

# the burnett buzz...

Summer 2013

## LAND FOR WILDLIFE - in the inland Burnett

Land For Wildlife continues to partner with Burnett Mary Regional Group and with BCCA here in the North Burnett and South Burnett Regional Council areas.

Over the past 12 months, BCCA have undertaken nine Land For Wildlife property assessments: six in the south Burnett and three in the north Burnett.

The program has been well supported in the south with around 50 active Land For Wildlife properties registered.

Before registering, landholders demonstrate to the Land For Wildlife Officer some of the best habitat features on the property, which can sometimes mean taking a walk around the property or getting in the four wheel drive and touring around the back roads. During this time, some of the plant species are being recorded as well as other habitat features such as important nesting hollows in trees or vines that are essential habitat for butterflies.

Once the Land For Wildlife officer is satisfied that the property fits the criteria for Land For Wildlife, the landholders receive the iconic green diamond Land For Wildlife sign and a folder of information and maps relating to their property and wildlife management.

In Gayndah, Mr. Mike Goebel recently registered his property as Land For Wildlife. At the time of assessment there hadn't been much rain, less than an inch over three months and things were very dry, but that didn't mean there wasn't essential wildlife habitat around. The long native grasses provide perfect habitat for spiders to spin their webs to catch the insects that shelter there, and both provide food for lizards who in the spring time were active again now that the sun had more heat.

**"we spotted a range of birds, including the red-backed fairy wren and pale headed rosellas"**

The property is just shy of 2 hectares however that is not a limiting factor to the Land For Wildlife program in the inland

Burnett.

There were wattles and narrow-leaved ironbarks with a shrubby understory and native grasses and sedges. During the visit we spotted a range of birds, including the red-backed fairy wren and pale headed rosellas who were struggling to find enough food in the dry season.

For more information about Land For Wildlife or if you are interested in registering your property as Land for Wildlife, contact the staff at the BCCA office or check out [www.betterburnett.com/land-for-wildlife](http://www.betterburnett.com/land-for-wildlife).



Contact Louise @  
M: 0409 893 972  
E: [bush@betterburnett.com](mailto:bush@betterburnett.com)



Mike Goebel, on his Land for Wildlife property in Gayndah



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### Highlights

- Reef Rescue Case Study
- Useful information regarding Flood Recovery Assistance
- Cat's Claw Creeper Control in the North Burnett
- BlazeAid lending a hand for flooded farmers
- Staff members flood photos
- Welcome Veronica to the BCCA team
- An endangered species found in the inland Burnett

# North Burnett Landcare set to claw down a pest

The North Burnett Landcare Group have been successful in obtaining an \$88,000 grant from the Queensland Governments Everyone's Environment fund. The group aim to implement physical, biological and chemical treatments to reduce the dominance of cats claw creeper in the Threemoon and Monal Creeks; from the headwaters of the catchment to their junction at Huntings Bridge.

**"flooding has seen large quantities of the pest wash downstream highlighting the importance of starting at the top of the catchment.."**

Cat's claw creeper (CCC) is an aggressive, woody climber which has the ability to completely smother native vegetation. It spreads readily from seed carried by wind

and water and can reproduce vegetatively through sprouting of persistent underground tubers.

The recent flooding has seen large quantities of the pest species wash downstream, (although much still remains) highlighting the importance of starting control treatments at the top of the catchment.

The coordinated control program will involve participation by landholders, landcare members, council staff, high school students and volunteer labour.

The program will be bolstered by further funding from the Burnett Mary Regional Group to establish demonstration sites, exhibiting the results of the different methods of control such as cut stump chemical applications, chemical spray applications and biological control using the tinged bug (*Carvalhotingis visenda*).



For further information, contact North Burnett Landcare Group E: [nblgmonto@gmail.com](mailto:nblgmonto@gmail.com).

## Staff Profile – Veronica Chapman

Hi, my name is Veronica Chapman and I recently joined the BCCA team as the Grazing Project Coordinator. I am based in Bundaberg.

I started the role in early January and commenced Reef Rescue Grazing completion visits in my first week on the job. I will also be working with landholders on Property Management Plans and am looking forward to some pasture monitoring in coming months. In addition, I am assisting the other members of the BCCA team with the various projects we have "on the go".



**"...I was based in Emerald as an extension officer on the Central Queensland Sustainable Farming Systems Project"**

Previously, I worked for the Queensland Department of Primary Industries in various roles in southern and central Queensland. Most recently, I was the Farm Financial Counselor based in Bundaberg assisting primary producers to understand their financial position and help them to identify and assess different options to improve this position. While based in St George I worked with cotton growers in southern Queensland to contribute to regional natural resource management targets and to implement the Land and Water

Management module of the Cotton Industry Best Management Practices (BMP) Program. For several years prior to that I was based in Emerald as an extension officer on the Central Queensland Sustainable Farming Systems Project.

I have a Bachelor of Agricultural Science, extension and communication qualifications and a Masters of Professional Accounting.

While I bring a diverse set of skills and experience to the Grazing Project Coordinator role, I am keen to learn much more as I work with landholders in the Burnett, the BCCA team and the other agricultural and natural resource management individuals and groups.

*Veronica Chapman*

Contact Veronica @ M: 0448 114 502 E: [veronica@betterburnett.com](mailto:veronica@betterburnett.com)

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

|        |  |               |  |
|--------|--|---------------|--|
| TBA    | SEB Landcare Flood Recovery BBQ, Booubyjan Hall                    | 20 Mar        | Innovations in Agriculture & Natural Resource Management Conference, The Pavilion Brisbane |
| 6 Mar  | FBA Carbon Farming for Graziers, Biloela                           | 20 Mar—26 Mar | RCS Grazing for Profit, Rockhampton  |
| 18 Mar | Biodiversity Fund Round 2 EOI close                                | 6 Apr         | SE Burnett Landcare Identifying Native Plants and Grasses Field Day, Booubyjan             |
| 20 Mar | BCCA General Meeting, Mundubbera                                   | 8 May—11 May  | Agrotrend, Bundaberg   |
| 20 Mar | Caring for our Country Community Landcare Grant Applications close |               |  |

# Do you need assistance with flood recovery?

There are plenty of groups, organisations and individuals who are able to assist you in flood recovery. However, if you are unsure of who to contact please feel free to call BCCA as we may be able to assist you directly or refer you to the relevant person or organisation.

## Grants and low interest loans for primary producers directly affected by flooding

Grants and low interest loans are available to eligible primary producers directly impacted by the recent flooding and rainfall associated with Tropical Cyclone Oswald. These measures are administered by QRAA. To be eligible you must have received direct damage and your enterprise must be located in an activated local government area. Other eligibility criteria apply for each form of financial assistance so it is important to check that your business meets all criteria. In addition, funds are to be spent on eligible costs only. There are three (3) forms of financial assistance available to eligible primary producers –

- Special Disaster Assistance Scheme - grants up to \$25 000 for primary producers
- Natural Disaster Assistance Scheme - low interest loans up to a maximum of \$250,000
- Exceptional Disaster Assistance - a loan and grant package up to \$650,000

### Special Disaster Assistance Scheme - grants up to \$25 000 for primary producers

Grants of up to \$25,000 are available to assist eligible primary producers as follows:

- Initial grant: up to \$5,000 to assist you with immediate recovery
- Subsequent grant: up to \$20,000 to recover costs that you have paid in order to repair direct flood damage.

The grant is not intended to compensate for loss of income and is subject to future audit. Therefore, it is important to keep evidence of your expenditure.

The grant enables you to cover the costs associated with cleaning and restoration activities including:

- purchasing, hiring or leasing plant, equipment or materials to clean up or resume business activities
- clearing or disposing of debris and damaged goods or injured or dead livestock
- repairing buildings or essential fittings in buildings other than houses
- repairing or reconditioning essential plant or equipment

- repairing roads, fences and dams and other essential infrastructure
- repairing or restoring fields
- purchasing fodder or saving crops or feed for livestock
- maintain the health of livestock or poultry
- engaging a person to clean or conduct a safety inspection of premises
- paying additional wages to an employee to assist with the clean-up and restoration work.

### Natural Disaster Assistance Scheme - low interest loans up to a maximum of \$250,000

If your enterprise has sustained significant damage as a result of Cyclone Oswald and the grant funds will not be sufficient to allow your business to recover you may wish to apply for a Natural Disaster Assistance low interest loan through QRAA.

A low interest loan, up to a maximum of \$250,000, can assist you to re-establish your primary production enterprise by covering costs such as:

- repairing or replacing damaged plant and equipment
- repairing or replacing farm buildings
- purchasing livestock to replace those lost in the disaster event and
- meeting carry-on requirements including -
- re-planting, restoring or re-establishing areas affected by the disaster event
- essential property operations
- paying rent and rates

Natural Disaster Assistance loans are for a maximum term of 7 years with an interest rate of 1.7% and no fees or charges apply. An interest only period of up to 2 years may be negotiated with QRAA depending on circumstances.

### Exceptional Disaster Assistance - a loan and grant package up to \$650,000

If your enterprise has suffered extreme damage and the assistance available under the Special Disaster Assistance Scheme (grants up to \$25,000) and Natural Disaster Assistance Scheme (loan up to \$250,000) is inadequate to meet your recovery needs, you may be eligible under the Exceptional Disaster Assistance Scheme for a loan and grant package up to \$650,000.

Exceptional Disaster Assistance loans are for a maximum term of 10 years. The loan is interest free for the first 2 years converting to an initial interest rate of 1.7% from the third year. No fees or charges apply.

QRAA requires adequate security for the loans and a demonstration that the business will be viable following the assistance.

For more details on grants and loans, eligibility guidelines and application forms –

- visit the QRAA website [www.qraa.qld.gov.au](http://www.qraa.qld.gov.au) and follow the links
- contact QRAA on Freecall 1800 623 946 or
- contact your local QRAA Client Liaison Officer

\$25,000 grants available to eligible primary producers affected by the recent flooding in the Burnett Catchment.

Contact BCCA if you would like assistance in applying for funding. We may be able to help you or put you in touch with the best person or organisation to help.

Phone: (07) 4166 3898

## Flood recovery assistance available from Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry - Queensland (DAFF Qld)

DAFF Qld have services available to assist landholders to recover from recent flooding and cyclone events.

They can provided assistance with –

- Accessing financial assistance (eg. grants, concessional loans & freight subsidies where applicable)
- Coordinating fodder availability
- Technical advice on crop damage, weed management and soil-borne disease
- Managing animal welfare and identifying stray cattle
- Business recovery information

If you have been affected by the recent flooding events and would like to find out how DAFF can help please call the Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23.

## CASE STUDY—Deb Sanderson & Greg Carr



**D**eb Sanderson and Greg Carr purchased their 560 ac (228 ha) grazing property at Mt Maria in August 2011. The property was originally a Paulowna tree farm but the majority of these trees had died. While the property had good water infrastructure for irrigation there were no internal fences. Improved pasture consisting of signal grass and legumes (siratro and wynn cassia) had been planted by the previous owners.

**“Reef Rescue has allowed them to fast-track their internal fencing plan enabling them to fence off the other side of Island Ck”**

Deb and Greg had fenced one side of Island Creek to exclude cattle prior to becoming aware of Reef Rescue funding. Their Reef Rescue project has allowed

them to fast-track their internal fencing plan enabling them to fence off the other side of Island Creek, create a well-designed creek crossing, divide one large paddock into three smaller ones and install a tank and trough in one of the newly created paddocks. This will allow effective rotational grazing and improved water quality through a reduction in the export of sediment from the property.

Deb and Greg have already achieved a lot in the short time since they purchased the property. However, they have identified further work needs to be done to allow the property to reach its grazing potential. These activities include fixing some of the boundary fences, continuing to remove trickle tape left from the previous Paulowna plantation,

some erosion control measures and weed management. BCCA will assist Deb and Greg in coming months to plan and prioritise these activities through the Property Management Planning process. They currently run a small breeder herd and will build numbers as property development work progresses.



*Greg Carr in a newly-created paddock with a tank and trough installed which was funded under the Reef Rescue Program. This infrastructure will contribute to improved water quality by allowing effective rotational grazing and ground cover maintenance on the property.*



Contact Veronica @  
M: 0448 114 502  
E: veronica@betterburnett.com

## BlazeAid to the rescue in the inland Burnett

**W**ithin eight days of the flood waters receding in Monto, help in the form of BlazeAid was set up at the showgrounds, ready to get stuck in!

BlazeAid is a volunteer-based organisation that works with farmers and families in rural Australia after natural disasters such as fires and floods. Born out of the Black Saturday bush fires in 2009, BlazeAid founder Kevin Butler saw an urgent need for many hands to help rebuild the lost fences. Working alongside the farmers, the volunteers help to remove debris and rebuild fences that have been damaged or destroyed. The volunteers not only rebuild

infrastructure but they rebuild farmers hopes and spirits.

The volunteers are predominately grey nomads but also backpackers hoping to extend their visas by doing some volunteering.

**“over 30 volunteers have helped clean debris off over 50km of fences and re-erect almost 20km of fences on more than 24 farms”**

The speed at which BlazeAid arrived in Monto was thanks to some highly proactive farmers and a hugely supportive community. In the first two and a half weeks of operation, over 30 volunteers have helped clean debris off over 50km of fences and re-erect almost 20km of fences on more than 24 farms! With over 60 farmers registered for assistance the BlazeAid crew will be around for quite a while longer.

If you are in the Monto district and have not yet registered with BlazeAid for assistance and want to, contact Kim on 0497 226 626.



*Cleaning debris off fences on a Monto property  
Photo: David Binskin*

BlazeAid is quickly establishing camps in the Central Burnett and Murgon areas also.

All three camps urgently need more volunteers too, so to volunteer, visit [www.blazeaid.com.au](http://www.blazeaid.com.au) or call the camp coordinators below.

The assistance these volunteer camps will bring to our small, agricultural dependent inland Burnett towns will have a significant influence in getting our farmers back on their feet and farming again.



To register for assistance for help from BlazeAid contact the appropriate camp coordinators:  
Monto: Kim 0497 226 626  
Central Burnett: Vikki 0418 180 688  
Murgon: Alison & Paul 0429 381 448



*The BlazeAid crew re-erecting fences on a Monto property*

# Some staffers flood photos



Knocked down Paulownia trees at Ceratodus 18/2/13



Debris in the trees at Ceratodus -18/2/13



Melinda's son catching carp from a Kapaldo dam bywash -27/1/13



Some of the full shed of hay destroyed at Katie's -31/1/13



Recently upgraded Cania Road -28/1/13



Threemoon Creek -28/1/13



3m+ high travelling irrigator

24/9/12 = what the flat usually looks like



Irrigator half under

12:30pm 26/1/13



Irrigator gone

7am 27/1/13

Katie's cultivation flat taken from house.  
The flooding came up further than this photo during the night and the shed in the middle of the paddock almost went under.  
The fence had been in for 3 weeks. The water lapped the bottom of the fence.

# Healthy habitat for critically endangered shrub

Local botanist Caroline Haskard was walking through a patch of scrub identifying the plants and soil types when she was met with a shrub that very few people have seen in the wild; it is so rare that in 2010 it was recognised as a critically endangered plant under the federal government's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.



*Lasiopetalum sp. Proston thick in flower.*  
Photo by Caroline Haskard

*Lasiopetalum* species Proston has no common name, but it is a shrub that can grow to 2.5 metres and has oblong green leaves that are covered in small hairs. The flowers – which come into display between September and November – are darker pink clusters also covered in small hairs. Eighteen months ago, there was only one known population for this species: along the Speedwell Range just north-east of Proston in the south Burnett. Ms Haskard was at a property near Allies Creek in the inland Burnett undertaking a vegetation assessment for a private landholder when she spotted the range at the back on the property. The range is deep red soils with thick softwood scrub vegetation – an ecosystem that is often rich in biodiversity and in this case it was relatively undisturbed. Taking a look along a dirt track that wound up the range, she spotted the *Lasiopetalum* species and reported it to the landholder, and the two agreed that it was a significant habitat that needed to be protected.

“...it’s status as a critically endangered plant means that no harm is to come about to this plant”

The landholder applied for a Healthy Habitats grant through BCCA to fence off the remnant vegetation which this newly identified population had been found. The fence had a double win because it kept the cattle out of a highly important ecosystem, but it also kept the cattle from hiding in the scrub when it came to mustering which had become a concern for the landholder. The result was just over two kilometers of stock-proof fencing and some lantana control to reduce cattle access and to reduce the threat of lantana encroaching in the habitat.

It’s status as a critically endangered plant means that no harm is to come about to this plant, it has the highest protection placed over it. Ms Haskard says “What it really means is no harm whatsoever is allowed to come to the plant in the wild. This has implications for the simplest work, like roadside slashing and grading, in the area where the plant is found. That damage prevents them from setting seed. If they’re slashed off, they have to grow again before they can flower and produce seed. It disrupts the natural biological reproduction process.”

The property has registered as a Land For Wildlife property, which recognises the habitat values of the remnant vegetation on private property.



*Lasiopetalum sp. Proston shrub near Allies Creek, approximately 1.8m tall.*



*The new Healthy Habitats fence line separating the vine thicket and eucalypt communities from the open grazing land.*

 Contact Louise @  
M: 0409 893 972  
E: bush@betterburnett.com

## Elsie's Diary



At the time of writing, our Burnett River & catchment area had been subject to major flooding. Nature has a way remaining resilient to these extreme events, however our infrastructure that we place in its path is not.

Two years ago the floods caused havoc on our nest protection sites where we had sand piled upon sand and stock-proof fences tangled up inside. This year, the nest protection work for the white-throated snapping turtle was not undertaken due to other commitments by all involved. However the riverbanks and nesting areas have once again been changed by the floods and will result in the females once again having to recover and then find new favourite nesting areas in the coming nesting season, which will begin in around April 2013.



# Australia Day Weekend in Mundubbera - a staff members perspective

Well, wasn't it a surprise to see just how much water flooded our land at the end of January 2013. I remember that I was in Bundaberg on the Wednesday before it started raining and when I went to the carwash the owner told me that it had been a quiet day because everyone had been thinking it was going to rain. I didn't believe him. How I was wrong!

I've grown up in Mundubbera and lived here most of my life. I'm also a Generation Y-er and that means that over my lifetime up until the flood event of 2010, I had never experienced a flood. I was shocked to see just how much water rose two years ago – it went over the Domitrios Bridge over the Burnett River here in Mundubbera, which was supposed to indicate a 1 in 100 year flood event. But then it happened again only two years later.

Following the heavy downpour in Mundubbera over Australia Day 2013 and the news that upstream in Monto and Eidsvold had had huge amounts of rainfall as well, our local SES group, of which I'm a member, was activated and begun evacuating at midnight. Residents in the lower lying areas of town who were flooded in 2010 were notified and began to pack their things.

At 6am the following morning the North Burnett Regional Council brought their big trucks from the depot across the river to the township to be used to help shift people's heavy belongings from their homes. I later heard that Mundubbera was the only town in the Burnett where this happened and the local staff here ought to be congratulated on their initiative.

The most important information that every resident wanted to know was 'how high would the waters reach?' Two years ago we learnt that even with the river height readers where they are along the river there is still not enough information to confidently predict how high the river will reach. So as time went on and the amount of information came in increased, so did the expected river height. Over 12 hours residents and businesses in Mundubbera evacuated street after street, everyone pitching in wherever they could. It was the only day where the road rules went out the window along with the flooded toilet roll paper, as people parked anywhere and everywhere they could to pack up homes and jumped on the back of trucks to help unload furniture.

*“a male pig wandered around grazing on the freshly greened grass that had only five days earlier been brown”*

Overnight the river rose to 22.9m, 0.72m short of the record 1942 flood height, and 4m higher than two years before. Most of the water to Mundubbera flowed from O'Bil Bil Creek which joined the Burnett River just upstream of town, where the Burnett River, Three Moon and Splinter Creeks had flooded paddocks in Monto, farms in Eidsvold and homes along the riverfront all the way down. Stories are still arising about people who woke to find water flowing through their bedrooms, not knowing that they needed to evacuate. Roads were cut across the region making moving impossible and on top of that, power and telecommunications were cut. It was each community for themselves.

The river past Mundubbera was flowing fast. The local policeman clocked floating livestock, bins and shipping containers going past at up to 85km/hr.

Once the waters receded, the clean up began. Supplies for cleaning products, drinking water and food were getting low as power had been off for days and roads were still being repaired and opened up to let trucks in. The landslip at Binjour range was proving a particular problem for traffic as only small vehicles were being let through. The same traffic limitations were applied to the Domitrios Bridge coming into Mundubbera over the river. Initial assessments were made to assess the safety and eventually we as the SES were called in to do traffic control, allowing one car across at a time, as damage to the bridge was largely unknown. During this time I got to speak to a lot of people who had been isolated for several days and desperate for fuel and food. Once the traffic slowed, the stray domestic stock that had survived being washed out of their paddocks and pens began to walk around. A piglet scurried across the road between cars, and then an adult male pig wandered around grazing on the freshly greened grass that had only five days earlier been brown.

Our local SES group helped to provide generators and lights, floodboats and helicopter fuel good old fashion elbow-grease and sweat and then as the clean-up got underway and roads opened up, we had up to 15 SES volunteers at a time from north, south, east and west coming to help relieve our local members as well as rural and urban fire brigades and the army who helped clean and wash out houses and businesses and the fire brigade even had a call out to attend a couple of escaped fires from people burning rubbish.

As the weeks have gone on, it has been encouraging to hear people's attitudes change as the future looks a little brighter. The funding assistance has been very welcomed, and insurance companies somewhat more accommodating this time around, however there is no underestimating just how much work will need to be done before our local businesses and farms are fully productive again, but I firmly believe that they will be.

*Louise Newman*



*One of a number of pigs on the loose in Mundubbera*



Contact Louise @  
M: 0409 893 972  
E: [bush@betterburnett.com](mailto:bush@betterburnett.com)



# Burnett Catchment Care Association



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

BCCA derive the majority of our funding and acknowledge support from the Burnett Mary Regional Group and the Australian Governments Caring for our Country program.

### Find BCCA at:

6 Lyell St  
PO Box 8  
Monto Qld  
4630  
P: (07) 4166 3898  
F: (07) 4166 3897  
E: admin@burnettcatchment.org

We're on the web!  
[www.betterburnett.com](http://www.betterburnett.com)

### General Manager:

*Katie Muller* M: 0428 753 338

### Extension Officers:

*Veronica Chapman* M: 0448 114 502

*Louise Newman* M: 0409 893 972

*Fiona Morris* M: 0407 482 242

### Admin/Project Support Officer:

*Melinda Myles* P: (07) 4166 3898



CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY



## Last word...

On behalf of the executive and staff of BCCA I would like to express our heartfelt sympathies to anyone affected by the recent flooding created by ex tropical cyclone Oswald. It was like nothing anyone has seen before in our catchment. The destruction to property and infrastructure right across our great catchment is overwhelming.

We personally lost creek and boundary fences, had lucerne paddocks destroyed (again), huge quantities of rock and gravel deposited on our cultivation from the newly upgraded highway, a shed full of hay ruined and a travelling irrigator washed away. However, we understand our story is so common and we are much luckier than many as our homes and lives were spared. We will re-fence, replant and get back in the farming game again.

Surprisingly, not as many as expected of this years Reef Rescue Grazing projects on the coast were severely damaged, however it appears most erosion projects have seen the erosion exacerbated. The main issues project proponents reported were creek fencing

damage, dam wall washouts, topsoil loss and erosion damage.

**"creek, river and stream bank erosion as well as top soil paddock loss is significant"**

In terms of natural resource management, creek, river and stream bank erosion as well as top soil paddock loss is significant. This is particularly an issue for our horticulture, cane, grain and lucerne farmers. Let us



Topsoil lost show around Lucerne plant

hope that the government is able and willing to help us assist these farmers in remediating these soil management issues.

In the last few weeks, I have been working closely with the BlazeAid team in Monto. The Monto community have been amazing in supporting these generous volunteers who have been working tirelessly to clean and replace fences and provide hope and support to struggling farmers. I am sure we will see this unbelievable and generous support provided to and from BlazeAid in the coming weeks when they are fully established in the Central Burnett and Murgon.

We have been working closely with BMRG helping them provide a picture of the damage and issues facing our farmers and graziers. We invite any of our members to share their story or any major issues with us and we will pass it on to BMRG who, like us, are reprioritising and striving to assist with the flood recovery any way they can.

*Katie Muller*



Contact Katie @  
M: 0428 753 338  
E: beef@betterburnett.com