

ACROSS THE OUTBACK

Number 45

September 2009

Produced for Outback SA

Airstrip projects take off

Three outback airstrips in South Australia have received more than \$3 million in government funding under the Remote Aerodrome Safety Program (RASP).

The tourism boom created by the flooding in Lake Eyre was a timely reminder of the importance of William Creek aerodrome, which was awarded more than \$2.2 million towards the cost of resheeting and sealing the runway, taxiway and apron and to install lighting.

The \$2.22 million project joins other upgrades at Marree and Marla, where federal grants ranging from \$125,000 to \$310,000 will be matched by the State Government, including:

- completing the seal of the runway at Marla (total project cost \$620,000)
- resealing the runway at Marree (total cost \$250,000)

It is anticipated standard landing fees will be charged at all three aerodromes to assist in maintenance and life-cycle costs.

The Outback Area Community Development Trust's chairman Bill McIntosh says the upgrades at William Creek Marree and Marla will also help the pastoral, tourism and mining industries and take pressure off outback roads.

'The upgrades at William Creek and Marla will greatly enhance emergency response capabilities by providing virtually 24 hour, all-weather services to those areas. The Marree work is also important to maintain the existing sealed strip,' he says.

'Increasing the number of sealed airstrips in the outback also has important spin-off economic benefits for the



tourism, mining and pastoral industries as well as for small towns.'

Previous RASP program funding of more than \$1.2 million has enabled upgrades of the Manna Hill and Glendambo airstrips.

Two stages of work at Manna Hill have finished and the upgrade of Glendambo aerodrome is expected to finish by October.

In partnership with the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure, the Trust has been applying for the grants every year since the four-year \$20 million Safer Runways in Remote Australia initiative was launched in 2007-08.

Work required on remote outback aerodromes was identified in the Trust's Outback Aerodrome Emergency Preparedness Audit completed in 2006-07.

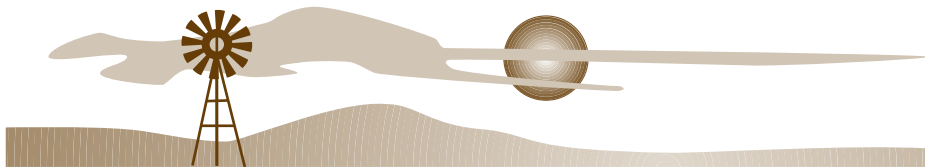
The fourth round of RASP applications will be considered in early 2010.

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.

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



Government
of South Australia



SAAL NRM Plan discussed with the Pastoral Board

The August meeting of the Pastoral Board included a presentation from the SA Arid Lands (SAAL) Natural Resources Management (NRM) Board on the development of the Regional NRM Plan.

Chris Reed, Presiding Member of the SAAL NRM Board and Hadyn Hanna, Consultant, provided the Pastoral Board with the opportunity to discuss the development of the Plan and to provide feedback on the contents.

Discussion focussed on several of the draft Management Action Targets proposed in the Plan that involve assisting pastoralists with sustainable grazing management and the provision of information on biodiversity management.

The SAAL NRM Board will publicly consult on the Plan soon.

Other major topics discussed by the Pastoral Board at the August meeting included lease inspection

reports, lease assessments, change of land use to non-pastoral activities, and native title issues.

Pastoral Board forum at Burra

The next meeting of the Pastoral Board will be held in Burra on 14 and 15 October. To coincide with the meeting the Board will hold an open forum for pastoralists from the Eastern Districts in the afternoon of Wednesday, 14 October.

According to Michael McBride, Presiding Member of the Board, the forum will provide a great opportunity for pastoralists to get to know the members of the Board and to discuss any issues of concern directly with Board members.

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 Baulderstone (08) 8303 9752

Lease inspections and tenure enquiries:
Chris Turner (08) 8303 9755

Mr McBride said that pastoralists will be invited to an informal BBQ with Board members following the forum.

Pastoral inspections

For the next three months the pastoral inspection program will focus on properties in the Eastern Districts area of the rangelands.

Results to date from the program indicate that while this area is in a generally very dry condition, pastoralists are adapting to the conditions by the reduction of stock numbers in affected areas.

The robust nature of the saltbush/bluebush plains and woodlands in the area has maintained the stability of the soils and vegetation, with nothing that a really good soaking of rain could not fix.

After the three months, further inspections are planned for some areas of the Kingoonya/Coober

Pedy districts followed by Eastern Flinders Ranges and the Far North. The Eastern Flinders is probably in the driest condition.

Boundary fencing policy

The Pastoral Board has accepted the wording for the new boundary fencing policy.

While other factors can contribute to stock movement from property to property, it is accepted that parties either side of a boundary must contribute equally to a reasonable standard of fence for the area.

If an upgrade of a fence is required to accommodate an introduction of a different class or breed of animal then the person responsible for the introduction must pay for the upgrade.

The upgrade required is to be negotiated between both parties but could include the addition of an electric outrigger wire or prefabricated fencing.

Further information

Chris Turner
1800 678 447 (toll free) or 8303 9755

Arid Lands Information System

The Department of Water Land and Biodiversity Conservation (DWLBC) has developed the Arid Lands Information System (ALIS), a web-based information portal that aims to be the primary gateway for access to data and information about the arid areas of SA.

Development of ALIS commenced in October 2006, with support from the state government, the National Heritage Trust and the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board.

The system was released to the public in December 2008.

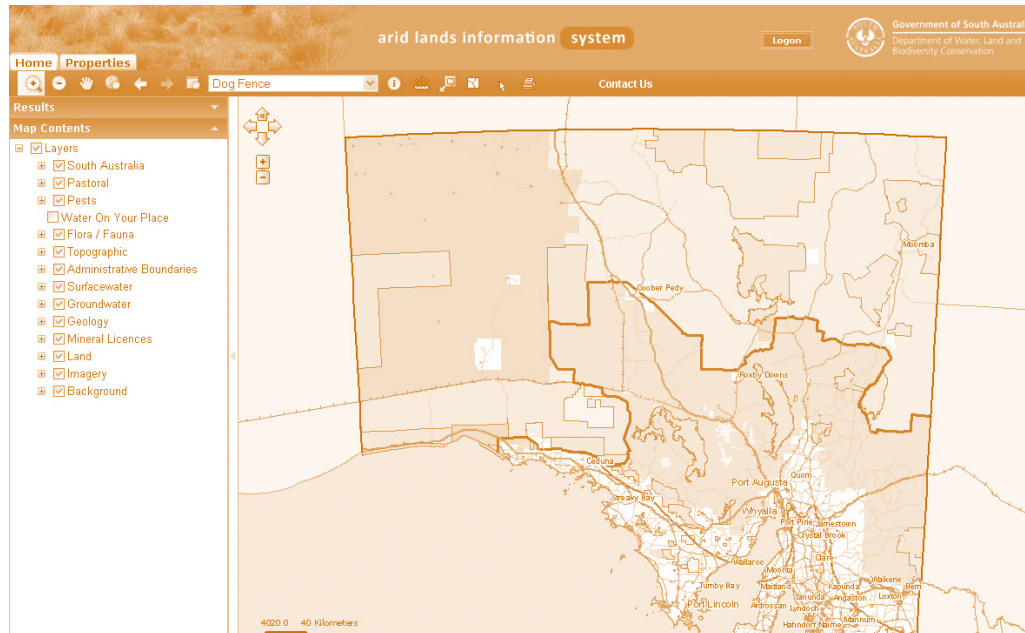
ALIS provides open access to government data and information on the arid areas that previously would have required significant time and effort to find and obtain.

Information can now be accessed in real-time at any computer with an internet connection.

Access is provided to the most up-to-date information available by linking directly to key data repositories across government agencies.

In this way users can be confident they have access to the best available information for the region.

While much of the information within the system is publicly available, a sophisticated security layer protects confidential information regarding individual pastoral leases.



By using ALIS pastoralists can now access real-time information to assist with the management of their property.

Pastoralists can also contribute information on their property, such as rainfall, surface water and groundwater data.

ALIS is a valuable tool for businesses, organisations, and members of the public with an interest in natural and economic resources in the arid

areas of SA.

The system was recently voted the runner-up in the ESRI Web Challenge, a prestigious national award for web-based mapping and data management systems.

The ALIS can be accessed at <http://e-nrims.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/alis/>.

Further information

Peter Buxton
8303 7612

Outback Calendar

Biodiversity Month
September

Native Plant Sale
Every Wednesday 9 am - 12 pm, Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden
Port Augusta

National Water Week
18 October - 24 October

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 November. Please email any additions to jenny.barker@sa.gov.au

Separating grazing from climatic effects on the rangelands

Craig Boulderstone

The rangelands are characterised by considerable climatic variability – dry years are normal but infrequent wetter periods can have a profound effect on the vegetation.

This variability makes it very difficult to distinguish the effects of grazing management from year-to-year variation in rainfall.

A method to separate as much as possible the effects of climatic variability from grazing management has been included in part of the Australian Collaborative Rangelands Information System (ACRIS) report: *Rangelands 2008 – Taking the Pulse*.

The term 'seasonal quality' is used to express the impacts of climate and is described as the relative value of recent rainfall for vegetation growth.

Seasonal quality is quantified as an index by relating the amount of rainfall received prior to an assessment of rangeland condition to the long-term record.

The process uses data from 'SILO' gridded rainfall (www.bom.gov.au/silo) and AussieGRASS simulation of pasture growth (www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au/aboutus/research/projects/aussiegrass).

By analysing this data over broad areas the climatic vs grazing impacts can be separated.

The results show that seasonal quality between the early 1990s and 2005 was generally above average in the north and north-west and variable in much of central Australia.

Over most of the WA and SA shrublands, seasonal quality was initially above average, and then declined in response to drier conditions.



Change at the same photopoint containing daisy bluebush taken in 1992 and 2008. A range in land condition has existed over these years, some due to climate, some grazing. The work by ACRIS assists in the separation of these effects.

In the eastern grasslands and mulga lands it was below average followed by drought conditions.

Current forecasts for climate change indicate that rangeland managers will need to prepare for greater climatic variability and in particular decreased rainfall and

changing rainfall patterns across the southern and south-eastern regions of Australia.

Further information

Download a full copy of the report from www.environment.gov.au/land/rangelands/acris/index.html



Community grants

The deadline for several small rural community grants is approaching.

Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal

Applications close 30 September

Grants of \$5000 to organisations for rural and remote community services and development (excluding sporting groups).

Further information

Go to Funding Programs listed at www.frrr.org.au, freecall 1800 170 020 or email info@frrr.org.au

2009 Volunteer Grants program

Applications close 25 September

Funding between \$1000-\$5000 is available for non-profit organisations to purchase practical small equipment to help volunteer programs.

Further information

Department of Housing, Families, Community Service and Indigenous Affairs
www.fahcsia.gov.au

State Volunteers Support Fund

Applications close 12 October

Applications are sought from incorporated not-for-profit groups which want to support the work of local volunteers.

Further information

Office for Volunteers
paul.donnellan@sa.gov or phone 08 8463 4437
www.ofv.sa.gov.au

Community Manager appointed to Outback SA

The first permanent community manager has been appointed to the expanding outback township of Andamooka.

The Outback Areas Community Development Trust (OACDT) has opened an office in Andamooka to service the outback community of more than 900 people.

It will be led by the town's new permanent community manager, Robert (Bob) Jacobs.

Bob will work from the new office in the old Andamooka Progress and Opal Miners' Association (APOMA) offices near the Town Hall.

This will give the community a shopfront for more effective delivery of State Government services into the community.

With a background in business, local government and remote community

management, Bob's last position was with the Barkly Shire Council in Tennant Creek, NT.

His appointment was the first major outcome in the new partnership between APOMA and the OACDT, which aims to establish the expanding township of Andamooka as a model of good governance in outback towns.

Trust chairman Bill McIntosh said the new arrangement will relieve 'some of the pressure on volunteers for administration of town services'.

Further information

Bob Jacobs
08 8672 7411
0447 485116



Bob Jacobs (Community Manager Andamooka), Stefan Bilka (SES Unit Manager and past chairman of the Andamooka Progress and Opal Miners' Association), Mark Sutton (Director Outback Areas Community Development Trust) and Peter Allen (APOMA chairman) taken at a recent community 'meet-and-greet'



Western Myall walkabout: in search of answers

Janet Walton

Earlier this year, the Kingoonya NRM Group organised for a team of scientific experts to visit firsthand the Western Myall dieback in the Kingoonya district.

Of particular interest is the association between the Western Myall dieback and the Western Myall Whitefly.

The dieback has received some attention since the discovery of the Western Myall Whitefly in 1998 – and a decade later the dieback is escalating again.

Scientists and land managers are still unclear about the Western Myall/Whitefly relationship and how to manage the dieback or the recurring Whitefly outbreaks.

There does not appear to be any simple correlation with land degradation, drought stress or position in the environment that explains consistently the localities of affected trees or the dispersal of the Whitefly.

Some groves are seriously affected whilst adjacent groves or individual trees show no symptoms at all.

The scientific team included Dr Ken Tinley (Landscape Ecologist, Western Australia), Dr Peter Bailey (retired Senior SARDI Entomologist), Greg Baker (SARDI Entomologist), Hugh Pringle (Bush Heritage Australia ecologist) and John Maconachie (Pastoral Land Management Group).

Also in attendance were Kingoonya NRM Group members Julie Mould, Rick Mould and John Read, and Janet Walton (NRM Officer).

During the three days, the team visited a number of sites throughout the region with varying degrees of Western Myall Whitefly infestation.

Dr Peter Bailey and Greg Baker took a number of samples back to Adelaide to identify the rates of parasitism on the Western Myall trees.

The results indicated that one particular site was heavily infested with more than five Western Myall Whitefly larvae recorded on one phyllode (leaf).

Thankfully the trip also revealed a number of dead larvae and dehydrated eggs which may have been due to February's warm weather.

The team were also pleased to note a number of healthy juvenile Western Myalls at some of the groves affected by dieback in both 1999 and the current infestation.

The Kingoonya NRM Group hope to secure funding and resources to further investigate soil dynamics

associated with Western Myall dieback, the relationship between the Whitefly and its parasitic wasp, the inability of ants to defend Western Myalls against sap-sucking Whitefly in dry periods, and the effects of climate change.

Interestingly, there does not appear to have been previous outbreaks of major dieback for perhaps a hundred years. If this had occurred we would expect to see stands of dead trees as Western Myall decomposes very slowly.

Any ex-residents or visitors to the region who have noticed previous Western Myall dieback are encouraged to contact Janet Walton to help trace the history of myall dieback.

Further information

Janet Walton
08 8672 3648



Brendan Lay was recently contracted to revisit the 25 monitoring sites established in 2001 and 2006 where he will monitor the spread of Western Myall whitefly in the Kingoonya region.

Plant ID workshop

Louise Gavin

The SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board ran a successful plant identification workshop in Copley recently with 31 participants including members of the Copley and Marree CDEP Program, and people from Nepabunna and Iga Warta.

Simone Lawson (Rural Solutions South Australia) ran the workshop sessions using plant samples and photographs.

Simone taught us that plant identification is about eliminating options and that everyone in the room thinks about plants as they walk around or drive into town.

A good way to start identifying a plant is to think about and notice a few key things:

- The shape of the plant (ie. tall, short, rounded)
- Growth form (ie. shrub or tree)
- Colour of leaves and flowers
- Shape and arrangement of leaves
- Texture of leaves (ie. smooth, hairy, oily, bumpy)

With that information a plant can often be identified by a friend or from a book.

Scientific names, Adnyamathanha names and medicinal uses were also recorded for plant samples. Di Starick is continuing to work on this with some Copley residents.

Further information

Louise Gavin, 08 8648 5977

Special thanks to the Healthy Eating Program who organised food for the day and to Ron Johnston who assisted with workshop and field trip coordination.

Great Tracks Cleanup

Frank Lyman

For the third year in a row, the Leigh Creek SES volunteers cleaned up the Birdsville, Strezlecki Tracks and the Cordillo Road, taking with them about 70 tonnes of tyres and metal rubbish.

Equipped with their own vehicles and trailers, 23 volunteers participated in this year's Great Tracks Cleanup transporting the rubbish to the waste depots in the region.

After three years of cleaning the Great Tracks, some areas are looking really good.

Able led by Stuart Paxton, the volunteers began their trip at Leigh Creek and cleaned up a large amount of rubbish on the Strezlecki Track.

Other team members travelled the Balcanoona road through the North Flinders and out through Moolawatana Station to meet up

with the team at the overnight camp at Montecollina Bore.

The volunteers split into two teams so that secondary tracks such as the old Strezlecki track running along the Strezlecki Creek, the road out to Cameron Corner and the Bore Tracks could be cleaned up.

This led to a long but very successful day, and the team reunited at Innamincka for the evening.

The following days saw the team travel the Cordillo Downs Road to Birdsville, then down the Birdsville Track to Mungerannie and back to Leigh Creek.

Mechanics were on hand to repair the few breakdowns and the

support vehicle was always at the right place at the right time.

The volunteers are looking further afield next year to possibly clean up the Oodnadatta Track.

However this will only be possible through the continued support of the volunteers and the sponsors.

Further information

Stuart Paxton
08 8671 0370

Sponsorship and support came from SANTOS, Department for Environment and Heritage, Marree-Innamincka NRM Group (SAAL NRM Board), the Diamantina Shire, Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure, Flinders Power and Depot Springs Station.



Grey Grasswren Surveys

Reece Pedler

Since the relatively recent discovery of this species in the late 1960s there has been much interest and intrigue regarding the Grey Grasswren, an extremely secretive bird species that lives in the floodplain habitats of inland river systems in the Channel Country.

Within South Australia, very little is known about the distribution or life habits of the Grey Grasswren and the possible threats to its survival.

Surveys for the species in the Cooper Creek catchment of north-east South Australia were carried out in May by a team of experienced Grasswren researchers, led by Andrew Black, with Graham Carpenter, Lynn Pedler and Peter Langdon.

The extensive, five-day search was conducted around Embarka Waterhole and Tirrawarra Swamp where the bird had previously been recorded.

Tape-recordings of Grasswren calls were used to encourage the birds to show themselves or call in response.

... continued on back page



Photo: Lynn Pedler

Arid Recovery dingo project

Heather Springbett

Anecdotal evidence suggests that dingoes may suppress feral cat and fox numbers and assist survival of threatened species. Arid Recovery is the first organisation to test the impact of dingoes on cats and foxes using pen trials.

Arid Recovery's dingo project aims to determine what role (if any) dingoes play in controlling introduced predators such as cats and foxes.

If dingoes can assist with feral cat and fox control then dingo management may become a key element of future threatened species recovery programs in Australia.

Several feral cats were captured, fitted with radio and GPS tracking collars and introduced to a 37km² 'dingo pen' fenced north of the Arid Recovery Reserve.

In December 2008, a male and a female dingo were introduced into the pen and, more recently, four foxes have been added.

GPS collars take a location fix every

two hours. This data will be used to determine if there is any change in cat and fox behaviour, habitat use, activity patterns, condition or mortality after the introduction of the dingoes.

Their movement patterns will be compared to cats and foxes collared outside the pen.

Radio-collared animals are closely monitored so we are aware of their location and mortality.

This is mostly done through on-ground or aerial radio-tracking. We have also set up a surveillance system near the dam in the dingo enclosure.

This allows us to photograph the dingoes and other animals using this area and provides us with valuable

information about the animals' condition and behaviour.

Analysis of the cat and fox data is currently in the early stages. The dingoes will be recaptured in September so we can download the GPS data from their collars. This data will allow us to investigate the interactions between the dingoes and the cats and foxes.

Further information

Arid Recovery is a conservation initiative dedicated to restoring Australia's arid lands: www.aridrecovery.org.au

This project was made possible by funding through the SAAL NRM Board. Arid Recovery also acknowledges the support of Stuart Creek Station, Billa Kalina Station and Mulgaria Station.



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

Blinman to Wilpena road sealed

Travellers visiting the picturesque Flinders Ranges are bound to appreciate the newly sealed section of road between the towns of Blinman and Wilpena.

Since March 2008, the department's construction gangs and external contractors have been working to construct and seal the 53km section of road between the two popular Flinders Ranges towns.

The works include installation of new, and extension of existing, culverts, replacement of grids, stabilisation of 16 floodways, and installation of 8km of guardrail.

Design of some sections proved to be challenging due to the sharp curves, floodways and steep shoulder drop-offs.

An initial, temporary primer seal on the last 15km was laid down in early August 2009, completing the black top.

The department's Eyre Resheeting Gang is currently placing headwalls on culverts, and working along the final section installing signs and guide posts.

The first 23km from Wilpena has been final sealed and line marked.

The final seal on the remaining section will be laid in November 2009 with project completion expected in March 2010, once the guardrail has been installed.

The total project cost is \$12.3m of Australian and State Governments.



Work in progress on the Blinman - Wilpena Road (top), and the road newly sealed and line-marked.



Government of South Australia

Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure

Largest Athel Pine infestation in region removed

Ben Shepherd

A team of dedicated land managers and volunteers recently pooled their skills to remove the largest infestation of Athel Pine in the South Australian Arid Lands from the arid rivers between Lake Frome and the NSW border.

The initial removal of this large infestation is a significant step towards the protection and health of the arid rivers from which they were removed and the SA Arid Lands in general.

The control used both mechanical and chemical means with a D6 dozer employed for the dense areas and larger trees.

For outlying Athel Pines, away from the dense infestations, plants were cut down and herbicide applied to the stump.

To remove the many outlying plants, a group effort was required.

Over six days and working in four teams of 2-5 people, S. Kidman staff from Quinyambie Station, Rural Solutions SA Pest Management Consultants and volunteers from Conservation Volunteers Australia pooled resources and skills to successfully control over 30 athel pines scattered along several arid rivers.

But this does not mean it's over. Athel pines are often difficult to control and initial treatment is only the first stage.

Follow up treatments of regrowth may be required for several years to come, depending on rainfall and other factors.

The cost of removing wild infestations of Athel Pine is significant and a cost worth avoiding.

Garden plantings of athel pine have been the source of all wild infestations in central Australia and landowners are strongly encouraged to remove garden plantings of Athel Pine to prevent future infestations.

Further information

Ben Shepherd
84637435

This project is funded by the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country Program, with significant contributions from S. Kidman's Pastoral Company and in partnership with the South Australian Arid Lands NRM Board and NSW Western Catchment Management Authority.



S. Kidman and Co employees controlling outlying athel pine using cut stump methods



D6 Dozer with stick rake and blade plough attachment to remove dense infestations and large athel pine trees

If you sell sheep you should read this

Primary Industries and Resources SA (PIRSA) in conjunction with major sheep processors and livestock agents is set to increase compliance activities relating to the completion and accuracy of National Vendor Declarations (NVD).

As well as ensuring food safety, the NVD is a vital part of Australia's sheep and goat traceability system.

Without individual electronic identification, the NVD provides a crucial link back to an animal's last property of residence.

Recent audits continue to uncover an unacceptable number of incomplete NVDs, particularly from vendors selling sheep they have not bred themselves.

South Australia's Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr Rob Rahaley, said South Australia's sheep and goat industries expect PIRSA to enforce compliance with this vital component of SA's food safety and traceability system.

'To help improve producer awareness, PIRSA will be increasing

its auditing of NVDs at saleyards and abattoirs with a particular emphasis on non-vendor bred consignments,' he said.

'From August 10, PIRSA inspectors will be spot auditing the NVDs delivered with every consignment at major South Australian selling centres and export abattoirs.'

The increased scrutiny on NVD accuracy is an initiative of the SA National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) Sheep and Goat Implementation Committee which is comprised of representatives from producer groups, processors, agents, government and saleyard operators.

Dale Cameron, Livestock Manager with Tatiara Meat Company is concerned with the accuracy of

NVDs accompanying sheep and lambs he is purchasing.

'The main problem we are encountering is with question 3 on the NVD,' he said.

'If producers have not bred the sheep they are selling they must answer 'no' to question 3 and list the Property Identification Codes printed on the ear tags of the introduced sheep.'

'Alternatively producers can apply pink transaction tags on all of the animals in the consignment.'

Gary Tapscott, President of Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association (ALPA) urges producers to take the NVD seriously.

'The NVD is vital to the welfare of Australia's sheep industry and the information on the NVD is demanded by consumers of Australian sheep meat products,' Mr. Tapscott said

Producers who supply an incomplete or inaccurate NVD will receive a warning letter or expiation from PIRSA.

'Failing to accurately answer question 3 on the NVD in particular can result in regulatory action being taken against that producer in addition to the possibility of significant commercial discounts or sheep being withdrawn from sale altogether,' explained Dr Rahaley.

Further information

Producers who are unsure about how to correctly complete their NVD are urged to contact the PIRSA NLIS helpline on 1800 654 688.

HAVE YOU FILLED IN QUESTION 3 CORRECTLY?

The image shows a sample National Vendor Declaration (NVD) form. A red circle highlights question 3, which asks: "Has the owner stated above owned these sheep or lambs since their birth?". The form includes sections for owner details, property information, and declarations. A signature line and date field are also visible.



Rural health and drought support hotlines

Drought Link Hotline

180 2020

Personal and Family Support Line

1800 619 532

Emergency

Mental Health Assistance

13 14 65

(for use in a critical or mental health crisis)

beyondblue

1300 22 46 36

Mensline

1300 78 99 78

... continued from page eight

Although over 250 other bird species were observed, no Grey Grasswrens were found at Embarka and it is thought that they are no longer at this site. However, there are some lingering suspicions that they may not have spoken up enough to be heard!

The next part of the project will involve searching for the species in areas of the Warburton/Diamantina catchments.

Further information

Reece Pedler
08 8671 1083

The assistance and support of Gidgealpa managers Jane-Marie and Jason Barns and SANTOS Tirrawarra manager Mark Moffatt is gratefully acknowledged.

The project was initiated by the Marree-Innamincka NRM Group, with vital funding provided by SANTOS.

New Rural Community Counsellor for the Far North

Alan McMahon has recently taken up the position with Country Health SA (CHSA) as a Rural Community Counsellor for the Far North.

Alan is part of the CHSA Drought Response Team and replaces Trevor Middleton-Frew who has returned to Flinders Medical Centre.

Alan will cover the Flinders and Far North and Outback areas of the State and will work closely with other drought related positions that are currently operating.

He is based at the old Port Augusta Hospital offices and will also be available to visit stations and businesses affected by the drought.

Alan comes from a farming background and understands the impact the drought has on rural families and communities and how these pressures are exacerbated by rising costs.

Alan joins nine other Rural Community Counsellors across the State who are supporting families and individuals to deal with the stress and increased family tensions caused by the current adverse conditions.

Alan has spent many years working



overseas in rural development and has also spent time as a shearer, farm manager, Rural Financial Counsellor and working for the Department of Agriculture.

The position involves networking with other organisations and government departments offering services to outback communities, and supporting individuals, families, and communities suffering from stress and uncertainty.

Part of the role also includes mental health education to communities to assist people to identify what to do when things start to go wrong and they feel they can't cope.

The service is free and confidential.

Further information

AlanMcMahon
08 8648 5517
0427 798 670
0147 163 193 (Satellite)
alan.mcmahon@health.sa.gov.au