

# Upfront Outback



## TURBOCHARGING GRAZIERS

If you're a grazer, you can't afford to not do a BMP workshop. The Grazing BMP (best management practice) program is:

- voluntary
- led by the industry
- identifies practices to improve long term, enterprise profitability
- identifies steps to incorporate best management practices into your enterprise
- a standardised system of benchmarking your grazing management practices against the whole industry

As a community organisation, DCQ is proud to be partnering with Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to deliver three BMP workshops, in mid November, to graziers across our region. These accelerated program workshops are ideal for busy graziers and are funded by the Queensland Government's Building Drought Resilience Project, so there is no cost to you.

- Identify and explore your enterprise's strengths and weaknesses
- Get the latest on information and legislation to help run a successful grazing business
- Get technical advice to help give you that extra edge
- Complete all 5 Grazing BMP modules in one manageable block over one and a half days

The first day runs from 8:30 to 4:30; the second day from 8:30 to 12 noon, so you'll have plenty of time to have a yarn then drive home.

- Lunch and smokos provided

- Positions limited and will fill fast so **register now**
- Aramac (14/15 Nov) – Harry Redford Centre
- Longreach (16/17 Nov) – DAF Conference Room
- Corfield (18/19 Nov) – Corfield Sports Club

This is a program you won't want to miss out on:

Grazing land management – David Phelps (DAF): managing the land resource / managing grazing pressure / paddock sizes and stocking rates / mapping / land capability / monitoring land condition / fencing to land type / water infrastructure / biodiversity / vegetation management / weeds and pest animals

Animal production – Kiri Broad (DAF): land capability / markets / reproduction / weaning / nutrition / genetics / production system suitability / cattle performance / breeding objectives / bull selection / heifer management

People and business – Peter Whip (PRW): financial risk management / succession planning / business performance analysis / work/life balance / effective communication / shared goals and objectives / data collection / ongoing education / labour and legal requirements

Animal health and welfare – Ell Forster and Warren Lehmann (DAF): health management program / extreme weather / predation / biosecurity / animal welfare / transport / diseases / vaccines / parasites / droughts and floods / weed seed hygiene / stock handling facilities

Soil health – TBA (DAF): structure and characteristics / chemical properties / ground cover / biology / mapping / soil flora and fauna / nutrients / soil and land types / ground cover / salinity



## **UNDERSTATED SUCCESS AND BRICK WALLS**

The most successful weed control program you've never heard of, DCQ's Prickly Acacia Eradication Program, is running into a brick wall of funding austerity. This program has achieved in three years what conventional control methods had been unable to do in 20: show that it's possible to reverse the spread of Prickly Acacia.

This weed has tripled in area since 1996, it costs the region \$24 million per year in lost production, with another \$9 million in annual control costs.

It seems unbelievable that DCQ, having established a tightly integrated, multi-faceted, cost-effective and highly successful strategy and associated techniques to reverse the spread of Prickly Acacia, it seems unbelievable that there is any issue with funding.

To eradicate Prickly Acacia from the Lake Eyre Basin, DCQ is seeking \$5 million per year for eight years, well

DCQ is fortunate to have strong advocates for this program in Senator Barry O’Sullivan and David Littleproud MP, but neither of them carry the weight of the affected landholders of the region. If you feel strongly about this issue, write to your local MP urging them to support this funding request. Send your letter to PA Funding Effort, Po Box 601, Longreach Q 4730, and DCQ will collate them all and forward to the relevant members with copies to all the funding decision makers.

Together, we can get our prime grazing land free of this insidious pest plant.



## **STAY CALM, DON'T PANIC**

The comments of visitors often point out what you never think of yourself when you live in the region. Travellers between Winton and Kynuna have been expressing some concern about all the dead trees they're seeing. Well relax folks, they're some of the 50 million Prickly Acacia trees we've killed in the past three years.

It's part of the most successful weed control project most people have never heard of, DCQ's Prickly Acacia Eradication Program. As well as 50 million dead trees, this program has delivered:

- 800% efficiency increase
- 600% grass cover increase
- 1500% grass biomass increase
- 300% grass species increase
- 92% cost reduction
- 32 grazier partnerships
- 142,000 hectares of native habitat restoration
- 600 kilometres of streamline vegetation protected
- \$1 million spent in local businesses
- local employment
- partnerships with local government
- partnerships with State Government department Roads

Over this period, the Department of Transport and Main has invested strongly to rid its road corridors of Prickly Acacia. This investment is not only complementing the work of DCQ and partner landholders, it is setting an example to the wider community, and encouraging more landholders to get involved.



## EFFICIENCY NYMPHS

In the cactus control headquarters at DCQ, there are high hopes that the nymphs of the cochineal (*Dactylopius tomentosus – fulgida* biotype) insect that attacks Coral Cactus will allow the limited chemical budget to stretch much further.

Field trials to date have shown that the nymphs, which move on the wind, have progressed almost 40 metres from their release site in seven months. This is despite the cool and unseasonally moist conditions as opposed to their preferred hot, dry conditions.

This means the insect can be introduced to the heavy infestations of Coral Cactus via infected plant material, and the chemical directed to mopping up the scattered, outlying plants.

While this insect is specific to Coral Cactus, and shouldn't be on any other cactus species, Biosecurity Queensland is working on biotypes to attack other invasive cactus species. They hope to release a control agent for Snake Cactus within two years.

Map Panel



Output Panel

Welcome to VegMachine®

VegMachine® is an online tool that uses satellite imagery to summarise decades of change in Australia's grazing lands. It's simple to operate, easy to understand, and free to use.

With VegMachine® you can:

- generate comprehensive ground cover monitoring reports
- measure land cover change or estimate soil erosion rates
- view satellite image land cover products
- better understand the links between management, climate and cover in grazing land

To get started visit our help page.

Australian Government FITZROY BASIN ASSOCIATION Queensland Government VegCover AusCover

This project is supported by Fitzroy Basin Association Inc. through funding from the Australian Government's Reef Programme. VegMachine® is a registered trademark of the CSIRO.

## ANOTHER TOOL

VegMachine.net, a new online service providing ground cover monitoring across Queensland, will let you measure changes in ground cover on any part of your property from 1990 to the present. Benchmark those changes regionally, estimate soil erosion at specific locations, and generate comprehensive, paddock-by-paddock, monitoring reports with a few mouse clicks. It's a free service, designed for ease of use.

The website uses state of the art satellite image products and web services developed by the Queensland Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation, and is funded by the Fitzroy Basin Association. To find out more or to get started, visit [www.vegmachine.net](http://www.vegmachine.net), or follow them on Facebook.



## MIDAS TOUCH

John Young, the tenacious researcher who winkled the elusive Night Parrot out of its spinifex seclusion in 2013, taking the first ever photos of the bird in the process, has shown that it was no fluke. Now working as a senior field ecologist for the Australian Wildlife Conservancy, John has uncovered further populations of the bird in the broad vicinity of his first discovery.

On the nearby Diamantina National Park, John has confirmed Night Parrots at seven new locations. He found three nests with birds in the vicinity, saw a pair drinking, and heard three separate birds calling, and no one knows more about the Night Parrot call than John Young.

Not only does this latest discovery significantly expand the known population and distribution, it emphasises the importance of research and the consequent management strategies to maximise habitat protection. Initial

research indicates feral cat control, fire suppression and fence removals are three major actions needed to ensure the ongoing viability of these populations.

You can support Night Parrot conservation by donating to Desert Channels Foundation at [www.dcfoundation.org.au/donate.html](http://www.dcfoundation.org.au/donate.html). The Foundation has already undertaken significant social research into landholder attitudes to Night Parrot conservation, the results of which will be a major contributor to developing ongoing management strategies. This research resulted in the scientific paper, *Social landscape of the night parrot in western Queensland, Australia* which was published in CSIRO's *Pacific Conservation Biology*.



#### **B A DCQER**

If you want to join our merry band of committed supporters, it's only \$11 for the year. Call 07 4658 0600 if you want to feel the love.

#### **ALPHA GOLF MIKE**

Now that you're paying attention, our AGM will be held on Monday 5th December 2016 at 3:00pm in the DCQ conference room at 92 Galah Street, Longreach. All welcome

#### **LIMA ECHO BRAVO SIERRA ROMEO ROMEO**

And another friendly reminder: the Lake Eyre Basin State of the Rivers Report, which was to be released in draft form in early October for community feedback, has been delayed, but we will keep you posted.