and factors, including within their immediate surroundings and from more distant places (Massey 1994). They are also affected by the particular histories associated with the farms and more generally by the interactions between individual farm owners and ever-evolving political and social ideologies represented by State and Federal policies of particular governments engaged in the development and promotion of the farming industry within the nation (as outlined in Chapter 2).

Family farming businesses engage with agencies and actors beyond the farm gate, and they acquire their identities through these interactions (Massey 1994). All family members operating farms (that is, the complexes of property, enterprise, plant and other farm assets), as represented in this thesis by interviewees, variously engage with financial institutions, legal and accounting firms, suppliers of inputs and markets for their produce and local, state and the Federal Governments and their policies and regulations. The process of developing agricultural products to sell embeds farmers and their farms within a social-political-economic network of interdependent relations. In considering how to define a family farm and family farming, it is important not only to look within a family to understand how particular farms develop and evolve but also to acknowledge the role outside agencies play in the way farm owners organise their farming enterprises and ownership structures (Lefebvre 1991). Furthermore, as Massey (1994) suggests for other business firms, what constitutes a family farm and a farming family are not static, they are likely to change according to changes in outside entities and changes to social relations and interactions between the members of the farm family and people and institutions beyond the farm fence. National, State and local governments all influence farm families and the farms they create through their policies, programs, taxes and laws.

4.3.1 Farmers and government policies

While successive Federal Governments have instituted a variety of policies and programs to assist farming and farmers or to assist struggling farmers out of farming, Federal (income tax), State (stamp duty on property transfer) and Local Government (property rates) charges are viewed by many farmers as burdens to counter. On the one hand farmers, their families and farm businesses benefit/have benefitted from a variety of concessions and financial assistance that are/were not granted to others not involved in primary production. On the other hand, farm business owners

institute ways of overcoming imposts on their earnings through a variety of legal and accounting measures.

'Tax-minimization' arose frequently in the descriptions provided by farmers and potential successors of farm enterprises as a major factor in determining how owners structured farm ownership and how they managed their finances. To understand the way farmers can institute measures to reduce their taxable income I spoke with accountant Roy-FA2 who arranges these measures for farm families. He states:

> In Australia, family farm principals (the designated taxable persons) are able to average their annual farming incomes over a five-year period to account for the widely varying annual incomes in the preparation of their income tax returns, and thereby to reduce their taxes during the high-income years when this income may be needed to tide them over in leaner years (Roy-FA2 accountant, interviewed 2015).

> The government allows the farmer to set up a **farm management [term] deposit** (FMD) [and] for funds split equally between husband and wife. ... [The] farmer can set aside part of a year's profit to bring on stream for use in future lean years such as if all the crops failed and they had huge losses, they could bring all of that deferred income out and it goes into that year of the loss – effectively deferring incomes until they are needed. [This] removes it out of the taxable income of the highly profitable year. It can sit there for as long as they want – as long as they are farming, as long as they are making primary production income and their off-farm income is below a fixed level – such as $65,000. (Roy-FA2 accountant, interviewed 2015)

Tax-minimisation refers to legal methods employed by farmers and their accountants to reduce the amount of income tax payable on annual income derived from farm production. As described by Roy-FA2 above, the Federal Government assists family farmers to manage their finances. In effect, the farmers are given a "tax-break" not enjoyed by non-farmers (Peters 2015: 14). However, importantly, there are conditions under which farmers are unable to claim these concessions:

> The issue with it that once they start getting trusts, especially if the land is moved out of the individuals' names, they lose all these different tax concessions that could have been very beneficial for them. Often the more complicated [ownership] structures can lose out on tax concessions that apply to simpler farm structures on succession, such that in protecting the land and the assets the owners/proprietors can lose out in other ways. (Roy-FA2 accountant, interviewed 2015)

To access benefits and gain concessions a family farmer must meet the criteria outlined by the Federal Government (ABS 2003) (see Chapter 2). Not only does the Federal Government determine which farming entities qualify as family farms for taxation concessions during each annual income taxation assessment, it also distinguishes family farms from other farming businesses on the basis of what other income is brought into the family unit. These taxation concessions remain as long as farming constitutes the main income producing activity and as

long as the off-farm income is below a fixed level, which at the time of my interview with Roy-FA2 was $65,000. As represented in this thesis by many interviewees, in order to retain the status of a family farm to access benefits available to farming families, many farm owners act on the definition provided by Federal Government on what constitutes a family farm and structure their businesses accordingly.

Acceptance of financial assistance from governments at all levels while also adhering to reduced taxation and the right to be one's own boss free from government intervention – as described by Jay-SF26 (interviewed 2015) – is indicative of the tension in farmers' political standpoint; that is, between agrarian socialism and liberalism. Farm principals all accept whatever financial assistance offered by the Australian (income tax concession and financial assistance), State (no stamp duty on farm property transfers to single successors) and Local (concessional rates) governments, while also attempting to reduce their tax contributions to the Australian, State and Local Governments. That is, farm business owners – following the principle of reducing costs (sharing losses) while also privatising profits – align with ideology of Australian agrarianism that affords primary producers more status than their city counterparts (Aitken 1985; Botterill 2009). Whether family members acknowledge the tension between their voting patterns for small government – Liberal Party representation in the southern Federal Electorate of Wannon and National Party representation in the northern Federal Electorate of the Mallee (Australian Electoral Commission 2017a, 2017b), and Liberty Party and National Party representation in the corresponding State Electorates (Victorian Electoral Commission 2014b, 2014c) – and their expectations for financial assistance from governments was not forthcoming in the interviews with them.

Farm size and perceived farm viability is represented in this thesis by interviewees as one of the most important factors affecting farming families in their deliberations on farm succession, and assessments of viability are very much affected by State and Federal government polices relating to returns on trade. As described by Len-SF82:

> [One daughter] was quite interested in and would have liked a bit of the farm but we decided, for the want of a better word, that there wasn't enough to split up. … We said with the present farming commitments you couldn't split the two and a half thousand acres and have a viable farm. So, we wrote up an agreement that [son] would get the farm and the [two] girls would get our financial investments and things like. (Len-SF82, interviewed 2014)

In Len-SF82's family, the farm was considered large enough to be viable and to transfer to the next generation but not to all offspring who wanted to be involved in the farm. His son was granted the farm and not the daughter who was also interested in farming. In other families, the broadacre farms, once considered viable farming enterprises by their owners and successive

Federal Governments, are no longer profitable or sustainable farming entities because of changed markets, commodity prices, Federal Government policies on trade and changed climate and physical environments (Davison 2005; Keneley 2005). Differently from Len-SF82, other farm families do not share the sense of passing farms onto their children because the farms are now regarded too small to enable succession and/or inheritance for the next generation. According to Bec-DF25, her father is not in a position to transfer the farm that supported himself, his wife and four daughters because the farm is no longer considered viable:

> Dad has expressed that even if one of us did want it, it's only about 800 acres [and] to then buy out the other three [daughters] it doesn't leave a situation for the person to pay them out and be in good financial position. ... Now that mum has passed away, if dad passes away it would go to us four with the intent to be sold and the assets to be divided up. (Bec-DF25, interviewed 2014)

In this change, from a relatively small but productive family farm once able to provide for a family to the situation of the same farms no longer considered viable, we see directly the influences of the global market and national policies on the production of viable farms. People who took up the opportunities to purchase small blocks of farmland offered by the Victorian Government during the closer settlement programs have either been able to expand their operations by buying out their neighbours – as in Dee-DF60's family (see Section 4.2.3), or have themselves sold up to other farming families or larger companies and moved out of farming – as in Rus-SF58's family (see Section 4.2.1). Farmers who have increased their holdings or people who have come into farming as others have moved out, have acted within prevailing regulations and applied particular legal and accounting instruments to protect their farming interests and to reduce their taxable incomes. Their activities and methods of farming, and actual enterprises (see Table 5.4) often differ from those of earlier farmers to match the new conceptions of the farming sector – as described through rural policies, advice given by farm associates and farmers' own conceptions – and contribute to new representations (conceptualizations) of farming and the (re-)production of the farming spaces (Lefebvre 1991). Therefore, farmers, by responding to opportunities provided by or constraints of policies, act according to mental constructs of particular eras about farming. These changes are further examined in Chapters 5 and 7.

Changes in the conceptions of how farming should be conducted, the markets and successive Federal Government farm policies have resulted in changes to farming communities and consequently of what constitutes farming spaces. In Lefebvrian terms, we can conclude that farms, as social and economic spaces are produced according to the representations (mental constructs) held not only by the farm owners but also by agencies beyond the farm boundary (Lefebvre 1991; Massey 1994). Lefebvre (1991: 102) further argues, the social space of the farm is an active, mutable product, at once "work and product" – never fixed or immobile. This is exemplified by dairy farmer Ric-SF33 describing his attitude to his childhood family farm as

farmer with a young family and his acceptance of the current rationalist approach to owning and running a farm business:

> We'd only be buying it from a sentimental reason. … We can't find a business reason to retain that bit of dirt. For where it is, for the commercial value of that 80 acres, we could go to [other places] and buy 300 acres in today's market. … Business wise we just can't make it stand up…. I'm not inheriting the original farm and I've come onto this farm at 20 years and I'm not inheriting it, I'm buying it … 235 hectares. All up I would put our combined farm total at 490 hectares. … The bank owns most of it - we would have about 430 free hold and 60 hectares leased. (Ric-SF33, interviewed 2015)

Ric-SF33 also demonstrates, though his purchase of a larger property and his financialization of the property, that farms as produced spaces become "active moments" not only in the fortunes of families associated with them but also in the "expansion and reproduction of capitalism" as farmers act to make their farms successful and enduring (Merrifield 2000: 173). That is, farmers are not only subject and responsive to prevailing capitalist ideology, they are agents who through their farming activities support, sustain and extend the influence of capitalism. In Lefebvrian terms, farms are, like other produced spaces, "colonized, and commodified, bought and sold, created and torn down, used and abused, speculated on and fought over" (Merrifield 2000: 173).

4.3.2 Farmers and the finance sector

Interdependent positionality within a network of economic relations is a factor influencing farmers to structure their farms and enterprises in such a way so as to acquire the greatest possible benefit available to them. One of the most common and important issues acknowledged by family members, especially current and former owners and potential successors, concerned farm finance and farm debt. For some older family members (for example Huw-SF87 and Len-SF82), inheritance or succession occurred without the encumbrance of debt at the transfer of ownership. For younger potential successors Jay-SF26 and Sam-SF26, their prospective transfers of farm ownership will carry farm debts of up to one million dollars (mostly as interest-only loans) as described by Jay-SF26:

> I plan to pay off some of the principal so that I can refinance or re-mortgage to buy up other land that comes onto the market. It is not going to be easy and in the succession process I will be taking over the farm debt but looking at the big picture this doesn't not "phase me" because I will end up with more land. (Jay-SF26, interviewed 2015)

Jay-SF26 and Sam-SF26 both expressed confidence in their ability to succeed in farming to service the debts as well as provide for themselves and their families. While no potential successor interviewees expressed negative views about their capacity to benefit from such arrangements, their parents expressed concern at the debt burden their successors will take on.

Potential successors in other families may view such debts and financial uncertainty a burden and a deterrent to taking over the farm. Of those with confidence to continue farming, many stated the need to structure the farming business so as to reduce costs to the farm business to ensure returns on farm produce are sufficient for a 'good' farming life-style. Jay-SF26's conception of a good farming life-style is evident in the following as he contemplates taking over the farm and considers the financial commitment he will have to make:

> I won't ever get out of sheep **no way.** I like machinery but enjoy sheep more. And I won't sell up because of the opportunities and the life style. There is so much land and it is great to be your own boss without an overseer. It is a good life. … There is family cost in the amount of time worked on the farm to provide a high standard of living … it is tough to strike a balance between working hard and earning enough for a good life and earning enough to live … Whereas my father used to work most weekends, I like a bit more social interaction than dad had. When I am working by myself, I know I need to go out for a chat, so I go to the pub on Thursdays, a good place for a chat. (Jay-SF26, interviewed 2015)

A good farming lifestyle was presented as one where there was time and money enough to enjoy life away from farming to engage in sport, travel, socialising with friends and family, enjoy annual holidays as well as being able to work productively and efficiently to earn income to provide for the family and for improving the farm enterprise. The confidence expressed by Jay-SF26 and Sam-SF26 depends on the interest rates not rising, their farm property values not falling and their agricultural products earning sufficient income to service the interest on the debts and to provide for themselves and their families.

Five current farm owners spoke of operating their farms with finance gained as 'interest-only' loans from banks. On these terms, as explained by Con-SF51, the borrowers were expected to pay only the interest on the loan each year and did not have to pay back any of the principal.

> We've got an interest-only loan at the moment much to [my wife's] disgust (laugh), so when we sell, the bank's going to take "x" amount of dollars back and whatever's profit then is profit. … Eventually, somewhere along the line, the bank will be wanting their money but at the moment the bank is happy to just get interest only. … We put a deposit down here of probably about a third of the amount and fair enough we haven't paid anymore off but in that time farm values have gone up. We might still be owing $800,000 at the end of the day, that third that we have paid for is worth a lot more. (Con-SF51, interviewed 2015)

According to Con-SF51, this generally works in favour of property buyers because as land values increase purchasers' equity in the land also increases, thereby reducing their debt to equity ratio. In this scenario, the farmers, if and when they do sell their land, are in a position to gain considerably more cash on the sale of the land than the initial purchase amount. However, if land values fall – as is currently happening in western Queensland and about which State and Federal members of parliament (for example Katter 2016; Leyonhjelm 2014) and political commentators

(for example, Garnett 2014 in Australia and Creswell 2013 in the United States) express concern – the issue is that farmers operating on interest-only loans may have a negative equity in the farm and be required to refinance their loans or, where this is not possible, to sell up. By engaging with financial institutions in instituting interest-only loans to support and/or expand their enterprises, farmers are complicit with and dependent on others in determining the constitution and practices of their farms.

As demonstrated in Section 4.2 and Section 4.3 farmers engage with many agencies and actors and act according to opportunities and threats as they employ legal devices to ensure that their properties and enterprises remain intact to be transferred to the next generation (Voyce 2008). These considerations together demonstrate the production and sustainability of family farms are not only determined by the people who own the farm properties and the farming enterprises. Farms, like other productive spaces, are produced jointly by many agencies (Lefebvre 1991), and farmers are part of an extensive network that determines how they constitute and manage their farms (Massey 1994).

Family farm histories, farm ownership structures and enterprises, financial networks, the mental constructs and definitions applied to the enterprises by government, financial institutions and the farm owners and the effect of current and future government policies and regulations on farming enterprises are all important considerations for the discussion on intergenerational family farm transfer.

4.4 Re-conceptualizing the family farm

4.4.1 Family farms as multigenerational constructs

Most previous literature on the characteristics of family farms refer to families and their relationships with particular farming properties, and include the personal attachments family members may have to particular places and the values imbued in those places as important factors to account for when considering farm transfers (see, for example, Schwarz 2004). Much discussion about multigenerational farms is often conflated with continued occupation of particular parcels of farmland (Lobley and Baker 2012); however, as reported by real estate agent Alan-FA17 (interviewed 2015), this is not necessarily the case. Intergenerational farm transfer is not necessarily tied to one particular multigenerational parcel of land, but is tied to what the older generation owns at the time of transfer. Alan-FA17, through his work in farm property sales, has observed many farms or parts of farms are sold each year as vendor families move out of farming, downsize or move onto other farms to expand or change their enterprises. While farm transfer is an important consideration for each family, the notion of a family farm is not necessarily fixed to a particular parcel of land (Cheshire et al. 2013; Johnsen 2004). An

investigation of how many farming families change properties and/or enterprises is beyond the scope of this thesis, but such an investigation would add to the knowledge of family farming and assist in understanding the flux in farming communities and the effects of this mobility.

The appreciation of the "decoupling" of farmland from family farming does not deny that there are successive family members who remain on the same property and who are deeply attached to their places of farming, the family heritage with the farm property and the developments of particular tracts of farmland (Cheshire et al. 2013: 64). These are the farms usually described as multigenerational family farms (see, for example, Kardel 2014). I also apply the term to family farms which may not have yet been fully transferred from a first generation to the second generation within the family where an adult member of the second generation is working on the farm in partnership with the first generation. Furthermore, I also apply the term 'multigenerational' to families where adult members of successive generations have a family history of farming but who have relocated from one farming property to another to continue a farm business enterprise, albeit often a different type of enterprise in a different location. Therefore, in this account, intergenerational farm transfer may relate to properties that have been held by family members over many generations or it may relate to properties that have been acquired by the most recent generation.

The next section provides a synthesis of the data emergent in the interview transcripts and the previous literature to arrive at revised concepts of what constitute family farmers, family farms, farming families and farming family members.

4.4.2 The family farm re-conceptualized

The analysis of data gained from the research participants prompts a re-conceptualization of family farming. In this re-conceptualization, Lefebvre (1991) and Massey (1994) enable a better appreciation of the wide network of factors influencing farm family members and how owners in concert with others produce the spaces of family farms than previous accounts of family farms have provided. Differently from previous literature, I focus on the social relations and activities of family members involved in family farming instead of on describing a family farm as a multi-faceted unit. As all social activities are embedded both in place and time, the space and location of the farm and the era in which the farm operates are also included in the definition of what makes up a family farming enterprise (Crang and Thrift 2000). Farms – never stable constructions – are created by the influence, intervention and intersection of a multitude of factors and actors and take their form through the various representations and lived actions by a variety of actors, including farm family members (Crang and Thrift 2000; Lefebvre 1991).

For analytical purposes the family farm is decomposed into three parts. I define the family farming business entity as consisting of three parts: a 'family farm', a 'farming family' and a

‘family farmer’; all determined by the era and place in which they are embedded. Firstly, in the political regime of an advanced capitalist country, the ‘family farm’ is an enterprise comprising a business related to producing an income from agricultural activities and one which engages members of the same family in the productive activities. It is an enterprise where the family derives a significant proportion of its income from farm-related activities but which may not necessarily provide the major part of the family income. Most previous descriptions of family farms, either expressly or implicitly, entail the characteristic that farming activities contribute to the majority of the earnings for a family involved with the business of farming or that the main reference person or income generator derives the greater portion of family income from farming than any income earned in off-farm employment (see, for example, ABS 2003; Schwarz 2004). The farm property on which the farm business is conducted is an integral part of the family farm and may be owned by family members, under purchase agreement with others or leased by family members. The farm business enterprise and the farm property may exist in a variety of ownership structures, from simple single-owner title holders, to partnership arrangements including separation of agricultural enterprise from land ownership to complex structures such as family trusts and family companies. In addition, farms may be family farms even when the family lives off-farm if members of the family work on the farm property and/or share an ongoing interest (financial or otherwise) in the farm property or enterprise. Furthermore, it is not necessary that current family farmers are operating farms passed to them from the previous generation. A farm for this thesis is not considered a family farm when the family lives off the farm and there is no association with the farm by other family members (that is, not working or sharing an interest in the farm – financial or otherwise). Nor is a farm a family farm when there is only one person living and/or working on the farm and no other persons related to this person share an interest in the farm.

Secondly, and in accordance with most other accounts of farming families, a ‘farming family’ comprises a group of two or more people related by marriage and/or kinship whose daily life is related in some way with productive farming activities. The family may live on the farm or it may be a family living off-farm but with at least one person whose main occupation is farming and whose farming activities contribute to the wellbeing of and provision for the family. Thirdly, and following on from the second point, a ‘family farmer’ is a person whose on-farm productive activities contribute to the livelihood and wellbeing of him/herself and his/her other family members.

My definition of the family-farming business entity builds on and differs from that suggested by Gasson and Errington (1993) and later theorists (for example Schwarz 2004 and Fulton and Vanclay 2011). This reflects the fact that farming has undergone considerable revision since the straitened times of the 1990s (Gill 2011). Family members are now aware that in a

neoliberal climate of self-responsibility they must be more self-sufficient and attuned to the vagaries of the climate as well as international and local markets (Gill 2011). Accordingly, and because the older definitions do not reflect the current political and economic regimes which influence farm practices and ownership arrangements, I allow for farm families to include members whose incomes from off-farm activities are greater than incomes from on-farm activities of other family members. I also allow that a farm family does not necessarily have to live on the family farm, but that a farm principal who resides off-farm with his/her family still has a commitment to a farm and its productivity that provides the family with a significant proportion of family earnings.

While many interviewees spoke of the importance of the intergenerational connection to particular farming properties, other interviewees spoke of their commitments to family farming enterprises even though there was no previous intergenerational connection to the farming property. What appears to be important to all interviewees in terms of family farming is that the farms provide an income and lifestyle for the current farming family, although not necessarily providing sufficient income to furnish all the families' needs. Multi-generational ownership seems to carry less weight in defining the family-farming business entity than the contribution that the work on family farms provides for current families.

This revised definition of a farming family does not appear to contradict the definition provided by the Federal Government for taxation purposes such that farming families are families whose family reference person and/or their spouse or partner, reported that their main occupation was a farmer or a farm manager (ABS 2003). It does differ in respect to the proportion and amount of income earned from on-farm and off-farm work in that, according to the Federal Government prescription, on-farm work is expected to contribute the greater proportion of income to the family than off-farm work and that off-farm work must not exceed the annual limit if the family wishes to receive concessions and other benefits from the government. Interestingly, in an era of supposed gender equality the Federal Government still adheres to the descriptor of one main 'reference person' in a family where equality between partners (married or not) is practised or assumed. This provision does have negative implications for farm enterprises under stress and seeking government assistance, as described earlier in this chapter (Alston 2009). However, as we shall see in the following chapters, while the definition of family farm or the farming family may create issues for farming families seeking government assistance in times of farm stress, other factors, such as the actual relationships between family members, can create considerable concern and stress/distress for farm principals, their nominated successors and other family members as they negotiate intergenerational family-farm transfer.

Finally, the descriptor of 'farm family member' is both flexible and contested. Who ascribes this status, who has the right to ascribe this status and who benefits from this status are

among the questions that arise when successors and non-successors speak of their associations with their families' farms. For the purposes of seeking research participants, I applied the term to any person who had grown up in a family associated with a farm and where the work on the farm provided for the family. However, not all siblings within a family share this view of family membership. For example, five daughters each regard themselves as family members because they have a love of their childhoods on the farms and, except for Tam-DF57, retain some connection to their families still living and working on these farms (Ros-DF29, Tam-DF57, Deb-DF30, Ann-DF34 and Kim-DF21). They also acknowledge that other family members do not ascribe the label 'farm family member' to them because they do not necessarily work on the farm or contribute to the management of farming enterprises. They are often named by the job or position they hold, for example, teacher, nurse, business assistant, counsellor, mother and so on, and are deemed to have lesser status with respect to the farm than those who remain and/or work on the farm. Sons (for example, Abe-SF31) working off-farm also experience the same lack of family member status.

For a variety of reasons, other people actually reject the label for themselves. Their reasons vary. Ben-SF19 does not identify with or wish to be associated with farming as a career. For him there is nothing redeeming in owning farm land or living and working as a farmer. Liz-FP60 did not enjoy life on the family farm; it was too isolated from the things she enjoyed – theatre, art galleries and a supportive social life. Jan-DF60 rejected the "small-minded" farming community attitudes. Abe-SF31, who liked the idea of a farming career for himself, considered the costs of farming too great to ever be able to become a farmer. The relationships of family members to each other, farming, the family farm and farm ownership are integral to decisions about and affect the processes of intergenerational farm transfer.

4.5 Family farm ownership patterns and intergenerational farm transfer

The different forms of ownerships either enable or limit the control family members exercise or have the right to exercise over the operations of the farm enterprises or the farm properties and also affect the eligibility of family members to participate in intergenerational farm transfer. Furthermore, farm ownership arrangements can present issues for families planning and instituting farm transfers. According to Roy-FA2, the various agencies (such as lawyers, financial advisors and accountants) that farmers engage to assist them in setting up their farm businesses often create ownership arrangements which make the process of farm transfers very difficult

> Farms come in one of two ways – they are in a very basic structure or farmers have had advice in the past and now they are in a very complicated structure – the more complicated

> the farm business … makes it extraordinarily difficult to do anything with them … it makes it [succession] very difficult (Roy-FA2 accountant, interviewed 2015)

Roy-FA2 further stated that intergenerational farm transfer was rarely an easy process, even without the complicated structures. One of the main issues to arise from operating the family farm as a trust has to do with ensuring the necessary provisions have been made for the appointment of future appointers following the departure of the current appointer. The 'appointer' is the person with most authority within a trust and the only person who has the power to nominate future appointers of the trust (Dan-FA11 lawyer, interviewed 2015). This is explained by Tim-SF40:

> Well [of] course the idea of the family trust is so that … the farm business passes smoothly from one generation to the next … but depending on … whoever is an appointer.
>
> Because there was only ever mum and [dad] in the trust … If I wasn't made a director we would have been in a lot of trouble. … It was going to have to go to court to be sorted out. That's where we would stand and if my sister wanted to be greedy she could have quite easily challenged what was. I think it's got to be written into the wills that side of it, to pass the appointeeship on, yeah, it gets quite complicated. (Tim-SF40, interviewed 2014)

This segment of the interview transcript highlights the difficulties farmers face in keeping up-to-date with the requirements placed on them by the very structures they have put in place to protect themselves against losing part or all of their farms. Furthermore, when farmers institute complex legal farm structures to take advantage of particular government benefits or to protect the family farm entity for the intended successor, as indicated by Tim-SF40 when referring to the possibility of his sister being "greedy" (see also McAllister and Geno 2004), they may encounter or indeed generate other unforeseen problems for themselves. This lends a sobering view to setting up family farms as complex legal structures before fully understanding all the ramifications. As stated earlier in Section 4.3.1, family members may lose out on some benefits and tax concessions on succession if they institute complicated ownership structures. Moreover, the manner in which farmers transfer their farms to the next generation may also have disadvantageous consequences for the retiring farmer. Roy-FA2 reveals that decisions made by farmers to secure pensions on retirement may in fact be disadvantageous, "Retiring farmers often get side-tracked on trying to maximise Centrelink payments by divesting all assets – at the cost of other benefits" (Roy-FA2 accountant, interviewed 2015). Seeking legal structures to protect against risk of loss of the farm during a working life may create other barriers to potential benefits and wellbeing for the retiring farmers on succession. So, while farmers may be taking an active role in protecting their interests, they may also be inadvertently disadvantaging themselves and/or their successors.

According to Roy-FA2, the most tax-effective ownership structure for a farm is to be set up as a company. Family members working as farmers and included in the farm company as directors have access to funds and assets of the company but are not recorded as receiving incomes as high as they otherwise would be if they were in partnerships or were sole owners. In this way, farms are not places determined entirely by the mental constructs of external hegemonic state power (Lefebvre 1991). Farmers and farm owners negotiate and renegotiate their positions and farms as places through challenging and rechallenging government policies by arranging their ownership patterns to provide more favourably for themselves under different government regimes.

Therefore, farm owners are at the same time institutors and managers of their farms and responders to prevailing economic, political and climatic factors. This is demonstrated very clearly by Don-SF48, 5th-generation farmer and husband and farm partner of Lil-FP48, who states that he is doing all he can to keep his farm afloat through buying up more land and working to change the breed of sheep to produce the fine wool that he was advised would meet market requests.

> Almost for the entire journey it's been superfine wool but because of the state of the wool industry at the moment and the lack of premium on low micron wool I think we're about to change. … I think partly because of the dry seasons and partly because of the push towards lower microns that, like our end of the job, is just oversupplied now. We're planning ... to put more emphasis on food so be it mutton or lamb. … Through the generations we've all worked off the farm ... you know with a view to getting established to buy a little bit more and we've all done that … but no one's ever really had a free kick either … I think now is probably as close [to selling] that we've ever been … largely because we've just ... we've sort of landed in the wrong spot we've landed with a couple of bad seasons and a product that no one wants to buy. (Don-SF48, interviewed 2014)

In the fifteen years that Don-SF48 and Lil-FP48 have worked the farm, he feels as if they are no further ahead than when they began because of changes to government policies and world markets and the effects of climate change, things over which he has no control; but he does exercise control by changing his farming enterprise to meet market expectations. Other farm owners also feel some sense of control in how they manage and work their farms. Their farms may be produced or structured by farm owners as negative responses to particular external agents' constructs or expectations; such as, of what farming enterprises ought to contribute to the government from their annual net earnings, in responses to supposed threats that may arise from within the family or responses to markets for their produce. The farm owners through their resistance to particular imposts or threats demonstrate their agency (albeit partial) by structuring their farming enterprises to increase their gains, reduce costs and/or prevent loss (Merrifield 2000).

So far in the discussion, the focus has been on the ownership arrangements and economic aspects of family farm business structures. While finance and legal ownership arrangements define farms in quite specific ways and focus on the business of farming; they are not sufficient to account for the social and relational contexts of farming and not sufficient to account for individual family members' status, desires and relationships. Further to these considerations are the emotional attachments that family members have to their farms (to the farm, the enterprise, the activity, the place within the community), the relationships between family members, family members' aptitudes for farming and the financial gains for family members from the transfer of the family farm (Fulton and Vanclay 2011; Gasson and Errington 1993; Schwarz, 2004). Any dissatisfaction expressed by family members about farm ownership arrangements were not so much about the type of ownership arrangements *per se*, rather they were about the relationships between family members and the level of control they could or could not exercise about farming matters or their involvements with the farms. These are considered in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

4.6 Conclusion

The results of this research show that family farms are not necessarily multi-generational farms. Nor are these family farms similar in legal structure, enterprise, size, off-farm income-generating activities or as places where all family members reside or work. Furthermore, as referred to in Table 4.1, there may be multiple farming enterprises conducted on the one family farm. What the farms do have in common is that they are social relational places where one or more family members conduct the business of farming and that the business generates income that wholly or partly contributes to the wellbeing of family members and creates a livelihood for one or more family members.

This chapter demonstrates that the various complexes of family, farm property and enterprise can be the direct result of particular mental constructs (Lefebvre 1991, Merrifield 2000) of what farms ought to be: in the Australian case, from populators of rural spaces in the early to mid-20th C, to efficient agriculturally productive enterprises of the 21st century with the focus primarily on agricultural production. Farm principals manage their farming enterprises within these mental constructs or in opposition to them as they seek to reap the greatest possible benefits from their farms for themselves and their families. Farms are also produced by the active engagement of farm owners and their associates in response to other relational factors such as markets and government policies on taxation and family provision. Thus, farm owners are both agents and servants in a complex network of relationships (Massey 1994).

The variety of family farming operations presented here, ranging from simple sole ownerships where succession is the prerogative of the owner to very complicated legal arrangements such that succession itself requires extensive legal advice, gives some indication to

the differences that families may face as they address the issue of farm transfer to members of the next generation. The one common issue that relative newcomers to farming and multigenerational family members encounter at some stage in the families' life-cycles is how to address and deal with the transition of an older generation out of farming, possibly into retirement, and members of the younger generation into a career of farming, transitions which take place in changing economic, political and climatic contexts. Farms may pass from one generation to someone/anyone in the younger generation or the farm principles may decide to sell up to invest their funds elsewhere. The methods farm families adopt to navigate their way through farm transfer and the issues that arise for the various families, family members and their farm entities are discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter 5

Intergenerational farm transfer: Which process? Who benefits?

5.1 Introduction

Farm succession is regarded by many as an important process for the continuation of an efficient and productive farming industry in Australia (Stephens 2011; Voyce 1999; Wheeler et al. 2012). It is promoted as the way to ensure skills and knowledge for particular farming activities acquired during childhood and through teenage years remain on the farm (Lobley and Baker 2012). Farm owners are urged to address the issue and to start the succession process as soon as practicable (Crowe Horworth 2015; Spence and Rose 1978; Stephens 2011). This chapter critically examines different processes by which farmers transfer the management of their enterprises and their farm properties, and examines whether farm ownership structures presented in Chapter 4 determine patterns of farm succession. Further, this chapter questions which issues have primacy for farmers in determining farm transfer to the next generation, particularly, for example, the issues of farm viability (as encouraged and supported by current government policies) or perceived fairness to all children in the family (Barclay et al. 2007).

In critically examining the issues of farm transfer, the chapter looks beyond the family to reveal the forces and influences acting on farm owners and further reveals wider social issues that may be attributed, or partly attributed, to patterns of farm succession. Farm transfers have implications and consequences that extend beyond the family such that making the decisions for farm transfer present a wider-than-family concern. For example, provision for parental retirement, family social cohesion and community connectedness are all implicated in farm transfers. Social issues arising from family decisions and actions relating to farm transfers are examined in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

As described by previous authors (Errington 1998, 2002; Foskey 2005; O'Hara 1998), intergenerational farm transfer is not a simple project. Intergenerational farm transfer typically involves not only the business enterprise but also the farm property, equipment, livestock and/or grain, and, in most cases, the family home, and it also necessarily involves the transfer of interactions and relationships with both familial and outside agencies, it is a relational project (Massey 1995). Furthermore, farm transfer is not usually a purely rational business transaction. The complex emotional overtones often imbued in family farms and the complex interrelationships between family members add different and important factors which must be acknowledged and accommodated in the transfer process. These emotional overtones and

interrelationships encompass a multitude of factors such as the farm as a home, a place of occupation and productivity, family interaction, emotional attachment, recreation, an aesthetic space and, for many, a significant part of personal identity (Schwarz 2004). Variously, these elements emerge and merge during the discussion of intergenerational farm transfer. Furthermore, many factors exogenous to the family also intersect farmers' decision-making processes (Fischer and Burton 2014), they mediate the decisions made (Latour 2005).

The next five sections are devoted to close examination of the factors influencing decisions about and processes of farm transfers. Section 5.2 employs Latour's (2005) actor-network theory (as described in Chapter 2, Section 2.6.3) to examine what happens inside the 'black box' of the farming family approaching/considering farm transfers (Latour 1994). As some transfers involve selling the farm such that there is no successor, Section 5.3 examines factors leading to the sale of family farms. Of the families that do transfer farms intergenerationally, the variety of within-family transfer processes as exemplified by the research participants is examined in Section 5.4. Following this, Section 5.5 reviews the methods and stages of farm transfer revealed during the research. Section 5.6 discusses the effect of family traditions on farm transfers.

5.2 Factors informing family farm transfers

Transferring the family farm requires a decision on whether to transfer the property intergenerationally, or to sell up and move off the farm. Either a next-generation family member accepts the mantle of farm principal and runs the business of the family farm, or the farm passes out of the family (Inwood and Sharp 2012). Hence, succession occurs when two basic factors within a family align, that an owner is willing and able to pass the farm onto the next generation, and, importantly, there is someone in the next generation who is prepared and able to take over the farm (Voyce 1999).

Of the forty-nine farms represented by forty-seven farm families in this research, participants indicated eighteen farms had been or would be passed onto someone in the next generation. The figures add up to 49 and not 47 because one founder family farm was split and, consequently, the transfer decisions represent two generations of decisions for different farms within the same family (see Farm Family 7 in Table A6.6), and in another family the son has bought extra land that he farms separately from his parents (see Farm Family 39 in Table A6.6). Interviewees and survey respondents representing sixteen farms were unsure as to whether succession would occur or, if it were to occur, who the most likely successor would be. Fifteen farms have been or will be sold out of the family. Of the farms transferred or to be transferred, interviewees reported different ages of both the older generation and the transferee generation at which transfer happens, different processes and stages of farm transfer and the difficulties family members faced as they worked through these processes

Before examining the endogenous factors at play in farm transfers it is important to understand the context within which these decisions are made and enacted. As stated in Chapter 4, farming businesses exist in networks of relations with other social institutions (Massey 1994). And the farms and the family members engaged with them are embedded in a complex interplay of mental, social and physical factors while enacting and engaging in farm production (Lefebvre 1991). So, while farm families' activities and decisions may be enacted locally, within a local political, social, ideological and physical environment, they are not bounded by that environment nor are members of farm families without agency to resist impositions or to make changes in that environment (Lefebvre 1991). Lefebvre (1991) and Massey (1994) have enabled a nuanced appreciation of the network of relations that family members are subject to and exist within, and which in some way contribute to the production of family farms. Latour's (2005) actor-network theory, described in Chapter 2, Section 2.6.3, enables us to examine the specific social, economic, political and physical factors impacting on the agricultural productivity of farms and subsequently the intergenerational transfer of farms. Farm families operate their farms within chains of inputs to and production from their farms. Figure 5.1 shows the position of the farm family within the chain of actors involved in creating a value-added product for local and more distant markets.

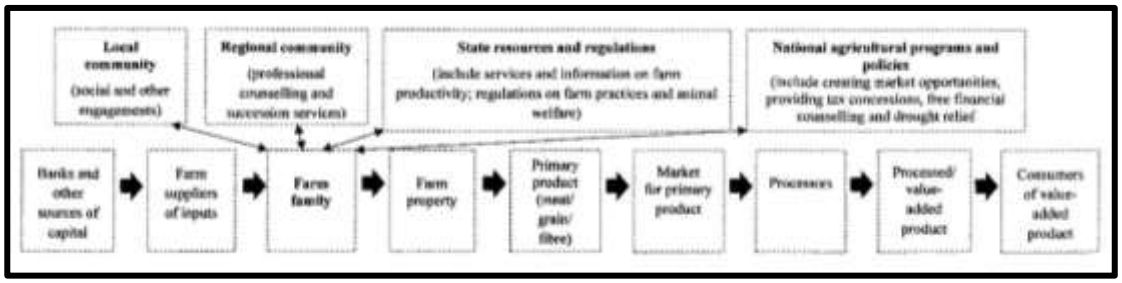


Figure 5.1. Actors/actants involved in farm production and economic return

This chain of entities (read from left to right) shows the farm family relying on other actors to provide sources of capital and inputs and the farm itself to provide the resources for the family to produce the primary products that it can sell in order to raise capital to pay off loans and to purchase further materials to continue annual farming activities.

The actor-network for primary production (Latour 2005), and the porosity of social groups (Massey 1994) indicate the complex interplay of factors influencing and which are influenced by farming families. Exogenous factors not part of the direct chain of actors for production (depicted above the chain of actors for farm production in Figure 5.1) also impact on farm production. National agricultural policies and programs, State and Territory regulations and services, farm associates from the regional community and members of the local community act as enabling or constraining factors on farming families. Endogenous factors that play a role in determining farm

structures and farm transfers include farm property ownership, farm family members and the farming enterprise. What Figure 5.1 does not show is what happens inside the family; the family is 'black-boxed' (Latour 1994). 'Black-boxing' refers to the practice of grouping multiple entities, processes and functions as a single item, a 'black box', within a larger framework to enable a broad overview to be presented. However, in order to gain a full appreciation of particular processes and events, black boxes have to be opened to enable examination of the functions and processes that may be occurring internally and hence affecting overall functions and processes (Latour 1994).

Not only does the farm family produce agricultural products for sale, it is also called upon by the Federal Government and local and family traditions to produce the next-generation farmer (Kaplan et al. 2009). As this research is about the deliberations and activities of farming families, it is the black box of family decision-making in determining farm transfers that are examined in this chapter (Latour 1994). For this thesis, the family, the farm and the processes leading to farm transfer are examined with reference to the associations between the actors involved in farm transfers, including non-successors. A generalized schema representing a network within a farming family for farm transfer is shown in Figure 5.2.

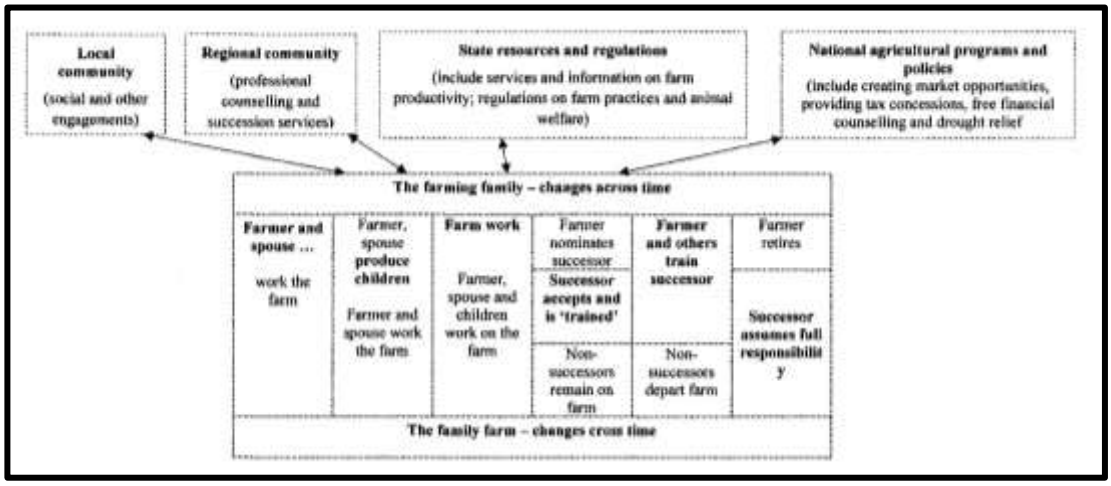


Figure 5.2. Changes to the farming family (read from left to right) leading to intergenerational farm transfer

Figure 5.2 (read from left to right) represents a farm transfer process across two generations of a farming family. Typically, as described by most interviewees, a farmer and spouse begin their farm-life partnership without children, then have children, raise their children on their farm, engage their children in farm activities and eventually nominate (and groom/train) a successor before they themselves reach an age of being less involved in farm work and they transfer the farm enterprise to the successor. Non-successors in the family usually move out of the family home, leave the farm and pursue adult lives elsewhere. This model represents expectations placed on farm families by the Federal Government, farm advisors and by family members themselves (Voyce 1999).

While Chapter 4 examined the diversity of farm ownership arrangements as a starting point to examine farm transfers, there is more involved to farm transfers than ownership arrangements. The action of transferring the farm to the next generation is an action dependent upon all members of the family and dependent upon the relations of production (Massey 1995) involving the farm property, the enterprise, actors outside the family and other non-human factors such as climate, soil, water, farm animals and or crops and machinery that allows the work on the farm to proceed and maintain or build value. The following two figures are composites of the many factors interviewees mentioned that impact on their farming enterprises and planning for farm transfer. The figures demonstrate the extended and complex actor-network (Latour 2005) that farm owners engage with as they raise their children, run a farming enterprise to earn a living and engage with rural communities, and prepare the next generation of farmers. Figure 5.3 represents farm owners' associations with their families, the farms and their immediate commercial activities that impact in some way on their considerations about intergenerational family farm transfer.

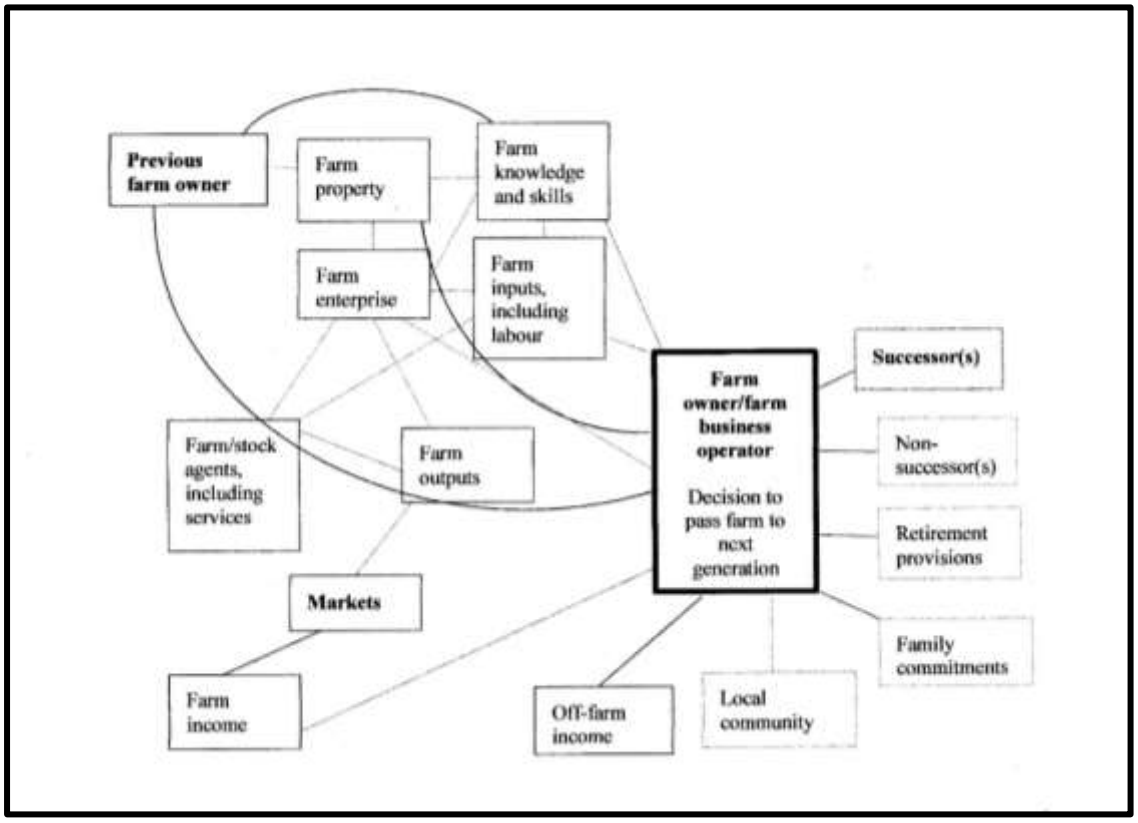


Figure 5.3. Immediate actants and mediators impacting on family farm transfer

In this figure, we see that even within the local environment of everyday life, farm owners must be alert and responsive to a variety of factors and relationships, often competing, that affect their farming outcomes, their family wellbeing and their considerations about and for farm transfers. The second chart, Figure 5.4, presents a much more complex and widely dispersed network of actants and mediators (albeit not a complete network of associations) that all impact either

directly or indirectly on the management of family farming enterprises and plans for farm transfer. Markets in this chart refer not only to the sale yards or grain receivers but also to the international trade that is facilitated mostly by the Federal Government, often by the State Government and sometimes by Local Government (through particular exchange relationships with particular localities)

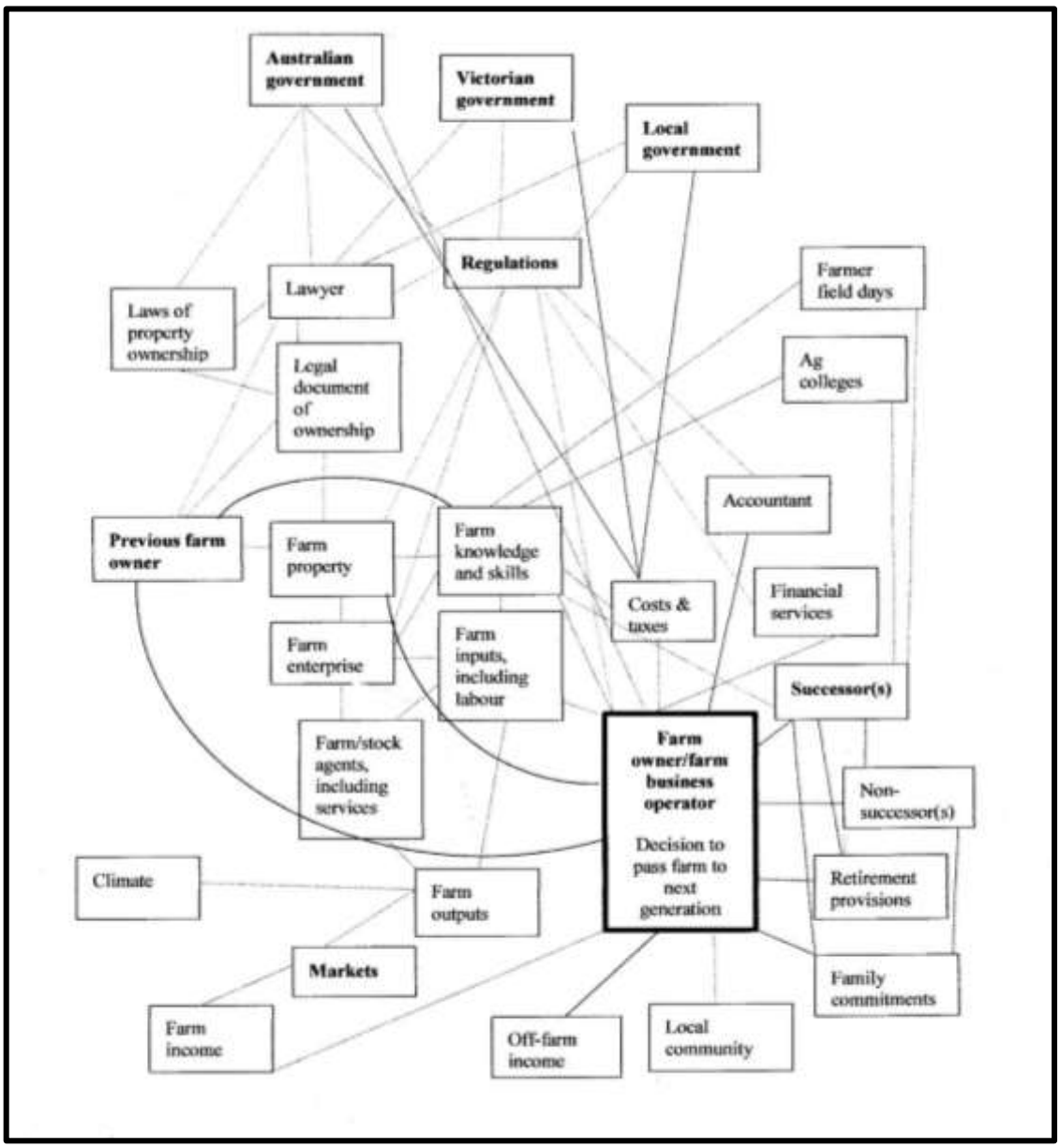


Figure 5.4. Local, national and international actants and mediators impacting on family farm transfer

Figure 5.4 enables us to see how complex running a family farming enterprise can be. The business of primary production (the day-to-day job and management of the enterprise) is intertwined with engaging with markets, maintaining the natural resource in variable climates and of rearing a family (albeit, most commonly, with the mother in the family assuming the greater responsibility for this) and raising and training a next generation farmer while also

managing family relationships and looking after personal ambitions, all within the one socio-economic and political system – the family farm. In the words of Latour (1994: 35) the action of transferring the farm is "the property of an association of actants"; that is, human and non-human entities are all implicated in the completion of intergenerational farm transfer. The process of family farm transfer is but one of a multitude of possible goals confronting and engaging farm principals. How well they manage all aspects of farming including the dimension of intra-familial relationships and the transferral of their farms impacts on themselves, their families, their local communities, the natural resource and the national economy. This chapter now turns to opening the black box of the family to examine the farm transfer processes employed by farm principals as recounted by various members of farming families. This thesis builds on earlier research by including accounts from non-successors and from others who are witness to the processes and effects of these processes.

5.3 Transferring the family farm

Research participants' experiences of farm transfers include inheritance, gifting, purchase from parents (often with parental assistance), progressive transfers of management of the enterprise and of the property, or a combination of any of these processes. Family members, lawyers and accountants interviewed in this study indicate owners of farms not only hold differing views on how to dispose of or relinquish ownership and control of their farm properties, farm-related assets (for example machinery, stock and grain) and their farm enterprises, but that they also differ on when and to whom they transfer their farms and associated assets. Furthermore, successor involvement in intergenerational farm transfer ranges from no input from either successors or non-successors, where control remains with the current owners until the transfer is complete, to full engagement in the process of transfer. And, finally, not all owners adhere to the practice of patrilineal inheritance as described by many previous authors (for example, Barclay et al. 2007; Poiner 1990; Shortall 2005), nor in all transfer processes does farm viability take precedence over family members interested in participating in some way in farm transfer.

The data gained from interviewees reveals in most cases, that owners who transfer their farms via wills, gifting (whether early in the successor's life, or to enable current farm owners be eligible for the Australian Age Pension) or through selling to the successor retain control over either the properties or enterprises or both until formally relinquishing control of this ownership. In 1997, a bill introduced by the Liberal/National Coalition Government and passed into legislation enables farmers to transfer their farm assets as a gift to a family successor (in lieu of foregone wages of the recipient) so that parents can access the Australian Age Pension without the application of the five-year gifting rule applicable to other non-farming people (Australian Department of Human Services 2017; Dwyer, 1998). This is another instance of farm families

granted a financial concession not granted to others, in this instance as they transfer their properties to their offspring.

In farm transfers via wills, there is no gradual process of transfer of the farm as occurs in farm succession outlined by Errington (1998, 2002), Hastings (2004) and Barclay et al. (2007). Gifting and selling farm property to the successor(s) may provide for staged succession of the enterprise while the owner is still alive, but the amount of autonomy granted to the successor depends on the way the farm principals structure the farming enterprise and property ownership whether as a sole owner/manager, in partnership or as a trust or company (as described in Chapter 4), and on how much the principal is willing to share the management and decision-making with the proposed and /or interested potential successor. The control of the farm by the owner does not necessarily mean that there has been no prior farm engagement or training through participation by the eventual successor. However, importantly, it is the case that the current owner(s) in the transfer scenarios mentioned above retain ultimate control over which farm activities, regimes and investments are instituted. According to owners, farm associates and potential transferees interviewed, farm owners generally limit the responsibilities of the potential transferees to practical issues (such as the planting of crops, herding of cattle and shearing of sheep) rather than providing them with opportunities to experience the overall management and risks of the farms (for example in making decisions relating to finance, hiring seasonal workers, sales of produced and purchases of expensive farm items). No transferee interviewed in these scenarios identified with Errington's (2002) 'ladder' of succession or Hasting's (2004) 'phases' of succession.

According to the farm associates, legal executive officer Bob-FA12, lawyer Dan-FA11, accountant Jim-FA1 and accountant Roy-FA2, the process of farm transfer, whether by conscious decision-making or by a haphazard unplanned process, relates partly to the way farm owners structure their farm assets. Furthermore, according to Roy-FA2 and Bob-FA12, these ownership structures can either enable a relatively simple process of farm transfer (such as an asset transferred by will, gifting or selling) or may involve complex and extended processes of legal and financial consultation before progressive transfer of the farm can be determined (such as in appointing a successor to the family farm trust or company). However, family members who have experienced the transfer through the simpler mechanisms of wills and gifts provide evidence that simple ownership structures do not necessarily ensure freedom from complexity or sibling challenges. Nor do they provide for the continuity of viable family farming enterprises or ensure family relations remain positive and supportive after farm transition. For owners who engage (or plan to engage) their adult children as partners or shareholders in their farm enterprises, the process of succession arises as a significant issue before and during succession for both transferors and successors because (as indicated above in Figure 5.4) transferring a farm is

complex relational process requiring consideration of a multitude of human and non-human factors.

The three following sections examine how families manage farm transfer whether through selling out of the family or transferring to a family member. Section 5.3.1 examines the reasons farm owners sell their farms. The next section, Section 5.3.2 examines family-farm transfer via inheritance, gifting or purchase. Finally, how family members negotiate family-farm transfers as progressive succession is examined in Section 5.3.3

5.3.1 Selling up

According to family members, selling a farm is regarded as a drastic step for any family to take with many professional people (accountants, lawyers and real estate agents) and friends of the families concerned questioning the reasons behind the decisions to sell. For other interviewees, farms were sold outside the family because either no child was interested in continuing the farm or the farms were considered too small by the owners to be viable for anyone of the next generation.

The factors that led Vin-SF57 to sell his farm included a sense that there was possibly no successor in the family. However, differently from the examples cited above, the major factors were the souring relations between his and his brother's families following the split of the family farm in the mid-1980s and his wife's demands to move away from his brother and his brother's family. The serious downturn in the 1990s in farm income added weight to the decision to sell. When Vin-SF57, and his wife put their property on the market, his real estate agent said to him, "[family name] don't sell farms"; his reply, "this one does".

Liz-FP60 and son Ben-SF19 provide another example of family tensions leading to the sale of their farm. There is nothing which ties them to the farm. Rather, they want to escape the bad relationships experienced on the farm with their husband/father who is remembered for his domineering and single-minded approach to farming at the expense of his relationship with his family. The farmer, according to Liz-FP60, has recently decided to sell the farm and to try to mend the fractured relations with his wife and son. Liz-FP60 and Ben-SF19 are happy for the farm to be sold and to have no further association with it.

Rus-SF58 (interviewed 2015), exclaims his disappointment and anger at his father's "piss poor effort" in writing a will that excluded him. His father's will provided his wife with life interest and then after her death he left the entire farm to two older siblings who had little involvement in the farm. Rus-SF58 successfully contested the will so that he is now included, but the property will be sold. According to Rus-SF58, this resolution gives no account to all the work he did to improve the farm, nor does it provide a future as farm owners for himself and his son who now work as contractors to other sheep farmers. Deb-DF30 also considered the farm

she grew up on and had shares in would be hers to continue. However, her parents were forced to sell their farm due to a bank foreclosure following increasing debt accrued by them. Deb-DF30 now grieves the loss of her opportunity to take on the family farm and expresses anger at her parent's "careless" financial handling of the farm business.

Marj-FA3 (aged-care lifestyle coordinator) considers many sheep and dairy farms in her region are not able to support two generations of a family living on the farm, nor is there sufficient cash in the family to support parents who may be ready to pass the farm to the next generation but lack funds to support them in their retirement. Marj-FA3 observes:

> When the time comes for the parents to retire, the children can't afford to buy the farm. The parents can't afford to retire without getting the money from the farm. So, the farm has to be sold. … [And a lot of farms have] all been sold to blue gums. … The land's going under blue gums everywhere and the few farmers that were left were very upset and very angry [at the loss of farming land]. (Marj-FA3 aged-care lifestyle coordinator, interviewed 2014)

What is noticeable to Marj-FA3 is the change to farming communities. The farms in many areas of western Victoria that once supported families whose social capital contributed to community amenity are now 'under trees'. Rural farming populations in these areas are decreasing and social networks are thinning thereby creating a sense of isolation for those who remain (discussed further in Chapter 7).

Local business proprietors are also aware of, and affected by, issues arising from farm transfers. Mary-FA20 operates a business along a major highway in the region. One of her observations concerns a family where there was a potential successor:

> All of a sudden mum and dad decide they are going to retire [with] no plans in place. … Poor [son] Johnny's ousted because it's come to a head. Mum and dad need money to retire to live for the rest of their lives. No plans have been put in place. Johnny's out in the cold. The farm gets sold up and it gets divided up … and away they go. … That's happened on two occasions in this area that I know since I've been here. (Mary-FA20 rural retailer, interviewed 2015)

Mary-FA20 sees and experiences the effects of a rural community losing a farming family. The farm is sold to outside interests, the nominated successor is forced to uproot his family, lose his farm investments and is forced, in his forties, to start a new career, and Mary-FA20's business loses valued customers. The community structure becomes eroded such that there is less social capital in the community to undertake voluntary community work and to look after the natural resource. The situation above need not have happened nor the community been eroded had the owners made plans and provisions for their retirements and succession of their farm. Lawyer Dan-FA11 and accountant Roy-FA2 state that proper financial and succession planning can ensure that parents have sufficient funds to retire, and the parents' contributions to other children's careers can be assessed against the likely benefit received by successors.

Finally, there are families where the children are considered as neither having the aptitude to manage a farm enterprise nor to maintain a farming property. Jan-DF61's aged, widowed mother is in an aged-care hostel and will not be able to return to the farm she has worked since her childhood, first as the daughter of the owner and then as the owner herself. Jan-DF61's brother may have been nominated as the successor had he been more capable. She describes her brother's situation as difficult: "He's got no skills, no capacity to earn a living doing anything other than what he does [labouring]" (Jan-DF61, interviewed 2014). Jan-DF61's concern is not about the farm but that her brother will be provided for through some legal structure to ensure him a continued income. Jan-DF61's only concern is that her mother's estate is managed to the advantage of her underprivileged brother who, as he approaches old age, may not be able to continue his work as a labourer for local farmers. This could involve selling the farm. Paul-FA4 (power of attorney for brother-in-law, interviewed 2014) shares similar concerns for his wife's nieces and nephews whom he describes as having "different disabilities or … problems that they would not be able to run the farm".

These last two examples provided by Paul-FA4 and Jan-DF61 indicate the former successful farm operators do not necessarily have children competent enough to take on the business and activity of farming. There are two issues emerging from these situations. The first centres on adequate provision for the health and welfare of the children of the family. This provision may be generated from arrangements made on the continuing operation or sale of the farm. The second issue concerns the continued productivity of the farmland and is the concern for local producers, as reported by Eva-DF74, who see poor farm management contributing pests and weeds in local areas. This second issue indicates that there is more than the personal involved in the intergenerational transfer of farmland. Hence, within the local area, farm succession affects not only the family members, it can also affect the productivity of neighbouring farms and the economic prosperity of other rural businesses. This will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

While selling up was an option exercised by some families represented by the interviewees, most interviewees reported families opting to transfer their farms to someone in the family. The following sections examine the methods family members employed to transfer their farm enterprises and properties.

5.3.2 Simple transfer processes: Inheritance, gifting or selling

In farm transfers via inheritance, gifting and/or selling, owners generally maintain control over the management of their properties, farm enterprises and other farm assets until the farms have been transferred. According to interviewees, transfers via gifting or selling do not usually occur until farm owners are ready or need to hand over their property and assets. Their reasons include deciding to retire, reducing involvement in the farm enterprise, change of business interest or ill

health. Farmers who have no intention of transferring the farm property and its assets until their death disperse their farms through their wills.

5.3.2.1 Inheritance: Farmers and their wills

In Australia, testamentary freedom generally holds for owners of private property (Atherton and Vines 2003; Voyce 1994). Testamentary freedom "is the ability of an individual in a society to decide what will happen to their property after death by means of a will or testament" (Atherton and Vines 2003: 21). However, where that property supports family members the Family Provision Act requires that dependent family members are considered and catered for in the transfer of property, and the courts can alter the terms of a will to ensure dependants are not ignored (De Groot and Nickel 2012; Voyce 2007). According to Bob-FA12 (legal executive officer, interviewed 2014), most farm owners do write wills as a precaution against their untimely death so that family members are the beneficiaries of their wills. Furthermore, according to Bob-FA12, as farm owners age, and their relationships with their dependants and partners change, their wills are often altered to reflect the altered relationships within the family (including step-family members) and their expectations of likely and potential successors.

The farm-owner's age at death can have a major impact on how the farm owner's assets are transferred. A number of interviewees provided accounts of themselves and other family members inheriting either a portion of the farm or the whole farm on the death of the previous owners. In some cases, other family members were considered in the wills but received non-farm assets. Others reported being left out of a farm-owner's will altogether. How the testators provided for their survivors is discussed in the following two sections.

Farm owners die when their children are young

Three daughters belonging to an extended family (Sue-DF58, Peg-DF83, and Jen-DF60) and two sons (Len-SF82, and Joc-SF61) reported cases where farm owners died when their offspring were either children or young adults still considering their options for their future careers. In each of these examples, adult family members acted to keep the farm viable and in the family. However, the outcomes for each of the offspring who remained to help keep the farm in the family are not all positive.

Peg-DF83 recounted the story of her husband whose father died young and the farm was still very much in debt to the bank. Peg-DF83's father and later her brother also died when their offspring were teenagers or young adults. Figure 5.5 depicts the successors in the extended family of Peg-DF83, Sue-DF60 and Jen-DF58, the early death of the successors and the patterns of farm transfers across the generations.

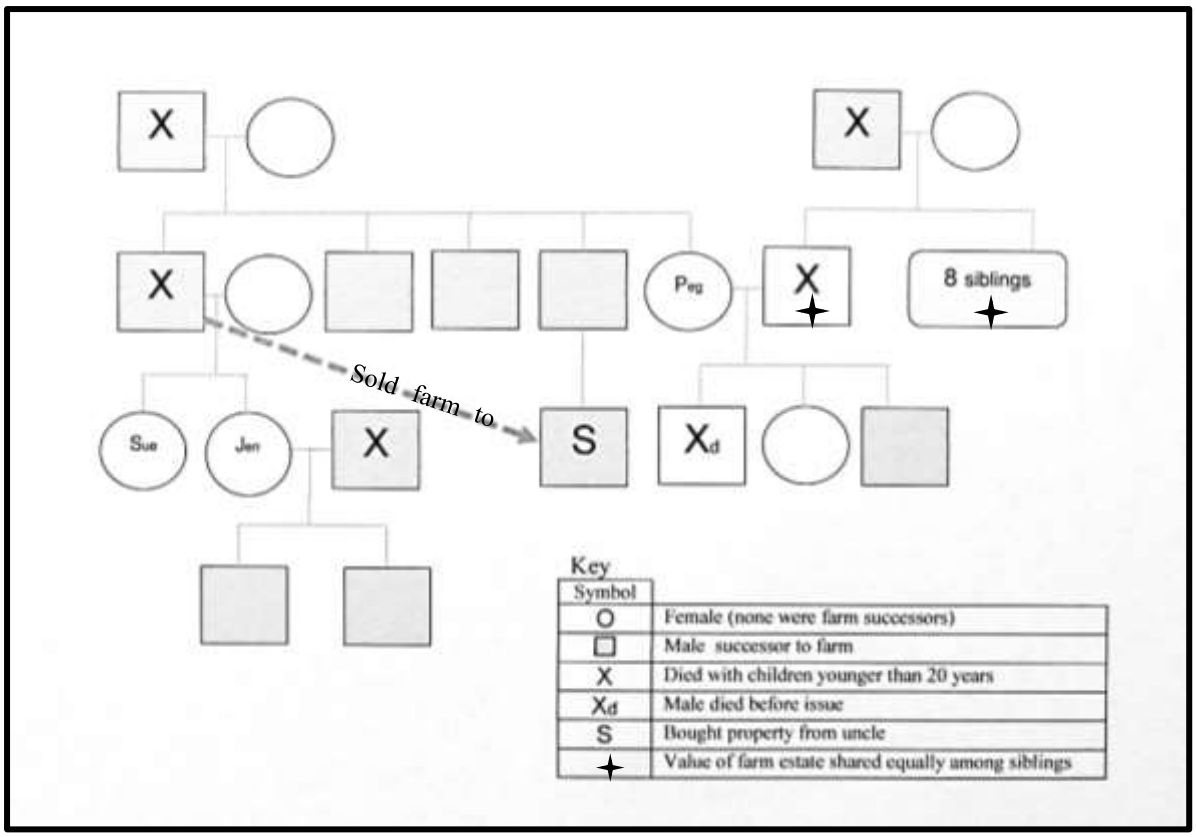


Figure 5.5. Family tree and the pattern of farm transfers across the generations. Note: Sue and Jen's two other siblings (also non-successors) are not shown in this chart.

Peg-DF83's husband was nineteen years old when his father died. He was the only child of nine children who worked on the farm following his father's death to pay off the farm debt and to provide for his mother (his father's sole beneficiary). According to Peg-DF83, he did so on a verbal agreement with his eight siblings that he would be the sole beneficiary of the farm when their mother died. Nine years later, on his marriage to Peg-DF83, they bought a house in the nearby town for his mother and continued to provide for her as they worked to continue pay off the farm debt. Six years after their marriage, following the death of Peg-DF83's mother-in-law and after all debts were paid, they were shocked to find the mother's will stipulating the farm estate was to be shared equally between all nine children (see Figure 5.5). They were even more shocked to find that each of the eight siblings no longer respected the earlier agreement that the stay-at-home son should be the sole beneficiary of the farm estate. As Peg-DF83 explains, it seemed extremely unfair (the bold print denotes the continuing anger in Peg-DF83's words):

> They found out it was to go nine ways and he got [a] ninth. … We had to … pay the family out. **We made whatever we made off the farm, our own farm, to pay them out and then lived off what we got** [from] that other paddock. ... **I even rendered down fat, you know, and sold a tin of fat every now and again**. [We] did everything to make a few coins … We paid one off at a time. We had to **pay them interest on the money** … you see because we couldn't pay them all out at once. (Peg-DF83, interviewed 2014)

The outcome does seem unfair, especially as Peg-DF83's husband had paid off the farm debt accrued by his father and looked after their mother and then paid out (with interest) his siblings to remain on the farm. This example is not representative of the situation that other offspring found themselves in following early deaths of their fathers. However, it serves to highlight the disconnect that may occur between assumptions and verbal agreements made by family members and the written document representing the testamentary freedom of the titled owner of farm property. In this case, the deceased farmer's widow, who benefitted from the farm estate for the remainder of her life and who also benefitted from the work of one son working the farm and clearing the farm debt, through her will left the farm to be dispersed equally between all nine siblings. The mother's will in the actor-network of farm transfer from mother to son presented a major and costly obstacle for Peg-DF83 and her husband to negotiate.

Sue-DF60 and Jen-DF58's father (Peg-DF83's brother) died when his own family was quite young, a year after suffering a serious heart attack. While there was no farm inheritance for his children, in selling the farm to his nephew to "keep the farm in the family" he provided funds to support his wife and daughters (see Figure 5.5) (Jen-DF58, interviewed 2014). Sue-DF60 also suffered the untimely death of her farming husband, killed at age fifty years when their family was still quite young, ranging in age from nine years to nineteen years. When her husband died, inheritance was quite a difficult issue. Although some farm property and assets were owned in partnership between herself and her husband and she inherited these directly through her husband's will, she and her husband were also involved in partnership with her parents-in-law for most of the farm property and business. According to Sue-DF60, she was able to appoint a manager to look after the farm property that she and her husband had owned. However, Sue-DF60 explained the extremely complex and difficult situation she was in because of the partnership arrangement with her parents-in-law. She found she was not able to leave this partnership without significant cost to herself and her children. Moreover, because the house they lived in was not freehold but was also part of the partnership asset she had no independence from her parents-in-law in terms of her choosing her own residence.

At the time of our interview, ten years after her husband's death, Sue-DF60's major concern is that her two sons, who are both home on the farm and who have worked it since their father's death, are given a fair share of the farm in the wills of her parents-in-law. Her parents-in-law are in their nineties and, according to Sue-DF60, still controlling who does what with the farm and who will be the beneficiaries on their deaths. That is, they have more agency than Sue-DF60 has to determine what happens to the farm, and to not include Sue-DF60's sons in their wills in a way that compensates her sons for keeping the farm viable while other grandchildren have not contributed to the farm. At the time of our interview, Sue-DF60 was in the middle of stressful and protracted legal discussions with the family lawyer and her parents-in-law. A

follow-up letter revealed that Sue-DF60 felt more secure about her sons' futures because her parents-in-law had finally transferred the farm property into a land trust in her two sons' names. This provision effectively isolates the farm property from other assets under testamentary consideration when the parents-in-law pass away (Sue-DF60, interviewed 2014).

Two further examples represent sons whose fathers died when they were children: Len-SF82 was 12 years old and Joc-SF61 was seven years old. Their mothers were the beneficiaries of their fathers' wills and kept the farms operating by appointing managers while the children were pursuing their education. Eventually, both Len-SF82's and Joc-SF61's mothers transferred farm ownership to their children, and the daughters relinquished their titles through selling to their brothers. According to both Len-SF82 and Joc-SF61, there were no apparent disagreements between the mothers and sons or between the sons and other siblings.

Farm owners die when children are adults

Two daughters (Dee-DF60 and Kay-DF44) and two sons (Huw-SF87, and Greg-SF47) experienced beneficial outcomes through their parents' wills. Rus-SF58 (mentioned earlier in the chapter) represents a son with ongoing interest in the family's farm but who was excluded from his father's will.

The two daughters were provided with farm property in their fathers' wills and have used this inheritance to be involved in farming activities on the inherited properties. Dee-DF60 had her own fulltime career as a teacher but also worked the family farm in partnership with her brother and sister on weekends and during school holidays. The farm provided Dee-DF60 with an opportunity to spend time in the place of in her childhood which she loved, to add to her income through productive farming activities, and to remain connected with her past through visiting the community of her childhood.

For Kay-DF44, the inheritance has been life-changing. Kay-DF44 was in her thirties and had been living and working overseas when her father became ill. As Kay-DF44 explains she had not intended to become a farmer but her father's death and the lack of siblings to take over provided an opportunity to consider farming:

> I was also only coming home to fix things up and fence off the creeks and plant trees. … I wasn't intending to come home permanently. … [Then] you wanted to do things and then, you know, the next year's come up and then the next year's come up and you just start enjoying it. (Kay-DF44, interviewed 2014)

From initially only thinking of helping her father on the farm during his ill-health, Kay-DF44 developed an on-going interest in the farm and its productivity to eventually become the farmer responsible for complete management of the farm. Without any formal communication from her parents, Kay-DF44 always understood that she would inherit any assets owned by her father, and

her half-sister would receive her mother's assets. However, because her half-sister was killed when her children were young, Kay-DF44 is concerned about future decisions about the family farm so that her sister's children are treated fairly and so that the farm can still be operated as a viable entity:

> Everything in dad's estate's going to be left to me and everything that's mum's was going to be left to my sister. So, if something happened to mum, like I take the farmland even though it's in her name and my nieces and nephews would get the equivalent in houses in [nearby city] or something else. Otherwise it would just not be workable [to keep the farm viable]. (Kay-DF44, interviewed 2014)

Kay-DF44 is mindful of her mother providing something for her deceased half-sister's children, but is also aware that providing equal shares to three children out of a small farm property and any children she herself may have may not provide a viable farm entity for anybody to work. Kay-DF44 supplements her farm income through off-farm work and non-farm investments and would swap these investments with her sisters' children to keep the farm as a viable entity.

Of the sons whose parents made provisions for their children via wills, Huw-SF87 and Greg-SF47 were treated favourably, even after they had received some of their farms through farm succession and gifting while their parents were still alive. Both are beneficiaries of multigenerational farming properties and enterprises. For them, their inheritances completed the transfer of farm assets (such as infrastructure, plant, animals and grain) and farm property. Huw-SF87 has since distributed his farm property and assets to his sons and has no further farm assets to divest through his will. Greg-SF47, on the other hand has only recently become sole operator of the family property. He works the farm business, organised as a family trust, with his mother as one of the trustees. Greg-SF47 explains that while his mother is accorded shares in the property through the trust, this is "purely as legal requirement" and he expects that she will "hand her share over" when she dies (Greg-SF47, interview 2014). His mother, following the death of her husband, receives no financial benefit from the farm entity. According to Greg-SF478, his mother has sufficient independent income from her other investments to have no need to draw on the farm earnings.

Greg-SF47 has prepared a will in the case of his early death. He has also made provisions for someone to manage the farming enterprise in the event of his early demise so that it remains an estate for his children to inherit and not for his wife to dispose of. Greg-SF47 is concerned about children inheriting farms too young because that involves them making what he considers an enormous commitment when there is "a bloody long time between eighteen and sixty-eight and it's a big world". While he doesn't consider his wife to have a role in the farm's future, he considers that either his daughter or his son may be a successor.

Rus-SF58 presents a different example of inheritance, one involving exclusion and contestation of the will. He once presumed, after working on the farm for most of his adult life, he would become the successor of the farm (that is, the property, the enterprise and the assets that make the enterprise function). However, instead of continuing to work the farm, Rus-SF58 has spent much of the previous two years challenging his father's will to recognise his claim to at least an equal share of the property with his siblings, even though the farm enterprise has since been dissolved. He considers his claim to be very generous on his own behalf as none of the other children devoted much of their adult life to maintaining the productivity and viability of the farm as he had done. This example is regarded by farm associates as something not uncommon. Bob-FA12 (legal executive officer) remembers former clients who used their wills as a means of socially engineering their families; for example, to insist that family members work in partnership on the farm or they would not be granted the farm.

The examples provided above demonstrate the variability of provisions made in the wills for deceased farm owners' children. They demonstrate that agency to institute farm transfer and to provide the opportunity to take up farming is exercised by the current owners or by recently deceased owners through their wills. Offspring in families who wish to take up farming or to take up ownership of the farm property have little agency to ensure they are the future owners their families' farms. Wills, as legal documents, are actants in the process of family farm transfer.

5.3.2.2 Gifting farms

The gifts of farm property and associated farm enterprises are bestowed by family members to their successors. Some interviewees received a portion of their childhood farms as gifts on their marriage or when they turned twenty-one (that is, on achieving their 'maturity'), others had to wait until their parents' retirements. The farm property, stock and other assets are enabling assets which provide opportunities to take up farming or to realise capital on their sale – they are assets that, after transfer, become actants influencing successors' livelihoods and productive capacity.

The simplest type of gifting occurs when a farmer preparing for retirement hands the whole farm operation over to one child as Vic-SF93 did in order to provide for his son and to receive a pension. After divesting himself of his farming assets and buying a house in the nearby town, Vic-SF93 and his wife were eligible for the Age Pension. Australia's conditions for receiving the Age Pension are not only means tested but are also age-dependent (post-65 years). As described earlier, the means-testing conditions for pensions are favourable to farming families.

Huw-SF87 received his land as a gift on his wedding in 1952:

> My dad gave me my portion of the farm when I was married [at age 26 years] … He gave it to me – 960 acres … He didn't tell me or talk to me about it he just did that because I was the first one … to say I was going to be a farmer. (Huw-SF87, interviewed 2014)

Huw-SF87 was gifted land from his own father when he married at age 26 years and the land was his to work without parental help or intervention. Huw-SF87 also explained that his father had divided the family farm into portions so that four of the five children (three sons and one daughter) were all allocated parcels of land from the property and the fourth son was given another farm property in the same district on his marriage. Huw-SF87 bought out his sister's share of land and part of one brother's share during the 1950s, and he leased the third brother's land until his own retirement from farming in the 1990s. On this brother's death in 2012 his father's will still had provisions to be followed. The will provided that the leased land be sold and the proceeds be divided between the three surviving brothers. Huw-SF87 transferred (gifted) his share of the proceeds to his successor's son, his grandson, forsaking his other five grandchildren, so that the grandson would be able to purchase this parcel of farmland to "keep it in the family" (Huw-SF87, interview 2014). When questioned further on this decision, Huw-SF87 could only remark that it was the right thing to do because there was person in the family line with his family name to continue the farm and who wished to farm. He did not consider the possibility that he was being unfair to his other grandchildren; rather, he was helping this grandson take over the farm in an era when farm property is expensive to buy. Attachment to place and a sense of family farming continuity appear to be the driving forces in Huw-SF87's decision.

5.2.2.3 Purchasing farmland

Two interviewees, Ian-SF85 and Zac-SF34, talked of buying out the parental generation – albeit on more favourable terms than if they had purchased farms not owned by their families. Ian-SF85 came into farming through buying into his father's farm property during his twenties. In this way, Ian-SF85 provided his father with funds for his old age. While Ian-SF85's father did not follow the typology of farm succession as described by Errington (1998), he did assist his son to become a successor via purchase of the property:

> Well, I was paying a thousand pounds per year repayment to him. … ***[N]othing was given to me it was all [bought]*** and I was paying him an interest rate of 5% then. The banks put their interest rates up to 7½% and he kept his at 5% to me and ***that 2½% was a very big asset*** to me … on the first block … After that it was all through the banks. ***I bought extra land as the time went on*** … I bought a farm that my father had bought with the idea that of helping me. … I borrowed … from the bank. ***Dad guaranteed the loan.*** (Ian-SF85, interviewed 2014)

Ian-SF85's father helped him to purchase farmland in two ways. In the first instance, Ian-SF85's father provided a lower-than-bank interest loan to his son to assist him buy up part of the family farm. The son benefited through the lower cost of taking out a loan, and so did the father through having a secure purchaser for his farm and also extra income through the interest paid on the loan. This is similar to the situation experienced by Zac-SF34. Secondly, although Ian-SF85 did

eventually take out bank loans for further property purchases, his father was able to provide the support for his son to make these arrangements with the bank. Ian-SF85 increased his farm from his father's original holding, that is, from 130 acres to 426 acres through buying up neighbouring properties during his own working life.

Ian-SF85 went on to explain that of his four children, one son and three daughters, his 60-year-old son is working the farm but that he was only leasing it from him. On asking whether his son would eventually be the owner of the farm Ian-SF85 stated not so:

> No, the whole of the family. I wanted him to buy it all along but he's had sickness for quite a while … *The family will be let make the decisions on what happens to the farm either to lease it or to sell*. (Ian-SF85, interviewed 2014)

Ian-SF85 is firm about not wanting to pass his farm solely to his son as a gift. He also maintains a continuing interest and business connection to the farm through leasing the farm to his son and possible future activity for the farm. This is a very different situation from his own entry into owning the family farm. His son at 60, still only has marginal control over his childhood family farm, his illness is limiting his future prospects with the farm and his father is leaving the property in his will to be shared equally with all four children. The pattern of farm transfer in this family does not hold across the generations, and it challenges the notion of patrilineal inheritance as the accepted pattern of farm transfer.

Other patterns of farm succession are examined in the following section. Importantly, these processes are two-way relations involving acceptance by parents that succession will occur during their life-times and commitment by the potential successors to be successors working alongside their parents.

5.3.3 Staged succession

Staged succession requires a decision by successors and transferors that transfer of farm enterprise will occur progressively. In this section, I refer to Errington's (1998: 128) "succession ladder" which he uses to describe the process of succession and which later researchers have incorporated into their work on intergenerational farm transfers (see for example Barclay et al. 2007). As discussed in Chapter 2, farm succession is usually a process whereby successors progressively assume farm management roles that were previously the responsibility of the parental generation (Errington 1998). It may involve gifting and/or selling of family property by the parental generation as presented in the previous section, so that successors may also build up equity in the farm property as they assume more and more control in the enterprise; however, for some interviewees, gaining a financial stake in the farm property does not always accompany succession of farm management (Luhrs 2015). Where Errington (1998: 128) has described the process of succession as a rising up the "rungs" of the "succession ladder" where the successor

gradually becomes "more and more involved in the management of the farm", this thesis argues that the process is more aptly described in terms of stages representing the readiness of the parental generation to include potential successors in the activities related to managing a farming enterprise. Furthermore, the timing of the transfer is a parent-driven process, depending on parental needs and desires, rather than a successor-driven process, based on skill acquisition and readiness to assume responsibilities; parents (as owners) have more agency in this transfer relation than their successors.

Through examining the data presented by the interviewees on how farm transfers occurred for them, I identify three significant stages in the transfer of family farms that I label as 'early transition', 'mid-transition' and 'post-transition'. 'Early transition' is characterised by two main factors: (1) family members having a sense that there is someone in the next generation willing to take on the role of farmer on the family farm, and (2) a next-generation family member is working alongside the parental generation to do the farm work and to gain farming and management skills and/or the nominated successor is gaining farming skills off-farm. 'Mid-transition' is characterised by the nominated successor assuming various roles in the management of the farm enterprise but who is still involved with the parental generation in the management of the farm. 'Post-transition' is the stage after the completion of the intergenerational family farm transfer, where the successor is now the manager of the business enterprise. Post-transition may not entail ownership of the farm property, although this was usually the case in most of the families interviewed for this research. Potential successors become successors when their parents go through the stages of thinking about succession, provide opportunities for successors to participate in the family-farming activities and then pass the multiple responsibilities of the farm enterprise over to the successor(s). Many farm owners also have a time before actions relating to succession begin. This stage I call 'pre-transition'.

5.3.3.1 Pre-transition

For most farm owners, the issue of farm succession is a constant presence even when plans have not yet been formulated or even discussed. Seven farmers (ranging from thirty-three to eighty-five years) stated that they had no firm ideas or plans on succession for the farms they owned. The reasons given for this lack of planning included considering their children too young to be making a decision about their possible careers or children not showing or expressing an interest in continuing the farm. For Ian-SF85 (discussed above) with four adult children including his 60-year-old son working on the farm, the lack of planning appears to stem from the farm owner's reluctance to hand over the management of the farm to the next generation and his wish to provide equally for the non-farming children. Ian-SF85 is leaving the future of the farm to his children "who will work it out after I have gone".

Of the potential successors interviewed, all were sons. Three sons, Tom-SF28, Abe-SF31 and Cam-SF44, stated that they had little knowledge of when or how they would assume control of the farm or if indeed they would be involved in the farm once their parents retired or passed away. Tom-SF28 reported being torn between his passion and interest in farming and respecting his parents as individuals with their rights to determine the farm's future. He is currently working with his father on the family farm. Tom-SF28 appreciates the work his father has done to make the farm a "good farm" but is frustrated by the differences in the way his father and he go about farm work:

> It's … in good financial shape but I don't know the details because dad doesn't share anything about the financial side of things. I think that it could be run more simply. … I love it when he takes holidays … because I can then work in my own way and not have it complicated by being inefficient. (Tom-SF28, interviewed 2014)

Tom-SF28 is frustrated that his father does not communicate what is needed before beginning a particular series of farm jobs or the financial side of the business. He is also frustrated by the lack of communication about succession from his father, especially after they attended a succession-planning session with a consultant together, where both stated that succession would have progressed significantly within five years of the planning session. Tom-SF28 states that session occurred four years ago and "nothing has changed". While farming does appear to be his future, his uncertainty raises concern about the time he is investing in farming at the expense of other possible futures:

> I know that I am lucky to have this life and the eventual possibility of being the successor but at the moment I feel like dad's not ready to share or hand over the running of the farm … We are not sure what the plan involves because we never really get down to discussing it. … He's much better at working the farm than sharing his knowledge about it. (Tom-SF28, interviewed 2014)

Tom-SF28 and the other interviewees (Abe-SF31 and Cam-SF44) represent families in which there is no firm indication or commitment from the farm owners as to when succession would be instituted, how it would happen or how long the process would take. No daughter interviewees described being directly affected by this pre-transition stage. Two daughters, Bec-DF25 and Amy-DF29, each with professional careers off-farm, stated the lack of succession planning in their families was a concern for their parents and their siblings.

For Cam-SF44, the situation is very difficult. The problem for him arises on two fronts: how to ensure his own future on the farm (operated as a company) and how to ensure the possibility of farming opportunities for his children. Even though he suspects his children may pursue non-farming careers, they are too young for making firm commitments. Cam-SF44 would like to know what his father has in mind for succession but finds it difficult because the 73-year-old co-director appears reluctant to engage in the conversation and process of succession. As he

is co-director of the farm company no decisions can be made without his involvement. He has control within a family on how and when to institute farm succession. The reasons for Cam-SF44's father reticence to engage in discussion, let alone begin farm succession were not forthcoming. We can only surmise that for this family the reasons lie in the Cam-SF44's father's personality, fears or other concerns. The issues arising from the lack of certainty for potential successors in the pre-transition stage affects not only the potential successors but also other family members whose futures may depend on their parents' decisions about succession.

The issue of farm succession for Abe-SF31 is complicated through the family being a 'blended family' – the farm that he could be interested in is owned by his step-father. He believes the possibility of becoming a farmer on the family property is scant. At thirty-one years, Abe-SF31 understands that he has the aptitude and commitment to make a good life as a successful dairy farmer, but he also understands he has little opportunity to enter the business as a farm owner because of what he considers the prohibitive costs to buying dairy farms and his status as step-son in the family. He now works off-farm.

Of the people interviewed, there are family members who are in doubt as to their farm-succession status even though they are currently contributing to the productivity of their parents' farms and have been for a number of years. This doubt of farm future creates uncertainty in other aspects of potential successors' futures including affecting their willingness to invest in capital items and local amenities, and their willingness or ability to encourage their children to take up farming. The stresses felt in families in this stage and the consequences are further discussed in Chapter 6.

5.3.3.2 Early Transition

Early transition indicates that the parental generation has made provisions for a member (or members) of the next generation to be a successor and to work alongside them in the farm enterprise so that they can gain skills and knowledge and generate an income while undertaking productive farming activities. Benefits may also ensue such as accommodation on the farm, access to farm vehicles for personal use and an opportunity to start up a separate farm-related enterprise either on- or off-farm, such as, for example, creating a new stud, contract shearing, cropping ventures or machinery hire. For successors, there is an increase in their access to assets related to farm as the transferors reduce their control over farm items and activities. They report a sense of security of opportunity when entering this stage. The variety and complexity of negotiations and the ages of successors and their parents in this early stage of transition are underlined by the differential status of parents and their successors – parents are able to exercise greater agency than their offspring in progressing farm transfers.

Sam-SF26, like other young family members in this research cohort, belongs to a wide and rich network of associations that extends beyond the farming community. However, after completing tertiary studies overseas, he has chosen to work full-time on his home farm in a district that lacks services and social amenity. Both his parents and he consider it very fortunate that there is a successor to the family farm. Sam-SF26, happy to be the sibling in a family of five children who is able and prepared to choose this life.

Although Sam-SF26 doesn't own any of the farm property, he considers that he has equal input in the day-to-day running of the farm as well as managing a different farming enterprise on the property. Sam-SF26 as the only one of five siblings to express interest in continuing the family farm, states, that he would become the eventual owner of the farm as his siblings have other occupations and live far from the region. His parents, Ron-SF59 and Maz-FP56, are less comfortable with this consideration and do consider that farm succession plans ought to provide for their other children in some way. Ron-SF59 and Maz-FP56 are also very aware that they have only just begun to think about succession and have no plans about how it will happen except for thinking that this son will probably be the person most likely to take over the farm. The father, Ron-SF59 also expects to continue working as a farmer for another ten or more years. Both parents also expect to stay in their house on the farm in their retirement. Although each of the interviewees from this one farming family (interviewed together 2015) state the family enjoys happy family relations, there is potential for discord to develop between members of this family if succession plans are not further defined in the near future.

Nev-SF59 and his family are further along the transition process than the previous family. Nev-SF59, also in his late fifties and thinking about his own adult children, wishes to avoid the conflict that he felt between himself and his brother and his father. He offered both his son and daughter, Jay-SF26 and Ros-DF29, the opportunity to train for farming while also supporting them as they explored non-farm careers. According to both Nev-SF59 and his wife Fran-FP53, both children are fully aware of the opportunities and constraints on farm succession and are fully involved in succession-planning discussions, but decisions are still not forthcoming. Nev-SF59 is not yet ready to retire from farming or to leave the property, Fran-FP53 is ready to retire and to move into the nearby town, and Jay-SF26 has returned from completing a trade apprenticeship and is looking to take over the farm at some time in the future. Ros-DF29, after doing some farm training and working on the farm in her early 20s, is happy for her brother to take on the farm as long as she and her partner, child and future children have access to the farm for out-door farming activities (Ribot and Peluso 2003). Ros-DF29 reports that her 3-year-old son loves visiting the farm.

Although succession planning has been ongoing for ten years, this family is still in the early stages of succession with many issues to resolve. They have surmounted the first hurdle of

having successor and a sibling who is happy with the decision for her brother to be the successor. However, the exchange of farm enterprise responsibilities from parents to their successor is still to be accomplished. The biggest issue for this family to resolve is when Nev-SF59 will retire and where he wants to live when he does retire. Nev-SF59 states he is not ready to make any commitments about that just yet - he enjoys farming and living on the farm. Given Nev-SF59's experience of conflict over succession in the previous generation, this family is keen to ensure their children, Jay-SF26 and Ros-DF29, remain on good social terms.

The real and possible tensions and opportunities apparent in these two families in early transition are also evident in other interviewees' families. A different threat to farm succession arose for Meg-DF63 and her daughter Ann-DF34 (interviewed separately in 2015) when the husband/father no longer wished to continue as a farmer. Following many family discussions and formal meetings with farm succession consultants, the family is now in the early stages of farm transition with the youngest son nominated as successor and his parents and siblings supporting this decision. Employing a consultant enabled family members to each express their concerns about the farm's future, their continuing access to the farm, and to plan the long-term succession process that includes leasing the farm while the son gains experience elsewhere and the husband works off-farm. This farm transfer process engages a wide network of associations to enable the farm to continue in the family.

Lee-DF57 represents a family where succession has stalled. Her unmarried, mid-50s brother still lives with his parents and works on the farm following his father's farm program. Lee-DF57 and her brother understand that he is to inherit the farm and she will inherit the non-farm investments. However, according to Lee-DF57, her 88-year-old father has not made any formal succession plans and has not yet transferred any of the property or enterprise to his son. As with other examples of fathers delaying the transfer of the farm enterprise to their children, Lee-DF57's brother (like Ian-SF85's 60-year-old son mentioned above) fills the position of "farmer's boy" described by Errington (1998: 125), where the apparent successor works on the family farm for many years but has little input into the management of the farming enterprise. Inexorably, in the case of Lee-DF57's family, the farm appears destined to pass out of the family once the patriarch has passed away because the nominated heir is also approaching retirement age, has not married and has no children.

Unlike the example above, early transition represents a stage in intergenerational family farm transfer characterised by a shared sense of hope for farms futures. Parents express pleasure, relief, and feelings of purpose in the family to have a sense of continuity of the farm and a sense of their own continuing connection to the place, the enterprise and the community. For nominated successors, being nominated as the successor delivers feelings of self-worth, responsibility, purpose and identity as well as providing an opportunity for a career which, for

people not from farming families, can be difficult to enter. No nominated successors interviewed for this research expressed concern or reservation over this position, unlike in other accounts reporting negative feelings, or successor stress arising from their sense of obligation in taking over the family enterprise (Lambrecht and Donckels 2006). Indeed, no interviewees felt as though "a slave of the business" (Lambrecht and Donckels 2006: 305) even in cases where the financial reward was quite low. The stress for successors in the early transition stage in this research arose from the uncertainty they experienced over the rate of transition, especially for successors approaching middle or old age, and not being able to make decisions for themselves. As the older nominated successors and other family members have found, being accepted into the early stage of succession does not guarantee progression into the next stage of transition. Agency for farm transfer remains the prerogative of the farm owner, and successors who remain in this stage have the choice of remaining on or departing from the farm.

In families that have not moved from early transition, other family members also experience frustration at the lack of devolution of farm management and ownership from parent to successor. Lee-DF57, observing her 90-year-old mother and mid-50s brother, and Fran-FP53, considering her own position, express disappointment as they see time disappearing for the successors to experience a clean entry into farming in their own right and for parents to have a good chance to enjoy a change of life as they let go the responsibilities of managing the farming enterprise while they are still reasonably healthy.

In families that have moved from the early stage of transition to mid-transition, family members generally show more confidence in their futures. Former farm owners are easing out of responsibility for farm-related activities and successors are taking on more financial and managerial responsibility.

5.3.3.3 Mid-transition

Families in the mid-transition stage have successors aged mostly in their 30s and 40s and who themselves are parents to young children. Mid-transition successors are granted, or take on, more responsibility for the financial management and productivity of their farming enterprises and appear more confident of their succession status than some of the successors in the early transition stage. They are now and integral part of the farm enterprise and have assumed rights (such as decision-making regarding the farm program) not granted in the early stage. A relatively simple mid-transition arrangement is presented by Pam-DF79. The second son in the family, now is in his 50s, leases part of the farm and works alongside his father. Pam-DF79 expects that he will inherit the farm. According to Pam-DF79, her farmer son has managed to increase the size of the farm he works through leasing other property and to be the manager in charge of the sections he leases.

Although Pam-DF79's son has autonomy in his farming enterprise, there may be a problem for him in working the farm as a leaseholder. For the leaseholder, according to Nev-SF59, there is no guarantee that the improvements made by the lessee will be of future benefit to the lessee, unless the lessee has the opportunity to own the land; and, according to Nev-SF59, for the land-owner there is no guarantee that the leasing farmer will maintain the fertility and productivity of the land. So, while this detour to owning the family farm may be acknowledged as one pattern of succession (Errington 1998), it doesn't necessarily allow for the greatest productivity from or management of the asset, the land, when there is doubt over possible future ownership of the farm.

To insure against this doubt, and to ensure that their children remain interested in becoming successors of the family farm, other farmers transfer parts of their farms to the next generation not though gifting or proposed inheritance but through enabling their successors to purchase sections of their farms (described earlier in the chapter). This provides the purchasers with an asset and a sense autonomy over the farming enterprises, and it secures a commitment from successors to continue farming the land. Furthermore, purchaser-successors reported the benefits of having the use of farm plant and of sharing farming activities with the older generation. Zac-SF34 expresses this sense of farming future through purchasing land from his father and also the opportunity it provides his parents to enjoy life off the farm, to widen their social networks.

> I've bought probably two-thirds. … Dad's grandpa [and] my great uncle they were of that generation that you worked until you fell over … Dad realises – dad's 65 – that he wants to be able to live a little bit after farming … and having my sister live away gives him the opportunity to travel. It's a great aspect for dad … and fantastic for mum as well to be able to get off and experience things that their parents never experienced. Zac-SF34 (interviewed 2014)

Zac-SF34 explains the difference between generations in his family, again demonstrating that patterns of inheritance do not necessarily follow family traditions – in this case, in terms of process. Where his father assumed farm-owner status on the death of his father, Zac-SF34 has been able to purchase land from his father while he is still young. Furthermore, and differently from his father, Zac-SF34 also has a full-time, off-farm job to support his farming activities and to provide funds to improve his farming operation. He could support himself by working full time on the farm, but admits that he would not be able to fund his ambitious projects, and he enjoys the company of meeting other farmers through his paid work as a farm merchandise sales-person. However, Zac-SF34 also represents a family where patrilineal transfer remains the pattern of transfer across the generations.

A third example of a different path to farm ownership is provided by Ric-SF33 and his wife Wyn-FP36. They operate a large dairy farm not far from and much larger than the property

of Ric-SF33's childhood. They have borrowed extensively to buy more land and to build a modern dairy as Ric-SF33 explains:

> So, the most we've ever paid for land was $3500 an acre. … We built a new dairy which has sort of got us up to being … our debt level is, $2.8 million all up … We're probably currently sitting at about $2800 an acre in debt yeah so, we are just trying to buffer that a bit more. … The banks are comfortable with the amount we are paying it off … We are abreast of it. If we need more money for a tight season or stuff they can still give us more money. (Ric-SF33, interviewed 2015)

Ric-SF33 and his wife Wyn-FP36's purchases reflect the current Federal Government's polices driving the trend in farming towards larger and growing farm enterprises rather than managing a smaller and less productive enterprise which would possibly still meet their family's needs. Ric-SF33 and Wyn-FP36 express no concerns about taking over the remainder of Ric-SF33's parent's farming property and enterprise as they will benefit through not having to pay stamp duty on that property. Legal Executive Officer Bob-FA12 stated that young farmers, those under the age of 35 years, are exempt from paying the stamp duty that normally accompanies any transfer of property in Australia when they buy their parents' farm property.

Ric-SF33 and Wyn-FP36 do understand that they have taken on an enormous bank loan to finance the purchase of more property and to upgrade their dairy operations, especially in a time of variable returns on their products. While they feel comfortable with the current level of debt, it is the farming enterprise they have taken on, and not family relations, that occupy their thoughts. Their concerns focus on the risks they face in meeting the demands of a competitive and fluctuating market which, in Australia, is less protected by tariff policies now than it had been for previous generations of farmers (Lawrence 2005a; Stayner 2005). It appears that recent and the current Federal Governments' drive to encourage farmers to expand their enterprises and increase production thereby adding revenue to the Australian economy is also one which can increase the risk of defaulting on loans when markets do not pay sufficient prices for produce – as happened in early 2016 when milk prices fell (Smith 2016).

5.3.3.4 Post -transition

In this section I examine families approaching the end of the transition process or who have completed the transfer of the farm. Sixteen interviewees represent family members whose childhood farms have undergone complete intergenerational transfer – twelve were successors. Some of these family members are now grappling with intergenerational farm transfer decisions for their own children and have already appeared in the discussion above. Three non-successor daughters moved onto other family farms through marriage and raised their own children on these farms. Four successor sons have also transferred their farms to the next generation in their family.

The different processes of family farm transfer as experienced by the successors are summarised in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Processes and circumstances leading to complete transfer of the family farm

Farm transfer process (Successors position in farm business before complete transfer)	**Age of complete succession of the family farm (years)**						
	Less than 20	**20-29**	**30-39**	**40-49**	**50-59**	**60-69**	**70 or greater**
Take over following early death of father		Joc-SF61 Len-SF82!					
Provided allowance or cash from farm earnings before joining farm partnership			Vin-SF57!				
Paid worker		Len-SF82!					
Lessee, then purchased family farm		Ian-SF85					
Given portion of farm		Huw-SF87	Tam-DF57*	Ron-SF59			
Sold portion of farm		Min-DF97*		Dot-DF88#			
Financial assistance to purchase other farmland			Vin-SF57!				
In partnership with parents/siblings			Don-SF48, Con-SF51, Peg-DF83#	Nev-SF59	Vic-SF93#		Vic-SF93
Trustee of farm trust				Greg-SF47			
Farm company director				Dee-DF60 Len-SF82#			
(n = 18) TOTAL	-	5!	5!	6	1	-	1

Notes: * Indicates a brother was successor to the family farm
# Indicates a son was successor to the family farm
! Indicates a successor represented twice

Except for Vic-SF93 and his successor, the data in Table 5.1 indicate that most transfers for this group of interviewees occurred when the successors were starting out in their farming careers or were approaching middle-age. Successors in these age-groups have been given greater opportunities to develop their farming enterprises independently of their parents' control than nominated successors still in the early or middle stages of succession or who became successors at later ages (such as Vic-SF93), a time when many people consider retirement. Successors whose parents moved off the family farms in old age and those whose parents have taken up the Age Pension or who have access to independent means of income experienced greatest independence from their parents.

Peg-DF83 is one farm parent who decided, on her accountant's advice, to transfer the farm property and enterprise to her son when he was in his late twenties. She and her son had operated the farm as a partnership for ten years following her husband's death. Peg-DF83's 18-year-old second son took on the role of principal farmer to keep the farm viable and in the family (as her husband had done in the previous generation):

> **I am proud of him.** He's done a very good job. He's done it hard … He took over at 18 … he'd left school, oh, the harvest before. … Yes, that's right he did the first harvest for [husband] when [husband] took sick… he wasn't well but at least he could tell him you know what to do … I was on the farm ten years with [son] … I was 55 when [our eldest son] died … I was 56 when [husband] died. (Peg-DF83, interviewed 2014)

Peg-DF83 is adamant that her son is the only beneficiary of the farm estate, because she understands the investment her son has given to maintaining, expanding and improving the productivity of the family farm. Peg-DF83 instituted formal legal succession so that her son could not be challenged over ownership of the farm estate, as her husband had been (described earlier in the chapter), and so that she became eligible to receive the Age Pension and not need to draw an income from the farm. Peg-DF83 does acknowledge that her daughter would like to live on the farm, but in her mind this claim carries no weight after all the years that Peg-DF83's son has invested in the farm. Her son now operates the farm independently of Peg-DF83 and free from any challenge by his sister.

Not all successors share the same level of independence. The apparent freedom from parental financial control after succession does not necessarily mean absolute independence from parental influence, or parental and sibling opinion, or the continuing effects from changed relationships following farm succession. After a number of years of frustration at the lack of succession, fifth-generation farmer husband Don-SF48 and his wife Lil-FP48 secured the full transfer of the farm business into their names from the joint partnership they had with Don-SF48's parents. Don-SF48 remembers succession as a difficult and protracted process that left the parents – still living on the farm – feeling hurt, alienated and impotent and the successors with a sense of disappointment for their missed opportunities.

In contrast, Greg-SF47, also a fifth-generation farmer, regards his entry into the farm enterprise positively. His father, differently from Don-SF48's father, provided him with 25% equity in the farm from the age of 23 years through bringing him into the family business. Greg-SF47 earned a share of the profits and disbursements depending on where the greatest tax advantage would be, "a tax management sort of thing". Greg-SF47's family owned a much larger farm (approximately 5000 acres) than Don-SF48's family farm of 1760 acres and there were more opportunities for Greg-SF47 to be brought into the farm business to share the dividends from the farming enterprise than for Don-SF48. Furthermore, Greg-SF47's father died recently whereas Don-SF48's father is still alive and offering opinion on what and how things should be done on the farm. Greg-SF47 now operates the family farm independently from his father, while Don-SF48, also the independent owner, navigates the father-son relationship through the emotional legacy following succession. Don-SF48 also reflects on how his economic position differs from that of his father and those of others with more land to farm:

> [Father] lived through the wool boom but he was no means landed gentry (laugh). You know it would have been nice to have [more land] ... Well through the generations we've all worked off the farm ... with a view to getting established to buy a little bit more. And we've all done that but no one's ever really had a free kick either. … I'm not complaining that's just the way it is when some people ahh um you know inherit 5000 acres and some inherit 400. (Don-SF48, interviewed 2014)

Don-SF48 is well aware that his and his father's ownerships reflect different economic eras with different outcomes for each of their families. He considers his father had a better opportunity to make money from the farm during the 'wool boom', even though his father, like himself, worked off-farm to raise extra capital. Don-SF48 also believes that larger properties provide greater security to productivity for successors. In this way Don-SF48 is aligning himself with the need to work towards getting bigger (if possible) to ensure farm sustainability for the next generation.

As exemplified in the families of Don-SF48, Greg-SF48 and Peg-DF8, succession, is a relational process that is determined by the networks of associations acting on the families in different locations and eras. Parents, successors and other actors in the networks through their actions affect the processes and outcomes of farm transfers.

5.3.3.5 Mixed transfers

A number of interviewees reported taking over family farming businesses and properties through a combination of methods. One example is provided by Huw-SF87, who, differently from his own gifting entry to farm ownership on his marriage, progressively brought his two sons into the farm partnership. Huw-SF87 made provision for his two sons to have a proportion of ownership of the farm enterprise in a partnership with himself and his wife when they showed interest in becoming full-time farmers, to live on the farm and to work alongside him. His sons had a mixed transfer involving becoming partners and progressively taking up more shares in the partnership as they moved towards their thirties. Huw-SF87 and his wife moved off the farm in 1989 but remained financial partners with their sons for seven years before eventually handing over, gifting, complete control of the farm enterprise and the property to their sons in 1995 so as to be eligible to take up the Age Pension.

5.4. Review of farm transfer methods and stages of transfer

Data from the interviews and survey respondents reveal a number of different processes of farm transfers – some as single transactions, some as staged transactions and some with a number of different processes instituted. The major distinction between transfers as described in this thesis and previous accounts is of progressive transfers. This thesis finds progressive transfers involve three distinct stages in the transition processes and one stage prior to transition. In contrast to Errington's (1998: 130-131) typology of succession as the progressing through "the rungs of the succession ladder", I argue that the "rungs" in Errington's typology of succession may fall into

any of three stages: early transition, mid-transition and post-transition. From the discussion above, succession is deemed to have occurred when the successor takes over control of all financial and management concerns related to running the family farm. (There are cases where farm property ownership is separate from ownership and management of the farm enterprise. Parents may retain ownership of the land and lease it to the successor or the land may be owned through a company or trust structure.)

While the stages of succession may be distinguishable, the ages at which these stages occur, the duration of the transfer processes and the outcomes vary widely across families. Table 5.2 demonstrates the various farm transfer pathways in western Victoria's broadacre cropping, grazing and dairy farms and the different ages at which farm transfers occur. Although the sample is too small to formulate a generalization about the patterns of farm transfers, the transfer processes are probably reflective of patterns of farm transfers in other similar sized family-owned farming enterprises elsewhere in Australia and in comparable Western countries.

Table 5.2. Farm transfer methods and successor ages at stages of transfer (includes interviewees' and survey respondents' data)

Age (years) **Farm transfer**	**< 20**	**20-29**	**30-39**	**40-49**	**50-59**	**60-69**	**70+**	**Total**
Pre-transition	1	4	1	2; 1[p]	1; 2[p]	2	2[p]	16
Inheritance	1		1					2
Purchase			2					2
Gift		1			1			2
Combination: inheritance/ gift/purchase/succession			3	1				4
Early transition		2	1	1	1[p]			5
Mid-transition		1		1		2[p]		4
Post-transition			3,1*	3				7

Note: * Indicates successor later sold farm to non-family members
[p] Indicates the age of the parent at interview and not the age of the potential successor(s)

From Table 5.2, we can see that most transfers occur when transferees are under fifty years. Of the nominated successors, thirteen in the ages from twenty to forty-nine are variously engaged in early-, mid- or post-succession stages and four are taking the combination pathway to farm transfers. There are also sixteen participants for whom no farm transfer is occurring. The lack of plans for these sixteen participants not only has implications for their futures, the lack also has implications for their families, the farms and their local communities.

Most farming families considered that farm viability and family continuity with their farms were related, as recounted by Don-SF48 above, to how much farmland they have. However, parents on both larger and smaller farms shared doubts over their children's ambitions to engage in farming, especially now that most families expected their children to pursue post-secondary

education whether to seek a trade or to undertake tertiary education. Both local and distant factors influence parents as they guide their children into adulthood, and local and distant factors inform farm children's hopes and desires for their futures. Their lives are not bounded by the farm or the farming district, they are open to and influenced by a multitude of enabling or constraining factors both in the local space and from afar (Massey 1994). The next section examines whether family traditions have an influence on family members as they negotiate intergenerational farm transfers.

5.5 Farm transfers: Not tradition, but traditional patterns remain

The different pathways to farm succession experienced by interviewees' reveal a number of new and challenging aspects pertaining to notions of intergenerational family farm transfer. Interviewees themselves present evidence of the continuing pattern of transferring farms and the associated property to a limited number of offspring and the dominance of sons over daughters for succession in their families, a pattern also observed in neighbouring families. Patrilineal inheritance or succession continues to be the most common outcome in interviewees' families, even after much research revealing the importance of women, including daughters, to family farms (see, for example, Alston 1995; Luhrs 2015). Importantly, however, this does not necessarily mean that farming families have not considered the possibility of daughters as successors or that daughters are not actually provided with opportunities to take up farming on the family farms.

When we examine the data from the younger generation of farmers making decisions on succession, most male farmers in their 40s, 50s and 60s with children state that they would like to see their farms pass to someone in their families, but it may be a daughter or a son (for example, Greg-SF47, Don-SF48, and Joc-SF61). There appears to be no apparent evidence in the interviews of bias between grooming and/or nominating successors for this age group. And yet, when all the data from interviewees and survey respondents of families with both sons and daughters are examined, we see that sons overwhelming out-number daughters as successors to family farms (see Table 5.3). Patrilineal dominance appears to hold despite the statements by prospective succession decision-makers, not so much as inheritance but through farm succession. In particular, where farms are set up as partnerships, trusts and companies, inclusion in the farming business requires formal legal arrangements, and it is sons in the research sample who have benefitted from these arrangements more than daughters. And it is potential successor sons who state that daughters ought not expect any benefit from the farm, nor to be included in the farm estate, as they have other lives off the farms (for example, Jay-SF26, Ric-SF33, Zac-SF34 and Tim-SF40). They do not recognise or admit that their parents may have influenced their sisters to develop off-farm lives. Nor do they consider ways of organising the farm ownership

arrangements to be inclusive of their siblings. Some daughters expressed a desire and an on-going interest to be involved in their families' farms in some way (for example, Ros-DF29, May-DF29, Deb-DF30 and Ann-DF34). The extent to which the daughters will be able to satisfy these desires will depend very much on their families, and, in particular, the successors. The effects of the genderedness of intergenerational farm transfer with sons as successors and daughters usually not successors are considered further in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7. Appendix 6 records the data demonstrating the continuing skewed benefit of farm succession favouring sons (Luhrs 2015; Poiner 1990; Shortall 2005). The only daughters interviewed to be included in intergenerational family farm transfer were Kay-DF44 and Dee-DF60. Kay-DF44 the sole surviving child, had no competitor. Only Dee-DF60, amongst all daughter interviewees, has the distinction of being viewed of equal status alongside her brothers with respect to farm benefit and succession.

Table 5.3. Sons' and daughters' farm transfers statuses across the age-groups

Age group (yrs) Gift/inheritance Decision	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	**Total**
Children treated equally; each receive similar inheritances/gifts		2			2	3	7
Sons treated more favourably than daughters	1	3	3	5	2	7	21
Daughters treated more favourably than sons							0
Sons treated disadvantageously		1[1]		1[2]			2
Daughters not considered for farm gift or farm inheritance				2		3	5
Daughters receive compensatory farm assets						4	4
Daughters receive comparable non-farm assets	1			1			2

Notes: 1. This son (Abe-SF31) is a stepson of the farm owner and does not expect to share in his stepfather's distribution of farm assets.
2. This son (Rus-SF58) was excluded from his father's will which was written in favour of two sisters and the remaining brother.

Of the family members interviewed for this research, only two daughters retain active ownership and management of their childhood farms, whereas all of the males, bar three, were or are to be included in farm succession, with most of these retaining ownership and management of their childhood farms, albeit, as different legal structures for some. Two sons (Ben-SF19 and Abe-SF31) have chosen non-farming careers and have moved out of their childhood farming districts

while one son (Rus-SF58) who wished to continuing farming on the childhood farm was excluded in his father's will. One son (Cam-SF44) understands that he is to be included in succession, it is just that his 73-year-old father is not ready to start that formal process. Most of the wives interviewed were included in the management structure of the farming enterprises but two sons, Greg-SF47 and Tim-SF40 have not included their wives as owners in the farm management structure.

The data demonstrate a clear disconnect between stated assertions of equality of opportunity in farming for women and men and the actuality of participation by successor sons and daughters. While equality may be emerging in the relationships between husbands and wives in farming enterprises in terms of ownership and participation in farming activities and responsibilities, there is no equality evident in which children in farming families actually take up farming. While some daughters were provided with opportunities to be included in farm succession and some of the younger farmers stated that their daughters as well as their sons would be considered as potential successors, there is not unqualified support for the impressions presented by McAllister and Geno (2004), that farming was becoming fairer and more inclusive of all farming children.

While most incoming wives to family farms are included in the legal management and ownership structures and they do receive recognition of and benefit from the work they do on family farms, most daughters (except for Kay-DF44 and Dee-DF60) remain outside the new ways of structuring family farms. Two other daughters, Ros-DF29 and Ann-DF34, older than their successor brothers and no longer living on farms and who were considered in the families' succession discussions, chose non-farming careers even when there were opportunities for them to be farm successors. Their situations reflect the findings of Haugen (1994) in Norway where, even when daughters are accorded the right of inheritance through primogeniture, daughters often defer farm succession to their brothers so that males continue to make up the majority of successors to family farms. This differential succession with sons remaining to be successors to farms results in continuing the gendered migration of more daughters than sons leaving the farming communities (Luhrs 2015).

Interestingly, Huw-SF87 and Len-SF82 experienced succession where their brothers and sisters were each allocated portions of their families' farm properties. Huw-SF87 and Len-SF82 (with his brothers) each bought out their sisters' shares. However, when it came to their turn to determine succession neither allocated a share of the farm property to their daughters. Huw-SF87 and Len-SF82 both explained that they had provided for their daughters by paying for their educations, and, because their daughters had good careers out of farming, they were adequately provided for. In both these cases, daughters were not asked by their fathers if they wished to have a role in farming, and it was assumed that they left the district because they had other

ambitions. Neither father, when pressed, admitted to the possibility that daughters may have liked to have been included in the farming enterprise or to be included in the division of the farm property, nor did they consider their families possibly influencing their daughters away from the farm and their sons' commitments to farming as O'Hara (1998) found in Ireland. Huw-SF87 provided the response, "daughters didn't work on the farm".

The different approaches to farm succession from one generation to the next in Huw-SF87 and LenSF82's families do not support the notion of a traditional pattern of patrilineal inheritance in the farming families (Poiner 1990, Dempsey 1992). Indeed, it seems to show that the previous generation acted more favourably to the daughters with respect to a share of the inheritance of the family farms. Huw-SF87's and Len-SF82's attitudes informing their decisions could be explained by their perceptions of better opportunities for their daughters to generate their own financial security following equal pay for equal work legislation which was not available to women of previous generations (Human Rights Equal Opportunity Commission 1998) and/or different economic times putting pressure on farm viability (Lawrence 2005a). However, it does not explain why the fathers favoured their sons as successors to the farm over their daughters. The fathers appear to not have questioned the apparent bias towards males continuing the family farm and daughters moving off the family farm. In this way, they appear to be acting in a way which ensures male dominance over farming property in their sons' generation. The next section provides a brief overview of what happens to farms after intergenerational transfer.

5.6 New farmer, new enterprise

Following succession, successors often institute changes to their enterprises to accommodate changing climate and market conditions, to adapt to threats to the security of their farm businesses and to improve the returns on investments in farming (Inwood and Sharp 2012). These changes to farm enterprises necessarily change farmers' networks of associations. Greg-SF47 and Don-SF48 both report changing their farming operations since becoming the farm principals, but neither has changed the ownership structure they inherited from their parents. Other successors altered their ownership structures from partnerships to family trusts or farm companies to provide some legal separation and protection of private capital from the farm business capital (McAllister and Geno 2004). Table 5.4 summarises the changes in the structures of the farm business enterprises, the changes in the productive activities since successors assumed ownership of the enterprises and the state of family relationships since succession.

Table 5.4. Changes to farm business structure, productive enterprise and family relationships since farm transfer

Farm	Age on Succ'n	Current farm business structure and main enterprise				Effect of farm transfer on family relationships
		Farm business structure	Change Y/N	Farm enterprise	Change Y/N	
Peg-DF83	NS	Partnership	N	Cropping	Y	Strained with her husband's siblings
Tam-DF57	NS	Sole owner	Y	Agisting sheep	Y	Estranged from brother
Dot-DF88	NS	Partnership	Y	Wool	Y	Good family relations
Min-DF97	NS	Sole owner	N	Beef cattle	Y	Good family relations
Huw-SF87*	26	Partnership	Y	Wool & prime lambs	Y	Sons estranged
Vin-SF57*	38	Partnership	N	Wool & cropping	Y	Estranged from brother
Nev-SF59*	40	Trust	Y	Wool & prime lambs	Y	Estranged from brother
Greg-SF45	20s	Trust	Y	Cropping	Y	Good family relations
Ian-SF85	20s	Sole owner	N	Beef cattle	Y	Good relations with children
Joc-SF61	28	Company	Y	Mixed grazing & cropping	Y	Good family relations
Dee-DF60	32	Pastoral company	N	Cropping	Y	3 siblings: Mostly good but strained with older brother
Ron-SF59	30s	Partnership	N	Hay	Y	Good family relations
Con-SF51	30s	Partnership	N	Dairy	N	Estranged from paternal family
Don-SF48	38	Partnership	N	Prime lambs	Y	Parents feel alienated
Ian-SF85	45	Trust	N	Grazing and cropping	Y	Uneasy relationship with sister
Vic-SF93	60s	Partnership	N	Mixed grazing	N	Good family relations

Notes: 1. * Denotes members of the same family: Huw-SF87 – father; Nev-SF59 and Vin-SF57 – sons of Huw-SF87.
2. NS refers to non-successor interviewees reporting changes to farms after sibling-successors took over.

Of the farms represented in Table 5.4, we see that most successors, that is eighty-eight percent of successors, have changed the productive enterprises of their parents' farms. On the other hand, sixty-three percent of successors have retained the same ownership structure they inherited from their parents. Of those who have changed ownership structures, all but one of the changes have been from simpler ownership structure to the more complex structures of trusts and companies. These changes not only reflect farmer adaptation to a form of ownership that is regarded acceptable and useful – a "new kind of normal" (Webster 2015: 22), they also question the very premise on which succession is promoted, that is, the transfer of farming knowledge between the generations.

The changes made by members of following generations are often significant, especially when there is a complete change of enterprise for example from mostly wool production to mostly cropping as in Greg-SF47's case. Sometimes the changes in enterprise involve complete changes to property to cater for the new production, different machinery and different work programs through the year. All the knowledge for these changed enterprises cannot be drawn from

childhood experiences based on a different production system. That successors are successful in instituting and conducting new farming enterprises on their multigenerational farming property questions the argument that good farmers are made through their childhood learning. Productive farming requires commitment, awareness, aptitude and learning what to do and how to manage a business; this does not necessarily entail the transfer of knowledge between the generations. Rather their success in new farming enterprises indicates that their associations in the farming networks are sufficient to support their development of new skills and knowledge. Farmer health practitioner Tim-FA10 has observed families where the older generation holds to old ways of doing things and the tension evident when the younger generation is interested in taking up new ideas and technologies but is prevented from doing so by the parental generation.

Literature and programs directed at farmers and farm educators emphasizing the need for farmers to apply new knowledge and technologies to not only maintain but to also increase productivity – see, for example, Weatherley 2014 (Errington 1998), indicate that farmers are enmeshed in networks representing the current drive for increased and efficient production and contributions to both the domestic and global markets. As I argued in Chapter 4, each generation of farmers is subject to the particular governmental policies, markets, costs and other conditions of the time and most take these into account when managing their farms. If the successors institute changes to the farms' productive enterprises, then they are not following or applying the knowledge they would have gained from the parental generation. The question becomes, if succession does enable the transfer of farming knowledge from one generation to the following generation, what is the knowledge that the older generation has that is actually useful for the next generation and which cannot be acquired from outside the family farm? Is it farming knowledge which is the issue or are their other factors associated with farming childhoods which are the significant factors? This thesis does not have the space to explore these questions; however, they remain as important questions for future research.

5.7 Conclusion

The relationships and roles of actors in the farming districts have previously been described as predominantly existing within a masculinist hegemony where men occupy important decision-making roles for the farms and the community and women provide the allied support (Alston 2005a; Dempsey 1992; Poiner 1990). In this way, men and women from farming families are described as displaying unstated, but obvious, different patterns of behaviour and different accesses to resources and opportunities. There are a number of participants in this research whose families do indeed reflect different roles for men and women in families where the males, over the generations, appear to have exercised more agency in making decisions on what happens to the farm on succession, and where males have greater access and opportunity to become

successors to family farms (Ribot and Peluso 2003). However, this pattern is not consistently observed within farming families, nor is it observed within particular farming regions of the western Victoria, Australia. My data reveal a much greater diversity than previously described between the ways farming families operate and who in the families have opportunities to succeed and who makes the decisions on farm succession. There appear to be no particular gendered patterns that pertain to farm family members *per se*. Furthermore, my results show that even within one particular multigenerational family, in terms of farm transfers, the patterns of decision-making and decisions made in some families can change across the generations. In other multigenerational families, there do appear to be clear patterns of patrilineal succession based on the decisions of previous farm owners. However, even in these families, successors can make decisions that run counter to parental expectations and to the families' traditional patterns of succession. Of the number of farms represented in this research, most will be or have been passed to someone in the next generation. However, twenty-seven percent of farms will be or have been sold out of the family. Those that have been sold have resulted in a net loss of local population through departure of families.

The concerns of farm advisors, discussed in Chapter 4, that complex farm business ownership structures may have a large impact on succession processes have not be borne out by the interviewees, either by farm owners or potential successors. Where simple ownership structures have been in place, farm properties have been transferred as gifts, through inheritance or by purchase. Where farm enterprises have been structured as partnerships, successors have been brought into the partnerships through acquiring a percentage of the enterprise partnership either as a gift, purchase or through foregone wages. For farms operating as trusts or companies, successors have been nominated a percentage holding either as a trustee or company director. Although more formal accounting and legal advice has been obtained (and more complex legal documents have been completed) at the time of the successor becoming a partner, trustee or director in the farm business, this aspect of farm transfer appears to be less of a problem than the problem of the older generation actually letting go the reins and starting to hand over the management and control of the farm business and the farm property. For successors, it was not the actual process of succession that presented problems to their assuming control and ownership of the farm, it was the lack of planning, discussion and action on the timing of when succession would occur and what responsibilities the successor could anticipate as succession occurred.

There are a variety of processes by which families transfer their farms, and for many families, farms may be transferred through a combination of processes including gifting, inheritance, selling, leasing and/or inclusion as partners, trustees or directors of the farm enterprise. My data reveal there are two very distinct classes of farm transfer which can affect family members' interests in and commitments to the farm and in farming as a career. The first

is where property and enterprise are transferred solely through a will on the death of the previous owner. The second is where the farm property and assets and/or enterprise are transferred while the owner is still working/managing the farm.

Where transfer occurs as progressive succession, farm transfer progresses through three stages: from early transition to mid transition and finally to post-transition. There do not appear to be any differences in the timing of the stages of intergenerational family farm between the simple and more complex farm ownership structures. Rather the differences in the timing of the stages of transition appear to be related to factors of identity and psychology of the current owners, the apparent competence of proposed successors and the relationships between successors and current owners. Greater commitment to and enjoyment of farming appear to arise when progressive succession is instituted when the successors are in early adulthood.

Some families appear to have managed the process of intergenerational family farm transfer with little disruption to the farming enterprise or to harmonious relations between family members. Some family members have found the process to be very long and emotionally exhausting but eventually to be mutually satisfactory for all members of the family. Others have found the process to be distressing and with enduring effects, ranging from being mildly unpleasant to being disastrous economically, socially and emotionally. As demonstrated in the examples presented in this chapter, farm transfers are very much influenced by the constructs farm owners have of their farms, and these constructs in concert with the personal dispositions of individual family members determine the processes and outcomes of farm transfers. Given this, I contend that we cannot divorce the psychology of the individual from the social processes of farm transfers and the sustainability of local farming communities. In other words, the processes of farm transfers and the outcomes of transfers are psycho-socially determined as well as being influenced by the economic, social, political and climatic contexts in which transfers occur.

The emotional, social and economic effects of intergenerational family farm transfer for family members and the local community are explored and examined in the following two chapters. The next chapter focuses on the social and emotional effects experienced by family members as a result of family farm transfers.

Chapter 6

‘Emotional spacetime’: Informative, infectious emotions

6.1 Introduction

Family farms are more than productive enterprises in rural spaces, they are places invested with emotional commitments from family members to each other and to the farm (Schwarz 2004) and many are revered as places in which generations are nurtured and raised and as places combining the ideals of tradition, lifestyle and agrarian livelihood (Gray 1991). When farms are transferred intergenerationally, a fundamental part of the transfer is the extent of emotional attachments family members have to each other, the farm as property, the farming enterprise and the local farming community. How the multifarious factors associated with farms are considered, apportioned and transferred contribute to family members’ responses to farm transfers. Anger, disappointment, grief, fear, uncertainty, disinterest, contentment, relief are some of the enduring feelings expressed by interviewees arising from farm transfers. These emotional responses and continuing influences confirm Connor’s (2007: 16) argument that emotions, as constant and necessary aspects of human existence “infuse the actions, behaviour, thoughts, feelings and decisions made by the actors”, in this case farm family members. This chapter focuses on the enduring emotional responses of individual family members to farm transfers to explore the significance of the relationality (Bondi 2005) between family members on the wellbeing of family members, on the sustainability of family farms and on rural farming communities. The concepts of emotional spacetime (Symons 2007) and space as a produced entity (Lefebvre 1991) provide the theoretical scaffold for understanding complex phenomenon of farm transfer and for the emotions that arise during this process.

6.2 Theoretical approaches to examine emotional responses

In order to examine how emotional responses arise from and infect (that is, instil with remembered bad feeling)[2] the process of intergenerational farm transfer, I draw on two theorists to provide entry points for examining the enduring emotional impacts of farm transfers. The first, Lefebvre (1991), provides the conception of space as produced phenomena (described in Chapter 2) and the human relationship with space as comprising three elements: representation (mental constructs), spatial practice and lived experience (sensations and experiences) derived from the former. Drawing on Lefebvre’s concept that mental constructs inform the production of space

[2] Infect in this context is used to convey the notion that emotions that arise from one experience of farm transfer can affect later farm transfer processes. Infect – “to instil with bad feeling or opinion” (*Oxford English Reference Dictionary* 2002: 722)

offers the opportunity to compare individual members' representations of farms and relate these to their degree of emotional attachment to their family, the farm and the local community and their responses to farm transfers.

The second, Symons (2007), provides the concept of 'emotional spacetime' to examine organizations undergoing change – the change is the emotional spacetime involving emotional responses within and to a particular place occurring over an extended time – and describes the need to acknowledge, account for and manage emotional responses of people in these organizations to enable continued functioning of the organizations. A family farm is one such organization undergoing change in the lead up to and enactment of intergenerational farm transfer, a change through which people can be emotionally affected. The concept of emotional spacetime allows us to acknowledge emotions as potent factors influencing not only individual family members experiencing changes to their farms, but also the functioning of the farm and the sustainability of the local farming community.

More than one emotional spacetime usually exists within a farm's organization. The emotional space time of farm transfer often overlaps other changes occurring in the families (for example, adapting to changes in government policies, markets and family structures – illness, deaths, etc.). The emotional spacetimes of farm transfers may be relatively short as in the case of transfers following the death of farm owners or they may be of long duration extending over many years when farm transfers occur as staged succession.

Individuals within the same family and/or locality may develop different emotional responses to their families, the farms and the processes of intergenerational farm transfer. I begin the analysis of emotional responses to farm transfers by referring to Lefebvre's (1991) theory of space as produced phenomena and his conceptual triad of space – representation (mental constructs), lived experience and spatial practice.

6.3. Farms as produced spaces, farm transfers and emotional responses

A focus on the concepts of space as conceived and constructed by family members and their associates as well as how these relate to the broader context of national political agendas enable a more comprehensive engagement with the family members' attitudes to the processes and outcomes of family farm transfers than previous research has allowed. Examination of individual family members' conceptualizations of their farms reveals different representations held by members within particular families. While families operate within particular eras representing different political programs and policies, that family members may adhere to different mental constructs of family farms indicates not all members within the families adhere to prevailing constructs of these farms. The existence of different mental constructs arising from everyday

farm-life experiences provide evidence of possibilities of resistance and contestation to prevailing hegemonic constructs regarding farm transfers (Lefebvre 1991), and provide sources of knowledge to suggest different transfer options and to seek better approaches and outcomes from family farm transfers (Merrifield 2000). One mental construct demonstrating a strong attachment to the farm as place is described by Don-SF48:

> I reckon there's like a physical connection to the land you know. Like our indigenous brothers talk about being in country and you know having a sort of feeling of being a part of it. ... I think you recognise the seasons and you know the smells and the plants and the animals and all those kind of things. … Like in the first instance it's very much you feel part of the place, it's not just a business. (Don-SF48, interviewed 2014)

6.3.1 Representations, status and intra-familial relationships[3]

Farm families are often discussed as if they constituted a unitary social set (for example, Farmer-Bowers 2011; Gasson and Errington 1993). However, I found in my previous research that family members come into the farming family through different routes: one possibly as the successor, others through purchase or marriage and others born to parent-owners of farms (Luhrs 2015). Family members may not adhere to or act according to shared notions of what their particular farms represent for them. It is possible that differences in representation may generate different attitudes, expectations and behaviours among family members and create conflict among family members over farm succession. I begin this discussion by turning to examine, as a case study, the effects of farm succession as reported by Tam-DF57 to highlight possible differences between family members' representations of the social spaces of farms, the emotional upsets experienced and the social problems during and following succession.

<u>Case study 1</u>

Tam-DF57's representation of her family's farm includes not only the farm as a place of primary production, for her it is also a place which reminds her of her family's farming heritage. Her history with and emotional attachment to the place with its buildings and large trees and its importance to defining who she is are included in her representation of the farm (Gieryn 2000). For Tam-DF57, the farm was not only a home, it was an important family legacy going back through four generations of successful wool-producing farmers and which she understood would always remain in the family, a place for her to visit and share with her children. The farm's

[3] In this thesis, when referring to farm family members, I use the word '**status**' to represent a family member's position/standing in the family with respect to decision-making on farm matters. Therefore, 'status' in this context refers the relative agency particular family members have in determining how and when intergenerational farm transfer occurs.

importance for Tam-DF57 lay in the imagery of the family history and relationships within the particular farm landscape and her engagement with farming:

> You drive into the long driveway and then there were three big trees just over the bridge and they had names of three women who were sisters or something from three aunties or something but they have now since gone. … and then there was a little old garage. … When we were shearing of course you needed to get the sheep in you know … We would all be out there chasing the sheep. .... When I was older I roused sometimes … [and] I can remember I had to throw the fleece on the wool table and doing a bit of skirting. … I was part of all of that. (Tam-DF57, interviewed 2014)

Tam-DF57, like the non-successor daughters in Cassidy's (2017) of Irish farm families, understood her status with respect to succession and was initially accepting of that as she understood the farm would remain in the family and because of this she would have a continuing association with and access to the farm, the place she loved – its aesthetics, associations with past relatives and its activities. In contrast, according to Tam-DF57, her brother conceived of the farm property as an asset to be borrowed against to fund other property investments. Tam-DF57 stated that after her brother became sole successor (and thereby sole beneficiary) to the farm, he sold off most of the stock and was using the property purely as collateral for raising loans to purchase rental properties in Melbourne. The farm property was financialized,[4] as has become the condition for many farming properties which are seen as attractive investments for creating and storing wealth (Magnan 2015; see Chapter 7), but in this case, it was not for primary production but to fund other off-farm, income-producing assets. Tam-DF57's brother was unable to meet the interest repayments on the loans and the bank foreclosed on the debts. The farm was sold to realise capital to repay the debts. The farm sold out of the family to an investor from Melbourne who employs local labour (other already-established farmers) to run the farm – nobody lives on the farm and no new people have migrated to the district to replace the previous owner and his family. Tam-DF57's distress is palpable as she tells (through tears and sobs) of her alienation from the farm, the farm she still feels strongly attached to but has no enduring physical connection with since her brother, as Tam-DF57 states, "lost it". His children and hers were denied a future with the farm.

Two siblings, one the successor and the other a supportive non-successor living and working during their childhoods in the shared social space of the farm, engaging with each other, their parents, the farm enterprise and other people involved in the enterprise (shearers, agents and so forth) and the physical space of the farm, demonstrate through their attitudes and behaviours

[4] '**Financialization**', according to Lawrence (2015: 204), represents an "emerging concept which … is altering the nature of economics and social life" in rural farming regions (See also Larder et al. 2015; Chapter 7).

in their adult lives two very different conceptions of the farm. Representational space, the lived space of their farming childhoods, is story of a space of shared responsibility where the siblings helped their parents develop and maintain the farm as an operating and productive space (Lefebvre 1991). According to Tam-DF57, she and her brother were brought up in the family to appreciate and respect the family history (her father's family history) of developing the farm as a productive farming enterprise, one that would continue after her parents passed the farm on to their son. That is, they lived within a family with a particular representation of the farm – one which included continuity of family association with the farm achieved through patrilineal transfer.

As adults, the siblings' lives and associations with the farm diverged such that Tam-DF57's brother was given successive parcels of the farm as his own titled assets to work in partnership with his parents, and he lived with his wife and children on the farm property. Even after Tam-DF57 departed the farm to pursue her career as a teacher, was married and had children, she still understood herself to be part of the farm family and to have association with and access to the farm. However, Tam-DF57 and her young family were now visitors to the farm and not members of the farming family *per se*, her relationship, and hence status, with the farm had changed since her departure and marriage.

Differences in the sibling's representations and statuses became apparent during their divergent adult lives. After gaining title to the farm property, Tam-DF57's brother was legally entitled to make decisions pertaining to farm production and development. Tam-DF57 was devastated when these decisions resulted in the sale of the property which she had assumed would remain in the family for future generations. Tam-DF57's distress arises from her brother's actions producing a situation conflicting with her representation of the farm as a continuing legacy of her parents and her grandparents work. She is also angry that her now-adult son who is keenly interested in farming has no opportunity to continue the family connection with the farm:

> [Son 1] is 30. [Son 1] was born a farmer, and you know [Son 1] would have loved to have the farm. It seems so sad. … [Dad] would have loved it if he could have taken over the farm and the farm's gone, you know. Now, nobody's got it. (Tam-DF57, interviewed 2014)

The situation described by Tam-DF57 after her departure from the farm highlights the differential statuses that successors and non-successors have with respect to decisions regarding the management and futures of farms. It also highlights the contested issue of ascribing the label of 'farm family member'. In one sense, non-successors, such as Tam-DF57, regard themselves as family members with continuing interests in the futures of their childhood farms because they

have supported their siblings to become successors through not contesting the succession, and they value the farming enterprises, farm properties and their associations with them. On the other-hand, the conflicting view, as exemplified in Tam-DF57's brother's decisions and lack of engagement with his sister on these decisions, is that once a family member leaves the farm to begin an off-farm life a person may no longer be considered to have an interest in or status in the fate of the farm. In this view, they have no rights to the property or status in decision-making. Tam-DF57 and her brother's different situations demonstrate the differing power relations embedded in patterns of ownership of farming properties (Merrifield 2000: 174). It was not Tam-DF57's status as non-owner that was the cause of her distress; it was her brother's financial structuring of the farm that caused her dismay:

> It's not about me owning it at all. ... It's also about my father – the fact that [he] was so proud of the [family] name and so connected to [it]. … And it was all about him keeping it in the family you know, and he had the son who had the name. … It is about respect. (Tam-DF57, interviewed 2014)

According to Tam-DF57, their parents managed the farm productively and carried no debt over the property during their time as owners. In contrast, her brother sold farm assets (the stock and plant) to raise funds to build up a property portfolio rather than to engage with producing wool as his parents had done. That he mortgaged the property to raise funds for off-farm investments demonstrates how different his concept of the once-family farm is from Tam-DF57's whose view is that the farm should not have been mortgaged to fund other investments, it should have remained viable for primary production. Although the farm is no longer in the family, Tam-DF57 (a non-successor family member) still holds a strong attachment to the farm and to ideals that informed her parents' operation of the farm. Her ambitions of a continuing association with the farm have been thwarted, highlighting the distressing possibilities for other non-successors who, through their attachments to their farms, at first, are accepting of their non-successor status to support their successor siblings (Cassidy 2017).

Within this one family line, we see not only how representations, spatial practices and associations with a farm can change over time and create differing responses to intergenerational farm transition, we also see siblings within a family ascribed status according to their gender. Siblings who start out apparently equally, as Tam-DF57 had thought she and her brother had done, end up with different successor status, legal rights to the property and subsequently different understandings of and relations to the farm. Tam-DF57 talks about the respect she had for her father and his pride in the family's connection to the farm and her sadness at the loss of the farm, yet patrilineal inheritance/succession is unquestioned as the mode of farm transfer in this family (Alston 1998; Poiner 1990). The response by Tam-DF57 indicates that she, as the

excluded one, does not question (or notice) the discrepancy in status between herself and her brother. Ahmed (2010) explains this state of lack of awareness that fosters the status quo to the disadvantage of particular groups in this way:

> [W]e learn not to be conscious, not to see what is happening right in front of us. … It is not that an individual person suffers from false consciousness; but that we inherited a certain false consciousness when we learn to see and not to see things in a certain way. (Ahmed 2010: 43)

Choices and patterns, such as the gendered selection of a successor, become and can remain invisible in families (even to non-successor siblings). The invisibility is not only experienced by the many who are disadvantaged but is experienced especially by the dominant groups – the successors (Griffiths 1995). Tam-DF57 – the disadvantaged sibling – learned to see the farm as her father had described, as something to be passed on from father to son. Her brother accepted the successor position to the exclusion of his sister. On examining the outcome for this farming family, we can see the discrimination enacted by Tam-DF57's father. Tam-DF57 considered her father "the most generous and gentle man", albeit one constituted out of the particular hegemonic relations of his time and place who favoured his son as successor to the exclusion of his daughter. Tam-DF57 does not question the pattern of succession as has occurred through previous generations of the family nor in her own generation. Tam-DF57's statements indicate it is the intergenerational family transfer that is more important to Tam-DF57 than her opportunity to assume the status of successor. Tam-DF57 does give a glimpse into her thoughts on the choice of her brother as successor as mistaken when she talks about her own sons' missed opportunities to take over the family farm: "[Dad] would have loved it if he [Tam-DF57's son] could have taken over the farm". Tam-DF57 does question successors limiting non-successors' access to property/farms which are important to them, and questions successors not retaining farms within the family line.

Keeping the farm in the family line is a way of keeping access to the farm as a place of meaning open to non-successors (Cassidy 2017). Access to former family places is denied when farms are sold out of the family or when successors deny access to non-successor siblings. Tam-DF57's emotions do not arise from her loss of access to farming, but arise from her lack of access to the farm – a place of significant and enduring meaning for her. However, Tam-DF57 does not attribute her lack of access to the farm to her father's decisions to nominate and support the son to be the successor. Similarly, to non-successors described by Cassidy (2017) in her study of Irish farm non-successors, Tam-DF57 had understood her continuing attachment to the family farm would be respected through her brother's ongoing occupation of the farm property. Differently from the cohort of Cassidy's (2017) research, Tam-DF57 has experienced much personal distress over the loss of family connection to the farm, at not having continued access to the farm.

Tam-DF57 has not demonstrated any consciousness of the discrimination that denied her access to the family farm after succession, instead she has explained her emotional distress as resulting from her brother's actions and mismanagement of the farm asset. As Ahmed (2010) states, it is when others question the status quo because they notice unhappiness as a sign of a deeper malaise that discriminatory practices are exposed. The social disturbance created in this exposure creates opportunities to engage in social practices with greater awareness of possible outcomes. This social disturbance aligns with Lefebvre's (1991) argument of actors' opportunities to exercise resistance to hegemonic constructs that may be understood as 'normal' but that are disadvantageous to individuals.

> Feminist consciousness can thus be thought of as consciousness of the violence and power that are concealed under the languages of civility and love. … We learn to see what is concealed by signs of unhappiness. You can cause disturbance by merely noticing something … you realize that the world you thought you were in is not the world you are in (Ahmed 2010: 43)

The unhappiness expressed and displayed by Tam-DF57 is indicative not only of her loss and her powerlessness to alter the outcome. It is also indicative of the malaise infecting and affecting relationships between family members when farm transfers do not consider the representations individual family members hold about the farms on which they have spent a large portion of their lives or the relative attachments of family members to the farms, their attachments to the local communities and what the attachments signify for them. By exposing the importance of the relationality involved in the process of farm transfers and its continuity after the transfer, we learn of relational factors affecting family member wellbeing, farm sustainability and local community sustainability (Bondi 2005). Relations of differential agency between family members, as this case demonstrates, can pervade families on farms, and they not only include the implicit relations based on mental constructs of assumed rights to farm succession (Lefebvre 1991), but also those expressly based on legal entitlement to property and rights to governance over that property (albeit along state sanctioned lines) (Voyce 2007), and they affect family member relationships with each other, the farm and the community. The next section examines more generally the effects that differential legal ownership statuses to property may have on family members, their relationships within the family and to the community.

6.4 Ownership, status and ongoing access to farms

A person's ownership of title over land constructs a set of power relationships to that property that permits or restricts the variety of relations others associated with the property may have (Ribot and Peluso 2003; Shortall 1999). The title-holder has more agency to make decisions about the property than those who do not have title to the land (Jennings and Stehlik 2000). This is evident when we consider the importance of rights associated with holding title to land in families

where successors and non-successors alike hold strong attachments to the farms of their childhoods.

6.4.1 Same family, different expectations and outcomes

For family members, the different statuses of nominated successors and non-successors can create different expectations of what happens to particular farms and different expectations of participation and engagement with family members' childhood farms after transfers. Different expectations, in turn, can lead to disagreements, disappointments and conflict between family members such that family members who once may have been a source of social support are now estranged or distant (as in the case of Tam-DF57's family). Many interviewees told of families whose members, formerly inhabiting the same social spaces and appearing to follow or support shared notions of farming, suffered social discord when differences between parents', successors' and non-successors' conceptions of their farms became apparent. These different mental constructs of farms generally emerged when family members engaged in the emotional spacetimes of succession-planning or change of farm ownership with the associated exchange of titles from parents to the successors.

Four family members, Pru-DF37, Deb-DF30, Rus-SF58 and Lil-FP48, have stories of family members in distress over farm succession and their ongoing emotional and or social problems associated with changed relationships either with the farm, family members or both. While their distress has arisen from a variety of events, such as from not being included in succession, not being sole successor or not having access to the farm property after succession, the origin of the distress lies in the conflicting representations held by family members on what the farms mean to individual family members and the different statuses they have with respect to the farms.

Farm associates, farmer health practitioner Tim-FA10, medical practitioner Nat-FA14, mental health consultant Rose-FA15 and rural relationships counsellor Kath-FA18, through their work with their patients/clients presenting with ongoing emotional problems confirm that enduring emotional problems can and do arise from issues relating to farm ownership, farm succession and different statuses of family members within families .[5] They further support the argument that many on-going emotional problems suffered by their patients/clients arise when conceptions about family farms do not match their lived experiences. These emotional problems indicate that not only are there differences between family members' representations of life on the farm and those expressed by other members of their farming families, but that these differing representations of farms are indeed sources of conflict and/or stress between family members.

[5] None of the farm associates interviewed knew of the particular farm family members interviewed for this research, nor did any of the farm associates breach their own patients' confidentiality. All comments made by farm associates referred to family situations and not to particular people.

We could say that the families of family members presenting with ongoing emotional issues have not managed or been sufficiently attentive to the emotional spacetime of farm transfers to ensure positive relationship outcomes for family members (Symons 2007).

Pru-DF37, who had no desire to remain on the farm as a farmer, retained the belief of being able to return to the farm as respite from a busy career. The succession issue Pru-DF37 presents concerns her father (one of six children), the stay-at-home son who farmed his own small 600-acre property and helped his father run the larger 2000-acre farm next-door and his siblings. According to Pru-DF37, her father's siblings "colluded" to influence their mother to sell the family farm after their father's death to ensure that non-farming siblings could each reap a share of the value of the farm. In so doing, they deprived her father from a continuing involvement in the farm on which he and his wife had lived and worked to help his parents after shifting from their home on their smaller property.

> Around 2000, some sort of nurse home-doctor said that dad's mum needed looking after, full-time. Mum was quite reluctant to move over to the big house because it wasn't her home but [her mother-in-law] needed looking after so she moved, and after a couple of years she did up the kitchen. … You can sort of imagine the shock when their home that they didn't want to move into and they've been working for the partnership was suddenly sold out from underneath them. (Pru-DF37, interviewed 2014)

From the above, we can interpret that the six siblings in Pru-DF37's father's family held different notions about their parents' (Pru-DF37's grandfather's) farm. Pru-DF37's father and mother lived on the farm, her father worked the farm in partnership with his father and her mother looked after the mother-in-law. One aunt also contributed a little to the care of her mother. No others were involved in the farm during their adult lives. And yet, the non-farming siblings in adulthood each expected some return from the farm after their father had died. The result has been a fracturing of relations among Pru-DF37's father's siblings – "there's a rift in his family" – and a regret by Pru-DF37 that it has come to this state. Pru-DF37 states, the process not only affected her parents but her own generation:

> Oh, I think we were mostly disgusted; … the home, you know [our grandparents' place] had become our home in a way. That's where we'd go for our weekends [and now] … It's really sad, and he [father] doesn't talk to [his sister] anymore. She's the one we actually like. … The fact that they didn't even talk, dad didn't even talk to [his brother] at Nan's funeral. (Pru-DF37, interviewed 2014)

The distress and sadness over family divisions arising from farm transfers, as recounted by Pru-DF37, provide poignant lessons on the pitfalls of intergenerational farm transfer when assumptions and decisions have not been fully explored before actions are taken. Unexamined assumptions defining beneficiaries to family farms also arise as a source of family discord and estrangement in Peg-DF83's family, discussed previously in Chapter 5, section 5.3.2.1. According to Peg-DF83, her husband's siblings, after their father's death, had agreed for the stay-

at-home sibling (her husband) to be the sole beneficiary of the farm estate. It was Peg-DF83's mother-in-law who enabled non-farming siblings to take a share of the estate on her death by leaving equal shares of the farm to each of the nine children. This example highlights how members of a family, who may once have shared similar notions of farm succession, can change those notions over time if opportunities beneficial to them arise. The eight non-farming siblings in the family created a time of hardship for Peg-DF83 and her family, and also set up barriers to family unity and communication. In this family, agency did not lie with the farmer working the land, instead it lay with the mother and the mother's testamentary freedom in creating her will (Voyce 1994).

Lefebvre (1991) enables us to account for the different attitudes and behaviours accompanying farm succession. We learn from applying Lefebvre's (1991) theory of the production of space that people within a family may hold different and competing representations of spaces that they co-habit (or once co-habited), and that these different representations inform family members' attitudes and behaviours, sometimes in ways that conflict with other family member's representations and expectations. These conflicts, we also learn can create strong emotional responses such that they undermine social relationships between family members.

Farms are socially produced spaces (as described in Chapter 4), and family members have personal representations informing their attitudes about and behaviours towards farms and farm succession. Representations contribute to the emotional responses to farm succession and to rural communities. Emotional responses of family members to farm succession can, as farm associates and family members describe, affect personal wellbeing, family relationships and rural community sustainability. In the following sections I examine more closely the role of emotions and affects in exposing the social impacts of intergenerational farm transfers on individuals, families, farms and communities.

6.5 Informative emotions and affects

Emotion and affect alert us to social issues, and alert us to the possibility that all is not well in the emotional spacetime and/or families' conceptions of farm succession (Ahmed 2010). The emotions expressed as words and the affects displayed by the bodies of interviewees exposed the social consequences of intergenerational farm transfers. For example, Tam-DF57, quoted above, discussed her emotions of sadness at her alienation from the farm, while at the same time her body was sobbing and shaking with affect – the physiological/bodily responses to her emotions. Affect had taken Tam-DF57's "body in its grip" (Rossi 2010: 86) so that every time she spoke of her sadness, tears welled in her eyes. Such unvoiced bodily reactions to particular events were visible during many of my interviews. Other interviewees also described their emotional responses arising from particular events, interactions or relationships and the effects these

responses had on their relationships with other family members, their farms and their communities. Raised voices, changed voices, tears, table-thumping, silences and swearing of family members are the affects their bodies displayed as we discussed farm succession in their families. They also arose from participants' senses of agency (or lack of it) to create positive/fair outcomes.

6.5.1 Emotions, affects and agency

Emotions and affects emerged as significant responses for interviewees as they described their families' deliberations on, approaches to and events following farm succession. Farm associates also reported on the emotional and affective conditions apparent in family members as they negotiated or discussed succession with them. In describing emotional responses to experiences of succession, relative statuses between family members emerged as a factor contributing to family members' experiences and emotional responses to succession. Parents and their children generally have different statuses with respect to input to the process, timing, and actual decision-making to effect farm transfer because it is the parents who are usually owners or major share-holders of the properties and are the managers of the businesses. Parents may also have, or assume to have, differential statuses that determine their input into the succession process. In common with much previous research on family farming, most current farm owners/proprietors in this research are divided between the males as successors and the females as wives of successors (Luhrs 2015; McGowan 2011; Poiner 1990). As described in Chapter 4, owners who are successors to their farms hold ownership rights either as sole owners, in partnership with spouses or with spouses and children, as trustees in family farm trusts or as company directors of the farm enterprises. In this research, most male farm owners through their ownership status and associated rights have a direct role to play in determining what happens to the farms on succession. Again, as described in Chapter 4, their wives, on the other hand, may or may not have ownership status with respect to the farm property or to the enterprise conducted on the property. Wives' effective status in determining what happens to the farms on intergenerational transfer is not necessarily as assured as that of their husbands. In instances where daughters are successors (for example, Kay-DF44, Dee-DF60, Jan-DF61's mother) or where wives are in partnership with their husbands (for example, Joy-FP46, Lil-FP48) women farm owners do have a direct role to play in determining succession.

Agency may take the form of not engaging in farm transfer or in instigating farm transfer without engaging others in the negotiations or in determining actions against the desires of other family members. In this section I examine the emotional responses occurring through four situations to highlight the personal and social effects arising from different relative positions of agency. First is the case concerning a couple who are co-owners with equal status of a multigenerational farm but with divergent views on what to do with the farm. The second

example is of a co-owner whose husband refuses to discuss succession. The third situation describes two couples where wives have married successors of large multigenerational properties and are not part of the ownership arrangements. The fourth describes a son as a would-be successor but who was left out of the will.

6.5.1.1 Co-owners' emotional attachments differ

Husband, Don-SF48, and wife, Lil-FP48 share a love of living on their farm and being in the district, and they have equal status in the ownership of the farm property and the business. However, Don-SF48 states that the difficult years since the 1990s have caused him to rethink his attachment to this particular farm, a farm that has been it his family for five generations. He states that, although he would rather not, he could move elsewhere.

> You know there was a period when I couldn't imagine selling it … but now I think as I get older I probably could, I mean I wouldn't like to but I think I could. Like if circumstances were such that …the kids clearly weren't interested … we may sell some of it. (Don-SF48, interviewed 2014)

In this statement Don-SF48 allows for the possibility of his children's lack of interest in farming. For Don-SF48's wife, moving off the farm is a very difficult concept to consider because she has made a home on the farm for their family. She loves the fact that they have worked hard to improve the house and the farm, to make a warm and welcoming home for their four school-age children. Lil-FP48 has become attached to the place as place of beauty and imbued with a strong sense of family history. Her attachment indicates her loyalty to her husband's long family history and her own 25-year recent history as the following interview extract demonstrates (Connor 2007):

> I just love the idea that there's that connection. … Don's fifth generation and the boys and the girls are the sixth. … We've got this connection … somebody built the church and someone helped do this and they had the tennis court over there they built the school. **I just think that's very special.** (Lil-FP48, interviewed 2014)

Lil-FP48 and Don-SF48 recognise they share a sense of beauty of the farm, and they acknowledge that there is a difference in their opinion of the options they may follow. Lil-FP48 presents as having greater attachment to the farm, their home and the family history than her husband admits to. They have also survived the transition of the farm partnership and property from Don-SF48's parents to them and remain in touch with Don-SF48's parents. The main issue confronting Don-SF48 and Lil-FP48 concerns the apparent lack of interest shown by their children in farming. They do not rush off the school bus to put on their farm clothes to be outside amongst it as Don-SF48 once did. Don-SF48 states, "The girls are too young to know what they want … The boys are the eldest and … they're not leaving school to be farmers." In acting to be open and fair-minded about their children's possible futures, Don-SF48 considers that he may

have missed the opportunity to instil an interest in or commitment to taking up farming in his children. Now with prospects of no children expressing interest in taking over the farm, Lil-FP48 and Don-SF48 have a potential dilemma of determining how to keep the farm productive and viable as they grow older or deciding to lease all or part of the property or to sell up and leave the property altogether. Their attachment to the farm and farming may be the issue for them rather than conflict between parents and/or children or issues of status that other families face.

6.5.1.2 Parents not engaging with succession

Eva-DF74, like Lil-FP48 above, loves the farm and farm life: "I can't imagine not being here really or not having a farm of some sort". She would like to remain on the farm in her retirement to help out but realises that it is time for her three middle-aged sons to assume responsibility for the ownership and management of the farm she and her husband operate as farm trust. Her husband, also in his 70s, according to Eva-DF74, does not allow time to discuss farm transfer, let alone enter the process of succession-planning. Eva-DF74 finds the decision-making for and the process to transition very difficult. The problem, according to Eva-DF74, is that her husband "still has a grip on the structure of the farm trust and management" and this is blocking the succession-planning and her husband's health is also an issue for the family:

> [Husband] has health issues and gets quite tired – he is not very well and is impatient in not being able to do what he likes to do. … We have tried a structured meeting to discuss succession but that didn't work well because although there was a formal procedure to follow with some family members getting a bit cranky [with] some being heard more than others. … Part of this shows through in [3rd son] more than the others perhaps in part stemming from his childhood when he was the youngest for a number of years before being displaced by a later child. (Eva-DF74, Interviewed 2014).

For Eva-DF74, this is a source of great frustration and concern, and, she thinks, possibly a source of conflict in the near future and as her three sons' children approach their teenage years. Her sons are now in their late 30s and early 40s and are making plans for their families, but they are unable to exercise full control over decisions for their families because their decisions link back to their lack of status in the family farm enterprise. This was confirmed by her son Cam-SF44 in a separate interview.

The husband/father in this family is exercising control of his family's activities through not engaging in succession. His agency is exercised through silence. The fact that Eva-DF74 is in equal shares with her husband in the family trust does not give her agency to determine the trust or property in her sons' favour. Eva-DF74's frustration is of no effect in instituting succession; however, her husband's silence is his communication of his agency and control – he is not participating in succession, yet.

6.5.1.3 Wives excluded from ownership

In this current era of general improvement in women's statuses on farms (Pini and Shortall 2006), there are cases where wives have no status in determining what happens to farms either for their own involvement and/or benefit or for farm transfers (Jennings and Stehlik 2000). Kaz-FP41 and her husband Tim-SF40 and Greg-SF47 and his wife (who made a brief appearance and commented during her husband's interview) represent two families that have followed the tradition of patrilineal succession, and where wives are excluded any status in the farm. Both husbands, proud of their inheritances and of the work previous generations have done, continue and develop the multigenerational farms. Both husbands would like someone to be successor to their farms but have not (yet) directed their attentions to either one or other of their children to take over the farm. Greg-SF47's two children (a boy and a girl) are just approaching their teenage years, and Kaz-FP41 and Tim-SF40's two sons are about to leave secondary school and choose post-school training.

In contrast to their husbands, both wives view the family traditions as traditions of *power-plays*. They see the differential statuses of family members with respect to farm ownership and management as detrimental to their relationships with their husbands and between other members of the family. So much so, that Kaz-FP41 and Greg-SF47's wife both vehemently stated that they would like their children to not take over the farms, to seek lives and careers elsewhere. Their associations with the farms have produced negative emotional responses and these responses appear to arise from their lack of inclusion in farm work or the farm business. After interviewing Kaz-FP41 and listening to comments made by the husbands in these two families, I developed a sense that their marriages may be under stress and this may be more of a problem for them as they consider the futures of their farms than actually determining the next successors. For example:

> It's very hard for me to be a mother of farming sons because the control of the farm is in that generation above. … It's hard because I feel like my in-laws control my life to a certain extent. … Farm comes before family, farm becomes before everything. ... And I work to support the family so that everything can go into the farm. So, it feels like the harder I work, the more they benefit. (Laugh) The farm benefits, but at this stage it's them [parents-in-law] that benefit because of the income that we are not getting from the farm (Kaz-FP41, interviewed 2014)

As all farm income goes back into the farm, Kaz-FP41 is the person to provide the income to raise the children and to look after herself and her husband and their domestic/home space. The main problem expressed by Kaz-FP41 is her sense of lack of input into the farming business and that part of the problem exists because her husband has not yet been granted full control over the enterprise. Kaz-FP41 sees the enterprise involving her husband and his parents is restrictive to

any possible input she may like to contribute and, hence, also to her mothering of potential farming sons. According to Kaz-FP41 this distancing from the farm originates in her parents-in-law considering her as threat to the farm's continuity on her marriage to their son, and, according to Kaz-FP41, a marriage they opposed (Pini 2007; Price and Evans 2006). This distance from the farm, both in exclusion from formal ownership and in emotional response to the attitude of her parents-in-law towards her, has resulted in Kaz-FP4 identifying more with her off-farm life and her nuclear family more than she does with the farm:

> ***Why should I work to support the family here plus do work on the farm*** … ***I'm doing enough*** trying … to do everything else and I'm not really feeling part of it and I've kind of separated … I mean I probably define myself quite separate from the farm because I probably feel that's something I need to do for my own sanity. (Kaz-FP41, interviewed 2014)

Tim-SF40 understands his wife has feelings of distance from the farm but explains the reason for not including her in the ownership structure is more to do with not having all their finances tied up with the farm than actually excluding her for other reasons. In this family, the tensions related to farm succession are between Kaz-FP41 and her husband Tim-SF40 (expressed more by Kaz-FP41 than Tim-SF40) and between Kaz-FP41 and her parents-in-law over the issue of when her husband will be granted full control of the farm so that he can then include her in the business structure. Until that time arrives, Kaz-FP41 feels no agency in decisions about the next successor or the future of the farm.

Similar feelings of exclusion and the effects of that exclusion were voiced by Greg-SF47's wife. Greg-SF47's wife has no decision-making status with respect to the farm and for planning for succession. This lack of status has her in conflict with her husband over encouraging their children to consider their positions as possible successors.

> [My wife] will say to the kids like: "Don't by any means feel like you have to come back to the farm". And I had the conversation with my son and said: "Listen [Son] that's all very well, but if you want to come back to the farm, don't be put off by your sister or your mother". You know what I'm saying, it's their choice.
>
> It's certainly a balancing act with pitfalls. The perfect scenario in this succession planning is that the kids get high paying jobs in Melbourne and we stay here and you might have manager, and we stay here and they just come back … to the big house and have fun … But if they want to farm, that is, if they want to work off farm and have this core farm as a weekender then that's great. But you have to offer them the choice to farm (Geg-SF47, interviewed 2014).

In the families of Greg-SF47 and Tim-SF40, family tradition affects the wives more adversely than their daughters. In these families, the children are considered equally for succession regardless of gender but their mothers have little or no status regarding the farms. Kaz-SF41and Greg-SF47's wife, married to successors, feel left out and impotent to contribute to decisions

about the farms on which they live. Their children, on the other hand, are being provided with opportunities to consider and take up succession; they are considered equally by their fathers to be successors.

These two examples present a new pattern of status in farming families where husbands are successors to the farms and who, like other successors, hold ultimate decision-making agency because of their previous history with the farms, but their children are not distinguished with respect to succession based on their gender. Perhaps this is a nod to equality in farming families – that children of both genders may be raised with equal opportunities and expectations of and for succession. The wives of successors in these families hold least status in the families.

6.5.1.4 Would-be successors left out wills

The final case in this section concerns a son who worked the family farm for over three decades for little financial gain and who assumed that he would be the successor when his father passed away. When the will was read, Russ-SF58 learned not only was the farm not passed to him, but that he was left out of the will altogether. That his father had testamentary freedom to construct his will was not questioned (Voyce 1994); however, the sense of betrayal and loss felt by Russ-SF58 after all his work on building up the farm is enduring and infuses his attitudes towards his father and siblings. After challenging the will, Rus-SF58 was awarded a quarter share of the value of the property after it was sold. The will and eventual sale not only created division between Russ-SF58 and his siblings, it also precluded Rus-SF58 from owning a farm and being able to continue to work as a farmer on his own property.

Rus-SF58 is bitter and angry about his father's will and angry at his two elder siblings who, he thinks, prevailed upon their father to change his will such that they and a younger sister also benefitted from the sale of the farm at his expense. Rus-SF58 considers that they did not value the farm property as an on-going farm but as source of funds to provide for their own off-farm lives. Lefebvre (1991) provides a way to understand how the motives of family members may be explained. Rus-SF58's mental space held the farm as a place to continue productive farm work, to be a link to family history and to be recompense for his years of underpaid work. However, according to Russ-SF58, his three siblings considered the farm to be a realisable asset, something to sell to gain capital for other projects or investments, resembling the representation held by Tam-DF57's brother (mentioned earlier in the chapter). Rus-SF58's father, in writing his will, demonstrated his lack of sense of family continuity with the farm, and his will was also not informed by considerations for fair distribution to all his offspring in the dispersal of the property. Rus-SF58 had some agency to challenge the will, but not to override the will entirely.

We learn from the examples discussed in the chapter so far that family members' emotional responses arise during and continue after processes of farm transfers. These emotional responses

arise because of family members' different conceptions of what farms are, different expectations arising out of these conceptions for farm transfers and different statuses to act on these conceptions and expectations. Family relationships suffer when actions are instituted that conflict with family members' expectations. The range and extent of emotional stress (as reported by interviewees) is depicted in Figure 6.1 below with 'content' indicating not upset or concerned and 'distressed' indicating severely emotionally upset affecting personal wellbeing. For some families, emotional distress fractured family relationships and in the most severely affected families, relationships were fractured and farms were sold. The severity of the emotional response to personal well-being and family relationships is indicated by width of the arrow below the list of emotional responses.

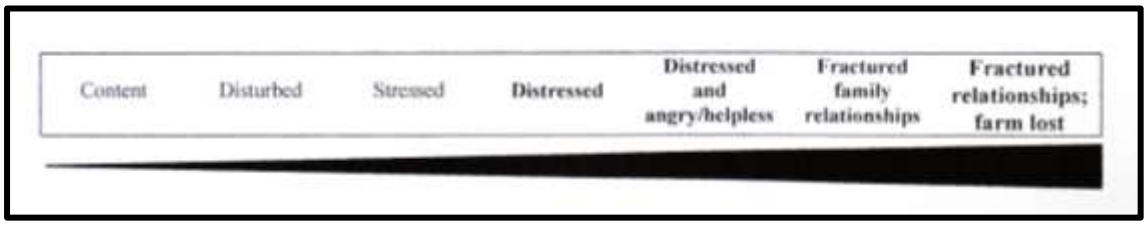


Figure 6.1 Range of emotional responses arising from intergenerational farm transfers affecting family members, intrafamilial relationships and family farms.

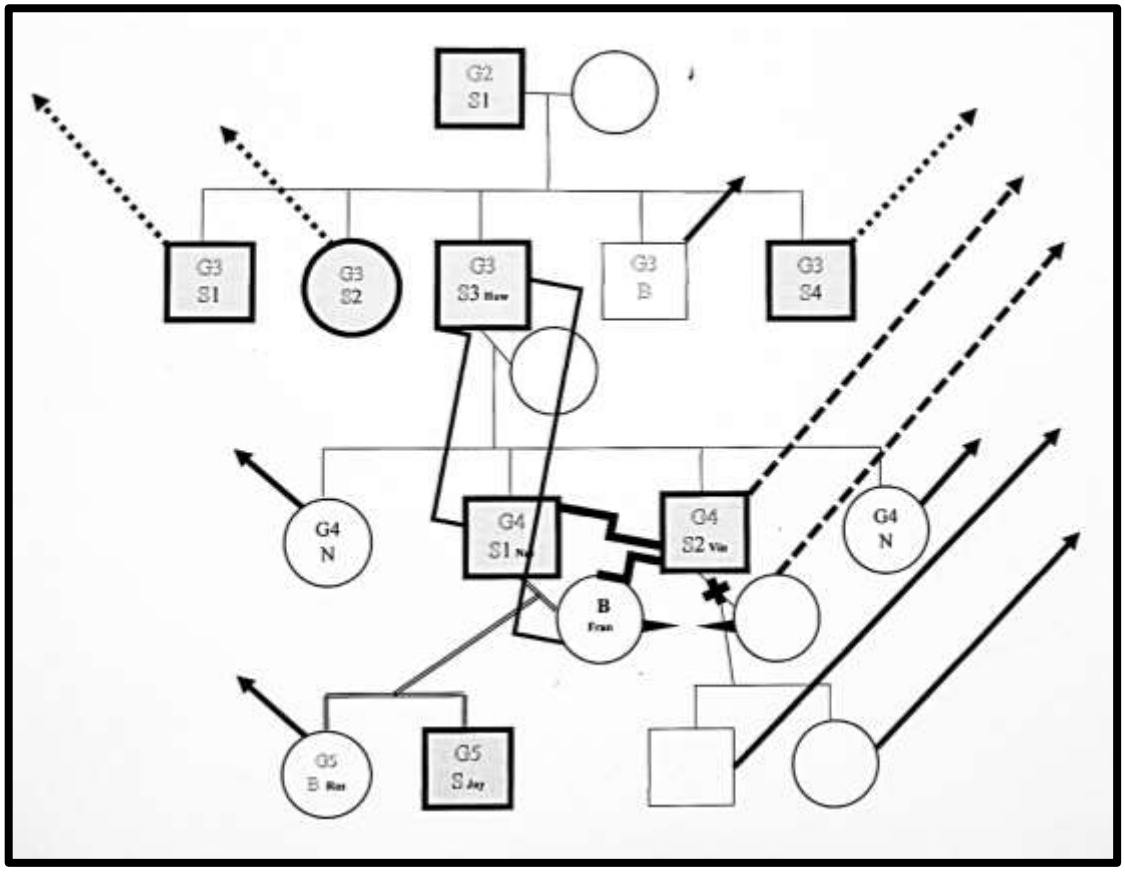
The next section presents a case study of a multigenerational family to demonstrate how emotional legacies resulting from farm transfer decisions from one emotional spacetime can translate across the generations to affect later farm transfers.

6.6 Emotions transfer from one emotional spacetime to the next

Case study 2

To demonstrate the significant and long-term effects that may arise from the emotional spacetime farm transfer event (Barbalet 2004), I present a family with emotional legacies from the previous transfer that are informing and infecting the current transfer process. The situation is one where both parents in the family approaching the time for farm transfer agree that succession is to occur, but they have yet to agree on how and when it is to occur. The nuclear family informing this discussion, a subset of a larger family cohort interviewed, comprises parents Nev-SF59 and Fran-FP53 and their daughter Ros-DF29 and son Jay-SF26. Their positions within the five-generation farm family are depicted in Figure 6.2. The farm (albeit of different proportions as sections have been sold and other land bought) passed from Huw-SF87 (one of the successor siblings in the

third generation) to Nev-SF59 and his brother Vin-SF57 (successor sons in the fourth generation). Jay-SF26 (Nev-SF59's son) is the nominated successor in the fifth generation.



KEY

○	Female	S	Successor
□	Male	B	Beneficiary of family farm estate
▣	Successors to the farm	N	Neither successor or beneficiary
G(n)	Generation number	═══	Strong attachment to family members
⇢	Family members who leave the farm after selling their share to successor siblings who remain; size of arrow denotes the distance away from the district.	⇢	Family members who leave the farm after selling their share to non-family, non-local people; size of arrow denotes the distance away from the district.
→	Family members who leave the farm without benefit; size of arrow denotes the distance away from the district.	⚡	Conflict or strained relations; thickness of line represents intensity of discord
►	Relationship cut off	✱	Divorce

Figure 6.2. Genogram depicting successors and their emotional relationships across three generations of a 5-generation farming family (adapted from genograms by Kets de Vries et al. 2007)[6]

[6] A genogram is similar to a family tree in that it shows relationships between family members across the generations. Its value for this thesis is that it also shows the emotional relationships between family members represented by the symbols in the Key (Kets de Vries 2007).

Figure 6.2 also depicts the fractured relationships between Nev-SF59 and his father Huw-SF87, between Nev-SF59 and his brother Vin-SF57. It also shows the fractured relationships between Nev-SF59's wife Fran-FP53 and her father-in-law Huw-SF87, between Fran-FP53 and her brother-in-law Vin-SF57 and between Fran-FP53 and Vin-SF57's ex-wife. The chart also shows that Nev-SF59's brother, Vin-SF57, sold his portion of the farm and moved out of the district. The chart appears to put Fran-FP53 at the centre of the ill-feeling and fractured relationships. However, this is not the whole story. Enduring negative emotions and memories of events contributing to lack of trust and care extend back to the 1980s when Nev-SF59 and Fran-FP53 were a newly-married farming couple living on the family farm and Nev-SF59 was working alongside his father Huw-SF87.

The husband/father, Nev-SF59, is a successor son who was granted half the farm property of his childhood, the wife/mother, Fran-FP53, came into the farm family through marriage. Their son is the nominated successor who is currently working on the farm. Their elder daughter, after four years of working on the farm alongside her father, decided to leave the farm to take up a service career in the regional centre. (This decision was based not on her experiences of the farm or the family but on her perception of not being able to find a suitable partner with whom to share life on the farm).

The issues facing the current family include involving all members in the planning; farm principals and successor agreeing on the time of transfer; what is transferred and the how the transfer is to be conducted; and making provision for the retiring principals (the parents) and the non-successor sibling. Each of these issues present as emotional issues. Issues such as attachments, anticipated changes of identity, responsibilities and projecting life beyond the current situation arise as important considerations during separate interviews with each of the four family members. All four family members acknowledge that the issues have not yet been resolved even after more than three years of formal discussions and negotiations involving a farm advisor, solicitor, bank manager and accountant.

Nev-SF59 did not consider his own path to succession to have been easy or successful in terms of family relationships. He hopes that he will do a better job at organising farm succession than what he considers his father had done. He stated his deepest concern is to treat his children fairly, to keep them on good terms with each other and to keep them aware of all that farming entails. However, the process of decision-making for him and his family remains a difficult issue still to be resolved. His wife, daughter and son also confirm the family's extended negotiations for succession from father and mother (who operate the farm business in partnership) to the son are stressful.

Nev-SF59's memories of Huw-SF87's actions towards the farm, his two sons and his daughter-in-law in the 1980s and 1990s infect the current transfer process and affect how Nev-SF59 and Fran-FP53 both feel about the farm, their relationships with each other and their children and the process itself. Nev-SF59 felt betrayed by his father who, Nev-SF59's states, had promised that the whole farm would be his to continue. The sense of betrayal occurred when Huw-SF87 gifted part of the farm to the younger son Vin-S57. Nev-SF59 described the strong resentment he developed towards his brother and his lack of faith in his father's judgement of what Nev-SF59 considered fair reward for his years of low paid work on the farm alongside his father. This strong emotional response indicates not only the contradiction between what was expected and what actually occurred, it also indicates the lack of agency Nev-SF59 had, or felt he had, in the transfer of property owned by his father (Burkitt 2002).

While the emotional legacy from his succession drives Nev-SF59's attitudes about and actions for transfer of the farm to his son, interviews with Nev-SF59's father and brother reveal different and competing memories on how the farm was transferred from Huw-SF87 to his two sons Nev-SF59 and Vin-SF57. It appears that each of the three men have constructed divergent accounts of the earlier transfer process to frame their personal feelings, attitudes and memories they now hold. Before continuing with Nev-SF59's reflections on his approach to transferring the farm, I examine his father's and his brother's reflections on the previous transfer event to demonstrate the different interpretations of, the complex emotional interplay arising from and perceptions of agency in the earlier emotional spacetime.

6.6.1 Past events generate enduring impressions and emotions

Huw-SF87 was strongly attached to the farm, his identity as a local farmer and to the people in the local community. The first point made by Huw-SF87 is that he considers that he acted responsibly and caringly towards both sons. He is saddened by the fall-out between his two sons and the subsequent loss of part of the farm when the younger son sold the section of the farm he gifted to him – the property on which Huw-SF87 and his wife lived and raised their children.

Huw-SF87 remembers his second son's return to the farm to work after six years in a trade as a decision made by his son which he accommodated. Huw-SF87 is very clear that it was Vin-SF57 who decided to come home to the farm and to take up work as a farm-hand to his father and brother. Vin-SF57 remembers the time very differently, and also remembers thinking that his brother was the one most likely to be the successor to the farming enterprise:

> It was mid-1977, I came home. … I was actually asked by dad, you know. … Nev and dad basically asked me if I wanted to come home onto the farm because, you know, it was too much for them. So, I sort of agreed. … I knew it was a family farm. … And Nev, he did his agricultural course and wool classing course. He was trained up for it and when I came home I basically thought I was there to work to help out … as a paid worker. … [Nev] was

> the boss. I actually had to answer to Nev, and I had to answer to dad too. So, they were both bosses. (Vin-SF57, interviewed 2014)

Vin-SF57, in sharp contradiction to his father's memory, remembers being asked by both his father and brother to return to the farm to replace the farm hand who had since left the farm. He agreed to come home to help on the farm. Importantly, the impression that Vin-SF57 provides is that he regarded his brother as his boss and himself as a mere "worker". He did not presume to be of equal status with his brother or his father when it came to farm work. He recognised they had developed skills for farming that he did not yet have. However, instead of Vin-SF57 remaining as a worker to be paid out of the farm partnership involving his father Huw-SF87, his mother and his brother Nev-SF59, Vin-SF57, after his marriage, is considered by his father to be of sufficient status to be successor to part of the farm.

The second point to emerge from Huw-SF87's memory of his farming sons and farm succession is that the process did not actually take much consultation; it required only a few visits to the accountants, solicitors and banks for the appropriate forms to be signed correctly and then submitted for the transfer to occur:

> [It was] just a decision to be made. … Oh dear, I don't know. I thought we did it right. Main thing is just go to the bank and get everything changed over correctly. … Get it all done through the solicitor. … **We got our forms of what had to be** changed over. …
>
> [It took] …oh, not long. Couple of or three weeks, I s'pose. … Oh, you sort of think about it for two three or four years. … Nev and Vin were both married out on the farm and so that's when we thought we might as well. We were getting up [in years]. I was sixty-four at the time and thought it was time to move into [town]. (Huw-SF87, interviewed 2014)

Huw-SF87 did not remember (when asked in the interview) any discussion he may have had with his sons about succession other than to say that the elder son should receive a larger portion of the farm and a larger share of the stock and plant. For Huw-SF87, his words appear to indicate that importance is given to the correct procedural process rather than importance given to needs, personalities and relationships as understood by other family members. There is a glimmer of a sense of fairness in Huw-SF87 apportioning more of the farm to the elder son who had worked on the farm longer than the younger son had worked. After relinquishing titles to the properties 6 years later was the elder son given title to the larger property.

That Huw-SF87 did not enter into conversations or hold meetings with his sons, let alone include his daughters, demonstrates his sense of authority to make decisions for his family members. This transfer process demonstrates Huw-SF87's patriarchal attitude to controlling what happened in his family with respect to farm succession (Alston 1995, 1998; Dempsey 1992; Poiner 1990). Even though his wife and elder son were in partnership, it was not an equal partnership – Huw-SF87 owned the greater share in the partnership and was part successor to his father's farm. Not until Huw-SF87 relinquished titles to the farm properties in 1995 – to access

the Age Pension – did he let go the dominant position in the family with respect to decision-making and financial investments involving the farm properties.

The third point to emerge from Huw-SF87's account of the succession process is that he considers that he has done it "right". By following the process of engaging lawyers and accountants there seems little space to Huw-SF87 to reflect on the process or the outcome. The only regret Huw-SF87 expresses is that he did not take up an opportunity he had to buy another farm property so that he had a property to leave each son without having to split the multigenerational property. Huw-SF87 expresses no regrets about not considering or providing any property for his daughters. Succession was a gendered process for Huw-SF87's children, and sons were his chosen successors.

Vin-SF57 remembers the lead up to the farm split differently from his father, especially remembering that there was tension between his own wife and his brother and between his wife and Fran-FP53 (Nev-SF59's wife). Vin-SF57 also contrasts his memory of his farming childhood with the negative emotions developing between himself and his brother around the time he and his brother were raising their own children on their farms:

> On the family farm … childhood was **great**. … Always open spaces and it was **good fun.** … I started driving tractors, I reckon I ploughed a 40-acre paddock when I was about eight years old. …
>
> Well things were going fine, no worries at all. Nev met Fran and was married to Fran. I met Ann and we were married and then we started having children. … We were all going along so happily and then it all just turned pear-shaped when Nev just said: "Right, the farm's getting split". … Yeah, Nev decided. He said: "We will split the farm". So anyway, I said: "Well, fair enough, I s'pose fifty-fifty" and Nev said: "**No way**". He said: "The split up is – I've been here longer, I'm older, I am entitled to 58% and you're entitled to 42%" … And then he's said: "Well 58% of the sheep, we'll count 20 and you get 12. … The machinery was all valued and he worked out a figure of what he wanted … and that's **h o w i t h a p p e n e d**. (Vin-SF57, interviewed 2014)

Vin-SF57 does not remember any family discussion, just that his brother informed him there would be a farm split. In Vin-SF57's opinion, Nev-SF59 was the person in the family who demonstrated the greatest agency. He made the decision that the farm partnership would be split and decided how the farm split up was to occur. Nev-SF59's version of succession, the split of the farm and the eventual transfer differs significantly from both his father's and his brother's versions. In Nev-SF59's opinion he had little agency, it was his father who made the decisions and all he could do was react to them to make the best of a less-than-desirable situation for him:

> I was the only one ever to be interested in taking over the farm. … And that was reinforced all the time: "This'll all be yours one day". … I always wanted to be a farmer. I didn't think of anything else. … Farming was farming – wool-classing, shearing, tractor-driving. That's what I liked.

> **The succession plan was bullshit**. … It wasn't that I was nominated. **I wanted to be a farmer,** always. … When I came home, he kept saying: "You're going to get [the farm]".

> I must have been about 35 when I'd had enough of me doing the work and they [father and brother] were never home and I wanted my share … Yeah, well **it was 1995 when I finally got ownership of [property 1]** … Up until `95, I was paying dad money and that's when he told me he had given Vin [property 3]. And I said I'm out of this I said: "I'm not paying you another cent. You promised me that farm all my life and now you've just told me you've given it to Vin". He said: "Well I've got to make it even". (Nev-SF59, interviewed 2014)

This change of promise by his father remains the source of much bitterness for Nev-SF59, such that over 20 years later discussion of the event brings a change to Nev-SF59's body and voice. He leans forwards and speaks in a clipped voice when describing this exchange with his father. Fran-FP53 also reported feeling very strongly about the apparent lack of fairness towards her husband. Fran-FP53 saw her father-in-law as the cause of her husband's depression and withdrawal into farm work. To Fran-FP53, Huw-SF87 represented all things bad about the farm. Both Nev-SF59 and Fran-FP53, had enjoyed social occasions with Vin-SF57 when he first returned to the farm but they eventually lost respect for Vin-SF57, whom they later considered a free-loader to the farm enterprise. The difficult relations between Nev-SF59 and his brother and father were also affecting the relationship between Fran and her husband. Nev-SF59 states, "I'd had enough and [so had] Fran. It nearly it tore us apart".

Fran-SF59 observed her husband's lack of skills or confidence to deal with the developing social problems. According to Fran-FP53, her husband just went to the "back paddock" and buried himself in his work. The relationships between Fran-FP53 and Nev-SF59 with his father and his brother became increasingly strained. Adding to the tension was Nev-SF59's opinion that he did not see any financial reward for the work he was doing work coming to his family for him and his family to enjoy, all the while seeing that his brother appeared to accrue new leisure craft and cars and also seem to have more leisure time than he had.

> Ninety percent of the work and most of the money's going there. It was just flowing out the door, the farm assets. It was a generation wasted in my opinion. (Nev-SF59, interviewed 2014)

Nev-SF59 could not see any progress to the farm in terms of productivity or increased value. Hence Nev-SF59's thinking that his life has been a "generation wasted". Resentment, anger, disappointment and animosity towards his father and his brother remain as strongly expressed emotions harboured by Nev-SF59 as he reflects on his experience of farm succession as a successor. He feels as if he has missed opportunities and been denied things promised him by his father.

The enduring emotional effects of the transfer from Huw-SF87 to his two sons demonstrate the consequences of insufficient communication between family members. The lack of

consideration of promises made and the personal agendas of each of the parties involved in the farm transfer has created resentment in Nev-SF59. This enduring response displayed and borne by Nev-SF59 in turn has brought about feelings of sadness and puzzlement in Huw-SF59 who expresses pride in both his sons' achievements. He states, "They are good farmers". He does not appear to recognize that his early promises may have been the start of the resentments. And Vin-SF57 expresses anger towards his brother whom he now considers to be a very selfish and jealous person.

The emotional commitments to and investments in the farm by each of the parties involved in this emotional spacetime farm transfer event, which Symons (2007) describes as being essential to managing successful changes in any business, were not accounted for, let alone managed. Huw-SF87's focus, by his own words, appears to have been firmly focused on the legal and economic processes of filling in the correct forms. The only time emotions arose as a source of knowledge of the farm partnership not going well were those presented by Nev-SF59 when he talks of his unhappiness at how the farm was functioning before the partnership split. Instead of these emotions leading to a family discussion to sort out issues between the father and his two sons, Fran-FP53, (Nev-SF59's wife) decided they would have to get out of the partnership. The first meeting to discuss issues affecting her husband was one Nev-SF59 and Fran-FP53 had with Nev-SF59's parents to tell them they wanted out of the partnership. From this meeting, the family partnership split was organized, but still not with a full family discussion.

We learn from this family's experience that not accounting for emotional commitments and investments in places and enterprises can have enduring adverse effects. And in this family's case, one son eventually sold his portion of the former farm and moved from the district because of the ongoing tension between the two sons and their families. Not only were family relations fractured, the community lost active members when the farm was sold to an absentee owner.

6.6.2 Engaging with succession after previous succession experiences

Now it is Nev-SD59 and Fran-FP53's turn to negotiate farm succession to provide for their retirement. Nev-SF59 and Fran-FP53 have run the enterprise as partners since 1995. When newly-married, they shared many farming activities, but as their children's interests demanded more and more of Fran-FP53's time, their activities separated into mothering for Fran-FP53 and farm work for Nev-SF59. Nev-SF59 admits that his wife was very active on the farm during the early years of their marriage but that her interest is now elsewhere:

> She did heaps when she was first married. We used to do all the lamb marking on our own. I'd pick them up and she'd be vaccinating them and putting the rings on, putting the ear tags in. And she did that for years … **She flatly refuses now**. (Laugh) (Nev-SF59, interviewed 2014)

Nev-SF59 often laughs at the end of statements describing conflicts or disappointments. His laugh is the involuntary affect indicating his disposition (Barbalet 2002). However, whether it indicates that he feels some responsibility for the adverse situations in which he finds himself, or is defensive or resigned to the situation is difficult to discern or interpret – what we do know is that there is some affect that is "witness" to Nev-SF59's farm experiences (Nouvet 2007: 113).

Fran-FP53 is "over farming" and "over" living in a house which is surrounded by farming activities and which is also "the office" where the business of farming is negotiated, recorded and discussed. Fran-FP53's negative feelings about living on the farm have their origins in previous interactions with her father-in-law and brother-in-law, the disappointments suffered by her husband on his succession and the on-going uncertainties about the financial rewards from the enterprise. These negative feelings are all loaded onto the place of the farm (Ahmed 2010; Rossi 2010), and they register in her physical being and disposition (Barbalet 2002). Fran-FP53 now experiences the farm as a place to depart, to escape from, so that she can begin life afresh:

> The farm just *does my brain in*. It's just, there's a lot of *bad energy* out there in some ways for me. … I'll go and help when I can and do bits, **but I'm over it.** (Fran-FP53, interviewed 2015)

Nev-SF59 feels differently from Fran-FP53 about the next stage in their lives. Despite his feelings about his succession, he states that he still loves the farm and farming and he understands the need to plan for farm transfer. Jay-SF26 and Ros-DF29 also share their father's love and appreciation for living on the farm and the act of farming. Nev-SF59 and Fran-FP53 are in agreement to transfer management and ownership of the farm (property and enterprise) to Jay-SF26 (their son) and to include Ros-DF29 (their daughter) in the division of assets so that she does not feel alienated from the family or the farm.

Emotional responses to and memories of farm events involving Nev-SF59's father and brother in the 1980s and 1990s have informed Nev-SF59 and Fran-FP53's decision to involve their children in discussions of the farm's financial state from an early age. Nev-SF59 and Fran-FP53, differently from Nev-SF59's memory of his father's manner, have made a point of always keeping their children aware of their financial situation and what their possible futures in the farm may entail. Fran-FP53 described this openness as a way of caring for their children so that there would be no shock if either suffered an untimely death. Nev-SF59 states that there are no "sleeping giants" for their children to uncover after the farm has passed to the next generation, so that they do not suffer, as he did, from lack of information about the farm and about the farm owner's intentions:

> Well, you get to 40 years of age and realise … what he's been telling you for bloody 20 years that the farm will be yours and you'll be able to get it, no worries, and all you have to do is buy it; that's a sleeping giant. There's no other sibling worked on the farm and he comes

> around and says: "Oh your brother's just wanted, I've just handed the farm over to your brother", that's a sleeping giant. (Nev-SF59, interviewed 2014)

Being mindful of the issues encountered in the previous generations' transfer of the farm prompted Nev-SF59 and Fran-FP59 to address and engage with the farm transfer issue, but it has not made the planning for farm transfer stress-free. For Nev-SF59 and Fran-FP53 and their children, the current emotional spacetime transfer event has contributed a lot of stress to their lives. When I interviewed each family member separately in 2014 and early 2015, the major issue for the family to work through concerned the timing and the process of the transfer of their farm to their successor son Jay-SF26, and how and where Nev-SF59 is to spend his time after the transfer is complete. While Nev-SF59 stated that he wanted farm succession to be managed better than the way his father had managed the process during the 1980s, he is now realising there are previously unforeseen issues (such as his own sense of self) arising as he now contemplates farm transfer to his son. And while each parent considers that they are managing the process better than the previous generation, Fran-FP53 feels left out of the decision-making and has no idea of how and when succession will occur. Her frustration at the lack of any definite plan that includes her is evident in the following passage:

> I have to admit of getting a bit heated when I'm banging on the same gong and I'm not getting any answers. … We originally had a plan … for Jay to come home and Nev was going to wind back. … **Well, Jay arrives home and it went right out the window** … well I was just thrown. … And of course, we had a couple of confrontations about it, and he said one day: "Well them plans are all gone now. I'm not leaving here ever, I might never go". *Well, I was just flattened!* (Fran-FP53, interviewed 2015)

During this exchange Fran-FP53 is clearly distressed and frustrated at her husband's change of plans which evidently did not include her, and left her in limbo as to what her own retirement plans would or could be. Although Nev-SF59 and Fran-FP53 can agree on how their children are to benefit from succession, they have not been able to reach agreement on when they will begin a new life together off the farm. Nev-SF59 and Fran-FP53 are at different stages with respect to departing the farm. Nev-SF59 sees no urgency is leaving the farm, Fran-FP53 desperately wants to leave.

Nev-SF59 is keeping control of the conversation about his time to withdraw from the farm. Fran-FP53's reaction to this lack of communication is frustration about not being able to make plans for herself and for them as a couple living together in the regional centre. There is currently an impasse in negotiations for the couple which is affecting their relationship: impatience and frustration leading to occasional outbursts ("getting a bit heated when I'm banging on the same gong and I'm not getting any answers") from Fran53-FP and silence and withdrawal (in Fran-FP53's terms, going to the "back paddock") from Nev-SF59.

In this particular relationship, it appears that Nev-SF59 has greater agency because he not committing to changes to suit his wife, he is happy to continue with what he is doing. Where once he felt without agency when his father controlled the divestment of property, Nev-SF59 now has the agency to nominate when he will retire from the farm. That there is a power play between husband and wife appears evident in the words of Nev-SF59: "I'm not gonna say yes" and the unhappiness expressed by Fran-FP53. Their relationship appears under stress because of the many acts they each commit against each other (silences from Nev-SF59 and outbursts from Fran-FP53) which affect each other in this emotional spacetime (Grosz 2010). While emotions arising from decisions (or lack of decisions) about the management of the farm transfer are to the fore in this relationship, the management of the emotional spacetime appears to be absent. Both parties are so engrossed in their own particular emotional spaces they do not adjust their behaviours and emotional communications in consideration of the other person or for the overall bigger picture of harmonious relations while engaging in the emotional spacetime of farm transfer (Symons 2007).

Fran-FP53 is mindful that her negative feelings about the farm may also infect her relationship with her son; she is aware of her feelings and consciously controls this aspect of her emotional responses to things and people on the farm so that she doesn't include her son in her all-things-bad-about-the-farm reaction. By this admission, Fran-FP53 demonstrates that she has some control over how she feels and where she directs these feelings; that is, she is not without agency in the feelings she experiences about people or objects on or associated with the farm (Demos 1995). Fran-FP53 is expressing and employing her feelings as a means to communicate her desire to leave the farm, and is also controlling these feelings so that they do not create stress on the relationship she has with her son on the farm. So, not only is Fran-FP53 alert to what her emotions about the farm are telling her about herself, she is also in conscious control of how she reacts to these emotions. Tallon (1997: 3, 34) describes this deliberate control as demonstrated in this example of Fran-FP53 as "affective intentionality" such that she is integrating her feelings about the farm with her thinking about the farm and her desire to leave the farm.

In contrast to Fran-FP53, Nev-SF59, as the principal of the farm, perhaps for the first time following years of tension with his father and brother and then years of drought and poor commodity prices, feels and enjoys being in charge of the farm and also sharing the work with his son. He now has a compatible companion, his son, in the farming enterprise. Nev-SF59 and Fran-FP53's different notions of their retirement and how succession should occur is attributable to their current emotional relationships with the farm.

Kath-FA18 (rural relationships counsellor) stated many farming couples, in attempting to work out farm succession, often confront the uncomfortable realization that their relationships need attention before succession can proceed. Succession-planning may expose previously

unrecognised relationship issues and create further stress and distress for family members. Many of Kath-FA18's clients are recommended to seek counselling before their succession-advisors can proceed with succession-planning. Such may be the case for Fran-FP53 and Nev-SF59. Kath-FA18 and the example of Nev-SF59 and Fran-FP53 highlight the complexity for farming families negotiating succession which does not usually accompany other family businesses. Succession for many farming families involves decisions not only of finance, competence of the successor, changed identity for the transferee in accepting retirement, but also decisions about how and where to live which may mean changes to entire life-styles and relationships and not just to changes of occupation.

Nev-SF59 acknowledges that there are many factors at play in his approach to deciding on how to plan for the next stage in his life:

> The worst thing about farming is that you wake up at your work every day. … [But] it's something I enjoy. … Fortunately, I've still got a farm to run, too. Unfortunately, I'm not cash rich because of it. (Laugh) … I'm happy with that and I'm happy that [Jay's] farming and we're relatively asset rich. … We've got a massive interest bill … and that's probably been a progression since `95. Interest bills are getting higher and higher, and assets are going up. But also costs, which is making it **pretty tough,** and rural returns are so much [lower]. (Nev-SF59, interviewed 2014)

The complexity of planning for the farm transfer involves the current debt and interest bill, rewarding his daughter for the time she worked on the farm, making time to be away from the farm for himself and deciding how and where he wants to live. In all Nev-SF59's considerations, his son's and daughter's desires and possible needs are specifically noted and included in his considerations for succession. On the other hand, his wife's desires are noted but not yet included in his decisions about his life after his son has taken over management of the farm. Nev-SF59 merely states: "It will happen". Nev-SF59's approach to the planning focuses on how the farm will be managed and how his son will survive with the "massive debt". He is concerned that the ongoing debt and changes to climate will impact on the farm's viability. However, Nev-SF59 admires his son's work ethic and is impressed with the plans his son has for the farm:

> **Oh, every day he just blows my brain apart thinking, listening to what he wants to do.** … He's really starting to take on responsibility. … I'd say if I was to drop off the perch tomorrow he would have a far better future than I had at that age. He's got a better business brain. (Nev-SF59, interview 2014)

We see from the above passage that Nev-SF59's confidence in his son's ability to manage the farm is not what is holding him back from committing to his own retirement from the farm. Nev-SF59's uncertainty about leaving the farm is expressed in the strained response to the question of when he will leave the farm: "*Ohhhh, I don't bloody know*". It is not something he has an answer to, it is not something that he can commit to. Nev-SF59 verbalization of loving the farm

and loving farming indicates his identity and his preferences are very much emotionally tied to the farm. This emotional attachment is stronger than Nev-SF59's rational knowledge that he will leave the farm at some stage and that he will hand over the management of the farm and enterprise to his son.

The strained relations between Nev-SF59 and Fran-FP-53 about the planning process arise from Nev-SF59's continuing attachment to the farm, his apparent lack of decision-making and his not involving his wife in the planning. This apparent lack of decision may in fact represent a decision – that of Nev-SF59 deciding to stay on the farm or that he is not ready to leave the farm yet – even if he eventually does voice a decision to move and when he will move off the farm. However, that the decision is unvoiced is frustrating for Fran- FP53:

> You get to the stage where you feel *totally bloody misunderstood and frustrated*. … **I just need to know my next steps in life** – where am I going? … Just ***let me know, let me know***. Don't keep me there just reeling out, reeling in - hanging and hoping. (Fran-FP53, interviewed 2015)

Fran-FP53 feels without agency with respect to the farm transfer and feels without agency with respect to retirement plans if they are to include her husband. She does have agency for herself but does not want to take action that does not include her husband. While acknowledging that she has the means to fund her own departure from the farm (she has title to some other property that she could sell), this is not something that she currently wishes to consider. Having agency to retire off-farm presents a dilemma for Fran-FP-53. Her agency is not sufficient to enable achievement of what she desires when her desire is dependent upon another person also with agency choosing to act differently. Fran-FP53 wants to retire off-farm with her husband because he is a "great person" when he is off the farm, and not good company when is on the farm:

> When he comes home he is that tired like we hardly speak. … He loves it when he does go away. I think that is why probably that I am still here because if he was as grumpy and as, pardon me, as a *shithead* as he is on the farm away from it, I'd be gone. I think that's what I'm just hanging round to enjoy. Cos it is fun, and you know we all get on really well. (Fran-FP53, interviewed 2015)

Proposed successor Jay-SF26 and his sister Ros-DF29 also acknowledge the different personalities and interests of members within their family and how difficult it is for this family to come to an agreement on the timing of the transfer and their parents differing views on how the transfer would proceed. Ros-DF29 is concerned about her mother and the distance between her mother and the men in her family:

> I think mum's left out of it more than the men think. … My dad's a very, very tense person and she hasn't had an enjoyable life out there because … some days he just won't even talk. … She's desperate to get off the farm and let my brother take over. … I think it's affecting her mental health. But they don't see that. … She feels very undervalued in the relationship. (Ros-DF29, interviewed 2014)

Ros-DF29 sees her brother and father assuming importance in their roles as productive workers on the farm and running the business without giving due regard for the wife and mother in the family. Ros-DF29 understands the dismissive attitudes and behaviours of her father and brother have a deleterious effect on her mother's emotional health. Ros-DF29 considers that Nev-SF59 and Jay-SF26 do not appear to be acknowledging the importance of Fran-FP53's wish to leave, or being aware of the negative effect of their own dismissive behaviour towards Fran-FP53. Ros-DF29's description of the attitudes and behaviours of the men in her family resemble those of the prevailing masculine hegemony in Australia's farming regions (Poiner 1990; Whittenbury 2003). While, mother and daughter recognise the men in the family positioning themselves in dominant positions with respect to the current situation on the farm, they do not state it as gendered; rather they speak of it as individualised actions of a husband/father and son/brother.

Ros-DF29's perceptions of factors undermining the family's succession planning put her father as an individual in the frame rather than reflecting on the possible attitude that is common to males as owners of farming properties or as holding the status of farmer:

> We just have (laugh) one problem. (Laugh). … Oh, dad will be in agreeance (sic) but he goes: "No, I'm gonna go and do this now" and I'm like: "Well, you can't". And [he replies]: "Why can't I, I've worked. I've done this blah, blah, blah, I want to do this". (Ros-DF29, interviewed 2014)

Ros-DF29 does regard her father's change of mind during the transfer process as the major impediment to completing the transfer plan. Her statement also demonstrates the significance of the farm to a person who was the successor and responsible for the ongoing commitment to the family farm. His question, "Why can't I, I've worked, I've done this … I want to do this?" indicates the mismatch between an individual's sense of reward for a life of work and his responsibility and responsiveness to his family, including his wife's desire to move off the family farm. The individual, Nev-SF59, is put on the spot, as a member of a family, to acknowledge and accommodate the wishes of other family members if he wishes to maintain good relationships with both his wife and children. Conversely, the other family members are also challenged in having to acknowledge and accommodate the sentiments expressed by Nev-SF59. In the current emotional spacetime it is Nev-SF59 who is determining, through his lack of verbalising plans, when and how the farm transfer will occur; in previous spacetime, it was Fran-FP53 who instigated the transfer.

The family represented in this case study have engaged in difficult and protracted negotiations over farm succession, and negotiations are still not complete. Negotiations have stalled because Nev-SF59 is not ready to change or commit to changes to his living arrangements albeit having accepted his wish to take more time off farming to enjoy other interests. Nev-SF59's approach to succession-planning reflects two different approaches to other members in

his family. While taking the authoritative approach with his children, he is acting in an authoritarian manner towards his wife – he will commit to moving when he is ready and does not want to be forced into making that decision. Fran-FP53, wife and mother in the family, feels ignored and is uncertain about any provisions that include her. Where Nev-SF59's father in the previous farm transfer assumed an authoritarian approach with little input from family members to decide on what should be transferred when and to whom, Nev-SF59 and Fran-FP53 have attempted authoritatively to provide for their children fairly through engaging them in formal mediated meetings to arrive at mutually agreed terms of transfer (Milevsky 2011). Their son and daughter appear to appreciate how the plans provide for them and that they have been active participants in the process. Ros-DF29 and Jay-SF26's relationship has benefitted from their parents' approach to succession planning such that they continue to enjoy their sibling relationship and share many social occasions together. The outcome for the siblings in this family contrast with the outcome for the siblings in the previous generation. Fran-FP53 and Nev-SF59's attention to maintaining sibling relationships during negotiations for the emotional spacetime of farm transfer has worked for their offspring. However, there is still much to be done to attend to Fran-FP53 and Nev-SF59's relationship and their particular desires.

This family's planning for intergenerational farm transfer has involved and continues to involve all family members. Rational decisions about financial status, climatic conditions, the son's ability to manage the farm and the enterprise and the daughter's acceptance of provisions for her appear to be the least problematic in this decision-making process. Differing emotional attachments to the farm, embodied responses to the farm and the farming life-style present as the major issues for the husband and wife in this family to resolve. Fran-FP53's aversion to being on the farm further complicates negotiations – husband and wife now share little time together on the farm. Rational discussions with farm associates have not resolved the differences in their embodied knowledges informing their preferences on how and where they wish to live in the immediate or long-term future.

This family, albeit with parental retirement not yet resolved, in engaging their children in farm-work, farm finances and the difficult negotiations for succession, have provided their children with opportunities to learn about farming as an enterprise, learn about interpersonal relationships and the complexities arising when individual needs and desires conflict and to learn skills in assessing these conflicts. Authoritative parenting styles, adopted when the children were young, provided opportunities to generate positive outcomes for the children and for negotiations continue (Milevsky 2011). Furthermore, by engaging professional help, the parents have shown that some problems do require outside help and that the family can remain connected as long as they address the issues facing them. Feelings (some arising from the previous experience of farm transfer) were not hidden, but rather they were revealed and used to inform their decision-making.

For this family, affective responses to the family farm and previous transfer processes play an active part in the ongoing decision-making (Barbalet 2002).

There is a complex interplay between past hurts, individual expectations and family responsibility as this family considers and negotiates succession; individualism conflicts with the social connectedness of family members. The series of transcripts above indicate a family whose parents appear to be heading in different directions with the possibility that Nev-SF59 and Fran-FP53 may end up living in different places: Nev-SF59 to remain on the farm and Fran-FP53 to move into town. This is not what Fran-FP53 hopes for, but something she understands is infused by past hurts and disappointments: "I just think there are a lot of deep wounds there, and I just think some of them will probably never close".

The family's planning indicates that having a successor is important, but there does not appear to be any adherence patrilineal inheritance. However, the effect is still patrilineal because after four years living and working on the farm Ros-DF29 rejected farming as a life for her. Ros-DF29's stated reasons this decision focus on what she considered would be poor prospects for marriage if she stayed in the farming community. Ros-DF29 considered the attitudes of eligible men belittled women farmers – something she didn't want to entertain if she were to take on farming. Masculine hegemony, by Ros-DF29's assessment, remains evident in farming communities.

Masculine hegemony is also evident in the secondary status granted to Fran-FP53 by her husband Nev-SF59 through his lack of sharing his plans with her. He is determining his life for himself and leaving Fran-FP53 to work around this refusal. Fran-FP53's feelings of being disregarded have alerted her to recognise a similar situation occurring between her son and his current partner where the farmer's concerns and interests appear to hold prime importance and the partner secondary importance. She, like Kaz-FP41 (cited earlier), considers the wife of a farmer to be granted less importance than the farm or the children in the family through the pervasive presence of the farm business in the social space of the home:

> I just said in probably ten different ways: "Do not take your work home. That's what dad, that's what I've had and look where we are". If there is one lesson, this is it. (Fran-FP53, interviewed 2015)

Differential status between husbands and wives – with agency and status assumed by males in a family – can be expressed through lack of communication and/or through carrying moods from work into the home such that the male persons' concerns dominate the social space and leave women feeling undervalued or 'left out' of decision-making processes. The dominant-subordinate relationship in families, as demonstrated by interviewees, can take different forms. It may be restricted to the husband-wife partnership such that is the husband who is in charge of

the ultimate decision concerning timing of farm transfer and the wife awaits this decision. It may be gendered so that wives and daughters hold less status than males in the family. It may be generational so that the older generation holds all status and the younger generation have no status or it may be that a single person holds all power with other family members all subordinate. Unequal status and agency in families affect not only individuals but also the families and in some cases the whole community. Sometimes family relationships break down and marriages and partnerships fracture.

6.7 Family relationships break down

Family and the relationships between family members are regarded by psychologists and family theorists as important for family members' social and emotional wellbeing (Kowal et al. 2002; Jensen et al. 2013). Strong and supportive relationships between family members are possibly of even greater importance to families who live in sparsely populated farming regions than for those in more densely populated districts as it is to family members that people would look for support, company, socialising and for sharing the farm work. However, as shown in the previous sections, relationships between family members can be strained through competing conceptions of farms, what they provide and how important they are to a persons' identity and sense of wellbeing. For many family members, the representations of the social space of farms, as the cases presented above indicate, can compete and conflict with the representations of the social space of family. When family members hold conflicting representations of farms their representations of family are also exposed.

That family relationships can be destroyed through the different conceptions of what family farms mean and how they are to be transferred following the death of a former owner has been extensively documented through the many court challenges to farm testators' wills (De Groot and Nickel 2012). Farm associates, funeral director Anna-SC3, accountant Jim-FA1, rural retailer Mary-FA20 and accountant Roy-FA2, confirm, from their own engagements with family members, that once the transfer as described in wills is challenged in the courts, the family relationships are usually, or already, fractured (also Malcolm Voyce Pers. com.[7]). Family relationship malfunction not only severs communication and support between family members, it also has flow-on effects within local communities. This is demonstrated in the case of the dispute between brothers Nev-SF59 and Vin-SF57 whose family social dis-ease escalated to severing ties with local social groups so that they and their wives did not have to be in the same place at the same time. In their case, their relationship soured before the determination of their father's will. It occurred after their father instituted farm succession which included both sons

[7] Pers. com. 30 October 2013. Malcolm Voyce, commenting on wills and farm inheritance, stated that once family members take the challenge to the courts the family relationship is usually already fractured.

rather than only the elder son who had presumed he was to be the sole successor and his younger brother was to continue with his career in a trade industry. Their friends who once enjoyed the same social activities with the two brothers and their families were now divided between them. Eventually the family fall-out resulted in one of the brothers selling up his share of the family farm and he and his family moving out of the district.

The examples above as presented by Tam-DF57, Pru-DF37, Peg-DF83, Rus-SF58, Nev-SF59 and Vin-SF57 bring to light the hidden aspects of family farms as produced spaces. While family members may co-exist within a produced space such as a family farm and appear to hold the belief that as a family they share a commitment to work towards the productivity and enduring viability of the farming enterprise, not all members of the family are given the opportunity to maintain connections to the spaces of farms or to the enterprises in their later lives. Nor do family members who are given the opportunity for continuing associations and connections with the farms necessarily consider their siblings as equally entitled to share those associations and connections. Earlier shared associations and contributions can be negated or discounted by those with more power through greater access to legal instruments such as titles and wills and to funds to challenge adverse decisions, or through conflict and fractured relationships. For many family members in this research, "the social space of the lived experience" has been "crushed and vanquished by an abstract conceived space" such that perceived experiences on farms do not accord with the conceived notions about farms (Merrifield 2000: 175). Where once farms provided productive activity for family members and also a home, a place for family social activities and a place for leisure and pleasure (Fulton and Vanclay 2011; Gray 1991; Schwarz 2004), albeit within a hegemonic masculine culture (Alston 1995), some former family farms now form part of larger farming entities and are alienated from family members; some now have no-one actually living on the former property. Pru-DF37 describes the current situation of her former family farm:

> It was sold ... [to] one of those big investment funds that just put in cropping. They don't want anybody in the house, they don't care about the garden. They even ripped out all the fences so they could crop it all. (Pru-DF37, interview 2014)

Produced spaces, through shared representational (lived) spaces and shared spatial practices may not remain as they were formerly produced (Lefebvre 1991). Family farms as produced spaces catering for the agricultural market and providing a family residence and members of local communities can change as new owners of farm properties embark on different management regimes for farm enterprises, or indeed alter the productive enterprises carried out on the properties. Hence, not only are produced spaces located spatially, they are also located temporally as each intergenerational transfer creates opportunities for change –and they can, as evidenced by the experiences of interviewees, also be moments of conflicts and contradictions.

The moments of conflict and contradictions, such as occur when farmers institute processes that lead to farm succession, expose associations and relationships that may remain otherwise hidden to us, and they enable us to examine and question the status quo anew. Moments of stress, distress, conflict and contradictions provide an opportunity to question the assumption that farm viability, through limiting the number of successors, is the prime means for ensuring a continued productive farming industry and maintaining rural sustainability over other possible ways of organizing farm succession that includes more family members.

6.8 Conclusion

When families engage in intergenerational farm transfer, the different statuses of family members within farm families are exposed, exposed through conferring the ownership to particular children over other children and exposed through the behaviours and attitudes of successors, non-successors and parents during and following the farm transfer. Different representations of farms as constructed by different family members are also exposed, and who is considered and respected as a farm family member depends on the conceptualization of the farms by the parents, successors and non-successors. While parents and siblings may accept that each person in the biological family belongs to the social farming unit and social activities continue to revolve around the biological relationship, succession may limit the admission of former farm family members to the next generation of the continuing farm family. Lineal descent of farm ownership within a family can cast out members of farm families so that they no longer are permitted to participate in farm activities or to enjoy the spaces which were once part of their existence.

How people respond to intergenerational farm transfer decisions and processes is apparent in their emotional responses and affects. Emotions emerge during farm transfers, and they can endure to infect and/or inform the emotional spacetime of the next generation's farm succession process. Emotions cannot be separated from the process, nor can they be isolated according to particular eras. The range of emotions involved in succession is vast with each individual in the family contributing their particular emotions to the decisions or to the effect after decisions have been made. Family cohesion can be affected by the enduring emotions each family member carries. Hence, emotional responses and affects described or displayed by family members to family dynamics, decisions and processes of intergenerational farm transfer can be viewed as indicators or beacons of their wellbeing and of the adverse social structure inherent in current practices of family farm transfer (Ahmed 2010).

Furthermore, how families manage farm succession is significant to family member wellbeing. Differential treatment of children with respect to farm transfer contributes to disparities in individual wellbeing and the quality of the sibling relationship from childhood through to middle adulthood (Jensen et al. 2013). However, farm succession involves far more

than this. By looking into the family and at its members' emotions and affects we see the emotional spacetime of farm succession presenting as an emotional battle zone with competing emotions accompanying the multitude of changes that family members encounter, confront and perhaps accommodate. Retirement, new proprietor to the business, changed residences, changed relationships, changed senses of identity, changed farming methods and enterprises and changed financial arrangements all occur within the one context of farm succession. It is not about merely managing the financial aspects and changing roles in the enterprise, it is about managing how all people in the social context of a farming family relate, communicate, and wish to continue their associations with each other and/or with the farm. We see from the examples presented in this chapter that families ought not be referred to as singular social units but as social complexes comprising individual members who each may suffer (and/or benefit) from the processes and decisions made regarding farm succession. We also learn through family member's illuminating emotional beacons that farm succession as a process, considered as an emotional spacetime, is a fraught social mine-field requiring adept management and negotiation that includes the multifarious factors involved in the process. However, it is not only the family unit and its family members that are affected by farm transfers, the local community and wider society are also affected by the outcomes of farm transfers. In keeping with the discussion on the relational nature of family farming, the next chapter examines how decisions about and processes in private family farm businesses can impact on local communities and on wider society.

Chapter 7

Beyond the family: Farm transfers affect local communities

7.1 Introduction

The previous analysis chapters focused on the dynamics within families as family members structure the ownership of their farms and engage with the process of intergenerational farm transfer, all the while being influenced by a multitude of factors generated from their networks of relations extending far beyond the family farm. Chapter 6 revealed the difficulties many family members experience over the emotional spacetime of intergenerational farm transfer, an inevitable process for all farming families. This chapter, with reference to Latour (2005), examines how family members' decisions, actions and effects of their interactions during and after farm transfers can extend out from the family and affect the immediate local community, to the extent of affecting its sustainability, and to affect wider society and the management of the nation's natural resources. While most of the discussion relates to the effects of changes to associations of local communities, Lefebvre (1991) enables us to account for the changes to the structure of the local communities that affect the associations within those communities.

7.2 Family farms and rural farming communities

As discussed in Chapter 6, relationships, especially, but not only, between family members, are important for an individual's social and emotional well-being. People living in the broadacre farming districts of the research area, except for those located in peri-urban farming districts, now have less opportunity for social relations involving non-family individuals than family members of previous generations in the same areas or those living in more highly populated regions. The physical distance between people in most Australian broadacre farming districts and the distance of many farms from regional centres limits the frequency and types of interactions that farm family members can experience. Although modern communications technology and better roads and motor vehicles provide opportunities for many rural people to engage with more distant people and organizations, not all farming people are able to access these services easily for a variety of reasons – for example, because their farms are beyond the range of modern communications technologies, or poor roads make travelling difficult and time-consuming, and/or as labour has been replaced by technology, family members are tied to the physical work of operating the farm machinery. Men as well as women on large broadacre farm properties experience the issues arising from their physical isolation from others, and there are others who prefer to seek social engagement in the community of the local district, even if they

do have access to wider networks. Therefore, relationships and shared activities within a farming community are important for individual well-being of the many people living in broadacre farming communities. These relationships and activities, in turn, maintain the strength of connection and amenity within these farming communities. In the area of study, most farmers of a particular rural locality operate within a network of neighbouring farmers and where, for some, the local service towns may be up to 100 kilometres from the farms.

Changes to families on farms affect not only the family, they also change the features and dynamics of the local communities and therefore change the associations family members may have within their local community and, subsequently, with more distant places. Latour's (2005) conception of a community – in this thesis a local community with connections beyond the local district – as a 'social of associations' enables us to examine the issues arising from changes to populations as farmers transfer their farms. In farming communities, family members' associations are with their family members and their farms, the centres for local activities (for example, sport and other local social activities); volunteer services (such as Country Fire Authority (CFA), Landcare and the Australian Red Cross (ARC) activities) and amenity provision (such as constructing buildings for social use). Associations are also formed with the non-human actors (for example, the natural resources, climate and animals and plants which interact with family members in their day-to-day lives).

Interviewees residing on farms spoke of the need for cooperation between neighbours and nearby people in times of crisis, to maintain shared infrastructure (as in fences and sporting facilities), to prepare for or respond to adverse environmental events (for example, flood recovery works, local burning-off along roadsides for fire prevention), and to help in fund-raising events for local facilities or for local families in need. Family members through their everyday activities of farming, socialising and contributing to community sustainability are engaged in a wide network of associations (Latour 2005) and hence are integrated into a wide network of relations (Massey 1995). For many family members, for example Lil-FP48 and her husband Don-SF48, it is the associations between people and non-human elements such as the terrain, climate, open spaces, animals, plants and/or machinery of the local community where they invest and contribute most of their time.

For the purposes of discussion, human populations in the networks of associations can be referred to as "collectivities" of people "engaged in social interaction within a geographic area and [who] hav[e] goals or norms in common" (Black 2005: 20). Collectivity, in this sense, does not refer to a network of close emotional relations between people, or to people and events to which farm family members prefer to allocate their discretionary social time, rather it refers to the connections and interactions between local residents (Black 2005). These collectivities may or may not include nearby service providers and retailers and their families in the local towns.

For example, some districts have district centres with a community hall or sports club house (such as in the district of Mooralla shown in Maps 7.1 and 7.2) but have no service providers or local retailers. According to a number of interviewees, for example, Jay-SF26, Amy-DF29, Cam-SF44, Neb-SF59, Dee-DF60, associations within particular collectives are not necessarily sufficient to sustain them nor do they account for their social and emotional ties that extend far beyond a district's boundary and require many hours of travelling; such as, to enable family members to enjoy occasions and special events with their closest friends. Younger farmers reported this situation more than older farmers, reflecting the combined effects of increasing farm sizes, reduced populations and better vehicles. It is both the network of associations within local communities, and those extending beyond the local region, which impact on the sustainability of farming communities.

Two types of changes following farm transfers impacted immediately on local communities. Firstly, out-migration of family members as farms were transferred to successors or sold to neighbours or outside interests. Out-migration of family members contributed to the depopulation of local farming communities – particularly in the broadacre cropping and grazing regions in the study area where there were no other industries or large regional centres. Secondly, in-migration and population increases such as in the peri-urban areas surrounding the regional centres of Warrnambool and Horsham. Both of these demographic changes impact on the associations within the communities, affect family members' well-being, and impact on and have repercussions for the sustainability of rural farming communities. The next section examines the effects of depopulation of local farming communities resulting from out-migration following farm transfers.

7.3 Depopulated farming districts

I begin this section by presenting changes observed and experienced by local residents that affect the community in the Mooralla farming district. Following Latour's (2005: 253) call for "critical proximity", I spent an afternoon in January 2015 travelling through the farming district of my childhood, Mooralla, with my father (late-80s), sister (mid-50s) and family friend (early-80s) and using our combined knowledges recorded which families live/or lived on which properties in the district from the 1940s to the present day. Figure 7.1 and Figure 7.2 show the changes in the number farm family residences from the 1940s to 2015.

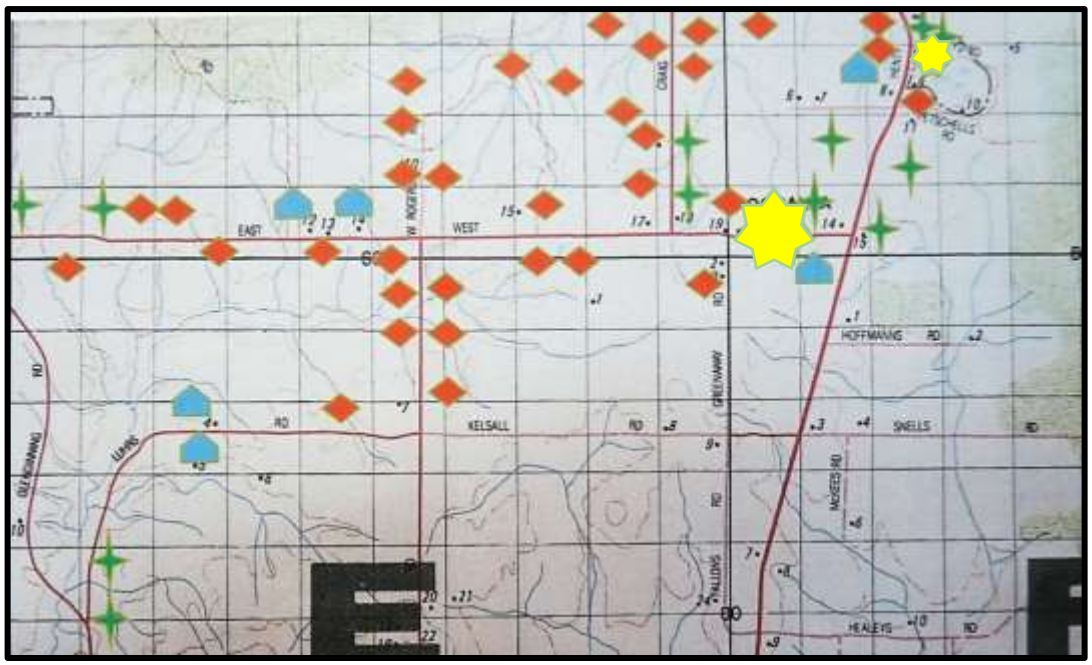


Figure 7.1. Residences in the Mooralla district 1940s-1960s (as remembered by my father and our family friend. My father was the Returning Officer for State and National elections during the 1960s). Fifty farming families resided in the district during this time and participated in community activities. [8]

KEY

Multigenerational family residence	Former family residence 1930-1970	Farm sold to new family	Community centre

Figure 7.2. Residences in the Mooralla District 2015 (as recounted by my father and our family friend). Eighteen farming families currently reside in the district – only 6 of these represent multigenerational family properties.

[8] Figures 7.1 and 7.2 are adapted from Country Fire Authority Victoria (1989) *Region 5 Rural Directory*, 2nd Edition, Melbourne: CFA Victoria, p. 6.

My father's and our friend's memories of families, activities and infrastructure between the 1940s to the 1950s and my sister's and my memories of our times in the Mooralla community during the 1950s to the late-1960s had much in common and contrast greatly with our observations and experiences of the present-day district. These two maps demonstrate clearly the loss of resident farming families since the mid-20th century. The changes in this district's population indicate the changes to the network of associations in the broadacre farming district. Figure 7.1 shows places where farming families (owners and workers) resided during the period from the 1940s to the late 1960s; it shows how densely populated the region was in the mid-20th C and what structures the population supported and developed. Figure 7.1 shows two community centres – places where people gathered for sport, religion, social and civic functions. The larger centre also contained the primary school. Figures 7.1 and 7.2 indicate which places no longer have resident families (these have either been bought up by neighbours or by out-of-district investors), which farms are occupied by descendants of the multigenerational farming families and which have been sold to newcomers to the district. Figure 7.2 shows how sparsely populated the district is in 2015 relative to the mid-20th century.

Farm transfers, changed practices in farming and changed government agendas changed the relations of production within the farming industry (Massey 1995), and these changes in concert contributed to the loss of population and the subsequent closure of the primary school in the 1970s, and later the closure of the church and the church hall all on the East-West Road. The golf/tennis club complex (shown as the community centre in Map 7.2) is all that remains of the community infrastructure following the decline of the farming population. The changes to the human population has immediate effects on the networks of associations within the local community. The thinning out of associations affects the activities the community can support and therefore defines the community – it is still a community but an impoverished community (Rogers et al. 2013); for example, there are fewer neighbours for each family to connect with and fewer people to engage in programs such as fire prevention and weed control along the roadsides and to supply labour when seasonal work beckons.

The primary school, the church and the sporting facilities provided more than just education for children, religious observance for the local community and an opportunity to develop sporting prowess. They also provided the opportunity for local people to work together and to plan activities for the year. The local people were in charge of their social agendas and services. According to my father and our family friend, there were many working bees and committee meetings to engage local people in deciding on and working towards common projects. The network of associations was dense and the community was rich in the variety of activities it could support. Dances, weddings, christenings, funerals, 21st birthdays, card nights, sporting competitions and voting days were some of the many social activities of local residents.

Added to this were memberships to the local CFA, Young Farmers, the Country Women's Association and the Methodist Ladies Guild. This community during the early to mid-20th C fostered and implemented actions and projects directed towards community sustainability (Black 2005). The dense network and the goodwill within the community to achieve community projects was evident in the construction of the original golf links at Mooralla in 1930 and then, a generation later, the new golf course at Victoria Lagoon in 1962 (Luhrs and Hobbs 2013) to which tennis courts were added in 1973 (Centenary Committee 2010).

Today, the story in Mooralla is very different from that of the mid-20th century. Today's much smaller population interacts for golf, tennis, meetings and social gatherings in the purpose-built community centre opened in 1992 – shown in the northeast corners of Map 7.1 and Map 7.2 (Luhrs and Hobbs 2013). There is no church or school in the district now. Children are either driven (by bus or private vehicle) to the primary school in Cavendish 25 km south of Mooralla or they are sent to schools even further away. Church services are conducted in neighbouring towns, some over 30 km away from this former hub. For 81-year-old widowed Merle Duthie, living in a farming district now is very different from what it once was. As she states, "It's a different world that's the type of people taking over the farms, you don't see them, there's no neighbours I can ring now". For our friend, security and social interaction within the local district were always part of farm life, now this is not the case. There is not the same social density as existed in the mid-20th C to support or create community projects, to maintain local institutions or to look after the natural resource, even though current government policies now aim for communities themselves to be responsible for resource management and community development (Black 2005; Eisler 2004; Lawrence 2005b).

The story of the depopulation and changes to the Mooralla farming community resonates with research participants' accounts and experiences from other broadacre and some dairy farming districts. Family members Dee-DF60 (Moyne LGA), Dot-DF88 (Southern Grampians LGA) and Len-SF82 (Northern Grampians LGA) remember the 1950s and 1960s as buoyant. The larger rural populations created by the Soldier Settlement Scheme attracted greater government support for the creation and expansion of schools and transport (Keneley 2000; Lake 2004), and rural residents themselves developed many social and sporting institutions in the districts during this time (for example, see Donald and Curkpatrick 2014; Mortlake Historical Society Book Committee 1985). The networks of associations of the rural farming districts during this era were dense. They provided the local knowledge and voluntary labour to care for and assist people and to undertake works to improve and maintain the surrounding physical environment. The facilities developed during this era provided for the social interaction and wellbeing of residents. Government-funded subsidies and imposed import tariffs to supplement incomes from agricultural commodities acted as enablers to the activities within the local

communities (Davison 2005; Lawrence 2005a). The densely-connected communities of this era demonstrate that the value of farmers, their farms and communities contribute to more than just the national economy – they contribute to individual wellbeing, local community service and amenity and they manage the natural resources of the district.

7.3.1 Differences across the regions

Across the regions I visited, differences between districts were evident in the number of services and facilities available, and these differences contributed family members experiencing different levels of amenity related their communities' population densities. Table 7.1 shows these varying population densities. While not applying the criteria used by the ABS to create the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (Hugo 2005), the current low densities of the local government areas of this research are useful in considering issues of access to goods and services to farming families when neoliberal-like policies prioritise relatively large regional centres over local rural towns for publicly-funded services.

Table 7.1. Population statistics for the Local Government Areas in 1996 and 2011.

Local government area (LGA)	District	Population 1996[1]	Population 2011[2]	Land area (hectares)[3]	Population density 1996 (persons/km^2)	Population density 2011 (persons/km^2)	Density change 1996–2011
Hindmarsh	Northern	6,864	5,695	752,418	0.90	0.75	– 0.15
Buloke		7,377	6,221	800,040	0.90	0.78	– 0.12
Yarriambiack		8,832	7,018	732,580	1.21	0.96	– 0.25
West Wimmera		5,187	4,089	910,839	0.57	0.45	– 0.12
Horsham Rural City	Central	17,949	19,687	426,706	4.21	4.61	+ 0.40
Northern Grampians		13,372	11,799	572,800	2.33	2.06	– 0.27
Southern Grampians		17,628	16,145	665,543	2.60	2.43	– 0.17
Ararat Rural City		11,655	11,207	421,136	2.77	2.66	– 0.11
Glenelg	Southern	20,818	19,521	621,829	3.34	3.14	– 0.20
Moyne		16,508	16,227	548,175	3.01	2.91	– 0.10
Corangamite		17,812	16,137	440,755	4.04	3.66	– 0.38
TOTAL		143,372	133,746	6,847,821	2.09	1.95	– 0.14

Notes 1. Population data for LGAs for 1996 sourced from ABS (1998a) '2035.0 1996 Census of Population and Housing: Population Growth and Distribution', @ www.ausstats.abs.gov.au (accessed 25 April 2016).

2. Population data for LGAs for 2011 sourced from ABS (2013) 1376.0 - Local Government and ABS, 2013 ... Comparing Census Night and Usual Resident Populations in Local Government Areas, 2011', @ www. abs.gov.au (accessed 25 April 2016).

3. LGA land area sourced from ABS (2013) '1376.0 - Local Government and ABS, 2013 ... Comparing Census Night and Usual Resident Populations in Local Government Areas, 2011', @ www.abs.gov.au (accessed 25 April 2016).

The data in Table 7.1 are important for the following reasons. Firstly, the data show that the populations of ten of the eleven LGA have declined. These losses continue from losses recorded in previous Census periods (ABS 1998a). The loss of population in each of these LGAs impacts on remaining community members by reducing their capacity to generate political leverage to claim support from the local, State and Federal Governments for the provision of public services and for the development and maintenance of infrastructure; they lack critical mass for services. Loss of public services reduces local amenity and has repercussions for the wellbeing of local community members. Secondly, the central and southern mixed farming and dairying regions of the research area were, and continue to be, relatively more highly populated than the northern mostly cropping region. The northern districts with the larger broadacre cropping properties had the smallest population densities and fewer services, social facilities and infrastructure than the central and southern districts with smaller broadacre and dairy farms. So, while the larger cropping farms may be contributing more to the national economy (depending on the season)

than the smaller mixed farms (ABARES 2016), they exist in areas of low service provision because of their low population density. The LGAs in central and southern regions, currently have greater claim on governments for investment in services and infrastructure than the LGAs in the northern region. However, family members in the northern region still require the same services (schools, hospitals, social welfare and police) and infrastructure (roads and communications networks) but suffer the lack of access to services and infrastructure because their populations are deemed to be too small to retain or attract public-funded services (Macgarvey 2005).

When the population data for the local government areas in Table 7.1 are compared and contrasted with those of local regional centres in Table 7.2, we see that the northern cropping areas have not only experienced population decreases across the farming districts but also that the populations of their regional service centres of Hopetoun and Warracknabeal have also decreased.

Table 7.2. Population records for the main regional centres in western Victoria

Regional centres	District	Population 2011	Population 1996	Population change
Hopetoun	Northern	555	670	(–) 115
Warracknabeal		2340	2,493	(–)153
Horsham	Central	15,262	12,591	(+) 2,671
Ararat		8076	6,890	(+) 1,186
Hamilton		9346	9,248	(+) 98
Warrnambool	Southern	29,284	26,052	(+) 3,232
Portland		9950	9,664	(+) 286
TOTAL		74,813	67,608	(+) 7,205

Notes: 1. Population statistics for 2011 sourced from Spearritt, P. and Stell, M. (Eds) (2015) 'Victorian Places, @ www.victorianplaces.com.au (accessed 25 April 2016).
2. Population statistics for 1996 sourced from ABS (1998b) '2016.2 – Census of population and housing: selected characteristics for urban centres and localities, Victoria, 1996 @ www.abs.gov.au/ausstats (accessed 25 April 2016)

Although the regional centres in the central and southern regions of the research area have generally increased in population, most of them exist in or are adjacent to LGAs where the overall populations have fallen, such that there is a reduction in the total number of people requiring services in these regions. Reduced population not only reduces critical mass to attract spending public (either State or Federal) funding for services when service provision is provided where perceived greatest need is rather than where need is, according to both aged care lifestyle coordinator Marj-FA3 and rural retailer Mary-FA20 it can also act as a deterrent to potential

investors and private service providers further compounding the lack of services and amenity (Morgan and Blackmore 2013).

Furthermore, as exemplified by family members Huw-SF87, Nev-SF59 and Jay-SF26, another of the issues arising from the depopulated rural communities is the loosening of associations between residents and their local farming communities. Where Huw-SF87 felt that the local district met most of his social needs and provided the advice he sought and to which he devoted his time and energies for development, his grandson Jay-SF26 feels only loosely connected to people and services in his local district. Other interviewees also mentioned the changes between the generations to remaining locally, regionally or travelling further to undertake and participate in activities. Jay-SF26 and Sam-SF26, representing a younger generation of successors exemplify the thinning out of associations in their districts. They reflect what is now already represented in TV shows such as *The Farmer Wants a Wife* (WIN TV 2012): there are very few young men or women remaining in farming districts, and young farm men experience difficulty in finding partners willing to live with them on their farms (Davison 2005). There is little local capacity to satisfy their personal drives and desires let alone engage in regional development.

7.4 Factors contributing to depopulation

Multiple factors contribute to changing fortunes of farm businesses; they therefore contribute to subsequent effects within local rural farming communities and decisions on farm transfers. Many of these were shown in Figure 5.4, Chapter 5. Farmer attitude emerges as a significant factor affecting rural farming community populations as does rural policy of both State and Federal Governments. The loss of rural populations and the disappearance of rural towns appear to be the inexorable effects of farmers and governments working to make agriculture a more efficient and competitive industry (Alston 2004a). As others have already described the effect of neoliberal-like policies on rural communities (Argent and Tonts 2015; Halpin and Guilfoyle 2005; Luck 2011, Tonts et al. 2012; Tonts and Jones 1997), this section focuses on examining the role of factors endogenous to the family, specifically attitudes of family farmers, in driving rural depopulation. The subsequent effects and issues of rural depopulation are examined in Section 7.5.

7.4.1 Attitudes drive people out of farming districts

Although changes to the social relations of agriculture are felt more within rural farming communities than in urban communities (Alston 2004), many farmers (for example, Jay-SF26, Joc-SF61, Maz-FP56, Ric-SF33, Sam-SF26, Tim-SF40, Zac-SF34) who understand the social fragmentation and costs to themselves and their communities also adhere to personal goals for

increased drive and efficiency and to be more market-orientated in their farming enterprises. Furthermore, owners of large farms in this thesis (such as Tim-SF40; Greg-SF47) reported operating efficient production regimes using up-to-date technology. Tim-SF40 and Greg-SF47 contribute to the depopulation of rural districts through the replacement of labour by up-to-date technologies such that now, ironically, their farms suffer labour shortages (Argent and Tonts 2015). Greg-SF47 now employs short-term migrant labourers to make up his farm workforce.

In rural farming districts where out-migration has been observed since the first family farms were set up (The Rural Reconstruction Commission 1944) and exacerbated by the contraction and withdrawal of government services in the 1980s (Weller and O'Neill 2014), farm-owners, by their practice of limiting the number of successors, contribute to local population decline through the subsequent out-migration of non-successor siblings from local communities (Alston 2005a; Dempsey 1992; Poiner 1990). Kay-DF44, Len-SF82 and Zac-SF34 specifically mentioned that their farms should not be shared between siblings on the justification of keeping the farm 'viable' so that they can be kept within the families. While some families have followed this practice as a family tradition (see Chapter 5), other farmers (such as Huw-SF87 and Len-SF82) are also now espousing this view where in previous generations male and female siblings benefitted from intergenerational farm transfers (see Huw-SF87's siblings' succession to the farm in Figure 6.2, Chapter 6). It appears that current farm owners are being/have been recruited to the view that the continuity of the farm is achieved through choosing one successor so that farm size is not compromised (Argent and Tonts 2015), and that this approach is more important than devising a way of sharing the farm between siblings such that the farms do remain viable and that more siblings remain connected the farms and communities of their childhoods. This view is also part of the wider understanding of farmers' contributions to the national economy (Dibden et al. 2009). Moreover, many, including Don-SF48 and Nev-SF59, have adopted the view promoted by their advisors that their farms' viability refers to size, that the bigger the farm the more viable the farm is viewed to be; so, they have, in recent years, bought more property.

Farmers demonstrate their recruitment to this singular view in the language they use to describe their goals for their farming enterprises – especially employing the neoliberalist terminology of 'efficiency', 'increased production' and 'reduced taxes' (Massey 2013). That they have adopted the ideology of rationalist self-government to achieving their goals (Argent 2005; Eisler 2004; Halpin and Guilfoyle 2005; Voyce 2008) was demonstrated by one delegate at the ABARES 2015 Outlook Conference 23 September I attended in Hamilton, Victoria, who chided people he regarded as "lazy" farmers for not using their land as productively as he himself was. Lazy farmers, according to this ABARES delegate, were not helping Australia because they were wasteful of their opportunities to do better and, worse still, were not fulfilling their duty to the

Australian economy. This moral assessment of less productive farmers is not new, as the following quote indicates:

> It seems reasonable to suggest that farmers on good land who will not farm that land productively along sound lines are acting in opposition to the national interests and should be induced to improve their methods. (The Rural Reconstruction Commission 1944, see also Cherry 1913).

On the other hand, another delegate at the same conference (a social worker with a local shire), in private conversation with me, stated many 'lazy' farmers were helping their communities by devoting time to community activities, thereby adding to the amenity of the communities and to the social wellbeing of local residents.

Some farmers, according to other family members, are so involved with the efficiency and high productivity project that they do not consider or realise the effect that their approach to farming has on other family members and/or on the local community. Wives, interviewed separately, report the negative effects of this approach to the family. For example, Liz-FP60 and Kaz-FP41 (Tim-SF40's wife) both told of their exasperation at the single-minded focus on the farm that affected their relationships:

> The whole relationship thing, it's because of his love of the farm. As far as I'm concerned, it's an absolute priority to him – to build up. (Liz-FP60, interviewed 2014)

> We'd just had our first child and I'm in hospital and his dad's ringing up saying ***he needs to come out to the farm now to work, come on,*** you know. (Kaz-FP41, interviewed 2014)

By the time of the interview, Liz-FP60 had moved off the farm to live separately from her husband. Her husband has since sold the farm. Kaz-FP41, although feeling distanced from the farm and conducting most of her social activities out of the district lives, in the farming community. Her husband (Tim-SF40) and son (survey respondent SR13-M19) are not overly concerned for the farm's future. Even if they do acknowledge the changes to the district's population, they do not appear to be conscious of the effect of Tim-SF40's attitude on his wife's time out of the district and the impact this may be having on the local community.

The attitude of appointing few successors in order to keep farm viable is strongly supported by younger successors such as Zac-SF34 and Tim-SF40 who both stated that their farms could not remain viable if the farms were shared with their sisters. Zac-SF34 and Tim-SF40's sisters and Huw-SF87 and Len-SF82's daughters all moved out of their farming districts on reaching adulthood and no longer contribute to the communities of their childhoods. That many farm owners and nominated successors see no apparent problem with their non-successor family

members leaving the district and, indeed, see this as the natural outcome of family decisions to keep farms intact and viable suggests that their actions contributing to rural depopulation remain invisible to them (Griffiths 1995).

That attitudinal factors within families and farming communities do reduce the involvement of potential successors in succession and drive people from farming districts emerged in interviews. Attitudes have a role in determining how close or loose the bonds are between community members and as such can be viewed as having agency – they are actants in the network of associations that affect community cohesion. The very people who, because of their childhood embeddedness in farming as a way of life, may be considered suitable to remain on farms or in farming communities are those who express desires to escape these communities.

Family members are being influenced by their perceptions and responses to the relations between members of the communities, they are being acted upon by their perceptions and desires. Two daughters, Jan-DF61 and Ros-DF29, actively chose not to remain in the farming districts of their childhoods. Jan-DF61 vehemently denied any longing to remain on the family farm.

> **NO WAY** cannot think of anything worse … I mean the farm for me was a nightmare to escape from. But even you know, like the small community oohhh … oh god, narrow-minded prejudiced, unquestioning, unthinking, no critical thinking, conservatism … **I feel no attachment to that bit of land whatsoever -** piece of dirt. (Jan-DF61, interviewed 2014)

In Jan-DF61's view, the farm was an unrewarding enterprise and didn't promise her the security she craved. However, the lack of shared feelings with people in the local district, that is, a lack of identity with other farming people acted as another strong push away from the district and farming. Jan-DF61 strongly asserts it is the attitudes of rural people that drive many people away and deter others from choosing to live in farming communities. Jan-DF61 is grateful for her education that provided her an exit from a life among what she called "the small-mindedness" of rural people.

Ros-DF29 differs from Jan-DF61 in considering farming to be a rewarding enterprise and the farm to be a great place to raise a family. However, she also agrees with the assessment that many farming people, particularly young men, display attitudes and behaviours she considers unacceptable. These attitudes acted to inform Ros-DF29's career choice. Ros-DF29 chose to forego a farming career because of the lack of what she considered partners with suitable attitudes; young farmers who had grown up on family farms, who had developed useful farming skills and who also were committed to farming did not display attitudes she was prepared to accept in a partner. She chose a non-farming partner and to live off-farm instead of choosing to remain on the farm with a less than favourable partner or the alternative – of being single:

> I think a lot of farmers have to have a certain personality to stay out there and be so isolated – and their personality turns the women off. … I thought I was [going to live and work on

> the farm] but then I had to find someone that was going to live on the farm too. … All the farmers I knew were jerks and I wasn't even going there. And then my partner come along … [and he] has no desire to live out of town. ***So, I moved into town.*** (Ros-DF29, interviewed 2014)

Ros-DF29's assessment is that the inbuilt nature of many farming sons "turns women off" – perhaps this nature is an actant that accounts for sons (such as Lee-DF57's brother and Ian-SF85's son) remaining unmarried. She does consider their attitudes can be altered so that farming sons do learn to respect and to behave respectfully towards women. Ros-DF29 is displaying her agency in refusing to accept attitudes in a partner/husband that previous generations of farming women lived with (Dempsey 1992; Poiner 1990); however, this agency is a 'catch-22' agency – she has removed herself from unacceptable rural male attitudes but also from farming as a career.

Sons also described attitudes alienating them from family farms, their families and local communities, especially following childhoods where their fathers bullied them into working on the farm. Overbearing fathers who appeared to put farm work ahead of family relationships made life difficult for Ben-SF19 and Tom-SF28 such that they felt alienated from their farms and from farming as a worthwhile pursuit. Ben-SF19 has rejected farming and rural life entirely and wants nothing more to do with rural places and people.

Tom-SF28, after many years of living and working off-farm, now understands that it was his father's attitude which was the problem for him and not farming *per se* or other people in the farming community. Differently from Ben-SF19, Jan-DF61 and Ros-DF29, he has since returned to the family farm to work as a farmer in partnership with his father, and lives on the farm with his wife and infant son in the house vacated by his parents (they have moved into the nearby town). Tom-SF28 loves the farm work. His frustration now is not with his father's lack of respect for his own skills and views on which farming enterprises to develop, it is with his father's lack of addressing the actual process of farm succession. His father controls the farm's finances and holds title to the property, and, hence, has ultimate control over when succession will occur. It is still the case that Tom-SF28's activities on and earnings from the farm are under the control of his father, even though Tom-SF28 now has his own family of wife and child to provide for (Hastings 2004).

Ben-SF19, Tom-SF28, Jan-DF63 and Ros-DF29 all provide insights to attitudinal factors and emotional responses which contribute to people's reluctance to consider remaining in farming or in farming districts or to consider marrying into farming families. The attitudes they present as chronic deterrents to remaining in farming or in farming districts are factors which could be changed if acknowledged and worked on. Both attitudes and emotional responses determine the outcomes from farming families considering succession and they determine the

nature of associations within and beyond farming communities, in this way they are actants affecting the networks of associations.

Although not every family member wants to remain in the country and/or on a farm (for example Amy-DF29, Kim-DF21, Lee-DF57, and Pru-DF37) (see also Luhrs 2012; Muenstermann 2009a, 2011), there are problems for families and communities when non-successor siblings who would like to remain on the farm are denied the opportunity to do so. Ros-DF29, Pru-DF37 and Tam-DF57, all non-successors, consider that children of farming families with an interest in farming and an attachment to the farms of their childhoods ought to be included in the decision-making and the decisions for farm transfer. Non-successors are not only presenting an argument for their inclusion in the family farm post-transfer to ensure the viability of the farms and to satisfy their personal desires, their interests, skills and knowledges are valuable for the sustainability of local communities. Tam-DF57 expressly feels dispossessed and undervalued as a family and community member. Tam-DF57 and Pru-DF37 have both lost their connections to their farms and their farm communities.

The above discussion highlights factors that compete and influence the decisions young people make about remaining on the farm, in the farming district or moving away from farming altogether. These findings confirm earlier findings of Geldens (2007) and Muenstermann (2011) that personal decisions made by young people are informed by a complex interplay of different perceptions of how life would be if they remained on or local to the farm. Most of the sons and daughters of farmers interviewed, particularly those under sixty-five years also reported a desire to leave the farming districts to explore new experiences and to train for professions or take up trades – their departures were informed by what Farrugia (2016: 836, 838, 844) terms "the mobility imperative", a triadic imperative comprised of structural, symbolic and non-representational dimensions. Mobility enabled farmers' sons and daughters to take "advantage of urban opportunities for education and work" and to develop "new tastes and lifestyles" (Farrugia 2016: 838, 844). This is particularly so for Jan-DF61 and ten other daughters, including Eva-DF74, and nine sons including Joc-SF61 who all departed their farming districts to complete university degrees or apprenticeships before living and working in large urban centres, interstate and/or overseas. All sons and one daughter returned to their farms to take up farming after extended time away, one daughter remained in contact with her farm as a company director while pursuing another career and one daughter benefitted from her inheritance to set up a farm in her local district after her marriage. All other daughters who left to follow new lives created new off-farm, out-of-the-district lives unrelated or only indirectly related to farming. Differently from other research (for example Argent and Walmsley 2008), this thesis finds that out-migration *per se*, the mobility imperative itself is not gendered; however, what is gendered is the return to family farms and farming districts, more males than females return to farms and farming districts.

This finding confirms Dufty-Jones et al.'s (2014) and my (Luhrs 2015) findings that proportionally more rural women than men remain away after leaving their farms and districts. These departures and non-returns are significant factors contributing to rural depopulation. However, rural-to-urban drift of rural youth is not a recent phenomenon (Davison 2005); what is different is State and Federal governments are not responding through interventionist programs to support and sustain rural farming populations and communities as did governments of the early to mid-20th century.

Farmers through their attitudes to farming and about who is the most likely family member to be successor and their decisions and actions to institute farm transfers contribute to the net-outmigration of family members from rural farming districts.

7.5 Local and national issues arising from depopulated rural districts

Many issues resulting from rural depopulation that may appear to be rural issues requiring local innovation and action, are, I contend, national issues. Local people who support rural social institutions, sporting clubs, voluntary services, schools, churches, health facilities and many other structures and events are in very short supply and many farming communities are below their "fulcrum density" (Argent 2008: 260). Rural and urban people alike, through reports in local and the national media, appear to understand the problems of accidents, drought, fire, floods and mice and insect plagues and the impact these factors have on rural living and the national economy (see for example, Duffy and Yell 2014; Gray 2015; Harris 2014; *The Weekly Times* 2014). They also understand that remediation and assistance is provided through government funding, volunteer action and provision of supplies through many sources including, for example, government emergency relief support and ARC charity (Gray 2015; Harris 2014; *The Weekly Times* 2014). In contrast, the loss of population in farming districts does not appear in national media as a national issue to address. Rural population loss as an issue for the nation remains a mostly silent issue – one that rises to urban consciousness when, for example, urban dwellers visit the rural regions seeking particular experiences and then find few rural people to help or provide services (such as, when travellers become lost or suffer mechanical breakdowns).[9] And yet, rural population loss brings with it many issues that require local and national attention, attention beyond mere budgetary/economic consideration.

Ron-SF59 and Maz-FP56 (interviewed together, 2015) explain one of the problems remaining family members face when the district population decreases:

Ron: The schools are all gone.

[9] Pers. com. Farmer adjacent to the Little Desert National Park, 18 September 2016.

Maz: We haven't even got a school bus here anymore.

Ron: And that will be hard to start again because you need to have at least five children before the bus run starts again.

While family members such Ron-SF59 and Maz-FP56 lament the problems they and other family members face as a result of declining rural infrastructure, the current State government provides services in centres with large populations. A disconnect exists between what individuals in dispersed places require/desire and what governments focused on rationalising services can provide. People living in sparsely populated regions must seek services from places outside their local regions, or go without (Smailes et al. 2002). Families with school-age children living in districts where schools have closed have to choose between home-schooling, organising a way of transporting their children to the closest schools and sending their children away to boarding school. All of these options have positive (for example, better opportunities for education to suit needs) and negative connotations (parents losing time to transporting or educating children or losing close contact with children and/or children losing daily contact with the farms and farm work) not faced by many of the previous generations. In previous generations and under different political regimes, rural populations in the research area were large enough to attract funding from the State Government to provide schools for children in farming districts (albeit with some families choosing to send their children to more prestigious city schools). Local schools acted as community hubs for children and parents, and they brought professionally trained teachers (often accompanied by their families) into rural communities thereby providing an opportunity for local residents to interact with people with other experiences. Less time was required for travel to school and there was more time that could be spent on the farm during non-school times. The loss of the primary schools in many districts is a loss of more than just the provision of a state-funded education (Smailes et al. 2002). It is the loss of time and money for parents in organising school education for their children, the loss of incidental daily interaction between members of the district through dropping off and picking up children and attending other functions and events related to the school's activities, and the loss of state-funding within the community with its flow-on support to other local enterprises. When children travel out of the district for their schooling, in effect the funds for education go to other districts – often large urban centres with little reinvestment of the capital returning to the local district.

When remaining family members become too busy with farming to contribute to the local community and when local districts and towns no longer provide social activities and services, family members often forgo these activities and services or seek them further afield. Changes to the locus of social and other activities in successive generations of a multigenerational farming family is evident between Huw-SF87, his son Nev-SF59 and his grandson Jay-SF26 (see Table 7.3). Third generation successor Huw-SF87 (born in 1926) centred his activities on the home,

farm and local district. Similarly, activities for fourth generation successor Nev-SF59 (born 1955) centre on the home, farm and mostly the local district. However, Nev-SF59 visits the nearby town less than the distant regional centre which offers more services and goods than the nearby town. For fifth generation successor Jay-SF26 (born 1988), the local district and nearby town lose importance as more activities are undertaken further from the home and farm. The home and farm remain important spaces, but the regional centre has overtaken the local district and the nearby town as a source for social and other activities and services. Family members who spend their non-working times supporting services and seeking social interaction out of their local district, then, further contribute to the erosion of local social activities and services.

Table 7.3. Importance of particular spaces for different generations in the same family. (The proportion of time and energy devoted to each region is indicated by the shading – the darker the shade in the section of the table, the more important the locus of activity to the farmer.)

Space of activity	Huw-SF87's Activities	Nev-SF59's Activities	Jay-SF26's Activities
Home and farm	Family care and fun activities; productive work; many social functions based in the home and on the property.	Family; productive work.	Family; productive work.
Local district	Main source of social interaction: school; sport; religious activities; regular social events with close neighbours; volunteering.	Frequent social interaction through school; sport; some family social events with local friends; volunteering.	Occasional social interaction through sport; some family social events with local friends; volunteering.
Nearby town	Regular dances; shows; picnics; basic supplies and services.	Some social events; basic home and farm supplies; services.	Some social events; basic home and farm supplies; services.
Distant Regional Centre	Occasional large sporting and social events; banking; health; secondary school; major purchases for house and farm; repairs; freight; stock sales. RETIREMENT OFF-FARM	Frequent sporting and social events; banking; health; secondary school; major purchases for house and farm; repairs; freight; stock sales. APPROACHING RETIREMENT AGE.	Many sporting and social events; banking; health; primary and secondary school; major purchases for house and farm; repairs; freight; stock sales. NOMINATED SUCCESSOR.

The associations – as represented by the activities Huw-SF87, Nev-SF59 and Jay-SF26 – linking elements of particular farming communities are affected by the presence or absence of factors which may – as actants – attract local family members to engage locally or to travel further to access goods, services and social interaction. The change of association through the generations, from a locally dense network to one of a less dense local network is reflected in the distances travelled by family members to access goods, services and social activities. This change of associations indicates the consequences of farm owners' farm transfer decisions, increased farm

efficiencies and the resultant outmigration of non-successors, the changing populations of farming districts and local towns and different government policies and programs with respect to service provision in rural spaces.

Recent authors have remarked that the "sustainability of livelihoods in rural towns is not dependent solely on the prosperity of the farming population" (Black 2005: 34). Apparently, there has been a 'decoupling' of towns from agriculture (Black 2005). This may be the case for town businesses in highly populated regions with a diversity of industry, but it certainly is not the case for many towns between the regional centres of Warrnambool and Hopetoun in western Victoria's broadacre farming regions. A greatly reduced population in the broadacre farming districts has seen many town businesses close and town populations to fall (Keneley 2005). This is explained by Ken-FA19 (rural financial director):

> The amalgamation or consolidation of farms if you like that's impacting on the smaller communities. Obviously if you are trying to run a general store in a two-store town if you've got less people to sell to then it becomes more and more difficult. … There might have been say ten small farms and their families which becomes into a bigger corporatized farm or a bigger farm where they look at automation and less employees obviously to run the same sort of business and that's where their economies of scale makes them more viable than the small farm. Therefore, there's less people. (Ken-FA19 rural financial director, interviewed 2015)

The businesses and services in towns and the farming families within these broadacre farming districts are linked more closely and are more interdependent than are businesses in large regional centres with the families on farms surrounding these centres. While the large regional centres of Horsham and Warrnambool and the towns of Portland and Port Fairy do have opportunities for growth that do not rely solely on the local farming economy, agriculture forms the main productive activity in most local government areas in western Victoria, and it is the people engaged in this activity who constitute the population to support businesses in nearby towns and regional centres. So, while Jay-SF26 and others of his generation (for example Sam-SF26 and Zac-SF34) do travel further for social and business activities, they still interact with businesses in their local towns; however, the towns do not provide for all or most of their social needs as was the case in earlier generations. The change of association therefore indicates a partial 'decoupling', by necessity and/or choice, of farmers from their local areas (Cheshire et al. 2013), but not necessarily of businesses from the farming families in these broadacre farming regions.

Issues of national concern that arise from depleted rural populations concern general safety, welfare and environmental management. Families living in districts depleted of people mention the difficulties encountered when attempting to complete community-related projects.

Ron-SF59 is concerned about who buys land when his neighbours sell their properties. His experience is one not only of consolidation of farming properties but also of absentee landlords and managers who live far from the farm properties. These people are commuters and are not around to be part of the local community to bolster local sporting teams or social events and to participate in the CFA activities. Ron-SF59 explains the effects of the changed demography:

> When I was at primary school … the CFA would burn around [people's] house[s] … and we did that every year, and we would have had twenty people there. Now we just be lucky to get three … It's a **battle** to get someone to go on the truck if there's a fire. (Ron-SF59, interviewed 2015)

As Ron-SF59 explains, not only are there not enough people turning up to help to the district to be fire-ready, there are not enough people in the district to operate the fire trucks if there is a wild-fire. The current trend of out-migration is creating and exacerbating the issues associated with rural isolation in former relatively densely-populated farming districts. For Ron-SF59, having a sense of association with a local community is problematic. He states "I don't know where we are anymore". In other words, he has no sense of identity to place or community other than his farm and family.

The physical isolation of remaining farming people challenges the argument that locals can be responsible for the sustainability of the communities in which they live (Magis 2010). Even though governments are promoting 'self-help' programs for rural people to overcome the rural disadvantages they experience (Lawrence 2005a), it is apparent that the idea of sustainability of rural communities being the preserve of the communities themselves is "problematic" (Black 2005: 36). The continuing mismatch between expectations placed on rural residents by politicians through the rhetoric of self-help, community capacity and local know-how, and the actuality of the lack of rural population capacity to enable community development to occur (Cheshire et al. 2007) or to sustain the natural resources in the region (Curtis et al. 2014) became evident on a Women on Farms Gathering (WoFG) tour in March 2016 through the depopulated farming region surrounding the once bustling rural town of Hopetoun in the Yarriambiack Shire As discussed earlier, factors beyond the local community and decisions on farm transfers by members of rural communities act in concert to adversely affect community sustainability.

Continuing population decline, a reduction in available public services (for example, fewer schools and transport and police services), a loss of amenity as local social and sporting clubs collapse, and a lack of young women to marry rural men and/or to contribute to the social and service structure of rural communities feature as issues for family members in many farming districts (Black 2005; Davison 2005; Forth and Howell 2005; Hugo 2005). Fewer farming people in broadacre farming districts results in fewer rural people to actually maintain and work on

community projects and committees, and fewer families produce fewer children which, in turn, reduces the need for schools in these districts. The pillars – social and political – which had previously sustained rural communities have been seriously eroded through the loss of population (Davison 2005). For many family members resident on farms, isolation, lack of public services, lack of opportunity for local community involvement through loss of population, unstable returns on farm products and health issues are pressing issues they now face. These findings are consistent with the findings of Alston (2005b), and are linked to a decline in the social wellbeing of residents in broadacre farming regions (Macgarvey 2005). The issues family members present when they consult with farm associates are described by Ken-FA19:

> Mental health, you've got to get passed that. You can't talk about finances if you go into the place and there's no communication going on and the farmer is on the tractor. … We normally [become involved through] referrals from a neighbour a friend or the accountant who has tried to help them and can see the writing on the wall. … Sometimes the reality is that … it is the wife who is the one who has called and the farmer is in denial … People deal with stress in different ways. So, once you are under financial stress, you know, the proud farmer – some of them will actually say, "Well, I've got to work 15 16 18 hours days to make it work. The harder I work, it'll work". (Ken-FA19, interviewed 2015)

Isolation exacerbates the issues so that, as Ken-FA19 states, famers can be in denial about issues they need to address and create greater isolation by working longer each day. So, while efficiencies have brought rewards to some farmers, others appear not to enjoy the same rewards and instead suffer from poor market returns, poor mental health and reduced social engagement. And although individual families may enjoy economic benefit from increased efficiencies and reduced labour costs, members of those same families lose out because of reduced services, loss of nearby social connections and greater distances to travel to access social and sporting facilities. Addressing issues arising from depopulation of farming districts is complex because of the multiple factors involved, including farmer decisions which are informed by markets, new technologies and political agendas of the day.

7.6 The crowded peri-urban farmscape

In the peri-urban farming districts, populations increase as families move out of farming and farms are sold and divided into smaller 'hobby-farm' properties. The characters of communities change as many of the new farm owners engage in urban jobs and urban social and sporting interests. Dairy farmer Con-SF51 and his wife Joy-FP46 (interviewed together 2015) report two opposing changes affecting their district: the influx of hobby-farmers whose associations revolve around urban interests, and the amalgamation of a number of farms into large corporate dairy farms such that farming families once part of the local community have moved out and fewer

people are associated with the larger amalgamated farms. Both changes have eroded the social capital within their local community, the school population is smaller and there are fewer people who contribute to local social activities.

During the interview, there was also discussion of the possible purchase and amalgamation of dairy farms in the region by Chinese business interests. Whereas others, such as Sue-DF60, Greg-SF47 and Ron-SF59, express concern about their neighbouring properties bought or sought by investors from Canada, China, New Zealand and Qatar because of the erosion to social capital they experience in their communities, Con-SF51 sees no immediate threat to his livelihood or lifestyle from international companies purchasing farmland near his farm. Con-SF51 is concerned when sales of nearby farmland lead to changed land-use from farming to life-style blocks, affect the charges made on his property because of the rising land values and reduce community amenity because of lack of engagement by new-comers to the district. The current social collective of his district is more dispersed in associations than the previous social collective in the less-populated farming district.

Changed populations and lack of participation in local community events arise as major sources of concern for family members in both depopulated broadacre districts and in peri-urban districts with growing populations. For example, Con-SF51 and Ron-SF59 share the same concerns about the lack of participation in local events to sustain the community – but the causes are different. In Con-SF51's experience, the lifestyle landowners not engaging socially with the farming community is a problem, whereas for Ron-SF59, the lack of sufficient people living locally to participate is the problem. There are challenges to address for communities in both peri-urban and rural broadacre farming communities, however, isolation and lack of access to services are major issues in depopulated districts.

7.7 Conclusion

Except for the farming districts close to growing and dynamic regional centres (for example Warrnambool and Horsham) all other farming districts visited in this research are suffering from a severe shortage of people. The rural-to-urban drift continues to undermine the status of many broadacre farming families' access to goods, services and social activities. Hugo made a similar observation in 2005, however, population records and family members' accounts in this chapter indicate a worsening of the rural situation since then.

A number of factors relating to rural population changes become clear when we compare changes in populations across generations with services and facilities supported by the people and the governments in each generation. Of the factors driving people from broadacre farming areas, some are exogenous to farming families and others endogenous to farming families and

relate to decisions for intergenerational farm transfer (Fischer and Burton 2014). Latour's (2005) concept of networks of associations enables us to discern the factors affecting farming community sustainability. The Australian political agenda for greater efficiencies and ever-increasing productivity on farms through employing new technologies that subsequently reduce the need for human labour, policies of small government, rationalist approaches to provision of infrastructure and services adopted by both State and Federal Governments lead to depopulated farming communities such that communities suffer losses of services, amenity and connectedness, and individual wellbeing is undermined.

Endogenous factors include farm owners' responses to the political agendas of increasing farm efficiencies and increasing farm productivity as well as their attitudes to maintaining farm viability and farm transfers. Many farm owners interpret the agenda of protecting and increasing farm productivity as the need to ensure there is one successor to the family farm at the expense of sharing the farm in some way with all offspring of the family. This differential treatment of farm offspring may indeed ensure the farm remains viable and that the successor can increase its productivity, but this often comes at a cost of rural out-migration of other children and the loss to the community of the social capacity of these children.

Despite the overall loss of population, most farmland remains agriculturally productive following succession, albeit often under altered production regimes and with patterns of ownerships structured differently from previous generations. Addressing agricultural productivity is not the issue for rural families; what is the issue is the access of services and the sustainability of local community resources and social institutions (Luck et al. 2011). Rural farming people understand the issues associated with declining populations in their districts and the purchase of neighbouring farms by outside interests (including investors from interstate and overseas) but do not appear to have sufficient resources to address these issues.

Chapter 8

Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

8.1 Introduction

This thesis examined the phenomenon of intergenerational family farm transfer and its effects on individual farm family members, family relationships and local farm communities in western Victoria, Australia; it also examined the implications of these effects on the management of natural resources in rural broadacre and dairy farming districts. Adopting an overarching feminist perspective to this research ensured all family members affected by or involved in family farm transfers were provided with opportunities to contribute their experiences and responses to these experiences, as were people associated with farm family members to enable the production of a nuanced account of the significance of family farm transfers to individuals, families, local communities and the national resource. The research, through engaging with parents, successors, non-successors and farm associates, exposed the underlying inequalities and effects of these inequalities within broadacre and dairy farming communities especially as occurs during and arising from the emotional spacetime of intergenerational farm transfer.

This thesis employed a plurality of analytical frames to examine and analyse the complex social phenomenon of family farm transfer to expose the multifarious social, economic and political factors that act in concert to inform and to enable or constrain farm transfers and sustainable farming communities. Latour's (2005) actor-network theory enabled the researcher to reveal and link the multitude of agential factors necessarily associated in the process of farm transfers that act in some way to impede or progress the social process of farm transfer. Lefebvre's (1991) theory of space as a produced phenomenon, argues that all social spaces are produced through the interaction of three moments: the conceived space – the idea of how the space should be constructed, the spatial practices – activities enacted in the social space that direct the lived space, and the representational space – the experienced space of memory. Lefebvre's theory was supported by Massey's (1995) theory of relational networks of production – the relations that exist within and extend beyond the locale that influence the decisions and outcomes of these decisions. Together, these two theories made visible the significance of relations that inform, operate within and act on the farming sector in general and allowed the significance of these relations to the complex phenomenon of intergenerational family farm transfer to emerge.

Lefebvre's (1991) and Massey's (1995) theories may appear to be incompatible with, even contradictory to, Latour's (2005) actor-network theory because of the differences in describing the status and relative agency afforded to the different actors. Lefebvre (1991) and Massey

(1995) accept a hierarchical social structure where particular actors have more agency than others but Latour (2005) does not allow such a structure in his discussions of associations between different actors. For Latour (2005), all actors are part of a network within a flat field. However, when employed in combination, together these different theoretical frames complement each other and enable a link to be established between actors affecting the process of farm transfers and the relations informing, directing and supporting or constraining the actors' actions in the process.

A fourth frame – Symons (2007) emotional spacetime – provided the scaffold to build emotions into the analysis and to acknowledge emotions both as significant informative and active effects of social phenomena. Considering farm transfers as emotional spacetimes acknowledges the role of emotions in providing social knowledge. Arising from the farm transfer process and affecting individuals, families and communities, emotions become actants that influence family member attitudes, choices and behaviours during and after the farm transfer process, and are sources of knowledge about the issues arising from the phenomenon of intergenerational family farm transfers.

This thesis finds that intergenerational farm transfer decisions and processes are informed by personal ideology that is also acted on by ideology reflected in the government policies of the day, and that these decisions and processes affect individual family members, intra-familial relationships and family farm sustainability. The decisions farm owners make and the processes they follow to implement intergenerational farm transfer also have direct repercussions on the amenity and services of local farming communities within broadacre and dairy farming regions. This thesis argues it is farm owners, other farm community members and government policies and programs in concert that contribute to individual family member wellbeing, family cohesion, farming community sustainability and family farming as an ongoing section of the farming sector. Furthermore, the data reveal that masculine hegemony is still a predominant feature of social relations in broadacre and dairy farming regions in western Victoria, Australia, a significant factor that informs the attitudes and hence decisions for intergenerational farm transfer. This thesis concludes that the attitudes and decisions of many farm owners, variously informed by policies and programs, contribute to the gendered depopulation in broadacre farming districts and, hence, to the social and resource management problems arising from the depopulation of these farming districts.

Before examining the processes of farm transfers, this thesis re-examined the notion of family farms to establish and understand what is actually being transferred when farms are transferred from one generation to the next. Chapter 4 provides a reconceptualised account of family farms based on Lefebvre's (1991) theory that spaces are produced and Massey's (1994, 1995) theory that spaces are constituted out of relations within and beyond the space. Together

they enable a comprehensive appreciation of the myriad of factors and relations that produce and constitute farms. A farm entity to be transferred is not static but something that is continuously produced and reconstituted by both endogenous and exogenous factors. The combination of factors acting on and interacting with and between the spaces of farms include (but are not limited to) the property and farm enterprise, farm owners, family members, the local community, farm advisors and other business associates, suppliers, markets and governments (local, state and national) and their regulations, policies and programs.

Farm owners act to protect their farm properties against adverse legal action to them by setting up ownership structures such as farm trusts or companies so that their intended successors are able to continue on the family farms without challenge, and family members not regarded as favoured successors are not included in these ownership structures. Ownership structures of farms reveal the nature of the relationships between family members and indicate who has greatest agency in determining intergenerational farm transfer. Arrangements that exclude wives in the ownership are the strongest indicator that some farm owners, acting out a social tradition that views wives as a threat to the farm, allow little agency to wives to determine farm transfers (except perhaps to encourage or discourage potential successors). In some families both parents exercise equal agency in choosing and supporting a successor; however, most often it is the fathers, who have more status and agency than mothers, who chose the successor(s). When intergenerational farm transfer is considered and instituted, multiple factors and relations are implicated in the transfer, and because relationships change in the transfer, these factors and relations are also subject to change.

The remainder of the chapter outlines the seven main findings based on the research questions outlined in Chapter 3. The three main research questions were:

RQ1. How do farm family members negotiate and respond to intergenerational family farm transfer?

RQ2. What are the enduring social and economic effects of family decisions and management of the processes of family farm transfer?

RQ3. What issues arise from family farm transfers which impact on local communities and natural resource management?

The next section addresses the findings related to the first research question: How do farm family members negotiate and respond to intergenerational family farm transfer?

8.2 How do farm family members negotiate and respond to intergenerational family farm transfers?

The first research finding, that many farm owners do not transfer their farms to the next generation well, relates to farm owners' capacities to manage the process of farm transfers successfully, where success is premised on maintaining cohesive intrafamilial relations, engaging in a process that acknowledges the desires of siblings and parents and, where possible, accommodates these desires, and maintaining farm viability during and after the transfer. Many farmers do transfer their farms during their lifetimes, others make no effort to transfer their farms during their lifetimes, leaving the dispersal to occur as they direct in their wills. This thesis finds that family farmers – the owners or principals of farming properties and enterprises – are, by and large, competent managers of these properties and businesses such that they have properties and viable businesses to transfer to the next generation. They are responsive to and incorporate the multifarious factors of finance, government policy, law, labour, seasonal variation, the natural resource, technical knowledge, skill uptake and transfer, inputs, annual works programs and markets into their management activities, and they hedge against risks that may derail their continuing involvement with their farms. However, many are ill-equipped to plan for, prepare for and institute farm transfers, and they, their families and their local communities suffer when farm transfers do not occur successfully.

Few family members – parents, successors or non-successors – could say that the family farm transfers they were involved in were instituted in a well-considered, well-planned, smooth process without tension, stress and strained family relationships and with no enduring negative consequences. Of those who considered that their experiences did not have any negative consequences, most were over seventy-five years old and did not offer much reflection on the actual process or the consequences of the process – they were more concerned about and pleased that their farms are still held by their descendants. Four family members of the thirty-eight family members under seventy-five years also reported no negative experiences: one son was in mid-succession, one son (who expects to inherit his parents' property) and his wife have bought their own property that is larger than the original family farm, and one daughter is a farm successor. For the remaining family members interviewed, the negative experiences relate variously, solely or in combination, to no plans, doubt about the future of the family farm and whether a family member will actually continue the farm, disagreements between family members over the plans, no action made to transfer the farm after plans are made, disagreements over the transfer processes and timing of the processes, access by non-successors to the family farm after transfer, and parental involvement and amount of involvement in the farms after the farms have been transferred to the successor(s). Some of these negative experiences arise because of the lack of competence in the farm owners to plan and act on their plans for intergenerational farm transfer.

Other negative experiences arise because the decisions informing the plans are themselves informed by ideologies that exclude some family members from continuing involvement in their farms.

The second research finding, that the selection of successor remains very much the prerogative of the property owners, and the decisions they make for the selection of successor and the process of farm transfer are partially dependent on the structural entity/ownership arrangements of the farms. Farm owners or principal shareholders in partnerships, trusts or companies affords them rights over decision-making about farm transfers that other family members do not share. Family members, therefore, hold unequal positions with respect to farm transfer decisions and processes. This inequality is at the heart of many family disputes and unresolved tensions during and after farm transfers. While some families appear to keep the farm and family relations intact through the farm transfer process, other families show varying degrees of upset and dysfunction.

The successor is generally the person deemed most suitable by the incumbent farmer – to continue his (in most cases – rarely, but sometimes her) lifelong project. Generally, more family members are excluded from the opportunity to become successors than are included. Most successors continue to be sons, and most excluded family members are daughters. *In vivo* succession, through the progressive transfer of business management and assets, establishes the divisions between siblings and their respective rights to access to the farm. Succession actually divides family members in early adulthood into two different categories – those who remain involved in and have access to the farm property and enterprise and those who do not, whereas transfer via inheritance provides some potential for equality between siblings in access to the farm. The lack of empowerment becomes evident to non-successors in the ownership arrangements instituted by their parents and their lack of inclusion in this arrangement. Non-successors who desire a continuing involvement with their family farms are dependent on the successors for continued access to the farms. Some may be unhappy with the outcome and, in extreme cases, distressed and suffering chronic ill-health when access is denied. The intensity of non-successors emotional responses is evidence of the degree of injustice they perceive in their families in exercising their plans. Various forms of compensation are provided from family assets, but for some, these offerings fail to redress the problem.

The third research finding relates to the planning for and processes of farm transfer – that farm transfer plans are often inadequate to accommodate the complexity entailed in the relationality that is inherent in farming families and family farms and which infuses farm transfers. Each farm owner's personal ambitions regarding the farm on his/her departure from the enterprise is enacted upon by a variety of factors ranging from the deeply personal to the policy agendas of the State and Federal Governments and to the markets that determine the

returns of the farm produce. In Chapter 5 Latour's (2005) actor-network theory provided the conceptual tools to analyse the factors/actants and mediators that enable or constrain intergenerational farm transfers. Planning for and instituting farm transfers involves a complex web of factors that act on the farmer, the farm and the successor. By constructing an actor-network to represent what is necessary for farm transfers to occur and the context in which they occur revealed the phenomena of intergenerational farm transfers to be more complex than previously described.

Furthermore, emotions are also actants in the network enabling/constraining farm transfers. Transferring a family farm intergenerationally requires farmers to consider more than the 'what', 'who to', 'personal exit plans' and the 'what to do' and 'when' parts of the transfer process, they also need to incorporate the complex emotional web of attachments and other desires of all family members into their planning for and instituting the transfer. In this research, of the farms that have been transferred or are in the process of intergenerational transfer most of the emotional labour invested by family members – often with the wives/mothers taking the role of mediator between the transferor and the transferee – is focused on 'when' and 'how' the process of transfer occurs. Discussions of the time, how much is to be transferred, missed opportunities and the conflict or differences of opinions about management of the farm enterprise and the process of transfer between the transferor and the transferee emerge as the issues that family members acknowledge as difficult issues to resolve. These discussions occur in families where no transfer is happening, during transfers or when transfers have occurred when the successor is approaching his (no her) fifties or sixties and the parents are in the seventies or eighties. These issues arise whether succession is by way of gifting, farm sale to successor, by staged succession or as mixed process.

Staged succession does not preclude difficult issues between the transferor and the transferee arising because the successor has a foothold into farm ownership. That families have difficulties resolving these emotion-laden issues was evident in family members' accounts of farm transfers. While staged succession allows successors to become competent farmers and feel more engaged with the family farm, farm owners can create conflict between themselves and their successors by not actually progressing from one stage to the next or not completing the transfer, leaving successors in limbo as to developing their own plans for the farm and their plans for their own young families. So, it is evident that the relationship between transferors and transferees can be undermined when the desires of the transferee are not met during the process of transfer, and when the desires of the transferor for continued involvement in the farm are not voiced, acknowledged and accommodated.

Hence, **the fourth research finding** refers to the skills necessary to recognise and accommodate affective relationships of family members for successful farm transfers. Family

farmers either lack the relationship skills, social awareness and/or do not attend to the emotional factors (attachments and personal desires) that are integral to the emotional spacetime of family farm transfers. Whether it is lack of attention to affective relationships by farm owners, or lack of skill in managing and accommodating affective relationships was not distinguished; however, poor management or lack of recognition of the significance of affective relationships of family members emerged as a significant factor in the emotional well-being of individual family members – parents, successors and non-successors alike.

8.3 Farm transfers create enduring effects for family members

Differently from other research, this thesis approached the examination of intergenerational family farm transfers by examining the emotional relations within the family and between individual family members and the farm before, during and after the process of intergenerational family farm transfer. By including emotions as sources of knowledge of and acknowledging their role as actants in family dynamics and farm transfers we gain a richer understanding than previously provided of the complexities farm owners and their family members encounter and must negotiate as they move through this stage in their lives and of their farms' enterprises.

Chapter 6 focuses on the emotions and affects arising from experiences of family farm transfers. Lefebvre's (1991) three moments of space provided the conceptual tools to examine the differences in family members emotional experiences of farm transfers. This research reveals that the different actions for and attitudes and emotional responses to farm transfers can be apprehended when family members' representations of farming and their farms are known. While family members can be resident on the farms and acting together to create productive farms, they may hold entirely different representations of those farms. These representations can later create discord and conflict between family members. Siblings' attitudes towards each other and their relationships with family members, their farms and the local community can change as offspring become adults and act on their own representations of farms.

Emotional responses to farm transfers and emotional dispositions during and after transfers altered the relationships between family members and between family members and their communities. In some cases, the fallout between siblings is most noted between offspring who share succession but who have different expectations (representations) of succession that have not been acknowledged, explored or accommodated. When affective relationships and representations are ignored, or downplayed as less important than the farm itself, variously the outcomes may be personal stress, ill-feeling, fractured family relations, loss of farm productivity and/or loss of the farm to the family. These effects are exacerbated when trust and communication between family members breakdown. In accord with Ahmed (2010) and Barbalet (2002), this thesis finds that emotional dispositions and responses of family members

signal problems and issues often overlooked when the focus of study and research is on the timing and processes of social phenomena. That emotional responses can be enduring and affect family relationships many years following farm transfers makes them important factors in terms of individual wellbeing and family social connectedness. This leads to the fifth research finding.

The fifth research finding is that family farmers, through their lack of relationship skills, and/or lack of attention to the affective relations of all family members, are responsible for the poor social and emotional outcomes experienced by family members and, in some cases, the loss of farms and out-migration from local farming communities. Many families do not manage to complete the staged transfer of their farms even when there are competent successors prepared to take over. Of the families able to transfer their farms to a successor in the family, some suffer the fracturing of family relationships during the process or difficult relationships following the transfers.

Farm succession is more than a business transaction. It is a relational phenomenon, a complex social process in a complex social business, in Symons's (2007) terminology, an emotional spacetime. It involves changes for all family members and therefore must engage with all family members, their different attachments to the farms and their constructs about and expectations of the outcomes of farm transfers. That many families do not manage the transfer of their farms successfully indicates that assistance is required in managing not just the financial and legal aspects of farm transfers but also in managing and addressing emotional and relationship issues.

Families who do manage succession successfully demonstrate that plans must be discussed and instituted early in a successor's life (during their twenties or earlier) and worked through (albeit with changes as changes to the lives of family members occur) to enable successors sufficient experience in decision-making and actual management of decisions through implementation before they become outright owners of the farming enterprise. Successful transitions further demonstrate that parents must include all family members in honest, clear and extensive communication about the possible futures for family farms and they must acknowledge and address the affective relationships of all members of the family.

Farm family relationships do break down over intergenerational farm transfers, and when they do, they not only sever communication and support between family members, they also affect relationships and functioning in local communities – because it is the family members who constitute the local communities. Family discord over farm transfers can also transfer across the generations, so that different branches of a family inherit particular emotional dispositions towards other family members, thereby continuing the isolation between members and further affecting local farming communities. The extent of the emotional hurt (ranging from mild unease

to strong resentments to enduring sadness to ill-health) felt by family members, the extent of family discord and fractured relationships and the effects on local communities resulting from these emotional dispositions demonstrates that a focus on family relationships is necessary when farm transfers are planned. Sometimes these poor outcomes result in farm sales and loss of family members or whole families from communities.

8.4 Local community and natural resource management issues arise from family farm transfers

Families do sell farms, and when they do the farms are bought up variously by new-comers to farming, farmers setting up in a new district, by neighbours or by out-of-district investors. Reasons for selling farms are many, and they are very much influenced by the prevailing economic and political contexts. Factors beyond the family are often as influential in determining the outcomes for family farms as are the internal dynamics of families and the personal goals of current farm owners. Chapter 7 with reference to Latour (2005) and Lefebvre (1991) focuses on the effects on farming districts when farm transfers occur in times of different economic and political eras contribute to increased or decreased populations in those districts.

The sixth research finding relates to the impact State and Federal Governments have on farm transfers and broadacre farming communities – governments are implicated in farm transfer outcomes for family members, family cohesion, family continuity with the farm and for local community sustainability. Governments, with policies and programs informed by particular social and economic agendas, either create densely populated farming districts with dense social networks and high social capital or they create sparsely populated districts with little social capital. Policies and programs that support high populations in rural areas enable farming districts to be rich in rural social capital, thereby enabling rural communities to develop and implement social structures and services which in turn, reflexively, provide systems to support individual wellbeing. Current neoliberal-like advice to farmers encouraging farmers to focus on efficiency and increased productivity undermines retention of people in broadacre farming communities, this in turn leads to thin networks of associations in these communities and to actual social isolation and a reduction in individual wellbeing of the local farmers and remaining community members and a reduction in the voluntary services offered by residents to look after each other, infrastructure and natural resources.

In many broadacre farming districts in the research area, the drive for efficiency has resulted in out-of-district owners who, as described by interviewees, contribute little to the local communities when contrasted with the contributions of farms with resident families. The farms owned by out-of-district investors may be equally or more productive and efficient than the farms

were when occupied and managed by the previous family owners, but the local communities and remaining resident farm owners benefit less when farms are owned by out-of-district investors.

Hence, **the seventh research finding** is that family farm owners, non-resident farm owners, their professional associates and the State and Federal Governments in concert create the farms and the local communities of these farming districts. This thesis, therefore, confirms the findings of Luck (2011) that natural resource management, local community sustainability and individual wellbeing are determined by this complex association. Except for the peri-urban regions, the populations of most broadacre farming communities in the research area of western Victoria, Australia are in decline, a decline continuing from the 1980s, whereas previously farms and farming communities were supported by tariff protection, farm subsidies and, especially, during the 1940s to 1960s, by the government funded Soldier Settlement schemes.

8.5 Summing up

This thesis presents the knowledge derived from qualitative research that engaged with representatives from farming families operating a variety of broadacre and dairy farming enterprises and with farming family associates across eleven local government areas in western Victoria, Australia. The qualitative research employing a plurality of analytical frameworks and operating within an overarching critical feminist perspective enabled the complexity of factors and relations impacting on the social phenomenon of intergenerational family farm transfer to emerge. The effects of decisions and processes of intergenerational family farm transfer on farm family members, their relationships, the farms and their farm communities were brought to light.

By employing Lefebvre's (1991) theory on the production of space to examine the factors that create different farming spaces in different places and eras and Massey's (1995) notion of the relationality of production, the factors influencing farm owners' decisions and the effects of these decisions in farming districts have been revealed. Latour's (2005) actor-network theory enabled the specific actants informing farm transfer decisions and processes to be made evident, and Symons's (2007) conception of processes of change as emotional spacetime events highlighted that emotions play a significant role in maintaining individual wellbeing, family cohesion and the sustainability of farming communities and natural resource management.

What is apparent from the research is that masculine hegemonic attitudes are still held by many (mostly male) farm owners and their successors, and many also adhere to the current neoliberal-like goals of efficiency and increased farm productivity. These attitudes and goals combine to continue and exacerbate the adverse consequences of intergenerational farm transfers, that of continued out-migration of non-successors, farms sales to non-farming family owners and out-migration of families from rural communities. The continuing (inexorable?) loss of family

members and of farming families and the social capital they could provide rural communities will continue to undermine the sustainability of broadacre farming communities and local resource management in those communities.

This thesis argues that the sum effect of multiple factors – variously the personal, family-generated, political and economic – has brought many broadacre farming communities, particularly those not in close proximity to large regional urban centres, to a critical situation such that unless something is done to reverse their decline, then the communities will cease to exist. These communities are at "tipping point" (O'Riordan 2013: 33) – for their survival: a tipping point which could see a continued depletion of population and loss of community associations. The tipping point could be viewed as a wake-up call to farm owners, local farming communities and governments of the issues that need addressing if family farming is to remain the cornerstone of farming communities with all the benefits, in the broadest sense (of environmental, social and economic goods), that families can bring to rural communities. That is, the current state of broadacre farms and their farming communities, produced by an intersection of many factors, require assistance and intervention beyond reliance on neoliberal-like individualist agendas.

As suggested by Gibson-Graham (2006), it is time to reflect on and examine more rigorously the general adoption of and adherence to agendas that focus predominately on economic efficiency and growth that appear to sacrifice, through net outmigration, the social wellbeing of many people living in broadacre farming districts. There is a need for rural people to address the fact that they themselves are responsible for contributing to rural out-migration through the attitudes they hold which make life difficult and/or unattractive for potential successors and potential life partners of successors. Reversal of the current trend of out-migration from rural farming regions requires changes to attitudes and actions within families, within local farming communities and within governments, and changes to the notion that farm transfers ought to be restricted to few successors.

The findings are relevant to other broadacre and dairy regions of Australia and for other comparable international farming regions where families form the backbone of rural communities in providing the social capital and attending to the sustainability of the physical, environmental and economic resources of those communities.

8.6 Limitations and recommendations for further research

While the scope of this research enabled engagement with representatives from farming families operating a variety of broadacre and dairy farming enterprises and with farming family associates across eleven local government areas in western Victoria, Australia, there was little opportunity

to investigate which knowledge and skills learned by successors in their childhoods on family farms were useful and applicable to them when they became successors, or to investigate how people new to farming were able to develop sufficient knowledge and skills to be successful in their farming careers. A qualitative sociological examination of the development of farming knowledge and skills would provide a more accurate assessment of the current taken-for-granted opinion that growing up on family farms is the best way to enter farming.

It was also not possible to engage directly with owners, managers or labourers/contractors on the farms known to be owned by out-of-district investors to seek their views on their commitments to local rural communities and the proposals they have for their farming enterprises and properties. Qualitative research engaging with out-of-district owners on their commitments to local communities is needed to add to the knowledge and theory of sustainability of the rural for both rural sociology and rural geography.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Australian Postgraduate Award

MONASH University
Institute of Graduate Research

[redacted]

Thursday 13 December, 2012

MS DIANE ELIZABETH LUHRS
[redacted]

Dear MS LUHRS

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION [redacted]
On behalf of Monash University, I am pleased to offer you an Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) commencing in 2013. This offer is made on the basis that you have obtained as a minimum qualification an Australian or New Zealand bachelors degree with first class honours or qualifications/research experience deemed equivalent by the university.

The APA pays a stipend of A$24,653 per annum (2013 full-time rate). All students are to pay a Student Services and Amenities fee of up to $273 (indexed annually) each calendar year. For further information go to www.monash.edu.au/fees/amenities.html.

Award: Australian Postgraduate Award (APA)
Course: 0020 - PhDArts **Attendance Type:** FT **Attendance Mode:** External
Academic Unit: Gippsland Sch Of Applied Media & Soc Sciences, Faculty Of Arts
[redacted]

Australian citizens, New Zealand citizens and Australian Permanent Residents are granted a Research Training Scheme (RTS) place which will normally exempt awardees from paying course fees for a maximum period of four years for a doctoral program and two years for a masters program.

Awardees are required to accept or decline the offer by Friday 4 January 2013. Please log on to the Online Application from www.monash.edu.au/migr/apply/accept/scholarship/ using your Applicant ID number and Password. Awardees must commence by 31 March 2013 (in exceptional circumstances awardees may be permitted to commence by 30 June 2013). Should you decline or fail to respond to the offer by the deadline, the offer will be withdrawn. For students already enrolled for the degree for which the scholarship was awarded, the duration of the award will be reduced by the period of study undertaken towards the degree prior to the commencement of the award.

Awardees accepting their offer must download the Scholarship Commencement Kit from www.monash.edu.au/migr/apply/accept/scholarship/. The Commencement Kit outlines the procedures for enrolment and for commencement of scholarship payments. New commencing students are required to present the original documents contained in their scholarship application at time of enrolment. Refer to the Commencement Kit for further details.

Please contact Ms Vesna Nikolovski, Senior Research Scholarships Officer on +61 3 9905 1471 or email hdrschol@monash.edu if you have any queries.

Congratulations on receiving the offer of this award.

Yours sincerely
[redacted]

Mrs Michelle Lopez, Manager Research Scholarships and Resources

Ground Floor, Building 3D, Clayton Campus
Wellington Road, Monash University
Victoria 3800, Australia
Telephone +61 3 9905 3009
Email migr@monash.edu www.monash.edu/migr
CRICOS Provider No. 00008C ABN 12 377 614 012

Monash University Institute of Graduate Research – formerly Monash Research Graduate School

Appendix 2: MUHREC Ethics approval

MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

This is to certify that the project below was considered by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Committee was satisfied that the proposal meets the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and has granted approval.

Project Number:	CF14/1403 - 2014000658	
Project Title:	Intergenerational Family-Farm Transfer: Family Members' Experiences and Rural Social Issues	
Chief Investigator:	Dr Michelle Duffy	
Approved:	**From:** 9 June 2014	**To:** 9 June 2019

Terms of approval - ***Failure to comply with the terms below is in breach of your approval and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.***

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation.
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must include your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Require the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

[redacted]

Professor Nip Thomson
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Ms Diane Luhrs, Dr Nick Osbaldiston, Dr Sally Weller

Postal – Monash University, Vic 3800, Australia
Building 3E, Room 111, Clayton Campus, Wellington Road, Clayton
Telephone +61 3 9905 5490 Facsimile +61 3 9905 3831
Email muhrec@monash.edu http://www.monash.edu.au/researchoffice/human/

Appendix 3: Seeking participants

16th June 2014

Letter seeking research participants

Farm family members

Are there any farm family members whose family farms are/were in west and south west Victoria Australia, who would like to participate in an interview (up to 2 hours) for my research project that aims to add to the knowledge about people living in and growing up in Australia's rural farming regions. My interest is in finding out how strong people's feelings are (or were) about their attachments to the family farms, their farming community, the farming activities and the farming way of life.

No participants would be identifiable in the research documents - the important aspect for me is to explore the feelings that current and former farm family members have about their family farm experiences and the effects that these feelings may have in determining their decisions, actions, careers and relationships. Participants must be over 18 years and can be any age from there up to any age. This project follows my research on daughters of farmers in 2012. That research focussed on daughters growing up on family farms in the Shire of Southern Grampians. This research also provides for daughters, but also seeks sons (successors and non-successors) as well as parents as farm owners. I am focussing on broadacre cropping, sheep/cattle and also dairying family farming properties from the West Wimmera Shire in the north to the Pyrenees Shire in the east and to Moyne and Glenelg in the south of SW Victoria covering nine shires across this region.

Possible research participants may now live outside SW Vic - but I can make arrangements to meet with prospective participants (I will drive to any district in Vic, southern SA and southern NSW to conduct the interviews) or conduct phone or Skype interviews if people would like to participate.

Either of the following addresses: Diane Luhrs, PO Box 883, Hamilton, 3300 or Email: deluh1@student.monash.edu may be used to contact me. Please contact me to discuss/clarify the research, and/or to arrange interview places and times.

Diane Luhrs
PhD candidate (GES)
Monash University, Clayton 3800, Victoria.

Letter to the Editor published in *The Spectator*, June 2014

Advertisement: Farm family members

Research participants sought to participate in research by interview that aims to add the body of knowledge on family farms in rural Australia. This research is a component of a PhD project undertaken by PhD candidate Diane Luhrs of Monash University, Gippsland campus. Daughters, sons and family-farm owners of all ages above 18 years who were/are members of farming families in southwest Victoria, are all welcome to register for this research.

Contact Diane Luhrs by writing to Diane Luhrs, PO Box 883, Hamilton, 3300, by Email: deluh1@student.monash.edu, or by phone 03-55723874.

Advertisement published over successive weekends in *The Spectator*, June 2014 and *The Warrnambool Standard* September 2014; *Facebook* October 2014.

Letter to Editor

Family farm transition

Dear Sir/madam

I am seeking, through your publication, people whose families are still working on family farms or who once belonged to farming families and who would be interested in contributing to research on how farming families negotiate the process of family farm transfer and intergenerational change of ownership. My research project is being undertaken as a PhD project overseen by Dr Michelle Duffy of Monash University.

This research seeks not only contributions from current owners (male and female) but also contributions from any successor and non-successor children over eighteen years (up to any age) and from retired farmers and their partners who may be able to offer a perspective on the subject. The aim is to build a comprehensive picture of how members of farming families negotiate intergenerational change and also of how different family members contribute to this process and the differences that may occur in different regions and in different types of family farms.

My research area is limited to family farms (cropping, grazing, dairying and mixed) in Western Victoria from the South Australian Border in the west to Avoca, Beaufort and Camperdown in the east and from Hopetoun in the north to the south-western Victorian coastline. However, research participants who have left the area of their family farms are also eligible to contribute to the research. I will arrange to travel to interview participants in a place convenient to them.

The research data will be collected through individual, confidential face-to-face interviews of between one to two hours. While I am looking for representatives of all family farming members: husbands, wives, partners, sons and daughters, it is not necessary that all members of one farming family contribute to this research. To contribute to this research, current and former farming family members can register their interest by emailing me Diane Luhrs at deluh1@student.monash.edu or by phone on 03-55723874.

Yours faithfully

Diane Luhrs

Letter published in Letter to Editor *The Weekly Times*, June 2014; Monash University HDR website, November 2014–December 2015; Trinity College (University of Melbourne) student enoticeboard, September 2014.

Seeking

Farm Family Members

to participate in research by interview to provide insights into how and whether family members in Western Victoria (from Beaufort to the SA border and from Hopetoun to the coast) negotiate and undertake the process of intergenerational family farm transfer or how they negotiate moving off the farm. Any family member over 18 years is sought for interview.

This is a Monash University PhD research project.

Please contact Diane Luhrs to register your interest: by phone 03 55723874, or email deluh1@student.monash.edu

Advertisement published in *The Weekly Times*, 25 September 2014; *The Wimmera Mail-Times*, 1 October 2014

Appendix 4: Explanatory statements and consent forms

MONASH University

Explanatory Statement 1
Date: April 13th, 2014

Explanatory Statement for farm family members – daughters, sons and family farm owners

Project: Intergenerational family-farm transfer: Family members' experiences and rural social issues

Chief Investigator's name	Student's name
Dr Michelle Duffy	Diane Luhrs
Department of Applied Media and Social Sciences	Department of Geography, Environment and Sustainability
Telephone 03-51226559	Telephone: none
Email: Michelle.Duffy@arts.monash.edu.au	Email: deluh1@student.monash.edu

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Student Research Project

My name is Diane Elizabeth Luhrs and I am conducting research towards a PhD Arts at Monash University. I am being supervised by Dr Michelle Duffy, researcher in the Department of Applied Media and Social Sciences with co-supervisors being Dr Nick Osbaldiston (Monash University - Gippsland campus) and Dr Sally Weller (Monash University – Clayton campus). This research involves me writing a thesis which is the equivalent of a book.

You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before making a decision to participate.

Why did I choose you as participant?

You have been invited to take part in this study because you are a member of a farming family who has lived on a family farm in south eastern Australia. Contact with you was made in one of two ways:

- Either I found your contact details based on my knowledge of farming families in the farming districts of south-eastern Australia through examining the local phone directory and you are not on the Do Not Call Register; or
- I was provided your contact details by you during personal contact at local events, or in response by you to radio announcements, newspaper and magazine letters, Facebook and advertisements placed by me requesting potential participants to contact me by mail.

The aim/purpose of the research

The aim of this study is to gather the stories from daughters, sons and farm owners, who have lived in farming families on family farms in the south-eastern region of Australia, on their experiences of farm inheritance/succession. The research seeks to find out about how daughters and sons of farmers and farm owners feel connected to the family farm, their responses to the way the family farm was/will be passed on, and the effects of the actual farm inheritance on their connection to the family, the rural community and the region.

MONASH University

Possible benefits

The benefits will be a greater understanding of how farm family members respond to the practices of family farm succession/inheritance, and an understanding of the daughters and sons of farmers' subsequent connections to their parents and siblings, the farm community and the farm region. This in turn will inform research into rural and family farm sustainability and the development of policies and practices directed to rural sustainability programs.

What does the research involve?

The research involves a preliminary questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview is like a conversation. Our conversation will be recorded.

How much time will the research take?

The interview process will take approximately 90-120 minutes.

Inconvenience/discomfort

If you feel upset during the interview, we will take a break or stop completely. If you very feel upset please contact one of the following agencies:

1. Lifeline on 13 11 14
2. Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636

Payment

There will be no reward offered, financial or otherwise for the interview.

Can I withdraw from the research?

Being a part this research is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. However, if you do consent to participate, you may withdraw from further participation at any stage, but you will only be able to withdraw data up until the completion of the transcription of the interview and its approval by you. After the transcription has been approved it will not be possible to withdraw the data. Understand that if you do withdraw your participation you will not be penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

Confidentiality

The information collected during the interview will be confidential or anonymous. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the privacy of each person when conveying the stories in my PhD thesis in addition to other publications and presentations. Any details that may identify you will not be used in the thesis or in subsequent publications.

Storage of data

Data collected will be stored in accordance with Monash University regulations, kept on University premises, in my supervisor's office, in a locked filing cabinet for 5 years. A report of the research may be

MONASH University

submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. The data will be destroyed after 5 years.

Use of data for other purposes

The information in this study may be used in academic journals and public presentations to convey the stories of farm family members. Due to confidentiality and privacy, you will not be named and your personal details will not be identified in any way. Please keep in mind that it is sometimes impossible to make an absolute guarantee of confidentiality/anonymity.

Results

If you would like to be informed of the research findings, I would be happy to provide you with a written general summary statement of the findings (with the approval of my supervisor) at the conclusion of my course.

Contact: To contact the researchers or MUHREC on any issues relating to this project please cite Project No: CF14/1403-2014000658.

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:	If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research is being conducted, please contact:
Dr Michelle Duffy Department of Applied Media and Social Sciences Monash University Churchill Victoria (3842) Telephone 03-51226559 Email: Michelle.Duffy@arts.monash.edu.au	Executive Officer Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Fax: +61 3 9905 3831 Email: muhrec@monash.edu

Thank you,

Student Researcher: Diane Luhrs

Signed:

[redacted]

Date: 13th April 2014

MONASH University

Consent Form for Farm family members – daughters, sons and family farm owners

Title of project: Intergenerational family-farm transfer: Family members' experiences and rural social issues

NOTE: This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records

I agree to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that:

I consent to the following:	**Yes**	**No**
I agree to complete a preliminary questionnaire asking me about being a member of a farming family and about issues of farm inheritance/succession.	☐	☐
I agree to be interviewed by the researcher	☐	☐
I agree to allow the interview to be audio-taped	☐	☐
I agree to allow the interviewer to take photographs of the place of the interview	☐	☐
I agree to allowing the researcher to use the data from this research in later follow-up research	☐	☐

and

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project but that I will only be able to withdraw data up until the completion of the transcription and its approval by me.

After the transcription has been approved by me, I understand that it will not be possible to withdraw the data.

I also understand that if I do withdraw my participation I will not be penalised or disadvantaged in anyway.

and

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the interview / questionnaire / survey for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

and

I understand that I will be given a transcript of interview data concerning me for my approval before it is included in the write up of the research.

MONASH University

and

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

and

I understand that data from the interview, questionnaire, transcript and audio-record will be kept in a secure storage and accessible to the research team. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5 year period unless I consent to it being used in future research.

I **do/do not** wish to receive a copy of the final written general summary statement of the findings at the conclusion of the research honours course.

Optional – My postal address (or email) for receipt of the final written general summary statement of the findings of this research project is:

Address: _____

State: _____

Post Code: _____

Email: _____

On signing this document, I give my consent to participate in this research project and consent to and agree with all the possible conditions outlined above.

Participant's name _____

Participant's signature: _____

Interviewer's signature _____

Date: _____

MONASH University

Explanatory Statement (2)
April 13th, 2014

Explanatory Statement for 'Professionals involved with Farming Families'

Project: Intergenerational family-farm transfer: Family members' experiences and rural social issues

Chief Investigator's name	Student's name
Dr Michelle Duffy	Diane Luhrs
Department of Applied Media and Social Sciences	Department of Geography, Environment and Sustainability
Telephone 03-51226559	Telephone: none
Email: Michelle.Duffy@arts.monash.edu.au	Email: deluh1@student.monash.edu

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Student Research Project

My name is Diane Elizabeth Luhrs and I am conducting research towards a PhD Arts at Monash University. I am being supervised by Dr Michelle Duffy, researcher in the Department of Applied Media and Social Sciences with co-supervisors being Dr Nick Osbaldiston (Monash University - Gippsland campus) and Dr Sally Weller (Monash University – Clayton campus). This research involves me writing a thesis which is the equivalent of a book.

You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before making a decision to participate.

Why did I choose you as participant?

You have been invited to take part in this study because you are someone with specialist knowledge of issues affecting farming families involved in intergenerational family farm transfer. Contact with you was made because:

- You are in a profession engaged with farming families and I contacted you using your advertised professional contact list.

The aim/purpose of the research

The aim of this study is to gather the stories from daughters, sons and farm owners, who have lived in farming families on family farms in the south-eastern region of Australia, on their experiences of farm inheritance/succession. The research seeks to find out about how daughters and sons of farmers and farm owners feel connected to the family farm, their responses to the way the family farm was/will be passed on, and the effects of the actual farm inheritance on their connection to the family, the rural community and the region.

MONASH University

Possible benefits

The benefits will be a greater understanding of how farm family members respond to the practices of family farm succession/inheritance, and an understanding of the daughters and sons of farmers' subsequent connections to their parents and siblings, the farm community and the farm region. This in turn will inform research into rural and family farm sustainability and the development of policies and practices directed to rural sustainability programs.

What does the research involve?

The research involves a preliminary questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview is like a conversation. Our conversation will be recorded.

How much time will the research take?

The interview process will take approximately 60minutes.

Inconvenience/discomfort

If you feel upset during the interview, we will take a break or stop completely. If you very feel upset please contact one of the following agencies:

1. Lifeline on 13 11 14
2. Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636

Payment

You will be offered a complementary lunch or afternoon tea as a thank you for your participation in this research. A small payment may be available if you feel that this is necessary to compensate for the time taken out of your professional work time.

Can I withdraw from the research?

Being a part this research is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. However, if you do consent to participate, you may withdraw from further participation at any stage but you will only be able to withdraw data up until the completion of the transcription of the interview and its approval by you. After the transcription has been approved it will not be possible to withdraw the data. Understand that if you do withdraw your participation you will not be penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

Confidentiality

The information collected during the interview will be confidential or anonymous. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the privacy of each person when conveying the stories in my PhD thesis in addition to other publications and presentations.

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Storage of data

Data collected will be stored in accordance with Monash University regulations, kept on University premises, in my supervisor's office, in a locked filing cabinet for 5 years. A report of the research may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. The data will be destroyed after 5 years.

Use of data for other purposes

The information in this study may be used in academic journals and public presentations to convey the stories of women. Due to confidentiality and privacy, you will not be named and your personal details will not be identified in any way. Please keep in mind that it is sometimes impossible to make an absolute guarantee of confidentiality/anonymity.

Results

If you would like to be informed of the research findings, I would be happy to provide you with a written general summary statement of the findings (with the approval of my supervisor) at the conclusion of my course.

Contact: To contact the researchers or MUHREC on any issues relating to this project please cite Project No: CF14/1403-2014000658.

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:	If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research is being conducted, please contact:
Dr Michelle Duffy Department of Applied Media and Social Sciences Monash University Churchill Victoria (3842) Telephone 03-51226559 Email: Michelle.Duffy@arts.monash.edu.au	Executive Officer Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Fax: +61 3 9905 3831 Email: muhrec@monash.edu

Thank you,

Student Researcher: Diane Luhrs
Signed:

[redacted]

Date: 13th April 2014

MONASH University

Consent Form for Professionals Involved with Farming Families

Title of Project: Intergenerational family-farm transfer: Family members' experiences and rural social issues

NOTE: This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records

I agree to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that:

I consent to the following:	**Yes**	**No**
I agree to be interviewed by the researcher	☐	☐
I agree to allow the interview to be audio-taped	☐	☐
I agree to allowing the researcher to use the data from this research in later follow-up research	☐	☐

and

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project but that I will only be able to withdraw data up until the completion of the transcription and its approval by me.

After the transcription has been approved by me, I understand that it will not be possible to withdraw the data.

I also understand that if I do withdraw my participation I will not be penalised or disadvantaged in anyway.

and

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the interview / questionnaire / survey for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.
and

I understand that I will be given a transcript of interview data concerning me for my approval before it is included in the write up of the research.

and

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

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and

I understand that data from the interview, questionnaire, transcript and audio-record will be kept in a secure storage and accessible to the research team. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5 year period unless I consent to it being used in future research.

I **do/do not** wish to receive a copy of the final written general summary statement of the findings at the conclusion of the research.

Optional – My postal address (or email) for receipt of the final written general summary statement of the findings of this research project is:

Address: _____

State: _____

Post Code: _____

Email _____

On signing this document, I give my consent to participate in this research project and consent to and agree with all the possible conditions outlined above.

Participant's name _____

Participant's signature: _____

Interviewer's signature _____

Date: _____

Appendix 5: Questionnaire, interview guide questions and postal survey

Intergenerational family-farm transfer: Family members' experiences and rural social issues

Preliminary Questionnaire for farm family members (daughters, sons and family farm owner

Questions about the family, the family member's position in the family and the family member's role in determining family farm succession or inheritance		
1	Date of birth	
2.	Age / date on starting life on the family farm	
3	a. Age / date on inheriting the farm b. age /date on leaving the farm	
4.	Family size	
5	Position in family (that is, parent, 1st, 2nd, 3rd , etc-born child)	
6.	Family structure – parent(s) and birth order of brothers and sisters	
7.	Main decision-maker in family	
8.	Current owner(s)/title-holder(s) of the family farm	
9.	Who owned the farm in the previous generation?	
10.	Number of generations the farm has been in the family.	
11.	Who next/(will) inherited/(inherit) the farm?	
Questions about the farm relate to the family farm when the family member was living on the farm. (Those marked with an * may not be answerable but they are included to provide an indication of the family member's understanding of the commercial and productive value of the family farm. Those marked with ^ may require more space. Please use an additional sheet to provide extended responses.)		
11.	Farm location	
12.	Farm size	
13.	Farm enterprise	
14.	Number of workers on farm (including seasonal contractors)	
15.	Own jobs on the farm^	
16.	Farm jobs/roles of other farm family members – members roles/jobs to be listed separately ^	
19.	Estimated/comparative value of the farm, its stock and capital assets* (as assessed by the farm family member, against other farms in the vicinity of the family farm)	
20.	Estimated/comparative yearly income of farm* (as assessed by the farm family member, against other farms in the vicinity of the family farm)	
21.	Did you or will you inherit the farm or have the farm succession plan include you?	
22.	**For the farm children** - would you like or have liked to inherit the farm or be included in the farm succession plans?	
Questions about schooling (These questions are aimed at eliciting factors which relate to the farm-family member's preparation for occupation and status in adult life)		
23.	Highest level of education achieved	
24.	Highest level of education achieved by siblings(parents answer about their children)	
25.	Factors that determined the educational pursuits and achievements of you and your siblings (parents answer about their children).^	
26	Religious affiliation in childhood	

Interview Guide - Owners of Family Farms and the Parents of Daughters and Sons in Farming Families

The following questions are questions that I may ask to generate reflective responses from participants on their interpretations of their status with respect to farm inheritance and farm-succession plans. They may be asked in any order after the first three questions, with not all questions necessarily being asked depending on the participants' responses and comments.

I will start the interview by stating that:

> I am interested in exploring the participants' personal thoughts on their roles in the farming family's process of handing over the family farm to the next generation or on removing the family from the family farm. I will be asking for personal memories and impressions of their roles and responsibilities on the family farm, of their personal associations with and attachments to the family farm and of whether the family farm is still a significant part of the interviewee's current life-style. I will also be asking for impressions of family farming as a lifestyle, as contributing to rural communities and of the current importance and significance of family farming to rural Australia and to Australia in general.

1. What is/has been your main occupation/life activity?
2. Describe your involvement with your family's farm.
3. How did you come to live and work on your family farm?
4. Describe the importance of the family-farm to you.
5. Do your children share these same feelings about the family farm?
6. What are your children's main ambitions for their adult lives?
7. What do you think is important with respect to your children's futures?
8. What provisions have you made to ensure that your children are able to live comfortably and to follow careers of their own choosing?
9. What do you see as the main connection between the family farm, your role as parent/farm owner and each of your children's futures?
10. How does the family-farm feature in the future lives of your children?
11. How will you prepare for and manage the time when you will no longer be living and/or working on the family farm?
12. What do you think are the important considerations for farmers undertaking/undergoing change of ownership of the family farm?
13. Will you have processes to follow to ensure that the next generation can enjoy their association with the family farm of their childhood?
14. Is there something further that you can add to this discussion on intergenerational family farm transfer and about who should be nominated a successor?

Interview Guide - Daughters and Sons (both successors and non-successors) of Family Farmers

The following questions are questions that I may ask to generate reflective responses from participants on their interpretations of their status with respect to farm inheritance and farm-succession plans. They may be asked in any order after the first three questions, with not all questions necessarily being asked depending on the participants' responses and comments.

I will start the interview by stating that:

> I am interested in exploring the participants' personal thoughts on their farming family's process of handing over the family farm to the next generation or on removing the family from the family farm. I will be asking for personal memories and impressions of a childhood on the family farm and of personal associations with and attachments to the family farm and of whether the family farm is still a significant part of the interviewee's current life-style. I will also be asking for impressions of family farming as a lifestyle, as contributing to rural communities and of the current importance and significance of family farming to rural Australia and to Australia in general.

1. What is your main occupation/life activity?

2. Does it include on-farm activities?

3. Please explain the importance of the family-farm to you during your childhood, that is, up until the age of twelve. The following sub-questions may be used as prompts for this question:
    a. What are your first memories of life on the farm?
    b. Did you enjoy growing up on the farm?
    c. What did you enjoy?
    d. What did you dislike?

4. How do you think that your childhood experiences of living on the family farm inform your personal identity?

5. Did you ever think that you would have liked to be the one to continue with the work on the family farm?

6. Did you ever think that you would have liked to be the one to inherit the family farm?

7. Describe the social, and/or other, events that either brought you closer to the family farm or distanced you from it. The following sub-questions may be used as prompts for this question:
    a. How did the family prepare you for adult life?
    b. What factors influenced your decisions in preparing for your adult life?

8. Did the family ever talk openly about who would inherit or continue the family farm?

9. Were you considered by the family as a potential farm successor and farm operator/manager?

10. What was the message that you received from your family about your role in continuing the family farm?

11. What are your impressions of how the family determined and managed the process of intergenerational transfer of family farm assets?

12. What have been the effects of your family's handling of this intergenerational transfer of the family's farm? ('Effects' to be left to the interviewee to consider.)

13. What changes, if any, have occurred in the relationships between you, your siblings and parents because of the intergenerational transfer of the family farm?

14. In summary –
    a. What do you think are the effects of the process of intergenerational family farm transfer as occurred in your family have been
        i. On you personally?
        ii. On the relationship between you and your parents?
        iii. On the relationship between you and your siblings?
        iv. On the relationship between you and the wider local farm community?
        v. On you and rural communities in general?
        vi. On your choice of adult life?
        vii. On the rural community?
    b. What do you understand as the basic relationship between males and females in your family with respect to decisions about farming practice and inheritance/succession?
    c. Is the relationship that you have just described, similar for other families in the farming community of your childhood?
    d. Do you think that this is acceptable or in need of change?
    e. If in need of change – what changes would you suggest should/could occur in the process of family farm succession?

15. What is your current impression of family-farming as a rewarding life activity?

Final question:

16. Are there any aspects of this research not already covered that you think should be included in this research focussed on daughters of farmers and issues of farm inheritance?

Other relevant questions may arise – these may be added later interviews.

Interview Guide - professional consultant/advisors in farming communities

The following questions are questions that I may ask to generate reflective responses from participants on their interpretations of their involvement with farming families with respect to farm inheritance and farm-succession plans.

The questions are raised with attention given to the researcher's mindfulness of the obligations of client confidentiality of the participants. The researcher will remind all participants of these obligations and will stop the participants if they appear to be in breach of client confidentiality. The researcher will remind the participants that confidentiality responsibilities rest with both the researcher and the participant so that no third party can be specifically named or identified from the information given during the interviews.

1. What is your main occupation/life activity?

2. Does it include on-farm activities?

3. Describe your involvement with farm succession.

4. For how long have you been engaged with farm family members on the issue of farm succession

5. From your own direct professional involvement with members of farming families, what knowledge can you share about the process of farm succession and the effects of this process on
    a. Members of the farm families?
    b. Other members of the farming community?

6. What appear to be the most difficult aspects of farm succession for farming families?

7. What effects do you see as resulting from the process of farm succession?

8. How do you advise farm family members who engage you to help them through this process?

9. What do you see as a way of making this process less difficult and more equitable for members of the farming family?

10. Do you have any major concerns about how farming families approach and undertake farm succession-planning? If so, what are they?

11. What would you like to see in terms of family farm succession planning as related to issues of
    a. Farm sustainability
    b. Farm family relations
    c. Community sustainability
    d. Something else?

12. What other observations do you have to make about family farm succession-planning as occurs in this farming region?

MONASH University

Topic: Family Farms: Negotiating Family Farm Transfer

Project Title: Intergenerational family-farm transfer: Family members' experiences and rural social issues

Confidential Anonymous Survey for Monash University PhD candidate Diane Luhrs ID 19031149

Please complete as many of these sections as you can or wish to and return to D. Luhrs in the envelope provided

Note: Where there are choices for responses please circle the most relevant response(s) or add your own comments in the section provided

A. Farm details:				
Location (Shire):				
Farm size (A or HA)				
Number of generations in the family				
Farm enterprise (main activity stating which activity(ies)). Eg wool, beef, dairy, cropping, etc	**Mixed:**			
	Single commodity:			
Any other relevant comments about the farm enterprise – perhaps changes in enterprise and management undertaken over the years				

B. Self	**Age:**	**Yrs**	**Sex:**	**M F**
Entry to farm	**Birth**	**Moved with family as child**	**Married farmer**	**Other (state)**
Number of years on farm				
Active role in	**Management**	**Farm jobs**	**Employment**	**Other (state)**
Main position on farm	**Owner**	**Principal**	**Business partner**	**Other (state)**
Personal farm training				
Other occupations/training/ qualifications				
Considering retirement	**No**	**Yes**	**On-farm**	**Off-farm**
Other comments re: self and farm				

C. Succession				
Years of thinking about succession				
Years of planning succession				
Succession to occur	**Yes**	**Perhaps**	**No**	
Successor(s) nominated	**Yes** (which relative(s)?)		**Possible**	**No**
Succession plan formalised	**Yes**	**Partially**	**No**	
Succession process	**Farmer decision**	**Family discussion**	**Employ consultant to assist**	**Other (state)**
Are you involved in the succession process	**Yes (in what way):**			**No**
How much longer do you see yourself involved in the farm: living/work/management?				

Thank you for your contribution to this research

Diane E Luhrs 17-01-2015

Appendix 6: Participants, farms and farm regions

This appendix provides data describing interviewees and survey respondents and their connections to family farms. It provides data on the locations, enterprises and sizes of farms of farm family members. Members belonging to the same farming family are shown by grouping them in Table A6.6.

Table A6.1. Parents – mothers – who moved onto family farms after marriage. (No men, on marriage, moved onto farms owned by successor daughters)

Farm-family member[1]	Age in years	Childhood residences[2]	Occupational training	Location of family farm - Local Government Area[3]	Current involvement with farming[4]	Current involvement with farming community[5]
Wyn-FP36	36	Metropolitan	Veterinary assistant	Glenelg	Married to farmer; farm partnership	Very little – some social activities
Kaz-FP41	41	Country town	Science degree	Rural City Horsham	Married to farmer; not in partnership	Very little – some social activities
Joy-FP46	46	Country town	Childcare	Moyne	Married to farmer; farm partnership	Social activities and rural services
Lil-FP48	48	Metropolitan	Research assistant & other paid jobs	Southern Grampians	Married to farmer; farm partnership	Social activities and rural services
Fran-FP53	53	Country town	Home duties	Southern Grampians	Married to farmer; farm partnership	Social activities
Maz-FP56	56	Family farm	Trained nurse	Glenelg	Married to farmer; farm partnership	Social activities and rural services
Liz-FP60	60	Rural & metropolitan mix	Teacher/artist	Rural city of Ararat (lives in city out of shire)	Married to farmer; not in partnership	Very little – some social activities

Notes: 1. Possible responses include: husband, wife, de-facto relationship, however all interviewed in this category are wives/mothers

2. To retain confidentiality, the general locality of childhood homes is given rather than specific locations.

3. To retain confidentiality, the Local Government Area of individual farms is given rather than specific locations.

4. Possible responses include: None, Helper, Waged income, Worker, Owner, Manager, Partnership, Associated professional (AP), married to farmer.

5. Possible responses include: None, Associated professional (AP), social activities, rural services.

Table A6.2. Farm daughters' current farm involvements. Daughters who are/were successors to their childhood farms are shaded grey.

Farm-family daughter[1]	Age in years	Location of childhood farm - Local Government Area[2]	Occupation	Current involvement with childhood farm (CF)[3]	Current involvement with farming[4]	Current involvement with farming community[5]
Kim-DF21	21	Moyne	Business employee	Visits and helps parents on CF	Help out on family farm	Social activities
Bec-DF25 & **P**	25	Moyne	Kindergarten teacher	Visits father on CF	Married to farmer	Social activities
Ros-DF29 & *p*	29	Southern Grampians	Veterinary's assistant	Visits parents and brother on CF	Helps out with farm work	Social activities
Amy-DF29	29	Moyne	Tertiary student	Vacation work & accommodation	Help out on family farm	Social activities and rural services
Deb-DF30 & **P**	30	Rural City of Ararat	Farmer + off-farm business and office work	None	Lives and works on small farm	Social activities
Ann-DF34 & **P**	34	Southern Grampians	Business owner	Visits CF family successors	None	Social activities
Pru-DF37 & *p*	37	Corangamite	Journalist	Visits CF family successors	Reporting farm issues (AP)	Social activities
Kay-DF44	44	Southern Grampians	Farmer	Successor: works on CF	Full time farmer	Social activities and rural services
Lee-DF57	57	Glenelg	Teacher	Visit parents and brother on CF	None	Teaching farm children
Tam-DF57 & **P**	57	Glenelg	Teacher	None	Visits sons farm	Social activities
Jen-DF58 & *p*	58	Northern Grampians	School Principal	None	None	Visit NCF Teaching farm children
Dee-DF60	60	Moyne	Retired teacher	Works CF	Partnership	Social activities
Sue-DF60 & **P**	60	Northern Grampians	Farmer owner and manager	None	Partnership with sons	Social activities and rural services
Jan-DF61	61	Yarriambiack	Anthropologist	Visit brother on CF	Farm bookwork	None
Meg-DF63 & P	63	Southern Grampians	Farmer's wife	Visits	Partnership	Social activities and rural services
Eva-DF74 & **P**	74	Southern Grampians	Farmer/ former scientist	Visits CF family successors	Partnership with husband and sons	Social activities
Pam-DF79 & **P***	79	Glenelg	Retired nurse	None	None	Limited social activities
Lyn-DF82 & **P**	82	Hindmarsh	Farmer's wife	Visits CF family successors	None	Social activities
Peg-DF83 & **P**	83	Buloke	Retired farm wife	None	None	Social activities
Dot-DF88 & **P***	88	Southern Grampians	Retired farmer/farmer's wife	None	None	Limited social activities
Rae-DF91 & **P***	91	Glenelg	Retired farmer's wife	None	None	Limited social activities
Min-DF97 & **P***	97	Southern Grampians	Retired nurse	None	None	Limited social activities

Notes: 1. *P* – with children but not farm children; **P** – with children who are possible successors; ***** – off-farm, aged-care residents.

2. To retain confidentiality, the general locality of individual farms is given rather than specific locations.

3. Possible responses include: None, Visit childhood farm, Live on the childhood farm, work on childhood farm.

4. Possible responses include: None, Helper, Waged income, Worker, Owner, Manager, Partnership, Associated professional (AP), Dwelling.

5. Possible responses include: None, Associated professional (AP), social activities, rural services.

Table A6.3. Farm sons' current farm involvements. Sons who are/were successors to their childhood farms are shaded grey. Sons who believe they are to be successors are shaded in pale grey. Sons unshaded are not successors to family farms.

Farm-family son[1]	Age in years	Location of childhood farm - Local Government Area[2]	Occupation	Current involvement with childhood farm[3]	Current involvement with farming[4]	Current involvement with farming community[5]
Ben-SF19	19	Rural City of Ararat	Tertiary student	Occasional visitor	Very little	Very little
Jay-SF26	26	Southern Grampians	Farmer	Successor	Fulltime farming	Social activities and rural services
Sam-SF26	26	Glenelg	Farmer	Works on family farm; potential successor	Fulltime farming	Social activities and rural services
Tom-SF28 & **P** & FA8	28	Southern Grampians & Moyne	Farmer and off-farm sales	Lives on farm with wife and child; Potential successor	Works with father after hours	AP, social activities and rural services
Abe-SF31	31	Glenelg	Home handyman	Visits CH	Helps out occasionally	Social activities
Ric-SF33 & **P**	33	Glenelg	Farmer	Successor	Fulltime farming	Social activities and rural services
Zac-SF34 & FA9	34	Southern Grampians	Farmer and off-farm sales	Successor	After-hours farming	AP, social activities and rural services
Tim-SF40 & **P**	40	Rural City of Horsham	Farmer	Successor and partner	Fulltime farming	Social activities and rural services
Cam-SF44 & *p*	44	Southern Grampians	Farmer	Works on family farm; potential successor	Full time farming	Social activities and rural services
Greg-SF47 & **P**	47	Moyne	Farmer	Successor	Fulltime farming	Social activities and rural services
Don-SF48 & **P**	48	Southern Grampians	Farmer	Successor	Fulltime farming	Social activities and rural services
Con-SF51	51	Moyne	Farmer	Successor	Fulltime farming	Social activities and rural services
Vin-SF57 & *p*	57	Southern Grampians	Mechanic	None (as successor sold the farm)	Contract farm work - seasonal	Social activities
Rus-SF58 & *p*	58	Southern Grampians	Farming contractor	Beneficiary of farm estate – farm leased	Contract work on farms	Social activities and rural services
Nev-SF59 & **P**	59	Southern Grampians	Farmer	Successor and partner with wife	Fulltime farming	Social activities and rural services
Ron-SF59 & **P**	59	Glenelg	Farmer	Successor	Fulltime farming	Social activities and rural services
Joc-SF61 & **P**	61	Southern Grampians	Farmer	Successor	Fulltime farming	Social activities and rural services
Len-SF82 & **P**	82	Northern Grampians	Retired farmer	Visit son and his family on CF	Helps out with delivering farm items	Social activities
Ian-SF85 & **P***	85	Southern Grampians	Retired farmer	Visits and owns CF	Controls finances and management	Limited social activities
Huw-SF87 & **P**	87	Southern Grampians	Retired farmer	Visit son and his family on CF	Helps out with delivering farm items	Social activities
Vic-SF93 & **P***	93	Glenelg	Retired farmer	Visits CF	none	Limited social activities

Notes: 1. *P* – with children but not farm children; **P** – with children who are possible successors; ***** – off-farm, aged-care residents.

2. To retain confidentiality, the general locality of individual farms is given rather than specific locations.

3. Possible responses include: None, Visit childhood farm, Live on the childhood farm, work on childhood farm.

4. Possible responses include: None, Helper, Waged income, Worker, Owner, Manager, Partnership, Associated professional (AP), Dwelling.

5. Possible responses include: None, Associated professional (AP), social activities, rural services.

Table A6.4. Farm family associates. Farm associates who are also farm-family children and who are/may be successors to their childhood farms are shaded grey.

Farm family associate	Sex F/M	Profession/ occupation	Relationship with farming families	Status Practising P Retired Re
Jim-FA1	M	Accountant	Consulted with farmers on financial matters relating to wills and farm succession	Re
Roy-FA2	M	Accountant	Consults with farmers on financial matters relating to wills and farm succession	P
Marj-FA3	F	Aged care life-style co-ordinator	Works closely with retired farm family members in aged-care hostels	P
Paul-FA4	M	Businessman	Uncle with Power of Attorney over one family farm	P
Jo-FA5	F	Businesswoman	Aboriginal woman whose family members worked as labourers on a number of family farms in the region.	P
Liz-FA6	F	Businesswoman	Local small business trader to farm family members	P
May-FA7	F	Businesswoman	Local small business trader in rural town; aunt to farm family members on a multigenerational family farm	Re
Tom-FA8 and SF28	M	Farm supplies salesperson	Interacts with farm family members on farm management and supplies.	P
Zac-FA9 and SF34	M	Farm supplies salesperson	Interacts with farm family members on farm management and supplies.	P
Tim-FA10	M	Farmer health practitioner (also owns a working farm)	Consulting practitioner for farm family members on their physical, mental and social health.	P
Dan-FA11	M	Lawyer	Advises on different legal structures for ownership and management; advises on creating wills.	P
Bob-FA12	M	Legal executive officer	Consulted with farmers on legal matters relating to wills and farm succession	Re
Rob-FA13	M	Local Member of Parliament	Consults with farm owners and represents to Federal Government their concerns relating to taxes, regulations and other instruments affecting farm production, income and markets.	P
Nat-FA14	M	Medical practitioner	Consulting general medical practitioner attending to the physical and mental health concerns of rural patients.	P
Rose-FA15	F	Mental health consultant	Consulting practitioner for farm family members on their mental and social health.	P
Beth-FA16	F	Mental health researcher	Has interviewed farm family members under stress relating to early traumatic death of close farm relatives.	P
Alan-FA17	M	Real estate agent	Assists people in buying and selling farm properties	P
Kath-FA18	F	Rural relationships counsellor	Private counsellor assisting people in dysfunctional family relationships	P
Ken-FA19	M	Rural financial director	Oversees cases consulted and assisted by Rural Financial Counselling Services.	P
Mary-FA20	F	Rural retailer	Country-store owner – provides goods and services to rural residents within a 25 km radius of the shop.	P

Table A6.5. Informal 'serendipitous conversations' (SC)

Contributor	Sex F/M	Age in years	Farm association	Location of farm experience	Topic of conversation
Scott-SC1	M	70s	Farm owner	Southern Grampians	7-11-2015 Hamilton: That non-successor children who have already been paid their share of farm inheritance can come back years later and demand additional payment for the perceived increase in farm value since their payout.
Lia-SC2	F	40s	Wife of farmer	Southern Grampians	6-05-2015 Hamilton: That her farm-successor husband (approaching 50 years) who runs the farm formerly run by his parents still does not have his name registered as part of the family business.
Anna-SC3	F	60s	Funeral director	Corangamite	12-03-2016 Port Fairy: That she deals with many farming families in preparing funerals for deceased farmers. She also speaks with them after the funeral when they come in to pay the expenses after the will has been read and often finds many are surprised and disappointed by the contents of wills.
Dylan-SC4	M	50s	Landcare Facilitator	Southern Grampians	11-06-2015 Condah. Monitors regional Landcare funding and projects on farms in Western Victoria for the Catchment Management Authority

Table A6.6. Interviewees' and survey respondents' farms (*shading = interviewees of same farm family)

Farm family	Int' viewee	Sex F/M	Age (yrs)	Location LGA	Farm Size# (acres)	Enterprise	Est' blished	No. of Gen's	Soldier settlement Y/N	Ownership structure SO/P/TC[1]	Successor Chosen Y/N
1	Lee-DF57	F	57	Glenelg	2000	Wool	c. 1900	3	N	P	Y?
2*	Jen-DF58	F	58	Buloke	1000	Crop	1908	3	N	SO	**N**; sold
	Peg-DF83	F	83								
3	Jan-DF61	F	61	Yarriambiack	500	Wool/crop	1875	4	N	SO	Y?
4	Dee-DF60	F	60	Moyne	1200	Wool/dairy	1948	2	Y	P	**N**
5	Pru-DF37	F	37	Corangamite	3600	Wool	1940s	2	N	P	**N**; sold
6	Lyn-DF82	F	82	Hindmarsh	640	Wool/crop	1920s	3	N	P	Y
7*	Jay-SF26	M	26	S. Grampians	3000	Wool/lamb	1911	5	N	T	Y
	Amy-DF29	F	29								
	Rob-FP53	M	53								
	Nev-SF59	M	59								
	Huw-SF87	M	87		2700	Wool/beef				P	Y
	Vin-SF57	M	57		1000	Wool				P	**N**; sold
8	Kay-DF44	F	44	S. Grampians	4000	Lamb/beef	c.1950	2	N	T	Y?
9	Bec-DF25	F	25	Moyne	800	Wool/lamb	c. 1950	2	Y	P	**N**; will sell
10	Sue-DF60	F	60	N. Grampians	6178	Crop	Late 1800	5	N	TC	Y
11*	Eva-DF74	F	74	S. Grampians	5000	Wool/lamb	1972	2	N	TC	Y?
	Cam-SF44	M	44								
12	Tam-DF57	F	57	Glenelg	1034	Wool	c.1920	4	N	P	**N**; sold
13	Deb-DF30	F	30	Ararat RC	840	Wool	c. 1950	2	Y	P	**N**; sold
14*	Ann-DF34	F	34	S. Grampians	1800	Wool/beef/leased	1970s	2	N	P	Y
	Meg-DF63	F	63								
15	Amy-DF29	F	29	Moyne	4000	Wool/lambs/crop	1950s	3	Y	P	**N?**
16*	Kim-DF21	F	21	Moyne	330	Dairy	1998	1	N	P	?
	Joy-FP46	F	46								
	Con-SF51	M	51								
17	Dot-DF88	F	88	S. Grampians	100+	Dairy	1920s	3	Y	SO	Y
18	Pam-DF79	F	79	Glenelg	?	Dairy/mixed	?	4	N	P	Y
19*	Min-DF97	F	97	S Grampians	200	Dairy mixed	c. 1925	3	Y	SO	Y?
	Ian-SF85	M	85								
20	Rae-DF91	F	91	Glenelg	?	Dairy	1920s	2	Y	SO	**N**; sold `84
21*	Don-SF48	M	48	S. Grampians	1760	Wool/lamb	c. 1900	5	N	P	**N?**
	Lil-FP48	F	48								
22*	Ben-SF19	M	19	Ararat RC	1500	Prime lamb	1993	1	N	SO	**N**; sell-up
	Liz-FP60	F	60								
23	Zac-SF34	M	34	S. Grampians	1000	Wool/lamb	c. 1900	4	N	SO	Y
24	Len-SF82	M	82	N. Grampians	5000	Wool/beef/wheat	1920s	3	N	P	Y
25	Tom-SF28	M	28	S. Grampians	850	Prime lamb	1980s	2	N	SO	Y?
26	Rob-SF47	M	47	Moyne	5000	Wool/beef/crop	Late 1800s	5	N	TC	Y?
27*	Tim-SF40	M	40	Horsham RC	5680	Crop/wool/lamb	1870s	5	N	TC	Y
	Kas-FP41	F	41								
	SR13-M19	M	19								
28	Abe-SF31	M	31	Glenelg	1300	Dairy/beef/lease	1970s	1	N	SO	Y?
29*	Ric-SF33	M	33	Glenelg	1200	Dairy	c. 2005	2	N	P	Y?
	Wyn-FP36	F	36								
30	Rus-SF58	M	58	S. Grampians	505	Wool/beef	1950s	1	Y	SO	**N**; sold
31	Joc-SF61	M	61	S. Grampians	3000	Wool/beef/lamb	1920	3	N	TC	Y?
32	Vic-SF93	M	93	Glenelg	2000	Wool/beef	c. 1900	4	N	P	Y
33*	Ron-SF59	M	59	Glenelg	4500	Wool/beef/hay	?	5	N	P	Y
	Maz-FP56	F	56								
	Sam-SF26	M	26								
34*	SR1-F67	F	67	Moyne	Retain 340	Beef	?	1	N	P	**N**
	SR1-M66	M	66								
35*	SR2-M53	M	53	Moyne	2600	Sheep/beef	?	4	N	P	Y
	SR2-F53	F	53								
36*	SR3-F45	F	45	Glenelg	3700	Beef/lambs/ wool	1967	3	N	TC	Y
	SR3-M45	M	45								
37	SR4-M55	M	55	S. Grampians	2000	Lambs/bull stud	2000	1	N	?	Y?
38	SR5-M74	M	74	S. Grampians	2050	Wool/beef	1956	2		?	**N**
39*	SR6-F54	F	54	S. Grampians	800	Prime lamb	1978	2	N	P	Y
	SR6-M59	M	59								
	SR6-M30	M	30		240	Prime lamb	2009	1	N	SO	**N**?
40	SR7-M46	M	46	S. Grampians	8377	Wool	?	5	N	TC	Y
41	SR8-M55	M	55	S. Grampians	1000	Wool/lamb	c. 1900	4	N	P	**N**
42	SR9-F55	F	55	S. Grampians	2500	Wool/lamb/crop	?	2	N	P	Y
43	SR10-M66	M	66	S. Grampians	>2000	Crops/lamb	?	5	N	P	Y
44	SR11-M61	M	61	S. Grampians	3000	Wool/beef/crop	c.1900	5	N	TC	Y?
45	SR12-M36	M	36	W. Wimmera	900	Wool/lamb/beef	c. 1900	5	N	P	Y
46	SR13-M19	M	19	Buloke	7000	Crops/wool/lamb	c.1900	5	N	?	**N**
47	SR14-F19	F	19	Ararat RC	800	Crops/wool/lamb	c.1950	2	?	?	**N**

Notes: 1. SO – sole owner; P = partnership; TC = complex legal arrangement as Trust or Company.

2. # Farm sizes were more commonly reported in acres than hectares. Farm sizes across the age-groups in the same family show variation because of family members buying and/or selling sections of their properties.

Table A6.7. Number of people (interviewees and survey respondents), farms and types of enterprises in each LGA represented in this research. Colours delineate the northern ◯, middle ◯ and southern ◯ LGAs of the research area in Western Victoria.

LGA RC – rural city S – shire	Inter-viewees	Inter-viewees' farms	Survey respond-ents	Crop[1]	Mixed crop/ sheep[2]	Sheep	Sheep and cattle[3]	Beef	Mix crop/ sheep cattle[3]	Dairy	Total enter-prises
Hindmarsh (S)	1	1			1			-			1
Yarriambiack (S)	1	1			1			-			1
Buloke (S)	2	1	1	1	1			-			2
West Wimmera (S)	-	-	1				1	-			1
Horsham (RC)	2*	1	1*		1			-			1
Northern Grampians (S)	2	2		1				-	1		2
Southern Grampians (S)	21[4]	11	10		3	11	8	-	1	1	24
Ararat (RC)	3	2	1		1	2		-			3
Glenelg (S)	10	8	2			2	4	-	1	2	9
Moyne (S)	7	5	4		1	1	2	1	1	1	7
Corangamite (S)	1	1				1		-			1
Totals	**50**	**33**	**20**	**2**	**6**	**17**	**14**	**1**	**7**	**5**	**52**

Notes: 1. Cropping refers to a variety of farming enterprises: for example, grains (oats, wheat), oil seeds (canola) and pulses (lentils, peas, fava beans).
2. Sheep refers to both prime lambs and wool-producing breeds. Wool production ranged from superfine wool to coarse wool varieties.
3. Cattle refers to both beef and dairy cattle on mixed farms.
4. One participant works on the family farm holding which is spread across three LGAs (Southern Grampians, Hindmarsh and West Wimmera) but most of the work occurs in Southern Grampians.
5. * denotes members of the same family.

Appendix 7: Farm data not readily available

During the course of this research, I attempted to gather up-to-date information of the number of people operating family farms, the number of properties on which family farming occurs and the number of people who own properties on which family farming is conducted. None of my requests for this information were satisfied. The following email indicates the lack of accessibility for this information.

From: Jenny Spencer [mailto:jenny.spencer@abs.gov.au]
Sent: Friday, 11 December 2015 3:33 PM
To: Diane Luhrs
Subject: RE: statistics assistance please for PhD candidate

Hi Diane, I have spoken with a colleague in the Business Register Unit (BRU) in our Melbourne Office about your request for data.

Unfortunately the data you want is not readily available, however there is a possibility some of it might be provided as a paid data consultancy.

Costs for custom data consultancies start at $470, however a typical request (for agriculture data) is more likely to cost in the region of $800 to $1,200. I have no idea of the complexity of the BRU request and there is the possibility the cost might be considerably more.

If this is something you might want to pursue, you should contact the ABS National Information and Referral Service (NIRS) in the first instance, either by phone or by email. The contact details are provided in the link to the ABS website, below.
http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/Contact+Us?opendocument#from-banner=GT

If you contact NIRS, you should explain that you have already approached the Agriculture and Environment Section and we were unable to assist you, but that the Business Register Unit may be able provide some of the data.

I hope you find this information useful.

Cheers

Jenny Spencer