

### ***How can we optimise carbon in the real world?***

In responding to the challenge topic, Gerry opened by pointing out that Australia has the opportunity to take on a global problem with a local approach to carbon sequestration. Specifically, by change farming practices in Australia producers can pick up on international 'reverse options' carbon sequestration processes and earn more from their properties. With respect to carbon reconditioning of soils; the point was made that Carbon based fertilisers improve productivity by restoring soil structure and increasing water and nutrient uptake. Currently, trials using products from Latrobe Valley brown coal are already underway in Victoria.

Gerry Morvell, argued: yes, nations must move quickly to reduce and mitigate the deleterious effects of emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses that are forcing factors for accelerated global warming. He argued that this is where the confusion commences. Carbon is not carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gasses as promoted at times in media 'short-hand'. Rather, it is a chemical element that forms a vast number of compounds many of which have as yet unmeasured value to humankind. Many scientists and technologists argue that carbon will be for the 21<sup>st</sup> century what iron and steel were for the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. And coal is a mineral of fossilised carbon, which among many uses, is essential for the production of steel, plastics, carbon polymers and pharmaceutical products.

In concluding, Gerry raised focusing questions such as:

- When demonising carbon are we replacing "a fair go" with "hypocrisy"?
- When dismissing the importance of carbon products are we "throwing the baby out with the bath water"?
- When ignoring reality, is Australia in danger of turning its back on the opportunities offered by carbon as the driver of new economic activity?

### **Summing up**

Economists, politicians and environmental activists have used shorthand and created a mythology that 'Carbon' is harmful. This is a false proposition; rather, in the real world ***Carbon underpins all forms of life, society and the global economy.*** Maximising the benefits that carbon can bring to production and conservation landscapes and reducing greenhouse gas emission could in fact be achieved by moving towards having an 'enhanced-carbon society and economy'.

Spotlight Session participants agreed that we do we need strong political leadership and political will to act to optimise the opportunities to maximise the use of carbon in our production and conservation landscapes and create new jobs and wealth from the innovative use of carbon in rural and regional Australia. Support from the participants to move to a new carbon age was enormous. Contact details have been exchanged to further the dialogue between participants towards possible regional projects aimed at optimising carbon resources, creating new jobs and producing new products and services.