

ACROSS THE OUTBACK

Number 44

July 2009

Produced for Outback SA

Extension of drought support measures in Far North

The Rangelands Drought Task Force welcomes two announcements by the Australian Government that will see the continuation of support to drought affected pastoralists in the Far North of South Australia for another year.

The Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Tony Burke, announced on 27 May that he had accepted the recommendation of the National Rural Advisory Council (NRAC) that the Exceptional Circumstances drought declarations for the Central North East and North West Rangelands be extended until 15 June 2010.

The current declaration was due to expire on 15 June 2009.

Chairperson of the Rangelands Drought Task Force, Chris Reed, said that the NRAC recommendation followed a review of whether seasonal conditions in the two regions had improved to permit a sustained recovery to commence.

This review included a visit by NRAC representatives to both areas in March.

'Members of the Rangelands Drought Task Force were actively involved in the organisation and conduct of the visit, as were many pastoralists', he said.

'We are pleased that this assisted NRAC to develop a realistic picture of seasonal conditions 'on the ground', which remain very poor for the vast majority of pastoralists within the two regions'.

Previously, the Australian government had announced an allocation of \$715.3 million in the 2009/10 Federal budget, to continue existing Exceptional Circumstances support measures for drought affected farming families, small businesses and rural communities.

These include interest rate subsidies, family income support and professional advice and planning grants.

Mr Reed said that the announcements would give pastoral families and businesses who have been struggling under the impacts of the prolonged drought some added certainty as they headed into the next 12 months.

Leith Yelland Giant of the Outback 1940-2009

Leith Yelland, until recently editor of this newsletter, passed away on 20 May. Leith was a popular gentleman widely known throughout the region.

His energy and enthusiasm for the outback drove this newsletter for many years and his efforts and personal commitment were considerable. In addition to its editorial composition, Leith also prepared and penned the heart of the newsletter - the back page articles 'Outback People and Places'.

On this page Leith brought a compassionate ear to the outback, recording the stories of many great people and describing what it is to be a part of the region.

Many of these stories were published in a hardback compilation *Pastoral identities from across the outback*, a remarkable record of people, lives and ways of living - and a worthy read.

On his retirement, and despite much cajoling, Leith humbly declined to draft his own story for inclusion on this back page.

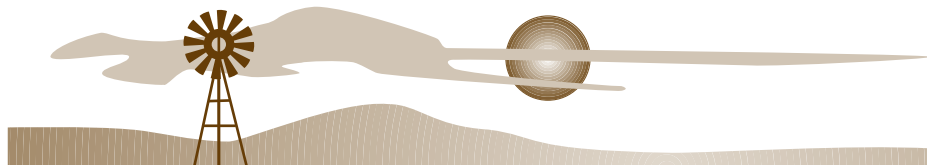
Mark Sutton (OACDT Manager) pays special tribute to Leith in this edition.

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Across the Outback is prepared and edited by Jenny Barker (SAAL NRM Board). Comments and suggestions are always welcome. Please contact barker.jenny2@saugov.sa.gov.au or 08 8463 3354



Government
of South Australia



Meetings at Mungerannie

Glenn Gale,
Manager, Land Management Unit

The Pastoral Board and the SA Arid Lands (SAAL) NRM Board held a joint meeting at Mungerannie on 4 June.

The Boards aim to have at least one joint meeting per year to discuss common issues, align policies and actions and build closer working relationships.

The meeting was very successful and included discussion of a range of issues of mutual concern including feral goat control, pastoral lease assessments and inspections, dingo management and the control of large feral herbivores.

The control of feral goats was a major topic of discussion and included an update on the recent integrated control program conducted by the SAAL NRM Board in partnership with Department for

Environment and Heritage and Pastoral Program staff.

The Boards concluded the discussion on feral goats by resolving to strengthen their joint approach to this problem.

Following the meeting the members of both Boards met informally with representatives of the Marree-Innamincka NRM Group and local pastoralists.

Both the SAAL and Pastoral Board held their own meetings at Mungerannie the following day.

The Pastoral Board has at least one meeting at a location in the rangelands per year.

This provides the Board members with an opportunity to get a first hand view of rangelands conditions and to meet local pastoralists.

The meeting at Mungerannie enabled the Board members to observe the conditions across a large area of the rangelands, including the transformation of the country and feed supply caused by the inflow of floodwaters from

Pastoral Board and Program contacts:

The Pastoral Board of SA

Prescott Building, Entry 5, Waite Campus Waite Road, Urrbrae SA (GPO Box 2834, Adelaide SA 5001)

General enquiries:

Phone - (08) 8303 9751
Fax - (08) 8303 9320
Freecall - 1800 678 447

Specific contacts in Adelaide and Port Augusta:

Presiding Member:
Michael McBride - 0427 087 966

Program Manager:
Glenn Gale - (08) 8303 9345

Pastoral Board matters:
Glenn Gale - (08) 8303 9345

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

Public Lease Assessments:
Craig Boulderstone (08) 8303 9752

Queensland.

The items discussed at the Board meeting included lease assessments, stock maximums, lease inspection, management of exotic breeds of sheep, and public access routes.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Pastoral Board will be held at the Waite, Urrbrae on 13 August.

Pastoral lease annual livestock return

By now all pastoralists should have received in the mail their 2008/2009 stock returns to complete.

This form needs to be filled out and returned to the Pastoral Program by 31 July 2009.

If any person has not received the form or are having problems completing the form, please contact the Pastoral Program on our toll free number 1800 678 447.



Pastoral Board members, program staff and pastoralists at Cowarie Station

Pastoral Lease Assessment Update

Craig Baulderstone

All field staff involved with lease assessments for the North East region completed a calibration exercise during the week beginning 18 May.

This began with an inspection of the TGR Osborn Vegetation Reserve at Koonamore (see separate story, page 4). The rest of the week was spent observing as many land and vegetation types as possible.

Consistency of observers was measured and compared and all our field work methods closely examined.

Experiences and issues from assessments conducted elsewhere were discussed and efforts made to improve our efficiency.

Fieldwork for the first couple of leases in the North East district has since been completed. Work has been programmed for lease assessments through to the end of the calendar year and assessment officers will be in contact with those lessees in the near future.

Your photographs are valuable

Our first assessment in the NE has revealed another lessee who has retaken photos at a number of photopoint sites across their lease. While this has not been

done at every site every year, the photographic record is extremely valuable in helping us to understand the changes that occur.

This practice may be much more common than realised and if this information is available at times of assessment and inspection it will help in our understanding of changes in lease condition. Photographic technology has certainly moved on since the time of the first assessments when we offered film and processing to lessees who chose to retake site photos.

Today with the widespread use of digital cameras, it is just a matter of downloading and emailing or we could copy the files when we visit.

Guidelines for taking photos

As guidance to those that may be thinking about taking photos, obviously the more the better, but your time is valuable. The lessees and land managers that pastoral program staff have talked to over the years have all been very observant of the sort of changes that occur and a photo is the best way to communicate this knowledge.

If you notice sites that change and think this is interesting, then chances are the pastoral program staff will also be very interested.

If you jot down in a notebook the date and any plant species of interest that is a bonus. 'Your' name for a plant is fine and we can usually work out a scientific name from your description and photo. Otherwise just a photo and date will do.

If possible, adjust the zoom on the camera so that the image on the camera looks about the same as that in the photo. If you have numbers on your zoom, our old film cameras used fixed 50mm lenses and the equivalent digital zoom is about 35.

Draft lease assessment reports

Thank you to those lessees that have responded with comments on their draft lease assessment reports since the last *Across the Outback*. The Pastoral Board are continuing to reduce the backlog of reports to be considered and the more comments we get the better.



Photographs taken at TG Osborn Reserve: at left, in 1940 showing excellent condition with saltbush and, at right, in 2008 showing saltbush death and not looking too good.

Maintenance of Public Access Routes

David Oag, Pastoral Inspector

Additional maintenance is due to be carried out on the Halligan Bay PAR in late June/early July 2009 due to the increased use of this track.

The track will be graded with assistance from the Department for Environment and Heritage in anticipation of a large volume of traffic over the school holiday period.

This is the only ground accessible point to Lake Eyre that visitors will have a chance to see any water, but this will depend on the direction of the wind.

Some tracks in the Flinders Ranges such as the Nuccaleena track and Artimore tracks, require a high clearance 4 wheel drive with experienced operators due to washouts and rocky creek crossings.

Additional time needs to be allocated to travel along these routes as it is slow going.

Water is still flowing down the Warburton River and consequently the Warburton K1 PAR remains closed.

Further information

Visitors seeking permission to access pastoral leases can find the relevant forms at the rangelands website, www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/land/rangelands/public_access/

Additional information regarding the status of tracks within the PAR network can also be found on this website.



Monitoring at TGB Osborn Vegetation Reserve

Assessment staff made a close examination of the TGB Osborn Vegetation Reserve at the University of Adelaide research station at Koonamore in May.

Many pastoralists will know that this area was heavily overgrazed in the early part of last century.

In 1925, one square mile was fenced off to become a permanent stock enclosure and monitoring site. Permanent quadrats and photopoints have been maintained ever since and it is thought to be the longest and most comprehensive rangeland monitoring dataset in the world.

Kangaroos can access the Reserve, but domestic stock is excluded and rabbits are intensively controlled by students as part of annual monitoring exercises.

The recent inspection revealed large amounts of bladder saltbush death, confirming verbal reports received from lessees.

Extensive areas had bushes that appeared dead but with twigs still intact. As a general rule the death did not affect all plants in a locality but they appeared to be of similar age. Within the same area there are also patches with no or very little death. This raises numerous questions about the causes and we have been in touch with the University regarding potential research projects.

It is expected that these areas will respond very well once rains come due to the lack of soil disturbance and the mounds of soil surrounding dead plants. The mounds help capture and retain seed and will be ideal sites to foster plant recruitment.



Tarcoola comes to life

Mark Shirley, Community Development Officer, OACDT

The once thriving town of Tarcoola came to life over the June long weekend when more than 200 people attended the *Back to Tarcoola* celebrations.

The event was the brainchild of the St Clair family, the last remaining residents in the former railway and mining community.

Carol St Clair, with sons Matt and Nigel St Clair, who live in Port Augusta, and daughter Leah Morgan, wanted to honour the history of the town through a reunion of ex-railway workers, miners and pastoralists from around the State.

Funds raised through the celebrations will go towards the Royal Flying Doctor Service and other charities that have assisted the community over the years.

Among the visitors at the reunion weekend were five surviving daughters from the White family who travelled from as far as Sydney, Gawler and Adelaide to attend the event.

The sisters lived in the town from 1933 to 1951 and three of them married railway workers who came to Tarcoola.

The White sisters, aged from 73 to 91 years, took the opportunity to unveil a plaque on their young sister Natalie's grave.

Other visitors were Hazel Irons, who managed the Tarcoola pub from 1944 to 1955, and well-known Port Augusta nurse Flo Robins, who lived in Tarcoola as a child.

A group that toured the old pub, which has been closed for more than 10 years, was told the current owner Giovanni Villa has plans to re-open the hotel in the future.

However, Giovanni said he is quite aware of the challenges he faces in restoring the old building to its former glory.

Port Augusta band *On Your Bike* led the celebrations at the Tarcoola Hall.

Although the Tarcoola Progress Association has disbanded, the Outback Areas Community Development Trust assists the town by insuring the local hall, which is one of the best venues of its kind in outback SA.

Pastoralists from outlying stations such as Bulgunnia and Wilgena had the chance to get together and celebrate late into the night

As well as the St Clair family, the town's Health Service remains. It is still used by the Royal Flying Doctor Service to service the surrounding pastoralists.

Transfield Services also has a presence in the town.

The success of the event highlighted the strength of the town's past and present.

Grants for arts and recreation

Country SA Grants

The current round of Country Arts SA grants for regional and remote Australia close on 15 August.

The grants are available to assist groups and individuals to undertake projects in any form which extend or advance knowledge, understanding, participation or development of the arts and culture.

Further information

Sarah Twigg Patterson 8641 9175
www.countryarts.org.au/catalogs/assistance-funding.php

Open Space Grants

Progress Associations can apply for assistance through the SA Government's Open Space Grant Funding program.

The funding enables local government authorities to develop, plan and purchase land for open community space or for work on conservation and recreation land.

Further information

Kelly Harding 8303 0507
<http://publicspace.planning.sa.gov.au> and go to Public Space Grants



Rockholes, frogs and fish

Henry Mancini

The SA Arid Lands NRM Board is working to better understand our water resources and the life that they support. Here's a summary of two projects that are currently underway.

Protecting rockholes in the Gawler Ranges

The SA Arid Lands NRM Board is collecting ecological data and traditional ecological knowledge of rockholes in the Gawler Ranges native title claim area.

We are working with the Aboriginal community, landholders, ecologists and anthropologists to map the location of rockholes and record the plants and animals associated with these areas.

Ecological data is being recorded and will help us understand how these ecosystems function, and protection works (eg fencing, rockhole cleanout, pest control) are being identified.

Rockholes are important to Aboriginal people due to their cultural significance and importance as a source of water.

Recording traditional knowledge about the rockholes will help Aboriginal communities protect these resources and participate in land management activities.

Frog and fish surveys in the Flinders

The SA Arid Lands NRM Board is monitoring native frogs and fish in the Flinders Ranges to better understand their diversity, distribution and abundance.

This will provide important information for the development of management strategies for their protection.

So far, 120 near-permanent groundwater-fed springs and waterholes with frogs and fish have been identified.

We've discovered that the endangered Flinders Ranges Purple Spotted Gudgeon is doing very well

with a stable population at various spring sites.

Our survey work has revealed that drought conditions and depletion of aquifers has caused the condition and extent of the springs to significantly decline.

Highly sensitive to change, frogs (and some fish) are important indicators of the health of an ecosystem.

Changes to climate, water flow, water quality or land use, the introduction of pest animals or plants, or the loss of habitat will impact any natural ecosystem – and frogs are often the first to suffer through decline in diversity and number.

Further information

Henry Mancini
8463 7034

Successful community grants

The following community groups were recently successful in obtaining grants of up to \$10,000 of State funding to help them in their landcare work.

Blinman Progress Association

Eradicate the invasive garden escapee Oleander from a remaining patch in Parachilna Gorge in the Flinders Ranges. Completes four years of previous work.

Conservation Volunteers Australia

Survey properties around Mt Fairview in the Gawler Ranges for Yellow-Footed Rock Wallaby colonies to inform the development of management plans for this

endangered species.

Copley Community (Aroona Council)

Provide dust mitigation to the township of Copley by establishing shelterbelts of vegetation around the town boundaries

Iron Knob Progress Association

Protect previous revegetation through preventing storm water erosion and providing irrigation from rainwater. Builds on the existing

efforts of the Iron Knob Progress Association.

Conservation Volunteers Australia

Survey of a number of old growth mallee areas in the Gawler Ranges for malleefowl activity. The results will contribute to development of management plans for the malleefowl.

Further information

SA Arid Lands NRM Board
8648 5977

Grass with Class Information Day

Janet Walton

The Marla Oodnadatta NRM group recently hosted a very successful *Grass with Class* information day in Oodnadatta. This was an initiative of group members interested in native grasses for livestock production, land rehabilitation and the role of buffel grass in an arid environment.

Deb Agnew (SA Arid Lands NRM Board) explained the process for identifying and prioritising weed risk and feasibility assessments of grass species in the arid lands region.

Margaret Friedel from CSIRO spoke about the costs and benefits of buffel grass in arid environments, as well as the research results from a recent CSIRO project reviewing public opinion on buffel grass.

Dick and Robyn Cadzow from Mt Riddock Station (Alice Springs) generously shared their knowledge and experience of land rehabilitation and sustainable pastoral production.

San Jolly (Ruminant Nutritionist) spoke about the nutritional value of native grasses for livestock production.

Janet Walton demonstrated native grass seed collection techniques.

Rangeland Ecologist Hugh Pringle treated the audience to an exciting presentation on sustainable landscape management.

Those who attended the day commented on the great array of information and the opportunity for open discussion.

Further information

Janet Walton, 8672 3648

Kowari monitoring in Sturt's Stony Desert

Reece Pedler

Over 40 Kowaris were recently caught during monitoring in the far north-east, suggesting that local populations are surviving through ongoing dry conditions.

Kowaris are small but feisty carnivores that belong to the Dasyurid family of marsupials which also includes the Tasmanian Devil and Quoll (native cat).

Within South Australia they are now only found in the pavement gibber areas of Sturt's Stony Desert.

Over the last decade or so, much work has gone into trying to learn more about Kowaris and to monitor their population numbers and distribution.

As part of this ongoing work, trapping sites in prime stony 'Kowari country' on Clifton Hills Station were recently revisited to check on their numbers.

The trapping sites consist of two large 16 km² grids, each with 200

Elliot (aluminum box) traps, baited with a stinky mixture of peanut paste, dog biscuits, tinned sardines and tuna oil – a proven Kowari tempter!

While the numbers of Kowaris in certain areas are different to previous patterns, several young ones were captured and results suggest that they are hanging on well.

This is particularly encouraging, given the disappearance of the species from many other parts of their range in South Australia.

The ongoing support from Clifton Hills Station for this work is gratefully acknowledged.

Further information

Reece Pedler, 8671 1083



Muster hailed a success

Louise Gavin

The Arid Lands Muster held at the Coinda Club in June was a successful and motivating two days, attended by more than 60 landholders.

Held by the SA Arid Lands NRM Board to give the community a break from the tough economic times, the free event neatly combined a social environment with a learning one, providing attendees with a selection of workshops, a wide array of stalls and a fun and lively atmosphere.

There were plenty of workshops and talks on natural resources management. Two different styles of land management attracted large audiences - Natural

Sequence Farming was presented by Peter Andrews while the Ecological Management Understanding (E.M.U.) system was introduced by Janet Walton.

But it wasn't all about natural resources management.

Guest speaker Dr Andy Killcross challenged everyone to look after themselves physically to help maintain a positive mental health approach while Paralympian Katrina Webb amazed us with her incredible story of triumph in the face of adversity.

And for those looking for a creative or culinary outlet, there were also workshops on bush foods and craft.

Dinner on the Friday night at the Port Augusta Golf Club was attended by just over 100 people. Ann Johnston cooked several roast meats and vegetables followed by divine deserts. Rural media identity and our MC for the evening, Ian Doyle kept the evening lively with quiz questions and prizes, many of which had been donated by local Port Augusta businesses. And the night continued with the beautiful voice of Jasmine Reschke and the entertaining singing of John O'Dea.

Feedback from attendees

Many attendees took the time to provide us with feedback on the event. When asked the most valuable things they had learned one respondent told us that they were 'inspired by other people's commitment and motivation'. Another remarked 'that we still have things to learn' and another felt they had learned more than they could list 'especially re: landscape systems and management practices'.

The highlights of the event were numerous - one attendee remarked on the positive energy 'even though times are tough for everyone' and another on the 'excellent' variety of workshops and speakers.

Thanks

The organising committee - Emma Morris, Keith Slade, Kaye Fels, Anne Dawes, Graham Ragless, Ralph Coulthard, Lisa Taylor, Jess Kemp and Louise Gavin - take this opportunity to thank everyone who attended and contributed to this successful event.



Government of South Australia
South Australian Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board



Nation building (outback style)

Motorists are set to enjoy a smoother ride on sections of the Stuart Highway, south of Coober Pedy with rehabilitation works recently completed.

The Australian Government committed \$3.4m from the Nation Building Program for pavement rehabilitation works on the Stuart Highway in 2008/2009.

Works began on 19 May 2009, to apply a bitumen overlay on a total of five kilometres of targeted sections of the highway and upgrade 3km of road shoulders.

The identified sections, approximately 20 km south of Coober Pedy, have caused concern for some time due to the rough and uneven surface, and considerable dips and undulations.

The works on the Stuart Highway included laying a granular overlay of 200mm from material sourced from the Breadknife Stockpile, blended with 10% shale.

The new seal is to a width of 9m, comprising 3.5m traffic lanes and 1m sealed shoulders, with an additional unsealed shoulder width of 1m.

Two Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure Rural Construction crews worked on the job and at the peak of production, 2,200 tonnes of base material was placed each day.

Detours were constructed around work sites allowing the rehabilitation work to proceed unimpeded.

The closure of the worksite to general traffic allowed material to be tipped down the centre line of the highway and graded right and left to the edge of the new pavement.

This enabled the single handling of approximately 40,000 tonnes of material using road trains.

This efficient movement of material and high productivity at the road site kept motorist waiting times to a minimum.

Nevertheless, construction personnel appreciated the patience and cooperation shown by the public in response to traffic controllers' directions along detour routes.

Laying of the initial primer seal (a temporary seal) on the various sections commenced in the week of 29 June and was completed by the end of the first week in July 2009.

Line marking of the newly sealed section will be undertaken in August 2009 and it is anticipated that the final double seal will be applied later in the year.



Road-train tipping material down centre-line of Stuart Highway



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Department for Transport,
Energy and Infrastructure



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practical local outcomes"

Phone: 1300 364 322
Port Augusta Office 08 8648 5160
www.ruralsolutions.sa.gov.au

Feral Camel Management Workshop

know the issues, understand the animal

14-15 August 2009

Are you a landholder in the SA Arid Lands region? Do you have problems with feral camels? On behalf of the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board, Rural Solutions SA invites you to a workshop to exchange ideas and information on feral camel management.

Hear our guest speakers

Experienced camel people will talk about best practice camel handling, mustering and transport methods, camel physiology, infrastructure and legislative requirements etc.

Find out about camel handling and behaviours

Key aspects of camel behaviour and how this relates to camel handling will be demonstrated



Register now!

Places are strictly limited

When

Friday 14 August (full day) -
Saturday 15 August (half day)

Where

Marla Traveller's Rest Hotel/Motel,
Stuart Highway, Marla

Cost

Free registration for regional landholders and
land managers registered by July 24

Registrations & enquiries

Mel Feldmuller
08 8648 5170 or 0407 604 792
feldmuller.mel@saugov.sa.gov.au



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY



Government of South Australia
South Australian Arid Lands Natural
Resources Management Board

New Animal Welfare Act

Trent Scholz, Animal Health Adviser

Everyone needs to be aware of their responsibilities under the Animal Welfare Act. The law is very basic: 'It is an offence to ill-treat an animal'.

The Act then goes on to prescribe further information about what constitutes ill-treatment.

For animals in possible distress due to starvation/poor body condition, their owners are causing an offence if they fail to provide it with appropriate and adequate food; and/or fail to take reasonable steps to mitigate harm suffered by the animal; and/or neglect the animal so as to cause it harm.

'Harm' means any form of damage, pain, suffering or distress arising from injury, disease or any other condition. Of course an animal may be in poor body condition and not be suffering from harm.

However, if the degree of weight loss has led to disease (usually metabolic) or acute or chronic disability which is causing the animal pain and distress, the owner may be deemed to be ill-treating the animal if they fail to either adequately treat the starvation (feed it) or destroy the animal.

If a farmer is aware that their animals are hungry and that they are deteriorating, they must then make the decision to either feed, or otherwise dispose of the animals.

In pastoral areas it may be difficult to bring in feed and farmers should make the decision to sell animals sooner rather than later, while they still have some value.

If they wait too long, the only option may be to destroy the animals before they start to suffer. Gone are the days when it is acceptable to allow animals to starve to death.



A cow with an ingrown horn, an example of an unacceptable welfare issue that needs to be dealt with.

It all boils down to good and sensible stockmanship. Laws are meant to be interpretable by the average sensible person. So all farmers should be able to assess their stock, seek professional guidance if they are unsure and make a decision about the required care of their animals.

The *Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals; Cattle* is a regulated Code in SA and farmers can be prosecuted for failing to comply with it. The penalties for not abiding by the law are severe with potential jail terms of up to four years or fines of up to \$50,000. Inspectors under the Animal Welfare Act are actively carrying out their role in pursuing animal welfare prosecutions in the SA livestock industries where breaches are deemed to have occurred.

Further information

The *Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals; Cattle* gives advice about animal welfare and is available from PIRSA. For more information please contact your local PIRSA Animal Health Officer/Veterinarian.

Upcoming workshop

Dingo management update
Ben Allen (SA Arid Lands NRM Board)

Cattle reproductive disease and disease surveillance
(Pfizer and PIRSA)

Wednesday 19th August 2009
Marree Telecentre @ 5.30pm

Thursday 20th August 2009
Oodnadatta Town Hall @ 5.30pm

RSVP PIRSA Port Augusta 8648 5160

Outback Calendar

William Creek Bronco Branding and Campdraft,
22 August

Port Augusta Racing Cup, 13 July

Great Australian Outback Cattle Drive,
30 July - 29 August

If your event or meeting date has been set, let us know. *Across the Outback* is published bi-monthly. The next issue will be in September.

Please email any additions to barker.jenny2@saugov.sa.gov.au



Outback people and places



Leith Yelland, 1940-2009: an outback legacy

Mark Sutton, Outback Areas Community Development Trust

For a number of years this back page has been devoted to profiling a pastoral identity. The empathy and passion captured in those profiles was the craftwork of Leith Yelland. Sadly, Leith passed away on 20 May in Adelaide.

Often the first page read (despite being on the back cover) Leith's stories captured the essence of the outback and for a brief moment allowed readers to envelop themselves into the life of the identity.

These profiles brought to life a love of country, and somehow always managed to evoke deep pride in what it means to be part of the outback.

Leith will be remembered with great reverence for his long and devoted commitment to all things outback.

Whether it was the people, places, landscape, environment or history, whether it was seemingly unimportant or of the highest priority,

Leith supported them, advocated for them and fought in the trenches for them.

I often recall the times when Leith would remind me when I encountered a moment of bureaucracy, that the outback is unique, and that if we don't support the communities and people 'warts and all', who would.

It is for this compassion and understanding that Leith will always be remembered.

I have chosen not to do a profile on Leith because I couldn't do it justice.

I would prefer to quote the words of Sir Isaac Newton: 'If I have been able to see farther than others, it was because I stood on the shoulders of

giants.'

Leith was a giant of the outback, a man with outback flowing through his veins.

Through his profiles, his legacy, he will forever remain part of the history of the outback.

On behalf of the members and staff of the Outback Areas Community Development Trust – where he worked for almost a decade – and the people of the outback, thank you Leith and may he rest in peace.

A profile on the life of Leith Yelland appeared in the Stock Journal on 21 May. It appeared on the day after his death, so sadly, he never had the chance to read it.



Leith looking over Lake Eyre South at sunset. This photo is significant as it symbolises what Leith loved about the outback, its vastness and beauty.