

# Upfront Outback



## WELCOME TO UPFRONT OUTBACK



## THIRD TIME LUCKY

At the third attempt, the Sesbania field day actually happened despite the clouds once again threatening, and more than 15 mm of rain falling at Winton, only 100 kilometres to the south.

The day started with a bus tour of treatment sites where the 54 attendees saw, first hand, the results of different treatment methods and chemical rates, and learnt about the evolution of the regulatory approvals central to the success of the DCQ program.

Amongst the detailed explanations of equipment set-up for misting, quad-bike work, buggy and drone, there were presentations on aerial (drone) photography and automated mapping of Prickly Acacia and mature natives, which DCQ is working on with the Australian Centre for Field Robotics.

There were also presentations on climate adaptation (profitability in a changing climate) in western Queensland by Peter Whip of PRW Agribusiness, and the carbon market by Mike Berwick, Chair of the Queensland Regional Groups Collective.

While everyone was impressed with use of drone for treatment of highest density infestations, there was keen interest from landholders in the effectiveness, cost and longevity of different Prickly Acacia treatment options, particularly residual herbicide pellets and misting.

Everyone agreed that strategic approaches, like DCQ's, which utilise the best of current knowledge and technology, together with the strength of legislative and regulatory backing, are showing the kind of success that needs to continue.

Much of the day was filmed and photographed from the air with the DJI Inspire quadcopter drone of Alun and Aled Hoggett, further demonstrating the effectiveness and versatility of drones for a range of data gathering tasks.



## LIVING LANDCARE

Around 50 people gathered for our Landcare Legends Awards on 12th August at the Qantas Founders Outback Museum to help us acknowledge and celebrate achievers in Landcare and the Landcare ethic, throughout the Desert Channels region.

Former Longreach resident, and long-time driver of Landcare, Mike Chuk was awarded the Landcare Champion Award recognising exceptional activity in Landcare or the Landcare ethic through leadership, example, promotion, inclusion, collaboration and innovation. Mike's collaborators on many projects, Peter and Elizabeth Clark, were very worthy runners-up.

John Fisher accepted the Landcare Group Award on behalf of the Upper Thomson Catchment Landcare Group, for their work to improve land and water health, productivity and community involvement. John, a long-serving past president of the group, also scooped a personal award for 'Recognition of service and commitment to Landcare'.

Everyday Hero Award went to a quintessential everyday hero, Quenton 'Scotty' Scott. Scotty is always there, usually in the background beavering away in the Landcare ethic, supporting the front people, and providing the manpower and enthusiasm to get things done. Indefatigable might have been coined with Scotty in mind.

Longreach Recreational Fishing Club scooped up the Landcare in Tourism Award and were runners-up in the Landcare Group Award. Not only do they run a mighty fishing competition once a year, they also raise the awareness of the importance of healthy waterways and their sustainable use as a recreational resource.

Our very own Peter Spence received recognition for exceptional work in the Landcare ethic. Anyone who knows Pete, realises just how far over and above he goes. Peter leads our field team and is on the front line of our Prickly Acacia eradication program. As the citation read, 'Peter Spence epitomises the Landcare ethic'.



## BASINITE FEEDBACK

Making management decisions without the latest knowledge and information is a bit like Pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey... a best guess, and, just as likely as not to be wrong. With that in mind, the NRM groups of the Lake Eyre Basin, DCQ included, are working with Australian, State and Territory governments along with research institutions, Lake Eyre Basin Community Advisory Committee members, Lake Eyre Basin Scientific Advisory Panel members, communities and landholders to form the very best picture of the current state of the Basin's rivers and catchments.

This happens every 10 years, and the 2016 State of the Basin condition assessment will report on the current status of the hydrology, fish, water quality and waterbirds of the Lake Eyre Basin and on the current and emerging threats and pressures to the Basin.

A draft of this report will be released in early October for a period of consultation and feedback before the final report is published in early 2017. A copy of the draft report will be published on the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources website [here](#).

If you're a passionate Basinite and want to provide feedback, keep an eye on this site from early October, or 'Like' our [Facebook page](#) and we'll let you know the minute it's available.



## WHEN ONLY THE BEST WILL DO...

Best Management Practice is all about getting out in front of the pack, giving yourself, as a producer and business person, a competitive edge. And the Grazing BMP workshops that DCQ will be running later in the year in conjunction with Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, are designed to give you that edge. While some subjects might sound a bit dry, they're all essential cogs for a well tuned grazing enterprise machine. Grazing Land Management, Animal Production, Soil Health, Animal Welfare and People and Business are all contributors to efficiencies and top products.

DCQ will complement those units with a practical assessment tool to gauge and keep track of your land health over time. Consistent and repeatable measurements of ground cover and other vegetation, essential for informing other management decisions, is not difficult, but the are tricks. 'Like' our [Facebook page](#) to stay posted on this exciting, no cost, professional development opportunity.



## IT'S A WR(A)P

The draft, new, Great Artesian Basin Water Resource Plan is due to be released for public comment in late 2016. It will deal with the security of supply for current and future water users and the protection of groundwater flows to springs by broadly defining the areas and circumstances in which water may be taken or made available, as well as requirements for ongoing monitoring and reporting.

A range of technical assessments were undertaken to inform plan development, including hydrogeological; environmental; socio-economic and cultural assessments. These reports will be made publically available when the draft plan is released for public comment.

DNRM has also been consulting closely with the Queensland Great Artesian Basin Advisory Council, a representative group appointed by the Minister for Natural Resources to provide advice on management of the Queensland Great Artesian Basin. A range of interest groups are represented on the council: agricultural organisations, resource companies, NRM Bodies (including DCQ), local government and the Queensland Indigenous Working Group.

So, if you want to review how the Government intends to manage this precious resource, Stay tuned to



## QUIET ACHIEVER

Our commercial arm, DC Solutions, doesn't spend money on advertising, we let its achievements speak for it... and work keeps flowing in. Having recently finished a major weed control program for Department of Transport and Main Roads, we are currently delivering four filming jobs and some rural enterprise mapping.

While DC Solutions is a separate company, its sole shareholder is DCQ, and all of its profits are donated to Desert Channels Foundation to augment the NRM projects in the region.



## STATS AND FACTS

Our CEO, Leanne Kohler, quite unashamedly touts the eradication of Prickly Acacia, and why wouldn't she... "Ground cover up from 5% to 40%; grass species up from 2 to 6; grass biomass up from 100 kilograms per hectare to 1,500; costs down by more than 10 times; 99.96% kill rate with the UAV; germination rate < 3 plants per hectare; 317,613 hectares of prickly acacia under management; 142,630 hectares of native habitat restored; 687 kilometres of streamline vegetation protected; \$1 million spent in local businesses; local employment create." ...that's our Prickly Acacia eradication program.

## THE GIFT OF GIVING

Apart from love and friendship, there aren't many worthwhile gifts you can give at absolutely no cost... a subscription to Upfront Outback is one. It's so easy: pop onto the [www.dcq.org.au](http://www.dcq.org.au) and enter your friend's name and email address in the 'Subscribe' form at the bottom right of the page, then click 'Subscribe'. Not only will they be grateful, you get the satisfaction of having helped a friend.