



ACROSS THE

OUTBACK

Celebrating 25 years of *Across The Outback*

Welcome to the first edition of *Across The Outback* for 2015.

This 73rd edition marks 25 years since *Across The Outback* first rolled off the press as *Outback*, published by the then Department of Lands on behalf of the Pastoral Board for the South Australian pastoral industry.

The publication has seen changing covers and faces, and changes to government and departments, but its commitment to keep the SA Arid Lands community informed of government activities which affect them has remained the same.

And it remains the only publication that covers and centres on the SA Arid Lands region.

Across The Outback is mailed to about 1500 subscribers – through email and via snail mail – and while its readership is many and varied, and includes conservation, recreation and tourist groups, its natural resources management focus has meant its core readership remains the region's pastoral community.

Indeed, a 2012 survey of 192 pastoral leases funded by the SA Arid Lands (SAAL) Natural Resources Management (NRM) Board revealed 85 per cent subscribe to *Across The Outback*.

Getting your Arid Lands news online...

Last year the SAAL NRM Board also initiated the region's new Facebook page.

Taking its lead from *Across The Outback*, the Natural Resources SA Arid Lands Facebook page is rapidly positioning itself as the only Facebook page dedicated to supporting the SA Arid Lands community and sharing the many activities and events occurring in the region, as well as relevant news.

The page is about natural resources management in its truest sense – it's about promoting healthy communities and sustainable industries as much as environment and conservation news.

Think community events, tourism news, information about road and park closures, and items for pastoralists on improving their (sustainable) production.

Continued on page 02...

01 BOARD NEWS

02 Kids share what they love about their place

03 Act locally – join your NRM Group

04 Seasonal conditions report

05 LAND MANAGEMENT

05 Commercial camel grazing on pastoral properties

06 THREATENED SPECIES

07 Idnya update

07 ABORIGINAL NRM NEWS

08 WATER MANAGEMENT

08 Sharing knowledge on the Diamantina River Channel Country

09 PEST MANAGEMENT

09 Buffel Grass declared in South Australia

10 NRM GROUP NEWS

12 PLANNING FOR WILD DOGS

14 NATIONAL PARKS

14 A new management plan for Innamincka Regional Reserve

15 ANIMAL HEALTH

16 OUTBACK COMMUNITY



HAVE YOUR SAY...
Commercial camel grazing
on pastoral properties
See page 05



...continued from page 01



Pretty much anything goes. If you're on Facebook and thirsty for more SA Arid Lands news, or would like to share some community news, we encourage you to check out our page www.facebook.com/naturalresourcesaaridlands.

Speaking of those who prefer to receive *Across The Outback* electronically, we (the editors) have long held a desire for improving your electronic experience and we're exploring new alternatives for issuing the newsletter. We hope to bring you further news on that later in the year.

Get in touch...

Across The Outback continues to be compiled by the Natural Resources SA Arid Lands communications team Jenny Barker and Meg Barker (our surnames are a happy coincidence!) with funding from the SAAL NRM Board and using the graphic design services of elevenacross.

Behind the scenes administering the Facebook page, is our Quorn-based consultant Lisa Pearson. You can contact Lisa directly at lisa@pureoutback.com or 0429 352 058.

Between us, we have a long association with this extraordinary region, a huge respect for the history and role of *Across The Outback*, and a desire to build a similar reputation for our Facebook page.

THANK YOU

Over the past decade, publication costs – editing, graphic design, printing and mailout – have largely been borne by the SAAL NRM Board with additional funds from regular contributors the Pastoral Board, Primary Industries and Regions SA, and Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources.

In this 25th year of *Across The Outback*, we acknowledge the past and previous editors and designers of this newsletter – and its precursor *Outback* and *Across The Myalls* – including Leith Yelland, Denys Slee, Richard Campbell and Merri Tohill. And we also recognise the many who contribute their news to this publication.

And finally, we thank all our loyal readers for whom this publication is compiled and for your patience when an edition is delayed – putting this publication together is not without its challenges but the positive feedback that we receive always makes the effort worthwhile.

Jenny Barker, Editor & Meg Barker, Contributing Editor

Kids share what they love about their place

Three lucky kids walked away with an iPad in January after winning a competition that captured the imagination of 70 children who love the SA Arid Lands region.

The multimedia, storytelling competition asked kids to tell the SAAL NRM Board what they loved about the region, in any way they could think of. This resulted in some great and unique entries – videos, posters, photo stories, and even a model grader were all sent in!

William Privett (Kingoonya district) took out the 5-8 year old category, Annie McCarthy (Northern and Yorke region) won the 9-12 year old category, and Elisabeth Pergoieto (Port Augusta) won the 13-17 year old category.

Congratulations to the winners and thanks to all the children who took the time to share what they love about their place; it has added to an amazing collection of values from across the region which is contributing to the Board's *Regional NRM Plan* development.

Keep an eye on *Across The Outback* for more on the collection of your values, what the science is telling us about how our landscapes function and the threats and pressures to those land systems, and how you can help the Board and our six district-based NRM Groups prioritise management actions to ensure a sustainable future.



Left: William Privett – winner of the 5-8 category produced a great video entry. Check it out at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wk0PvV5Qil8

Below: Some of the great entries



NRM BOARD MEETS WITH NRM GROUPS

The SAAL NRM Board held its annual meeting with the Chairs of the district-based NRM Groups in December.

Agenda topics covered during the day included a review of NRM Group achievements during 2014, discussions about future priorities in the NRM districts and membership recruitment.

The NRM Groups play a vital role in "grass roots" level community engagement in NRM," said Janet Brook, Presiding Member, SAAL NRM Board.

"The Board values the contribution of all NRM Groups in the region and will continue to support them as we finalise and deliver on our new *Regional NRM Plan* in the years ahead."



NRM Group members touring a local mine site

NOMINATIONS OPEN

Act locally – join your NRM Group

Applications are now open for membership of the SA Arid Lands (SAAL) Natural Resources Management (NRM) Board's district-based NRM Groups and members of the Arid Lands community with an interest in natural resources management in their area are encouraged to apply.

There are currently six active NRM Groups in the region representing the North Flinders, Marree-Innaminka, Marla-Oodnadatta, Kingoonya, Gawler Ranges and North East Pastoral districts.

Vacancies exist within all of the NRM Groups

"Community members involved at this level are a vital, practical link for the communities they represent, providing a local perspective and ensuring the Board's priorities and investment decisions are locally relevant," said Ms Janet Brook, Presiding Member of the SAAL NRM Board.

"The majority of our NRM Group members live in the district or are involved in natural resources management in the area and may include pastoralists, Aboriginal community members, townfolk, and representatives from mining and tourism industries and conservation groups."

Groups are skills-based with members selected based on their knowledge of areas such as local community affairs, mining and petroleum, tourism, primary production, soil conservation, water resources management, pest animal and weed control, local governance, Aboriginal heritage and business administration.

The Groups provide advice directly to the Board on wide ranging local NRM issues and priorities, including the management of weeds and feral species, industry activities, road conditions and waste management.

"The North Flinders NRM Group, for example, initiated the Biteback program for wild dog control, and have hosted workshops to allow for community input into the development of the SA Arid Lands Wild Dog Management Plan.

"The Marla-Oodnadatta and Kingoonya NRM Groups are both involved in the Ecosystem Management Understanding (EMU)TM project, an informal approach to sustainable land management that combines pastoralist experience with scientific expertise.

"The Marree-Innaminka NRM Group has been involved in improving facilities and infrastructure along the Strzelecki Track and have developed a digital version and App for their successful *Great Tracks* brochure.

"And the Gawler Ranges NRM Group have focussed on maintaining relationships with mining and defence organisations in the region and have developed tourism signage to raise awareness of responsible travel and fragile landscapes.

Meanwhile, the North East Pastoral NRM Group have focussed on developing a District Weed Strategy to identify the spread and control of pest plants in the district."

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST!

To register your interest in becoming an NRM Group member or for further information contact Natural Resources SA Arid Lands or visit www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/aridlands.

Applications close on 10 April 2015.

SAAL NRM Board, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands

Find out what it's like to be an NRM Group member: Glenys Aird shares her story on p. 11



Sharon Bell and her grandchildren enjoying the water in House Creek, Dulkaninna



Seasonal conditions report

Jeffrey Stringer, Pastoral Inspector

Pastoral properties in South Australia experienced a very dry second half of 2014, with very little rain recorded on most properties after April 2014.

In contrast, 2015 began very well with good to excellent rainfall recorded throughout the state on the 9-13 January, excepting properties in the Kingoonya district, along the Dog Fence, where recordings were generally below 20mm. These January rains contained not only enough storms to enable most dams to fill, but also general steady rainfall to provide vegetation response and sufficient stock fodder well into 2015. Many areas reported storm damage to station tracks, fences and dam banks, but generally the response has been one of welcomed rains.

Marree-Innaminka

Rainfall recordings for January ranged from 280mm at Dulkaninna Station, 102mm at Lindon Station and 40mm at Moomba. At the top of the Birdsville Track properties that have been experiencing a very long, unequalled drought recorded excellent rains in January of approximately 80mm, with most dams now full.

Marla-Oodnadatta

The highest January rainfall recording in the far north west was Teyon Station with 135mm. Although 120mm of this event occurred in a single day (9 January), the stock feed benefits will last into the second half of 2015. Generally, recordings in the Oodnadatta district were pleasing with Todmorden Station recording 61mm at the homestead, Macumba Station 115mm and Oodnadatta 43mm. Marla to the west recorded lower falls.

North Flinders

Through the Flinders district January rainfall recordings were good, with Wilpena recording 108mm, Arkaroola 180mm, Beltana Station 48mm and Moolooloo Station 90mm. Although these rains will generate a primarily annual forb response in vegetation, the capture of runoff stock water will be of great benefit.

North East Pastoral & Eastern Districts

January rainfall east of Burra and north toward Cockburn was excellent, with Quondong Station recording 140mm, Mooleulooloo Station 105mm, Cockburn 78mm, Sturt Vale 78mm, Mannahill 70mm, and Boolcoomatta Reserve 52mm. These good rainfalls will both alleviate stock water shortages and produce good resprouting in the chenopod shrublands.

Gawler Ranges & Kingoonya

Most of the sheep properties west of Port Augusta received good January rains, although recordings were very variable. The higher recordings were Mount Eba Station 42mm, Glendambo 32mm, Woomera 89mm, and Andamooka 70mm, but unfortunately some properties recorded only 10-15mm.

Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, Pastoral Board

PASTORAL BOARD AND UNIT CONTACTS

THE PASTORAL BOARD OF SA
Level 1, 1 Richmond Road
KESWICK SA 5035
(GPO Box 1047, Adelaide SA 5001)

GENERAL ENQUIRIES
Phone 8124 4837
Fax 8463 4828
Freecall 1800 678 447

PASTORAL BOARD 2015

MEETING 147
Thursday 30 April, Keswick

MEETING 148
Thursday 18 June, Keswick

UPDATE – PASTORAL BOARD FUTURE

The last edition of *Across The Outback* reported that debate on the Boards and Committees Abolition Bill, particularly the future of the Pastoral Board, was to occur in the House of Assembly (Lower House) of Parliament during March. This debate was delayed and it looks likely a full debate will not occur until May. If the Bill is passed in the Lower House it will then be debated further in the Legislative Council (Upper House). The Pastoral Board will continue with its bi-monthly meetings in April and June 2015. Further updates will be published in *Across the Outback* as more information is received. For additional information contact Chris Turner, Pastoral Unit Leader on 8124 4957 or 0418 812 484.

On behalf of the Pastoral Board, the Natural Resources SA Arid Lands Pastoral Unit has maintained data from significant rainfall events since 1972. This data is obtained using Bureau of Meteorology data, from key pastoral station records and annual stock return data and assists with the monitoring of land condition throughout the South Australian rangelands. A yearly summary of seasonal conditions is also provided in Pastoral Board annual reports. Contact the Pastoral Unit for more information.



HAVE YOUR SAY

Commercial camel grazing on pastoral properties

The SA Arid lands community are encouraged to have their say on draft guidelines for pastoral leaseholders applying to commercially graze camels.

In response to commercial interest, the State Government, led by Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA), have been working towards developing a clear process and criteria for applicants wanting to run camels "behind wire" as a pastoral business enterprise.

The resultant draft guidelines consider the legislative requirements of the *Native Vegetation Act 1991* and the *Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act 1989*.

The guidelines provide information about the requirements of a management plan to form part of the application process.

This management plan will be used to ensure that the commercial grazing of camels does not cause degradation of

rangeland landscapes and that the camels are securely contained to prevent escape into the wild.

Information in the management plans provided by applicants will help the Native Vegetation Council and the Pastoral Board consider applications to graze camels as part of a commercial enterprise on a pastoral lease.

The two month consultation period for the guidelines seeks feedback from key stakeholder groups and the broader community prior to consideration for adoption by the Native Vegetation Council.

Further information

Get a copy of the draft guidelines and a feedback form from www.environment.sa.gov.au/haveyoursay/rangelandscamelgrazing, or contact the Native Vegetation Council. email nvc@sa.gov.au or telephone: 8303 9777

The public consultation period on the draft guidelines closes on 6 May 2015.

The guidelines were developed by PIRSA in collaboration with the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, Native Vegetation Council, SAAL NRM Board and Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara

FREE GRADER WORKSHOPS

APRIL/MAY 2015

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

Are you interested in improving your grader skills, track design and knowledge?

Save yourself time and dollars. Learn how to improve your station roads and tracks and maintain your pastoral country.

The free workshops are open to land managers, contractors and government staff working in the SA Arid Lands region and are currently scheduled for each NRM district in late April/early May 2015.

To register your interest contact Lisa Stevens (Regional Landcare Facilitator) 8648 5300, 0438 720 469 or lisa.stevens@sa.gov.au

Training will be delivered by Alice Springs-based soil conservation expert Col Stanton. Col will demonstrate practical skills in track design and maintenance, drain location and design as well as grading techniques and maintenance.



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

These workshops are delivered by Natural Resources SA Arid Lands on behalf of the SA Arid Lands NRM Board with Australian Government funding.





Magnificent regional snakes

Natural Resources SA Arid Lands staff often encourage residents and visitors to the region to be their eyes and ears and to send in their photos of interesting plants and animals. Native or introduced, your sighting may be a plant or animal not previously recorded in our region or one outside of its known range. Here, *Across The Outback* shares some of the snake sightings people have been reporting over the last few months.

Flinders Ranges National Park

During recent Western Quoll (Idnya) surveying in the Flinders Ranges National Park, volunteers David Peacock and Kelly Rayner were undertaking telemetry near Wangarra Lookout and were alerted to the excited calls of the Grey Shrike Thrush. When Kelly stepped off the path a couple of metres to investigate, she was amazed to see a Carpet Python (*Morelia spilota*) more than two metres in length (see below).



Carpet Python (*Morelia spilota*) in Flinders Ranges National Park

Wintinna Station

The old, 1972 Mack truck that left Wintinna Station on the back of a semi-trailer had a stow-away on board that took free ride to Adelaide, a snake that measured more than one and a half metres in length!

The stow away still remains a bit of a mystery to Digby Giles (Wintinna) who had no knowledge it was actually on board when it left the property and has never seen that type of snake in the area before. "I heard it might have been a Carpet Python and that it is outside the known range for this type of snake, but we can't be 100% certain it was on board went it left the property," Digby said.

It was a bit of a surprise when the truck was being unloaded in Adelaide and it was discovered under the spare tyre. A snake catcher was duly called and the travelling snake has been relocated to a more suitable home.

Near Coober Pedy

Jan Becker, a German exchange student, came across an Inland Taipan (*Oxyuranus microlepidotus*) after visiting the Dog Fence north east of Coober Pedy during his university holidays (see above).

Travelling with friends between Adelaide and Alice Springs, Jan shared his photograph with the online community for identification and was surprised when the message he received back was, "[You are] very lucky to see a wild one of these. Lots of hepers [herpetologists] go out looking for them and don't have any luck at all." Jan's photograph and GPS co-ordinates have resulted in the record being lodged in the South Australian Biological Survey Database. Well done Jan!

Natural Resources SA Arid Lands

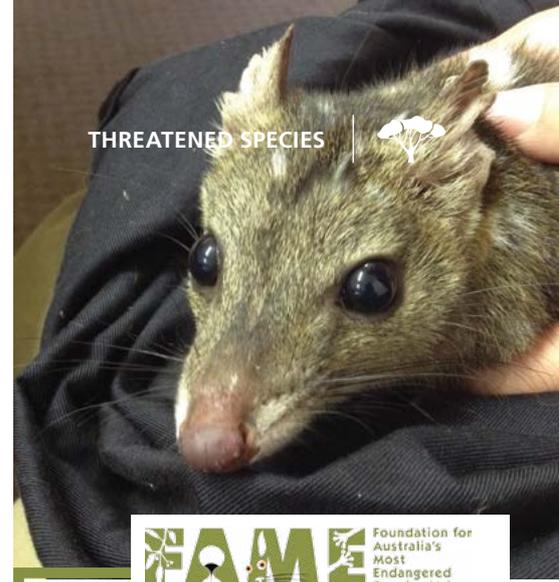
WOMPA? WHAT IS IT?

Share your photos of interesting critters or plants on the online page "WOMPA" where the online community can help identify your sighting and the information you provide can be added to national and international databases.

Created by regional ecologist John Read, WOMPA was created to inspire kids, empower naturalists and inform biologists about the amazing natural history we have in the SA Arid Lands

region. The page takes its name from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara word "wampa", which means "I don't know" or "It's a mystery" and it's the perfect place to post your photo and ask the question, wompa? – what is it? Check out – www.bowerbird.org.au

Alternatively share your sightings with the Natural Resources Centre in Port Augusta SAAridlands@sa.gov.au or phone 8648 5300.



Idnya update

A second release of the Western Quoll (*Idnya*) will occur within the next two or three months after last year's trial release was deemed successful.

The latest *Idnya e-News* reported that the December trapping captured 10 juvenile *Idnya* and recaptured 12 of the original 41 release animals.

A dedicated team of trappers descended on the Wilpena Shearers Quarters to set cage traps at 152 trap sites over eight nights (each trap was trapped for four nights).

Despite the long hours and early mornings, the group was ecstatic to capture the first new sub-adult *Idnya* on the first night of trapping along the Wilcolo Track. In total 10 new sub-adult *Idnya* were captured along with 12 of the original release animals.

Results are encouraging and suggest conditions are suitable for *Idnya* re-establishment in the park. All adult females that were captured had large post-lactating teats suggesting that they had successfully raised young.

Special thanks to Stephen Robinson and Rachel Ladd, interns who worked over the summer to radio-track juvenile *Idnya*.

The Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources and the Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered Species (FAME) thank the many volunteers, contractors, donors, land managers and partners of Bounceback and FAME for their support for this project.

Look out for more news in the next edition of *Across The Outback* or subscribe to *Idnya e-News* for a more detailed email update on the *Idnya's* progress: send an email with the subject "Quoll update" to SAAridlands@sa.gov.au



Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered Species Ltd.

FAME is leading the drive to raise approximately \$1.7 million over a five year period to fund the recovery of the *Idnya*. They greatly need your help to continue this vitally important project and make it the success it deserves to be. Donations to the Western Quoll project can be made by visiting fame.org.au/projects/western-quoll or contact fame@fame.org.au for more information.



NEW PUBLICATIONS

Sharing the stories in Aboriginal NRM

The SA Arid Lands (SAAL) Natural Resources Management (NRM) Board has recently funded a collection of new communications tools to help share the stories of the many activities occurring in Aboriginal natural resources management across the region.

A new publication, *Connected to Country* and two short movies, *Looking for the Bronzeback Legless Lizard* and *Buffel Grass in the SA Arid Lands* are now available to be read, watched and shared.

The Board, guided by its *Aboriginal Partnerships Strategy*, has goals associated with increasing levels of Aboriginal community participation in natural resource management activity, and these communication tools aim to increase awareness, exchange ideas and inspire participation across the region.

Looking for the Bronzeback Legless Lizard is a five minute movie, telling the story of the seven year search for the shy lizard on Mount Willoughby Indigenous Protected Area and the successful contribution the Lennon family have made adding records to the national database.

Buffel Grass in the SA Arid Lands is a 10 minute movie, telling the story of Buffel Grass and the Roxby Downs and Coober Pedy community's efforts to control it.

Visit www.naturalresources.com.au/aridlands to check out these new stories.

The recently released publication, *Connected to Country*, gathers regional stories to share with both Aboriginal communities and the broader community and shines a light on the challenges and successes of looking after country in the SA Arid Lands.

Connected to Country also welcomes contributions from other government and non-government agencies, native title holders and individuals.

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

Visit www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au to subscribe to *Connected to Country* or contact the Aboriginal Partnerships Team, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands 8648 5300 or SAAridlands@sa.gov.au





"I was glad to bring the young ones, to find out the history. I'm happy to find the artefacts and I'm glad the kids came along, as we are getting older and are handing down our responsibilities to them."

Valerie Naylon-Fuschtei



Valerie Naylon-Fuschtei (centre) with her grandchildren, Valerie Fuschtei and Eddie Fuschtei

Sharing knowledge on the Diamantina River Channel Country

Eleven Wangkangurru/Yarluyandi Traditional Owners joined a varied team of ecologists, scientists, historians and botanists in September to follow the path of the Swan Dreaming creation story which takes in part of the Diamantina River.

The field trip was mounted to share information about the human influences on the Diamantina catchment as part of a four-year project that is focussing on both the natural features and human influences on key refuge waterholes and wetlands along the Diamantina River, Warburton and Kallakooopah Creeks in the Marree-Innamincka district of the SA Arid Lands region.

The team travelled with the Traditional Owners from Birdsville to Mungerannie taking in several major waterholes including Koonchera, Goyder Lagoon, Tepamimi, Yammakira, Yelpawaralinna and Lake Kalamurra and many other sites that were significant to the Wangkangurru/Yarluyandi custodians.

The group exchanged knowledge, ideas, and stories and learned from each other while visiting important cultural sites, including various stone arrangements in gibber country.

The Koonchera and Tepamimi Waterholes were notable cultural and historical sites where a number of stone artefacts were identified and the group was able to share knowledge about the Swan Dreaming creation story and the importance of the swan eggs along the journey.

Jimmy Crombie, Don Rowlands, Jean Barr and Valerie Fuschtei were the senior Wangkangurru Yarluyandi participants who have had a long connection on country, and for Valerie it was particularly meaningful to share the knowledge and experience with the younger members of the group.

Luise Hercus, the much respected linguist, joined the trip to contribute the consolidated learnings of more than 40 years of dedicated work with not only the Wangkangurru and Yarluyandi peoples but custodians from the Simpson Desert, around the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks and Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre.

Historian Dick Kimber also contributed his deep and thoughtful knowledge bringing with him more than 40 years experience in central Australia.

The field trip contributed significant information to the SA Arid Lands (SAAL) Natural Resources Management (NRM) Board's Diamantina Channel Country project and to the participants who shared the journey.

Work will continue to engage with Traditional Owners, pastoralists, mining and tourism industries as well as the broader community to exchange knowledge about the Diamantina catchment.

To Traditional Owners, Jimmy Crombie, Don Rowlands, Jean Barr, Valerie Naylon Fuschtei, Eddie Fuschtei, Valerie Fuschtei, Terry Crombie, Nerissa Parsons, Geraldine Monaghan, Jarrod Coulthard and George Reid, our thanks for your contribution to the project.

Thanks to the land managers from Clifton Hills, Cowarie and Kalamurina Stations for their co-operation. Thanks also to Luise Hercus, Dick Kimber, Margaret Friedel, Jake Gillen, Joc Schmiechen, Lynette Rowlands and Rob Nugent.

SAAL NRM Board, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, Australian Government



Participants sharing knowledge at Koonchera Waterhole, Diamantina River

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Henry Mancini, Water Project Officer, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, 8648 5300



Buffel Grass declared in South Australia

Buffel Grass infestation

Land managers in the SA Arid Lands region are advised that Buffel Grass was placed on the declared plant list by Sustainability, Environment and Conservation Minister Ian Hunter in January.

While Buffel Grass is widely utilised in northern Australia as cattle fodder, it is difficult to contain and has spread across a wide range of land types where it is not wanted, causing significant, long-term environmental and social problems. Hence, on balance, it is considered a major weed threat to South Australia.

In South Australia Buffel Grass has become established in a number of localities, and is encroaching southwards from the rangelands.

It establishes easily, grows and matures quickly, produces prolific seeds and has a high seed dispersal ability; it also naturalises in most climates and soil types and quickly forms self-sustaining populations which are tolerant of fire and drought.

These features have made it attractive to pastoralists but have also enabled Buffel Grass to rapidly establish as a weed species and it has the potential to completely change ecosystems by excluding native species and altering fire regimes.

Buffel Grass forms dense monocultures which can foster frequent fires and exclude native plants and animals from growing naturally, and it poses a significant threat to Aboriginal communities through the increased fire risk and reduced availability of native plants and animals for hunting and bush food preparation.

Buffel Grass workshop

A two-day Buffel Grass workshop held in Port Augusta in February brought together land managers, mining companies, conservation groups and Aboriginal community representatives to talk about the best practice identification, control, surveillance and hygiene associated with Buffel Grass.

Prevention and early intervention are important components of Buffel Grass control which can be achieved through vehicle hygiene, ongoing surveillance and early treatment of infestations. With Buffel Grass widespread in the SA Arid Lands region focus will be on keeping the species out of areas with high production or biodiversity values.

Land managers in the SA Arid Lands region who would like further advice on the Buffel Grass declaration should contact the Natural Resources SA Arid Lands Biosecurity team 8648 5300.

Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, Biosecurity SA, SAAL NRM Board

BUFFEL GRASS

Buffel Grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) was one of 24 weeds declared across South Australia by the Minister after a comprehensive review undertaken by Biosecurity SA and weed experts from the state's eight natural resources management regions. Information on Buffel Grass and the other newly declared weeds can be found at: www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecuritysa/nrm_biosecurity/weeds/pest_weed_policies.

Details on herbicides registered for Buffel Grass control can be found in the Weed Control Handbook for Declared Plants in South Australia at: www.pir.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/232382/Weed_Control_July14.pdf

Alternatively, download the free SA Weed Control app from iTunes or Google Play stores.

LEARN MORE ABOUT BUFFEL GRASS

Natural Resources SA Arid Lands has put together a short movie on regional efforts to control Buffel Grass around Coober Pedy and Roxby Downs. Visit www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/aridlands

ABC TV's Landline ran a feature on Buffel Grass in February presenting the different perspectives on the plant including from pastoralists, Aboriginal community members and ecologists.

Visit www.abc.net.au/landline/content/2015/s4172528.htm



Apply for \$\$ to control weeds

Through an initiative of the North East Pastoral NRM Group, land managers across the SA Arid Lands region are being encouraged to tackle weeds on their property with a rebate for the cost of the chemical used in their specific control.

In the last edition of *Across the Outback* we reported on the creation of new, five-year, district specific weed strategies for the North East Pastoral, Marree-Innamincka and Marla-Oodnadatta NRM districts.

The North East Pastoral NRM Group wanted to turn their strategy into action and this great idea has grown to be shared across the whole region.

So now it's time to tackle some of those weeds!

The weed control rebate is a simple process:

1. Submit the Expression of Interest (EOI), listing your target weeds and where you intend to work on them at your place by **Friday May 1**.

2. Natural Resources SA Arid Lands staff will contact you to discuss your EOI and if successful, will confirm the allocation of chemical.

3. Purchase chemical as approved by the confirmation letter

4. Submit invoice and copy of receipt for payment to Natural Resources SA Arid Lands for reimbursement.

Weeds listed in the district weed strategies are the targets of this rebate offer; the Gawler Ranges, North Flinders and Kingoonya district weeds strategy are currently under review so the rebate will target those in the existing strategies.

If you need access to spray units to undertake the work on your property, NRM Groups have several dotted around the region that may be suitable (see below).

Further information
For further information, to get a copy of your district weed strategy, or to submit your EOI form contact **Paul Hodges, Biosecurity Team, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands 8648 5300, paul.hodges@sa.gov.au**

SAAL NRM Board, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, Australian Government National Landcare Program

WATCH OUT FOR WEEDS

Good summer rains bring on a surge of growth in the region and this growth includes weeds! The weeds listed below can be sprayed now as part of your weed management plan.

SPECIES	NOTE
African Boxthorn	When actively growing after rain
African Rue	When actively growing
Athel Pine	Juveniles only
Bathurst Burr	When actively growing after rain
Buffel Grass	When actively growing after rain
Cacti species	When actively growing
Caltrop	When actively growing
Khaki Weed	When actively growing
Mesquite	Juveniles only
Noogoora Burr	When actively growing after rain
Parkinsonia	Juveniles only

REGIONAL WEED SPRAY UNITS

Several of the NRM Groups have purchased spray units and hose reels for use by land managers and communities in the region.

DISTRICT	SPRAY UNIT	CONTACT
Kingoonya	600 litre spray unit mounted on a trailer	Bon Bon Station. Mike Chuk and Julia Harris. Telephone: 8672 8932
Gawler Ranges	400 litre slip on spray unit	Yardea Station. Sandy Morris. Telephone: 8648 1880
Marla-Oodnadatta	400 litre, slip on, engine driven spray unit with a 30 metre hose reel	Janet Walton, Coober Pedy. Telephone: 8672 3648 or mobile 0408 807 498
North East Pastoral	500 litre, slip on, engine driven spray unit with a 50 metre hose reel	Glen Norris. Boolcoomatta Station. Telephone: 8091 1613





The North Flinders NRM Group:
Stony Steiner, Glenys Aird,
Keith Slade, Ian Ferguson, Ivan
McKenzie, Leonard Nutt and
Natural Resources SA Arid Lands
staff, Louise Gavin and Tanya
McKenzie

A wide web of connections

With nominations open for NRM Group membership, Glenys Aird from Beltana shares with us some of her insights and successes during her five years with the North Flinders NRM Group.

Before I joined the NRM Group in 2010, my perception was that it was dominated by pastoralists, prompting me to think that I might provide a different perspective to some of the issues. As it turned out, my perception was not entirely accurate!

The North Flinders NRM Group has men and women members from a variety of backgrounds.

Some are pastoralists, others have conservation blocks, some are ecologists and others, like myself, are community members from the district.

Really, I am just an old chook and have reached the stage of life where I am able to see multiple points of view as valid, yet, I have the confidence to pursue my own interests in natural resource management. Being a part of this Group has given me the chance to pursue those interests.

I enjoy the meetings where different personalities, opinions and perspectives are all canvassed and respected. Our Chair, Keith Slade from Moolooloo Station, gives everyone a chance to share their opinions, and at the end of the discussion I feel as if the Group actually achieves positive and practical outcomes and is not just a talk fest.

The Group are actively working to encourage all land managers in the north Flinders to work with their neighbours and wider community to look after their country.

Sometimes this means extra fencing, sometimes it means putting out fox and wild dog baits together; often it is about calling people to let them know of sightings of wild dogs or feral goat mobs.

That is to me, the wide web of connections working together in really practical and meaningful ways.

The North Flinders NRM Group have held workshops over the past few years to increase our collective understanding of plant identification, bait making, alternate sheep breeds, carbon farming, pest plants, the Pastoral Act and the Idnya (Western Quoll) reintroduction to the Flinders Ranges.

The Group has recently been working to develop our priorities in a Strategic Plan which we have started working towards achieving.

We are always interested in ideas and issues anyone in the district has about natural resource management and members of the community are welcome at all meetings.

The Group will continue to hold workshops and information sessions and have guest speakers as part of their meetings to raise the level of awareness about natural resources matters.

I would recommend you get involved in your local NRM Group.

**JOIN YOUR LOCAL
 NRM GROUP**
 See p. 03 to find out how

SAVE THE DATE REGIONAL WEED WORKSHOP – BOOLCOOMATTA STATION

The North East Pastoral NRM Group invite land managers to attend a regional weeds workshop to share information about how best to manage weeds such as African Boxthorn, Cactus, Noogoora Burr, Pepper Tree and Buffel Grass.

When: Wednesday 20 May 2015

Time: 10am-4pm

Enquiries and RSVP to Paul Hodges, Biosecurity Team, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, Telephone: 8648 5300 Mobile: 0417 738 498, Email: paul.hodges.sa.gov.au



Planning for wild dogs

The South Australian Wild Dog Advisory Group (SAWDAG) presented its draft *SA Wild Dog Strategic Plan* to about 60 participants at a Wild Dog Stakeholder Forum held in Port Augusta in February.

Bringing together representatives of pastoral, conservation, Aboriginal and government perspectives the forum was an opportunity for attendees to comment on this statewide plan which provides for a cooperative approach to wild dog management by government, industry and community across South Australia over 2014-18.

The forum enabled the participants and the 10 presenters to discuss all things wild dog – including new control initiatives, aerial baiting, the Dog Fence, state policy and the national situation.

Chair Geoff Power said the *SA Wild Dog Strategic Plan* was the mechanism by which South Australia delivers its contributions to achieving the Wool Producers Australia-led *National Wild Dog Action Plan* which was launched in July 2014.

An update on the implementation of the national plan was provided by Wool Producers Australia's Michele Jackson.

The forum also saw the launch of the SAAL NRM Board's *SA Arid Lands Wild Dog Management Plan*, an important document for the Board, land managers

and government staff in conducting wild dog management throughout the SA Arid Lands region to 2017.

Attendees were pleased with progress since the December 2013 forum which first gave rise to the South Australian Wild Dog Advisory Group (SAWDAG) with a range of measures introduced to step up wild dog control, particularly in the SA Arid Lands region.

Many of the initiatives had arisen out of the improved communication and coordination provided by the establishment of SAWDAG and the release of a national plan last year.

Greg Patrick (Natural Resources SA Arid Lands) reported increased investment by the SAAL NRM Board with funds released to employ a new wild dog officer, and Drought Assistance funds to contract a professional trapper, subsidise baits, and contribute provide for trapper training workshops inside the Dog Fence (see p. 13).

Peter Bird (Biosecurity SA) provided an overview of the March/April aerial baiting where 96 properties have been ear-marked for 10,000 kilometres of baited flight path with funding provided by the SA

Sheep Industry Fund and Australian Wool Innovation.

With aerial baiting generally limited to inaccessible areas, the land managers present were strongly urged to participate in the Biteback ground baiting program to keep the pressure on to remove wild dogs from inside (south of) the Dog Fence.

Comments closed on 27 February on the draft *SA Wild Dog Strategic Plan* – available here www.environment.sa.gov.au/haveyoursay/wild-dog-strategic-plan. Responses will be collated for final consideration by SAWDAG and the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation..

Copies of the *SAAL Wild Dog Management Plan* can be downloaded here www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/aridlands while additional information is available from the Natural Resources Centre in Port Augusta 8648 5300.

SA Wild Dog Advisory Group, Biosecurity SA, SAAL NRM Board, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, Australian Wool Innovation, Sheep Industry Fund



Wild dog management assistance available

A range of measures to step up wild dog control in the region are available to land managers both inside (south of) and outside (north of) the Dog Fence.

Professional dog trapper

Professional dog trapper, Brian Gill, is available to assist dog control inside the Fence. Availability and timing permitting, he can be allocated to a property for up to two weeks. Currently Brian has been booked by seven properties in the Kingoonya, Gawler and North Flinders districts. He is self-sufficient (including traps, camp equipment, food, etc.) but requires accommodation during his stay. To find out about having Brian visit your property contact the Wild Dog Management team.

Volunteer shooters available

Properties outside the Fence that are experiencing impacts from excessive dog numbers can now register to have qualified volunteer shooters from the Sporting Shooters Association of South Australia (Hunting & Conservation Branch) and the Australian Deer Association to undertake dog control. Register your interest with the Wild Dog Management team and the volunteers will contact you direct to determine a suitable time before commencing wild dog control on your property and at no cost.

Trapping workshops

The Wild Dog Management team is seeking expressions of interest from land managers for two trapping workshops planned for mid-late May at locations to be determined. Contact the Wild Dog Management team for further detail.

Subsidised manufactured baits

Half price manufactured baits are available to properties across the region. Contact the Wild Dog Management team for details on how to purchase them.

Local Area Planning workshops

The latest round of Local Area Planning workshops have now been completed in the North Flinders and Marree districts with workshops in Leigh Creek, Marree, and Hawker. Two more workshops will be held in the North East Pastoral district in March and May. Similar workshops will be conducted in the Gawler Ranges and

Kingoonya districts throughout the 2015/16 financial year.

Workshops allow land managers to discuss wild dog control efforts in their area, review existing local area plans, determine the minimum control efforts for their group members, standardise bait preparation techniques, and establish reporting requirements for dog control inside the Dog Fence.

Land managers are strongly encouraged to attend.

LOCAL AREA PLANNING GROUPS

There are currently 22 Local Area Planning Groups (LAPs) established inside the Dog Fence and nine established outside the Fence. These groups enable a coordinated approach to wild dog control through group baiting programs at specific times of the year (spring and autumn). Groups inside the Fence work together to develop Local Area Plans to facilitate the creation of minimum dog control standards for their group and to ensure a standardised approach to wild dog control.

Get your meat injected

Land managers inside the Fence can attend a bait injection service in the following districts:

- **North Flinders/Marree: 23-27 March**
- **North East Pastoral: 13-15 April**
- **Kingoonya/Gawler Ranges: 27 April-1 May**

Invites and locations will be mailed by post at least four weeks before each week of injection services.

These baits are then distributed by land managers on their properties, or are semi-dried and frozen in one of 14 communal freezers in operation throughout the region for distribution during the year.

CHANGES TO OUR WILD DOG MANAGEMENT TEAM

With the completion of the region's wild dog plan, Heather Miller has taken on a new position providing oversight over the region's six district-based NRM Groups by leading the region's NRM Officers, as well as managing the Aboriginal partnerships, volunteer and education programs.

Wild Dog Project Officer Chris Havelberg was joined by Emma Spaeth in January. Emma will work with Chris on the Biteback program and work will continue outside the Fence to deliver the annual bait injection service and as required. Emma is from a sheep, cattle and cropping farm in Wilmington, and completed a Bachelor of Animal Science at Roseworthy in November. She will be working on the ground with landholders at injection services and liaising with landholders to develop local area plans to manage wild dogs.

CONTACT US

For access to wild dog management services contact Chris (chris.havelberg@sa.gov.au, 0458 566 536), Emma (emma.spaeth@sa.gov.au, 0419 835 120) or the Natural Resources Centre 8648 5300.

Map your dog sightings

To help determine where the biggest impacts are occurring and where control efforts should be focussed, land managers are asked to continue mapping dog sightings and control measures on their properties.

Maps will be provided at the autumn and spring injection services, or mailed to properties if they are unable to attend. The same maps will then be sent to pastoral properties with stock returns and mailed directly to perpetual lease properties in June. All maps should be returned in the supplied self-addressed envelope by 31 January each year to ensure allow for data collation. Contact the Wild Dog Management team if you need a new map.

SAAL NRM Board, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, Livestock SA, State and Australian Government drought assistance funding



Paul Wainwright

HAVE YOUR SAY

A new management plan for Innamincka Regional Reserve

Planning is now underway for the development of a new management plan for the Innamincka Regional Reserve and community members are encouraged to join in the conversation and help contribute to setting the course for the Reserve’s management for the next 10 years.

In accordance with the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*, the new plan will reflect developments and changes within the reserve, together with the aspirations of the Yandruwandha and Yawarrawarrka Traditional Owners and the broader community and stakeholders.

The Innamincka Township and Malkumba-Coongie Lakes National Park are within the boundary of the Reserve which protects the boom and bust ecology of the Cooper Creek, its waterholes, floodplains, dunefields and gibber plains. In addition to the conservation of the Reserve’s natural

and cultural heritage, pastoralism, mining and traditional Aboriginal land uses also occur within it.

There will be several opportunities to participate in the planning process, from the current phase of initial contributions, to consultation on the preparation of the draft plan to the final consultation phase, the three month public consultation on the draft plan.

Further Information contact:

Justine Smith, Policy & Planning Officer – Innamincka, DEWNR
Telephone: 8124 4802 or DEWNRProtectedAreaManagement@sa.gov.au

Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, Yandruwandha Yawarrawarrka Parks Advisory Committee, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands

GET INVOLVED FRIENDS OF VULKATHUNHA-GAMMON RANGES NATIONAL PARK

Have you ever thought about joining a Friends of Parks group? Does the Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park hold a special place in your heart? This could be the volunteering experience you were looking for....

Following a generous bequest to the defunct Friends of Gammon Ranges National Park, a renewed vision for a

collaboration with the Park staff and volunteers has gained momentum and the group are looking for volunteers.

Graeme Oats, Treasurer and instigator of the group’s re-forming says “the new Friends of Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park is in a great position to undertake some exciting and meaningful projects within the park thanks to the start-up funds from

the bequest. Volunteers often have some great ideas but no money to see them come to life. Fortunately, we do and we want to spend the funds wisely,” he says.

To register your interest contact Graeme via email gdoats@bigpond.net.au



NLIS TRANSFERS

Ensure you complete the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) transfers for cattle or sheep coming onto the property you are responsible for. If you are receiving the cattle, you are responsible for ensuring that the transfer is uploaded to the national NLIS database. Even if you rely on a third party (agent, saleyard etc) to complete the transfer it pays to check your NLIS database account to ensure the transfer has been done correctly.

Don't have an NLIS database account? They are free, and easy to obtain. Go to www.nlis.com.au for more information.

ARE YOU BRINGING MORE THAN LIVESTOCK ONTO YOUR PROPERTY?

When bringing livestock onto your property make sure you aren't bringing any hidden surprises along with you. You may be bringing in more than you bargained for. Introduced animals can be a source of weeds (in dung/hair/fleece), diseases and parasites (internal and external).

You can minimise your risk of nasty introductions by knowing the disease risk of the animals you are introducing. Source animals from areas or properties of low disease and weed risk and quarantine livestock, allowing weeds to be shed in a confined area and allow the incubation period for a disease of concern to pass without signs of the disease.

Restocking cattle back to your property?

There are several important things land managers will need to consider when restocking cattle back onto properties as a result of the rains in the north of the SA Arid Lands region earlier in the year.

Cattle needs to be *Beef Only* certified, have a Market Assurance Program (MAP) certificate or be otherwise compliant with the requirements of the national cattle health statement.

Most of the northern pastoral region is in the protected zone for Bovine Johne's disease (BJD).

This means that stock brought into the region will generally have to meet the requirements of the *Beef Only* category.

Beef Only is a herd category to help assure cattle buyers about the very low risk of BJD in beef herds that have had no contact with dairy cattle.

The beef cattle industry and state animal health authorities have agreed that cattle from herds that qualify as *Beef Only* represent a low risk of BJD.

They also agreed that herds that qualify as *Beef Only* can trade into BJD Protected Zones of the Northern Territory, Queensland and South Australia without herds having to be tested.

When land managers are restocking they need to insist that all cattle are accompanied by a MAP certificate, or are *Beef Only* certified in a National Cattle

Health Statement or otherwise meet the requirements of the national cattle health statement.

This includes cattle coming back from agistment. This will allow land managers to trade these cattle to other BJD protected zones in Australia.

All cattle movements from interstate must be accompanied by a national cattle health statement.

Copies of the National Cattle Health Statement which contains the *Beef Only* declaration can be found at www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecuritysa/animalhealth

REMEMBER – BIOSECURITY MATTERS!

Further information

Contact Trent Scholz,
PIRSA Animal Health Officer,
Biosecurity SA
0427 970 453, 8648 5166 or
trent.scholz@sa.gov.au



Volunteers help restore historic Balcanoona Woolshed

Last April we brought you news of the restoration of an old wool press at Witchelina Nature Reserve. This April *Across The Outback* reports on another impressive effort to restore a woolshed in the Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park with assistance from the Campground Host program. Peter and Heather Hastings graciously share their experience here.

Heather and I have been using national parks all our lives – keen to give something back during retirement we became campground hosts in 2012 and have since hosted at Mount Remarkable National Park in South Australia’s mid-north, Flinders Chase National Park on Kangaroo Island, and several times at both Witjira National Park in the far north and Lincoln National Park on Eyre Peninsula.

It was against this backdrop that we undertook a three week stint at the Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park in October – our first time in the park for many years and our first as campground hosts.

With our visit a week or so after school holidays and temperatures hovering around 44 degrees, visitor numbers were not very high, and park rangers Lindsay Brown and Sian Johnson kept us well supplied with icy water. They also asked if we could help with some maintenance work around the Park.

After fixing up picnic benches, removing old fire pits, cleaning up campgrounds, and painting various buildings, in the last week of our stay we assisted in restoring the historic Balcanoona Woolshed.

Part of the woolshed restoration was to help rebuild the wool press which, best we can establish, is a 1950s Humble and Sons press made in Geelong.

We guess this as the termites did not leave very much of the original wood – the only bits remaining were some of the outer painting from the original wood in green with grey printing and that seemed to match photos that we found on the internet.

The press has now been restored with the top and bottom press boxes rebuilt and put in place.

These have been reconstructed using native pine and as many of the original fittings that were available.

At this stage the press will be a display item only as we are missing the second pulley to operate the downward press.

If you know where a replacement can be found, Lindsay and Sian would be happy to hear from you as they have the original press handle which is still in good condition and just awaiting a pulley to work with.

The restoration of the woolshed will continue, including pens, holding yards and shearers stand and we are sure that we will be involved when next we return to the Park.

Further information
Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park
8648 4829

ACROSS THE OUTBACK

Across the Outback is prepared and edited by the Communications team, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, a division of the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources.

It is currently jointly funded by the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board; Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources; the Pastoral Board; and Biosecurity SA (a division of Primary Industries and Regions SA).

Comments and suggestions are always welcome.

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



Government of South Australia

Content for the June edition due COB Monday 18 May 2015



The wool press

WHO ARE CAMPGROUND HOSTS?

Campground hosts are volunteers who enjoy the natural environment and are interested in promoting its conservation by assisting rangers with park and visitor management in South Australia’s national parks and reserves.

Hosts are often the first point of contact for visitors to a park with their main role to meet and greet campers and help them to settle in and enjoy their park experience leaving rangers to undertake their other many and

varied duties.

Campground hosts are stationed in national park campsites throughout the year but they are often in demand during school holidays and long weekends.

Interested in becoming a campground host? Contact the Volunteer Support Unit 8124 4841 or the Natural Resources Centre in Port Augusta 8648 5300.