

Royal Agricultural & Pastoral Society

Strategic Case

April 2021

Report Objective

*“The Royal Agricultural and Pastoral Society of New Zealand seeks to undertake a ‘Better Business Case’ process to ensure the parent organisation and its member organisations, both A&P Associations and Breed and Kindred Societies, **are well placed to meet their purpose, continue to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world, and seek to optimise their impact for key stakeholders and New Zealanders.**”*

The first stage of this Better Business Case process is this Stage One report, the Strategic Case.

Strategy Development Process

This Strategic Case was developed by Steve Bramley, SGL Group, with the RAS Executive, from November 2020 to February 2021.

The overall approach was:

- Part A: **Full Situational Overview** for the Royal Agricultural and Pastoral Society (RAS)
- Part B: **Draft Strategic Planning Discussion and Directions**
- Part C: **Development of Working Groups** Background and Scope.

Interviews

SGL undertook about 30 interviews with 34 different people including:

- RAS Executive and CEO (6 people)
- District Representatives (3 people)
- A&P Associations (16 people from 9 A&P Associations, ranging from large to small shows)
- Breed and Kindred Associations (3 people representing 5 B&K Associations)
- External domestic stakeholders (6 people).

Peer Review and Support for Further Business Case Development Process

To support this process, the RAS Executive also formed a **Strategy Group** to peer review the Strategic Case, and to help guide and support the next stages of the Business Case development.

The membership of this group includes three current RAS Executive members and three independent appointees.

Peer Review and Support for Further Business Case Development Process

The Strategy Group membership includes:

- Stephen Woodhead (Independent and Chair) – Former Otago Regional Councillor
- Murray Jagger (Independent) – Chair, Northland Port Corporation
- Kate Wilkinson (Independent) – Former Member of Parliament, current Environment Court Commissioner
- Brent Snelllex (RAS President)
- Rachel Walker (RAS Vice-President with Strategy Portfolio)
- Malcolm McKerrow (RAS Executive with Finance Portfolio)

What We've Heard

- Need for one set of rules acknowledged
- Mission disconnect...sustainability? innovation?
- People wanting greater connection and help
- Conference is an AGM – ‘no one wants to go’
- Over emphasis equestrian but “only one which makes money”
- Passionate and good people who care and who are putting in lots of time at all levels
- All agree importance of Shows for social connectivity, should reflect the community (‘s identity), ‘bring town to country’ (experience animals)
- Use A&P movement to educate public re importance of primary industry/farming and rural issues

What We've Heard

- Some low trust, frequent comment... "importance of respect"
- "In effect we're on our own"
- How can we simplify some of the rules... "a phone book, too many, some unnecessary, too hard" ... "about power"
- Need greater flexibility to accept some entries
- Greater transparency... "cronyism for some appointments?"
- "Largely ignore RAS emails...not relevant"
- Want a friendlier style and a less policing style
- "Interconnected strands of people ...alienate one, alienate several" ... "tribal networks"
- Fee review – A&P and Breed Societies

What We've Heard

- How can we make rules simpler
- Need for a skills-based Board at national level
- Be smarter...use technology to save time, travel costs – “is RAS being as efficient as it could be?”
- Need one online system that is tailormade, national results and height database, competitors enter once, etc, “want an online system which makes as easy as possible for me to run Show and access services”
- “Have to innovate to make Shows work...is RAS innovating?”
- Limited national stakeholder relationships (e.g., NZ Beef & Lamb, NZ Dairy, MPI)

What We've Heard

Views of the future...

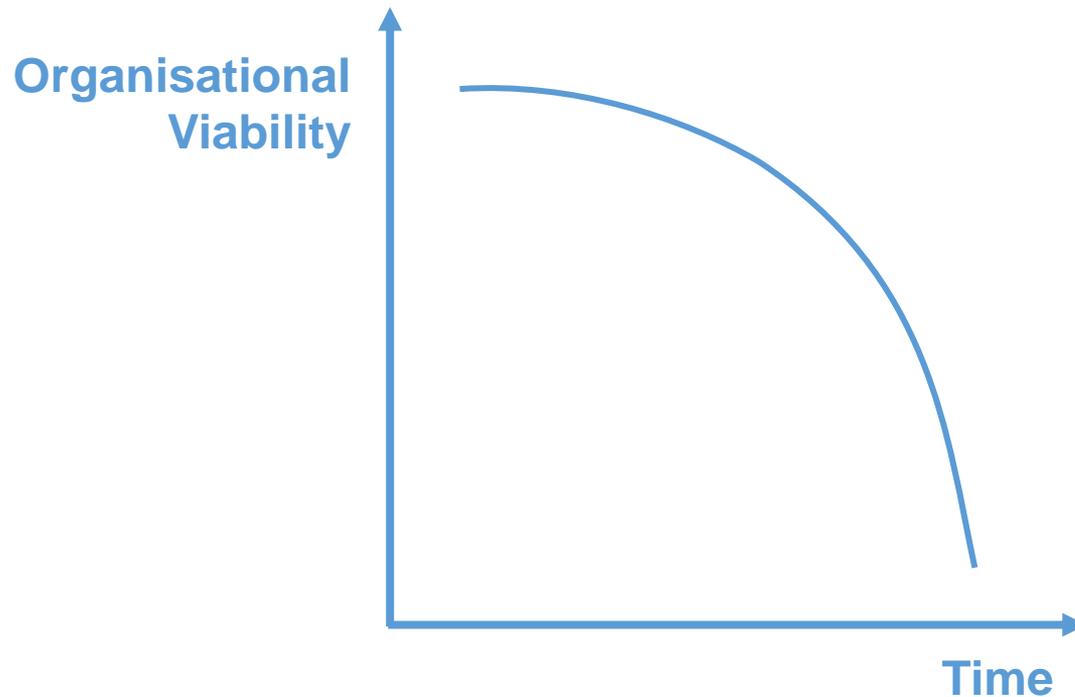
- Some A&Ps (and Breed Societies) will disassociate - too hard, no relevance
- “Is the A&P movement dying a 40-year slow death?”
- Lots of hope because of greater relevance of social connectivity and community
- Must use platform of 93 shows and asset base to achieve community and rural sector outcomes

What We've Heard

About organisation culture...

- Learn from each other/more information sharing, “one team”
- *From controlling ...to empowering, knowledge sharing, enabling*
- *RAS to be mandated to lead, rather than to have seek permission to act*
- *From administering...to how to support, foster improvements and innovation*
- Don't isolate
- Coalition of the willing
- “Join hands – common good, common understanding, common idea”
- More listening, more visibility, more connection, saying thanks (“Go to Shows...*understand their business and understand them*”)
- More real support

If Don't Act, A Possible Future for A&P Associations?



...Aging Facilities (with low use and income other than the A&P Show)

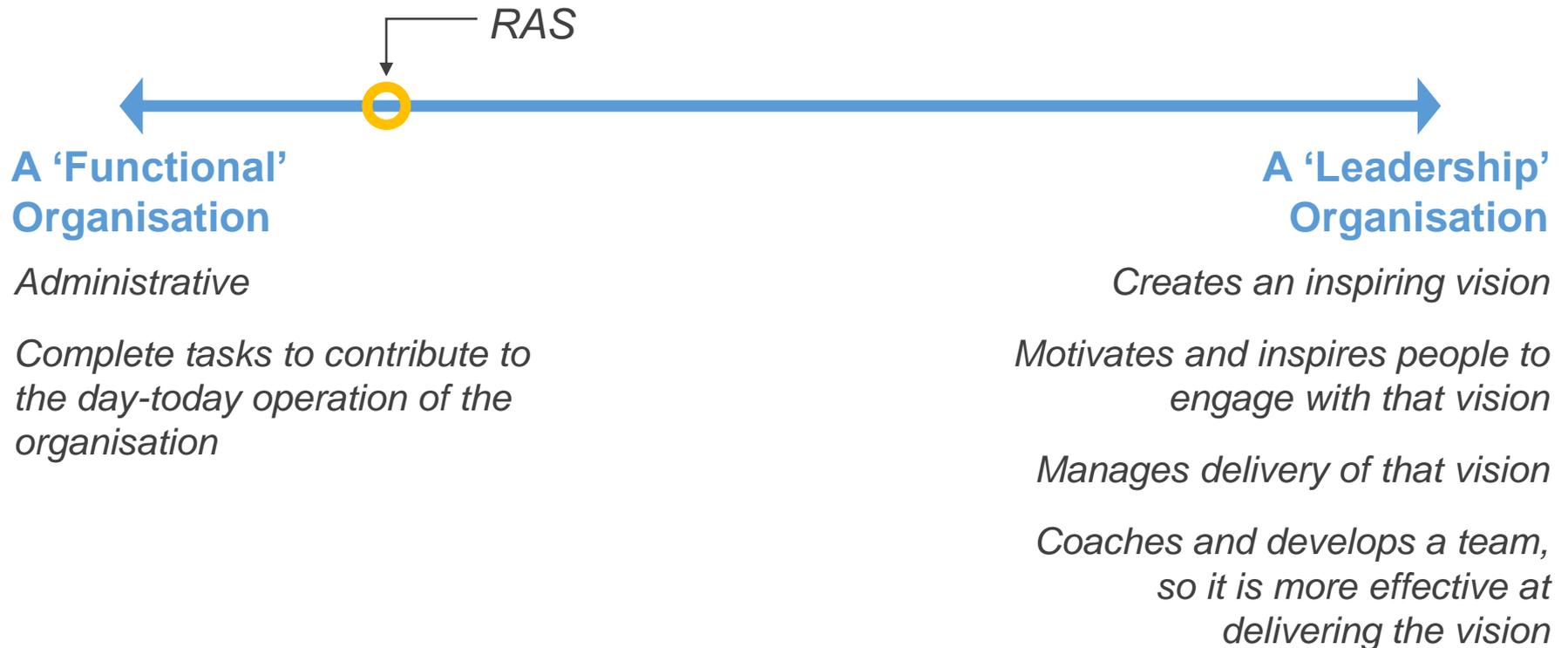
...Aging Volunteers (with limited succession planning)

...Decreasing Relevance of Some Shows (with limited refresh)

...Reduction of Showing Movement (due to M bovis, commercial impacts, etc)

Where is the Royal Agricultural Society in 2020 on a 'Functional to Leadership' Continuum?

From administering ...to how to support, and foster improvements and innovation



SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
93 member A&P Associations and annual shows/national coverage	A disconnect between current RAS mission and current strategy and activities
67 Breed & Kindred Societies with specific breed knowledge	RAS seen as an administrator of rules
Royal Show brand and licencing	Aging membership with limited diversity and minimal succession planning by many A&P Associations
Importance of social connectivity and community identity of shows	Lack of national database/digital systems
Asset base of A&P Associations	Lack of documented customer understanding and pathways
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Optimise digitalisation – national database and digital systems that save time	Financial viability of A&P Associations and Shows – several stressed Associations with financial and volunteer challenges
Future strategic relationships with key stakeholders/smart partnerships, e.g., ESNZ	Asset base retention - many A&P Associations have ageing facility infrastructure, often with low community use and income outside the annual A&P show
Provide a development framework for best practice and content options for different scales of Show...in effect a 'quality support framework' without accreditation	Reduction of showing movement
Develop Next Generation strategies, in effect for the 'Mid-Generation', to foster succession planning	Bio risk: Population and animal health management (Covid-19 and Mycoplasma bovis)
Move from an organisation role and culture of administering to leading and enabling	

Overall Approach

Approach

Important to be clear on one's competitive advantage and the organisation's future required role.

Definition of Competitive Advantage

- Of value to customers
- Better than competitors
- Difficult to replicate.

TODAY'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Local land/venue base (whether through ownership or safe long-term leases)

History, volunteer base and networks/positioning (a rural social icon: note A&P is the brand, not RAS)

(Consequently) **Established shows**, providing the opportunity for animal contact, a breadth of activities reflective of the local community, and social connection

Breed and Kindred Association affiliation – specific breed knowledge and members



TOMORROW'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

National database of competitors, horse and members, and streamlined digital systems...*how to leverage our data?*

A&P Associations are rural community hubs/places of convergence and connection – a focal point and 'home of' rural communities for community activities, services and training (for A&P Association, Pony Clubs, equestrian groups, Young Farmers, Scouts/Guides, etc); preferred indoor and outdoor events venue (for A&P Show, equestrian events, mini-trade shows, etc), 'place of rural trade' when appropriate (e.g., stock sales, vet services?), motorhome accommodation, civil defence community hub, etc

Well established partnerships so RAS and A&P Associations are a portal and platform for engagement for industry and education best practice for all areas matching RAS's mission

Well understood and managed customer pathways for all key areas of operation, including animal showing (competitors and judges), rural careers, (relevant life-long) involvement in member and affiliated organisations, etc

Established national and regional acknowledgement programmes for volunteers, youth, environmental sustainability, technology innovation, etc (i.e., areas matching mission)

Our Purpose and Vision

Our Purpose

From: The RAS exists to inspire members to promote rural excellence, sustainability and excellence

To: ***Showcasing Rural Excellence***

Our Vision

Supporting our members to connect, educate, excel and innovate

Guiding Principles

...seeking to be clear what's most important regarding how we operate in the future

From:

- With Integrity
- In Collaboration
- Adding Value
- Hunting New Opportunities

To:

- ***Trusted Leadership***
- ***Relationships and Partnerships***
- ***Progressive***

Possible Future Strategies

Reference # (to main report)	Strategy (Note, not in priority order)	Phase 1: 2022 to 2024	Phase 2: 2025 to 2027	Phase 3: 2028 to 2030
1	A people focus: Strive to be a best practice organisation for staff and volunteer management and acknowledgment	X	X	X
2	Rules review and simplify where can. Also, 'partition' off rules management from main operation of RAS	X	X	
3	Education: Education through (animal) experiences and displays at shows+, plus website portal – RAS could provide a website portal for all key areas of information (provided by partner organisations) but does not need to be a developer of educational content ... RAS and A&Ps are a portal and platform for engagement for industry and education best practice for all areas matching RAS's mission	X	X	X
4	Provide a development framework for best practice and content options for different scales of show... in effect a 'quality support framework' without accreditation	X		

Possible Future Strategies

Reference # (to main report)	Strategy (Note, not in priority order)	Phase 1: 2022 to 2024	Phase 2: 2025 to 2027	Phase 3: 2028 to 2030
5	Develop and provide business modelling and advisory/support services for Associations and shows of different types and scale (including guidance when appropriate for future structural solutions that retain benefits for the A&P movement)	X		
6	Optimise digitalisation: Online system that is tailor-made for entries, results, height certificates, etc, that competitors can enter their base information once, use of QR codes/scanners at events, etc. Also to assist effective and efficient Show management and Association management. Explore with Equestrian Sports NZ and NZ Pony Clubs the potential for one national equestrian database and online system. How to leverage our data?	X	X	X
7	Role of Districts: Remain volunteer structures with future roles including a revised rules role as part of a nationally revamped system, networking and knowledge sharing, possibly an expanded mentoring role , and support for locally run training courses	X		

Possible Future Strategies

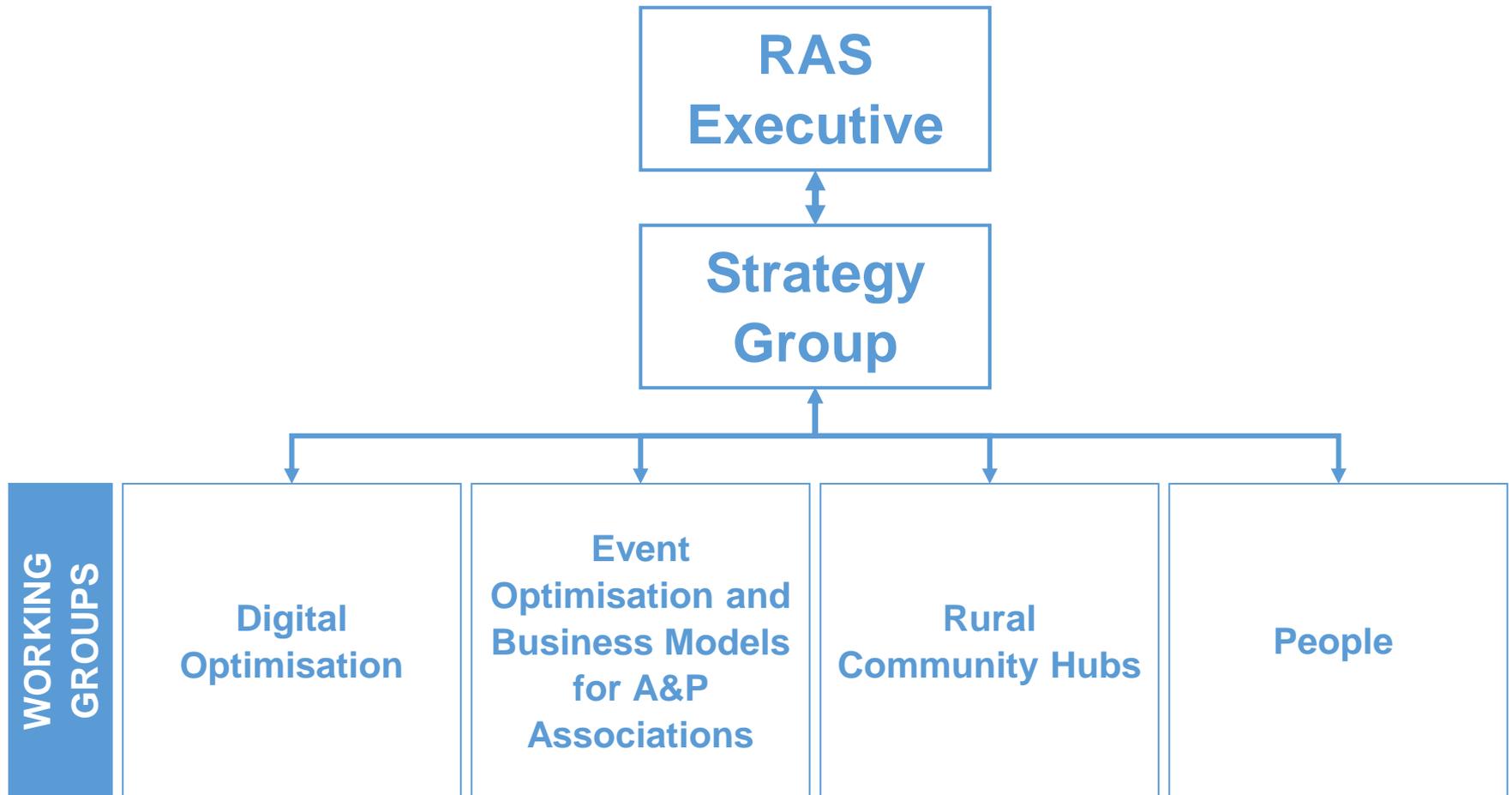
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8	With stakeholders such as ESNZ, DairyNZ, etc, develop relevant and effective partnerships – partnerships are to be a cornerstone of RAS’ future style and strategies	X	X	X
	Example only: With NZ Young Farmers (or similar), develop a partnership to achieve effective reach/connection with rural child and youth audiences and under 30-year farmers	X	X	
	Example only: Develop national relationship with NZ Motor Caravan Association so A&P Associations are a preferred venue and actively promoted		X	
9	Position A&P facilities/Associations as ‘rural community hubs’ : Suggest a key future positioning strategy – that A&P’s are places of convergence and connection	X (pilot only initially)	X	X
10	Better ‘vertically and horizontally integrate’ the A&P movement , e.g., foster linkage strategies between shows in a District such as a regional point series		X	X

Possible Future Strategies

Reference # (to main report)	Strategy (Note, not in priority order)	Phase 1: 2022 to 2024	Phase 2: 2025 to 2027	Phase 3: 2028 to 2030
11	<i>Develop well understood and managed customer pathways for all key areas of operation</i> , including animal showing (competitors and judges), rural careers, (relevant life-long) involvement in member and affiliated organisations, etc	X	X	X
12	<i>RAS to develop key messaging and relationships with key public funders</i> . However, first need to have a united and compelling vision supported by real and achievable strategies, and for interface right governance/management skill sets	X	X	X
13	<i>Foster national and regional corporate support</i> but first requires a consistent, quality event delivery platform and a national database/online system which provides direct access to membership (via RAS)		X	X
14	<i>Consider developing bequest/endowment strategy for A&P movement</i> but must be based on reset/compelling and shared vision. Develop stories	X	X	X

Immediate Next Steps

Short-Term Planning Development Structure (April to August 2021)



Immediate Next Steps

WORKING GROUPS

Membership: (At least) One Executive member from the Strategy Group is linked with each Working Group, with three to four of the best possible people from the A&P Movement for that area of work, and to be supported by SGL.

Time Requirement: Each Working Group to meet up to 3 to 4 times, both prior to and then after the RAS AGM in June 2021.

Need and Role: Each Working Group to undertake more detailed, practical work for their Strategy Development Area. These Working Groups are essential as part of a shared ownership process and about being able to provide practical examples of how improved support could be provided to RAS members in the future.

RULES REVIEW

From discussion at the RAS Executive meeting on 25 February 2021, it was also agreed immediate progress should be made on the Rules Review, and that appropriate group/s be formed to progress this area of work.

Next Steps

- Working Groups formed and underway by early June 2021
- Full Report release by 1 June 2021 (currently being further updated from recent Strategy Group review)
- Further Strategic Review presentations and discussion at RAS AGM
- Further business development work by 31 August 2021, including Working Group findings, initial partnership discussions, and draft financial planning