

the burnett buzz...

Autumn 2017

Darling Downs Bus Trip— February 2017

A group of 8 growers from the Monto district climbed aboard the bus for a couple of intense days of learning. The group departed on a Monday afternoon to be prepared for an early start on the Tuesday morning at the Farming Systems Site Tour at Pampas (supported by GRDC, CSIRO and the State Government). The tour highlighted the use of crop rotations to increase the level of organic carbon in the soil, break disease cycles (eg nematodes) and increase per-hectare returns. Examples of different cropping intensities – single, double and long-fallow allowed the group to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of each strategy.

A visit to the Pacific Seeds shed in Toowoomba showed growers the size and operations of the large storage facility including the workings of their bagging plant, a run-down of the Quality Assurance Program and how they carry out extensive germ testing.

Paul McIntosh from Pulse Australia was available on Tuesday afternoon to show the group around Pulse Australia's mungbean plot at Meringandan. Paul is a very experienced and accomplished Agronomist and the group

enjoyed having access to his knowledge of mungbean agronomy and techniques such as crop rotation and nutrient management.

After a relatively quiet night, the group headed off early to visit Agbitech's facility in Toowoomba where they manufacture biological pest controls. The Group were shown around the facility and had the opportunity to inspect *Heliothis* grubs and moths first hand.

The highlight of the tour for many of the growers was the Planter Technology Expo that was held alongside the Pioneer Corn Trial. While Pioneer celebrated the release of their new gritting corn variety, the growers were most interested in the precision planting equipment on show by various manufacturers. Growers had the opportunity to inspect various pieces of equipment and ask questions about planting

'Many left with ideas of how their own equipment can be modified....'

depth, spacing between seeds and the pressure ratings of press wheels. Many left with ideas of how their own equipment can be



modified to improve the accuracy and success of their planting.

The final stop on Wednesday was a visit with Bede O'Mara at the "Colonsay" Long Term Nutrition Trial. Bede provided in-depth information about soil nutrition and nutrient management that has been gathered at the Colonsay trial site for over 20 years. Principally monitoring nitrogen, phosphorous and sulphur, the trial results have played a key role in developing new soil tests and understanding the role of carbon. Plots included examples of zero till, minimum till, rip stripping and conventional farming. The growers were particularly interested in learning about the deep placement of fertiliser and how to adopt the method in their own operations.

The feedback at the end of the tour was overwhelmingly positive with suggestions of what topics to delve into further should the opportunity arise. A subsequent bus tour is already in the planning stages for June 2017!

Reef Alliance – Growing a Great Barrier Reef is a partnership between agricultural industry groups and regional NRM bodies and is facilitated by the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF), with a common goal of securing the future health of the Great Barrier Reef. Burnett Catchment Care Association is working in partnership with Fitzroy Basin Association Inc. to support grain growers through the Reef Alliance 'Growing a Great Barrier Reef' project. The project is funded by the Australian Government and delivered through the Reef Trust.

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Highlights

- Rainforest species identification and the importance of these species in the landscape
- Nearing the 5000 tree target for our 20 Million Trees project
- Successful Goomeri and Mundubbera soil health workshops
- Seeking practice change by graziers in the Burnett priority area for improved water quality and on-farm benefits



Machinery at the Planter Technology Expo at the Pioneer Corn Trial

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Rainforest field walk at Colosseum

In May, a highly successful rainforest field walk was held at Mclvor's property, which is located south of Miriam Vale. There is a pristine section of creek running through the property, which adjoins Colosseum National Park. The day was attended by 25 landholders and interested locals, who were keen to improve their knowledge of rainforest and creek vegetation.

The day was held as part of the Baffle Reef Systems Repair Project, being managed by BCCA field Officer Peter Crawford.

One of the targets under this program is to develop landholders' skills in on ground

activities to enhance native vegetation. This type of activity is not only interesting and informative, but also showcases the incredible range of native flora species in the region. Rainforest species identification will assist landholders to carry out revegetation projects on their own properties in future years.



View to magnificent Mount Colosseum in the Baffle Catchment



Ann Moran and Maureen Schmitt assisting with species identification

The day was facilitated by well-known local environmentalists and species identification experts Maureen Schmitt and Ann Moran. Ann has said that on a previous visit to the property they identified over 180 different rainforest species, vines and grasses.

The conservation of these species and the importance of them in the landscape was also covered during the day.

The feedback from participants has been very encouraging, and it is likely that BCCA will hold another similar event next year.

This project is an initiative of the Burnett Mary Regional Group and is supported by funding from the Australian Government. This project is coordinated locally by BCCA.



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20 Million Trees by 2020

The Australian Government's 20 Million Trees Program aims to re-establish green corridors along water ways by planting 20 Million Trees by the year 2020. BCCA's 20 Million Trees project aims to plant 5000 native plants and shrubs to restore the habitat of our threatened species; the Australian (QLD) Lungfish (*Neoceratodus forsteri*) and White throated snapping turtle (*Eelseya albagual*). Project labour is provided by the Green Army with crews started revegetation in

July 2016 at Site 1. This site is located at the junction of Reid's Creek and the Burnett River just upstream of the Gayndah township. The crew planted approximately 3000 tubestock, but planting had to cease in late November due to the extreme heat. BCCA contracted a watering crew to ensure survival of the



Site 1—March 2017



Site 1— August 2016

tubestock until the second Green Army site supervisor arrived on site in early January 2017. The new crew is going well and have moved onto the second site, which is located on the Burnett River just down from the township of Ideraway. The plants selected are local to the area and include species such as: *Ficus opposita*

(Sandpaper Fig), *Melaleuca viminala* (Weeping Tea-tree), *Casuarina cunninghamia* (River Sheoak) and *Brachychiton australis* (Broad-leaved Bottle Tree). Since the much welcomed rain in March, the sites have exploded with grass, which has kept the crew busy maintaining established trees and clearing new areas to be planted. The Green Army crew will continue planting until July 2017 and reach the 5000 tree target.



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Graziers getting to know their soils

Graziers across the Burnett gathered at workshops in Goomeri and Mundubbera in the last few months to expand their knowledge of regional soils and how to assess their own.

Mark Sugars & Warrick Brown from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, provided a detailed overview of local geology, key soil forming factors and then went on to discuss the chemical and physical properties of soils. Graziers then had the opportunity to get their hands dirty by looking at a variety of soils and undertake field tests which they can now perform easily on their own properties—such as assessing sodicity, pH, structure, colour and conductivity.

Mark & Warrick provided graziers with information on how to access the best available digital soil and land systems information over their properties. In addition, discussion was held on what this information really means, including its limitations. Graziers were able to locate their property on the Central Burnett maps provided and see how their soils are classified.

The day continued on with John Day, Soil

Conservation Officer from the Burnett Mary Regional Group presenting information to graziers on how to manage gully erosion and the best way to calculate and design dam by washes. A field tour put all this information into perspective with John identifying the positive and negative of different ways of managing erosion and dam by washes.

BCCA received positive feedback on the workshops from the graziers. These workshops were held under the Better Catchments Grazing program which involves working with graziers on projects which will result in improved practices in line with industry standard and long term sustainability.

These projects are supported by BMRG and coordinated locally by BCCA, through



DNRM'S Mark Sugars & Warrick Brown with John Day, BMRG Soil Conservation Officer at 'Marcella', Goomeri

funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme. The Better Catchments Program will continue working with Graziers to implement an improved practice changes.



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Changing practices for improved water quality

Under 'Reef Alliance: Growing a GREAT Barrier Reef' project, we are aiming to reduce soil movement from grazing properties into waterways in the Burnett priority area. This means protecting streambanks, addressing gully erosion and retaining good ground cover. This is good for your business and good for the Reef!

We are seeking to work with commercial-scale graziers, with property within the priority area (refer to the map on back of newsletter), who are keen to participate in extension and training with the view to implementing practice change. This project will have the most impact on retaining soil (and, therefore, reducing sediment to the Reef and meeting project aims) where the property features damaged streambanks and/or seriously eroded gullies. If this sounds like your property – give us a call to see if we can help.

We are able to offer graziers in our priority area one-on-one, tailored extension and training to help implement management changes needed to retain valuable top-soil on your property. There are some relatively

low cost options to reduce soil movement which align well with good grazing practices and therefore have the potential to improve your profitability. These include

- pasture budgeting to better match stock number to feed availability,
 - timely stocking rate decisions and herd management to reduce the risk of over-grazing and
 - changes to the grazing systems and herd management to (better) enable rotational grazing and pasture spelling for pasture recovery and improved groundcover.
- Under the project, together, we review all aspects of your grazing management looking for areas for improvement and devising feasible options to address any areas of concern. This may include participation in relevant training or seeking specific technical advice from industry specialists.

As part of the project, 'on grounds works' may be identified as a way to reduce sediment movement including

- protecting a streambank through fencing and providing cattle with off-stream watering points and

- repairing badly eroded gullies and the associated works or structures to reduce the risk of future erosion at the site.

If these on ground works are likely to significantly reduce soil loss from your property, there is the opportunity to apply for incentive funds to help complete these works.

Thank-you to those graziers who have already expressed an interest in this project.

For more information please contact Veronica Chapman, our Project Extension Officer, on 0448 114 502 or veronica@betterburnett.com

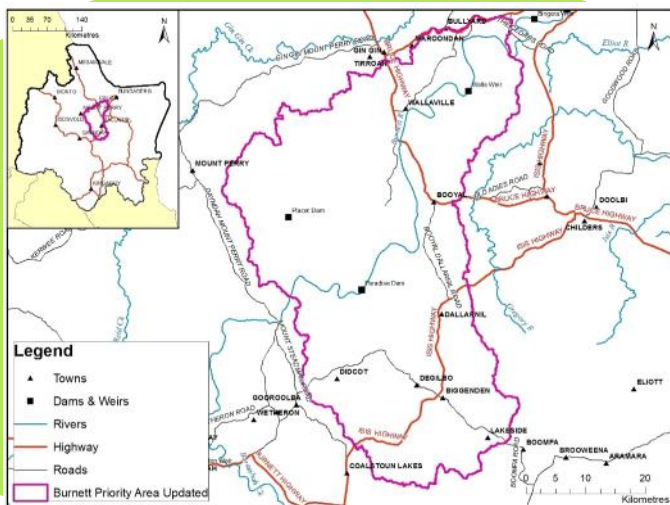
The Reef Alliance Program is a partnership between agricultural industry, regional NRM bodies and facilitated by the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF), with the common goal of securing the future health of the Great Barrier Reef. The Reef Alliance Program is funded by the Australian Government and delivered through the Reef Trust



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Burnett Catchment Care Association



Reef Alliance Project—Burnett Grazing Priority Map

BCCA is a member-based, not-for-profit organisation, employing professional staff to develop and implement natural resource management projects across the Burnett Catchment.

We work directly with landholders to support sustainable land management practices.

We partner with associated, like-minded organisations such as the Burnett Mary Regional Group and landcare groups where much of our funding is derived from State and Federal Government funding programs.

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What's on 'round the Burnett...

- 14 Jun GRDC—Grain storage quality management—Murgon & Kingaroy
- 14 Jun Seasonal Climate Forecasting Workshop—Rosedale
- 20 & 21 Jun Property Mapping—Monto & Eidsvold
- 27 Jun Biosecurity Planning Agforce Workshop—Biggenden—FULL—Fill in expression of interest to attend next workshop.
- 28 Jun Seasonal Climate Forecasting Workshop—Mundubbera
- 28 Jun Biosecurity Planning Agforce Workshop—Kingaroy—FULL—Fill in an expression of interest to attend next workshop.
- 11-13 July Bull Selection Course—Monto
- 13 July BCCA General Meeting—Mundubbera
- 28 July Native Forestry Management Field Day—Mundubbera

Last word...

Autumn brought some much needed rain for the Burnett region from Tropical Cyclone Debbie. Hopefully you were lucky enough to receive some decent rain before the winter months ahead.

With three of our programs concluding this financial year - Action on the Ground (AotG), Carbon Farming Project and Water Monitoring - we are concentrating on the

new Reef Alliance – Growing a GREAT Barrier Reef project which has both a Grazing and a Cropping component in the Burnett.

Technical Officer, Jenny Voigt has finished with BCCA at the conclusion of the AotG project. She has since secured employment within the Burnett region and we wish her every success into the future.

Autumn also brought with it a new addition to the BCCA family. Our General Manger, Katie Muller and her husband, Kendall, welcomed a baby girl—Eva May. All are well and we look forward to Katie's return to BCCA later in the year.

Melinda Clarke

2016/17 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Renew your membership for only \$1 and keep up to date with BCCA activities

- \$1 cash
- stamps
- NEW \$5 for 5 year membership

CONTACT OFFICE FOR DIRECT DEPOSIT DETAILS!!!

Name: _____

Postal Address: _____

Property Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Mobile: _____ Email: _____



Please return with payment (postage stamps acceptable) to: BCCA PO Box 8, Monto Q 4630