



January 2014

Green as Grass

If there is one thing that gives the spirits a lift, especially in dry times, and makes a home or town look welcoming, it's the sight of green grass. But it is always a challenge to keep it alive, let alone green when the temperatures soar, water is scarce, and the area is subject to high pedestrian traffic.

This is where synthetic turf can play a role. This once maligned product has come a long way from the 'green outdoor carpet' of yesteryear. Today's products are scientifically designed to resist UV radiation that causes heat build up and colour fading, and it incorporates a mix of fibre lengths, colours and thicknesses to give the most realistic finished product.

In semi-arid areas like the Desert Channels region, water is always a precious commodity, which is why DC Solutions believes there is a bright future for a product that doesn't use any, while still providing the splash of green that gives a visual and psychological lift in a normally dry environment.

Barcaldine Shire Council shares the confidence in this product, and DC Solutions is currently supplying and laying quality synthetic turf to new traffic islands in the town. The added benefit of synthetic turf on traffic islands is that the absence of permanent moisture adjacent to the road foundation reduces potential pavement failure and expensive repairs.

To date, DC Solutions has laid synthetic turf in Longreach, Barcaldine, Jundah and Windorah in both domestic and commercial situations. The UV resistant, very realistic fibres are designed for Australian conditions, and provide a long, maintenance-free life - no watering, mowing, fertilising, or pest control: simply lay and play!

Accolades Abound

That was some feedback from a recent Desert Channels Digital job we delivered. What brought on such an enthusiastic response?

The Longreach School of Dance had contracted Desert Channels Digital to film their most ambitious project to date - Peter Pan. The Civic Hall was packed with proud parents, relatives, and friends, dancers were ready with costumes, hair and makeup finally done by a host of frantic mums, and the spectacle began.

It is this exciting moment that no one wants to miss or forget and capturing it on video is vital.

To get the best result, Alun shot the pantomime on three cameras including our latest state of the art Sony XDCAM.

The end product was far superior to what the dance school expected and were thrilled that parents and family would be able to take home an amazing recording of this challenging production. Here is some of what they said:

“The professionalism that your team afforded the Dance School and the outstanding quality of the final result has left all involved awe struck and eternally grateful. Nothing was ever too difficult or too hard. Not once did we hear the words ‘it can’t be done,’ and the courteous friendly attitude given to the parent volunteers by your staff is to be commended.

We are already planning this year’s spectacular and are so relieved and relaxed in knowing that at least one onerous task (the production of the DVD) is in very safe hands. We are very excited about working with the Desert Channels Group again this year and cannot reiterate enough how wonderful you were.

Thanks again for the astounding job. We are truly blessed in this region to have professionals such as your calibre and are only too happy to provide any references you require.” Nicki Heslin, Longreach School of Dance. (Check it out: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5fXqeBOhh8>)

Videos can also be a useful training or promotional tool. Another client has this to say about a promotional video.

“Knowing the quality of their product, I approached Desert Channels Digital to see if they were interested in producing such a marketing video, knowing that if they didn’t, I would need to negotiate with a city filmmaker.

They took on the job and I am delighted with the result. The 2 minute video captures the aims of my marketing needs. Filmmaking is an artform with specific technical skills such as visual and audio but also requires an ability to interpret the client’s needs in a creative manner which is exactly what they did.

Thank you Alun and Desert Channels Digital for the opportunity to work with your highly skilled and professional team and for such a terrific job.” Kim Anderson, Train Inn Longreach (Check it out: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8hy5hGsHakU>)

Give us an inch, we’ll take a mile.

The recently approved area management plan (AMP) by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines is a significant new tool for landholders to manage weeds on their property. The AMP has been designed to control the four major weed species of Western Queensland: prickly acacia; mesquite; parkinsonia and rubber vine. The AMP, produced by Desert Channels Queensland, is an approval under the Vegetation Management Act 1999 (VMA). Landholders that clear native vegetation as part of their weed control operations under the AMP, will not need any further approvals under the VMA. This inch of paperwork can make for miles of clearing. The process is more streamlined, lessening

paperwork and fees.

The AMP will operate for 10 years across two stages within Western Queensland. The first stage will occur within the local government areas of Flinders, Winton, Richmond, McKinlay, Longreach, Barcardine (part), Boulia, Blackall-Tambo (part), Barcoo and Cloncurry. This stage will occur until 30 June 2017. The second stage includes the local government areas of Mt Isa, Diamantina, Murweh (part), Quilpie, Paroo and Bulloo and runs from mid 2017 until 2022.

The streamlined nature of the AMP requires only minimal requirements to be considered when undertaking weed control operations. These include ensuring that creeks, mature native trees, wetlands and unstable soils are protected during weed control operations. The AMP also requires a 5 year weed plan to be developed in conjunction with DCQ. The development of the weed plan with DCQ will ensure efficiency within the region through coordination of weed control operations.

If you would like further information on how to develop a weed plan and use the AMP, contact DCQ on 4658 0600 or visit the contact page on our contact page.

Ancient Trees, Ancient Story

A project on the nationally vulnerable Waddy Tree (*Acacia peuce*; EPBC Act 1999) has been made possible thanks to funds from The Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife. Only 3 populations are known to exist of this ancient tree, all on the edges of the Simpson Desert: one in south-eastern N.T. and two in Queensland, south of Boulia and north of Birdsville.

These slow growing prehistoric trees may live to be 500 years old. Some stories claim that the Waddy Tree was used by Aboriginal people for weapons and digging implements however there is no direct evidence of this. It does, nevertheless, have great mythological significance for Aboriginal people so it is thought that they were too important for the timber to have been used. Europeans on the other hand, did use this scarce timber for fence posts, yards and house-building as it is very hard and heavy.

This collaborative project will engage Indigenous and non-indigenous community members in a number of activities to ensure the future of the Waddy Tree. Activities will include seed collection, seed propagation trials, a planting day with the local school and increasing awareness through improved signage and brochures.

Helen Cross, our Regional Landcare Facilitator, recently travelled to Boulia with a group of Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers based in Longreach and Camooweal along with the Group's Senior Project Officer Wayne Gamble. The Rangers engaged with representatives from the Pitta Pitta Aboriginal Corporation on whose land the Boulia Waddy Tree population occurs. The group then visited a large stand of trees on the Coorabulka Road 20 km south of Boulia, where it is seeding prolifically. The plants here range from spiky juveniles 10cm high to 15m high trees with their characteristic drooping foliage that resembles pines or casuarinas.

As the distribution of the Waddy Tree is so restricted, the habitat at all locations is considered to be critical for the survival of the species. A wildfire in one of the N.T. stands killed most of the trees, further threatening their existence. While there is no record of fire having occurred within the Boulia population, if groundcover fuel-loads were ever allowed to build up, a large wildfire could be

catastrophic which makes the careful management of this ancient tree all the more important.

To serve and protect

Our commercial arm, DC Solutions, has a range of environmental services available. Complementing the skills and knowledge of DCQ, these services include: weed surveys; flora and fauna surveys; general environmental surveys; water sampling; weed control and spotter catcher activities.

Companies undertaking roadworks or construction are usually required to do surveys before and after their work. These include flora and fauna surveys and weed or environmental surveys. Weed control work and spotter catcher activities are also undertaken during the production period.

As part of DCQ's Rehabilitation Permit administered by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, we are able to observe and relocate protected animals (often referred to as spotter catcher activities) that may be in danger of being hurt or killed where construction works or road works may encroach on or destroy their habitat. Our permit allows us to catch and relocate native animals in the following council areas; Barcaldine, Barcoo, Blackall Tambo, Boulia, Bulloo, Charters Towers, Cloncurry, Diamantina, Flinders, Longreach, McKinlay, Mount Isa, Quilpie and Winton. A permit must be held to legally catch and relocate native animals.

DC Solutions have been providing these environmental services to a number of clients across the region over the last couple of years. If you or someone you know is requiring an environmental service as mentioned above, give us a call or pass on our details. We provide a full suite of services, including comprehensive reports and photographs of our findings undertaken by qualified and experienced staff with local knowledge. We'd love to hear from you!

Agrihive

Drought places significant stress on farming businesses and their families. Agrihive was formed to provide support to resilient yet drought stricken farming communities.

Agrihive is an agribusiness community designed to get information to agriculture. Key information is gathered on many topics from numerous specialists, and distributed quickly.

Agrihive has a suite of information and templates to help businesses during a drought.

Topics to be covered in the future include:

Savings -

There are many layers of cost reduction in Agriculture. Agrihive will uncover spending through expert eyes and unlock some new discoveries for potential savings.

Production -

The ability to accumulate revenue generating assets is key to drought recovery. Agrihive reveals a systematic approach to business performance.

Possibilities -

Agrihive and its strategic partners will create new opportunities and levels of thinking; revealing new options.

To find out more, please visit: www.agrihive.com

“Let our advance worrying become advance thinking and planning” (Winston Churchill).