

# the burnett buzz...

Summer 2018/19

## Monto Agriculture Strategy



The Monto Agricultural Strategy is a new project which aims to empower growers in what was once the Monto Shire by providing relevant information regarding diversifying income streams, reducing financial risk and ensuring more reliable farm incomes.

Key sectors to be investigated include, but are not limited to, livestock industries, cropping, horticulture, hemp, bio fuel, dairy, beekeeping and wool. Parameters that will be considered regarding these sectors comprise of productivity, social and environmental implications specific to the Monto district.

As part of developing the Ag Strategy a survey will soon be mailed to all landholders

within the Monto district as well as circulated on the Burnett Catchment Care Association Facebook page. This survey is to collect data from Monto residents in order to better understand the existing agricultural situation and to direct the Ag Strategy going forward.

Completing the survey is not compulsory however we hope to get as many responses as possible. The more responses we receive, the higher chance we have of producing a strategy that is relevant to our local landholders. In my experience, it is uncommon for funding to be awarded to such a specific agricultural region so I am looking forward to making the most of this opportunity. All valid responses to the survey will go in the draw to win a \$500 gift voucher at a Monto rural supplies store

(your choice of FarmStuff Monto, Kewpie Rural Monto or Monto Rural Traders).

*The Monto Agricultural Strategy is delivered by BCCA thanks to the Australian Government's funding through the Building Better Regions Fund – Community Investment Stream and in conjunction with North Burnett Regional Council, Burnett Inland Economic Development Organisation, Monto Growers Group and FarmStuff Monto.*

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## Hannah Vicary—Project Support Officer

It was with great excitement that I recently joined the BCCA team as a full time Project Support Officer.

This role is based in the Monto office and is to provide support to the BCCA project delivery team with current projects.

I come to BCCA with a background predominantly in beef production, having grown up on a beef breeding, backgrounding and fattening enterprise on the Boyne River, south of Mundubbera. Additionally, I have recently graduated

from The University of Queensland, Gatton with a Bachelor of Agribusiness and Bachelor of Applied Science (Majoring in Animal Production).

Projects that I am currently involved in include the Monto Agricultural Strategy and Reef Trust III – Grazing.

Since starting with BCCA I have had the opportunity to get out and about to a few property visits with some of our project officers and I have enjoyed meeting some of our members along the way.

Sustainable agriculture is



one of my passions and I am excited to be working in such a dedicated team. I look forward to continuing to assist them going forward.

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### Highlights

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# Barambah Weed Control Project

In 2018, BCCA successfully obtained a 'Community Sustainability Action Grant' to collaborate with Gympie Regional Council (GRC), to monitor current infestation levels of Rubber Vine (RV), Parthenium Weed and Honey Locust (HL) in the Barambah, Boonara Creek and sections of the Moonda Waamba Creek located in the GRC area. The project is funded by the State Government acting through the Department of Environment and Science.

In mid 2019, GRC will engage a drone to survey deep gorges and difficult terrain areas to establish the current levels of Rubber Vine and Honey Locust. A weeds contractor will then treat approximately 50m either side of these identified areas of invasive weed infestation, covering an area of approximately 800ha and 70km of riparian area.

The project area has received good spring rainfall, allowing the contractors to begin spraying for Parthenium weed.

This project will include monitoring of the treatment areas and landholder and community education as part of the long term activities of the eradication program.

This project will build on previous

project works which involved treatment of targeted declared plants (Rubber Vine & Parthenium) in the Barambah, Boonara and sections of the Moonda Waamba creek, this was funded through our regional body, the Burnett Mary Regional Group. Weed control work under this proposal will lead to a high chance of areas becoming weed free or at a manageable level for the participating landholders.

Extension and awareness will focus on increasing the awareness of these weeds (identification, vectors of spread and control) to provide the community with the ability to maintain the catchment free of these weeds, and promoting the need for early intervention which will build desire of the community within the project area to respond to new infestations in the future.



*Honey Locust—long, strong spines which can inflict serious injuries*

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## Kirstie Roffey—Community Resilience Officer

Hi, I'm Kirstie Roffey and have recently started with BCCA on a full-time basis, as a Community Resilience Officer.

Based in Monto, my role is to coordinate the North Burnett Natural Disaster Resilience Program (NDRP),



as well as provide general support to the BCCA team and projects.

Since completing a Bachelor of Agribusiness at The University of Queensland - Gatton, I have worked in a range of fields in the agriculture industry, including meat processing, NRM and most recently Agribusiness banking and finance. I have spent a majority of my life living in and working with rural businesses and communities and look forward to continuing this with BCCA.

The NDRP project aims to build and enhance natural disaster resilience in the agricultural North Burnett, through assisting agribusinesses to examine their operations and determine ways to mitigate the impact of natural disasters and

flooding events on their businesses and in turn improve overall production and profitability.

Initial stages of the project involve completing a needs analysis study, in consultation with local landholders, as well as local and industry organisations/groups. This will ensure we are able to deliver support, resources and solutions that are relevant to and required by our local producers.

If you would like to be involved in the project and/or give your input for the initial needs analysis, please feel free to contact me.

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# Graziers Getting the EDGE in Business

Thanks to funding under the Australian Government's Reef Trust Phase III —Reef Alliance – 'Growing a Great Barrier Reef' project, graziers currently involved in this project were given the opportunity to attend the two day **Business Edge** business management workshop in Bundaberg run by Bush Agribusiness. The Reef Alliance – 'Growing a Great Barrier Reef' project has a strong extension component aimed at providing landholders with training to implement management practices to improve their businesses and water quality.

This MLA Business Edge workshop focuses on assisting graziers to determine if all the family needs and aspirations can be funded by the business, prepare and understand their key financial information on the business, assess and manage agricultural business risk and understand and manage enterprise

performance. This included understanding what the key profit drivers of a grazing business are, how to influence them and what effect they have on overall business performance.

The course challenged the graziers to really consider whether their grazing business is providing them with more than just a job. Grazing businesses require a lot of capital and labour; many of which can be considered multi-million dollar enterprises. Graziers had to stop for the two days to assess whether the business is

**'... understanding what the key profit drivers of a grazing business are...'**

providing sufficient returns given the capital and time invested... or is it just providing them with a job?

Feedback from all the graziers was extremely positive, Leigh-Ann Archer from Biggenden stating, "the course was fantastic with a lot of information to take in. The presenter was really good, and easy to understand. I have made an appointment at the bank to change a few things. At the start of the session I felt a sense of hopelessness, but by the end have a new sense of we can get on top of things".

Having a good handle on the business and financial management gives a better sense of direction and focus which follows through to the overall sustainable management of their whole grazing enterprise.

Successful grazing businesses are those that are generating sufficient profits to reward their owners for both their capital investment in the business and their efforts in running the business. This puts these businesses in a position to be able to fund growth, debt reduction, retirement and succession. Growing the business skills and financial literacy of your management team is the starting point to improved financial performance. Graziers attending the workshops ranged from having been in Grazing all their lives to some new to the industry. All participants left the workshop feeling a sense of direction and focus, with many taking away new skills and looking to make big and little changes to their businesses to ensure long term sustainability.

Reef Trust Phase III —Reef Alliance – 'Growing a Great Barrier Reef' project is a partnership between agricultural industry, regional NRM bodies and is facilitated by the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF). The project is funded by Burnett Mary Regional Group through funding from the Australian Government Reef Trust Program with the common goal of securing the future health of the Great Barrier Reef.



**Business Edge participants—Back: Ian McLean (presenter) & Bernie Wixon  
Front: Leigh-Ann Archer & John Driver**

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## Burnett Catchment Care Association

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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## Last word....

**A**nd in a blink of an eye, 2018 is almost over. It has been an action packed year here at BCCA with the sad departure of Veronica and Peter, but then the excitement of welcoming Kirstie and Hannah to the team. We were also saddened by the passing of a long time BCCA treasurer Glenn Baker. Our condolences to the Baker family.

We had some great long term project comes to an end, such as the Baffle Reef System Repair project and the Better Catchments

project, and some new projects begin including the Building Resilience in the North Burnett project and the Monto Agricultural Study. Stand by for updates on these projects in the coming months.

Our region has experienced some horrible disasters in the last couple of months with the Severe Storms in October in the South Burnett and the devastating bushfires of the Baffle, Kolan and Upper Burnett catchments. Our thoughts are with those affected and we hope the support required

is at the ready and recovery is quick.

December and January will be spent frantically applying for funding with the announcement of second round of the National Landcare Program Smart Farms Small Grants. Any ideas for possible projects are very welcome.

On behalf of BCCA, we wish you a very merry Christmas and a prosperous (and natural disaster free) 2019.

*Katie Muller*

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

- 12 Dec Agsafe's Agvet Chemical Supplier Course—Toowoomba
- 12 Dec Future Proofing Your Business— Rockhampton
- 11 Jan NLP Smart Farms Small Grants applications close
- 15 Feb GRDC Farm Business Update—Toowoomba

*National Landcare Program—  
Smart Farms Small Grants are  
NOW OPEN!!*

### 2018/19 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**