

# the burnett buzz...

January 2010

## Improved pastures popular with Monto graziers

Over fifty graziers packed the Monto Town Hall on Friday, 27th November, to update their skills in sown pasture establishment in time for the coming wet season.

The full day workshop, hosted by the Burnett Catchment Care Association (BCCA) was part of Better Catchments; an Australian Government "Caring for Our Country" program. The workshop was presented by Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries



*Monto grazier John Sinclair, sharing his sown pasture experience with the group on his property, "Hollow Hills".*

(QPI&F) Extension Officer, Damien O'Sullivan who is one of the few remaining specialists in pastures in the Burnett.

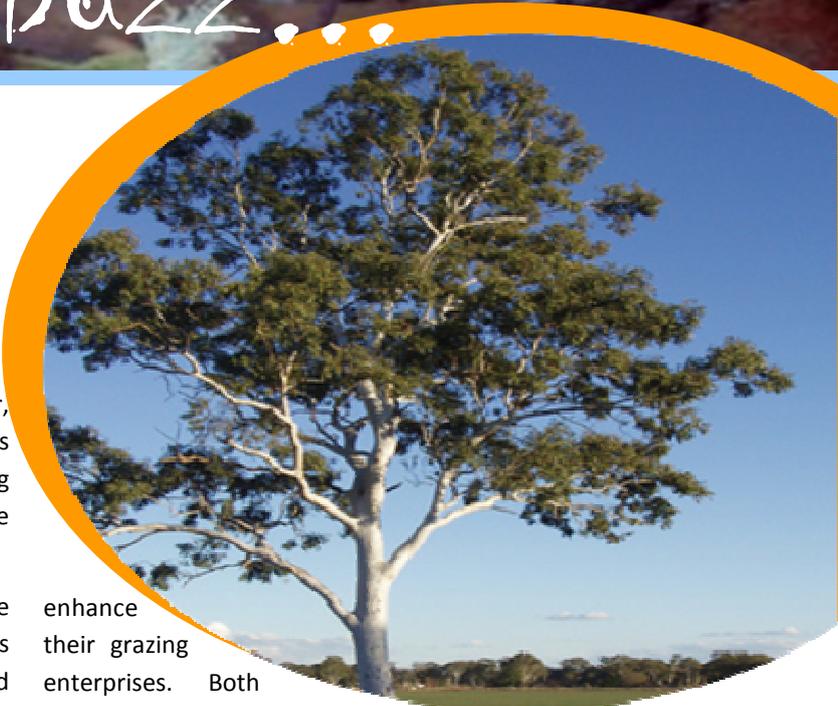
Mr O'Sullivan opened the floor to the keen attendees to share their successful and not so successful experiences with establishing improved pastures in the North Burnett. Mr O'Sullivan also discussed the tools available to graziers that assist in reducing the risk of pasture establishment such as "HowOften", a simple rainfall pattern predictor based on historical rainfall records.

As added enticement for the participants, each were offered the choice of two soil management incentives; either soil test vouchers or the computer mapping program "Phoenix" to

enhance their grazing enterprises. Both were eagerly received by the participants.

After a great BBQ lunch put on by local agricultural business, Farmstuff, the crowd ventured into the heat to visit some local properties and discuss appropriate sown pasture species with the potential to be established when the season breaks.

BCCA Chairman, Paul Lobegeier said he was extremely impressed to see so many graziers in one room, all keen to be prepared once the rains do come.



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## New year, New BCCA office

**BCCA are back in the swing of things for 2010.**

But everything is not as it seems—the main BCCA office has moved from Mundubbera to Monto.

In 2009 we said farewell to our Administration Officer, Letetia Berthelsen, and hello

to a new office located at 6 Lyell St, Monto (the old IT Centre). Program Manager Katie Muller & Extension Officer Leeanne Witcher will be based at this office.

The Mundubbera office address is still occupied by Extension Officer, Louise Newman.

*Leeanne Witcher in the BCCA Monto Office*



### Highlights

- More than 40 graziers are participating in Reef Rescue 2009
- Better Catchments in the inland Burnett
- BCCA office relocates to Monto
- Nest protection underway for threatened freshwater turtle
- Killara Creek recovery in Mundubbera

# Continuing partnerships with QPI&F

During the later months of 2009, BCCA held a number of workshops in conjunction with Qld Primary Industries & Fisheries.

The first workshop held in the South Burnett on 24th November, was the one day 'Stocktake' workshop.

'Stocktake' is a pasture monitoring tool developed by the QPI&F aimed at assisting graziers to maintain good ground cover, which is pertinent for good soil management. The workshop had 6 participants with most attendees keen to put the tool into place in 2010 with the help from BCCA staff.

The second workshop in the south was to assist grain growers to use the newly developed Grains Best

Management Practice (Grains BMP).

Grain growers from across the south Burnett converged on Kingaroy on the 9th December, to be some of the first users of the online version of the Grains BMP.

The Grains BMP was developed by the Fitzroy Basin Association, AgForce and QPI&F as a tool for grain growers to assess their current management systems and to determine what improvements can be made to reach 'Best Management' standards.

Not to be outdone though, the north Burnett also pulled together for a hugely successful Pasture Establishment workshop held in Monto, on 27th November 2009.

We're very pleased to be able to continue to work with the QPI&F to bring the latest information to Burnett landholders.



Grain grower Nathan McKee and BGA AgriServices agronomist Damien Sippel, work through the online version of the Grains BMP in Kingaroy in November 2009



## Better Catchments '09 breakdown

BCCA is continuing with the Better Catchments program again in 2009/10.

Better Catchments is an innovative of BMRG and is funded by the Australian Governments Caring for Our Country program.

This financial year, Better Catchments is targeting improving soil management practices.

To compliment the workshops being run in the Burnett for 2009/10, BCCA have been able to provide workshop participants with small incentives to help landholders improve their soil

management practices.

For each of the workshops currently run through Better Catchments, a number of small incentives were on offer to participants:

### 1. Stocktake workshop

- Assistance from BCCA to set up Stocktake monitoring sites on property in 2010.

### 2. Pasture Establishment

- Soil test vouchers
- *Phoenix* Computer mapping software

### 3. Grains BMP

- Small cash incentive to assist with a project that will improve soil management, as identified in the growers Action Plan from the Grains BMP

A GLM Forum will be held in the new year. Along with this, other workshops will be conducted, with cash incentives available to help improve soil health.

Keep an eye on our website for more information and future workshops in your area!

[www.betterburnett.com](http://www.betterburnett.com)

## What's on around the Burnett...

**Jan 1**— Happy New Year!

**Feb 3** — Grains BMP follow-up workshop, Kingaroy

**Early Feb** — Grains BMP workshop, Monto

**Mid Feb** —Compost Tea workshop, Mundubbera

**Feb - May** — More Better Catchments workshops for 2010

**Apr - May**—Wild dog and fox baiting for turtle nest protection in East Burnett

**April 2-5** — Easter break

## From Elsie's Diary

January to March is the mating season for Elsie the White Throated Snapping Turtle.

If you think you've seen this species during your travels, we'd love to hear about it!



become a fan of 'Elsie' the Elsey

## Coastal Graziers to Rescue the Reef

**Coastal graziers are benefiting in a big way from the Australian Governments Reef Rescue .**

The Burnett Mary Reef Partnership has been providing incentives to farmers & graziers in the Great Barrier Reef catchments to improve farm management practices, mainly to keep their fertiliser, soil and chemicals on farm. BCCA was involved in delivering the grazing component of Reef Rescue for the Burnett Mary Regional Group.

The Plan, in its second year, is working with 47 graziers to reduce sediment runoff to the reef, with \$375,000 in cash incentives for our region. This, along with landholder contributions, will accomplish projects valued at over \$1.1 million. This is in addition to year

one of Reef Rescue, whereby 43 graziers completed projects, valued at \$900,000.

BCCA's LEEANNE WITCHER said, "The on-ground works will not only account for a reduction in sediment export from the land, benefiting the Reef, but they will also benefit for producers, enhancing their sustainability."



*Grazier John Bell with new fence to help protect sediment into the reef.*

John Bell is a Bororen grazier who received funding during year one of the Reef Rescue program. He used the funding to install additional fencing and water infrastructure that will allow paddock rotation, and therefore the ability to spell the pasture. Spelling of pasture helps maintain adequate ground cover, which, during a rainfall event, will reduce the amount of sediment loss from the paddock.

"This additional infrastructure has given me the ability to spell my pastures, along with making it easier to manage the herd", said Mr Bell.

Other activities funded include erosion control, fencing landtypes, additional watering points & revegetation of riparian areas.

## Central BCCA Branch clean up their act

**BCCA Central Branch, together with the North Burnett Regional Council put together a Healthy Habitats project in 2009 and got busy planting trees with the help of almost 100 kids from Mundubbera State School.**

The native tree, shrub and groundcover species went in easily and the weed matting proved worthwhile, but nothing could protect the plants against the black frost that hit the area only a few weeks after planting.

So, after a bit of time to recover, some Central members got out there again in the December heat to tidy up the weeds and replant the plants that had been killed.

After our good summer rainfall the plants should be able to survive.

The two groups were again successful in receiving a grant to continue this project that is helping to improve the creekline of Killara Creek and has become a welcome sight to travelers

into town and locals.



*Some of the Mundubbera school students who lent a helping hand to revegetate Killara Creek*

## Threatened turtle looks to landholders

**Have you heard of the White Throated Snapping Turtle?** Ever seen one? Did you know they are a high priority on the EPA's 'Back on Track' program?

*Elseya albagula* is large freshwater bum-breather, not unlike the Mary River Turtle, with many of the same threats to its survival.

Their nests along the Burnett River are being destroyed by wild dogs and foxes as well as their native predators, and

the population numbers are getting dangerously out of proportion.

But we can all help! Landholders along the Burnett River west of Bundaberg can bait for dogs to keep their numbers down.

BCCA will be working with the community to erect a nest protection fence to create a small safe haven for some nest areas near Pine Creek. Updates on this project will be on the

web and in the next BCCA newsletter!



*Elseya albagula*  
White Throated Snapping Turtle  
Photo courtesy of: Marilyn O'Connell



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## Who are we?

BCCA is a community organisation working on the philosophy of integrated catchment management. Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) is a philosophy that encourages a coordinated approach to the management of natural resources in Queensland. Its overall purpose is to integrate the management of land, water and related biological resources in order to achieve their sustainable and balanced use.

ICM involves the voluntary actions of stakeholders including government, rural landholders, industry, fisheries and urban dwellers that incorporate the goals of achieving and maintaining a healthy catchment for future generations.

BCCA is a member run organisation. If you'd like to become a member please phone or email the office for a membership form!

## Last word...

My goodness, what a year 2009 was & what a wonderful wet start to 2010!

Since our last newsletter, the team have been extremely busy delivering the Reef Rescue and Better Catchments programs.

Both of these programs BCCA are delivering are funded under the Australian Governments 'Caring for our Country' program and involve assisting landholders in reducing sediment loss from their property (Reef Rescue), and improving soil health (Better Catchments).

These programs have allowed BCCA to interact directly with landholders to deliver on-ground incentives or training through a number of workshops.

There have been some changes to

BCCA over the last few months. Letetia, our Admin officer, has left us, accepting a permanent position at the Bendigo Bank in Mundubbera. BCCA wish her and her family all the very best and the team at BCCA will miss her cheery persona!

With Letetia resigning, we decided that it would be most economical and efficient if the administration office be relocated to Monto, whereby Leeanne and I could share the role of administration and finance. Our office in Monto was originally based at the Monto Library, and was becoming quite cramped! We decided to relocate to the IT Centre, which has plenty of space to hold meetings, and Leeanne and I are not tripping over each other! We share this office space



*The BCCA team—Louise Newman, Katie Muller and Leeanne Witcher*

with the North Burnett Landcare Group Inc, which is a great partnership!

I would like to take the opportunity to wish everybody a continuing wet and prosperous 2010! We hope to see you all within the year at the various workshops we will be running around the catchment.

*Katie Muller*