

Across the OUTBACK

AUGUST 2010

PRODUCED FOR OUTBACK SA

NUMBER 50

New departments for water and environment

Two new State Government departments came into effect on 1 July 2010 – the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department for Water (DFW).

DENR brings together the former Department for Environment and Heritage and most of the natural resources management (NRM) activities previously supported by the former Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation (DWLBC), including support for the eight NRM Boards and the Pastoral Board.

The integration of NRM activities within a single State Government department provides a real opportunity to develop a more effective regional approach to managing the State's natural resources and our many unique landscapes. This includes land, marine and wetland environments and the plants and animals they support.

As the community face of natural resources management, NRM Boards will continue to play a crucial role in developing regional plans, engaging communities, working with government to decide priorities, helping to resolve difficult NRM conflicts, and monitoring the condition of natural resources in regions.

And with the establishment of a dedicated Department for Water, South Australia's push for a sustainable and secure water future and a healthy River Murray has been strengthened.

DFW will lead the management of South Australia's water resources, providing advice to the Government and the South Australian community on the quantity, quality, use and availability of these resources. It will lead the implementation of *Water for Good*, South Australia's flexible and adaptable plan to guarantee our water future, and will also help implement national water reform through the Australian Government's Water for the Future initiative and the National Water Initiative.

Meanwhile, the biosecurity functions of the former DWLBC have integrated with PIRSA Biosecurity to form Biosecurity SA. Biosecurity SA will boost South Australia's ability to strategically and effectively respond to animal, plant and aquatic pests and diseases. ■

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Read about the breeding of Banded Stilts on page 14



Public Access Routes – some pointers for the travelling public

David Oag, Pastoral Inspector

The PAR network allows the travelling public to access areas of South Australia that would otherwise not be accessible without first seeking the permission of the landholder. This article advises how to use them safely and courteously.

Public Access Routes (PARs) are not part of the formal road network. They are a network of unimproved and unsurfaced dirt tracks providing the public with four-wheel drive access to places of interest in the remote areas of pastoral SA.

Due to the nature of the tracks their condition can change rapidly with the weather and they can become impassable following rain, flooding or the accumulation of sand drifts.

The condition of a PAR can also decline quickly with high traffic loads during periods of high visitor use and travellers should use caution and drive according to track conditions.

All the PARs traverse pastoral properties and are generally part of the station track network so visitors need to be aware that other travellers or station workers may be using the same tracks. This can include trucks and road-trains for transporting livestock. As PARs are not fenced, visitors also need to be aware of wandering livestock, especially near yards and waterpoints. It is a requirement under the *Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act 1989* that landholder consent be sought to visit areas of the pastoral lands not covered by the PAR network. Landholders have the right to either grant permission to visit or refuse a request for any reasonable purpose.

A Pastoral Lease Public Access Request Form should be used for access requests and is available from the Pastoral Program 1800 678 447 or 8303 9751 ■

IMAGES

Below: Historic water towers, Beresford on PAR14 north of Coward Springs en route to William Creek

Right: Bulldust areas on Halligan Bay PAR with rubble heaps to be used for re-surfacing



HALLIGAN BAY PAR REPAIRED

A major maintenance program was completed in June to repair and rehabilitate the Halligan Bay PAR after this year's significant rainfall and flooding throughout the region caused damage to many of the PARs.

The Halligan Bay PAR, commencing just south of William Creek and terminating at Lake Eyre, was closed earlier this year due to the impacts of the widespread rain and the generally rough condition of the track.

The repairs involved a complete wet-grade along the full length of the track. Several bulldust holes, which were a major hazard, were filled with rubble and rolled to provide a capped and stable surface over these sections of the track.

Completing the repairs in time for the July school holiday tourist season was important as the PAR provides one of only two public access points to Lake Eyre and has very high traffic loads.

The repairs were a collaborative effort between the former Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation, South Australian Tourist Commission, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the lessees, S. Kidman and Co.



Steve Scott, DTET



**PASTORAL BOARD AND
PROGRAM CONTACTS**

The Pastoral Board of SA

Soil & Water Environs Building, Entry 4,
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:**

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

Lease assessments

Craig Boulderstone (08) 8303 9752

Lease inspections and tenure

Chris Turner (08) 8303 9755

**PASTORAL BOARD
2010 MEETING DATES**

- Meeting 123** **Wednesday 20 and
Thursday 21 October**
Location to be
determined
- Meeting 124** **Thursday 15 December**
Adelaide or Pt Augusta

Land use and the perception of change

John Maconochie, Scientific Officer Rangelands

Pastoral Board members and Pastoral Program staff have received a number of comments and enquiries indicating a strong perception that many pastoral leases have been converted from pastoral use to other purposes, such as tourism and nature conservation.

The evidence from the pastoral lease tenure records shows that this is not the case and that the vast majority of leases continue to be used for pastoral purposes.

Collectively occupying 410,000 square kilometres, there are a total of 328 pastoral leases in SA's rangelands and 220 of these operate as pastoral stations (or pastoral runs).

While a growing number of runs now undertake tourism operations to supplement and support their pastoral production enterprise, only one lease (Arkaroola in the northern Flinders) has been formally converted from pastoral use to tourism and conservation purposes.

To date a total of 16 runs have been purchased with the intention of using them for conservation purposes. Two of these have been formally converted to Parks – the Gawler Ranges National Park and Bimbowrie Conservation Park.

Some pastoral lessees have placed a Heritage Agreement on a specific part of their lease, usually small areas ranging from a few square kilometres to tens of square kilometres.

Once a conservation purpose is approved by the Pastoral Board a nil stocking maximum is applied to the lease and this is reflected in the annual rental.

Current annual rents, as set by the Valuer General, are 2.7% of unimproved land value for pastoralism, 2% of unimproved land value for conservation, and 5% of unimproved land value for tourism.

Pastoral leases in South Australia are owned by many different organisations, from the traditional pastoral company or family run pastoral enterprise to conservation bodies, non-government scientific organisations, and mining and petroleum companies. The latter generally sub-lease the runs for pastoral purposes. ■



Paul Wainwright, DENR



Minster Caica visits the Rangelands

Paul Caica, Minister for Environment and Conservation, Water and the River Murray, visited the South Australian Arid Lands Region on 9-10 June to increase his knowledge of key issues in the region.

The Minister got a birds-eye view of a large part of the region visiting Port Augusta, Innamincka, Birdsville, Cowarie Station, William Creek and Prominent Hill where he met with people to discuss face-to-face some of the challenges and opportunities for sustainable natural resources management.

The Minister received first hand information about a wide range of issues including pest management, pastoral production, the impacts of the drought and the process of recovery from it, the regional reserve system and groundwater management. From the air he was able to see the extent of the floodwaters in both the Cooper Creek system as well as the Warburton.

Minister Caica acknowledged that while the floods have brought enormous benefit to the environment,

economy and communities in the region, they have also caused a significant amount of damage. At Innamincka he met with community members and staff from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and saw some of the damage the floods have caused to fences, roads, tracks and other built infrastructure.

On an overnight stop at Birdsville he met with representatives of the Wangkangurru people, the traditional owners of the Simpson Desert area. The Minister then travelled to Cowarie station where he met with Sharon Oldfield to discuss a range of pastoral management issues, including weed management, access to markets and water management. A visit to the copper-gold mine Prominent Hill increased his understanding of the scale of the project and

initiatives undertaken in relation to environmental offsets.

Overall, the whole trip was a terrific learning experience and I want to thank everyone involved for their openness and frankness and the hospitality I was shown, Mr Caica said.

The Minister was accompanied on the trip by Michael McBride, Presiding Member of the Pastoral Board, Katherine Moseby, member of the SA Arid Lands NRM Board, Ben Bruce, Director, Department for Water, and Geoff Axford, Regional Conservator, Outback Region, Department of Environment and Natural Resources. ■



IMAGES – CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
Minister Paul Caica being shown around the Prominent Hill mining site; with Cowarie Station owner Sharon Oldfield; and at Cooper Creek

COMMUNITY ACTION GRANTS AVAILABLE

Environmental, Aboriginal, Landcare and sustainable agriculture community groups are invited to apply for grants to help protect and conserve Australia's environment.

Community Action Grants are the small grants (\$5000 - \$20,000) component of the Australian Government's *Caring for our Country* initiative targeted towards established community groups which have sustainable farming and/or protecting and enhancing the natural environment as their principal objective.

The grants support local activities such as tree planting, revegetation, dune rehabilitation, field days, controlling pests, improving land management practices, and the recording and use of traditional ecological knowledge.

Individuals are not eligible to apply and projects must be completed within 18 months. Applications close 31 August 2010.

Further information

Contact the SA Arid Lands NRM Board 8648 5977 or visit www.nrm.gov.au/cag/index.html#guide

Help shape the future of our desert parks

Liz Ankor and Carmen Crossing

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources recently commenced management planning for Coongie Lakes National Park and Strzelecki and Lake Frome Regional Reserves and are keen to have your input.

Addressing issues ranging from biodiversity to tourism and exploration/mining interests, management plans provide the primary source of direction, so it is important that community views are heard and considered during this process.

The three reserves are highly valued for their role in biodiversity conservation at a local level, including the Coongie Lakes wetlands, which is considered of international ecological significance. Tourists from around the world are drawn to these desert wetlands, seeking a remote area experience and to learn about the unique environment.

All three reserves hold great significance to Aboriginal traditional owners and hold important cultural heritage values. They also provide significant economic benefit to many small towns across the region by attracting tourism and resource industry investment.

The petroleum, mineral and geothermal industries have an active interest in the regional reserves, with activities in Strzelecki Regional Reserve estimated to have added \$573 million to the State economy during 1991-2001.

We are particularly interested in community perceptions on key reserve values and management challenges, and also aspirations for future management.

To get involved contact Liz Ankor 8124 4752 (Coongie Lakes National Park) or Carmen Crossing 8124 4973 (Strzelecki and Lake Frome Regional Reserves) ■

PASTORAL IDENTITIES BOOK

Father's Day will soon be upon us and the book *Pastoral identities from Across the Outback* would make a good present.

Compiled by the late Leith Yelland, a local author and former *Across The Outback* editor, the book profiles 36 pastoral identities. Leith brought a compassionate ear to the outback, recording the stories of many great people and the book is a remarkable record and a worthy read.

Pastoral identities from Across the Outback costs \$27.50 plus \$10.00 postage and is available from Regional Development Australia Far North in Port Augusta 8641 1444.

Paul Wainwright, DENR

Become an industry partner in NRM

The SA Arid Lands (SAAL) Natural Resources Management (NRM) Board is inviting the major industry interests operating in the region to join their landmark Industry Partnerships Program.

This is a unique initiative in South Australia that will see businesses partner with the SAAL NRM Board to accelerate the achievement of the region's natural resources management goals, particularly where these are issues of concern to industry.

While the security and sustainability of the region's natural resources will ultimately be the big winner, participating businesses will be rewarded with an improved triple bottom line as they derive social, ecological and financial benefits from the Program.

The Program will address priority issues at the most appropriate scale and utilise best available knowledge.

It will combine both the interests and investment of industry and government with the expertise of scientists and resource managers to address issues and drive improvements in the condition of key natural resources.

Once underway, the SAAL NRM Board is confident that the success of this innovative investment

partnership approach for natural resource management will be quickly recognised by the regional population and the broader community.

With just two criteria to meet, joining the SAAL NRM Board's Industry Partnerships Program is simple.

As long as the business operates within the SA Arid Lands region and utilises or impacts natural resources as part of its operations, then it's eligible and the Board would be keen to explore partnership opportunities.

The priorities for natural resources management are described in the SAAL Regional NRM Plan.

There are a wide variety of activities that could be addressed via the Program including aspects of water security, pest management, threatened species conservation and community engagement.

Interested organisations are encouraged to contact the SAAL NRM Board 8648 5977 to discuss how they might get involved ■

SUCCESSFUL GRADER WORKSHOPS

The SAAL NRM Board held free grader, dumpy and seeder level workshops at Edeowie, Murnpeowie, Yudnapinna and Coondambo Stations during June 2010.

Daryl Hill (earthmoving contractor and university lecturer) shared and demonstrated his extensive knowledge on track and drain design and how to set-up and operate a dumpy level and seeder. Each workshop was well attended.

If you missed out on attending the workshops, contact the Board's office 8648 5977



DON'T RUE THE DAY YOU SAW THIS WEED

Greg Patrick, Pest Management Officer

With the warmer weather approaching, African Rue (*Peganum harmala*) will be starting to show up on properties and roadsides and it's important that this invasive weed is managed to prevent its spread into new areas throughout the State.

African Rue currently occurs densely in a core area north of Yunta where it extends sparsely for considerable distances. The weed is slow to spread to new areas but could potentially grow throughout SA.

African Rue plants will survive over summer into the cooler weather of winter. This means that two or three inspections and spraying may be required over this period because of the staggered germination and seeding of the plants. Once plants are allowed to establish, the deep root system will require several years of treatment before the plant is killed so early intervention is always best.

African Rue is unpalatable to livestock and prefers sites that have been disturbed (eg by vehicles, road grading or overgrazing). At these sites there is less competition from native plants and African Rue seedlings can grow unimpeded. Drainage lines, watercourses and floodplains are also vulnerable due to the extra moisture and the potential movement of seed.

The plant can be spread by root fragments if it is disturbed so the best method of control to minimise this form of spread is using herbicide. Seed can be spread by vehicles so driving through infested areas should be avoided.

Further information

For assistance identifying or controlling African Rue contact the SAAL NRM Board 8648 5977 or visit the Board's website for a factsheet www.saalnm.sa.gov.au



Successful community NRM day in Woomera

Woomera recently played host to a successful forum showcasing natural resources management in the Arid Lands Region to landholders, local community members and various community and industry groups.

The one day forum took place at the Eldo Hotel on Wednesday 23 June and was organised by the South Australian Arid Lands (SAAL) Natural Resource Management (NRM) Board to promote their work in the region and engage the wider community in natural resources management.

The free forum provided around 120 attendees with an excellent source of information and a great mix of presenters including SAAL NRM staff and community and industry representatives.

While one of the goals of the forum was to present the work of the SAAL NRM Board to the wider community it also proved a great networking opportunity for community and local groups to come together and discuss NRM in the region.

Even the local ABC radio got involved with Petria Ladgrove, the producer from Kieran Weir's Mornings show broadcasting live from the forum.

One of the key themes of the forum was the need to understand how the region's ecosystems function and are impacted, particularly by pests.

Opportunities for carbon capture resonated with the audience with

presentations on this topic by Mark Alchin (WA Department of Agriculture) one of the highlights.

The forum also promoted sustainable industries with displays and presentations by various mining and agricultural interests in the region including on the managing and marketing of exotic sheep breeds and the management of water allocations from the Great Artesian Basin.

People, and encouraging vibrant communities, were also an important focus and attendees heard about the many volunteers who contribute their time to NRM and other community initiatives such as best practice farming groups.

Attendees welcomed the opportunity to learn more about the diverse array of NRM projects in the Arid Lands region and to discuss these with SAAL NRM Board staff members. They were also impressed by the range of topics and options for discussion, the 'something for everybody' approach, and the knowledge of the presenters.

Other presentation highlights were Susan Carn's Bestprac Group, Greg Patrick's pest management and Sharon Bell and Col Greenfield's presentation on the Outback Lakes Group.

The responses to the Forum were all positive with people enjoying the range of topics and presenters as well as the extra activities like Tai Chi.

Attendees also felt the Forum provided them with an understanding of who the SAAL NRM Board is and the functions they perform as well as a chance to meet new people and catch up with old friends.

There were hopes that an event like this would be held again in the future with suggestions to make the forum even bigger and to further expand the forum to include more local producer and industry groups.

If you missed out on attending or would like to know more about the SAAL NRM Board, what the Board can do for you or how you can get involved in NRM in your area, contact the Board's office 8648 5977 ■



Keeping exotic weeds out

Janet Walton, NRM Officer

There is some concern around the Marla-Oodnadatta NRM district about the potential for the recent rains to introduce weeds into our region, such as Noogoora Burr (*Xanthium occidentale*).

This year's summer rainfall has seen several infestations of Noogoora Burr reported around Alice Springs. Pastoralists in these areas are planning control efforts but won't necessarily be able to clean it up in outlying scattered areas.

What does it look like?

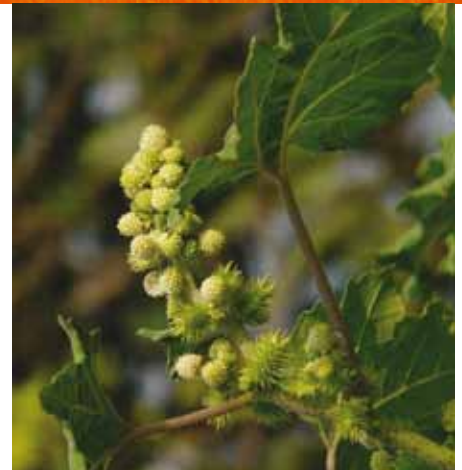
Noogoora Burr is a short-lived (annual) plant that has been introduced from North America. Stems are rough to touch and blotched or streaked purple. Leaves are 5-15cm long, dark green above and paler below. Leaf margin is coarsely toothed or indented with

three prominent veins. The veins and leaf stems are often reddish. The brown burrs each contain two brown, grey or black seeds, 7-25mm long, and covered in hooked spines that end in two diverging straight spines.

So what can you do?

It is far more cost-effective to take a few simple steps towards keeping exotic weeds off your property than it is to deal with an established weed population.

Keep an eye on stock or feral animals coming onto your property from infested areas. If you're purchasing or moving stock from infested



properties, hold them in yards as soon as they arrive on your property so you can inspect their coat, tails and hooves. Monitor this site vigilantly for new weed incursions.

Report any unusual plants on your property to the Board's NRM Officers or Pest Management Officer 8648 5977.

Visit www.saalnrm.sa.gov.au for a factsheet on exotic weeds ■

Recipe for rabbit control

With summer not far away, land managers will be thinking about planning their rabbit control program. Greg Patrick, the SAAL NRM Board's Pest Management Officer, provides some advice.

Summer is the best time to conduct rabbit control. Rabbit numbers are naturally lower and feed is scarcer.

The soil is drier which assists in collapsing warrens more effectively when ripped and any rabbits outside the warrens are more susceptible to predators, heat stress and dehydration.

Even if warrens are disused it is important to use this time to destroy them before any future reinvasion may occur.

A rabbit control program involves five steps.

Plan

Survey your property and map any warrens or other havens rabbits are using. Spotlight counts at these sites will assist in estimating rabbit numbers and help with assessing which baits to use and how much may be required. Use a GPS or even a mud map to plan a warren destruction program for your property.

Poison

Where rabbit numbers are high or warren destruction is not possible, use 1080 oats to help bring rabbit numbers to low densities. 1080 is a restricted substance so contact the Board 8648 5977 to discuss its use.

Destroy

Once rabbit numbers are low, destroy warrens by deep ripping to prevent

The SAAL NRM Board is seeking expressions of interest from landholders who are interested in participating in coordinated rabbit control programs this summer. Financial assistance may be available for landholders to manage rabbits on their property. Contact the Board 8648 5977 for further information.

a ready habitat for any possible resurgence of rabbits. Ripping needs to be to a minimum depth of 600mm, ensuring the full width of the warren is ripped. It is most effectively done with winged booted tines to ensure a thorough collapse of the warren. Native vegetation clearance approval is required if any vegetation is to be destroyed in the warren ripping process. Where ripping is not possible it may be necessary for a licensed operator to use explosives.

Fumigate

Fumigate and close off any holes that may be reopened by a stray rabbit.

Follow Up

Follow up any control works and monitor control sites to obtain the best long term results for your property. ■



New poster to prevent spread of prickly invaders

Deb Agnew, Operations Manager

A new poster has been released to help land managers in South Australia identify prickly invaders.

With 23 species of invasive Opuntoid cacti scattered in varying densities across approximately one million hectares of SA's rangelands, these weeds are a serious threat to biodiversity and agricultural systems.

Distinguishing between them can sometimes be difficult and the key features highlighted in the poster will help land managers identify 10 of the most invasive species.

Finding out exactly what cactus you have on your property is an important factor in planning a control program. With the method of dispersal dependent on the species, the risk of further spread is greater for some cacti than others and the best treatment method may vary.



managers to treat over 30,000 invasive cacti plants. Where possible, infested areas were initially surveyed to help contractors and pastoral/farm based staff locate cactus plants more efficiently.

The poster is just one outcome of a cross-regional project funded through the State NRM Program via the State Opuntia Taskforce.

As part of this project, the Eyre Peninsula, Northern and Yorke, SA Murray-Darling Basin and SA Arid Lands NRM Boards have provided support for land managers to undertake control of cactus infestations before they increase in size and density.

Significant progress has been made with the funding assisting land

This strategic approach ensures effective use of funds for on-ground control works.

A copy of the poster can be obtained from the Board's office and an interactive version of the poster will soon be available on the Board's website: www.saalnrm.sa.gov.au

For further information about how to manage invasive cacti on your property contact the Board 8648 5977 ■



WELCOME KRISTIAN COULTHARD

The Board was pleased to welcome Kristian Coulthard to the position of Aboriginal Engagement Officer in July.

Kristian is from the northern Flinders Ranges and of Adnyamathanha descent. He has a Diploma in Conservation and Land Management and has previously worked as a ranger on Welford National Park for Queensland's Department of Environment and Resources Management. Prior to that, Kristian worked for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in SA's outback region. He has extensive knowledge and experience in working with Aboriginal people, pastoralists, and remote communities and is looking forward to working with the Board on a wide range of projects.

Further information
Contact Kristian 8648 5963

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE

If you're after NRM Group or Board meeting details, a factsheet, report or newsletter, positions vacant, information for schools or volunteers or just the latest on NRM in the region, check out the Board's website www.saalnrm.sa.gov.au

SAAL NRM BOARD 2010 MEETING DATES

Meeting 32	17 & 18 August Port Augusta
Meeting 33	13 & 14 October Woomera
Meeting 34	7 & 8 December Port Augusta



DINGO UPDATE

ISSUE 11 AUGUST 2010

The *Dingo Update* brings you the latest news from the Dingo Research Project, an initiative of the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board, as well as ongoing management news. North of the Dog Fence the Board is investigating the impacts dingoes have on beef cattle in baited and unbaited areas to determine optimum dingo management strategies. South of the Dog Fence, the Board is busy delivering the landholder-initiated Biteback program for dingo control, a critical program for protecting the region's sheep industry.

Ben Allen

News from South of the Fence

Have you seen (or heard) a dingo?

Dingoes are a major problem for livestock producers south of the Dog Fence where dingoes are a declared pest species. As part of the Biteback project, we're interested in records of dingoes and dingo sightings south of the Dog Fence.

If you have seen a dingo or their tracks, heard them howl, or had stock losses to dingoes south of the Fence, contact us.

Dingo control factsheet

Over the last 12 months we've had lots of requests for information on the best-practice control of dingoes, so we've developed a factsheet to help land managers south of the Fence manage dingoes on their property.

Contact us to obtain a copy or visit www.saalnrn.sa.gov.au ■

Contact the Dingo Management team for further information 8648 5977

News from North of the Fence

Interesting finds in dingo poo

As part of the *Dingo Research Project*, we regularly collect and analyse the contents of dingo scats (faeces) to find out what dingoes eat. Over 3,000 have been collected so far revealing some interesting critters in places where we thought they were absent.

One dingo scat from the sandy Strzelecki Desert contained fur and a skull from an endangered Plains Mouse (*Pseudomys australis*). This is interesting because they have not been found there for many decades and are thought to prefer more stony habitats.

Thirty-three scats from Haddon Corner in north-east SA contained fur from introduced Black Rats (*Rattus rattus*) yet these rats are thought to be absent from inland areas away from human settlements. No skulls have turned up yet to confirm the diagnosis made from the fur.

These findings remind us just how valuable a poo can be because dingoes can help us locate species that are hard for us humans to find.

Calf predation results coming soon

Dingoes can sometimes have serious impacts on beef producers. To assess calf predation, the *Dingo Research Project* conducts pregnancy tests on cows each year to see when their calves are due to be born. When these cows are mustered next time, we can see whether or not they have a calf with them by assessing their lactation status – is the cow 'wet' or 'dry'?

With only one more round of mustering and pregnancy testing to be done this year, the calf predation results are just around the corner.



To get us in the moo...d, check out the pregnancy testing photo above. Do you think this cow is lactating? ■



Call for 2010/11 pest control and land rehab projects

Interested in doing pest control or land rehabilitation works on your property? Expressions of interest are sought from interested land managers who are looking to do on-ground activities.

The SA Arid Lands (SAAL) Natural Resources Management (NRM) Board has secured funds through the Australian Government's 2010/11 *Caring for Our Country* program to provide technical support and funds for on-ground works that address priority weeds and pests or improve land condition. Fill in the expression of interest form below and return this to the Port Augusta office before 15 October 2010.

Expressions of interest will be reviewed according to regional priorities and available funding. Those deemed most suitable will be developed into project applications with the assistance of Board staff who will contact the land

manager directly. Several pest animal and weed species have been selected for coordinated management. However the Board will also consider funding projects for other species considered of local priority. There are also land rehabilitation programs as well.

Project applications will be assessed against regional priorities and each other to ensure the limited funds are spent in the most effective manner. Project activities and funding amount will determine how many applications are approved. Successful applications will include some land holder contribution to project costs, either in-kind or cash.

Further information 8648 5977 ■

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
Pest Management and Land Rehabilitation Programs 2010/11

APPLICANT DETAILS

Name _____

Property _____

Contact details _____

District Group _____

Feral animal control programs

- Rabbit control
- Feral goat control
- Camel control

Land rehabilitation program

- Contour furrowing
- Direct seeding
- Water ponding

Weed control programs

- Cactus
- Athel Pine
- Mesquite and Parkinsonia
- Buffel Grass
- African Rue

Other activities _____

ACTIVITIES FUNDED

Indicate which activities you are interested in and provide details of the proposed project.

(ie. area to be treated, method, your contribution and amount of funding being sought)

Funding for activities not listed will be considered if details provided.

I am able to complete this project by 31 May 2011 Yes No

Signed _____ Date ____ / ____ / ____

Return this form to the Board before 15 October 2010

Fax 8648 5976 Post: SAAL NRM Board PO Box 2227 Port Augusta SA 5700



New Authority eager to work with outback communities

The new Outback Communities Authority officially came into operation on 1 July 2010, marking the beginning of a new era in management and governance for outback areas.

To mark the occasion, Minister for State/Local Government Relations Gail Gago visited Iron Knob on 16 July, accompanied by members of the new Authority and shared morning tea with local residents.

Encouraging community members to get involved, Minister Gago and Presiding Member Bill McIntosh explained how local progress associations and community members would have a greater say in the future of the outback.

Newly appointed members are eager to work with outback communities. Each bring unique experience relevant to life in the outback and are ready to start conversations with the communities they will serve. Members have worked in fields including, community governance and engagement, strategic planning, financial management, business, environmental management, health and medicine, land use, youth services, tourism and farming.

All seven members have strong connections with people who live in and service the outback and four of the members come from different outback communities, thoroughly equipping them to support outback residents to respond to infrastructure and service demands.

The newly appointed members are Bill McIntosh (Presiding Member), Pat Katnich, Toni Bauer, Frances Frahn, Jennifer Cleary, Margaret Heylen and George Beltchev.

Supported by State Government staff based primarily at Port Augusta, the members will now be responsible for developing a community engagement strategy, five-year strategic management plan, annual business plan and budget.

These plans will be subject to extensive community consultation and guide spending of new levies which can be introduced at a later date.

Outback residents will be consulted on important matters before they become part of the Authority's work.

Like the Outback Areas Community Development Trust it replaces, the Authority will serve a vast region covering 65 per cent of the State and about 3,800 people in more than 30 communities across the outback.

The first meeting of the new Authority was held on 3 August in Port Augusta with some future meetings to be held in outback communities to strengthen relationships with outback residents.

For further information visit the new website www.oca.sa.gov.au ■

FREE ACCESS TO NEWSPAPERS

Thanks to Public Library Services and SA's public libraries, anyone with an SA public library card can now access full 'page-by-page turning' electronic versions of *The Advertiser* and *The Australian* for free, just by using their home computer (or anywhere with an internet connection). There are over 1,000 full version titles to choose from including: *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*, *The Guardian* (UK), *Le Figaro* (France), *Shanghai Daily* (China) and the *Times of India*.

Further information
www.libraries.sa.gov.au or contact
your local public library

FREE LEGAL ADVICE

The Legal Services Commission advises that there is a dedicated free Legal Help Line for people seeking legal advice.

For fast, free legal advice, call the Legal Help Line on 1300 366 424. The Help Line is open Monday to Friday 9.00am-4.30pm.

The Legal Help Line is supported by new caller and queue handling technology which delivers prompt access to the community.

AIR ADVENTURES

Regional Development Australia Far North is currently preparing a summary report on the results of a Flinders Ranges and Outback South Australia Tourism (FROSAT) survey of air charter firms and airstrip operators across the region. One immediate outcome is *Air Adventures*, a brochure aimed at promoting places in the region – stations, hotels and resorts – where a private flying group could land and get great hospitality. The brochure will join the highly successful *Station Stays* brochure and will shortly be available on www.flindersoutback.com.au

IMAGE

Outback Communities Authority members, (left to right) Toni Bauer and Pat Katnich with leader of Iron Knob Progress Association, Dave Evans (centre), Presiding Member Bill McIntosh and George Beltchev.



Innamincka Regional Reserve opens after flood

Approximately half of the visitor facilities at Innamincka Regional Reserve have reopened after floods left all sites under water earlier this year.

Even though the floodwaters had started to recede, visitors still need to be careful and do their research before travelling.

Some campsites will not open until late August or September as they are still drying out and will need repair work undertaken.

Coongie Lakes National Park will be closed for the 2010 visitor season due to the floodwaters.

Further information Desert Parks Hotline 1800 816 078 ■

Date Palm removal underway

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is about to begin a control program to control the highly invasive Date Palm at the heritage listed Dalhousie Springs in the State's far north.

The program aims to restore the ecological integrity of the Dalhousie Homestead Ruins and Kingfisher Springs by controlling the spread of Date Palms within the Witjira National Park.

DENR staff first started removing the Date Palms in 2005, and with National Water Initiative funding sourced in partnership with the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board in 2008, contractors have now been sourced to further support the removal of Date Palms to ensure increased environmental flows to the area. ■

ARE YOU ON THE ACROSS THE OUTBACK MAILING LIST?

Across The Outback is a free publication that is issued to over 1000 individuals or organisations with a stake or interest in the Arid Lands region.

If you would like to join the mailing list or update your details please contact the Editor jenny.barker@sa.gov.au.

Please include your name, mailing address and email address (to receive electronic notification).

CALL FOR CONTENT

Across The Outback
October edition

Content due by COB Friday 24
September

Contact the Editor (details on back page) for further information.

Outback Calendar

FRIENDS OF PARKS FORUM,
WOOMERA

20-23 August

INNAMINCKA RACES

28 August

BIRDSVILLE RACES

3-4 September

LAKE EYRE BASIN
2010 CONFERENCE,
ALICE SPRINGS

13-Sep

16TH AUSTRALIAN
RANGELAND
SOCIETY BIENNIAL
CONFERENCE,
BOURKE

26-30 September

These are a selection of events extracted from the *Calendar of Events* administered by the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board available at www.saalnrm.sa.gov.au

If you would like to receive notification when the *Calendar of Events* is updated please send an email to jenny.barker@sa.gov.au ■

THIS SPACE COULD BE YOURS!

Across The Outback remains committed to reporting on government activities in the region in the single publication and we welcome contributions from other agencies. We'd also like to hear from non-government organisations, Progress Associations or Friends groups operating in the area. Tell us what you're doing to support your community and if we have space we'll try to accommodate you.

For further information contact the Editor jenny.barker@sa.gov.au or 8463 3354. A fee per article may apply.

150,000 breeding Banded Stilts at Lake Torrens

Alex Clarke, DENR Regional Ecologist – Deserts

This year's rainfall set the stage for the largest breeding colony of Banded Stilts ever recorded in SA ensuring this bird's population remains healthy well into the next decade.

In late April, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) received information from the ornithological community (notably Iain Stuart and Keith Bellchambers) suggesting we should be on the look-out for Banded Stilts due to the heavy rainfall at Andamooka, which had now flowed into the western side of Lake Torrens.

Information from the community (David Dadd) also suggested the birds were no longer present at the Coorong.

DENR responded by conducting an aerial survey of the Coorong but

finding no presence of the birds we turned our attention to the Outback.

Half-way down Lake Torrens, with no sign of the birds, we quietly assumed they had gone elsewhere, when we spotted the colony on a tiny island 2km from the western shoreline.

Examination of aerial photos taken during the survey revealed an estimated 150,000 birds were breeding on the island.

DENR immediately despatched a field team of rangers and ecologists to record ecological information and intervene to protect the Stilts if Seagulls presented a serious risk.

With an average of 3.2 eggs per nest, it is estimated more than 200,000 chicks departed the colony to feed on the flooded lake in mid-May.

Seagull harassment did not present a serious issue with around half of the original colony breeding again in early June.

A second colony of around 5,000 Banded Stilts was also discovered by Trevor Wright at Lake Eyre in late May.

Many thanks go to 'Max' Greenfield for his support and hospitality throughout the event. ■



Alex Clarke

BANDED STILTS AND THEIR BREEDING EVENTS

The Banded Stilt is an endemic wading bird known for its uncanny ability to sense heavy inland rainfall from thousands of kilometres away.

Once rainfall is detected, the birds immediately depart their coastal haunts for tiny islands on wet outback salt lakes where they breed *en masse* – sometimes in rapid succession.

The world population is estimated at between 200-300,000 birds and they can be found spread across the southern half of Australia from WA to southern NSW. Larger flocks are more common in the coastal areas of SA (Coorong) and WA.

Classified as vulnerable in SA, the birds rarely get the chance to breed because they rely on significant rainfall events over the catchments of inland salt lakes.

We only know of seven breeding events in the past 70 years meaning these birds may only get the chance to breed 2-3 times during their entire 20-25 year lifespan.

To make matters worse, these rare breeding colonies are often harassed by over-abundant Seagulls (ie. due to rubbish dumps, tourism etc.), which steal and eat the Banded Stilt eggs, causing serious disruption and even failure of the breeding events.

The last known breeding event in SA was at Lake Eyre North in 2000.

After initial breeding attempts failed due to Seagull harassment, DENR intervened to protect the Stilts and around 50,000 chicks successfully fledged from that colony.



Alex Clarke



'WAR' ON LOCUSTS ABOUT TO BEGIN

Preparations are ramping up to combat the worst plague locust outbreak in South Australia in maybe 40 years.

From September millions of locust eggs laid last autumn in South Australia's Mid North, southern Flinders Ranges and Riverland/Murray Mallee regions are expected to begin hatching.

Locust response teams operating out of Orroroo and Loxton operations bases will have just small 'windows of opportunity' to spray these emerging 'hoppers' before they take to the wing and become an even wider problem.

The State Government is providing \$12.8 million to combat the locusts.

Further information
www.pir.sa.gov.au



Cheesy gland in sheep

Trent Scholz, PIRSA Animal Health Officer

A commercially available vaccine against Caseous Lymphadenitis (CLA) is effective in significantly reducing the incidence of this disease – and landholders could save money if they vaccinate their sheep.

Commonly known as 'cheesy gland' CLA results in the formation of abscesses caused by the bacterium *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis* and recent evidence shows significant numbers of infected sheep arriving to slaughter from across the State, including from pastoral regions.

CLA reduces the quality of the carcass, resulting in up to 50 per cent of all condemnations in abattoirs.

The less obvious impact of the disease is the affect it has on on-farm animal productivity. Wool cut can be reduced in animals with CLA infection.

CLA is most commonly spread between stock at shearing time from cuts and ruptured abscesses. It may also spread by sheep coughing up the bacteria from lung abscesses and infecting other animals.

Several years ago, and through funds contributed by SA sheep farmers



and graziers, the SA Sheep Advisory Group began supporting a program of abattoir monitoring.

Under this program, individual properties submitting sheep direct to slaughter receive feedback about a number of diseases or quality issues (including CLA) found when carcasses are dressed.

For more information on CLA or other animal health issues, contact Trent Scholz 8648 5160 ■



Welcome Nigel Baum

PIRSA Biosecurity Animal Health is pleased to welcome Nigel Baum, their new Veterinary Officer (Disease Surveillance). Nigel will be based at Clare and will work in the pastoral region, the mid to upper north, and the Yorke Peninsula.



Nigel grew up on the family sheep and cropping farm near Auburn. After graduating from Murdoch University, Perth he moved to Albany where for five years he worked predominantly with cattle, horses and sheep. And got rained on. A lot.

Nigel also worked in the UK in mixed practice and spent four months working on the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak. He got rained and snowed on and survived two Yorkshire winters.

On return to Australia in late 2001, he and Anna moved back to SA to run the family farm and he continued to work in both mixed and large animal practice. Most recently he has been working with hyper-immunised sheep as a vet for BTG Australasia at their site near Mintaro. ■



Government
of South Australia

Across the Outback is prepared and edited by Jenny Barker (SAAL NRM Board).

It is published every second month for the Outback SA Government and Community Alliances.

It is currently jointly funded by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources; the Pastoral Board; Primary Industries and Resources SA and the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board.

Comments and suggestions are always welcome.

Please contact jenny.barker@sa.gov.au or 8463 3354



Jenny Barker

New book: *The Cooper's Coming*

Jim Dunn, for 30 years the owner of Kalamurina on the Birdsville Track, has combined his general knowledge with the written history of the Cooper Creek to produce a book of anecdotes and photos just in time to mark this year's flood.

Writing and publishing his book in just a few short months, the book provides an insight into the history of the Cooper, the people who have relied upon it, and the pastoral industry that it supports.

Jim and his wife Joan were pioneers in an area of desolate isolation. They had more than 25 years at Kalamurina Station and saw the Cooper flood a number of times, from 1949-51, in

1955 and then again in 1974, the biggest flood on record.

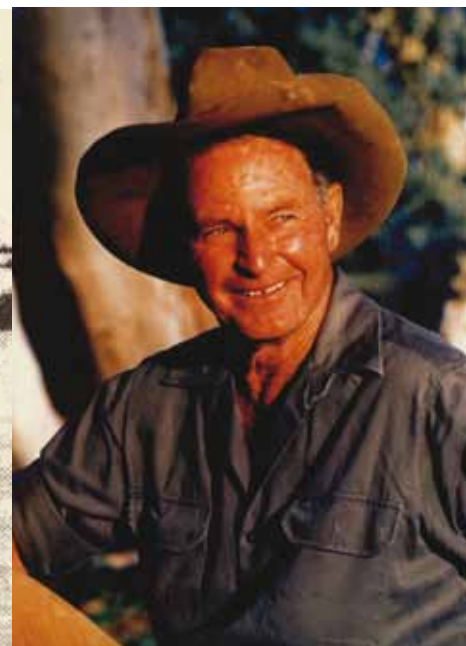
Water – from their four inch annual rainfall or in flooding rivers creeping through the parched sandhills and claypans – always brought immense joy and eased the hardship of survival.

Today Jim and Joan are based in the Adelaide Hills where they're enjoying the euphoria of this phenomenon once again.

Those who have only seen the arid landscapes of our inland will enjoy this portrayal of the Cooper in flood.

The historical text would be a valuable source for teaching the younger generation about an area of Australia which continues to capture our imagination and interest.

The Cooper's Coming is \$30 plus postage and available from the Birdwood Newsagency 8568 5377 ■



FAREWELL MERRI



Long-time readers of *Across The Outback* will be sad to hear that Merri Tothill is leaving the region for the southern pastures of Strathalbyn. Merri will work out of Murray Bridge, still with Rural Solutions SA.

It has been nearly 23 years since Merri started working in the rangelands of SA. She began as a pastoral lease assessment officer with the former Department of Lands, followed by Landcare Officer and a stint leading the PIRSA rangelands team before becoming a consultant with Rural Solutions SA.

Merri says:

'I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the individuals and the collective rangelands community for welcoming me into your lives and literally into your homes. You have helped to make this the best time of my life, enriching my experience and significantly contributing to who I am today.'

Merri will continue her association with the region through attending the Australian Rangeland Society conference in Bourke in September and as a part-time course facilitator with Rangelands Australia.

As current editor of *Across The Outback* I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Merri for her role in the history of this 20-year newsletter. Merri was the editor of *Across the*

Myalls which later merged with the original *Outback* magazine to become *Across the Outback*.

AND ANOTHER SPECIAL MENTION

And speaking of former editors I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Denys Slee and Richard Campbell. Denys wrote and edited the publication from its inception as *Outback* to 2003 when Leith Yelland took over. In the 18 years that Leith and Denys produced the newsletter, Richard undertook the layout, copy-editing and artwork. Both Richard and Denys are now retired. Richard retains his connection with the outback, recently mentoring Roseworthy vet science students on a trip to Moralana Station. ■ **Jenny Barker**