

ACROSS THE OUTBACK

Number 42

March 2009

Produced for Outback SA

Welcome Back to the ATO

Hello and welcome back to Across the Outback for 2009. We're delighted to be back again for another year. You'll notice a few changes to the newsletter including the obvious make-over. A basic update has been given to the look and feel, and the famous green has been (controversially) left aside. That said, every effort to retain the character and intent of the publication will be made and we hope to continue much as previous years.

We would also like to welcome the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure to page 9 who, together with the existing ATO contributors, will bring you the six bi-monthly issues of the ATO for 2009.

Leith Yelland has graciously handed over the reigns of the ATO (see p5) and while he'll continue to contribute to future issues, I'd like to congratulate him on many years of producing the ATO. — Ed.

Water Allocation Plan in Action

At the end of February, Minister for Environment and Conservation, Jay Weatherill adopted the Water Allocation Plan (WAP) for the Far North Prescribed Wells Area (FNPWA).

The innovative WAP is the culmination of extensive community consultation and planning. It establishes a firm framework governing the allocation and use of water from the Great Artesian Basin (GAB) in this region.

Chris Reed, Presiding Member, SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management (SAAL NRM) Board says, the success of this WAP will be largely due to the huge involvement and support from the people and communities of this region. "The Plan represents a successful outcome for all stakeholders and the environment."

The FNPWA WAP will not only protect the existing users of water and ensure that indigenous traditional and cultural access to water is guaranteed, but also bring assurance to the myriad mound springs, environmental systems and plant and animal species endemic to the region. The adopted plan will guide the allocation of water from the GAB in the FNPWA. Communities, industries and environments in this arid area are almost exclusively dependent on groundwater.

A further benefit is that it now creates an opportunity for any unused surplus water to be made available to other users. New users will now need to obtain licences and permits in order to access GAB water.

John Gavin, General Manager, SAAL NRM Board says, "The WAP clarifies the rights and responsibilities of all GAB users. It prescribes responsible, fair and equitable water allocations for all users of groundwater in the Far North Prescribed Wells Area, while also maintaining the health of natural resources and ecosystems throughout the region."

Under the plan, the region's water resources will now be managed in a more coordinated and sustainable way.

Copies of the WAP, Explanatory Documents and a Licensing Information brochure are available at www.saalnrm.sa.gov.au

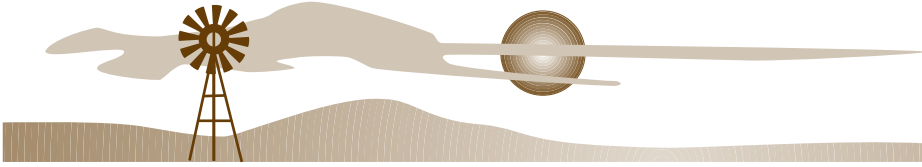


The WAP was developed through extensive research and community consultation

Across the Outback is published every second month for the Outback SA Government and Community Alliances. It is currently jointly funded by the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation (on behalf of the Pastoral Board); Primary Industry and Resources at Port Augusta; the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board; the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure; and the Outback Areas Community Development Trust. This paper is prepared and edited by Mark Wheeler (SAAL NRM Board). Comments and suggestions are always welcome. Please contact wheeler.mark@saugov.sa.gov.au or 08 8204 9328



Government of South Australia



New appointments to the Pastoral Land Management Group

The retirement of Brendan Lay has meant that the vacancy for the important position of lead scientist within the Pastoral Land Management Group has been advertised and filled. The position attracted a strong field of interest and, following a rigorous selection process Mr Craig Boulderstone has been appointed to the position.

Many pastoral lessees will know Craig from the first round of pastoral lease assessments as he was an integral part of the team that undertook that task. Following his work with the assessment team, Craig had a stint overseas as a Project Officer with Worcestershire Wildlife Trust Consultancy, UK. Craig then returned to South Australia to work as the Unit Leader, Compliance & Monitoring with Native Vegetation Group. In 2006, Craig took some time out from his Public Sector Career to work on the family farm at Keith.

Craig's experience with the assessment program and his strong project management skills will be invaluable in ensuring the delivery of this important work for the Board is timely and efficient.

Further to Craig's appointment, the Pastoral Land Management Group has also welcomed Monique Farrell, a trainee administration officer. Monique is fresh out of Year 12 but has already shown a real aptitude for the work – a recent 'test' saw her pass the challenge of spelling lease names (try Mooleulooloo if you don't live there) with flying colours!

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Pastoral Board Matters:
David Leek - (08) 8303 9755

Public Access to pastoral lands:
David Oag - (08) 8648 5174



Craig Boulderstone



Monique Farrell

Caring for Our Country

As many people would be aware the Australian Government has released a new environmental initiative entitled 'Caring for Our Country'. As it has become known, the C4oC initiative will invest \$2.25billion to secure improved strategic outcomes across six national priority areas:

- The National Reserve System
- Biodiversity and natural icons
- Coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats
- Sustainable farm practices
- Natural resource management in northern and remote Australia, and
- Community skills knowledge and engagement.

Each year the Australian Government will release a business plan identifying the priority areas for investment that will deliver the strategic outcomes identified above. The business plan for 2009/10 was released late last year and prompted a flurry of activity to prepare project proposals for the March 6 deadline.

The Pastoral Board, through the staff of the Pastoral Land Management Group is an active partner in a number of proposals, particularly in relation to projects that are aimed at the sustainable farm practices, natural resource management in northern and remote Australia, and Community skills knowledge and engagement. While the March 6 deadline has been extended due to the Victorian bushfires and Queensland floods, the time to develop projects is still short and has required a concentrated

Outback Calendar:

William Creek Gymkhana Saturday, April 4
 Marla Bronco Branding April 24
 Flinders Ranges Bush Festival April 24-26
 Oodnadatta Races May 16
 Marree Picnic Races and Gymkhana June 6
 Oodnadatta Bronco Branding and Campdraft July 11

If your event or meeting date has been set, let us know. (Remember, *Across the Outback* is published bi-monthly so the next issue will be in May. Please email any additions to wheeler.mark@saugov.sa.gov.au)

effort from staff. In most instances, projects are being developed in cooperation with the South Australian Arid Lands NRM Board and a range of interstate entities.

One large project proposal of particular interest is aimed at reducing the impact of feral camels – a target that is explicitly identified in this year's business plan. This project is being developed by a consortium of partners both from within South Australia and across our borders and, if funded, will see a concerted effort by all jurisdictions to reduce the feral population. Further information about C4oC, there is a wealth of information at <http://www.nrm.gov.au>.

Camel Report

Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre (DKCRC) recently released a comprehensive report entitled "Managing The Impacts Of Feral Camels In Australia: A New Way Of Doing Business". This very comprehensive and interesting report covers all aspect of camel management including chapters on the ecology of feral camels, stakeholder perceptions, a review of legislation and regulations, evaluation of feral camel impacts and a review of the control options available. The report is available from Desert Knowledge CRC and is supported by a wealth of accompanying information on the DKCRC website at <http://www.desertknowledgecrc.com.au/>

Given the recent media focus on the impacts of feral camels and reported interest from a range of people in the development of a camel industry, the Pastoral Board has shown a keen interest in the content and will further consider the implications of the report over the coming months.

Pastoral Rents

Lessees would be aware that invoices for pastoral rents have been issued. In accordance with the Valuer-General's determination, rents have increased by 10% this year and the Valuer-General has

indicated that, in accordance with the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act, a full review of rents will be undertaken in 2009.

In the report provided to the Pastoral Board, the Valuer-General noted that the majority of sales evidence indicated that the increase is conservative but noted that prevailing dry conditions, the related economic markets and cost influences had determined that a cautious approach to rent increases was warranted.

As noted in the communication sent to lessees accompanying the rent invoice, any lessee who is dissatisfied with the rent determination may make written representations to the Valuer-General. Lessees are invited to contact the Pastoral Land Management Office if there are further questions about this process.

Seasonal Conditions

At its February meeting the Pastoral Board received information on seasonal condition. In summary the report indicated that the Marla Oodnadatta district continued to receive beneficial falls of rain into December 2008 although since then conditions have started to dry out. All standing biomass has now mainly hayed off (dried off) although it is terrific cattle feed. Parts of the Kingoonya district also received rainfall in December 2008 with the vegetation in good condition, although dry. Other districts are in similar condition as reported at the last Board meeting. The area east of the Flinders Ranges is extremely mixed in that some leases have received good rains and responded very well is in really good condition whilst others to the south still have areas of drift and instability evident. It was noted that despite some rain late in 2008, areas around Marree are still particularly dry.

Lake Eyre 'Fills'

The rumours that Lake Eyre is about to fill has prompted the usual round of enquiries about how to access the lake, both to pastoralists and to the Board via the pastoral land management group. While there is debate about whether the current flows from the Georgina / Diamantina will reach Lake Eyre and, if so, how much water will flow into it, there has already been a range of people enquiring as to how they can get to the lake to view the expected spectacle. In order that this level of interest can be managed, the Pastoral Land Management Group is exploring how lessees might be supported over the coming months to manage the expected influx of people.

It is worth reminding affected lessees that the Board has developed an access request form that people can be directed to that might help keep track of who has asked to go where and when. This form is available at http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/land/rangelands/public_access/regulation_links.html

Pastoral Board Meeting Dates

The Pastoral Board has set its meeting dates for 2009.

- Meeting 114 Thursday 2nd April 2009 DWLBC Conference Room BLD 1 Waite
- Meeting 115 Wednesday 3rd and Thursday 4th June 2009 (Joint Regional meeting with SAAL NRM Board. Location TBA Maree or Mungerannie)
- Meeting 116 Thursday 13th August 2009 Conference Room BLD 1 Waite
- Meeting 117 Wednesday 14th and Thursday 15th October 2009 (Regional meeting. North East - Yunta proposed)
- Meeting 118 Thursday 10th December 2009 Balyana

The Board is also planning to progressively review and update its policies over the year and to dedicate time to reviewing assessment reports with a view to making lease offers later this year. The Board is very aware of the delay in processing reports that have already been reviewed and is hopeful that the appointment of the new Principal Scientific Officer coupled with the ironing out of technical glitches with the Arid Lands Information System will see the flow of information to lessees improve in the future.



Farewell to Leith Yelland

Mark Sutton

It is with mixed emotions that the Trust says farewell to our long serving Projects Facilitation Officer, Leith Yelland, who retired at the end of 2008 after nearly 10 years with OACDT.

During this time Leith co-ordinated all projects undertaken by the Trust in the outback areas, including the establishment of the UHF repeater network, new public convenience facilities, major aerodrome upgrade works and heritage restoration projects to name but a few.

His commitment to, and understanding of, outback communities was second to none, he was passionate about equity in service provision and was determined to ensure the outback was never taken for granted.



Along with his retirement from the Trust, Leith has also relinquished his stewardship of this publication, a task now being undertaken by the SAAL NRM Board. Leith will continue to contribute to the 'Pastoral Profiles' page and can still be contacted via his email.

On behalf of the Trust, I would like to sincerely thank Leith for his service to the Trust and wish him all the best in his retirement.

On a personal note I would like to thank Leith for his mentoring and friendship, I do not think I could have done my job without his support, there has only been one Leith Yelland and he will be hard to replace. Good luck and good health.

Meeting The Needs of Outback Communities

The needs of South Australia's outback communities are to be better met under improved governance structures now detailed in draft legislation recently released.

Minister for State/Local Government Relations Gail Gago said the Outback Communities (Administration and Management) Bill 2009 is the result of feedback received from communities that were asked about the future management of their region in 2007. "This review was initiated to look at the formal capacity of the Outback Areas Community Development Trust to respond adequately to the needs of the outback areas now and into the future," she said. "The outback areas of our State face diverse challenges and so it is important that communities have up to date

governance structures in place to manage local affairs for the benefit of communities whilst upholding a strong sense of community spirit." The key elements of the Outback Communities (Administration and Management) Bill 2009 include:

- the establishment of a new Outback Communities Authority, to replace the Outback Areas Community Development Trust;
- increasing the capacity and expertise of the Authority by increasing membership of the Authority to seven;
- increasing community consultation to better inform the Authorities future operations - through the development of a five-yearly strategic management plan, annual business plan and budget and community resourcing and management agreements;
- strengthening regulatory powers

to enable the new Authority to better manage issues confronting its communities, such as collection of rubbish, dealing with litter and abandoned vehicles, and land hazards such as animals causing a nuisance, as well as managing development.

- increasing the financial capacity of the Authority to better maintain existing infrastructure and ensure the sustainability of outback communities by the introduction of an asset sustainability levy and (where requested) a community contribution.

An information package is available at www.oacdt.sa.gov.au or (08) 8204 8700 (or freecall 1800 352 224). The Bill is expected to be introduced to Parliament in the first half of this year.



Market Based Approach to Large Feral Herbivore Control

Phil Gee

Landholders will be aware of the Australian Government funded SAAL and AW NRM Board's pilot project trialing a market based approach (MBI) to large feral herbivore management in the north east of the state in 2008.

This pilot failed to place a successful tenderer into the field to actually remove feral herbivores and it is easy to judge the pilot as falling short of expectations. In truth, however, a great deal was learnt from the exercise. It could have easily produced on-ground results.

A market-based approach essentially seeks input from markets (businesses) to achieve a desired outcome (removal of large feral herbivores) at the most cost effective price. Bidders are invited to tender or bid for funds (in this case removal assistance money) to achieve the outcome.

The amount of funds required may differ between tendering businesses. An aerial cull operator, for example, would not anticipate any returns on animals removed, while a contract musterer might seek a lesser amount of removal assistance money if they anticipate that sales (additional money) are possible after removal (mustering).

Information sessions were held in Adelaide and Marree to inform stakeholders, initiate contacts between landholders and businesses, and respond to questions. Fact sheets on the impacts of large feral herbivores

and the MBI approach were prepared and distributed to inform the broader community about the need for removal and the MBI process generally.

As anticipated, bids were received that ranged between \$20-\$40 (of removal assistance) per animal removed. Timing issues prevented several interested stakeholders from submitting bids, as did some complexity in the invitation to tender document (called a "Request for Proposal").

The selection process itself was relatively simple; a preferred tenderer was identified quickly. Selection was based on criteria that placed a value on the amount of removal assistance needed, the number of animals targeted for removal, demonstrated experience and competence, compliance of submission to documentation and various other criteria designed to allow the work to operate across all tenures (crown, parks, pastoral and indigenous). A Competency Evaluation Panel rejected the first preferred tenderer on a risk assessment basis and a second preferred tenderer was elevated for consideration. Both were aerial cull operators.

After an extensive period of evaluation the second preferred tenderer chose not to engage contractually with the pilot to undertake removal activity. A key reason was that achieving net returns was perceived (by the tenderer) as risky and perhaps not achievable as expected numbers of feral animals were

not believed to be present (or were inaccessible due to access limitations). Additionally, capacity for negotiation was limited without re-issuing the invitation to tender to the public and further progression of the selection process was consequently prevented.

The pilot market approach to feral camel management is now being evaluated independently for its potential to contribute to large feral herbivore management, both regionally and nationally. Many key lessons have been learnt, in particular, uptake of the model requires all stakeholders to be comfortable with the model including landholders (who are frontline beneficiaries of removal) and all potential bidding entities. Compliance (payment made for actual animals removed) is a significant hurdle, as is ensuring that cost efficiencies are obtained in a free market environment – compared to directly funded removal activity (eg. markets may not be free if access restrictions eliminate competition).

The market approach to feral camel management will now be trialed in the NT and WA using the SA pilot as a basis for improvement and development.

A market based approach to large feral herbivore removal does have merit and will undoubtedly form part of an integrated management package for large feral herbivore management, particularly with feral camels.

Dog Trap Givaway

Peter Bird

Five hundred 'Jake' softcatch dog traps will soon be distributed free to pastoralists inside the dog fence to help combat the wild dog problem. The new traps, provided by State NRM Funds, are intended to replace in one clean sweep all existing steel-jawed traps whose use will be outlawed under impending changes to National Animal Welfare Codes of Practice.

Designed and built by a practising US trapper, 'Jake' traps are widely regarded as the best available dog trap on the market. Pastoralists using 'Jake' traps on loan from the SAAL NRM Board have been impressed by their positive action and robust construction.

Peter Bird of Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation will contact pastoralists soon seeking information on the number and usage of existing steel-jawed traps. It is anticipated that some of the new softcatch traps will be available in April with the remainder around July. For more information contact bird.peter@saugov.sa.gov.au or 8303 9519.

New Methods Yield Results

Reece Pedler

The search for one of South Australia's little-known reptiles has recently led to some unusual methods being trialed in the Coober Pedy area and some interesting biological finds as a result. Coober Pedy seems an appropriate setting for the somewhat strange new project, which involves utilising some of the many thousand opal prospecting shafts which dot the local landscape. The main aim is to find out more about some of the local fauna and in particular, the little-known Bronzeback Legless Lizard. Bronzebacks are known

from only a handful of records in the far north of South Australia (and recently just over the border into the Northern Territory). These unique little lizards are extremely secretive and live under the thick leaf litter mats which accumulate over many years beneath several local tree species. Bronzebacks are typically very difficult to find and many hours or days of raking the leaf litter often yields no captures at all. This raking can also be somewhat destructive of their delicate homes.



Tim Webb checking a bucket at Digger's Gully Opal Field

Although there are some records of the species from near Coober Pedy, more information is needed about the types of habitats that Bronzebacks use. There are also many questions about how far they move from their homes, when they are active, when and where they breed, just to name a few! It is hoped that an alternative method of intercepting some of these little creatures in opal shafts may start to add some missing pieces to the puzzle.

The project has started small, with approximately 35 specially modified buckets recently installed into shafts in areas that represent potential habitat. The buckets are hung in the top of the cylindrical shafts which are produced by opal prospectors

with an auger. The help of several volunteers has been enlisted and these enthusiastic locals have been doing a great job in contributing to some meaningful scientific research.

Success has been encountered early, with the recent capture of the first Bronzeback from a shaft at the Hopeful Hills Opal Field. However, the project is also revealing more about some of the other local reptile fauna. So far, at least 13 species have been captured, including a range of geckoes, skinks, dragons and even a blind snake. A species of Ctenotus skink which is usually known from a couple hundred kilometres further to the north has turned up in the buckets, representing the first record of this species for the area. Another species of Legless Lizard, which also wasn't previously known from the area has also recently been found.

It is hoped that the project will continue to shed light on the unknown life of the Bronzeback Legless Lizard, as well as increasing our knowledge of other fauna species around Coober Pedy. This unusual project is also demonstrating the valuable contribution that people living or working in the outback can make towards research and conservation of our unique fauna – we gratefully acknowledge the hard work of the volunteers involved with this project!

Please contact Reece Pedler (08) 8671 1083 or reece.pedler@saalnm.sa.gov.au.

What Does Your Garden Grow?

Louise Gavin

In February a workshop by Annette Beer (Weeds CRC NSW) was held in Port Augusta on minimising the impact of our gardens on the native environment. Participants for the workshop came from the Friends of Arid Lands Botanic Gardens, Iron

Knob Progress Association, PIRSA in Clare, Greening Australia, Copley (supported by the Building Healthy Communities program), Roxby Downs and Port Augusta councils, the Northern & Yorke NRM Board and staff from the SAAL NRM Board.

As a result, people are now able to deliver their own workshop about the sorts of plants that grow in private and public gardens.

Attendees learnt about the impacts of their own gardens, as well as how this accumulates at the local, region, state and national levels. Importantly, the group also began a list of plants suitable for planting and growing in the arid lands. Entitled, *Grow Me Instead*, attendees began identifying names of suitable plants to incorporate into the list.

If you have any suggestions of attractive, native plants that are water-wise, grow slowly, don't have too many seeds, or the potential to become weedy, please forward to Louise louise.gavin@saalnrm.sa.gov.au

White Fly in Kingoonya

Janet Walton

Western Myall White Fly surveys returned from the Kingoonya NRM district revealed that pastoralists are concerned about western myall trees on their properties. In particular, three have concerns about western myall dieback and the presence of Western Myall White Fly. Results from Gawler Ranges NRM district will be reported in the next edition of the ATO. Thank you to all who contributed. Mr. Richard Scotchner receives a prize for the fastest response.

Concerns have been recently raised about the persistence of mesquite around the Woomera area as well as the increased number of wild dogs south of the dog fence. The

Kingoonya NRM Group have been given a report on dingoes by Ben Allen (SAAL NRM Dingo Research Manager) and pastoralists are now able to avail of soft jaw traps to combat dingoes.



Brenton Arnold and John Read inspect mesquite infestation near Woomera

These group recently made a site visit to observe flowering and fruiting mesquite plants. Mesquite is a Weed of National Significance (WONS) known for its invasive nature, ecological and economic impacts such as land degradation, harboring feral animals and reducing biodiversity. As a result, a project to treat mesquite (by spraying the basal bark) will be initiated.

NRM Groups Can Help Feral Horse Control

Deb Agnew

Landholders continue to undertake feral horse control work on their properties with great success.

Feral horse (*Equus caballus*) populations can build up in localised areas and add to total grazing pressure. Since their diet is similar to cattle, they have a significant impact on cattle production. When horses concentrate around waterholes during dry times, they will consume large amounts water. The areas frequented by horses during drought are believed to be the same important refuge areas used by many native plants and animals.



Pastoralists know that although destocking cattle during drought will help protect their land, feral animals will remain. The damage large mobs cause to waterholes during drought is significant. To keep populations low it is necessary to coordinate control over large areas - usually across a number of pastoral properties.

The SAAL NRM Groups are able to provide landholders with this support, coordinating programs that can extend district-wide. It is important that all properties participate at the same time. Programs could involve mustering and trapping by pastoralists on motorbikes, supported by aerial removal by trained marksmen.

An effective control program usually involves partnerships, combining local knowledge of pastoralists with coordination from the NRM Board.



Feral horse removal at Morris bore

The SAAL NRM Groups can provide useful support and coordination, ensuring numbers of feral horses removed are collated and monitored, greatly improving long-term planning.

NRM Groups can request properties to be involved, while individual pastoralists can advise a Group of any need for action. Application for funding need to be submitted (including expressions of interest from all properties in the targeted area) so allowing a few months lead time is wise. More information can be found at www.feral.org.au

Government of South Australia

South Australian Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board

The Outback Goes High-Tech

The South Australian outback will soon be going high-tech with the installation of automated road condition signs. The \$980 000 project is jointly funded by the Australian and South Australian Governments.

The Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI) maintains 10,000 km of unsealed roads within the Unincorporated Area of South Australia. As part of this vast network, the department is also responsible for the legal temporary closure and restriction of these roads during rain events.

This system covers the unsealed road network in the Flinders Ranges, Gawler Ranges, far north and outback areas of South Australia. It enables DTEI to open, close and restrict roads due to damage caused by wet weather.

The closure of roads is undertaken to protect road users from slippery conditions and areas that may have washed out during a flood event. It also enables DTEI to protect the roads and minimise damage which can be caused by travelling whilst the surface is wet or boggy.

The system works in that informants (including members of the public, SAPOL, Olympic Dam, Outback Road Gangs) advise of any weather changes and the condition of roads. They also advise if there needs to be any closures or restrictions applied, or whether a road can be re-opened.

The new automated system will feature 32 solar powered signs strategically located across the network that can be updated remotely through an electronic system located in DTEI's Port Augusta office. They are based

on systems that are currently used successfully interstate and will result in a more efficient and accurate road condition information system.

The Road Traffic Authority in New South Wales was awarded the contract for the manufacture and installation of the automated signs.

Two test signs are expected to be installed at Iron Knob and Wirrulla by the end of March 2009. All remaining signs are expected to be in place by the end of May 2009.

Up to date road condition information can be obtained by phoning the 24 hour hotline on 1300 361 033 or by checking the website www.dtei.sa.gov.au.

Stone Hut Bridge and Stirling North Checking Station Opened

The official opening of two major projects in the Northern and Western region occurred on 20 January.

The Stone Hut bridge project involved the construction of a new single span bridge, next to the old one. The old bridge, built in 1924, had a span of only 4.5m, with the new bridge having a width of 9m it now allows access for over-dimensional vehicles and large farm machinery without a permit. The project was fully funded by the State Government through the Rural Road Improvement Program at a cost of \$3.6m.

The Rural Road Improvement Program has four key infrastructure projects in the north of South Australia:

- Stone Hut Bridge (\$3.6m)

- Marree - Lyndhurst Road (\$0.7m)
- Blinman - Wilpena Road (\$2.4m)
- Oodnadatta - Hamilton Road (\$2.0m)

Additional State and Federal funds have been added to both Marree-Lyndhurst Road and Blinman-Wilpena Road to increase the scope of these projects to \$3.8m and \$4.8m respectively under the Auslink Strategic Regional Programme (50/50 State/Federal funding). A further \$5.7m has been allocated to the Blinman - Wilpena Road to complete the seal over the 53km unsealed section between Blinman and Wilpena.

The current program is as follows: Marree-Lyndhurst Road, works complete. Blinman-Wilpena Road, due to be completed in October 2009. Oodnadatta-Hamilton Road, construction due to commence in August 2009.

The recent upgrade of the Stirling North Checking Station was part of a need identified by the department to upgrade checking stations in three priority areas to ensure that the trucks now using the South Australian road network comply with safety regulations.

These new checking stations are located at Stirling North, Blanchetown and Monteith near Murray Bridge. Construction work on these checking stations was completed in mid December 2008.

The new Stirling North Checking Station will assist in improving safety for all travellers. The new weighbridge is able to weigh B-triple vehicles and road trains with greater accuracy and speed.

Government of South Australia

Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure





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Free Replacement Plants if you Remove Athel Pines

Ben Shepherd

Through the Caring for Our Country funding program, the SAAL NRM Board in partnership with Rural Solutions SA Animal and Plant control consultant, Ben Shepherd, are offering free replacement plants to landowners who remove high risk (within 100 metres of a creek line) Athel pines.

In many locations throughout northern SA, Athel pines have "gone wild" and infested arid rivers. In the past three years approximately 15 populations of naturalised (wild) Athel pine have been found. In the east of the region there are infestations covering kilometres of creek line. On one station, over \$100,000 will need to be spent removing them and ongoing control will be required over several years.

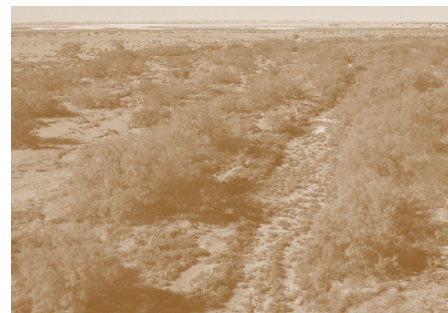
The source of all these infestations is upstream amenity plantings. Because of the significant risk Athel pines present when close to watercourses, policy specifies that landowners are required to control/remove Athel pines growing within 100 metres of a watercourse (NRM Act 2004 section 182(2)(3)). This includes trees planted for amenity purposes, and it's important that landholders consider the future risk these trees present.

Up to 50 native plants (a box of seedlings), including trees and shrubs, is available to landowners who remove Athel pines. Some infrastructure for irrigation may also be provided but funding is limited.

For removal of very large trees funding is available to employ

contractors if landowners do not have equipment themselves. Other support available will be provision of herbicide (where needed) and technical advice and assistance to landowners (if needed).

Contact: Ben Shepherd,
(08) 84637435, M: 0437791043,
shepherd.ben@saugov.sa.gov.au



Athel infestation Lake Frome
Photo: Ben Shepherd

What are the Negative Impacts of Athel Pine?

- Increasing soil surface salinity which prevents growth of native plants and pastures
- Increased use of ground water which can lower local ground water levels and dry up much needed water holes faster than usual.

This means that infested watercourses cannot function as they should, and the habitat they provide for native plants and animals is destroyed.

Four degree burns!

The horrific fires in Victoria; the floods in Queensland, and the recent extreme hot spell, coupled with long-term dry conditions in SA prompts thought on the impact and influence of climate change. Global warming has already resulted in a one-degree Celsius temperature increase. A two-degree increase will put many in Australia well over the dangerous tipping point, dramatically changing the way we live.

Revised climate change predictions state that the Arctic summer ice will be gone in five years. Arctic permafrost locks away as much carbon as is currently in the outer global atmosphere. If we allow global warming to increase by four degrees, we won't recognise our planet; no rainforests, no ice sheets,

and many animal species lost. We are also likely to lose algae in the upper layer of the ocean which also draws down carbon. This may mean the only place in Australia habitable will be south of Melbourne.

The Garnaut report puts all of this on the table; it also articulates the difficulties in finding a palatable way to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. However, we need to continue informed public debate and conversations about this issue. If we can keep warming below two degrees, we may have a chance. I would be keen to hear your thoughts on how we can do this. Merri Tohill tohill.meredith@saugov.sa.gov.au.

(Reference: interview with David Spratt, co-author *Climate Code Red: the case for emergency action*, and the *Garnaut Climate Change Review*.)

Moving Cattle into the SA Pastoral Region

Trent Scholz

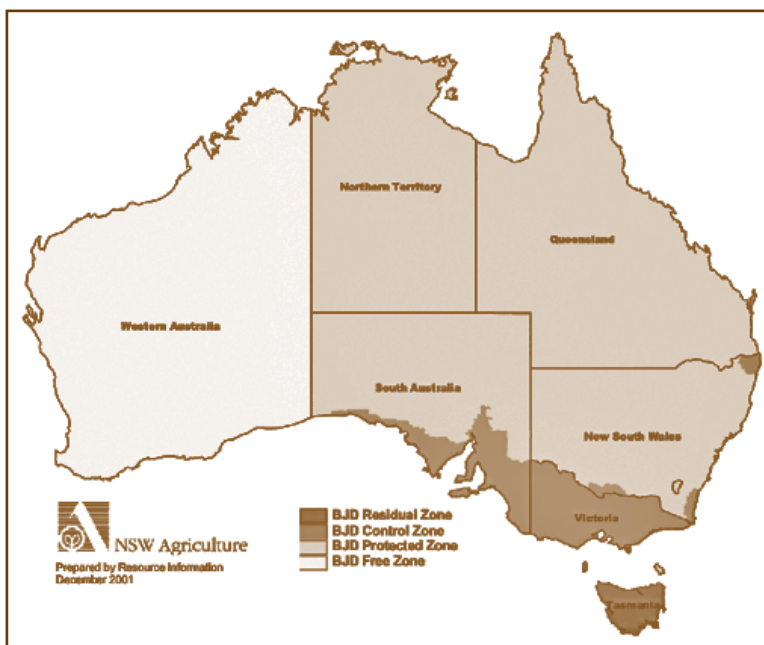
With the recent rain in some of the northern regions of the state there will be a number of cattle producers looking to restock their properties. These cattle will come from a variety of areas and will come under different circumstances (agisted cattle vs purchased cattle). The following information gives a short summary assuming cattle are moving into the pastoral lease area. The pastoral lease area also defines the Bovine Johnes Disease (BJD) Protected Zone.

Introducing Cattle From Within SA

Cattle moving from within the BJD Protected Zone to another property within the BJD protected zone are free to do so.

Cattle can only move from the BJD control zone to the BJD Protected Zone if they are accompanied by an 'Animal Health Statement for Bovine Johnes Disease of Beef Cattle'. This animal health statement has a "Beef Only" category, the conditions of which need to be met by the animals introduced to the BJD Protected Zone. The "Beef Only" category recognises that dairy cattle present a much higher risk of introducing BJD than beef cattle. Cattle can be classified as "Beef Only" if they meet the following criteria at the time of completion of the *Animal Health Statement for Bovine Johnes Disease of Beef Cattle*:

- Do not include animals that have been part of a herd which is classified as infected (IN), Suspect (SU) or restricted (RD).
- Are from a beef herd which has had no contact with dairy cattle or dairy-cross cattle at any time during the previous (5) years unless those dairy cattle were from a herd enrolled in the Cattle MAP.
- Are part of a herd that has not at any time, grazed on land that in the previous 12 months, had been grazed by adult dairy cattle (2 years old or older) except for Cattle MAP herds and,
- If introduced into the herd or onto the property(s), have come from herds which are of the same (Beef Only) or higher status (MN1, MN2 or MN3 on CattleMAP) for BJD and come with a BJD vendor declaration.



- Are identified under the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS).

The Northern Territory (BJD protected zone) now also accepts "Beef Only" cattle

for entry (previously they only accepted protected and free zone cattle as well as animals from CattleMAP herds. The highest level of assurance of not introducing BJD is with CattleMAP herds (often bull suppliers). Free and Protected Zones (breeders or steers) as compared to purchases from Beef Only or Check Tested herds. Purchasers need to ensure that vendors have the correct paperwork prior to the sale and are required to retain copies for auditing purposes. Remember cattle movements are now traceable from the animals' property of birth.

Introducing Cattle From Interstate

All cattle introduced to the Protected Zone from Control or Residual Zones interstate must be accompanied by a "Form 1" Health Certificate. As above, cattle coming from the SA BJD Control Zone to the SA BJD Protected Zone must be accompanied by an 'Animal Health Statement for Bovine Johnes Disease of Beef Cattle'

Remember all cattle movements should also be accompanied by an NVD and need to be followed up with a notification to the national NLIS database.

For any further information or copies of forms please contact Trent Scholz at the PIRSA office in Port Augusta (08) 8648 5160. Information on the National BJD Control Program is also available on the Animal Health Australia website on: http://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/programs/jd/jd_home.cfm

Outback people and places

Lawrence Breeding: An Outback Horseman

Roslyn Breeding

Lawrie was born at the Paratoo Siding in the State's north east on 23rd July 1917. He was the third child of Vic and Alice Breeding.

From an early age he was very much interested in horses. They quickly became the heart of his life, and as a young man Lawrie was quickly recognised as an accomplished jockey. In his early years he won a number of races at bush race meetings held throughout the north of the State. Inevitably, horses also compelled him to volunteer for the Australian Light Horse Brigade. However, he contracted pneumonia and so remained Australia bound, unable to serve overseas in World War Two.

In June 1942 Lawrie married Muriel Stubbs and together they raised their daughter, Pat (Hutchens) and son, John (who died in 2002). They lived and worked in the Yunta and Flinders Ranges for many years. Over those years, Lawrie came to be regarded as a great horseman. He was well known as a horse trainer and broke in all his own horses. This included a famous horse called Cinders, who featured in the epic Australian movie, *Robbery Under Arms*.

In 1947, Lawrie left the Flinders Ranges and moved the family to Adelaide, primarily for his children's education. Life in the city had little impact on

Lawrie's passion for horses. Despite living in the suburbs, he managed to ensure his horses were stabled not far from his home and most evenings he could be seen riding them through the suburban streets. Often his children accompanied him.

Those rides marked the beginnings of his work with the local community. He was instrumental in forming the Westwind Pony Club where he was chief riding instructor, and he



Lawrie at the 2008 Yunta Races, pictured with nephew Greg Cameron

was also a founding member of the Western Districts Riding Club, performing the role of guarantor for the grounds. Renowned horse educator Tom Roberts described Lawrie as, "a fellow horseman who helped and inspired, not only members of his own family, but so many other young riders."

It is, perhaps, fittingly ironic that Lawrie's daughter Pat now teaches riding to the children of people Lawrie

taught to ride many years ago.

Lawrie became a well-known identity riding with the Adelaide Hunt Club every weekend. RM Williams was another who rode with the group regularly. For many years, Lawrie also served on committees for the Equine Federation of Australia and the Horse Riding Clubs of Australia.

Despite living in the city, he was still very clearly drawn to the bush. Over the decades, it was a rare occasion that Lawrie missed the Yunta Races, and most years he would travel back to be a part of the activity.

Following his retirement in the early 1980s he and Muriel moved back out of the city to a property near Saddleworth where they kept and cared for what could only be described as a 'menagerie' of animals. Both remained highly active in the Saddleworth community and Lawrie convened the local Show for many years. This perhaps culminated in 1983, when Lawrie and daughter Pat won 25 of the 64 horse events between them.

Muriel passed away in the late 1990s after a long illness. Lawrie continued to manage the Saddleworth farm with assistance from his family until his death. He passed away peacefully at his Saddleworth home in July 2008. Coincidentally, Lawrie's Kapunda funeral fell on the 1st of August, a date regarded as the birthday of all horses!

Editor's note:

Leith Yelland will continue to pen this column as long as he is willing. There are very few people with the knowledge and ability to produce these remarkable outback profiles. We wish him well in his retirement and look forward to his ongoing contributions to this page. Additionally, a sincere thank you must also go to Ros Breeding for stepping in and offering this piece at short notice.