

newsletter



GASCOYNE
CATCHMENTS PROJECT

Developing an ecologically sustainable,
profitable and respected pastoral industry

Issue 1.
JUNE 2008



Looking at the land systems,
Mia Mia Station



Floodplain near Lake MacLeod,
April 2008



Total grazing management yards,
Gnaraloo Station

Welcome to the first edition of the Gascoyne Catchments project quarterly newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to inform and involve people working and living with the pastoral industry in the southern rangelands about this project, its outcomes and its success stories!

the project & its partners

What is the project you might ask? Well the 'Restoration and rehabilitation of the Carnarvon Basin and the Gascoyne catchment' or Gascoyne Catchments Project, is working towards improved rangeland condition and increases in production levels within the catchments, whilst supporting the development of industry and regional leadership. It was developed by the Lyndon, Upper Gascoyne and Gascoyne Wooramel Land Conservation District Committees (LCDC) in 2006 and received funding late last year through the Rangelands Natural Resource Management Co-ordinating Group.

The project is essentially being driven by the pastoral industry, with support and resources being delivered by the Ecologically Sustainable Rangelands Management (ESRM) program - a Department of Agriculture and Food program. This program works with pastoralists to develop property action plans which identify the factors that drive landscape function, biodiversity and livestock productivity. Land managers, in collaboration with ESRM, can then use this knowledge to assess current management practices and develop appropriate interventions.

Working predominately in the Gascoyne Catchments with this

project is proving a rewarding experience for ESRM. By supporting the delivery of this project they have found partnerships with regional communities and industry critical in being able to assist in the delivery of many great initiatives. Some of these include:

- Development of a self assessment and reporting tool. Jodie Caunt from Mooloo Downs will be working on this project over the next 12 months;
- Rigorous project planning occurring to clearly demonstrate to the wider community what the project is trying to achieve and how the project intends to meet its obligations. This will gradually improve the quality and delivery of natural resource based projects in the Rangelands;
- Gathering of new information, technologies and expertise that are currently being used in other Rangelands environments. We have recognised how important it is to look beyond our own region for solutions to some of the problems we now face;
- Strengthening industry leadership in the region by supporting their initiatives and empowering local decision makers.

the project drivers

In order to have a successful industry driven project, a steering committee was established in December 2007 to ensure that the LCDCs were receiving the maximum potential from the project. The process to appoint the steering committee involved sending an invitation to all members of the three LCDCs to discuss the project and its objectives and to determine members who wanted to assist in driving it. The following members were appointed on the steering committee;

Upper Gascoyne Representatives

Jim Caunt (Chair), Lachlan and Hamish McTaggart, Ross Collins "Jocks" and David Robinson.

Lyndon Representatives

John Percy (Chair), John Forsyth, Glen Dellar, Rodney Watters and Sean D'Arcy.

Wooramel Representatives

Justin Steadman

Project needs that were identified included the employment of two local contractors – one to develop the monitoring and self assessment tool and another to coordinate the marketing and communications of the project. Consequently Jodie Caunt from Mooloo Downs and Alex Harper from Dust Up Projects were contracted to meet these needs.

The four ESRM staff involved in the project are Luke Bayley (program manager), Karen Johnson, Karen Roberts and Richard Glover. Richard is based in Carnarvon and the remaining three officers are currently based in Geraldton, although relocating to Carnarvon by the end of 2008.

planning to date

The steering committee sought the help of a facilitator in May to help set the direction of the project. Rob Richards from Victoria was engaged as the consultant for a one day intensive workshop to develop the project logic. This logic clearly demonstrated what the project is trying to achieve and it enabled the committee to determine a specific vision and short and long term objectives, which will also allow the group to monitor its success and failures. The vision of the project is 'to develop an ecologically sustainable, profitable and respected pastoral industry that supports an adaptive and vibrant community'.

The ESRM team's on-ground planning to date has seen 10 property plans developed. With the completion of each plan, staff are delivering with more confidence and insight. A range of targeted and innovative financial incentives will be delivered throughout 2009 and 2010 to assist in the adoption of sustainable pastoral practices in the Gascoyne region.

These will not be available to everybody, they will be targeted for maximum effectiveness and only distributed on pastoral leases that have demonstrated sound planning and committed involvement with the Gascoyne Catchments project.

To register your interest in ESRM visiting your station to complete a property plan, please contact either Luke Bayley or Alex Harper from the project team.



events

Friday 25th July

Steering Committee Meeting
Lotteries House, Carnarvon

Sunday 28th September – Thursday 2nd October

15th Australian Rangeland
Society Conference, Charters
Town, QLD



project team contacts

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