

The need for entrepreneurs in the farming sector



**COMMENT by
MICHAEL J DOWLING**

TO BE a successful society and a successful economy, we need entrepreneurs.

They are the individuals who invest in productive businesses and those who risk their resources with the aim of making a profit – the profit that funds the rest of our capitalist system with all its controls and demands.

An entrepreneurial farmer looks at any opportunity by examining the facts which can be reasonably assessable.

What resources do they have, what does the season look like, what is the demand for the goods or services, what are the risks and what might the return be like if the initiative is successful?

I don't know how to measure the level of entrepreneurial activity in the nation but my view is that the entrepreneurial sector is not at all healthy.

While I acknowledge that there are many successful and hard working individuals and enterprises operating, my assessment is that the plans for most of the current level of wealth creators would be the question of how to convert their investment into cash and retire.

Government's response is to offer more of taxpayers' money to give grants to be seen to helping out, but they never really address the cause of the problem and ask why the entrepreneurial spirit has diminished and then seek to address the root cause of the problem.

The current generation of entrepreneurs just finds it too difficult. The risks of doing

business are too great for most to have a go and work towards making a profit.

If I am correct, then there is something unsettling in the nation. Instead of focusing on how to spend even more and more on assessing the many needs of those seeking support, the nation should be focused on how to establish an environment where entrepreneurs are encouraged, assisted and valued rather than being seen as being a small and insignificant part of our economic system.

Without a flourishing entrepreneurial environment we will not prosper. You only have to look at Greece and Spain to see that economic disruption and large-scale unemployment will follow the loss of entrepreneurial spirit.

If you cannot see what has happened overseas, have a good look at Tasmania and large areas of regional and rural Australia and you will see the consequences of the disappearance of the entrepreneurial spirit.

The Centre for the Study of Rural

Australia at Marcus Oldham is playing its part by engaging in a project called EntruBIZ which is developing entrepreneurship in rural businesses and communities.

The project, which is funded by the William Buckland Foundation, focuses on developing innovative approaches to business creation and development within two rural Victorian communities.

Australia needs new energised entrepreneurs to replace those that are retiring and to provide new employment in the industries and businesses of this century.

Let us have more focus and discussion on the need for increased entrepreneurial emphasis in our society and encourage those that are considering "having a go" because without them, wealth will not be created and the many demands on the economy will not be satisfied.

■ Michael J Dowling is a board member of Marcus Oldham College, Geelong.