



## *The Australian Rangeland Society*

### RANGE MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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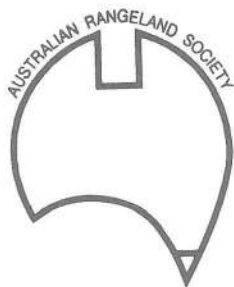
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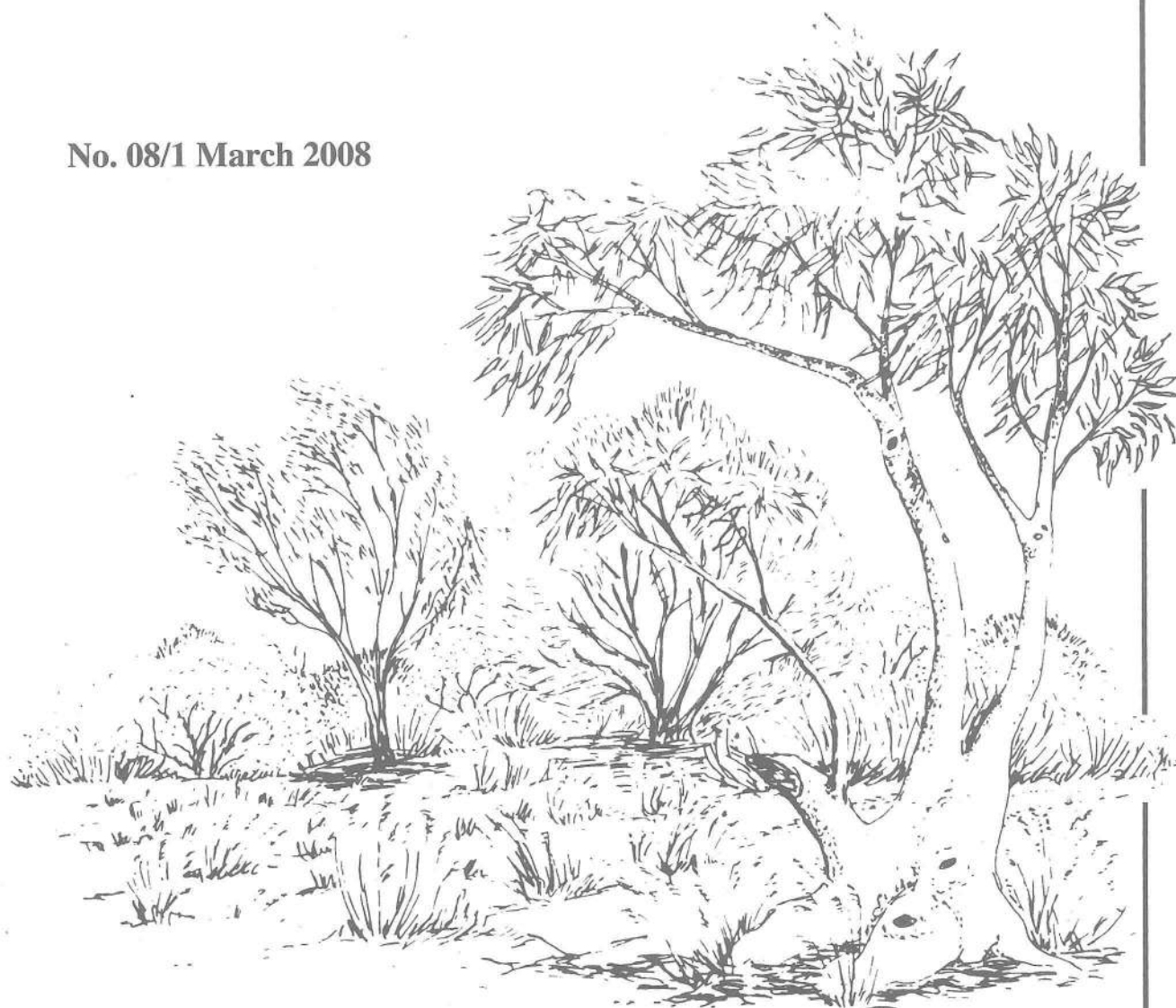
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# **Range Management Newsletter**

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EDITOR (RMN)

Noelene Duckett  
10 Villa Canyon Place  
The Woodlands Texas 77382 USA  
Ph: 0011 1 281 681 1551  
Email: aduckett7@msn.com

EDITOR (*The Rangeland Journal*)

Assoc. Prof. Wal Whalley  
School of Rural Science & Natural Resources  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351  
Ph: 02 6773 2477 Fax: 02 6773 3283  
Email: rwhalley@metz.une.edu.au

PRESIDENT

Peter Johnston  
Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries  
Locked Mail Bag No 4, Moorooka QLD 4105  
Ph: 07 3362 9585  
Email: peter.w.johnston@dpi.qld.gov.au

FINANCE & AUDIT OFFICER

Peter Marin  
Rural Solutions  
GPO Box 1671, Adelaide SA 5001  
Ph: 08 8226 1063  
Email: marin.peter@saugov.sa.gov.au

ACTING SECRETARY

Sandra Van Vreeswyk  
Department of Agriculture and Food  
PO Box 278, Derby WA 6728  
Ph: 08 9191 0333  
Email: svanvreeswyk@agric.wa.gov.au

GENERAL MEMBERS

Tim Ferraro  
Central West Catchment Management Authority  
PO Box 227, Wellington NSW 2820  
Ph: 02 6840 7810 Fax: 02 6840 7801  
Email: tim.ferraro@cma.nsw.gov.au

John Taylor  
Rangelands Australia  
c/o School of Natural and Rural Systems Management  
University of Queensland – Gatton  
Gatton QLD 4343  
Ph: 07 5460 1662  
Email: john.a.taylor@uq.edu.au

Graeme Tupper  
PO Box 141, Orange NSW 2800  
Ph: 02 6361 7734  
Email: grmtupper@yahoo.com.au

Annabel Walsh  
Moorna Station, NSW 2648  
Ph: 03 5028 2250  
Email: annabelwalsh@moorna.com.au

Vanessa Bailey  
c/o Environmental Protection Agency  
PO Box 202, Longreach QLD 4730  
Email: rangelands.exec@gmail.com

SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER

Graeme Tupper  
PO Box 141, Orange NSW 2800  
Ph: 02 6361 7734  
Email: grmtupper@yahoo.com.au

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Noelene Duckett, 10 Villa Canyon Place, The Woodlands  
Texas USA 77382. Email: [aduckett7@msn.com](mailto:aduckett7@msn.com)

Welcome to the first issue of the *Range Management Newsletter* for 2008.

This edition opens with an interesting article submitted by Anita Smyth. Anita is leading a multi-agency project which is examining if waterpoint management can be used to manage biodiversity in the arid South Australian rangelands. Field work and data analysis is currently being carried out, with some interesting observations being recorded so far. Hopefully the rain will come soon to allow site readings under the planned "wet" conditions to permit this study to continue as designed.

Next, I have included a follow-up article to the Rangelands Champions story found in the last newsletter. This latest article describes how tertiary study has benefited one Queenslander – turn to page 4 to find out who this article describes. Following this, Wal Whalley remembers Len 't Mannelje, a great rangeland scientist who recently passed away.

Are you interested in the latest scientific innovations for rangelands and the challenging issues facing land managers? If you are, you should make the effort to attend the next Australian Rangeland Society Biennial Conference to be held in Charters Towers, Queensland, from 28 September – 2 October, 2008. The Conference Organisers are excited about the great research and discussion program they have organised, and also the seven possible field trips that participants can enjoy. The presentations and discussion sessions will be interesting and varied - 129 abstracts for papers and posters have been received with 23 selected to be given as spoken papers. "Hot off the Press" information about many aspects of the conference is available on page 6 – the Society's website ([austrangesoc.com.au](http://austrangesoc.com.au)) will also be updated to include details as they become available.

There are a number of other articles of interest to ARS members. In particular, there is a notice about the Society's AGM (to be held on May 16) and an article on the recent Travel Grant recipients. The Society is also looking for a new Secretary to join its national Council – check out the advert on page 3 if you are interested in undertaking this fun and rewarding position.

Finally, I would love to hear from you if you are intending to participate in the International Rangelands Congress in China in July and would be willing to write a brief article for the *Range Management Newsletter*. Be brave – volunteer to write an article!

The next newsletter is due out in July so I will be accepting articles until late June. Please consider making a contribution.

## MANAGING BIODIVERSITY TO SUPPORT RANGELAND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES USING WATERPOINT MANAGEMENT

Dr Anita Smyth, Project Leader, CSIRO Sustainable  
Ecosystems, PMB 2, Glen Osmond SA 5064.  
Email: [anita.smyth@csiro.au](mailto:anita.smyth@csiro.au)

### Background

The South Australian government is under increasing pressure to show that waterpoint management control grazing across rangeland landscapes. Under the Native Vegetation Act, 1992, a permit system for waterpoint installation regulates native vegetation clearance. This legislation is contentious because permit approvals can lead to a degradation of ecosystem services through opportunity costs, production losses or a loss of biodiversity and ecosystem function.

This project is using participatory, desktop and field experimental approaches to look at whether waterpoint management can be used to manage biodiversity to sustain ecosystem services in the arid South Australia rangelands. It is not a study about grazing gradients or waterpoints nor is it about identifying "increaser" and "decreaser" species, although we use this knowledge in our research.

The work is being undertaken by a consortium of researchers, SA government agencies and cattle producers

Activities in the project are diverse but interconnected. So far we have:

- Conducted participatory workshops to assess the biodiversity conservation priorities that can be managed by waterpoints and identify biodiversity surrogates and ecological indicators for interpreting improvement in biodiversity condition;
- Started a synthesis of the biophysical processes driving the biogeography of arid gilgai ecosystems;
- Started manipulation experiments of waterpoint closure, calibration "cross-fence" studies in grazed and restored paddocks and glasshouse experiments on soil seedbank diversity; and
- Started exploring the potential of biological site data and remotely sensed data to understand patterns relative to long-term climate variation.

In this article, we focus on the field experiments.

### Fieldwork

Field sites are located on two cattle properties and the Oodnadatta Town Common in the saltbush – Mitchell grass vegetation community. This area has gibber



gilgais systems provide many ecosystems services, including fodder for cattle production, carbon sequestration, water sources, and aesthetic and cultural value. We have conducted three three-week survey trips (two experimental and one calibration) in March, June and November 2007.



Photo 1: The field sites are located in areas of gibber pavements interspersed with gilgais. In the above photo, the gilgai is filled with run-off water from the surrounding gibber pavement. Photo - Rick Davies



Photo 2: These fertile gilgais crack on drying and provide food and habitat for small mammals, reptiles and birds. Photo - Anita Smyth

A two-week field trip in November 2006 involved locating sites and setting-up pitfall traps. Plants, small ground mammals and reptiles were sampled at 40 control and treatment gilgais at increasing distances away from artificial waterpoints in the experimental sites. Another 40 traps were set-up in the calibration sites at increasing distances from waterpoints, with 20 sites in each of restored (hardly grazed for > 15 years) and regularly grazed (treatment) paddocks adjacent to each other. Insects were collected as by-catch in 280 pit-traps set up in each of the two types of study site. Resident ground-dwelling birds were surveyed to assess the appropriate scale of study.

We've only processed data for two of the field trips, on calibration and one experimental trip. While the general study area remained very dry for the calibration trip in March, good rains fell over all of the experimental sites in June.

At the calibration sites, 72 native plant species have been recorded, of which 28 species were grasses. No weeds have yet been recorded at these sites.

A total of 10 reptile species (geckoes, skinks and dragons) and six species of small mammals were captured; one was a House Mouse (*Mus musculus*). During the last week of the trip, the temperatures dropped into the high 20s and low 30s, so our reptile captures decreased.

Over 130 native plant species were recorded at the experimental sites in June, with some gilgais having over 50 species. Species recorded included Spike Lovegrass, a regionally rare species which has been collected only twice before from South Australia. Encouragingly, only one species of weed (Spiked Malvastrum) was recorded, this being present at very few sites and in only very small numbers. Of interest was the mix of a large number of predominantly summer growing grasses (28 species) which characterise northern arid regions of Australia along with a large range of winter growing species such as ephemeral daisies (15 species) and ephemeral chenopods (20 species). Even though the mean annual rainfall in the region is low (175mm) and mean winter rainfall is well under half that of the summer mean, the lower evaporation rate in winter and the significant runoff enable a high diversity of winter-rain-dependent species to survive.



Photo 3: The dwarf shrub *Frankenia serpyllifolia* (Bristly sea-heath) was recorded at the field sites. Photo - Peter Canty

Because of the low temperatures, reptile richness was low with only three species recorded. Mammal species increased to six, with larger numbers of Forrest Mouse (*Leggadina forresti*). Another species recorded of conservation significance was Plains Rat (*Pseudomys australis*; Photo 4).



Photo 4: The vulnerable Plains Rat (*Pseudomys australis*) has been recorded at the field sites. Photo – Peter Canty

Five species of birds, one of which was the vulnerable Thick-billed Grasswren (*Amytornis textilis*; Photo 5), were recorded in both the calibration and experimental sites during “dry” and after “wet” periods. Although we walked strip transects 4 to 5 km long for each survey, we commonly saw only one or two individuals of a species at most giving early morning calls. This strongly suggests that we were sampling only the part of the home range of individuals or pairs, so our sampling resolution was too small to capture bird patterns. Resource constraints prevented sampling at large scales, so we discontinued this work for now.



Photo 5: The vulnerable Thick-billed Grasswren has been recorded at the field sites. Photo – Lynn Pedler

We have now completed the “before” sampling at the experimental sites and cattle are being mustered from the waterpoints that are going to be closed. We will return to these sites after the water has been switched off for three months or more. Our next field trip was to sample the calibration sites under “wet” conditions in March/April but it continues to be rain free.

This project is funded by Land and Water Australia with in-kind by CSIRO; Department for Environment and Heritage, SA; Department of Water, Land & Biodiversity,

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE THE SECRETARY OF THE AUSTRALIAN RANGELAND SOCIETY?

The ARS is looking for a new Secretary to join the national Council. Vanessa Bailey stood down from the position in late April for personal reasons, and the Society needs a replacement.

The Secretary performs a number of roles for the Society including:

- Acting as the front-line person for correspondence between the public, Society members and Council;
- Preparing the agenda for Council meetings and taking the minutes;
- Undertaking any follow-up activities; and
- Director of the Society and signatory on the cheque account.

If you are eager to know what Council is up to, and are an organised and enthusiastic person, this may be the position for you!!!

If any member of the Society would like to take on the role could they please contact:

Sandra Van Vreeswyk  
Department of Agriculture and Food  
PO Box 278  
DERBY WA 6728  
Ph: 08 9191 0333  
Fax: 08 9191 0334  
Email: [svanvreeswyk@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:svanvreeswyk@agric.wa.gov.au)

## BACKING OPERATIONAL KNOWLEDGE WITH SCIENCE

Renee Golding, 'Rocktear Park', PO Box 1789,  
Katherine NT 0850. Email: [renee\\_golding@aapt.net.au](mailto:renee_golding@aapt.net.au)

Tom Garrett has seen the need for further education and has seized the opportunity provided by Rangelands Australia.



Tom lives in Amby, west of Roma, with his wife and children. He operates his wild game harvesting business and is the chair of South West NRM Limited and the Queensland Spatial Imagery Steering Committee. He is also Project Officer for the Queensland Macropod and Wild Game Harvesters Association and a member of the Queensland Rural Industry Training Council and does some consulting work for NRM projects at a State and Federal Government level.

With such an impressive resume you would expect Tom to have spent a number of years studying at university – but that is not the case. Tom left high school and went to live in the bush. Since then he has completed two Diploma courses, Rural Business Management (Agriculture) and Conservation and Land Management (Vertebrate Pests) and has almost completed his Graduate Certificate in Rangeland Management.

Rangelands Australia has developed this and other rangeland-specific coursework programs such as a Graduate Diploma and Masters in Rangeland Management. These are designed to suit people from a range of backgrounds and all levels of involvement in the rangelands. They are now available Australia-wide, by distance or face-to-face mode, through the University of Queensland.

It's no surprise then, that there is a wide range of people undertaking these programs, from people in government or regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) and Primary Industry agencies through to graziers/pastoralists, some of who left formal schooling in Year 10, but have a lifetime of experience, practical knowledge and skill.

Tom's quest to gain formal education is driven by a desire to enhance his contribution and impact

"I realised that change was needed in government at policy. I also realised that to be listened to and recognised you had to be 'in the circle' and have a level of recognised knowledge such as a degree. I had the operational knowledge from a layman's perspective; I wanted to get the scientific knowledge to back that."

"The course has done more than just getting me recognised in the circle. I have a much better understanding of wide ideas and issues that impact on Queensland, nationally and globally and a greatly enhanced industry network. I can make a point and influence a discussion. I have changed some perspectives and strengthened others. I can produce science to make decisions or to backup my previous knowledge and support my beliefs. The course has definitely made me a better contributor and has allowed me to contribute at higher levels. I am invited and accepted to give opinions."

Tom has no plans to stop his quest for further education once his Graduate Certificate is complete.

"I now hope to complete my Masters and plan to do this on game management and rangeland ecology. I think there is a lot to be learnt in Australia in this area and we could also learn a lot from other countries such as Africa. I also hope to continue my work in the rangelands with a focus on awareness of biodiversity and conservation and shifting from traditional grazing perspectives."

### Champion support

For many people the thought of tertiary education is very daunting, especially for mature-aged people living in rural and remote Australia.

Rangeland Australia, with funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, has developed a national network of Rangeland Champions (see RM 07/3 – November 2007 for further details).

This special group of people live and/or work in the rangelands and have experienced the challenges and rewards of tertiary education by distance. They are passionate about the future of Australia's rangelands and are motivated to encourage and support mature-aged learners in rural and remote Australia.

The Champions have proven to be an invaluable source of knowledge and practical experience to potential and new students, helping with many aspects of tertiary education such as looking at options for tertiary study, study tips, giving feedback on assignments, clarifying University requirements or expectations and providing motivation and encouragement.

Further information about Rangelands Australia courses and the Rangeland Champion program is available from:

Rangelands Australia  
Website: [www.rangelands-australia.com.au](http://www.rangelands-australia.com.au)  
Phone: (07) 5460 1660  
Email: [rangelands@uqg.uq.edu.au](mailto:rangelands@uqg.uq.edu.au)



## OBITUARY

### LEN 'T MANNETJE – RANGELAND SCIENTIST, FRIEND, GENTLEMAN

Many rangeland scientists throughout the world will be saddened to learn of the death of Len 't Mannetje on February the 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008 in the Netherlands. Len was active in science until his death. His latest contribution was as the Principal Editor of "Carbon Sequestration in Tropical Grassland Ecosystems" published by Wageningen Academic Publishers this year. He attended the launch of this book at a seminar organized by FAO in Rome on the 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2008. This book is the first comprehensive assessment of the capacity of highly productive tropical grassland systems to sequester carbon from the atmosphere into soils and will be reviewed in the next issue of the *Range Management Newsletter*. The capacity of such systems to accumulate carbon from the atmosphere is roughly equal to that of forests in the same region and this is an important finding of this project. It also illustrates how Len was at the forefront of scientific thought right up to the end of his life.

Len graduated with an MSc from Wageningen University and Research Centre in 1958 and immediately moved to Australia to work with the CSIRO in Queensland. He completed a PhD with the University of Queensland in 1966 and the title of his thesis was "Taxonomic studies within the genus *Styloanthus* Sw. (Fabaceae)".

Len was extremely active in the study of the ecology of tropical and temperate grasslands, both native and introduced for over 20 years while he was in Australia. He was a leader in the development of techniques for estimating herbage mass of grasslands under extensive conditions and these techniques are now used throughout the world. His paper on the dry-weight-rank method for the botanical analysis of pasture, published in the *Journal of the British Grassland Society* in 1963 led to the development of the BOTANAL package for the assessment of a range of attributes of pastures under extensive conditions using estimation techniques. This package is now used widely throughout the world. He was the editor of the standard book of techniques for measurement of grassland vegetation and animal production published in 1978 by the Commonwealth Bureau of Pastures and Field Crops. A more ambitious book followed in 2000 which updated the information in the earlier publication. In the second book, he was assisted in the editing by Dick Jones.

The work that Len did in his early years with CSIRO in Queensland gained him international recognition and he gained further experience in other countries, particularly Malaysia. He became a respected member of international committees dealing with rangelands and grasslands, as well as serving on the editorial boards of scientific journals. He was a long term, high profile member of the Australian Rangeland Society and also served as an Associate Editor for *The Rangeland Journal* up until his death.

The family decided to return to the Netherlands in 1981 and Len was appointed Professor of Agricultural Plant Production and Grassland Science at the Wageningen University and Research Centre. He continued traveling throughout the world and supervised many PhD students, is the author of over 100 refereed papers and book chapters and the editor of four books. He continued to be active in science long after his official retirement and his impact on rangeland and grassland science throughout the world has been immense.

It was always a delight to meet Len at either the International Grassland or International Rangeland Congresses and I shall miss his warm welcome at the Congress in Hohhot in China later this year. It has been a rare privilege to have known him and to have worked with him briefly over the years. Our condolences go to his family and to his friends and colleagues throughout the world. He was 74 years old.

R.D.B. (Wal) Whalley  
Editor, The Rangeland Journal

## IGC-IRC UPDATE

It is not too late to register as a participant at the 2008 Joint Meeting of the 21st International Grassland Congress and the 8th International Rangeland Congress to be held in Hohhot, China from 29 June – 5 July.

The main theme of the Congress "Multifunctional Grasslands and Rangelands in a Changing World" will be split into three simultaneous sub-themes:

- A. Grasslands/Rangelands Resources and Ecology;
- B. Grasslands/ Rangelands Production Systems;
- C. Grasslands/Rangelands People and Policies.

There will be four days for presentations and poster viewing during the Congress, with plenary papers each day. The themes cover the areas of interests of both the International Grassland Congress and the International Rangeland Congress with 24 half-day sessions.

Further details about the conference and on-line registration is available at the conference website - [www.igc-irc2008.org](http://www.igc-irc2008.org).





# *The Australian Rangeland Society*

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The 2008 Annual General Meeting of the Australian Rangeland Society will be held on

**16 May 2008  
at 5 pm (Qld time)**

A Block Conference Room, Animal Research Institute  
665 Fairfield Rd, Yeerongpilly  
Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Brisbane, Queensland

The agenda will include:

- minutes of the 2007 Annual General Meeting
- receive the Council's report
- receive the annual accounts
- motions on notice
- general business

### **Motions on Notice**

Any financial member wishing to place a motion on notice before the Annual General Meeting must ensure that the signed motion is lodged with the Acting Secretary by 2 May 2008.

Motions should be emailed or faxed to:

Sandra Van Vreeswyk  
Department of Agriculture and Food  
Derby, Western Australia  
Ph: (08) 9191 0324  
Fax (08) 9191 0334  
Email: [svanvreeswyk@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:svanvreeswyk@agric.wa.gov.au)

The AGM will be followed by light refreshments. Please let Sandra Van Vreeswyk know if you will be attending.

## AN UPDATE ON THE 15TH ARS BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

The 15<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the Australian Rangeland Society will be held in Charters Towers, Queensland, Australia, from 28 September – 2 October, 2008. The conference theme “A Climate of Change in the Rangelands” will focus on the changing environmental, social, cultural and economics facing Australia’s rangelands in the future and linking this dynamic to the broader community’s real values concerning the rangelands.

This will be a conference that facilitates networking and provides a programme full of discussions on the latest scientific innovations for rangelands and the challenging issues facing land managers. Under our theme “A Climate of Change in the Rangelands” we will hear about biodiversity, bioindicators, carbon sequestration, climate risk assessment, duty of care, ecological health, ecosystem services, environmental services, greenhouse budget, landscape condition and sustainability indicators. These will be explored in sessions on grazing management, land condition and monitoring, biodiversity management and conservation, multiple land use, environmental risk management, capacity building and action learning tools.

The conference is an opportunity for managers, carers and users of the rangelands to get the latest technical information from some of Australia’s best researchers and rangeland managers in the areas of natural resource management, conservation and biodiversity; environmental risk management; multiple land use; tourism and mining in the rangelands; sustainability indicators; social equity; stewardship; indigenous issues and land management; and land restoration.

### Conference Outline

The Conference will comprise one-day field visits followed by two and a half days of research presentations and discussions.

The Conference will take place at the World Theatre, Charters Towers, Queensland, Australia. This is centrally located and an ideal venue for spoken sessions with poster displays located in the adjacent Arthur Titley Centre. An exciting social program has been developed to ensure delegates have a “Charters Towers” experience.

The presentations have been grouped into five sessions:

1. Grazing management, land condition and monitoring in the rangelands
2. Biodiversity management and conservation in rangelands
3. Capacity building and social issues in rangelands
4. Multiple use and restoration in rangelands
5. Research and development in rangelands.

The program will include a focus on Youth in the Rangelands with a youth forum and a dedicated Student Session.

The Keynote Speaker will address our theme “A climate of change in Australian Rangelands.”

The overall conference schedule is:

<b>Sunday 28 September</b>  Afternoon  Evening	Registrations  Pre-dinner welcome reception. Own arrangements for dinner
<b>Monday 29 September</b>  Morning and afternoon  Evening	Visits to field research activities. Transport and lunch provided  Conference Barbeque
<b>Tuesday 30 September</b>  08:30 - 17:00  Evening	Papers, posters and discussions  Informal Dinner and “Trivia in the Towers”
<b>Wednesday 1 October</b>  08:30 – 17:00  Evening	Papers, posters and discussion  Conference Dinner
<b>Thursday 2 October</b>  08:00 – 09:00  09:00 – 13:00	Australian Rangeland Society General Meeting  Papers, posters and discussion

### Papers and Poster Presentations

129 poster abstracts have been submitted to the conference and these have been sorted into the five sessions indicated previously.

The Conference Organisers have asked 23 abstracts to be spoken presentations with the remainder being poster presentations. There will also be a student forum with 4 students invited to present their results.

The organisers plan to compile the final 4-page papers on CD and distribute the CD along with hard copies of the abstracts so people can follow the presentations without having to have a computer at hand to follow the presentation.

## Field trips

Delegates will have the choice of participating in one of seven field trips showcasing management issues and use of the rangelands. Each venue can cater for a maximum number so early registration is encouraged. We suggest you have a second choice in mind when registering.

### 1. Toomba

Toomba wetlands nature refuge is a commercial cattle station and stockhorse stud located at Toomba station, 120 km north west of Charters Towers. The property joins the Great Basalt Wall National Park which has significant wetlands. The lava flows across the property date back from 13000 to 2.4 million years ago. A nature conservation agreement covers most of the property. Toomba was declared a fauna reserve in 1920, being the first one in Queensland. This is a good example for integrating conservation and beef production.

### 2. Kirkton and Forest Home

Kirkton Station is located 80 km east of Charters Towers. Mechanical control (cutter bar) of significant areas of Chinese apple and rubbervine, sown pastures and spelling has given a big improvement in land condition and carrying capacity. The trip will stop for lunch at Forest Home Station where there is also noxious weed and rotational grazing management. Both projects are being completed in conjunction with the Dalrymple Landcare Committee.

### 3. Dalrymple National Park

Dalrymple National Park is located 50 km north of Charters Towers. It boasts ancient lava flows and fossilised limestone. The landscape consists of open woodland dominated by eucalypts, she-oaks and dry vine thicket and is an important refuge for native animals including greater gliders, rufous bettongs, wallabies and wallaroos. The Burdekin River on the park has one of Leichardt's camps who opened up this area in 1845. It is also the site of the former Dalrymple township, established on the banks of the Burdekin River during the gold rush. While the township once thrived, flooding and the discovery of other goldfields meant that by 1901 there was little remaining of the settlement.

### 4. Townsville Field Training Area (TFTA)

TFTA is a military training area that was formerly "Dotswood Station". Sections of the property were used as a fodder reserve for adjoining cattle properties in the severe drought of 2003/04. The property covers 250,000 ha and is located 90 km north east of Charters Towers. It is used for the light mobile infantry (no tanks) and there is an aircraft range. One area has been bombed for 40 years. Mosaic burning is practiced and researchers have been monitoring environmental impacts.

### 5. Ravenswood

Ravenswood is a mining town located 80 km east of Charters Towers. It is one of Queensland's finest ghost towns still in its original context. The town has some interesting Victorian architecture and has been restored and maintained for its cultural heritage values. Mullock heaps, tall chimneys, poppetheads and discarded mine

machinery pepper the countryside, reminiscent of the town's century old glory days. The tour includes an inspection of a modern-day mine from a lookout adjacent to the town and lunch at an historic pub.

### 6. Pajingo mine

Pajingo mine is a commercial open cut and underground gold mine located 90 km south of Charters Towers. The mine which has been operating since 1987, has the reputation of being one of the highest grade gold deposits in Australia. The adjoining grazing properties are owned by the mine and leased to local graziers. The mine has a good track record of environmental management including rehabilitation of tailings and overburden dumps.

### 7. Wambiana

Wambiana Grazing Project is a large (1040 ha) long-term (1998-2006) study located at Wambiana, 70 km south of Charters Towers, which tests the ability of different grazing strategies to cope with rainfall variability. The area has been divided into 10 paddocks each grazed by 12-35 Brahman cross steers. Treatments are light, heavy and variable stocking, rotational spelling and a SOI-variable strategy. After 8 years and very variable seasons strong differences have emerged between treatments in terms of animal production, economics, land condition, and pasture cover and condition.

## Registration information

Registration will only be available on-line via a link on the ARS website ([www.austrangesoc.com.au](http://www.austrangesoc.com.au)). Registration is expected to open in June 2008.

## Sponsorship

There are a number of levels at which Conference sponsorship is available. These levels and the benefits to your organisation and representatives are listed in the conference sponsorship prospectus. If required, there is also the capacity to tailor a sponsorship package to suit your company or organisation.

Please contact Jackie Kyte of JK Connections, to discuss all sponsorship options. Jackie can be contacted by telephoning 07 5482 4368 or 0409 564 729 or by email at [jackie@jkconnections.com.au](mailto:jackie@jkconnections.com.au).

## ARS TRAVEL GRANT AWARDS – SUCCESSFUL RECIPIENTS 2008

Vanessa Bailey, ARS Council, c/o Environmental  
Protection Agency, PO Box 202, Longreach QLD 4730.  
Email: [rangelands.exec@gmail.com](mailto:rangelands.exec@gmail.com)

The ARS is pleased to offer support by assisting three members to travel internationally to rangelands areas in the Northern hemisphere.

We look forward to them sharing their knowledge and experiences with the rangeland community back in Australia. There will be an opportunity for them to entice us with their travel stories in future *Range Management Newsletters* and hopefully, for those that attend the ARS Conference in Charters Towers, a presentation prior to the ARS General Meeting.

Two recipients will be representing Australia and the Australian Rangeland Society at the VIII International Rangeland Congress on the 29 June to 5 July 2008, Hohhot, in China. Merri Tothill and Paul Erkelenz will present a paper on *Handing over the reins - The changing relationship between people and policy in the South Australian rangelands*.

Another recipient, Nigel Tomkins has headed to America where he has a full itinerary from attending The American Forage and Grassland Council Meeting and the Society for Range Management - Building Bridges: grasses to rangelands meeting in Kentucky. Nigel then heads south to the New Mexico State University for presentations and studies of field sites in the Chihuahuan Desert Rangeland Research Centre which covers an area of 25,900 hectares of rangelands typical of the south west region. A visit to the Jornada Experimental Range and Corona Range and Livestock Research Centre which promotes collaborative works among animal, range and wildlife scientists should prove fascinating. They aim to discover innovative solutions to improve economic development in rangeland bound-communities.

Safe travels!

## INFORMATION SNIPPETS

### Threatened Species Network Community Grants Available

The Threatened Species Network (TSN) Community Grants Program has been established to support and inspire communities to conduct on-ground conservation work for the ongoing health of our natural environment, specifically targeting the needs of nationally threatened species and ecological communities. The TSN is a community based program of the Australian Government and WWF-Australia.

More than 380 on-ground conservation projects have been funded over the first nine rounds of the program. Funding is available for activities such as habitat restoration, weeding, feral animal control, population surveys and monitoring, fencing, and fire management.

Round 11 of the TSN Community Grants program opened on the 28 March 2008. Community groups are invited to apply for up to \$50,000.

Copies of the Program Guidelines, Application Form and Guide to Completing an Application may be obtained from: <http://www.wwf.org.au/tsn>; by phoning the Program Officer Grants on 1800-032-551; or by contacting the TSN Coordinator for your region.

Closing date for applications is 5pm Friday, 30 May 2008.

### New Book on the Future of North Australia Released

A new book examining the drivers that will shape tropical Australia was recently released. The four well-known authors (Stephen Garnett, John Woinarski, Rolf Gerritsen and Gordon Duff) have identified ten major drivers that will shape the north: population, social function, property rights, Commonwealth policy, the global economy, resource use, oil futures, climate change, invasive organisms and technological innovation. For each they identify the risks, uncertainties and the extent to which they can be controlled by the people of the north.

The book goes on to describe seven possible futures: chronic underdevelopment, degeneration, a northern ricebowl, an industrial powerhouse, environment first, an Indigenous community Utopia and dynamic urbanization. These are not predictions - they are scenarios to make readers think and realize that the decisions being made today will have a profound influence in the future. Whereas for the rest of the world, the future has largely been set by unplanned development and the irrevocable contingencies of history, northern, it is the author's belief that northern Australia can be moulded by deliberate and considered choices.

The book is available from the Charles Darwin University Bookshop ([www.cdu.edu.au/cdupress](http://www.cdu.edu.au/cdupress)) and costs \$22.00 plus \$7 postage.



## New Caring for our Country Initiative

The Australian Government recently advised that it will be refocusing its natural resource management programs in a new 'Caring for Our Country' initiative to better target national Natural Resource Management priorities.

Caring for our Country will commence on 1 July 2008 and will bring together delivery of several Commonwealth programs into an integrated package.

According to the Australian Government NRM website, the "integrated and streamlined approach to Commonwealth investment in environment protection and natural resource management will be less bureaucratic, reducing the administrative burden on those undertaking activities. These issues were highlighted in a number of national evaluations of the Natural Heritage Trust and the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality, and reviews of the National Landcare Program, along with several audits by the Australian National Audit Office."

The program will focus on six national priority areas:

- a national reserve system;
- biodiversity and natural icons;
- coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats;
- sustainable farm practices;
- natural resource management in remote and northern Australia; and
- community skills, knowledge and engagement.

Caring for Our Country will provide \$2.25 billion in funding over five years from 1 July 2008 to June 2013. It will integrate a number of existing natural resource management measures into a consolidated program. These include the Natural Heritage Trust, the National Landcare Program, the Environmental Stewardship Program, and elements of the Working on Country program.

It is also intended that the new initiative will:

- be explicit about what outcomes are to be achieved;
- direct funding to achieve those outcomes;
- choose the most efficient and effective ways of taking action and the organisations that are best placed to deliver;
- keep on track by setting short one to three year targets;
- simplify and streamline administration;
- be accountable to stakeholders for actions and achievements; and
- focus on achieving results and reducing red tape.

The program will remove the restrictions imposed on 'national', 'regional' and 'local' level funding and provide the opportunity for non-government organisations, regional bodies, Local Government and State, Territory

and Australian Government agencies to access a greater proportion of program funds to help achieve our national priorities.

The Australian Government will release the first Caring for our Country Business Plan, covering the 2009-10 financial year, in September 2008. This plan will:

- identify outcomes for the five years of the Program against each of the national priority areas for investment;
- outline the first series of short-term targets to achieve these outcomes; and
- invite proposals for activities to deliver investments against these priorities and targets.

Further information is available from the Australian Government Natural Resource Management website: at <http://www.nrm.gov.au/funding/>.

## NEW MEMBERS LIST

Teresa Eyre  
4th Floor, Forestry Building  
80 Meiers Road  
INDOOROOPIILLY QLD 4068

Adrian Friedel  
PO Box 637  
PORT AUGUSTA SA 5700

Chris Higgins  
49 Louth Road  
COBAR NSW 2835

Gina O'Sullivan  
PO Box 115  
EMERALD QLD 4720

Tom Stockwell  
Sunday Creek Station  
RSD MS 1953  
Via KATHERINE NT 0852

# AUSTRALIAN RANGELAND SOCIETY AWARDS

The Society has two awards to assist members with either:

- travel expenses associated with attending a conference or some other activity, or
- studies related to the rangelands.

Applications for each award will be considered on a yearly basis and close in November of each year. Any member of the Society interested in either award is invited to apply.

## Australian Rangeland Society Travel Grant

This grant is intended to assist eligible persons to attend a meeting, conference or congress related to the rangelands; or to assist eligible persons with travel or transport costs to investigate a topic connected with range management or to implement a program of rangeland investigation not already being undertaken. The grant is available for overseas travel and/or travel within Australia. It is not intended for subsistence expenses.

## Australian Rangeland Society Scholarship

This scholarship is for assisting eligible members with formal study of a subject or course related to the rangelands and which will further the aims of the Australian Rangeland Society. The scholarship is available for study assistance either overseas or within Australia. It is not intended to defray travel expenses.

## How to Apply

Members interested in either award should submit a written outline of their proposed activity. Applications should clearly address how the intended activity (ie. travel or study) meets the aims of the Society. Applications should be brief (less than 1000 words) and should be submitted to the Secretary, Sandra Van Vreeswyk, before **30 November**. An application form can be downloaded from the ARS website at [www.austrangesoc.com.au](http://www.austrangesoc.com.au). For further information contact Sandra by phone on 08 9191 0333 or email at [svanvreeswyk@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:svanvreeswyk@agric.wa.gov.au).

## Conditions

Applications for the Travel Grant should include details of the costs and describe how the grant is to be spent. Applications for the Scholarship should include details of the program of study or course being undertaken and the institution under which it will be conducted, and information on how the scholarship money will be spent. For both awards details of any other sources of funding should be given.

Applications for either award should include the names of two referees.

Finally, on completing the travel or study, recipients are required to fully acquit their award. They are also

expected to write an article on their activities suitable for publication in the *Range Management Newsletter* or *The Rangeland Journal* as appropriate, and for the Australian Rangeland Society website, within six months of completion of their travel or study.

## Eligibility

No formal qualifications are required for either award. There are no age restrictions and all members of the Society are eligible to apply. Applications are encouraged from persons who do not have organisational support.

There is a restriction on both awards for overseas travel or study assistance in that the applicants must have been members of the Society for at least 12 months. The awards can be for Australian members to travel to or study overseas or for overseas members to travel to or study in Australia.

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM



*The Australian Rangeland Society*

**TAX INVOICE / RECEIPT ABN 43 008 784 414**

Please complete and return to the Subscription Manager, Graeme Tupper, PO Box 141, Orange NSW 2800.  
Ph (612) or (02) 6361 7734: Fax (612) or (02) 6362 5719: grmtupper@yahoo.com.au

I, [name] .....

of [address] .....

Postcode..... Email address .....

Phone ..... Fax .....

apply for membership of the Australian Rangeland Society and agree to be bound by the regulations of the Society as stated in the Articles of Association and Memorandum.

☐ Enclosed is a cheque for \$AU..... for full/part\* membership for an individual/student/company\* for the calendar year 2007.

(\* delete as appropriate)

☐ Charge my Mastercard VISA Bankcard AU\$.....for full/part\* membership for an individual/student/institution\* for the calendar year 2008.

Card No.: ..... Expiry Date: .....

Signature:..... Date: ..... Cardholders Name:.....

If you were introduced to the Society by an existing member please include their name here .....

Please list details of your institution & student number if you are applying for student rates .....

### Membership Rates; GST inclusive

#### Australia

#### Overseas Airmail

#### Individual or Family -

Full (Journal + Newsletter)/Student  
Part (Newsletter only)/Student

\$85.00/\$65.00  
\$50.00/\$35.00

\$105.00/\$85.00  
\$60.00/\$40.00

#### Company -

Full (Journal + Newsletter)  
Part (Newsletter only)

\$115.00  
\$65.00

\$140.00  
\$75.00

- All rates are quoted in AUSTRALIAN currency and must be paid in AUSTRALIAN currency.
- Membership is for the calendar year 1st January to 31st December. Subscriptions paid after 1st October will be deemed as payment for the following year.

**Australian Rangeland Society Privacy Statement.** Consistent with national privacy legislation, the Australian Rangeland Society (ARS) will only use members' personal contact information for keeping its records up to date, and enabling member access to ARS products and services e.g. meetings, events, newsletters, journals and conferences. ARS will not use members' information as supplied to ARS for any other purpose and it will not disclose the information to any other party without the member's consent. This will be achieved through email communication or any other means as appropriate.