

# Western Division newsletter

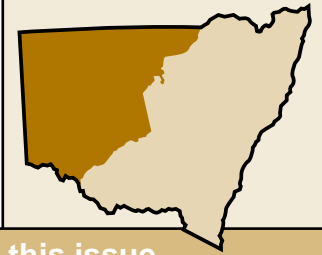
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May/June 07

Produced for landholders in  
the Western Division of NSW



In this issue ...

## Sheep feedlot rations – grower co-op value adds

As told to Sally Ware by Tony Bellinger, Manager, Moulamein Grain Co-Operative Ltd, Moulamein

### Background

The Moulamein Grain Co-Operative Ltd was formed in 2001 as a grain receival site for local growers. Moulamein is a small town (pop: 500) situated approx. 130 km south-east of Balranald. The Co-Op currently has 42 financial members. Usually the Co-Op receives about 40 000 tonnes of grain; however, last year the receivals were down to 20 000 tonnes.

### What factors made you think about a change?

We started thinking about the fact that we are coming into an autumn with no irrigation allocations for keeping the pastures going. Most of the landholders around here will have to consider putting their sheep into drought lots. The idea was to provide a feedlot ration as a service to our members using the grain we have on site. We are now expanding that service to the public as we now know we can offer a very competitively priced feedlot mix for sheep.

### How did you start to make a change?

We started using the Sheep CRC calculator (note: which can be downloaded from the Sheep CRC website) to work out our mix and our price. We also used advice obtained

from NSW DPI Livestock Officers, Geoff Duddy and Ian Evans. Our mix for young sheep is 80% barley, 20% faba beans, 1% lime (to provide necessary calcium), 1% salt and 1% sodium bentonite to reduce the risk of poisoning during grain introduction. We also add some recycled vegetable oil to bind the mix together. The faba beans are rolled to break them up so that they distribute through the mix a lot better.

Continued on page 3

**Moulamein Grain**  
**Co-Operative Ltd**  
ABN 90 940 498 384

**BEST VALUE**  
Complete  
Sheep Feedlot Rations

Ring Tony (03) 5033 0734  
Mobile: 0427 331 881

Sheep feedlot rations – grower co-op value adds

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Western Catchment Landcare forum is on again!

Climate change – new results

Fresh wool production to fall over the next six months

Snakes alive – return of the Bardick!

by Sally Ware  
Rangelands Officer  
NSW DPI, Hay

Printed below is an extremely powerful and very poignant poem by Murray Hartin. You may remember Murray as the author of *Turbulence* where the cowboy rides his swag down the corridor of a jet liner at '30 000 feet'. Whilst *Turbulence* is a very

humorous poem, *Rain from Nowhere* is about rural suicide. Murray has kindly given us permission to print *Rain from Nowhere*. The poem was created for a Salvation Army DVD project aimed at stopping rural suicide.

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## Rain from nowhere

His cattle didn't get a bid, they were fairly bloody poor,  
What was he going to do? He couldn't feed them anymore,  
The dams were all but dry, hay was thirteen bucks a bale,  
Last month's talk of rain was just a fairytale,  
His credit had run out, no chance to pay what's owed,  
Bad thoughts ran through his head as he drove down Gully Road  
'Geez, great grandad bought the place back in 1898,  
'Now I'm such a useless bastard, I'll have to shut the gate.  
'Can't support my wife and kids, not like dad and those before,  
'Crikey, Grandma kept it going while Pop fought in the war.'  
With depression now his master, he abandoned what was right,  
There's no place in life for failures, he'd end it all tonight.  
There were still some things to do, he'd have to shoot  
the cattle first,  
Of all the jobs he'd ever done, that would be the worst.  
He'd have a shower, watch the news, then they'd all sit  
down for tea  
Read his kids a bedtime story, watch some more TV,  
Kiss his wife goodnight, say he was off to shoot some roos  
Then in a paddock far away he'd blow away the blues.  
But he drove in the gate and stopped – as he always had  
To check the roadside mailbox – and found a letter from his Dad.  
Now his dad was not a writer, Mum did all the cards and mail  
But he knew the writing from the notebooks that he'd kept from  
cattle sales,  
He sensed the nature of its contents, felt moisture in his eyes,  
Just the fact his dad had written was enough to make him cry.  
'Son, I know it's bloody tough, it's a cruel and twisted game,  
'This life upon the land when you're screaming out for rain,  
'There's no candle in the darkness, not a single speck of light  
'But don't let the demon get you, you have to do what's right,  
'I don't know what's in your head but push the bad thoughts  
well away  
'See, you'll always have your family at the back end of the day  
'You have to talk to someone, and yes I know I rarely did  
'But you have to think about Fiona and think about the kids.  
'I'm worried about you son, you haven't rung for quite a while,

'I know the road you're on 'cause I've walked every bloody mile.  
'The date? December 7 back in 1983,  
'Behind the shed I had the shotgun rested in the brigalow tree.  
'See, I'd borrowed way too much to buy the Johnson place  
'Then it didn't rain for years and we got bombed by interest rates,  
'The bank was at the door, I didn't think I had a choice,  
'I began to squeeze the trigger – that's when I heard your voice.  
'You said 'Where are you Daddy? It's time to play our game'  
'I've got Squatter all set up, we might get General Rain.'  
'It really was that close, you're the one that stopped me son,  
'And you're the one that taught me there's no answer in a gun.  
'Just remember people love you, good friends won't let you down.  
'Look, you might have to swallow pride and take that job in town,  
'Just 'til things come good, son, you've always got a choice  
'And when you get this letter ring me, 'cause I'd love to  
hear your voice.'  
Well he cried and laughed and shook his head then put the truck  
in gear,  
Shut his eyes and hugged his dad in a vision that was clear,  
Dropped the cattle at the yards, put the truck away  
Filled the troughs the best he could and fed his last ten  
bales of hay.  
Then he strode towards the homestead, shoulders back and head  
held high,  
He still knew the road was tough but there was purpose  
in his eye.  
He called his wife and children, who'd lived through all his pain,  
Hugs said more than words – he'd come back to them again,  
They talked of silver linings, how good times always follow bad,  
Then he walked towards the phone, picked it up and  
rang his Dad.  
And while the kids set up the Squatter, he hugged his wife again,  
Then they heard the roll of thunder and they smelt the  
smell of rain.

Murray Hartin  
Australian Storyteller  
www.MurrayHartin.com  
Muz@MurrayHartin.com  
February 21, 2007

We can make a cheaper mix for older, dry sheep by reducing the protein by taking out the faba beans. The faba bean mix is an excellent feed for young sheep and late pregnant or lactating ewes. The grower just needs to use the mixes with some roughage such as hay. We test the mix regularly and at present it has a crude protein of 16% and a minimum metabolisable energy of 12.5 MJ/kg plus all the required elements needed by sheep in a mix. We are very competitively priced as we are a not for profit grower co-operative. We are only charging a mixing fee on top of the cost of the grain and the additives. The feed mix is made up in a mixer wagon and can be augered straight into trucks. If required, bulker bags can be organised.

**So, how is it going?**

We have only just started advertising to the public, so it is only early days. We are very competitively priced so if it stays dry, we expect to get very busy very quickly. We have a complete product for sheep that



does not require any extra additives; the grower just needs to provide some extra roughage. We are situated not far from Balranald, so we are relatively close to the southern part of the Western Division. At the moment, there is no waiting time for our mix. There is a local carrier who can transport the mix and we have the ability to take orders through agents, although there is an extra cost for this service.

Manager Tony Bellinger with the feed mixer bin. The feed mix can be augered straight into trucks from the mixer bin.

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## Legal Road Network Project

The Legal Roads Network Project achieved a real milestone in March this year with the lodgement of its first road plan. The plan defines approximately 150 km of the Silver City Highway from Broken Hill to Fowlers Gap and includes a link road known as 'Nine Mile' road. That plan also included two potential easements to landlocked properties.

With the majority of technical issues addressed and data collection completed, the project team is continuing to identify roads and easements for inclusion in the next plan.

**Our next plan will generally encompass the properties accessed via the Silverton Rd, Willangi Rd, Mt Woowollahra Rd and Corona Rd. If your property is accessed via these roads please be**

**prepared to act on any correspondence that you may receive.**

To enable the project to progress to program, it is imperative that landholders' responses to our requests for completion of application forms, for the creation of easements and removal of access conditions is timely. If those applications are not forthcoming it may result in the opportunity for an easement to a landlocked property being missed. It will not be possible for the project to revisit these areas and any creation of easements in the future would be at the landholders' expense.

We look forward to your continued support so that an effective legal access system can be achieved in the Western Division.

by Rex Miller & Jason Brouff  
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Jason.Brouff@dnr.nsw.gov.au

# Getting through the list of jobs ... how Outback Links can help

by Davida Melksham  
Telephone: 1300 731 349  
Email: outbacklinks@  
bigpond.com

*Paint mesh fence and gates*  
*Repack leaking tap glands*  
*Shovel sand on and off ute*  
*Install new battery in tractor*  
*Help dispose of sick cow*  
*Re-install submersible pump*  
*Help out with pre-school sessions*  
*Wash and service vehicles*  
*Help on the feed and water run*  
*Screen the quarters*  
*Remove rust and paint air cooler*  
*Paint exterior walls*  
*Install down-piping/stormwater drain*  
*Re-align gate stay*

Does the 'To Do' list at your farm or station look like this? If the answer is yes, then perhaps help is only a phone call or email away thanks to Frontier Services' Outback Links program.

Since it started several years ago, Outback Links has been matching skilled volunteers with Outback individuals and families who need an extra pair of hands without an extra financial burden.

The needs of families who call the service are varied. The last three requests to arrive at Outback Links have sought volunteers to:

Outback Link Trevor finishing a trench on a property with some helpers.



- 'Help with general property duties and someone to help with my wife who has health issues.'
- 'Do anything! Help with major and minor jobs ... so that we can catch up on so many overdue tasks. Welding, painting, handyman/Mr Fix-it type jobs. I also need help with my computer skills.'
- 'Help me in my own home on the station. I am a cancer patient in remission, and am unable to carry out some everyday tasks.'

As diverse as the needs are, the skills of the volunteers are more so. Currently registered and looking to help are speech pathologists, home-makers, engineers, pilots, musicians, accountants, painters, retired farmers, surveyors, carpenters, teachers ... the list just goes on and on.

Noela Schloss and Davida Melksham, the Coordinators of Outback Links, have established a register of volunteers willing to serve in the outback and seek to match their skills and gifts with specific needs of those who could use a hand, rather than a handout.

Outback Links has a well-established process to avoid any possible pitfalls in the relationship between volunteers and their hosts. This covers screening, matching, orientation, management of expectations, termination and other critical issues.

'Once rural families found out how Outback Links can help in a practical way, without the cost and complications involved in finding off-farm assistance, the response has been growing steadily,' according to Davida Melksham.

'The phone rings constantly with enquiries on how to access assistance, and also how to offer it. It means there's a need that we are meeting.'

Outback Links is run by Frontier Services, the major provider of aged care, health and community services, and pastoral support to people in outback and remote Australia.

If you feel that you might benefit from being a part of the Outback Links program, contact Noela or Davida, or go to the website [www.frontierservices.org/outbacklinks](http://www.frontierservices.org/outbacklinks) for more information.

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# Letters to the editor

## Madam

Many Western Division sheep breeders will be particularly interested in the short article on page seven of the W D Newsletter No.115 regarding fencing and exotic breeds of animals.

We support the Review as stated, but it has to be more than just a Review. Action will have to be implemented in this very serious problem.

Stock owners are at liberty to choose the type of stock they desire to run but they should also be responsible for containing their choice of animals behind suitable fences.

Merino breeders will have their sheep and wool reduced in value by contamination with hairy exotic breeds if they are allowed to wander. Also, there is the possibility of a market collapse for exotic animals. If that happens are we to see these animals abandoned by some people and let run wild, thus adding to the list of ferals.

## Alf Withers

Springwood Station  
Wentworth NSW 2648  
February 19 2007

## Reply

In reply to the letter from Mr Alf Withers dated 19 February 2007, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) thanks him for his comments and acknowledges that all throughout the Western Division at the moment there are serious landholder concerns regarding repairs, upgrades and replacement of boundary fences on leasehold land.

Boundary fencing issues have become prominent more recently not only due to the ongoing drought conditions and financial hardship being experienced in the Western Division but more so by

the increase in numbers of shedding sheep breeds being run on properties and the potential for contamination with wool sheep.

DNR has received many calls and letters from landholders regarding this issue since the last Western Division Newsletter. These landholders have been representative of both the wool and shedding breed industries, with the information provided to date being extremely valuable.

In response to these landholder concerns the Western Lands Advisory Council established a small Working Group to review existing requirements within both the Western Lands Act and the Dividing Fences Act. A report is due back to the WLAC in mid April and amendments to the Western Lands Act to allow for fencing standards and conditions to be better defined and an increase in powers for the Western Lands Commissioner are likely to be suggested.

Currently all lessees are obligated under Western Lands Lease conditions to ensure that boundary fences are maintained and all stock is contained within property boundaries. Any discussions in regard to repairs, upgrades or replacement of boundary fences have always been a matter for adjoining lessees to negotiate. If disputes arise or agreement cannot be reached between lessees than there is the option of going to a Land Board hearing or taking civil action through the courts.

In the Western Lands Branch of DNR the local district Rangeland Management Officers are always available to discuss fencing issues with landholders. They will continue to provide education and awareness to new lessees of all responsibilities and lease conditions under the Western Lands Act.

For further information, please contact Sharon Hawke, Manager, Land Management, Western Lands Branch on (02) 6883 3065.

LOOKING FOR A TOUGH, HARD WORKING,  
RELIABLE WORKMATE TO GO THE LONG DISTANCE



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ON THE FULL  
RANGE OF  
TOYOTA UTES  
AND WAGONS

LM D 17590

Talk to IAN LUGSDIN at  
Lugsdin Toyota, HAY 2711  
Ph: 02 69931661 Mob: 0428 729305

# Western Division Young Farmers Forum a great success

by Amber Croft, Western Division Young Farmers Network

More than 60 passionate young landholders, land managers and contractors gathered in Broken Hill over the 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> March for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Western Division Young Farmers Forum.

Delegates travelled from all corners of the Western Division to hear from a fantastic line-up of guest speakers and to discuss local issues. Topics covered themes such

as natural resource management, business planning, latest technologies and off-farm opportunities.

Popular speakers included Ken Solly from Meat & Livestock Australia, who ran a workshop on calculating cost-of-production, and Rob Brown from Peppin Business Planners, who covered the complexities of family farm business planning. The ever-popular Michael Kneipp also ran an excellent workshop on teamwork in business.

Delegates were also very interested to hear about the Precision Ag Systems that local landholder Tony Thompson utilises on his property. 'If you can't measure it, you can't manage it!' said Tony. Genevieve Carruthers from the Department of Primary Industries also emphasised the benefits of on-going data collection and review in her session on Environmental Management Systems.

The opportunity for people to get away from their farm for a couple of days, catch up with mates, plus make some new friends is another important benefit of an event such as this. In particular, the Forum dinner provided the chance for plenty of discussion, fun and laughter.

Guest dinner speaker, comedian John Walker of TV's Full Frontal fame, was certainly a highlight. John's hilarious impersonation of Prime Minister John Howard, imparting his policies on many of the environmental issues relevant to the region, had the room roaring with laughter.

The feedback received from all those who attended the Forum was overwhelmingly positive.

'It exceeded all my expectations and certainly left a very positive and energetic vibe for all to take away', said one delegate.



Committee member George Milllear with delegate Chrissy Brown and guest speaker John Taylor from Rangelands Australia



Forum Committee (L-R) Terry Smith, Craig Bell, Suzie Bunting, Viv White, Amber Croft and George Milllear

Below (L-R) Rebel Sikora, Luke Finch, Laura Boylan and Michelle Jefferies enjoy the guest dinner speaker



The Western Division Young Farmers Forum was an initiative of the Western Division Young Farmers Network, and was supported through funding from the Natural Resources Advisory Council, Western Catchment Landcare Steering Committee, Western CMA, Lower Murray Darling CMA, Central West CMA, RMAP

Inc, Rangelands Australia, South West NSW Land Management Group, and Elders.

Further information about the Western Division Young Farmers Network can be found at [www.youngfarmersnetwork.com](http://www.youngfarmersnetwork.com), or by contacting Amber Croft (03) 5020 6837.

# Western CMA captures riverbed secrets

by James Leigo, Catchment Officer, Western CMA Bourke

A parched riverbed is never a welcome sight but the Western Catchment Management Authority took advantage of current drought conditions to undertake an aerial photographic survey of the Darling River that is yielding important information.

The survey will provide information about river features that are usually hidden by water.

We contracted a photographer, Brian Harvey, to fly the Darling River from Bourke to Menindee taking digital photographs.

We now have photographs of approximately 1500 river kilometres taken at a resolution that clearly shows objects as small as 10–15 cm with corresponding GPS coordinates.

Each photograph covers an area of 1.6 km x 1.2 km and is computer-stitched to form a seamless photographic record of the river.

We are now analysing the photographs to map features that impact on water quality and salinity, like natural inflows, major waterholes and snags.

Natural inflows can be assessed in relation to salt contributions to the river system.

Natural inflows are salty natural springs that contribute to salinity levels within the river system. Being able to recognise



Brian Harvey prepares to take off for the aerial photographic survey.

the areas of inflow allows us to employ management strategies to combat the salt.

We have recognised some saline inflows in the reach between Bourke and Louth and we are conducting on-ground water-testing to confirm their locations.

We are also identifying waterholes as they often hold water with high salt content. Once the waterholes are mapped, our staff can test the salinity of that water. The water can be monitored and better managed as it moves through the river system.

We've had a great degree of cooperation from those landholders whose properties we've visited to test the river. We recognise that people are very passionate about the river and its future and we'd encourage anyone with information about saline inflows to contact us.

We're also investigating a link between inflows and geology as it appears that many of the inflows occur at the same place that natural fault lines meet.

Snags are also being mapped as snags, such as fallen logs and branches, play an important role providing habitat and breeding sites for native fish.

Mapping snags will indicate which areas have adequate fish habitat and which need to be protected or improved.

Needless to say, the most striking feature of the photographs is just how dry the river is. Below Tilpa, I'd estimate approximately 80 per cent of the river is dry and as there have been no significant flow events since the photographs were taken in late February, I'm sure that percentage is even higher.

It is interesting to note that the last time the river was this dry was in the early 1900s, when scores of paddleboats were trapped.

The Eliza Jane, for example, was stranded for two and a half years between Louth and Tilpa. It holds the record for the longest and shortest journey between Wentworth and Bourke. It took three years to travel from Wentworth to Bourke and, once the drought broke, three weeks to return!

The \$30 000 project is being funded by the joint NSW and Australian Governments' National Action Plan for Water Quality and Salinity and administered by the Western Catchment Management Authority.

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# Sam Bailey special guest at Managers' Forum Balranald



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Not many people can say that Lady Luck is on their side and be able to defy the odds and achieve their dreams and aspirations.

Popular farmer and inspirational speaker Sam Bailey was the key note speaker at the recent Community and Land Managers' Forum held in Balranald on 23 February.

Sponsors for this Forum included the National Harvest Labour Office, Landcare Australia, Mallee Family Care, Greater Western Area Health Service and LMD CMA.

Members of the community had been actively involved in the organisation of the forum, that provided an opportunity for the CMA and the community to get to know one-another.

Sam Bailey's life changed forever when a road accident turned this outback jackaroo into a quadriplegic. In addition to working on his northern NSW farm with wife Jenny, Sam spends much of this time sharing his story and giving hope and inspiration to others.

Sam's presentation provided a focus for many of the Balranald Shire community who attended to hear him speak. Through the laughs, comical quotations and serious descriptions of how he became wheelchair bound and his on-air love affair with then ABC radio announcer, Jenny Black, the audience absorbed his strength and listened to his inspirational words of encouragement.

Members of the Homebush Landcare Group with Mr John Dalton (State NRM Facilitator, far right).





Sam and Jenny Bailey (front) with (L to R) Lesley Palmer, Jill French, Gary Doyle, Patty Byrnes, Max Polwarth (MADEC) and John Dalton (State NRM Facilitator).

The sincerity of his words were proven when Sam spoke privately to a local lad who is disabled. Their quietly spoken words were inaudible to others around them, but the look of satisfaction on both of their faces was testament to a conversation that flowed from the heart. A moment of quiet reflection appeared before they departed.

Having a busy speaking program, Sam made time available to speak with both primary and secondary students at the Balranald Central School. He promised a primary student that when he learnt to fly his helicopter (in the near future), he would land on the school's oval to prove that nothing is impossible.

The forum was primarily an opportunity to give local farmers, land managers and the community a chance to interact with the Lower Murray Darling Catchment Authority (LMD CMA) board and staff on issues of importance to their businesses and to find out just how the LMD CMA can assist land managers during the current drought. Information was on hand that highlighted the current drought incentives available as well as what professional training is available to up-skill land managers to be as productive and effective as possible.

A new incentive was on show, 'Enterprise Based Conservation', which had \$1 million available to landholders in the Western Division.

'We wanted the day to be a way of updating the farmers on a number of our incentives as well as giving them a chance to celebrate the fighting country spirit which is getting us all through this aggressive drought,' said Mr Mark King, Chair LMD CMA.

'The forum was also to encourage optimism and lift farmer spirits, which is why the event organisers asked Sam Bailey to speak. He could share his experiences as a farmer and author,' he said.

'It has become very evident that there are misconceptions about what the CMA can do for land managers. The CMA must work within legal boundaries as prescribed by the State Government. The forum aired these ideas and also provided part-solutions to rectifying and building stronger relationships with land managers and staff,' Mr King said.

'I would like to thank the sponsors of the Forum (MADEC Harvest Labour, Mallee Family Care, Greater Western Area Health Service and Landcare Australia) for their financial assistance as well as to Gus Whyte (Wyndham Station) and Gary Doyle (Petro Station) for facilitating the discussion sessions. Lorraine Ayson (Homebush Landcare) provided invaluable assistance during the development of this forum.'

The outcomes from this forum has provided a foundation on which to build future forums in other parts of the LMD catchment. With the assistance of local community members who will be co-opted onto the organising committee, the future forum programs will be very relevant to that locality.

Will Sam Bailey keep his promise to the primary students of Balranald Central School? Let's hope so!

# Setting up a drought lot or feedlot

by Geoff Duddy, Livestock Officer, NSW DPI, Yanco

The same principles apply to setting up a drought lot or a feedlot. If you are thinking about a feedlot you need to consider the following factors:

- Slope and soil type
- Water quality and supply
- Feedlot design
- Area required
- Feed trough size
- Shade
- Feeding
- Animal health check.

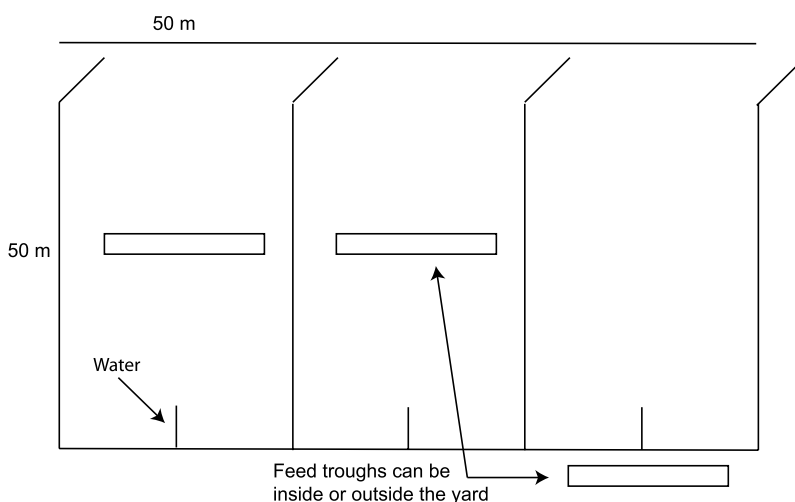
## Slope and soil type

A slight slope (2% to 4%) is preferred to allow for drainage from the yards. A medium clay loam soil is the best type of soil to locate the pens as heavy clays can 'pug' in wet weather and can dry slowly causing odour problems. Light sandy soils have high infiltration rates and are prone to erosion.

## Water quality and supply

Access by the stock to clean, fresh water is a critical component of a successful feedlot. Dry sheep will generally consume 4 to 6 litres of water per day but intake may be higher during hot weather and if the ration has high roughage or salt or a high cereal grain component.

Pen design where one mob is allocated per pen



Recommended water trough length for sheep is 30 cm plus 1 cm per sheep. Cattle need space for 10% at once or 30 cm per 10 head. The flow rate for cattle is critical and needs to be 10 litres per head per hour. Position water troughs as far from the feed as possible to minimise contamination by grain or fibre carried by sheep after eating. Clean regularly. The salinity needs to be less than 7000 ppm and a pH of around 6.5 to 8.5 is best. Too acidic or too alkaline water can lead to digestive upsets, reduced intake and production loss (note: water testing kits are available from your local NSW DPI office). Shade over a trough can also be considered to keep water temperature down.

## Feedlot design

Each design will depend on individual circumstances. There is no 'perfect' design. It will depend on area available, numbers to be run per pen, available capital input and labour and personal preference.

A rectangular design may be better than a square design in terms of management ease, minimising water contamination, maximising trough allocation and reducing social stress.

## Area

The industry recommendation for sheep is 5 m<sup>2</sup>. Increasing this area may improve feed intake and FCE and reduce shy feeder number provided there is an adequate trough allocation per animal.

The industry recommendation for cattle is 6 to 8 metres for weaners and 15 to 25 metres for cows. Cows with calves at foot need 100 metres plus. Providing less space per animal than these recommendations may aid with reducing dust levels but also increases the risk of several health related problems (e.g. pneumonia, pinkeye, coccidiosis).

## Feed trough size

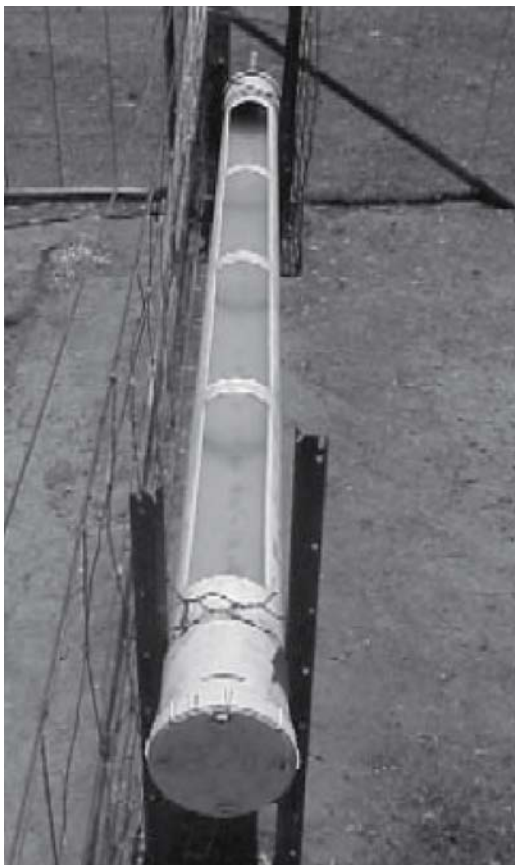
The recommendation for sheep is 30 cm+/head for a single side feed and 15



Left: Trough design where conveyor belt is used



Right: Trough design where shade cloth is used – shade cloth has the advantage of letting water and some dust through and it is a relatively cheap material.



Bottom L and R: Simple, cheap water troughs for sheep that are designed to minimise dust and evaporation.

cm+/head for a double side feed. For cattle, the size needs to be 25–30 cm/head for weaners, 30–38 cm for steers and heifers and 38–46 cm for older cattle. Horned animals need a minimum of 50 cm+.

If adequate trough space per animal is not available there is an increased chance of bullying and shy feeders.

Trail feeding rather than using troughs may result in grain waste of up to 20% and an increased chance of health problems including salmonellosis, coccidiosis, sand impaction, pneumonia and pink eye.

### Shade

Grazing trials comparing the performance of merino wethers in shaded or non-shaded paddocks have shown no significant change in grazing time, rumination time,

'Setting up a drought lot or feedlot' continued from previous page

time spent drinking and body temperature between the two areas. Sheep, with wool providing protection from the elements and regulation of body temperature through the mouth and nose can handle extreme environmental conditions better than cattle. Shade provision may minimise stress in a feedlot and is recommended provided shade trees and shrubs are protected from ringbarking.

### Feeding

Feed early morning. If not feeding every day, feed roughage on days prior to feeding



Hay feeders that attempt to minimise wastage

Top: Hay feeder made from 18 inch mesh

Below: Home made feeder with horizontal bars



grain or feed roughage ad lib to reduce the chance of acidosis. Up to 30% of the ration can be roughage providing the quality is high. Silage can be used but growth rates to date have been disappointing. If 40% of the animals are cud chewing at any one time, it is a good indication that the fibre level is adequate. Preventing wastage of hay is difficult; however, it is recommended that sheep are prevented from direct access to the bale.

For 'production' feeding, budget on anywhere between 3 and 4% of liveweight (depending on for example; age, weight, ration, waste). For 'maintenance' budget on between 1.5 and 2% of liveweight.

For full details on the quantity and quality of feed for livestock, see the NSW DPI *Managing Drought* handbook.

### Animal health check

All sheep should be vaccinated before entering a feedlot with 5 or 6 in one.

A worm test should also be carried out (worm test kits are available from NSW DPI offices) and an effective drench be used if required.

Providing an enriched environment for the stock in the feed lot is one way of reducing stress in the yards. An example of a stimulation method is the inclusion of logs in the yard or hanging an old tyre from a tree.



NSW DEPARTMENT OF  
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES



NSW Government  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



Department of  
Environment and  
Conservation (NSW)

The Western Division Newsletter is jointly produced by NSW Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Natural Resources with funding assistance from the Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW), the Western Catchment Management Authority, the Lower Murray Darling Catchment Authority and the Lachlan Catchment Authority.

# Life and Light photo competition launched

by Leah Arnold, Community Education Officer, Western CMA  
Cobar

The Western CMA will celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its photographic competition this year and residents are encouraged to enter their photographs before the 30 June deadline.

The 'Life & Light in the Western Catchment' Photographic Competition was initiated in 1998 by the natural resource management body, The Western Catchment Management Committee.

It has continued through the past decade under the auspices of the Western Catchment Management Board and now the Western Catchment Management Authority.

During that period, over 800 entries have been received. The photographs cover a wide variety of locations throughout the catchment and the full spectrum of subject matter, while the photographers range from semi-professionals to primary students with their first camera.

Despite their differences, one common theme emerges from the entries: pride in the diverse and unique environment that is the Western Catchment.

The theme for the 2007 competition is 'Our Country, Our Life, Our Future', which recognises the past as well as looking to the future.

To commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the competition, we hope to compile the best images submitted over the past decade, including the 2007 competition, into a screensaver to be provided free of charge to all interested people.

This will be a unique collection of spectacular images of the people and places of the Western Catchment, as seen through the eyes of its residents.



'Life on the Darling' by Sheree Bamforth, Highly Commended, Black and White, 2006

There are four sections: open colour, open black and white, secondary student (colour or black and white) and primary student (colour or black and white).

Entry to the competition is free and people can enter as many photographs as they would like. **Entries will be accepted until June 30.**

Photographs, including digital images, should be supplied as a 10 x 15 cm print. Digital photographs must also be supplied on a CD. Photographs of recognisable people should include a completed consent to use form, which is included in the entry information pack.

Photographs should have been taken no earlier than 2005, must be unpublished and should not have won any other competition.

Winners receive cash prizes of \$250 for first place and \$50 for runners-up.

Information packages, including entry and consent to use image forms, will be available at local council offices, on our website [www.western.cma.nsw.gov.au](http://www.western.cma.nsw.gov.au), calling 1800 032 101 or emailing [western@cma.nsw.gov.au](mailto:western@cma.nsw.gov.au).

# Environmental flows for the Darling Anabranh!



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The Darling Anabranh Environmental Flows Advisory Committee has been established by the Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority (LMD CMA) to oversee and advise on the development of environmental objectives, environmental flow management and monitoring.

‘Following the recent opening of the Darling Anabranh pipeline, attention is now focussing on the framework for delivery of environmental water when climatic conditions change in the upstream catchments’, said Mr Mark King, Chair LMD CMA.

The Environmental Flows Committee is chaired by Howard Jones, who is a Board member of the LMD CMA. Other members include landholders, the chair of Anabranh Water and representatives from Department of Natural Resources, Department of Environment and Conservation, Murray Darling Freshwater Research Centre and Department of Commerce.

Following the recent rain in February, a local landholder notified the LMD CMA of the ‘noisy chorus’ heard in pools in the Great Darling Anabranh following the recent rain event. Over 60 mm of rain had been recorded at some localities and as a result the native wildlife seemed to have appeared from nowhere. Shallow depressions had filled following the rain

fall and had become home to a chorus of different native frogs, most likely to be Burrowing Frogs. Freshwater Turtles left high and dry during this period of drought have been observed drinking from the shallow pools in adjacent paddocks.

In addition, tiny Shield Shrimps (from the scientific order of Notostraca) have also been found in temporary rain pools out in the paddock. Shield Shrimps are most commonly associated with freshwater habitats which dry periodically. Their eggs are very resistant to long periods of dry conditions.

Mr Howard Jones, joint Chair of the Darling Anabranh Environmental Flows Advisory Committee stated ‘this is a prime example of how our native flora and fauna species can respond positively to wetting following extended dry periods like those now being experienced. This emphasises the importance of environmental flows to the Great Darling Anabranh and its environs. When eventually these flows occur, they will provide a well needed drink to the surrounding River Red Gum, Black Box and Lignum communities, and also provide important habitat and refuge to native aquatic and riparian species.’

For further information about the Darling Anabranh Environmental Flows Advisory Committee please contact the LMD CMA on (03) 5021 9460.



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# Bushies barbeques in Dubbo

by Geoff Wise  
Ph (02) 6884 7900  
Email gawise@bigpond.net.au

I have recently initiated holding regular barbeques in Dubbo, particularly involving Western Division rural people who have relocated ostensibly to retire.

The initiative recognises the challenges faced by landholders in undergoing the radical transition from their past to their future chosen lifestyles. Through regular gatherings, people with similar backgrounds and experiences take comfort and support from each other even if they have not previously known each other.

In the early period of relocation to town living, this common thread is likely to be far stronger than any alternative experiences or interests with 'neighbours in the street,' or with people involved in the diverse range of urban activities available.

It is not automatic or easy for anyone to simultaneously change careers and relocate to a totally new environment, so any initiatives, such as the Bushies BBQ, which facilitate this transition, can play a role.

Whilst the initial concept was to focus on helping the needs of retired rural men and people with no family members in Dubbo, it is recognised that everyone benefits from social contact with others sharing common interests.

We should consciously acknowledge that in relocating from a rural property to town living, especially if away from one's historic local community, at least six major spontaneous issues are confronted simultaneously. These are:

- making and coping with the decision to move
- detaching, physically and emotionally, from a lifelong accumulation of (most) possessions
- radical changes in the daily work routine and activities



Cooks in action at Bushies BBQ

- relocation away from long-term established social networks
- establishment in a new home and in a new social environment (frequently this may be the first change of home since childhood or getting married, and the social environment invariably will be strangely different from living on the farm), and
- financial restructuring.

Invariably, ultimate contentment and self satisfaction is reached through being established socially, fulfilled daily, and sharing with friends with whom you can reminisce.

With this backdrop, the regular monthly Bushies BBQs build on the realisation that in helping rural people make the transition, they initially relate most easily with others with whom they share interests in common.

The Bushies BBQs aim to help a new 'rural retiree or couple'

- get established through their transition
- establish some confidence within their comfort zone
- learn and be helped from experiences and reassurances of others who have made similar transitions

- find out some choices in their new community
- socialise on a regular, casual, informal basis.

The Bushies BBQs are not a substitute for the diversity of the existing options within the community. Rather, they are a stepping stone to source appropriate interests and facilitate making initial contacts. For instance, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, which is close to the heart of so many Western people, has an active support group within Dubbo which involves many people who have relocated to town from western areas.

The Bushies BBQs are being held on the second Thursday of each month, commencing 'about an hour before sundown,' at the Macquarie Club in South Dubbo. People bring their own food, so no organizing is required. During winter the theme may change.

Thursdays have been picked, to avoid weekends, acknowledging that 'when you retire every day seems the same,' but coinciding with livestock sale days, on the off chance any out of town 'visitors' are most welcome.

At the first BBQ held in March, and organised in less than a week,

approximately 25 people attended. Their previous rural locations included Walgett, Collarenebri, Angledool, Goodooga, Brewarrina, Enngonnia, Bourke, Wanaaring, Wilcannia and Ivanhoe. These people represent only a small proportion of the numerous people who have gravitated to Dubbo in recent years.

If you are considering relocating to Dubbo in the future, it is hoped that the ongoing existence of these Bushies BBQs will facilitate a softer landing than has existed for others previously.

If you know of anyone who you believe could benefit by becoming involved, please advise me or refer them to me or others already involved. It is purely by word of mouth that we are promoting the existence of the Bushies BBQ. There is no necessity to have a Western Division association – that was purely a starting point.

The Bushies BBQ is identified as a practical means of addressing needs of some people who have moved to Dubbo. Other communities have 'Mens Sheds', Rural Museums and a host of other appropriate alternatives, not all of which are tea and scones.

The future of Bushies BBQ is now in the hands of those who attend.

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## Western Catchment Landcare forum is on again!

by Suzie Bunting, Landcare  
Coordinator, Western CMA

After the success of the first Western Catchment Landcare Forum hosted by the Barrier Area Rangecare Group in White Cliffs last August, it has been decided by the Western Catchment Landcare Steering Committee that the Landcare Forum should become an annual event.

Funding has been secured from the National Landcare Program to hold the 2007 Landcare Forum on Saturday, 22 September at the Cobar Bowling and Golf Club. It will be hosted by the Kergunyah, Buckwaroon Catchment and Mount Boppy Landcare groups.

A steering committee (made up of representatives from each of the Cobar-based Landcare groups) have been working hard to put together a program which will appeal to Landcare group members, landholders and interested people in the wider community.

The theme for this year's Landcare forum is 'Soil Sustainability in the Western Catchment'.

The morning session of the program will consist of noted guest speakers discussing issues influencing the future of Landcare and sustainable agriculture in the Western Catchment.

Topics include pasture cropping and its effect on soil health, natural sequence farming, carbon sequestration and carbon trading.

The afternoon session will give delegates the opportunity to experience first-hand, some of the land management practices that people are implementing to ensure sustainable use of soils in the Cobar area.

Field trips to local businesses will allow participants to learn about water spreading to improve native pasture regeneration, conservation farming techniques, mine site rehabilitation or visiting Mt Drysdale, a conservation area showcasing unusual

native vegetation and important Aboriginal and European Settler sites.

The Forum will conclude with drinks and dinner, including the presentation of the Country Energy Environmental Care Awards, which recognise environmental achievement within the Western Catchment. Winners of these awards are eligible to enter in the State Landcare Awards to be held in October.

More information on the program and registration will be available in the next issue of the Western Division Newsletter.

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# Climate change – new results

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

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has started releasing the details of its latest study into the why, how much and what next of climate change.

The reports are compiled by about 2500 scientists from all around the world working in specially formed groups to look at various aspects of climate change and how it could impact and at possible mitigation.

They take about 2 years to complete and are repeated every 5 years or so. This latest one is the fourth and is an update on the 2001 report which was when the argument about was it real was clearly settled.

Since then the science has improved with clearer understanding of some of the things which produce feedbacks and with some of the things which can change very quickly as well as tightening up on some of the known factors. Also more computer power, which allows study of whole of globe systems at much smaller resolution, this time at 100 x 100 km spacings compared to the 500 x 500 km spacings of the 2001 study. This increased resolution shows up

interactions within the systems a lot better and narrows the possible errors over the long term. Results from this report are more definite about direction and extent and with lower margins.

The reports will be released throughout 2007, with different groups reporting at different times. The Science group has provided a 'summary for policy makers', released on Feb 2. The Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability group will have a summary available on April 6 and the Mitigation group report on May 3.

Full detailed reports from each group are expected a few weeks after the summary reports and all should be available on the IPCC web site at <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

The very interesting Science summary report is already on the web.

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology and the CSIRO are combining to do regional downscaling of the IPCC assessment which should provide a guide to the likely extent of change and the possible impacts at a scale useful for farm business planning. They have targeted October 2007 for its release.

# Fresh wool production to fall sharply over the next six months

The full impact of the 2006 drought in Australia will be evidenced by sharply lower fresh wool production over the next six months, according to the latest release (23 March 2007) by the Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) Production Forecasting Committee.

The Industry based Committee predicts that for the last four months of the 2006/07 season, shorn wool production and broker receivables will decline by an average of 20%–25% year-on-year. This will result in Australian shorn wool production falling to 425 million kilograms greasy for the full season.

Committee Chairman Dr David James said it was important that those in the industry understood the distinction between production and supply to market. Wool supply, as measured by auction offerings, has been particularly robust for the 2006/07 season, with the increase in auction offerings largely being met by shearings brought forward and the release of wool grower stocks held in-store and on-farm.

‘However, this increase in supply should not be confused with shorn wool production. It is expected that Australian

fresh wool production will decline significantly over the next six to eight months as the full impact of the drought hits,’ said Dr James.

Highlighting what happens to the seasonal pattern of fresh wool production in a drought, Dr James pointed to 2002/03. In the 2002/03 season, wool production and broker receivables had their sharpest decline in April and May 2003, when AWTA test volumes (greasy) declined by as much as 30% year-on-year.

‘We can certainly expect a decline of a similar magnitude in April and May 2007, given the severity of the 2006 drought. The 2006 drought appears to be every bit as bad and potentially worse, as in 2002. In 2002, the drought was largely across the eastern seaboard, but the 2006 drought is Australia-wide, including key wool growing areas in Western Australia and also the western district of Victoria,’ said Dr David James.

The committee also made its first forecast for the 2007/08 season. A significant part of the first half of this season is also expected to be adversely affected by the latest drought. Assuming normal season conditions for the winter dominant rainfall regions across Australia, the Committee forecasts that Australian wool production will decline modestly to 420 mkg greasy. Offsetting a projected overall improvement in fleece weights in 2007/08 will be a 4.5% or 4.5 million head decrease in the number of sheep shorn for the season, resulting from a sell-off of sheep by woolgrowers through much of the 2006/07 season in response to the drought.

A full report of the latest forecast is available on the AWI website at [www.wool.com.au/forecasts](http://www.wool.com.au/forecasts). The next meeting of the AWI Production Forecasting Committee is scheduled for Thursday 28 June 2007.

## Mallee Sheep Nutrition Workshops



Grain and Graze (G&G) Mallee Project, operated by Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc. are holding interactive Sheep Nutrition workshops at Balranald and Wentworth on 19 July 2007.

Farmers will have the opportunity to listen to, and interact with the highly regarded speaker, San Jolly from ‘Productive Nutrition Pty Ltd’ who will be addressing a variety of livestock issues including sheep nutrition, feed lotting, complementary feeding, critical nutrition periods, ewe and lamb feed requirements plus much more.

These nutrition workshops will be highly farmer interactive and should not be missed by anyone carrying out a livestock enterprise.

For more information contact

Zubair Shahzad  
(03) 5021 9103 or  
Graeme McIntosh  
(03) 50198404



NSW DEPARTMENT OF  
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# Snakes alive – return of the Bardick!

During a recent fauna survey on Petro Station, NSW (owned by the Doyle family), a Bardick was captured.

The Bardick (*Echiopsis curta*), listed as an endangered snake in NSW, reaches 60 cm in length (averaging 35 cm) and has a large head, thick body and short tail. The colour can vary from olive to brown above and grey brown below.

The Bardick is venomous, nocturnal and lives in Porcupine Grass and Mallee vegetation.

Only two records for this species are known for NSW, collected in 1974 and 1983 from the Balranald district, occurring within 100 km of each other.

Peter Ewin, Regional Biodiversity Conservation Officer with the Department of Environment and Conservation, believes this to be ‘a very significant find for the region, giving important habitat and distribution information for the species’.

The survey occurred as part of the Mallee Fire and Biodiversity Project, being undertaken by La Trobe and Deakin Universities with support from;

- Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority (LMD CMA),
- Department of Conservation and Environment,
- Land and Water Australia,
- Mallee Catchment Management Authority,
- Department of Sustainability and Environment Vic,
- Parks Victoria,
- Department for Environment and Heritage SA,
- Australian Wildlife Conservancy,
- Birds Australia and
- Landholders.



‘This important project aims to assist land managers with fire planning in the region and will provide important information on the habitat requirements of threatened species,’ said Mr Mark King, Chair LMD CMA

Other significant species found during the surveys in the region included the Jewelled Gecko and the Southern Ningau (a small native marsupial) both listed as vulnerable in NSW. The Mallee Worm-lizard, Slender Mallee Blue-tongued Lizard and Western Pygmy Possum, all listed as endangered in NSW were also captured.

For further information on this project please contact the Biodiversity Officer at LMD CMA on (03) 5021 9460.

The Bardick. Photo courtesy Noel Hayward LMD CMA



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# To the Landholder



# Western Division newsletter

**The editor of the WDN welcomes contributions**

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120	Nov–Dec	1 October 2007	Fax: (02) 6993 2177
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