

# Western Division newsletter

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Sept/Oct 06

Produced for landholders in  
the Western Division of NSW



## 2 million trees to be planted in central NSW

by Leanne Anderson, CO2 Australia

CO2 Australia, an Australian owned company creating carbon credits, will this month embark on a mission to plant over 2 million trees across central NSW.

While volunteers across Australia planted thousands of seedlings for National Tree Day on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July, CO2 Australia is this month, about to embark on a tree planting mission of a different kind.

CO2 Australia has commenced planting more than 2 million trees in the NSW wheat belt in the Nyngan, Condobolin, Merriwagga, West Wyalong and Tottenham districts.

These mallee belt plantings form part of CO2 Australia's single purpose carbon sequestration program, aimed at reducing the impact of greenhouse gas emissions.

Last year, CO2 Australia planted more than 1.4 million seedlings in central NSW farming country.

After an extensive site analysis and preparation process which has been taking place over recent months, everything is in order for planting to proceed. Cultivation and weed control are just some of the activities undertaken in readiness for planting.

CO2 Australia General Manager, Operations, Aaron Soanes, said there has

been increasing interest in the tree planting program from producers right across NSW.

'We are working closely with cooperating landowners and one of the main objectives of our business is to integrate our unique tree planting program into their existing farming systems.'

'These environmental tree plantings will have huge benefits for these properties into the future, including wind break protection, livestock shelter, potential increases in crop productivity, reducing erosion risk, enhanced biodiversity and much more.'

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Australia  
Limited

## FREE TREE PLANTINGS

**CO2 Australia is seeking expressions of interest from landholders in NSW who wish to establish tree plantings as part of an innovative program.**

- Long-term environmental and agricultural benefits
- Landholder receives \$/ha payment
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**For more information, contact Mark Ritchie  
or Leanne Anderson on (02) 6921 2949  
or visit [www.co2australia.com.au](http://www.co2australia.com.au)**

by Sally Ware  
Rangelands Officer  
NSW DPI, Hay

## Landholder experiences

We know from the recent survey that readers of the WDN would like to see 'hands on' articles about what other landholders are doing and the management strategies they employ on their properties. To this end, the next edition will feature a Western Division landholder who has made a change, overcome the difficulties associated with the change and is now happy to share his experiences with others.

If you are a landholder who has made management changes on your property that you think would interest other landholders, would you please let me know or just go ahead and submit an article. We would be very pleased to hear from you.

## Address details

Readers of the newsletter also stated they wished to continue to receive a hard copy of the newsletter in the mail rather than switch to

electronic delivery. In order to continue to deliver the newsletter by this means we are giving the mailing list a complete overhaul to ensure copies of the newsletter are not being wasted and money is not lost through postage. This process has already started but now we need some help from the readers!

If you are receiving more than one copy of the newsletter at your homestead or office or if your mailing address needs changing, please let us know by completing the form below and faxing or posting it back or sending an email.

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DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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# Champion of the West retires

by Jacki Roberts, DEC, Dubbo

After forty years serving the public of NSW, National Parks and Wildlife Service Director Western Terry Korn is hanging up his tie, but definitely not his boots and binoculars.

Terry started with the public service as a NSW Agriculture Beef Cattle Officer Trainee at Hawkesbury Ag College in 1965. From there he went to Tamworth, Orange and cattle stations north of Cloncurry before running the beef cattle section at Tocal Ag College from 1969.

After stints as beef cattle officer in Albury and Deniliquin where he experimented with ways to reduce cattle bruising through using smooth crates, he moved onto feral animal control.

Arriving in Dubbo in 1979, for what was supposed to be a five year stint as a Technical Adviser for noxious and feral animals, Terry began a twenty year career in this field.

He was the research extension person with the North West Pilot Feral Pig Control Scheme involving coordination with 13 RLPBs and finished his career with NSW Agriculture in 1998 as Program Leader Vertebrate Pest Management.

Terry lists his highlights during this time as managing the introduction of RHD (rabbit calicivirus) into NSW, consolidating best practice for 1080 use in NSW, starting the Feral Animal Aerial Shooter Training program, moving into more cooperative group control programs and establishing the Australasian Wildlife Management Society.

Since June 1998, Terry has been a champion of the unique landscapes of the west of the state for the National Parks and Wildlife Service. In this time he has been at the helm during unprecedented growth in national parks in western NSW. He was instrumental in the creation of the Yanga and Paroo-Darling National Parks,



extensions to Mungo and Gundabooka National Park as well as the Lednapper and Narran Lakes Nature Reserves.

Among Terry's proudest achievements during his time with NPWS is his work with Aboriginal people. Terry was a passionate advocate of co-management of national parks – where parks are jointly managed with their traditional owners and played a pivotal role in the handback of Mt Grenfell Historic Site to the Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan people. He worked for three years to resolve the sensitive cultural issues surrounding Lake Victoria.

NSW Minister for the Environment Bob Debus said Terry's commitment to the landscapes, flora and fauna of western NSW was unsurpassed.

'He saw the need to preserve tracts of land under represented in the reserve system and inspired many people with his enthusiasm and vision,' he said.

Terry has no firm plans to take up his time in retirement, but is hoping to visit lots of the western national parks as a tourist, taking his beloved binoculars for some serious birdwatching.

Terry and Carol Korn cut Terry's retirement cake at a farewell function attended by more than 100 of Terry's friends from his NSW Agriculture and National Parks days.

'2 million trees to be planted in central NSW'  
continued from page 1

'We are very excited that we can work with farmers to establish the mallee plantings within their farming operations and the design, layout and final location of the belts across the property is done with the input, advice and approval of the landowner', Mr Soanes said.

The innovative world first CO2 Australia carbon credit program is now in its second year of operation. The CO2 Australia Carbon Sequestration program was recently announced as a finalist in the 2006 Banksia Environmentalist Award. This award recognises outstanding achievement in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

Landholders participating in the program receive an upfront financial payment on a per hectare basis and costs associated with the program, including site preparation, tree establishment and future monitoring costs are paid for by CO2 Australia.

CO2 Australia is currently seeking expressions of interests from landholders



across NSW who wish to be involved in this unique program to establish trees on their property. Ideally, suitable land for the program is between 300–600 mm rainfall per annum; has sandy textured soils; was cleared prior to 31 December 1989; is not heavily treed and contains at least 600 hectares of arable land.

Landholders interested in the CO2 Australia mallee tree planting program can contact Mark Ritchie of CO2 Australia on (02) 6921 2949.

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## Update on Exceptional Circumstances

by Danny Byrnes  
Drought Support Worker,  
NSW DPI, Hay

Farmers are reminded that at this stage, Exceptional Circumstances or 'EC' is due to finish, for most of the Western Division, at the end of November 2006. Preliminary dates are being set for tours by the National Rural Advisory Council (NRAC) for early September. On these tours, NRAC will take submissions from farmers and get a first hand view of the different areas. They will recommend to the Minister as to whether EC should be extended. If EC is not extended, the assistance available in the form of the interest rate subsidy from the Rural Assistance Authority (RAA) and also the assistance available from Centrelink through the Drought Relief Payment will no longer be available after November 30.

Farmers need to be aware that each round of assistance through the RAA requires a new application, i.e. they may need to re-apply after June 30 and in this current round the application needs to be in by November 30. A small grace period is allowed by the RAA.

Another type of assistance will become available through Centrelink called Farm Help when EC finishes. For any enquiries please contact your local Drought Support Worker: Danny Byrnes on 0428 973 141 or Lyn Leigo on 0427 265 810.

# Legal Road Network Project

by Rex Miller & Jason Brouff  
Legal Roads Network Project Team,  
DNR Far West Region, Dubbo  
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As discussed in the last issue, one of the tasks of the Legal Road Network Project is to provide legal access to landlocked properties by the dedication of public roads and/or the provision of easements. As part of the ongoing consultation process a number of questions have been raised, and a list of 'frequently asked questions' about roads and easements is being compiled. The list so far is included for your information.

## **Frequently asked questions about the dedication of public roads**

*What roads will be dedicated as public roads?*

Only roads currently maintained by shire councils or the RTA will be affected.

*Who authorises the dedication?*

The Minister has the power to dedicate land that, in the Minister's opinion, is being used by the public as a road.

*What will happen when a road within my property is proposed to be dedicated as a public road?*

Initially you will be notified in correspondence from the Department of Natural Resources of the impending withdrawal. The affected area of road will be identified on a plan and withdrawn from your lease. On withdrawal your lease area will be amended and the annual rent reduced accordingly.

*Does having frontage to a public road mean that it is the only way I can get onto and off my property?*

No. The road will be a defined legal access but it will not prevent private arrangements being made between neighbours to utilise alternative access routes.

*How wide will the road casements be?*

Road casement widths will be 100 m for highways and 60 m for shire roads.

*Will existing fencing be affected?*

Fencing of roads will not be mandatory. Existing fences will not be required to be moved to the new road boundaries. Any new fencing will be required to reflect the new road widths.

*What is the benefit of having the road dedicated as a public road?*

A dedicated public road will define the route of legal access and allow for the removal of the lease condition that refers to the use of tracks by any person. This will limit access and provide greater security in the management of the property as well as providing surety of access to the general public.

*What effect will a dedication have on the application of the various Roads Transport Acts and other potential liability issues?*

Many statutory and common law duties, including provisions under the NSW Roads Transport legislation and negligence, depend on the existence of a 'road', irrespective of whether it is dedicated as a public road. Also, mandatory third party insurance policies insure drivers for harm caused whilst driving anywhere in NSW, not just public roads. Any landholder who requires further information about potential liability issues should seek their own independent legal advice.

*Who will maintain the road?*

Maintenance will remain the responsibility of shire councils, and the RTA in the Unincorporated Area.

*Who can use a public road?*

Any member of the public provided other roads legislation is complied with. For instance, a vehicle must be registered under the *Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance)*

Act 1942, and various heavy vehicle and dimension restraints will apply to driving on public roads.

*Can I move stock along a public road?*

Yes, but authorisation must be given by the relevant shire council and the local Rural Lands Protection Board.

### **Frequently asked questions about the creation of easements**

*What lands may be affected by easements?*

Under this project only lands held under Western Lands Lease will be subject to the creation of easements for access.

*Will every property get an easement?*

No. It is intended that only those properties that do not have frontage to a public road will be provided with an easement.

*How many easements will I be provided?*

The policy of one legal access per property was adopted in line with access policy in the rest of the state. The charter of the Legal Road Network project is to ensure each property has at least one legal access. Multiple easements to all properties would make the project unworkable in terms of timeframes and budgetary constraints.

*What if my particular circumstances require more than one easement?*

If a landholder believes the provided access is not sufficient they may make a written representation to the Western Lands Commissioner outlining their circumstances and it will be assessed on a case by case basis.

*What is a benefiting and burdened party?*

A benefiting party is the landholder or person who gains the use of the easement to access or cross over another person's property. A burdened party is the landholder across whose property the easement traverses.

*What will happen when an easement crosses over my property?*

If a proposed easement crosses your property you will be informed by the Department of Natural Resources and in due course be contacted by the landholder who will benefit from the easement to obtain your agreement to the easement, including the location and lodgement of an application.

*Who applies for the easement?*

The burdened landholder signs the application to create the easement.

*Does having an easement mean that it is the only way I can get onto and off my property?*

No. The easement provides a defined legal access but it will not prevent private arrangements being made between neighbours to utilise alternative access routes.

*How wide will the easement be?*

Easements will be 20 m wide, however affected parties may negotiate an alternative width.

*What is the benefit of having an easement?*

An easement will formalise legal rights for a clear route of access across a property. With such rights in place, it will then be possible to remove the lease condition that authorises the use of tracks by any person. Access rights are thereby clarified, which gives greater security to the management of the property.

*What effect will an easement have on public liability?*

A landholder normally holds a duty of care towards entrants and users of land to protect against dangers arising from the condition of the premises which are not apparent and are not avoided by the exercise of ordinary care. Each situation will have its own unique set of circumstances. The duty is the duty to take reasonable care, not a duty to prevent any and all reasonably foreseeable injuries. Any landholder who requires further information about public liability should seek their own independent legal advice.

*Who will maintain the easement?*

Normally, the benefiting landholder is responsible for maintaining and repairing the easement area and the burdened landholder must keep it free of obstructions. However these duties can be a matter for negotiation between the benefited and burdened parties.

*Who can use an easement?*

Only the benefiting party or parties and their invited guests

*Can I move stock along an easement?*

Yes, by vehicle but otherwise not without the consent of the burdened landholder.

We expect many more questions and will add items to the list progressively.

# Changes in Department of Natural Resources

by Peter Walker, Acting Western Lands Commissioner

The Department of Natural Resources has been undergoing a major restructure in recent months, which has seen the removal of Regional Director positions, the creation of a stand-alone Western Lands Commissioner position and the retirement of several well known Western Division officers.

Staff in the country throughout the state now report through to Executive Directors, of Landscapes and Catchment Management Authority Support, Water Management, Licensing and Compliance, and Science and Information. This will allow savings in clusters of management for relatively small numbers of staff, and clearer prioritisation of work areas across the state.

The Western Lands Commissioner position has been advertised (and hopefully filled by the time you read this) and will be based in the west (most likely Dubbo at the time of writing). All administrative, assessment and compliance staff working on Western Lands matters in the Western Division will remain responsible to the Commissioner, and carry out compliance work associated with the Native Vegetation, Water, and Water Management Acts by arrangement with the Licensing and Compliance Director.

Geoff Wise has very much appreciated the support that has been shown for him before and since he left his position in early July.

Rangeland Management Officers Peter Spencer (Condobolin and formerly Bourke) and Eric McCormick (Broken Hill) along with veteran water officer Alan Amos (Bourke) have retired, along with Tom Kealy (who worked on cultivation consents and was the expert on the Maximum Allowable Area Policy for clearing and

cultivation), and Corinne Smith (known to many as Geoff's personal assistant).

All these people and several other staff who have left will be badly missed.

As well, I have recently accepted the position of Regional Manager, Central Region in the Department of Lands; responsible for Crown Lands administration and management in the northern and central parts of the Central Division. I leave with very mixed feelings and will miss the Western Division, its people and its staff, and will take away many fond memories developed over many years. All the best for the future.

## Emergency household payment from DOCS

People may be eligible for cash grants of up to \$2000. This includes farm and non-farm households who are financially disadvantaged by the drought. Bills such as telephone, electricity, school fees, domestic water will be paid. Farm bills are not paid.

DOCS prefer that you go through a Rural Financial Counsellor or Drought Support Worker

Contact DOCS on 1800 018 444 or at [www.community.nsw.gov.au/drought/drought.htm](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/drought/drought.htm)

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# Western Lands news

by Peter Walker, Acting Western Lands Commissioner

## **Invasive native scrub**

I attended a forum in Broken Hill in June on management and legislation for invasive native scrub (INS). The INS Working Group was in attendance to hear the views of landholders and Catchment Management Authorities, and have since been reviewing the rules and policies to apply.

I believe there is clear recognition of the range of problems caused by INS, and for the need for practical control measures.

My department has put into place an arrangement with the CMAs that operate in the Western Division to provide information, compliance status, and owner's consent (on behalf of the Crown) for Property Vegetation Plans, and has developed a simple cultivation consent form for granting approval for cultivation on grazing leases following approval of PVPs for INS clearing, in those cases where periodic cultivation to control regrowth is allowed. These consents will be issued for the cultivation associated with each of the allowed number of crops to be sown, and will not attract an application fee.

## **Boundary fencing**

Following widespread concern about required standards of boundary fencing to contain the newer breeds of livestock, we have been investigating the adequacy of the Western Lands Act and the Dividing Fences Act to administer standards.

At this stage it is likely that we will recommend amendment of the Western Lands Act to empower the Commissioner to require upgrading of fences by the landholder who wishes to run the 'new' stock which need better fences.

## **Carbon sequestration rights**

We are recommending amendment of the Western Lands Act to empower the Minister and Commissioner to grant carbon sequestration rights to organisations authorised to issue carbon credits. This would enable the establishment of tree plantations (most likely mallees) to absorb carbon dioxide, on Western Lands Leases where the land was cleared before 1990 and where the leaseholder has agreed. This would provide economic benefits to the leaseholder and environmental benefits.

## **Noxious weed control**

The Department is part of two major noxious weed projects underway in the Western Division: the Defeating the Weeds Menace project addressing mesquite and parkinsonia (coordinated by the Lower Murray Darling CMA), centred around Broken Hill, and the Hudson Pear project (coordinated by the Department of Primary Industries and the Castlereagh Macquarie Weeds Council), centred on Lightning Ridge.

Both projects are cooperative, covering some of the costs of control, but the provisions of the Noxious Weeds Act will still be used if and where the cooperative approach fails.

The Department is also carrying out noxious weeds control on Crown lands and along some road reserves in the Unincorporated Area.

## **Conversion of agriculture leases**

Holders of agriculture leases can apply to the department to convert these leases to freehold. A procedure has been established for the assessment. Market value of the land (unimproved) is payable, and we have to take into account roads, stock routes, and access to reserves and other properties that may overlie the lease(s) before converting. Where these situations do occur the time taken will be extended.

## **Drought and photo points**

Many of the photo points that have been established on leases in the past are now showing lots of bare ground and little vegetation. This is a good time to take photographs to chart the differences that occur over the seasons, or to put in new sites to follow the recovery.

Rangeland Management Officers can help establish sites, and there is an information sheet available.

## **Rents waived**

As readers would be aware, rent for rural Western Lands Leases has been waived for 2006–07 by the NSW government, in recognition of the consequences of the serious drought conditions we have been experiencing. Rent notices have been sent out advising this and calling up any arrears that are still outstanding.

# The seasonal outlook via 'Betting on Rain'

by Paul Carberry, Climate Advisory Officer, NSW DPI, Tamworth

Anyone who has a copy of the booklet *Betting on Rain* can get a seasonal outlook of pasture growth for locations in the NSW Western Division.

Just check the current phase of the SOI at the web address given at the bottom of page 38 and you will find that despite the June number being -6.7 and the July number being -7.4, the phase is actually 'Consistently near zero'. You need to check these as the boundaries between phases are not always where you might think.

Having found the current SOI phase, look up August in the table on page 39 for an August, September, October outlook. It will direct you to look at Figure 20 on the bottom of page 50. Figure 20 shows that most of the Western Division of NSW has a 30–40 % chance of exceeding median pasture growth over spring. This implies a 60–70 % chance of below median growth.

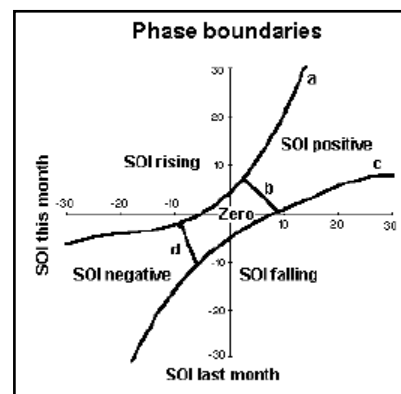
There is no guarantee that the season will provide below median growth but this is a 2:1 chance. Once you know what the odds are you can put this alongside your current circumstances and decide how

you are going to handle the serious risk that these odds represent. Landholders wishing to discuss this seasonal outlook are welcome to call me on telephone number (02) 6763 1132.

## Defining SOI phases

The five phases of the SOI were established by Dr Roger Stone using a technique called principal component analysis, to group all sequential 2-month pairs of the SOI (from 1882 to 1991) into five clusters. The boundaries between clusters, or phases, were defined by Dr J.F. Clewett by plotting the distribution of the clusters, and by using regression techniques.

These techniques put all the most similar combinations into the same phase, with an absolute minimum of errors but sometimes they are not where you might suspect they would be. The current combination from June and July are near the bottom left corner of the 'Consistently near zero' cluster but are still within the grouping.



*Betting on rain* is now available at the following locations;

DPI offices - Trangie Agricultural Research Centre, Walgett, Coonamble, Nyngan, Condobolin, Warren, Cobar, Hay, Deniliquin, Dareton, Broken Hill, Bourke, Tamworth  
RLPB offices - Hillston, Wentworth, Balranald, Cobar, Milparinka, Wilcannia, Nyngan  
CMA offices - Cobar, Buronga.

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**BETTING ON RAIN**  
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The graphic features a background of clouds and a windmill. A booklet titled 'BETTING ON RAIN' is shown in the foreground.

# Letter to the editor

**MADAM:** I am writing to comment on the item in the May/June 2006 Newsletter on the Kallara Total Grazing Pressure Trial.

Justin and Julie McClure, Trudie Atkinson and Ian Toole should be congratulated on setting up a practical trial of sufficient size to be relevant to Western Division property management.

I believe the really important discovery of this trial is that to attempt to exclude kangaroos from moving into paddocks to reduce total grazing pressure with electric or any other form of fencing is just not economically feasible over large areas.

To manage pastures and the environment to achieve better vegetation cover and diversity, kangaroo numbers simply have to be generally reduced and more aggressively managed to protect areas being conservatively stocked or spelled from over grazing by the highly mobile kangaroo flock.

It must be recognised that provision of stock water at close proximity to pasture and improved pasture management has created a far more favourable environment for kangaroos than we had prior to settlement. They are a very efficient breeder with the capacity to eat feed out whether other animals are in the paddock or not. They must be recognised as a major pest animal just as rabbits can be. The Kallara trial illustrated there is no easy way they can be kept out.

Kangaroo products both meat and skins are valuable. There just needs to be more taken to provide more income and less restriction. I happen to be old enough to remember when kangaroo numbers were properly controlled before National Parks over regulated. Then it was possible to allow pasture density to build up in a paddock without stock.

The Kangaroo Management Program only allows a quota of 15% or 17% of estimated population to be taken each year and adds so many other limitations that even that quota is never reached.

Let us all campaign for a real Kangaroo Management Program where numbers taken out can equal natural increase and in dry years are taken back to match pasture availability like we do to prudently manage our domestic stock.

**Frank Brown**, Mema, Cobar NSW 2835  
20 July 2006

## The reply

**DEAR FRANK:** DEC's kangaroo population estimates have never been more accurate, following improvements to our survey methodology about 5 years ago. These estimates show that kangaroo densities are very low and have been for 3–4 years (due to the ongoing drought and the kangaroo industry taking most of the available quota).

The Kangaroo Management framework has been reviewed and refined since the 1970s. While commercial quotas ensure long-

term ecological sustainability, there is no evidence that the provisions of the program have limited the industry capacity to take kangaroos.

From the early 1970s to the end of the 1980s the kangaroo harvest in NSW averaged slightly less than 350 000 annually. In the 11 years starting 1990 the annual average harvest was in excess of 900 000.

Industry demand is currently high and the prices being paid by the industry have never been higher. Actual harvest rates have reached as high as 95% of the annual quota over the last ten years, and are expected to be high for several years. However, the proportion of the approved quota the industry actually takes depends on the availability of markets.

The Kangaroo Management Program is currently under review. Submissions received during the exhibition of the draft plan are being analysed and will result in a finalised draft being submitted to the Commonwealth for approval. This plan will set the direction and boundaries for the commercial kangaroo harvest for the period 2007–11.

**Nicole Payne**  
Kangaroo Management Plan, DEC

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# Updated Regional Weed Strategy now available

For the past 2 years, landholders have used the *Regional Weed Strategy for the Lower Murray Darling Catchment*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition.

Now landholders can access the updated 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of this user friendly and practical publication commissioned by the Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority (LMD CMA).

‘This easy to use tool outlined the prioritisation process that has allowed landholders to determine which weed to treat first for best effect’ said Mr Mark King, Chair of LMD CMA.

‘Over the past two years, landholders have commenced implementing the Regional Weed Strategy and benefiting from the natural resource outcomes. It has now become necessary to update the

information in this 2004 Strategy to better reflect the current scenarios and options’.

‘The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Regional Weed Strategy has now been completed and available to those in the Catchment who are interested in being able to combat weeds on their lands. The new edition complements the Australian Government’s National Weed Strategy which is a co-operative approach to reducing the impact of weeds on the sustainability of Australia’s productive capacity and natural ecosystems.’

The LMD Regional Weed Strategy was funded by The Natural Heritage Trust.

‘Weeds are an important issue that we all need to get behind. People/landholders will again find the updated Regional Weed Strategy a valuable tool in our fight against weeds.’

Copies of the Regional Weed Strategy are available from your local government office, RLPB and DNR.

Call the LMD CMA Buronga office on (03) 5021 9460 for a copy.

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## ‘Our Catchment, Our Future’ – Landcare Forum a huge success!

by Melinda Fletcher, Community Support Officer, Western CMA

The town of White Cliffs was abuzz on June 7, with 130 people from all over the Western Catchment in town for the Western Catchment Landcare Forum, hosted by the Barrier Area Rangecare Group (BARG).

It was such a success that all participants agreed to hold another in the next two years!

Despite the prolonged drought, the atmosphere was very positive and people were very interested in the speakers and the field trips.

Alastair McRobert, Chair of the Western Landcare Steering Committee, welcomed participants and announced the latest round of National Landcare Program (NLP) Funding which was open until July 28.

Five guest speakers covered a wide variety of subject areas.

Angus Atkinson summarised the best and fairest of the WEST 2000 Plus program. Angus also reviewed the Enterprise Based Conservation (EBC) pilot project, which



Members of the Barrier Area Rangecare Group

saw ten landholders receive ongoing payments for meeting specific conservation targets.

He introduced Heidi Doyle, a Western Catchment Management Authority staff member, who will establish and administer a similar program being made available to landholders throughout the Western Division.

Peter Ampt of the FATE program explained the details behind a new pilot project to harvest kangaroos and his interest in issuing kangaroo tags to groups, such as the Barrier Area Rangecare Group, rather than



L-R: John Dalton (NSW State Landcare Coordinator), Kim Cullen and Mark O'Connor (BARG members), and Juliet Dalton registering.

to individual properties to ensure kangaroo management is effective on a larger scale with a more flexible approach.

Other speakers included Peter Jessop of NSW DPI, who reiterated the principles of good pasture management, David Hardwick from Australian Certified Organics, who said that organic production was increasing astronomically, and Colin Clare from Limestone Station, who spoke about his family's journey into enterprise diversification.

Participants then broke for a well-earned lunch before heading off on one of three activities: touring the Peery Section of Paroo-Darling National Park, a town tour of White Cliffs or taking part in a Monitoring and Evaluation workshop at the town common.

Despite significant mental and physical drain, participants then met to talk about future directions for Landcare. It was generally agreed that being involved in Landcare and participating in a Landcare group was a great way of sharing information, networking and working together to submit joint project applications.

Support for Landcare groups was generally good and anyone interested in re-activating or forming a new group could contact their local Western CMA office for assistance.

In addition to the official speakers, there were also two excellent displays from the Kergunyah and Buckwaroon Landcare Groups, from the Cobar area, who showcased their Landcare works and native plants and areas of their area, as well as some stunning quilts.

Some of the other posters displayed information on the Rangelands Assessment Program (RAP), project activities of the Barrier Area Rangecare Group (BARG), Rural Fire Services, Native Vegetation Legislation, National Landcare Program, Department of Primary Industries and the Western Catchment Management Authority's photographic competition and the competition to send five landholders to the Australian Rangelands Society Conference.

An auction of beautiful, locally-made quilts was held, with James Gardiner of Cobar successfully bidding for his choice of the three quilts. His donation of \$650 was made to the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

At the end of the day, most people enjoyed the chance to catch up with friends. The forum was the first of its type to be held in far-western NSW in many years and it was great to see such enthusiasm and interest, despite tough climatic conditions.

Many thanks to all who attended the Landcare Forum and to the White Cliffs community for their generous (and delicious) hospitality!

Anyone who would like particular information about what was presented during the day can contact Melinda Fletcher at the Broken Hill office of the Western CMA on (08) 8082 5206 or email at [Melinda.Fletcher@cma.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Melinda.Fletcher@cma.nsw.gov.au).

# First Western CMA Scholarship awarded

by Daryl Green, General Manager, Western CMA

The Russel Harland Memorial Scholarship offered by the Western Catchment Management Authority (CMA) has been awarded to Applied Science student, Matthew Goulton.

In accordance with his scholarship conditions, Matthew undertook his first assignment of paid work for the Western CMA during the July university holidays, working under the guidance of staff in Cobar.

Matthew is currently completing a Bachelor of Applied Science, majoring in Parks and Recreation Heritage at Charles Sturt University's Albury-Wodonga Campus.

Competition for the Scholarship was very strong with nine students from five universities applying.

Matthew is a very worthy recipient of the scholarship, displaying a strong academic, personal and professional commitment to natural resource management and he will be a welcome addition to the Western Catchment community.

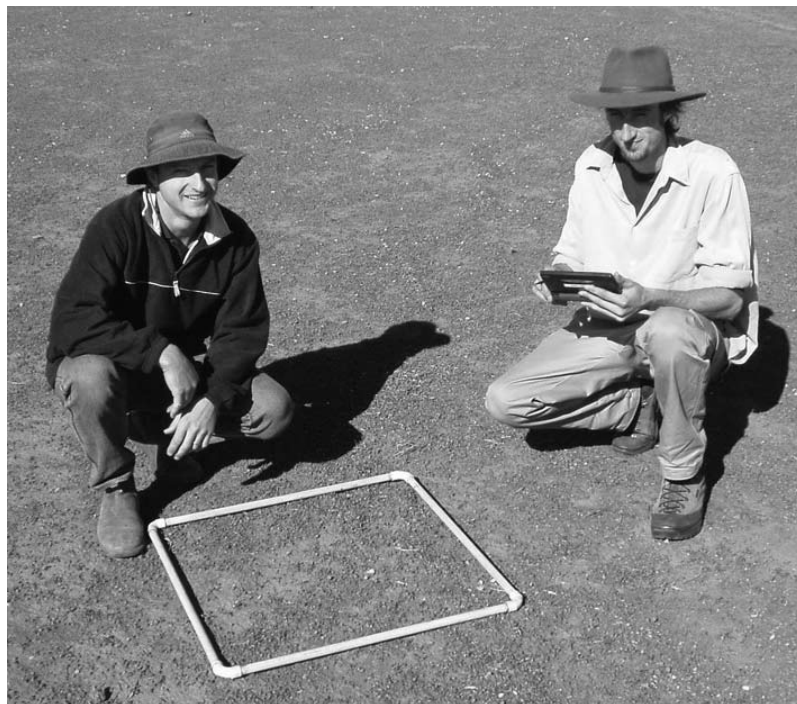
This scholarship is the first to be offered by a CMA.

It is also the first year the scholarship has been conducted, so it's a new initiative in many respects.

This is just one, very practical, way in which the Western CMA is investing in the future of the Catchment.

Matthew was raised in the rural town of Conondale in Queensland and since leaving school has undertaken a number of natural resource related positions, including native landscape gardening and bush-regeneration.

Now in the second year of his degree, he works part-time with Parks Victoria as a



moss bed regeneration supervisor in the Alpine National Park.

Under the terms of the scholarship, he will receive \$5000 per year for the final two years of his three-year degree. He will complete at least four weeks paid work for the Western CMA each year.

Once he has completed his studies, he will be contracted to work with the Western CMA for at least one year, at a location to be negotiated.

The scholarship is named in memory of Russel Harland, a stalwart of natural resources management in the Western Catchment, who passed away suddenly at the age of 44 in November, 2002.

The Russel Harland Memorial Scholarship will be awarded each year to a university student from NSW who displays strong personal, community and educational commitment to rural or regional areas and particularly the Western Catchment.

Applications for next year's Scholarship will be advertised early in 2007.

Western CMA staff member Paul Theakston and Matthew Goulton inspecting a Rangeland Assessment Program site near Cobar.

# Pests prioritised for Western Catchment

by Rory Treweeke, Chair of the Western CMA

Foxes and Invasive Native Scrub have been identified as Western Catchment public enemies one and two, according to a report commissioned by the Western Catchment Management Authority.

The report, *Natural Heritage Trust Priority Pest Report for the Western Catchment* identifies priority animal and weed pests and makes recommendations for their management.

Control of pest animals and weeds is essential in managing the natural resources of the Western Catchment for sustainable production and conservation of biodiversity.

This report will guide the allocation of future incentive funding to target the most damaging pests in the most effective manner.

It is an important step towards meeting the management target for pest management, which is for no increase in the number of species or extent of pest weeds or animals above current levels and a reduction in impact of pest species.

The Western CMA commissioned NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) to produce the report.

It was developed with significant input from land managers throughout the Catchment, including workshops held in Cobar, Broken Hill, Brewarrina and Lightning Ridge and a telephone survey of landholders in the Wanaaring area.

Landholders consider foxes to be the key animal pest in the Catchment, and to a lesser extent, wild and domestic dogs, feral pigs and crows.

Weed pests were prioritised as Invasive Native Scrub, Mesquite in the Broken Hill area and Hudson Pear in the Lightning Ridge area. Other priority weeds include

Noogoora Burr, Bathurst Burr and Horehound.

Although drought is an ideal time to control pests as their numbers are relatively low and concentrated in confined areas, the report recognises that landholders currently have few resources to conduct extensive pest and weed management.

In general, the report recommends improved coordination with other CMAs, Rural Lands Protection Boards, Shires, NSW DPI and National Parks to formulate strategies for specific pests, replicate successful programs across the Catchment and encourage people to take advantage of existing funding opportunities.

The Western CMA acknowledges the importance of pest management and has allocated \$490 000 from the current year of the Investment Strategy for the strategic management of pest animals and high-impact weeds.

This complements activities carried out by landholders' who are legally responsible for managing noxious pests.

In 2005, the Western CMA awarded \$383 000 to land managers for pest management. This included works to control feral goats on 1000 km<sup>2</sup>, control of Hudson Pear on 20 000 ha around Lightning Ridge and Mesquite control on eleven properties in the Broken Hill, Milparinka and Wilcannia areas totalling 540 km<sup>2</sup>.

Copies of the report and a summary sheet are available at [www.western.cma.nsw.gov.au/Publications/PriorityPestReport.pdf](http://www.western.cma.nsw.gov.au/Publications/PriorityPestReport.pdf)

# 200 000 hectares of new wildlife refuges in west

by Jacki Roberts, DEC, Dubbo

An additional 200 000 hectares of the Western Division of NSW has been voluntarily protected, with seven private landholders formally declaring their lands as wildlife refuges.

Minister for the Environment Bob Debus said 60 000 hectares would be set aside solely for conservation, providing vital habitat for an array of threatened species, including an endangered ecological community.

‘Wildlife refuges are an important part of the conservation ‘big picture’. Private landowners can play a significant role in adding to the scope and diversity of habitat under protection.

‘These particular properties offer a range of ecosystems and protect many fauna species including the threatened little pied bat, malleefowl, pink cockatoo and southern ningau (a mouse-sized marsupial carnivore) as well as uncommon animals like the jewelled gecko and short-beaked echidna.

‘One wildlife refuge has the endangered ecological community *Acacia Ioderi* Shrublands, while another has a number of historic tin mine sites. Several properties contain Aboriginal cultural heritage values, while another has features of the ancient Willandra Lakes system – so the diversity on these seven properties is really special.

‘The wildlife refuge scheme enables a statutory long-term commitment to be made by farmers to remove stock or take other action to protect areas containing important plant and animal species.

‘The properties were identified as part of the WEST 2000 Plus Enterprise Based Conservation Program, which provided funding to landholders for managing areas of high conservation value. The properties are all western lands leases and

the Commissioner of Western Lands has supported their gazettal as wildlife refuges,’ Mr Debus said.

Landholder Gary Neyland whose property Mandelman north west of Balranald will include 22 500 hectares for conservation, said he had always considered the environmental impacts of all work undertaken.

‘We really feel privileged when we see, particularly the more unusual wildlife species about the place.

‘We have always been aware of an obligation to look after them and make sure they have habitat.

‘Now that surveys have been undertaken and we know what’s there, entering into a wildlife refuge agreement was a natural progression,’ he said.

The properties also include: Churinga, near Wilcannia; Bokhara Plains, near Brewarrina; Sturts Meadow, near Broken Hill; Myrnong, near Wanaaring and Corella East, near Bourke.

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## Enterprise Based Conservation funding – coming soon

by Heidi Doyle, Catchment Officer, Enterprise Based Conservation, Western CMA

Work has commenced to secure funds and establish guidelines to allow landholders throughout the Western Division to apply for funding to undertake conservation-based activities on their property. The aim is to provide the long-term processes required for conservation to be recognised as a competitive enterprise. The Enterprise Based Conservation (EBC) program will build on the success of the WEST 2000 Plus pilot project, which involved ten properties throughout the Western Division.

Opportunities will be available to all landholders in the Western Division (regardless of which catchment they reside within).

The Western CMA has been instrumental in the development of innovative future funding concepts. Support from the NSW and Australian Governments at this stage is limited by some legal issues so there will be delays while alternative mechanisms are established.

The EBC program objective is to ensure land of ecologically high value is conserved, contributing towards meeting CMA’s targets for land managed under conservation.

Once guidelines and funding is determined, expressions of interest from landholders will be sought. The recent changes imposed on the EBC program means this will probably be in late 2006.

Meanwhile interested people should contact Heidi Doyle at the Western CMA on (02) 6836 1575.

# First Property Vegetation Plans for Western Catchment

by Karen Kneipp, Catchment Coordinator PVPs, Western CMA

The Western Catchment Management Authority (CMA) signed off three negotiated Property Vegetation Plans (PVP) during July, the first for the Western Catchment.

The first was an Invasive Native Scrub (INS) PVP for 27 630 hectares on a property near Ivanhoe, followed by 12 770 hectares on a property near Bourke and 15 090 hectares on a property near Cobar.

These three landholders now have agreements with 15-year clearing provisions allowing for essential management of invasive native scrub, which is a major environmental threat throughout the catchment.

Due to the removal of regular fires and the introduction of grazing, invasive native scrub now dominates much of the landscape, replacing areas that were traditionally open native pasture country.

The Native Vegetation Act recognises that managing invasive native scrub is essential to restoring balance in the landscape and will protect biodiversity and result in improved water, vegetation and soil health.

Property Vegetation Plans, developed under the Native Vegetation Act, are voluntary agreements negotiated between landholders and the CMA.

Landholders who wish to thin or clear invasive native scrub are advised to contact their local CMA office to discuss the preparation of a PVP or Development Application.

PVPs are legally binding agreements between the landholder and the NSW Government that last for up to 15 years for clearing. This gives people greater certainty and allows for better business planning.

Although these PVPs cover relatively large areas of land, they reflect the size of properties in Western NSW and the need



Invasive native scrub contributes to soil erosion in the Cobar area.

for flexibility to maximise the effectiveness of treating invasive native scrub.

The landholders can take advantage of climatic opportunities and seasonal conditions, so that in good seasons burning can be used, while in dry years chemical or direct mechanical treatment would be more effective.

While this recognises landholders' ability to manage the problem, they must adhere to agreed management conditions.

In addition, considerable incentives are available for people wanting to manage invasive native scrub and undertake other management actions that result in improved native vegetation.

At least \$2.8 million per year has been identified by the Western CMA to assist landholders to improve native vegetation health and sustainability through PVPs.

As well as funds available through the Annual Major Funding Round, a further \$889 000 is available during 2006 through the Native Vegetation Management Improvement fund.

A series of fact sheets including ones of invasive native scrub and native vegetation in the Western Division are available at [www.nativevegetation.nsw.gov.au](http://www.nativevegetation.nsw.gov.au)

People wanting more information on invasive native scrub and native vegetation management are encouraged to contact their local CMA office or ring freecall 1800 032 101.

# 'Toora' Total Grazing Pressure Trial

by Rex and Joy Andrews, Peter Jessop and Anthony Baird

Toora Station (8410 ha), owned by Rex and Joy Andrews is situated approximately 50 km north of Wentworth on the Greater Darling Anabran. Sheep are the main livestock but cattle are opportunistically run in good seasons.

The aim of this trial is to compare the effects of continuous (set) stocking and time control grazing on pasture growth and composition in a semi-arid environment.

The trial began in 2001 and consists of three paddocks totalling 1361 ha containing undulating grasslands of mainly spear grass and forbs with clumps of belah, rosewood and scattered bluebush. Two of the paddocks are time control grazed and the other is set stocked. Approximately 30% of the set stocked paddock was cropped in 1981 but has subsequently returned to spear grass.

Within each paddock there are two sets of grazed and ungrazed monitoring sites (exclosures) from which twice yearly measurements of ground cover, botanical composition, pasture biomass and pasture utilisation were recorded until 2006 when data collection changed to once yearly.

All paddocks are stocked so that each year they receive the same number of Animal Unit Days per hectare (AUD/ha) based on the grazeable area of the paddock. Generally pasture growth over the trial period has been poor due to dry seasonal conditions meaning that stocking rates have been reduced proportionally across the trial paddocks.

Statistical analysis of the data to the end of 2005 showed that there was no significant difference in botanical composition between the grazed areas or between the ungrazed areas of all three paddocks. Not surprisingly, there were significant differences in biomass production between



Rex and Joy Andrews

the ungrazed and grazed areas of each paddock.

Botanical composition outcomes from the trial so far have been inconclusive due in part to ongoing drought and the relatively long time required for significant perennial vegetation changes to occur in semi-arid environments. Interestingly though, anecdotal observations from 2006 indicate that there is now slightly more plant diversity in the set stocked paddock compared with the time controlled paddocks.

## **Rex Andrews's anecdotal observations from the trial so far:**

The trial has highlighted the difficulty of managing time control grazing in dry years when expected rainfall and vegetation growth does not occur. Limited rainfall can also amplify the impact on desirable plant species of any wrong stocking decisions.

In the time controlled paddocks that were rested for six months, high kangaroo numbers ate a large proportion of the pasture, especially the grasses.

While there may be greater plant diversity in the set stocked paddock at the moment, there appear to be more sub-shrubs such as ruby saltbush in the time controlled paddocks. In the long term I believe the time controlled paddock will contain more perennial grasses but we have not had the right seasons for their establishment yet. Resting paddocks, in the growing period, for extended periods can be detrimental to animal production because the pasture produces seed earlier than it would otherwise, resulting in a less dense stand with a low nutritional value. However,

if grazing continues you can run the risk of misjudging when the growing season finishes without allowing the pasture to complete its growth.

In one of the control grazed paddocks weeds contrary to many reports has proved to be a highly productive stock feed when grazed from germination to early seeding. At this growth stage it is often the preferred pasture plant allowing other pasture plants to compete. If not heavily stocked at this growth stage weeds totally takes over and becomes unproductive.

## Cannonball and goathead: Good feed or undesirable weeds

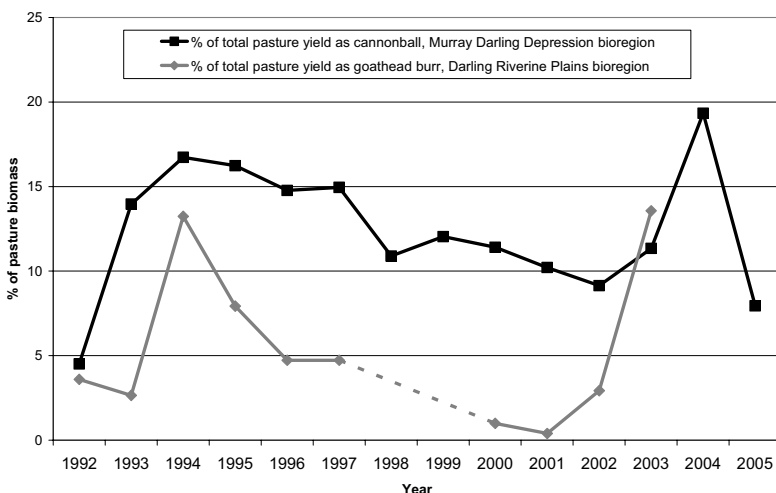
by Russell Grant, Coordinator, Rangeland Assessment Program, DNR, Condobolin

In the July / August edition of the Western Division Newsletter, Alf Withers of Springwood, Wentworth, brought up the issue of useful plants being described as 'undesirable' in rangeland monitoring reports. In his case, cannonball (*Dissocarpus paradoxa*) is the plant in question. Around Walgett, a similar issue exists with goathead burr (*Sclerolaena bicornis*). Both species are persistent under grazing and provide good levels of protein often when other feed values are poor. They also provide groundcover in critical times.

Science-based rangeland publications generally do label these as undesirable species. It has been widely recorded both in New South Wales and other states that they act as colonisers, establishing well in areas that have been disturbed or with a history of heavy grazing where pasture composition has deteriorated. This is why they are tagged as such in the Rangeland Assessment Program database. However it is also recognised that they have acceptable feed value and may be readily grazed by stock.

Rangelands are more often complex than simple and every plant has its time and place. Goathead, cannonball and similar species do respond well to certain seasonal circumstances and have a home on some soil types. For example, I have seen a species closely related to goathead burr (in this case *S.cornishiana*) growing prolifically on certain areas of never-grazed country in central Australia over periods of several years. The long-term ecological history of areas can also affect pasture plant distribution, but this information is often lost to human memory.

The following graph shows the average yield of cannonball and goathead as a percentage of total pasture yield recorded from Rangeland Assessment Program sites where these species occur. The cannonball data is from 123 sites in the Murray Darling Depression bioregion (Wentworth-Ivanhoe area). The goathead data is from 28 sites in the Darling Riverine Plains bioregion (Walgett-Bourke-Nyngan area). Measurements are taken each year in autumn. Clearly under certain seasonal conditions, goathead or cannonball can comprise a significant component of pastures.



# World's biggest sheep competition goes international

by Fiona Wragge, Committee Member,  
Peppin-Shaw Ewe Flock Competition

The biggest sheep judging competition in the world has taken on an international flavour.

Next year, South African Merino stalwart Andries Pienaar will join South Australian David Kellock to tackle the difficult task of picking the best line of young ewes in the Peppin-Shaw Ewe Flock Competition.

Mr Pienaar is renowned internationally for his knowledge of sheep and his presence is a real coup for the organising committee.

Peppin-Shaw president Greg Rogers said it was not the first time the competition had attracted an international judge, but it was many years since someone had travelled overseas to adjudicate.

'We have been extremely lucky to be able to attract some fantastic judges for the Peppin-Shaw over the years and this is not only valuable for the participants but the visitors as well,' Mr Rogers said.

'Those who come to the Peppin-Shaw have the opportunity over two days to talk with some of the world's best Merino industry experts and that is so valuable.'

Mr Pienaar is heavily involved with the Merino industry in South Africa, running the Klipplaatsfontein Merino stud at Colesberg.

And in an interesting twist, the stud was established with 30 ewes and one ram imported from Australia in 1907.

The stud promotes itself as producing a Mega Merino – a sheep which makes the highest sustainable net profit per hectare under all feeding levels.

It has also performed well in competitions, and has won the most prize money and awards of any Merino stud in the world, according to its website.

Mr Pienaar will share judging honours with David Kellock, who founded the Kelvale Poll Merino stud in 1966.

Mr Kellock founded the stud on South Australian bloodlines and states that he is still aiming to breed big, plain, productive and profitable dual purpose Merinos with constitutions for most areas of Australia.

The 2007 Peppin-Shaw ewe flock competition will be held on February 13 and 14 and sheep producers are encouraged to put aside these days.

'We always have a fantastic competition but it will be extra special next year and it gives producers a rare chance to talk with some of the world's best Merino breeders,' Mr Rogers said.

For more information, please contact Greg or Helen Rogers on (02) 6993 8151 or 0429 938 151.

## Action committee formed

Balranald Shire Council Mayor Cr Allan Purtill said 'The follow-up meeting attracted 50 people most of who had been to the Organic Livestock Conference in June. A key outcome of the meeting has been the formation of a committee from a broad cross section of meeting and conference participants.

'I am pleased to report that the meeting accepted Garry Hannigan as Chairman. I understand Garry, a 2005 winner of a Nuffield Farming Scholarship for his "best practice" organic farming enterprise, is currently on an overseas research tour funded through his Scholarship.

'I can also report the election of Vice Chairman David Jackson of Menindee; Secretary Trevor Ablett, Ranger with the Balranald-Wentworth RLPB; and Treasurer Hank van Apeldoorn, Manager of Economic Development with Balranald Shire Council.' Cr Purtill said.

In addition 11 Committee Members were elected, and include landholders in various stages of the certification process and stock agents. The Committee's geographical spread will ensure good regional representation for all areas of the Western Division.

Cr Purtill was aware 'A lot of information was brought forward at the meeting and the new committee has a lot of work to do prior to its next meeting, they will certainly be an "action committee".'

The next meeting of the committee is scheduled to be held in Ivanhoe on 22 August 2006. Other interested parties who were not able to attend the 3 July meeting but wish to attend forthcoming committee meetings should contact Trevor Ablett on 0427 200 820, or the Information Co-ordinator, Margot Fowler via email at [margot.organics@bigpond.com](mailto:margot.organics@bigpond.com).'

# The Trangie QPLU\$ selection lines:

## Improvements in fleece weight and fibre diameter after ten rounds of selection

by Sue Mortimer, Livestock Research Officer and Tracie Bird-Gardiner, Project Officer, Trangie, and Pat Taylor, Livestock Research Officer, Orange Agricultural Institute

The ten-year selection program involving the QPLU\$ selection lines at Trangie has now been completed. The selection lines, selected on combinations of fleece weight and fibre diameter in the fine wool, medium wool and strong wool strains of Merino sheep, were set up with specific aims:

- To demonstrate the improvements in fleece weight and fibre diameter in lines of Merino sheep selected on an index of clean fleece weight and fibre diameter.
- To demonstrate to breeders the consequences of this type of selection on other production, wool quality, meat quality and reproduction traits influencing lifetime performance.
- To provide breeders with information to help them choose a balance of measured and visual selection that will achieve their breeding objective.

This article will highlight the substantial improvements achieved in fleece weight and/or fibre diameter of the 2004 drop progeny as hoggets of the Trangie QPLU\$ selection lines following ten rounds of selection. Additionally, these changes in wool production and wool quality will be shown to result in improved commercial returns to wool producers.

With the financial support of Australian Wool Innovation Limited, measurements

and data analyses for the 2004 and final drop of animals will be completed over the next 12 months. A comprehensive economic evaluation of the QPLU\$ selection lines will be reported to industry. An upcoming edition of this newsletter will report responses in a wide range of traits of economic importance for Merino enterprises.

### The QPLU\$ selection lines

The QPLU\$ selection lines included:

**3% Micron Premium (MP) Breeding Objective Line:** This breeding objective maintained fibre diameter while maximising the improvement in clean fleece weight. It is the most profitable breeding objective if the market will pay 3% more per kg for wool that is one micron finer. This line occurred only in the medium wool strain.

**8% Micron Premium (MP) Breeding Objective Line:** Here the objective maximised the increase in fleece weight while reducing fibre diameter. It is the most profitable breeding objective if the market will pay 8% more per kg for wool that is one micron finer. This line occurred in all three strains.

**15% Micron Premium (MP) Breeding Objective Line:** Here the objective maximised the reduction in fibre diameter

Table 1: Improvements in fleece weight, fibre diameter and fleece value in the 2004 drop of each selection line, relative to the base flocks (1993–94) of each strain

Strain	Selection line	Fibre diameter (µm)	Clean fleece weight (%)	Fleece value per head (\$)*	\$ Gain (%)
Fine	Base flock	19.7	3.5 (kg)	32.20	-
	8 % MP	-1.40	14.4	43.52	35.2
Medium-Peppin	Base flock	20.8	4.4 (kg)	39.38	-
	Industry	-1.00	13.7	46.60	18.3
	3 % MP	-0.27	19.2	47.11	19.6
	8 % MP	-1.46	13.0	50.05	27.1
	15 % MP	-2.43	7.1	50.34	27.8
Broad	Base flock	23.2	5.0 (kg)	42.05	-
	8 % MP	-1.57	10.7	47.96	14.1

\* Based on wool prices 2003–05 inclusive

while maintaining fleece weight. It is the most profitable breeding objective if the market will pay 15% more per kg for wool that is one micron finer. This line occurred only in the medium wool strain.

**Industry Line:** The breeding objective of this line was set by the QPLUS Industry Liaison Committee. Selections were made by John Williams, using a balance of index performance and visual assessment. This line occurred only in the medium wool strain.

**Control Line:** Random mating that maintained a line that represented the original population.

The percentage figures refer to the micron premium on which they are based, which in turn reflect the varying emphases on fleece weight and fibre diameter in the breeding objective.

### 2004 drop responses

The changes in clean fleece weight, average fibre diameter and fleece value of the 2004 drop hoggets in each of the selection lines are shown in Figures 1, 2 and 3 and Table 1. The responses are presented as estimated breeding values. An animal's estimated breeding value describes the difference in performance of the progeny of that animal relative to a benchmark or base value of performance e.g. a flock or breed average.

As seen in previous drops, the progeny of the tenth selected mating of the QPLUS selection lines demonstrated substantial improvements in fleece weight and fibre diameter compared to the base flocks from which they were bred. These improvements have resulted in moderate to large increases in the average value of fleeces produced within the selection lines of each strain.

Across the three strains, the 8% MP index lines (i.e. equal selection emphasis on fleece weight and fibre diameter) demonstrated reductions in mean fibre diameter of 1.40–1.57  $\mu\text{m}$  with improvements in clean fleece weight of around 11–14%. These changes have resulted in increases in fleece value that range from \$5.91 per head for the broad

Figure 1: Responses in clean fleece weight and fibre diameter in the 2004 drop hoggets of QPLUS 8% Micron Premium index selection lines of each strain relative to predictions.

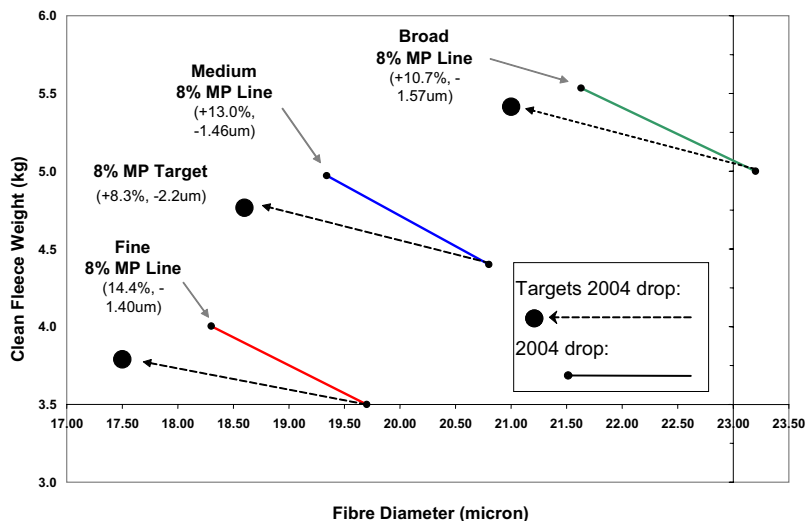


Figure 2: Responses in clean fleece weight and fibre diameter in the 2004 drop hoggets of QPLUS medium-Peppin index selection lines relative to predictions.

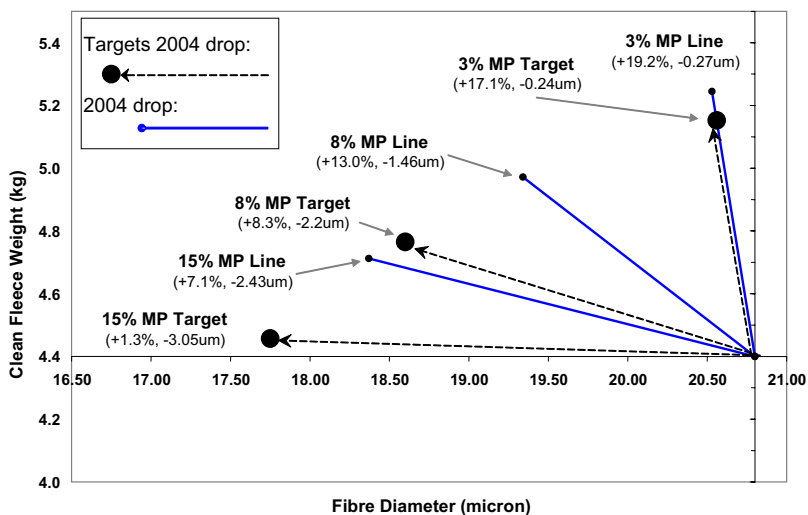
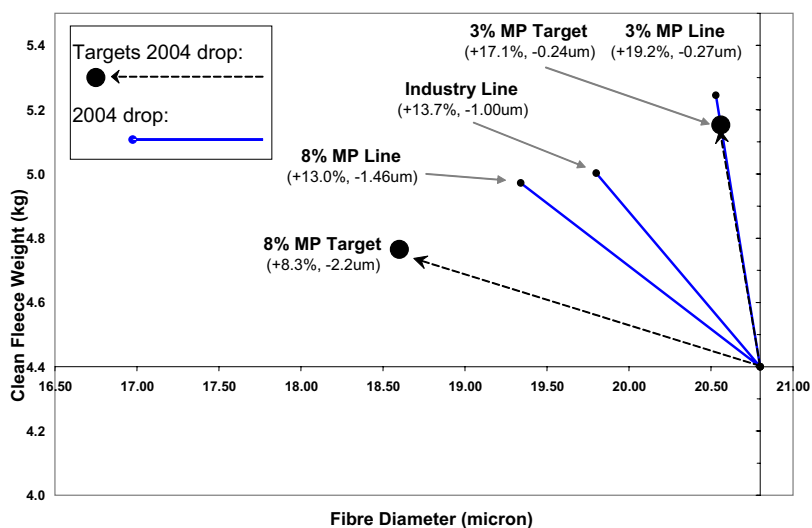


Figure 3: Responses in clean fleece weight and fibre diameter in the 2004 drop QPLUS Industry selection line relative to responses and predictions for the 2004 drop of the 3% and 8% Micron Premium index selection lines.



wool line, through \$10.67 per head for the medium-Peppin line to \$11.32 for the fine line. These improvements in fleece value are of the order of 14–35% per head. These estimates were based on a market period characterised by relatively low wool prices and historically low wool premiums for fine wool.

Among the remaining medium-Peppin lines, responses in fleece weight and fibre diameter were in line with predetermined breeding objectives. The 3% MP line (i.e. selection emphasis to increase fleece weight, maintain diameter) showed the largest increase in fleece weight (19.2%) and smallest reduction in fibre diameter (-0.27  $\mu\text{m}$ ) while the 15% MP line (i.e. selection emphasis to reduce diameter, maintain fleece weight) showed the largest reduction in diameter (-2.43  $\mu\text{m}$ ) and smallest increase in fleece weight (7.1%). The Industry selected line, in which selection was imposed on classer assessed fleece quality, physical conformation and measured fleece weight and fibre diameter also showed large improvements in fleece weight (13.7%) and fibre diameter (-1.0  $\mu\text{m}$ ). These changes have increased fleece values by \$7.13, \$10.36 and \$6.62 respectively.

### Conclusions

- All selection lines showed large and rapid improvements after ten years in fleece weight and/or fibre diameter in line with predetermined breeding objectives. This is in contrast to the perception that selection can be long-term and slow.
- These improvements in fleece weight and fibre diameter were achieved irrespective of the starting point as the responses were consistent across the strains.
- Selection for improved quality does not mean lower wool production.

- Traits with unfavourable genetic relationships, such as fleece weight and fibre diameter, can be improved using appropriate selection indexes.
- Within-flock selection based on measured performance, with or without visual assessment, can deliver predictable and substantial improvements that can increase commercial returns to producers.

A full report on the responses achieved in the QPLU\$ selection lines over the life of the ten-year selection program is available from the web site of the NSW Department of Primary Industries or your local DPI Rangelands Officer.

For more information contact Sue Mortimer: phone (02) 6880 8008, email [sue.mortimer@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:sue.mortimer@dpi.nsw.gov.au) OR Pat Taylor: phone (02) 6391 3916, email [pat.taylor@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:pat.taylor@dpi.nsw.gov.au) OR Tracie Bird-Gardiner: phone (02) 6880 8021, email [tracie.bird-gardiner@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tracie.bird-gardiner@dpi.nsw.gov.au).

If you would like to receive directly current and future information releases on the QPLU\$ selection lines, contact Tracie Bird-Gardiner.

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## NSW DPI offers unique feed quality service

by Richard Meyer, Wagga Wagga

Feed costs account for a high proportion of total input costs in many livestock enterprises, so they are a major driver of profitability.

With Australia's fodder industry valued at over \$1 billion per year, producers need to be sure they are getting value for money.

NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) now provides the State's only comprehensive feed quality testing service which allows producers to compare feeds on their nutritional value.

NSW is the second largest fodder producing state (after Victoria), with a production valued at over \$200 million per year. The bulk of this is traded within the state, but there is also an increasing export

market, primarily to Taiwan, Japan and Korea.

Feed quality testing is an integral part of good nutritional management on farms and feedlots, and provides an objective basis for trading feeds. As our dairy, beef and lamb production systems intensify, with greater use of supplementary feeds, feed quality testing will become even more important.

NSW DPI has been promoting the laboratory testing of feedstuffs through programs such as Prograze and TopFodder Silage for several years.

Now, as feeding programs become an integral part of livestock management, the optimisation of fodder costs becomes

paramount in ensuring that profitability of the enterprise is maintained and enhanced.

The department has developed a range of packages which are tailored to the farmer's needs, whether he is using pasture, hay, forage, silage, grains or mixed rations. The packages comply with the requirements of the Australian Fodder Industry Association's (AFIA's) guidelines.

These packages are mostly based on near infra-red reflectance spectroscopy, and are backed by world-class research carried out by DPI scientists. This technology offers accuracy combined with fast turn-around-times of three to five days.

'Wet chemistry' testing is also offered at the facility which is recommended for by-products and total mixed rations and offers a turn-around-time of 10 working days.

The laboratories providing the new service are located at the Wagga Wagga Agricultural Institute, are fully NATA-accredited, and have the latest equipment.

The new service will be backed up by the expertise of our extensive network of District Livestock Officers, who will be able to advise on the interpretation of the reports.

The service offers standard packages for rapid turnaround. The sampling kits are available through any NSW DPI office or by contacting the Wagga Wagga Customer Service Unit.

- Standard Forage package - \$53.30
- Premium Silage package - \$90.00
- By-Products package - \$85.00
- Grain and Mixed Feed package - \$53.30

Several tailored packages for special requirements are also available.

For further enquiries or to obtain free sampling kits contact the Customer Service Unit on (02) 6938 1957 or select Feed Quality Service from the following webpage:

[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/services/diagnostic\\_and\\_inspection/diagnostic\\_and\\_laboratory\\_services](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/services/diagnostic_and_inspection/diagnostic_and_laboratory_services)



# FEED QUALITY SERVICE

*Your reliable guide to feed quality*

DIAGNOSTIC & ANALYTICAL SERVICES

NSW Department of Primary Industries laboratories are part of a state-wide network offering comprehensive services to primary producers.

Our feed testing service is based on extensive research by some of NSW DPI's leading scientists and is backed by our network of advisory specialists.

Feed testing is an integral part of good animal nutritional management for the best and most profitable results.

**The new Feed Quality Service offers fast, reliable, cost-effective feed testing services for:**

- pastures and forages
- silage
- grain
- mixed feeds
- hay
- concentrates
- by-products

This service provides the farmer with objective assessment of feed quality – the key to profitable feeding.

*Diagnostic and Analytical Services  
Feed Quality Service  
Wagga Wagga Agricultural Institute  
WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650*

*Feed Quality kits are available through all NSW DPI offices.  
For more information, contact our Customer Service Centre on: 1800 675 623 or visit our website at [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au)*

NSW DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

**Answers you can use from technology you can trust**

## Interest Rate Subsidy from the Rural Assistance Authority

Assistance is available for up to 80% of interest payable on farm debt, generally for a two year period.

Net off-farm assets must be less than \$446 000 per business enterprise and does not include superannuation or farm management deposits (FMD's that have been created through the sale of stock because of the drought)

There are different criteria and differing cut off dates depending upon the location of your property. A separate application is required for each round of assistance.

Maximum amount payable per annum is \$100 000.

For more information contact NSW Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593

If unclaimed please return to:  
NSW Department of Primary Industries  
PO Box 865, DUBBO NSW 2830

# To the Landholder



# Western Division newsletter

**The editors of the WDN welcome contributions**

<b>Issue No.</b>		<b>Deadline for articles</b>	<b>Editorial Office</b>
114	Nov–Dec	1 October 2006	NSW DPI
115	Jan–Feb	1 December 2006	PO Box 393, Hay 2711
116	Mar–Apr	1 February 2007	Fax: (02) 6993 2177
117	May–Jun	1 April 2007	Phone: (02) 6993 1608
118	Jul–Aug	1 June 2007	Email: <a href="mailto:sally.ware@dpi.nsw.gov.au">sally.ware@dpi.nsw.gov.au</a>