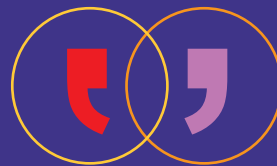


**The  
Workshop**

# How to Talk About **the future of farming** in Aotearoa New Zealand

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[www.theworkshop.org.nz](http://www.theworkshop.org.nz)



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# About this guide

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People who farm our land in Aotearoa New Zealand are a diverse group of people and communities. Many have a strong sense of connection and responsibility to the land they farm and live on and the people to come after them.

Many are changing the way they farm to respond to the challenge of climate change and environmental degradation that existing practices and systems have brought about. There are many opportunities from such changes for increased wellbeing for people in the farming community, for the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand, and for the world. The science is clear that more must be done to ensure we preserve and restore the health of our land, water and associated ecosystems, and our wellbeing into the future. Measures such as significant and scaled up land use change are key to the work of ensuring the land and water continue to support us and our wellbeing.

At the heart of people's ability to understand and support evidence-driven systemic change are deeply embedded, often invisible, understandings about how the world works and the particular issue of concern. These understandings, sometimes called mindsets, are informed by enduring narratives or stories in our cultural discourse. Mental short-cuts that we all have, which help us adapt to an information rich world, often serve to protect mindsets. It is difficult for researchers, advocates and policy makers to make evidence-driven shifts to existing policies and practices if existing mindsets and cultural narratives are not based on best knowledge – or have not kept up with changes in understandings.

For people to be willing to support and actively engage in best policies, investments and practices, deepening people's understanding of the causes of problems and the changes that are both needed and possible is foundational work. Researchers have found that shifts in people's thinking, and ultimately shifts in systems, are driven by scientifically developed and tested narrative strategies. They are a critical tool for anyone working on changes that will make the biggest difference to our long term wellbeing.

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## Who is this guide for?

- This guide is for people in the Our Land and Water National Science Challenge and their collaborators. It is also for all people in communications, science, policy and community roles who want to talk effectively about the future of farming, and land use change in particular, to the general public and farming communities who are interested in how people in farming can respond to the environmental challenges we all face.
- You may be in a scientific institution, a central or local government organisation, an industry or peak body or perhaps in a community leadership position. You want your communications to support and encourage people across the farming industry to follow best evidence to adapt to and mitigate against environmental harm. To preserve and actively restore the land and water that supports our wellbeing and the wellbeing of the generations to come, as well as to build resiliency against a changing climate.
- The recommendations apply mainly to large scale communications. While it is not specifically to help you have one-on-one conversations, aspects of it may help.

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## How to use this guide

This guide is not designed to help to convince people who are adamant that farming practices do not need to change to adapt to environmental harm, prevent more harm, or restore the environment that is critical for our wellbeing and that of future generations.

For various reasons, trying to convince people who are strongly opposed to responding to the realities of environmental degradation is unhelpful, and at times harmful, to the work of making sure that how we farm can sustain and maintain our wellbeing into the future.

This guide is for working with those people who care for our environment, understand something needs to be done, but may be unsure or unclear on how to do so. Perhaps they are farmers who are anxious about their livelihoods, their communities' future, or feel exposed to unhelpful stories about farmers' culpability. Perhaps they are people living in cities who care about the environment, food production and farming in Aotearoa, but don't understand how they can support people in farming to change. These are our persuadable audiences, and with the help of those who already understand what change needs to happen, we can deepen their understanding and build support for the types of changes needed to farm for the planet and our future generations' wellbeing.

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## In this guide we:

- Provide insights into the science behind our recommended communications strategies.
- Explain the different types of thinking people have about farming, the environment and land use change.
- Outline how that thinking is either helpful or unhelpful for building people's support for the solutions that will protect our environment and wellbeing into the future.
- Recommend how to avoid surfacing unhelpful thinking.
- Use a framework of 'building blocks' of narratives for change to explain the techniques and tools you can use to surface helpful thinking and build people's support for the solutions that will protect our environment and wellbeing.
- Give you examples of what these techniques look and sound like in communications. We encourage you to use these in your communications and adapt them in response to feedback.
- Provide a checklist to help apply the recommendations to your communications.



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## How we developed this guide

This guide was developed from a review<sup>1</sup> of the existing research and The Workshop's unique evidence-based framework for narratives for change, and funded by the Our Land and Water National Science Challenge.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> The Workshop. (2021). *Talking about land use and farming practice change: A Literature review*. The Workshop.

<sup>2</sup> <https://ourlandandwater.nz/>

# Insights from science: Deepening understandings

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One of the biggest challenges for advocates and experts who want to communicate complex ideas is to do so in ways that engage people, deepen their thinking, and build their support for changes that will make the biggest difference. Understanding the science behind how people come to think as they do helps in our communication challenges.

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## Fast thinking

- All of us use mental shortcuts to help protect what we already know and believe. For example, we look for evidence that supports what we already believe. This is known as fast thinking by researchers. Fast thinking is adaptive. It ensures we don't have to relearn everything we already know. But fast thinking can protect unhelpful understandings and mindsets. It can prevent us from understanding complex issues.

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## Dominant narratives

- Public narratives are the stories and explanations about issues that are dominant in media, social media, politics, communities, and everyday conversations. These, along with other sources of information, build our understandings about big issues.
- Public narratives, especially about complex issues, may not be deep. They can even be false. Public narratives, including false information that minimises the big problems we face, can overwhelm people so they don't process new information. Fast thinking can protect these narratives making it hard to communicate complex issues. All this can stop people supporting evidence-based policies and action.

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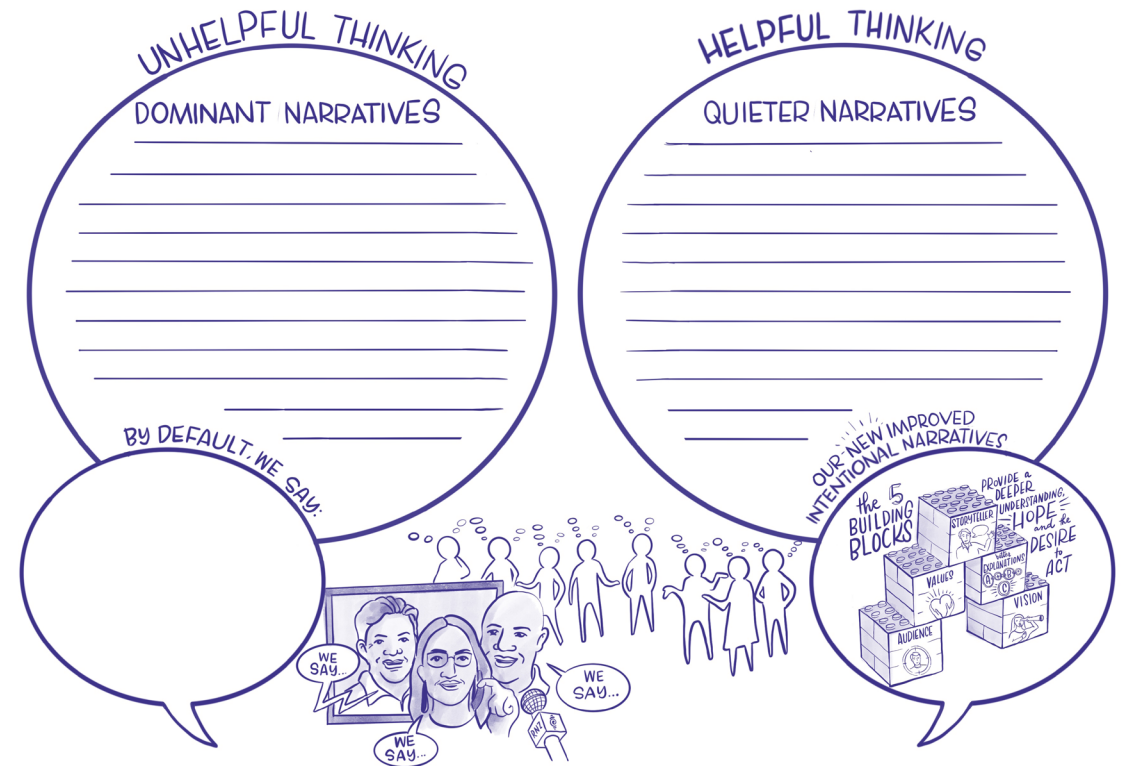
## Default communications

- We also engage in fast thinking of our own, assuming people don't understand or act because they lack information. This leads to default communications: we lead with facts, spend our time talking about the shallow or unhelpful narratives about our issue, use overly technical language, or emotive personal stories. Social science shows leading communications these ways means we are not communicating in ways that help shift narratives and mindsets.
- However, just as some narratives can surface unhelpful thinking, and hold unhelpful mindsets in place, others can also engage more helpful thinking and shift people's mindsets.

## Effective communication strategies to deepen thinking require us to:

1. Understand the landscape of narratives and thinking about our issues (to avoid the reinforcing unhelpful ones).
2. Create and repeat new effective communication strategies to foster new narratives, shift mindsets and ways of talking and thinking about your issue using insights from the research. We call these the five building blocks of narratives for change.

In Part 1 of this guide, we look at the narratives which already exist around farming, the environment and land use change, both helpful and unhelpful, and offer recommendations on how to bring the more helpful ones to the surface. In Part 2, we introduce our five building blocks of narrative for change, and show how this framework can be used to develop communications which have the best chance of achieving structural and systemic change.



**Figure 1.** Effective communication to deepen thinking means avoiding narratives that surface unhelpful thinking and instead focusing on narratives that surface more helpful thinking. We can do this using Five Building Blocks of Narratives for Change. What are the dominant narratives that surface unhelpful thinking in land use change?

# Part 1. The landscape of thinking and narratives on the future of farming

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For almost any issue people have existing ways that they think about it. It is very important to understand how people think about an issue before attempting to communicate about it. Some of these existing ways of thinking will be helpful to your message, and some will be unhelpful – you will need to avoid surfacing unhelpful ways of thinking, while bringing the helpful ways of thinking to the surface.



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## Unhelpful thinking

- These are some of the unhelpful ways people think about land use change opportunities. This thinking can make it hard for people to recognise or believe the evidence and support the changes that will make the most difference.
- These unhelpful ways of thinking are brought to the surface (*surfaced*) by how land use change is talked about in public (*public narratives*)<sup>3</sup>.
- As communicators you want to **avoid surfacing this thinking and, therefore, avoid drawing on such narratives, even in order to refute them.**
- **By repeating dominant shallow narratives, we are working against our own efforts to deepen understanding.**
- Think of these narratives as traps or pitfalls to navigate around in the landscape of communication.

<sup>3</sup> See Glossary for definitions of italicised terms.

Unhelpful thinking about farming and land use change	Examples of public narratives that surface this unhelpful thinking	Why is this way of talking unhelpful?
Assuming farmers can and will only be motivated to act to care for the environment if they see a personal, individual gain and financial return.	“Farmers need to know what’s in it for them. How will making these changes get them a good return on their investment?”	Firstly, it positions farmers as being unlike the majority of people in New Zealand who are motivated by long-term collective wellbeing. It also leads to framing communications in terms of personal, economic benefits, which research shows is unlikely to motivate long-term change for collective good.
Overly simplistic and flawed ideas about who people who farm are and what they do. Farming is seen as hard, risky, but simple labour, instead of the complex, expert practice that is the reality.	“Farmers are up early in the morning, working hard doing physical labour, for long days.”	It obscures the diversity of approaches and practices used in farming including key elements such as social equity, soil management and sustainability. These topics appear frequently in expert discussions of farming and trade materials, but are absent from popular discussions.
“Us” vs. “Them” thinking, which focuses on an ‘in-group’ vs. others. For example, people in cities blame people on farms for environmental harm, or people assert that dairy farming is the real problem compared to horticulture.	“City people need to do their part before blaming farmers for climate change.”	This sort of thinking sets up binaries between two groups of people – it moves people into antagonistic or combative mindsets. It also encourages zero-sum thinking, where if “they” gain something, it means that “we” are losing something.
Economy vs. environment. Thinking that the economy and the environment have to be traded off against each other. This compares the economy to the environment as though they are similar things. Whereas one is a natural system with inherent needs and constraints, and the other is a system designed by humans which can be designed to achieve what matters to us.	“We have to choose what we are trading off in terms of economic growth when we protect different parts of the environment.”	This reinforces shallow and unhelpful ways of thinking about the economy, i.e., that the economy is an end in itself and it is the job of people and the environment to care for the health of the economy. More helpful thinking to surface would be that we can design an economy that provides for the wellbeing of people and the planet.
Land and water pollution or other environmental health impacts are an inevitable part of productivity and progress.	“With productivity and economic growth comes environmental impacts like land and water pollution, we need to balance these costs and benefits better.”	Emphasises and reinforces the unhelpful thinking about land and water pollution being inevitable, the health of the land and water being able to be traded off, and productivity gain being the main reason to engage in land use change.

*Continued over page >>*

Unhelpful thinking about farming and land use change	Examples of public narratives that surface this unhelpful thinking	Why is this way of talking unhelpful?
Farm individualism – land and water quality is determined by individual farmer behaviour/choice alone, as opposed to the wider approach across the community and country.	“It’s important farmers choose to change how they farm to improve the water quality in this catchment.”	This reinforces the thinking that land use change is entirely about individual choice and behaviour. For people who farm it may reinforce thinking about good farmers and bad farmers, and cause a backlash as there is no reference to the systems shaping their options. We want to surface thinking about farms as part of a wider landscape and connected, collective, catchment-wide solutions.
Fatalism. The problems we face are so big that they feel insurmountable, and people in government or industry won’t or can’t act.	“75 percent of our native fish are on the threatened species list; it’s hard to imagine how it could be much worse, and the government is incapable of acting.”	Presenting the enormity of the scale of a problem in combination with framing the inability of governments or people with the power to make changes that will make a big difference is used to try to shock people into action. However, this surfaces fatalistic thinking, where the problem feels too big, and we believe no-one, especially those with the power to do so, will take action.
Environmental health, including water quality, is primarily about dealing with contaminants (as opposed to creating wellbeing through structures and systems).	“A recent preliminary study of nitrate contamination of drinking water in New Zealand found concentrations were sitting above potentially harmful levels.”	This focuses attention on contaminants, not on outcomes that matter in terms of people’s lives, or the good work that is already being done by people who farm to prevent them being released.
People who farm are thought of as men, usually Pākehā, and financially stable, whose families have long-standing connections to the land.	Communications that reinforce this idea by only framing the perspectives of these types of people who farm.	Reduces discussions of the diversity of experiences, needs, and thinking within the farming community. Separates farming from te ao Māori.
Farmers should make changes to help meet society’s environmental goals, regardless of the transitional commercial consequences.	“We need to reduce the number of cows in New Zealand, full-stop.”	This reinforces an expectation that farmers should risk their business and way of life, rather than showing the need for systems changes to create viable options that support farmers to do things in new ways.





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## Helpful thinking

The good news is that, as well as the unhelpful thinking which exists, there are also a number of forms of helpful thinking which exist within the public, farming communities, and advocates and experts – the same people often hold multiple ways of thinking.

Because some of these helpful ideas are already present, we are able to amplify them and bring them to the surface of discussions, in order to help people connect with, and understand our issue more deeply. Sometimes we need to build new ways of thinking entirely also as there may be “a cognitive hole” about some issues.

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### Here are some examples of existing helpful thinking:

- Farming is integral to our society, has been for a long time, and will continue to be.
- Farming is a way of life.
- Farming is complex, expert and challenging work.
- Creative solutions are highly valued as a characteristic of farming.
- The ways that we farm and use our land determines our health and wellbeing and that of our environment.
- Human health and the health of our land and water are interconnected, and sustain one another.
- We have collective responsibilities to ensure environmental health for many generations to come.
- We care about our land and water. Poor land and water quality is a major concern to many New Zealanders and they want us to do better.
- Climate change will change what we farm, how we farm, and where we farm. Being prepared and adapting now can reduce harm and build resilience for communities who farm.
- People who farm, like all of us, need direction and support to change default behaviours and practices.
- People in government and farming industries are in a position to provide the necessary direction and support to people who farm to change behaviours and practices, and make the necessary land use changes.
- Scientific research should be used in order to develop best practices and direction for farming.
- Evidence-led, good farming practices are often financially costly to adopt.



## Unhelpful narrative strategies

Both helpful and unhelpful ways of thinking can be surfaced and reinforced by the narratives we use (ideas, words, frames, images).

Unhelpful narrative strategies don't provide useful explanations for your issue (and sometimes even give false information). These narratives work with our fast thinking to hold us in shallow understandings of complex issues. This creates barriers to deeper understandings and support for change. In turn, unhelpful thinking reinforces unhelpful narratives. For this reason there are some commonly-used narrative strategies that are important to avoid in order to avoid unhelpful thinking, and create the space and opportunity for more helpful ways of thinking to flourish.

Unhelpful narrative strategies	Examples of public narratives that use these strategies	Why is this way of talking unhelpful?
Leading with the large-scale problems that require land use change.	"Agriculture is a significant source of our carbon emissions. Current farming approaches have caused large-scale degradation and water quality problems. We need to stop dairy farming."	If our audience is not already supportive of change, then leading our communications with problems is ineffective. People's fast thinking system will skip over or reject new and complex problems.
Discussions of sustainability are dense and jargon-heavy.	"Sustainable production practices involve a variety of approaches, including topography, soil characteristics, climate, local availability of inputs and the individual grower's goals."	Words like sustainability mean different things to different audiences. This can lead to misunderstanding of meanings and goals, and excludes people from the discussion if they don't understand terms like this being used.
Oversimplification of the complex solutions required.	"The issue is the use of synthetic nitrogen fertiliser."	Different solutions will be important for different groups and farming communities. Oversimplified solutions may be rejected immediately if they don't match the complexity of the problem.





## Special topic: The opportunity of Te Tiriti and farming in Aotearoa

In Aotearoa New Zealand, hapū and iwi have deeply embedded relationships with our land and waterways and have been leading innovative, effective environmental protection for generations.

There is an opportunity for all people in Aotearoa New Zealand to work and care for our land and water together. To do so, decision makers can understand and recognise the strengths that tangata whenua bring to this work – the values, knowledge and deep experience iwi and hapū have in environmental management – and to ensure mana whenua lead in the decisions that impact their communities and local environment. Through reciprocal, respectful and balanced partnerships, Māori leadership can be recognised and respected for the benefit of te taiao which ultimately sustains us all, and together we can realise the shared aspirations all our ancestors had in signing Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

As those communicating to people who farm work to build partnerships and evolve their communications approaches, there are some framing considerations we should be aware of as we support this vision through the way we talk about caring for the places we live and farm.

### Communication barriers to supporting the opportunity of Te Tiriti and farming – things we should avoid:

#### → Using te ao Māori narratives that are not led by Māori

- » Avoid especially appropriating Māori metaphors, names and stories, and using them out of their intended context and meaning.

#### → Using language and framing that surfaces extractive thinking

- » This is harmful thinking about Māori knowledge as something which can be taken and used as an “add-on” to non-Māori or Western science frameworks and programmes. Instead, recognise Māori knowledge as a knowledge system important and valid in its own right.
- » For example, avoid saying things like, “our science will be improved by using ideas from mātauranga Maori”.

#### → Surfacing “us vs. them” thinking

- » This happens when highlighting differences between Māori and non-Māori people who farm, e.g., “Māori who farm want different things for the environment”.
- » Instead we should talk about the strengths of complementary knowledge approaches, and honour Māori leadership which will bring benefits to our collective wellbeing and the planet.
- » For example, “Māori who farm bring insights and knowledge to the industry which, when respected, will help us do better together as a sector”.

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### Communications practices to embrace:

- Listening to tangata whenua and building respectful, reciprocal relationships.
- Respecting hapū and iwi to develop their own communications and visions.
- Referencing Māori leadership in environmental spaces from a strengths-based perspective.
- Careful use of Māori metaphors and stories in development with and under clear directive from tangata whenua.
- Identifying yourself and the perspective/worldview you bring to your communications.
- When speaking about Māori knowledge, acknowledge this as being protected and held by, and implemented by tangata whenua.

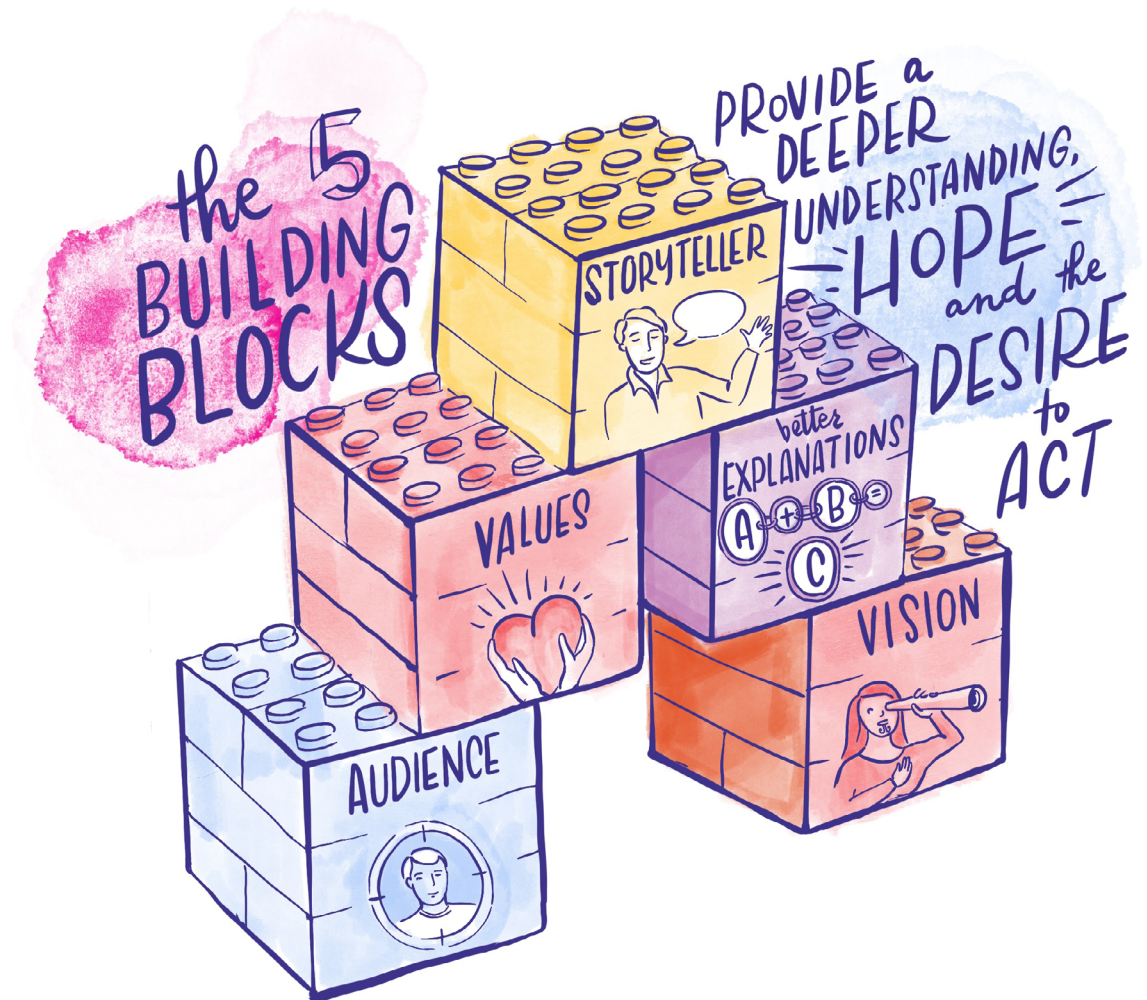
Now you know what thinking and narratives you want to avoid, and the thinking you want to surface. How do you do that? How do you redirect people's thinking?

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**At The Workshop, we have developed a framework from research across disciplines to redirect your communications to more helpful thinking.**

**This framework will:**

1. Help you build new narratives (or surface more recessive ones).
2. Help you communicate your evidence – whether that be from science, mātauranga Māori or lived experience – and deepen people's thinking.



## Part 2. The five building blocks of narratives for change for the future of farming

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### Building block 1. Audience: who you should communicate with

To help build new, more effective narratives, and avoid defaulting to narratives that surface unhelpful thinking, who you direct your communications to makes a difference.

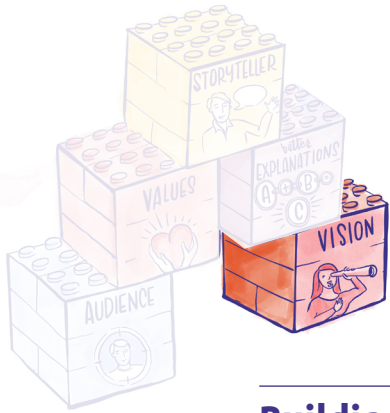
- » If you talk mainly to those who are firmly opposed to change (often loud and demanding of your attention), you will reinforce dominant narratives and unhelpful thinking.
  - » It lends itself to **myth busting** and **negating** false arguments. This amplifies the narrative and unhelpful thinking for others and is ineffective.
  - » Treat this opposition as an inevitable and fundamental part of shifting thinking and systems and move around it.
  - » If you talk only to those who already understand your issues (your base), you won't develop new communication strategies, new narratives or deeper understandings.
- ➔ Effective strategic communications will activate your base and convince people who are open to persuasion.



## Special topic: Successful communication with farming communities when talking about land use change

It is important that communication within this space builds a sense of a collective approach and solutions. Farming communities have often felt 'Othered' – that they are separated out from other citizens, and sometimes demonised for various problems facing Aotearoa and the world. Inclusive language and communication practices are important to ensure that people in farming communities are not put into a protection mindset, which entrenches existing views.

- When asked what they want to see less of, interview respondents for this research from the farming sector answered, “less hatred of the farming sector”, “less defensiveness and more pride”, “less of picking off one versus the other” (e.g., dairy vs. sheep and beef farmers), “less silos of sectors”. They commented that “land use is not about them versus us, all sectors have challenges and negatives. For example, horticulture has its labour challenges”. This is a clear example of the “us vs. them” unhelpful thinking mentioned previously.
- Find out what matters most to the people affected. Ask people in farming communities what their vision is for the future of farming, the environment, land, and water and then make sure your communications include their positive vision for better land and water quality.
- Use two-way communications developed in collaboration with communities and those most affected by land and water quality issues. This means you will include important aspects of local knowledge and behaviours. You will also build support in the community for necessary policy and behaviour changes.



## Building block 2. Lead with a concrete vision for a better world

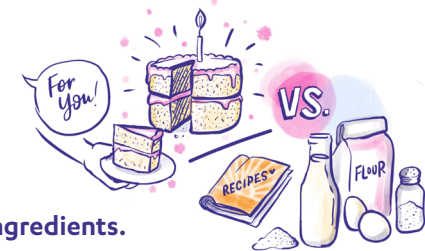
- ➔ A vision builds hope – crucial when people are constantly faced with problems.
- ➔ A vision creates an invitation for people to consider the issue as important to them.
- ➔ A vision opens a side door for your evidence to be listened to.

### Key principles of vision-making

- ➔ **A vision builds hope – crucial when people are constantly faced with problems.**
  - » What will look and feel better in people’s day-to-day lives, as a result of making land use and practice changes and improving land and water quality?
  - » Lead with environmental and people-centred outcomes, not economic outcomes. Describe farming environments that are thriving, self-determining, innovative, diverse, and intergenerational in concrete terms.

- » Envision the entire community. Do not talk about land use changes and policies in isolation. Include all farming sectors, allied farming industries and businesses, town planning, and other services.

**E.g.**, “We can have thriving rural communities where farmers and people in their communities work together to restore the land, bring back wildlife, clean up waterways and look after the soil. More people will be able to farm on land that is lush, where animals are healthy, rivers are teeming with fish and farms are surrounded by regenerating native bush. There will be more local employment and more opportunities to support local food producers”.



### ➔ Sell the cake, not the ingredients.

Lead your communications with a vision, not the list of ingredients or steps needed to make it happen.

- » While your ingredients are really important, they are not a vision. Your vision is the cake.
- » It’s the cake that motivates us to gather the ingredients and follow the recipe.
- » If we spend a lot of time researching and thinking about what is needed to create change, it’s natural to want to lead our messages with the detail of those recipes.
- » Avoid leading with policy, legal or technological solutions like: “Catchment-level water quality regulation is needed to improve the health of our streams and rivers”.



→ **Ensure your vision is inclusive of all people and their needs.**

- » Create inclusive visions in partnership with those most negatively impacted by current social and environmental conditions. This is likely to improve long-term engagement also.

→ **Show credible human-driven pathways to achieving the vision.**

- » A vision is motivating and can inspire hope. But without a credible pathway to achieve that vision, hope won't last long. This is where your recipe comes in. Having led with a vision, now identify the steps to achieve the vision. These may be smaller local level changes such as ensuring local farming communities are strongly resourced to undertake land use or practice changes.
- » Put people in the picture. Persuadable audiences often don't have a clear idea of who can create change, especially at a system level. You can increase people's sense of control and agency if you identify the people in a system who can act to achieve the vision, e.g., people in our local government, hapū and iwi, the local community, and related farming industries.
- » Avoid passive language, by including a human agent (the people who are able to make changes happen). Without clear agents, people default to thinking change is impossible. Name the agents who can build trusted partnerships for environmental action.

→ **Avoid negating or myth busting.**

- » Repeating myths or opposing stories in order to negate them just reinforces them in the minds of some persuadable people. Don't spend your precious energy and time doing that. Instead, focus on telling your positive story for action and reframe the debate.

**Experiential proof and vision-making**

- Seeing and experiencing what the change feels like in small ways can help build understanding and support for longer term changes, and form part of effective vision-making.
- Prototypes and experiments of different land uses on farms is one way to do this.
- Amplify the stories of people who are already taking advantage of land use change opportunities, give specific details about the problems they faced, the changes they made and why they made those changes.





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### Building block 3. Connecting with what matters to people: values that motivate

A vision builds hope. Values are what matters most to us in life. They are at the heart of human motivations. Values can be identified as the reason we frame for people to care about an issue: “the why”.

For example, we may talk about responsibility to future generations, wealth creation, or our literal survival as the reason why people should care about environmental degradation. Engaging with people’s values is shown to help better communicate science. At The Workshop we are guided by the theory and research of connecting with a particular type of values, which all people hold, but may not be regularly surfaced in our narratives and day to day interactions – intrinsic values.

- Dominant public narratives that tell us money, personal success, our public image are most important are known as **extrinsic and individual values**.
- Many public narratives also surface fears for our own health and safety or that of our loved ones.
- Research shows that what matters most to most people is taking care of each other and the planet, discovery, creativity and reaching our own goals, known as **intrinsic and collective values**.
- These intrinsic values are the ones most likely to engage people in deeper thinking about complex issues and improving systems for collective wellbeing.
- Use intrinsic and collective values to communicate about issues of collective wellbeing.
- How we feel about information is a traffic light system telling us how information fits with our beliefs and values. Our emotions protect existing beliefs, and alert us to how information sits with our values, which is why we engage with values.

## Productivity and return on investment: Is it a helpful frame?

Significant changes are needed in farming (and many other sectors of our society) to make the biggest difference to the health of our land, water and climate ecosystems and ourselves. They are changes for intergenerational and collective wellbeing, including that of people who farm.

Research shows that there are specific frames and language that encourage people to think about action for long term collective wellbeing, and others that keep people focused on the short term, and on individual gain and loss. The frames that keep people thinking short term and about individual gain and loss include return on investment and productivity frames and language. Research shows it is hard to build support for collective, long term action for humanity using financial return as a motivator.

Productivity does, of course, encompass more than money. Working smarter for better returns does imply wellbeing improvements. But in our culture, 'productivity' is a word likely to surface thoughts about wealth and money, financial gain and loss. While 'return on investment' is an outright financial gain frame.

### What is the alternative?

We need to move away from leading conversations with return-on-investment language. To motivate people to support and take action for long-term and collective good, we can instead use frames and narratives that focus on benefits for 'all of us'. We can frame the steps we want people to take now as 'planting seeds' towards the harvest of a better future. This might look like future environmental stability or food security, and might be framed as responsible management, or using pragmatism values. See below for examples of what this would look and sound like.

This doesn't mean we can't ever talk about money, return on investment, or productivity. But they are not helpful frames to use when we initially want to build motivation for action and change. Once people have agreed to prioritise long term environmental wellbeing, we can and should look at the most productive way to do so. But it's important to move away from using these frames to motivate people to make change for long term collective wellbeing.

One of the types of unhelpful thinking identified above is the idea that farmers can only be motivated to make changes that are in their personal and short-term interest. This implies that farmers are different to the vast majority of people, who can be motivated to support making big changes in the long-term collective interest when those changes are framed using collective wellbeing values (more on this below).



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## Values for land use and practice change opportunities

### Responsibility and pragmatism values

From research on climate change by the FrameWorks Institute, the idea of the responsible management value is to surface thinking around both stewardship or duty to our planet and local environment and doing the things that work. Often people use cost-effectiveness arguments when they would be better to lead with responsible management and pragmatism which surfaces collective thinking over zero-sum thinking, i.e., more for you means less for me (which discussions of money and allocation of funding tend to do).



### What does this sound like?

“It’s important we take responsible steps to manage the issues facing our environment, including pollutants in our soil and our waterways. We need to think carefully about how to manage these problems and take the best steps to deal with them. Keep the wellbeing and health of children and future generations in mind while we look for those solutions. Responsible land use means thinking long term and being open minded about solutions. This means that we take practical steps relying on common sense and all the evidence we have to look after our surroundings and our communities.”

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### Interconnectedness between people and the environment

Unity with nature is an intrinsic value that encourages helpful thinking about the relational connection between human and environmental health, and our role in ensuring collective wellbeing. It helps people to understand the connection between the soil, waterways and ecosystems, and their inseparable link from our own good health.



### What does this sound like?

“Our collective wellbeing is dependent on healthy soil, land, and waterways. We are all part of an interconnected ecosystem, where our activities and decisions have ripple effects experienced by all of us. Looking after each other means looking after every part of our environment as a connected whole.”



## Protection of the environment

Be intentional about framing people as living within an environment that must be taken care of to take care of us, our health and wellbeing.



### ***What does this sound like?***

“Living in harmony with land we farm, the waterways we use and the environment, is important to ensure our own good health and wellbeing. Working together to change the way we farm and improve water quality helps the environment and it helps us.”

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## Self-direction, curiosity, creativity and innovation

The key elements to surface when engaging people’s self-direction values are independence, curiosity and creativity. Land use change can provide the flexibility and freedom for people in farming communities to explore new possibilities, and to plot their own paths. It’s important to focus on the self-direction that a community can express, finding the solutions that work for the community as a whole, rather than for the individual. Working with communities and neighbours can be highlighted, where the power of collective thought and effort can help to solve problems facing the community as a whole. Emphasis on creative solutions and the role these can play in addressing challenges and crises may be very helpful here.



### ***What does this sound like?***

“People in our farming communities are world-leading in developing new approaches and expert practices. We have the ability here to take meaningful steps, to move away from old-fashioned thinking around land use, and to creatively tackle the challenges that face our communities today and in the future.”



## Avoid

### → Fear and security values.

This is when communicators imply that what matters most in the context of the issue is keeping ourselves or our families safe.

For example, don't lead your communications with how water or soil quality may impact people's material wellbeing, or damage their health. It is possible to describe health effects in a story that explains how land use affects us without leading with it.

Leading with fear increases a desire for simple behavioural solutions to big problems. In complex, systemic problems these solutions don't exist so people disengage from supporting other actions.

### → Money values.

Leading with values like cost-effectiveness, productivity gains, or value to the economy when discussing land use change should be avoided. This triggers individualistic and short term thinking and action (what's in for me vs. what is in it for us)

**E.g.**, "Changing land use will lead to significant productivity gains for farmers".

### → Leading with health values, as it may surface health individualism.

Note that talking about health in an explanation is fine, just avoid leading with health values.

## Embrace

### → Care for the environment.

**E.g.**, "In order to care for and restore the health of the land and water that sustains us all, people in government and business need to put in place policies and practices that will help people who farm change the way they farm".

### → Intergenerational responsibility, pragmatism, and responsible management.

More effective is leading with values about responsibility, responsible management, and pragmatism.

**E.g.**, "Responsible management of our whenua means thinking long-term for future generations. This means taking practical steps, relying on common sense and all the evidence we have, to look after our surroundings and our communities".

### → Fairness across places for all people to live in healthy environments and have good health and wellbeing.

**E.g.**, "No matter where we live, all of us deserve clean water to drink and the opportunity to live in healthy neighbourhoods".



Intergenerational responsibility, pragmatism, and responsible management



## Building block 4. Provide better explanatory pathways

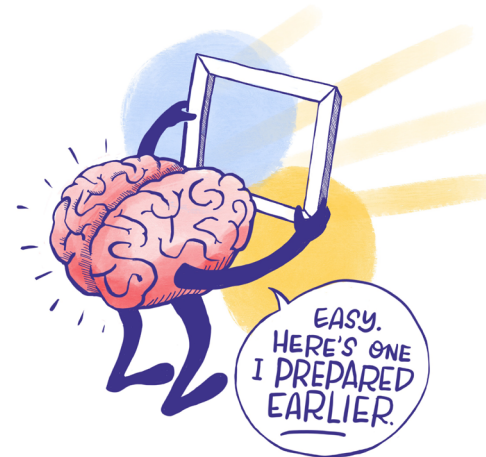
- ➔ In order to support solutions to complex problems, people need to understand what caused the problem and why the solution will work. This is why we need to offer people better explanations.
- ➔ An explanation is more than a description. Simply describing a problem doesn't help people understand what caused it, won't overcome shallow thinking about the problem and may reinforce unhelpful thinking – including fatalism.
- ➔ The challenge is that people's fast thinking systems make it hard for our good explanations to land. The good news is that we can offer explanations that work with people's fast thinking systems.
- ➔ To surface better understandings for people about land and water quality and land use change, we also need to provide better explanations.
- ➔ A good explanation:
  1. provides a new story about land use change and why it matters
  2. avoids repackaging unhelpful thinking and narratives
  3. includes an intentional and helpful way of framing the issue is solutions driven
  4. uses facts as a character in a complete story about causes, effects and solutions.



## Frames

*Frames* are pre-packaged explanations about how the world works.

- ➔ Frames surface particular ways of thinking about an issue. For example, health is often 'framed' as an individual, not collective, responsibility, through the language, metaphors, and images we see demanding people to choose better food.
- ➔ Frames are one of many cognitive shortcuts we take to make the mental effort of information processing easier.
- ➔ Frames are employed unconsciously and are often shared across a culture.
- ➔ We cannot avoid frames or negate or myth bust unhelpful ones, but we can replace them with better ones.



**Frames are a communication scaffold for any new story we want to tell.  
We can avoid frames unhelpful to our science, and embrace more helpful ones.**

Avoid	Embrace
<p>→ <b>Framing the natural environment through economic/market language.</b></p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, “stocks and flows”, “low-carbon economy”, “stabilisation”, etc.</p> <p>These examples simplify nature as a commodity which can be infinitely extracted from, so long as environmental health remains at an equilibrium.</p>	<p>→ <b>Ecological frames that reference interconnected and dynamic ecosystems.</b></p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, “We need to be mindful of what we take and return to each part of our environment, and how that impacts other parts, as everything is connected in our ecosystems”.</p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, “From mountains to sea”.</p>
<p>→ <b>Framing land and water quality problems and solutions as an issue of individual farm choice.</b></p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, “Dairy farmers are the biggest cause of land and water quality issues in New Zealand”.</p> <p>This frames the solution as an individual person issue not a collective and structural issue.</p>	<p>→ <b>Use language and offer solutions which highlight the systems-level constraints which have made change difficult.</b></p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, “In the last decades, people who farm have been under pressure from agrochemical companies, from banks and from large processors for farmers to keep buying expensive synthetic fertiliser, irrigation and feed. Farmers end up mired in debt and stress that makes it hard to innovate and change”.</p>
<p>→ <b>Us vs. Them.</b></p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, “People in rural communities need people in towns to take action on climate change and fix their waterways too if we are going take action on ours”.</p> <p>This sort of language makes people feel defensive, causes people to entrench themselves in their existing positions. It leads people to look to each other for change rather than lifting their gaze to systems-level change. This sort of binary can be seen with urban vs. rural, environmental scientists vs. farmers, beef &amp; lamb vs. dairy farming, etc.</p>	<p>→ <b>Framing our collective capability to do something about land and water quality. This encourages helpful thinking that we can work together to solve the problem as we have done with other problems before.</b></p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, “Improving the quality of our land and water is something we have all the tools to do. During COVID-19 we saw how, by acting together, we could reduce air pollution in our cities. We can work together in the same ways on our farms”.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> To avoid this sort of frame, we generally advise avoiding using terms which reduce people to a single characteristic, which is why we usually talk about “people who farm” instead of “farmers”. This helps highlight the fact that farming is only one aspect of who they are. This advice would hold true for communications with the general public. However, there isn’t yet research to suggest how this description would land with people in farming communities, where farming may be a central element of their identity. We recommend testing this language for use in targeted communications.</p>

*Continued over page >>*

Avoid	Embrace
<p>→ <b>Framing poor land and water quality as a necessary consequence of economic progress that needs addressing. It taps into unhelpful thinking that the problem is too challenging to solve. It also surfaces individualistic thinking (i.e., makes people think “I will lose something”).</b></p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, “Land and water contamination is one of the consequences of us developing as an economy, now is the time to address it”.</p>	<p>→ <b>Using health and wellbeing frames, and talking about land and water quality as a common good.</b></p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, “People in government can help farms operate in ways that ensure we have good land and water quality and deliver health and wellbeing for us all”.</p> <p>→ <b>Describing the connection between farming practices and the health and wellbeing of people who farm. This can shift public thinking from farming as a business, seeing it in purely economic terms, to the broader effects and implications.</b></p>
<p>→ <b>Suggesting that any intervention made by farmers will inherently have a negative effect on the environment.</b></p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, “Livestock farming has a vast environmental footprint. It contributes to land and water degradation, biodiversity loss, acid rain, coral reef degeneration and deforestation”.</p>	<p>→ <b>Highlighting the ways that some farming practices can actually work with nature, complementing natural processes. This can include explaining how some farming practices help maintain and restore the natural environment.</b></p> <p><b>E.g.</b>, “Across Aotearoa, there are people farming in ways that work with nature to rebuild soil, clean up waterways, bring back wildlife and store carbon as they grow great food”.</p>



## Metaphors

- *Metaphors* are a simplifying strategy that can help people quickly grasp a better, deeper explanation of a complex issue.
- A metaphor takes something we understand on a practical everyday level and connects it to something abstract or complex.
- Use metaphors that have been tested and found to deepen people’s thinking on your issue or similar issues.
- Avoid untested and unhelpful metaphors where possible, or consider what explanations they might surface.
- Images often contain metaphors – test images before use.



## Upstream environments, downstream health metaphor

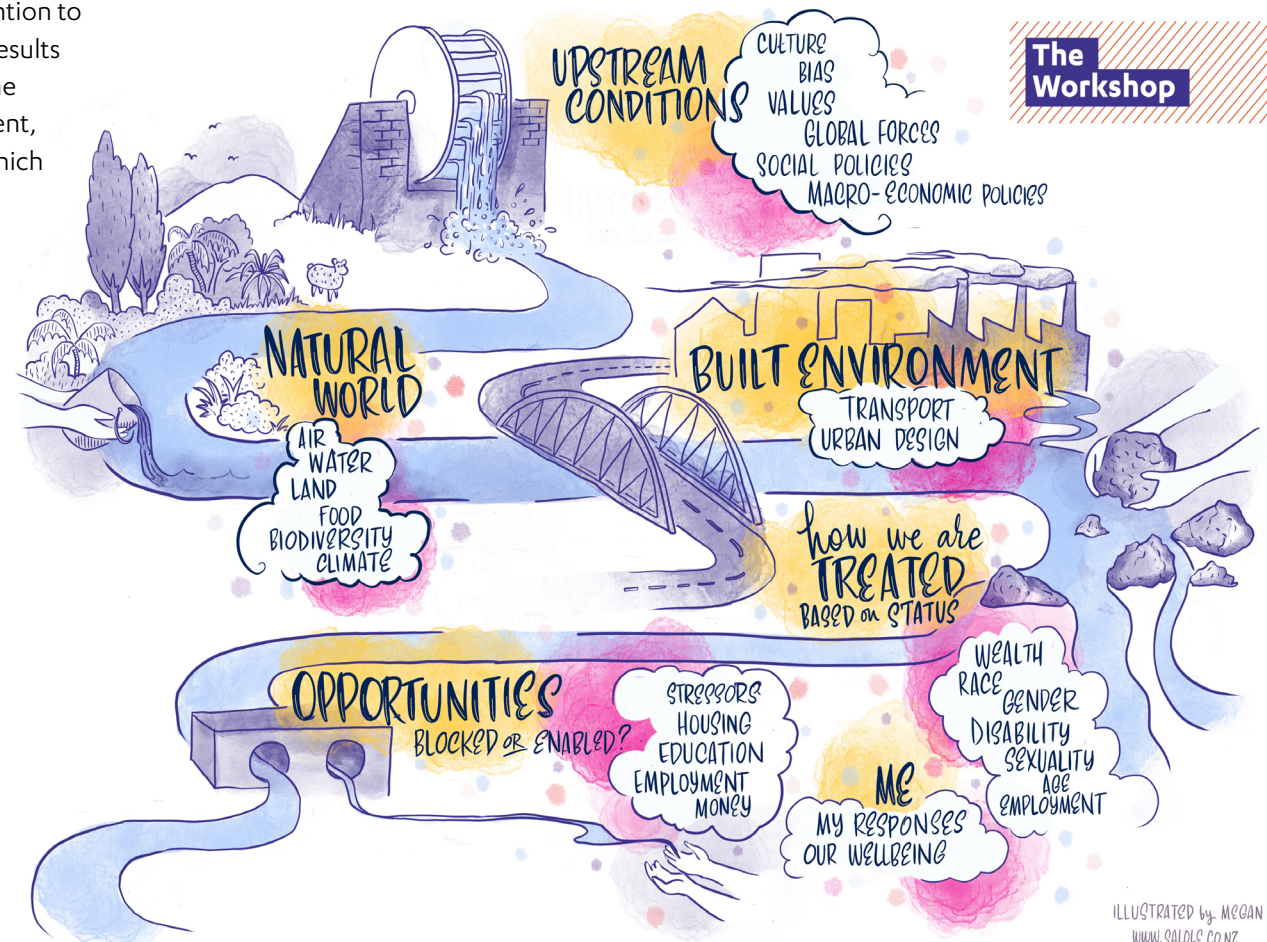
This is a metaphor that helps people understand why soil and water quality matters for us all. It helps redirect unhelpful thinking. Be aware that while this metaphor has been tested with general audiences, it has not been specifically tested with rural communities, so it is possible that it may need to be tested or modified with your specific audiences.

This metaphor works to get people to think more helpfully about the connections between environmental factors and human health and wellbeing and the need for intervention and prevention. It also brings their attention to the “upstream” systemic conditions which lead to the “downstream” results for individuals. It is important that you use language to identify who the agents are upstream (people in government agencies, local government, large agricultural companies) who have the ability to make changes which will lead to positive results for farming communities downstream.



### What does this sound like?

“We all live ‘downstream’ from environmental factors such as poor soil and water quality that negatively affect our health. We need to work together upstream to change the systems in order to create positive environmental conditions for human health. The Minister for Primary Industries is in a position to develop frameworks to support farming communities to develop and expand new practices around land use change. This will make sure that what flows downstream builds a healthy and safe environment for all of us.”



ILLUSTRATED by MEGAN  
WWW.SALOPE.CO.NZ

Avoid	Embrace
<p>→ <b>Metaphors that make soil and water quality seem out of anyone's control.</b></p> <p>E.g., "the silent killer".</p>	<p>→ <b>Upstream environments/downstream health.</b></p> <p>A metaphor that directly links human-built systems with soil and water quality and health. It also helps explain that it is not a result of an individual person, but the system and structure which guides the community as a whole. Just as it is the farming in a whole catchment area that affects the river health, it is the systems and structures 'upstream' from farming which affect the broader health of these systems.</p>
<p>→ <b>Assuming all metaphors will work with all audiences.</b></p>	<p>→ <b>Metaphors that are culturally appropriate to the audience you want to communicate with.</b></p>

## Using facts

- Facts are a character in the story you want to tell about what the problem is, who it affects and how, the need to act, who made it happen and who can change it and how.
- Facts are not the entire story. To help talk about facts more effectively we can use a tool called **an explanatory chain**.
- We can also make sure facts are 'fluent' for people (relevant, easy to remember).

## Putting facts into a story: Using explanatory chains

Explanatory chains are a tool to help us explain an issue and solutions using your facts.

People think about issues in a sequential chain;  $A+B=C$  (much like a story), so we need to replace that chain of explanation if their current mindset and understanding is too shallow.



### How to:

#### Explanatory chain:

- foreground the issue positively (e.g., a short vision, values or why the issue matters)
- identify the cause of the problem upfront
- provide general conceptual accounts of the indirect and direct impacts
- end with solutions.



## An example explanatory chain for land use change opportunities

<b>Foreground the issue (and why it matters)</b>	Being able to swim in clean and healthy lakes, fish in our rivers, and share our love for the natural environment that sustains us with our children matters deeply to many New Zealanders.
<b>Identify the cause of the problem</b>	We know that what we do on land and how we grow food in Aotearoa affects our water. How we farm, produce food and deal with waste can increase or reduce the nitrogen, phosphorus, faecal pollution and sediments going into our lakes, rivers, estuaries, groundwater and harming them.
<b>Accounts of the indirect and direct impacts, provide a few facts</b>	Different waterways have different tolerances for these stressors.  Very clear lakes like Lake Taupō have a low tolerance for these stressors, whereas shallow lakes with extensive native plant communities can handle higher nutrient loads before the water quality degrades.
<b>Solutions</b>	Drawing on the work produced by the Our Land and Water National Science Challenge, communities can identify the sensitivity of individual bodies of water to the nutrients produced by local farming. From there, the local community can work together to ensure that they are caring for their local waterways responsibly, making sure they are staying healthy for generations to come.

## Make facts fluent

To help tell your story, choose a few limited facts and talk about them in a way that makes them more fluent for people (i.e., they can understand and recall them better).

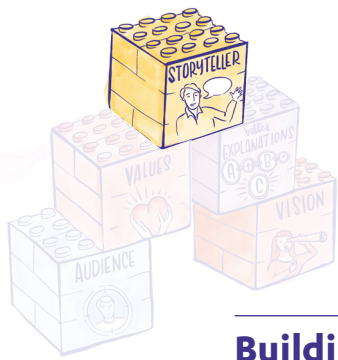
- Use fewer facts.
- Present the facts so people have an everyday context for them, e.g., “that is like half of an olympic sized swimming pool being made up of sediment”.
- Depict statistics and facts in graphics as a preference, for example, showing the number of rivers that are no longer swimmable, compared to twenty years ago on a map.
- Use strategies such as guess and reveal, e.g., ask people to make a guess at the fact and then reveal the answer.

## Use agentive language

We want people to understand that there are things they can do to change systems to fix issues. Headlines such as “The toll of decades of intensive dairying” fail to name a person or agent involved in the problem. This makes it hard for people to see who needs to act and what needs to be done. One way to help people lift their gaze and see what needs to happen is to name the specific agents of change within the system.

For example, we can talk about ‘upstream’ structures that include public health experts, top level industry groups such as Fonterra, as well as people in government who can make decisions and develop relationships that have a positive effect on systems and structures. It may sound like, “I can make land use changes on my farm if people in government make changes to support me”. This helps to draw people’s focus to aspects of land use change that people do have control over and gives them a sense of competence.

Avoid	Embrace
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ <b>Describing people purely in terms of the jobs that they do.</b> E.g., “farmers”, “government”.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ <b>Wording which humanises people.</b> E.g., “people who farm”, “people in government”.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ <b>Describing the problem with a lot of facts about poor land and water quality.</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ <b>Explanatory chains that start with cause, lead people through effects, and end with solutions.</b></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ <b>Using hard to understand facts in written format.</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ <b>Presenting fewer facts, presenting them visually and giving them everyday context.</b></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ <b>Passive sentences without an agent named.</b> E.g., “water contaminants are harming people”.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ <b>Naming human agents</b> E.g., “people in local government must work to help people who farm make the necessary land use changes”.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ <b>Labelling politicians or institutions as corrupt, evil or broken.</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ <b>Naming the problematic behaviour and/or naming the new behaviour required.</b></li></ul>



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## Building block 5. Storytellers

- We use credibility and trust as a mental shortcut – it's less work to take a trusted person's advice than assess all the information ourselves (credibility shortcut).
- We also use mental shortcuts in deciding who to trust or who is credible, i.e., how someone looks, the institutions they come from, past experience with similar people or institutions.
- Expertise is about perception not technical expertise.

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## Four principles on storytellers for land use change:

- 1. Work with people who are trusted by your audience to provide positive social proof and improve credibility of a message** – this would look like messages from people who farm, people in farming communities, people known to support people who farm, people who purchase farming products.
- 2. Consider what information you repeat and how often.** We are more likely to accept beliefs and positions that we see frequently repeated in order to fit in.
  - » Repetition from trustworthy people confers credibility to the information you are trying to get across.
  - » This cuts both ways – repeating unhelpful information gives it credibility.
- 3. Use messengers with shared values.**
  - » It is important to find messengers who people can see represent their values. For this reason a wide variety of messengers is important.
  - » Use surprising messengers – for example, older people who farm talking about the benefits of land use change for their grandchildren.
- 4. Pair the right messenger with the right message.**
  - » Pair effective narratives with a messenger that is trusted/credible to your audience.
  - » Choose messengers who will bring with them trust and credibility for your persuadable audience and who are in a position to transition/slide your audience into your helpful message.

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## What is social proof?

Showing people that other people who they consider trustworthy are willing to make or support changes is a more effective strategy to garner support for things like land use changes than presenting people with negative facts about the problem.

### Storytellers who share a concrete vision of the future of farming

Work in partnership with people who farm and Māori agribusiness leaders who are already engaged in changing their farming practices to build a vision for land use change that leads with positive and concrete examples.

- In order to make land use change feel important and possible, it is critical that those engaged in this transition are supported by concrete examples of both the people and practices that have led successful farming systems changes.
- These farming practices are underpinned by a philosophy of care for interconnected farms, soil, catchments, and waterways. There are examples of people who farm who have strongly connected with important tikanga based environmental values (i.e., reciprocity, interconnectivity, and intergenerational responsibility) and some who are even on a te ao Māori journey of their own. By referring to these shared values and understandings, their stories could spark helpful thinking about the benefits of Te Tiriti-based partnerships.
- Partnering with Māori agribusiness leaders can also help to share the collective wellbeing values and strategies that are future generation-focused with tauwiwi who are farming more conventionally or on their journey of change. People within Māori agribusiness continue to work tirelessly toward realising these values within their business models and operations. This shows people who farm a range of values and ways of thinking and farming that may provide support and inspiration for those engaged in change to continue their important work and others to join them.
- Again, use credible and trustworthy spokespeople using appropriate communication channels for your audience and in your message delivery. For farming communities it is important to share stories from trusted professionals and organisations through communication channels that include rural newspapers, industry events and publications, alongside online media.

# Putting it all together – an example message for a different farming future

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This guide has provided a number of strategies, tools and techniques that will be helpful for shaping a persuasive, values-led message.

The following section demonstrates how the structure developed by The Workshop can be used to create a message which could be used in your communications. The exact content and structure will differ depending on the medium you are using: a press release, an email newsletter, or a script for a video. But the underlying theory remains the same.

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## **Steps 1 & 2:** Articulate a positive and inclusive vision and identify helpful intrinsic values: the why

“Wherever we live in New Zealand, looking after our soil and water matters to us because it means the places we treasure can be enjoyed for many generations to come. For people who farm, people who live in cities and everyone across our country, healthy water, soil and ecosystems are vital for our shared wellbeing. And across New Zealand, some people are switching to ways of farming that work with nature to rebuild soil and waterways as they grow great food.”

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## **Step 3:** What is preventing the realisation of this vision?

(Here is the opportunity to provide better explanations about land use change and health effects: the who, the how, the where.)

“But people who farm are not getting the support they need to make changes to land and water use which would benefit us all. Many farmers are aware of the impacts of intensive farming on soil, waterways and our climate, which affect all of our health downstream. Many would like to make changes in their practices on the ground. But water and soil health needs changes to be made upstream, where current policies and practices compartmentalise areas of the environment despite them being connected through things like shared catchment areas.”

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## **Steps 4:** Present solutions

Attribute better outcomes (better soil and water health) based on evidence of the cause.

“In order to improve our downstream health outcomes, people in government and policy makers need to improve the upstream environmental factors that contribute to unhealthy waterways and soil. This means implementing policies that support people who farm to transition to ways of farming that work with nature to rebuild soil, waterways and wildlife and store carbon, as they grow great food.”

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## **Steps 5:** Present action/resolution (the what now?)

“We have an opportunity to make our communities and ecosystems healthier right now. You can hold people in politics and industries accountable for leading land use change opportunities.”

# Narratives and Framing Glossary

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<b>Agents</b>	Our fast thinking system makes it difficult for people to see the actors or human agents who make decisions and affect outcomes in complex systems like the economy or environmental health system. The solution is to show the humans that made this problem and the humans that can fix this problem. This is called naming agents.
<b>Extrinsic/individual values</b>	Extrinsic values are when what matters most, or the principles that guide our decisions are centered on external approval or rewards and losses. For example, social power, money, or concern about image.
<b>Frames</b>	Frames are both a) 'prepackaged' mental models or mindsets that help us to make sense of ideas and b) communication tools that evoke these mindsets. Frames act as guides directing people where to look and interpret what they see. Every message or communication is presented through a frame.
<b>Intrinsic/collective values</b>	Intrinsic values are when what matters most, or the principles that guide our decisions, are centered on internal or collective rewards and losses, for example, care for others or connection with nature.
<b>Metaphors</b>	Metaphors are a simplifying explanatory strategy that connects an abstract concept to a concrete or known concept. They help people quickly grasp a better, deeper explanation for complex issues. For example "unlocking poverty".
<b>Narratives</b>	Narratives are stories found across our culture and communications that capture preexisting or shared understandings about the world and influence our thinking. For example Individualism is a narrative that is embedded in many different communications that explains problems as resulting from a lack of individual effort and solutions as about individual effort or choice.
<b>Surfacing</b>	The process by which mindsets, helpful/unhelpful thinking, or values are brought to the fore of people's thinking.

<b>Values</b>	Values are what matters most to us in life, guiding principles. They are at the heart of our human motivations. They guide our behaviours, attitudes and how we understand the world.
<b>Zero-sum game</b>	This is a narrative in which people understand, often at a subconscious level, that more for one group means less for me and mine.

# Appendix 1:

## A checklist for your communications about the future of farming

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Use this checklist, based on the 'How to talk about the future of farming in Aotearoa New Zealand' guide above, to write and check your communications.

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### Step 1: Understand how people think about the future of farming

**Identify the unhelpful thinking you need to navigate around and the helpful thinking you want to surface**

→ **Check.** pp. 8–11 in the guide for current unhelpful and helpful thinking about farming and land use change

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### Step 2: Decide who to talk to and about

**Identify your persuadable audience**

→ **Check.** Don't construct communications for those already convinced or the noisy opposition

**Identify your agents. Be clear on who needs to do what**

→ **Check.** Focus on agents with the most influence. Emphasise collective action, avoid individual behaviour or choice.

---

**Step 3: Build the structure of your communications using vision, values, barriers, solutions formula**

**First >> Articulate the better world we want. Flip the problem to an inclusive vision**

→ **Check.** Your vision is not the removal of something bad

→ **Check.** Your vision uses concrete language and is about people's lives not processes or policies

**Then >> Identify the helpful collective values to connect with your audience**

→ **Check.** pp. 21–23 for helpful values to embrace and unhelpful values to avoid

**Then >> Name the barriers and problems that are in the way of the vision and solutions**

→ **Check.** You have named the agents responsible for removing these barriers

**Finally >> Present solutions. Include an action proportionate to the problem**

→ **Check.** You have named the agents responsible for removing these barriers



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## Step 4: Use language that deepens people's understanding

### Identify helpful frames to use. See pp. 25–26 for helpful frames

→ **Check.** Avoid economic, individual farm choice, or us vs. them frames.

### Plan your metaphors

→ **Check.** Do not use metaphors that make soil and water quality seem out of anyone's control. Use 'upstream environments, downstream health' metaphor.

### Use clear and concrete language

→ **Check.** Can I draw a picture of this?

### Use an explanatory chain where you need to explain complex science or cause and effects, see pp. 28–29

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## Step 5: Check for common errors that surface unhelpful thinking

→ Lead with the cake, not ingredients. Do not lead with facts, problems or policy solutions.

→ Tell your story, not theirs. Don't myth bust or negate. Avoid phrases like "you may have heard" or "it is NOT true that".

- People and planet, over money and fear. Don't use money, safety or fear as the 'why'. Avoid phrases like "how can we afford not to", "it will cost more in the long run if we don't".
- People do things. Turn passive language into agentive language, and check you have the correct agents. Use "people in government can set rules that support land use change" not "paying farmers to farm sustainably".

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## Step 6: Test your communications

- **Check.** Test with your persuadable audience, not the convinced or the opposition.

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