



The Australian Rangeland Society

RANGE MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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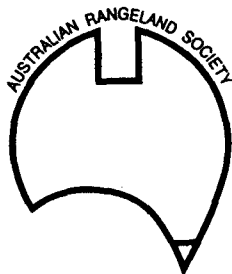
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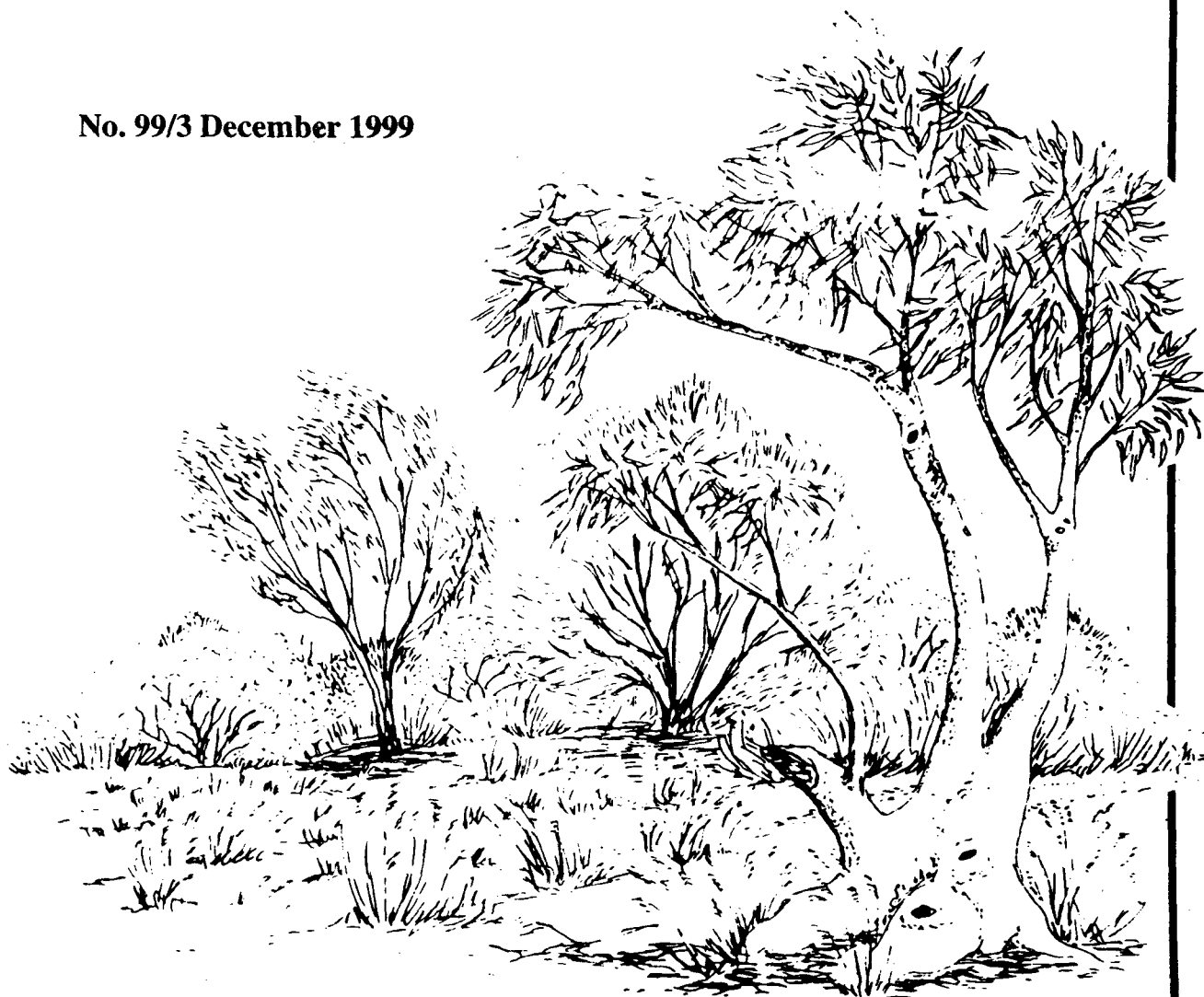
Special Issue

*Celebrating 25 Years
of the Australian Rangeland Society*

The Australian Rangeland Society

Range management Newsletter

No. 99/3 December 1999



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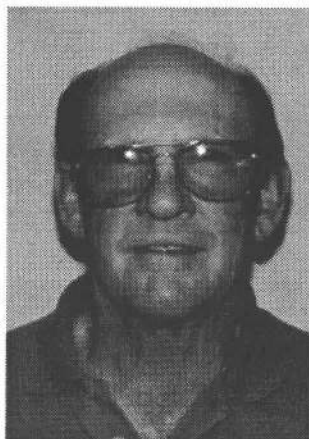
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FROM THE GUEST EDITOR

John Morrissey, 26 Elizabeth Street, Cottesloe WA 6011



As identified by David Wilcox and Alan Payne in their history of the Australian Rangeland Society, the founding fathers decided that the Australian Rangeland Society would support a Scientific Journal, a Newsletter and regular conferences as the means whereby the society would establish an identity as an organisation committed to improving and sharing the knowledge relevant to range

management. Twenty five years on, it is appropriate to reflect on these three core elements and celebrate the "good bits".

Society members who have been responsible for the journal, the newsletter and the biennial conferences have been invited to reflect on the activities they were involved with and to suggest just what was notable and worth recalling on our 25th anniversary.

Allan Wilson's review of *The Rangeland Journal* encourages the view that this publication has made a significant and worthwhile contribution to our knowledge of rangelands. He says:

"These papers, read together, showed an enormous advance in our knowledge on range management and in how we apply that knowledge on the ground to improved management"

Surely this level of achievement is something for the Society to celebrate.

The concept of ten biennial conferences over the 25-year life of the Society challenges my understanding of mathematical logic and use of the English language. Nevertheless the recollections of those events in this newsletter illustrate how the Society's membership enjoyed the opportunities to have fun at conferences and to forge friendships that endured across geographical barriers until the next conference or workshop. The convivial nature of the conferences has been one of the Society's great strengths.

The conferences were also a time to grapple with the biophysical and socio-economic issues in the rangelands. The reflections on the conferences highlight a number of turning points in the understanding and practice of range management and these illustrate how the Society has been involved in the evolution of range management practice in Australia. Something to feel good about after 25 years.

Livestock operations provided the context for the early conferences. However, the long term downward trend in commodity prices has not, except perhaps with the exception

of the extensive cattle raising operations, been countered by management systems which reduce costs or increase production. Therefore, activities that do not depend on livestock have shaped proceedings at recent events. As noted by Alec Holm and Ian Watson *"it's the socio-economic issues at the regional level that we now need to act on"*

An aspect of the reflections on the conferences, which the founding fathers will enjoy, is the evident involvement of both the practitioners and the boffins in these events. The decision taken in 1974 to not set formal qualifications as criteria for membership of the Australian Rangeland Society has been vindicated by the strong contribution made to the Society by those who manage enterprises in the rangelands.

The *Range Management Newsletter* has certainly grown up over 25 years. As intended, it has certainly provided a niche for information that is highly relevant to Society members, but not suited to the journal. The contribution made by Gary Bastin and Bob Purvis is the article I best remember from the newsletter. Former, and the present, editors have commented on what was memorable from the issues they prepared and these reflections highlight the diversity of interests among members.

Looking back over 25 years it is clear that the Australian Rangeland Society is a successful institution and there is much to celebrate. I hope I am around to see the next 25 years out. The only disquieting note is Rob Richards's report on membership trends in the July newsletter.

FROM THE USUAL EDITOR

Gary Bastin, CSIRO, PO Box 2111, Alice Springs NT 0871

Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Millenium.

I welcome your contributions to future issues. My deadline for the first *Range Management Newsletter* next year is the end of February.



THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE AUSTRALIAN RANGELAND SOCIETY



*David Wilcox, 54
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Cottesloe WA 6011*



*Alan Payne,
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Before the Society was formed conferences dealing with rangeland matters, described as Arid Zone conferences, were organised by CSIRO, the first of these being at the Warburton Chalet in Victoria!! Later conferences were actually held in the rangelands; these were at Alice Springs, Broken Hill and Kalgoorlie, with up to 300 people attending. There were other conferences in the heady days of the 1970s when money seemed to be no object, among them being the meetings of the US-Australia rangeland panel set up under a US-Australia agreement on scientific exchange. Numbers attending were restricted to about a dozen from both countries. But we were all grateful that CSIRO had grasped the opportunity to seize some funds for international cooperation. Two of these meetings were held in Australia, one in Adelaide and the other in Alice Springs. There were, as well, other purposeful conferences. Bill Burrows organised a great meeting in the mulga at Charleville to which the mulga people all trooped in 1972.

Attending these events was a test of one's stamina, both intellectual and physical. Discussions, fully lubricated, extended long and raucously into the nights. Nothing much changes, does it? But who is there among the older members who cannot fail to remember the enthusiasm with which delegates embraced the extra-mural activities available in Kalgoorlie, or, being bogged, in a bus, way out in the bush, in the Northern Territory; a situation only saved to the delight of the Australians and the surprise of the Americans by the prescience of Ray Perry who had personally loaded the refreshments.

There were, it seemed, always fleets of Queenslanders arriving in white 4x4s weighed down with swags and vast bull bars. Some other things don't change. There were convoys of white 4x4s at the Katherine meeting just a few years ago.

After they had seen the Australian rangelanders in action at the 1974 meeting of the Rangeland Panel in Alice Springs, our US colleagues, James Blaisdell and Harold Heady suggested that we needed an Australian Society which would reflect the

nature of the Australian rangeland environment and its special social, ecological, economic, conservation and production problems. Australians always being keen to move a novel concept along held a meeting at Alice Springs during the panel. Those present were Geoff Cunningham, Martin Andrew, Max Ross, Bill Burrows, Keith Hyde, Noel Dawson, Brendon Lay, Alan Payne, Colin Lendon, Bill Low, Mark Salloway, David Wilcox, Ian Noble, Malcolm Howes and Ray Perry. Over half of these founding fathers are still in the business today; there were no mothers.

The meeting spawned a mixed bag of terms of reference and guiding principles that included the charge to develop an Australian philosophy on range management, to encourage communication and interchange and to investigate membership qualifications. This last was quickly scrapped as we realised that our strength would come from a membership which was representative of all rangeland users. A nucleus committee, to be resident in Perth, was created and assigned the task of preparing for the launch of the new society at ANZAAS in Canberra in January 1975.

The members of the nucleus group were Alan Payne (convener), Ray Perry, David Wilcox and Stephen Davies. We were to be assisted by corresponding members from the seven rangeland centres in the rest of Australia. Malcolm Howes, the Divisional Editor of the CSIRO Division of Land Resources Management took a place on the central group shortly after. It met for its first meeting on May 24, 1974, at 54 Broome Street, Cottesloe.

Our first task was to produce the Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association required before the Society could be formed. We used our intuition, the principles given to us and the Articles of other learned associations to arrive at a workable set of documents. However when it came to incorporation we discovered that the Incorporations Act covered only small societies and applied only to WA and SA. We could probably have managed as an incorporated society if the Council were located at all times in WA or SA, however we were told that we would not be able to do so if Council moved between states. Moving Council regularly was to be one of the strengths of the Society. If we were to become a truly Australian Society we had to involve all the membership and how better to do this than through placing Council alternately in all states and centres.

After consulting a lawyer it was decided that registration under the Companies Act of WA was the appropriate action to allow a truly national society to evolve. We were compelled to have a registered office and a Secretary in WA, officially Alan Payne was appointed to this position. This is why 54 Broome Street, Cottesloe was used as our official address for so long.

The assumption was made that formation of the Society would be approved at the Canberra ANZAAS meeting and an application for registration was submitted to the Company's Office. We advised the Office that the Inaugural Council, comprising some of the signatories to the Memorandum, would be David Wilcox (President), Alan Payne (Secretary) and Malcolm Howes (Treasurer).

While all this was going on we had to tell the potential membership that a new star was about to burst upon the firmament of scientific societies. Once again CSIRO came to the party. Ray Perry allowed us an insert in the *Arid Zone Newsletter* seeking indications of support for the new society. We had an avalanche of replies. Over 200 people would join; one of whom would join only after the rat plague in the Tibooburra area had been suppressed! Eighty-five respondents said that they would not. Interestingly, there were among these some who wanted the new society to merge with the Ecological Society, with the Institute of Agricultural Science or with the Society for Animal Production dependent upon the respondent's interest.

We were now ready to go.

The first meeting of the Society was held in the Geology Lecture Theatre at ANU on Sunday January 19, 1975 with Owen Williams in the chair. Thirty-two people attended and there were 24 apologies. The Society for Range Management and the Grassland Society of South Africa conveyed their good wishes to the meeting.

Owen and his men arranged some lectures by luminaries and rangeland savants. Bob Lange spoke eloquently about this new flower in the forests of academe which academe would nourish and protect. One can always rely on such gracious public speaking in South Australia.

After lunch, arranged somehow by Owen at Bruce Hall, David Wilcox stated that the Society could progress if the Memorandum and Articles were accepted by this meeting. The discussion was, according to the minutes, prolonged and wide ranging. David Goodall asked some particularly difficult questions, but the two documents were accepted and the Society was born in fact. Subsequently, the meeting directed the Council to proceed to publish both a Journal and a Newsletter. Several committees were established to look after meetings, membership, publicity and editorial matters. The meeting also suggested to the Council that the annual subscription should be increased from the proposed \$10 to \$15!!

Getting the Society active was now the main objective of Council. As we saw it, the principal activities should be the Newsletter, Conferences and the Journal.

Graeme Tupper of CSIRO Deniliquin had already started a *Range Condition Newsletter*, which had a wide circulation. He very kindly allowed us to appropriate it, change its name to the *Range Management Newsletter* and to be the editor. The first edition of the Newsletter was produced in December 1975. The Newsletter has been through a number of changes in format under different editors and remains one of the vital means of communication between members. The Society has been blessed with a number of vigorous and innovative editors who have produced a first rate communication.

The first conference of the Society and the first general meeting were held at Deniliquin in mid October 1975. The Rangelands Research Unit of CSIRO was holding a scientific

meeting there on range evaluation at the time. Council, ever keen to seize upon an opportunity, linked its activities with the CSIRO event. Fifteen papers were presented at the conference; seven were published and formed the backbone of our first Journal issue. Graham Harrington was appointed the first Chairman of the Editorial Committee of the Journal as he agreed to edit the papers submitted at this conference.

At the end of 1976 membership totaled 293. The membership was spread over the states and included rangeland users as well as administrators, researchers and range management officers. The Journal and the Newsletter were alive and well. Council was about to give its attention to the second scientific meeting of the Society in Broken Hill.

The Society had set out on its journey.

SECOND INTERNATIONAL RANGELAND CONGRESS ADELAIDE 1984

David Wilcox, 54 Broome Street, Cottesloe WA 6011

In 1981 the Australian Rangeland Society was handed its first major challenge when it was asked by the Continuing Committee for International Rangeland Conferences to organise the 2nd International Rangeland Congress. This was to follow the first which was held in Denver in 1978. We were only given short notice, as Venezuela, the initial choice of venue, had to withdraw its offer.

Ray Perry, Chief of Land Resources Management CSIRO, was Chairman of the Organising Committee which delegated responsibility for program, tours, publication, publicity, finance, venues and accommodation to a large cross-section of the membership. This membership rose magnificently to the task of organising and running a conference. Few of us, if any, had had any experience of running an international conference though many had attended them. We had no idea what we were in for. One of Ray's significant contributions was to offer the services of his Administrative Officer at Deniliquin, Peter Joss, to the organising committee as secretary of the conference. He and Peter Lynch, who handled publicity, were rock solid in their imperturbability and confidence.

Our first task was to select a venue. Happily we chose Adelaide since it was closest to the rangelands and had a great history of rangeland research in Australia. We used the facilities at the Adelaide University. We received great assistance from the SA government on the financial side and were able to take advantage of the accommodation which was clearly better than that offered by other venues proposed such as Charleville and Karratha!!!

We broke new ground and designed the meeting around 13 themes and invited prominent practitioners in each theme to run that part of the meeting. They were expected to prepare a major paper within the general area of the section and to invite other contributors to support them. In this way, we hoped to

treat each theme in depth - rather than the alternative, rather superficial way of presenting many papers but allowing them but ten minutes of time. Having also in the first and subsequent circulars sought papers on a range of themes, we were able to give each of the theme leaders access to a wider range of contributions. The themes were presented in nine separate symposia over three days.

Other papers that were submitted to the organisers were displayed as posters in large groups of booths located in buildings around the campus such that they were in recognisable themes. This arrangement caused us some problems since we had to black out some of the better-lit venues. Few of us will forget the sight of Brendan Lay swinging through the ceiling structures of the halls pinning the black plastic in position.

This approach to presentation of work by authors proved to be very popular since it allowed delegates the opportunity to talk at close hand to the authors and created a series of continuously running mini-symposia throughout each day.

There were many memorable papers at the Conference. Ian Noble's symposium on the Dynamics of Range Ecosystems was notable since it was there that the first of the assaults on Clementsian ecology as it applied to Australian conditions was made.

The Society set aside the considerable profits from "Wal Whalley's Tours" to endow overseas scholarships and overseas conference tours. The tours from as far away as Darwin and Townsville went without hitch though one camping group found themselves short of blankets in an unexpected frost. The tours were enlivened by first-rate tour booklets prepared by the guides. There were tours after the Congress, some of which passed in a haze according to their leaders.

The then Governor-General, Sir Ninian Stephen, opened the Congress with great ceremony impressing our overseas visitors with his great knowledge of the issues in rangelands.

The success which attended this International Conference confirmed the Society as a mature and significant body in the scientific community.

1984 - Adelaide II IRC

Rangelands: A Resource Under Seige.

1999 - Townsville VI IRC

People and Rangelands: Building the Future

VI INTERNATIONAL RANGELAND CONGRESS TOWNSVILLE 1999

*Gordon King, University of New South Wales, Kensington
NSW 2033*

The Society has maintained strong international links with grassland/rangeland societies throughout the world and after commissioning a report from Ray Perry and David Wilcox, Leigh Hunt and his team successfully tendered in 1995 for the VI International Rangeland Congress to be held in Townsville.

The IRC débuted in 1978 at a US meeting when the applied rangelanders decided to part their ways from the theoretical grassland scientists then dominating the International Grassland Congress. The ARS then held the very successful second IRC at Adelaide in 1984. The challenge for ARS this time around was to put on a meeting where university and government resources and staff levels were now lean and mean, necessitating the retention of professional congress organisers to do the day-to-day nitty gritty of conference management and to produce a conference which was different and forward looking by nature, not just title!

The ARS Council appointed a lean organising committee (OC) of nine "managers" including a mean business manager. The team was Brian Roberts, Ron Hacker, Gordon King, David Eldridge, David Freudenberger, Ken Hodgkinson, Tony Grice, Andrew Ash and Don Burnside. This rather small committee quickly developed a management strategy and budgets which showed that we either had to aim for a relatively large congress or a smaller congress than was previously held in Utah in 1995 (700 people). The Townsville choice had some major logistic issues with budget implications. The OC decided that it was essential to get at least 700 delegates and this was our break-even point. The key to success would be to establish an attractive program and then market it to both potential sponsors and delegates. A market survey was conducted internationally amongst previous participants.

The Congress theme selected was "People and Rangelands: Building the Future". The aim was to focus on the theme throughout all 18 sessions and Australian and international session co-conveners worked to specific session objectives and outcomes. A focus on implementing rangeland science in a socio-economic framework was maintained throughout these sessions and the opening and closing plenaries. There was a great deal of diversity in the 3 1/2 hour session blocks ranging from conventional presentations with a break for poster viewing to participatory workshops, but in all sessions there was an emphasis placed on participation for the four target audiences of research, extension, administrators / policy makers and land use managers. There were some 460 submitted papers published in two volumes available at the Congress and also on CD-ROM. CABI is in the process of publishing a book on the Congress outcomes. Posters were on display for the whole Congress and were the focus of hot debate during a wine & cheese night from some 780 delegates from 77 countries.

A high level of international agency and USDA sponsorship, together with Australian and State support (particularly Queensland) enabled the OC to sponsor about 280 delegates with a particular focus on developing country, student, indigenous and community participation groups. The design of the programs and the functions allowed a great degree of participation and networking to be achieved with a strong Aussie flavour.

Some differences from previous Congresses were:

- a coordinated theme throughout with focussed outcomes;
- completed proceedings at the Congress;
- four-language interpreting;
- Barrier reef ecology(!) on tours;

- pre-congress tours limited, but based on prior market research;
- email newsletters and web registration;
- one GB (gigabyte) of email correspondence over four years;
- successful pre-congress professional refresher workshops; and
- one-price-includes-all for maximising participation.

The highlights:

(1) Don Burnside successfully teaching 20 Germans to sing Waltzing Matilda in an Aussie accent when they were sober and he wasn't.

(2) We didn't go broke.

AUSTRALIAN RANGELAND SOCIETY CONFERENCES

1st Biennial Conference BROKEN HILL - 1977

Program:
Economic, social and educational aspects of
rangeland use
The assessment of rangeland conditions
Manipulation of rangeland systems

Organised by:
Roger Stanley & the western NSW mob

3rd Biennial Conference ALICE SPRINGS - 1981

As told by **Ken Shaw**
– from Alice Springs
rangeland adviser to
Cunyu (Wiluna)
rangeland manager



2nd Biennial Conference ADELAIDE - 1979

Program:
Socio-economic outlook
Land & pasture condition
Animal husbandry & management

Organised by:
D.J. Crawford & the Adelaide crowd

4th Biennial Conference ARMIDALE - 1986

Memories courtesy of **Wal Whalley** – highly
respected rangelands educator
and Editor of *The Rangeland Journal*
For those of us present, who will ever forget the
BBQ in the frost!

5th Biennial Conference
LONGREACH - 1988

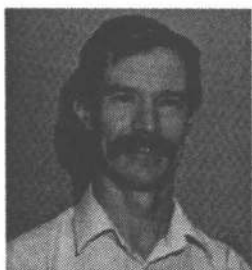
Fair Use and a Fair Go

*Paul Novelly – now leader
of AgWA's rangelands
push in northern WA
and an important cog in
the Tropical Savannas
CRC*



7th Biennial Conference
COBAR - 1992

**Australian Rangelands in a Changing
Environment**



*Tony Grice – from the
woody weed capital of the
world to researching exotic
weeds in northern Australia*

9th Biennial Conference
PORT AUGUSTA - 1996

Focus on the Future – the Heat is On!



*Merri Tothill
representing the SA
crowd who did such a
superb job
in organising and
running this
challenging
foresighting workshop*

6th Biennial Conference

CARNARVON - 1990

*Alec Holm – presently in the
world of academe.
Recently completed the workplan for
the National Land & Water Audit's
Rangelands theme*



*Ian Watson – one of the few
“survivors” from the AgWA
rangelands group
and coordinator of the Audit
Rangelands theme*

8th Biennial Conference
KATHERINE - (1994)

**Clean country, clean product, clear profit
Best practice for practical rangeland
management in Australia**

*“How high is the Katherine River?
12 Metres and Rising”*

*Tom Stockwell enticing us to the Katherine
Conference (RMN 94/1, p. 25).*

*How prophetic four years later as Katherine
went under water.*

10th Biennial Conference
GATTON - 1998

**Where the City meets
the Bush:
the importance of
effective
communication**

Reflections by Bruce Alchin



Alice Springs (1981)

Ken Shaw, Cunyu Station, Wiluna WA 6646

The Alice Springs conference was notable in that attendance was 30% greater than expected. The significant profit generated by the event provided funds that were an important element in the evolution of the Australian Rangeland Society as a significant professional association. Some significant features of the event were:

- The printing and binding of the working papers was completed in time for distribution to delegates at registration.
- Field tours; one to Kunoth paddock to review CSIRO's fire and range assessment studies, the second to DPI sites south of Alice Springs.
- Australian Conservation Foundation president, Geoff Mosely, as the after dinner speaker.
- The contributions made to the conference program by pastoralists Bill Prior of Hamilton Downs station and Grant Heaslip, Bond Springs station.
- Dick Condon's 1981 perspective on the central Australian rangelands. Dick, along with John Newman and Geoff Cunningham, had reported on the carrying capacity of this region following the 1959-65 drought. Delegates were challenged by Dick's judgements on carrying capacity for the district; generally these were lower than local expectations.

The conference was a forum for discussion of the ecological concepts of climax, continuum, succession, range condition, carrying capacity, range management and its manipulation. Drought and drought policy was a major theme with strong contributions from the Charleville contingent.

On the other hand, input from bureaucrats involved with land tenure and drought was absent. Despite efforts to enroll contributions from these sectors, few papers were submitted that dealt with alternative forms of land use; tourism, conservation and Aboriginal lands.

I consider that the Alice Springs conference marked a turning point for the ARS. After the Alice Springs event, the Society attained critical mass; it had the confidence to host the International Rangeland Congress in Adelaide, the Journal was revamped to provide quality and reliability comparable to other respected journals and funding was secured to provide honoraria for some of the more demanding tasks required to maintain the Society.

Armidale (1986)

Wal Whalley, School of Rural Science & Natural Resources, University of New England, Armidale NSW 2351

Ken Hodgkinson and/or Mike Young rang me sometime in 1985 asking if it would be possible to have the next Biennial Conference of the Australian Rangeland Society in Armidale. We were all recovering from the major effort of organising the 2nd International Rangeland Congress in Adelaide in 1984

and so I was a rather reluctant starter. However, after talking it over with Greg Lodge (NSW Agriculture, Tamworth) and Guy Robinson (NSW Agriculture, Glen Innes), we decided to give it a go. The deciding factor was that Guy was happy to act as Treasurer to the small Organising Committee, leaving Greg and me to cope with the program and general organisation. We were also able to call on the services of Sandra Kelly from the Faculty of Science, UNE, for secretarial assistance.

We were fortunate that Brian Walker had recently been appointed Chief of the Division of Wildlife and Ecology of the CSIRO and agreed to give the Keynote Address at our Conference. Brian felt that he needed to think through some issues concerning the research of the Division and presenting the Keynote Address provided a timely incentive. This address was subsequently published in the *Australian Rangeland Journal* (Walker 1988) and it is interesting to read it again about 13 years after his presentation.

Many of us were struggling with the Clementsian paradigm as an explanation of rangeland dynamics under grazing but had no replacement with which to compare it. This paradigm was basic to American Rangeland Science at the time and its inadequacies, particularly in Australia and southern Africa, had been brought into sharp focus at the Congress in Adelaide. However, how do you discard one paradigm when you don't have a replacement? I found Brian's address incredibly stimulating as he laid out a number of elements leading towards a non-equilibrium paradigm. This struck a chord with me because, intuitively, I had never come to terms with an equilibrium climax in a variable environment, particularly with grassland ecosystems which have the ability to rapidly track a changing environment over time, but sometimes seem unable to return to their original condition. Mark Westoby (1979/1980) had been thinking along similar lines and so their combined ideas led to the publication of the State and Transition model (Westoby *et al.* 1989). I believe that Brian's Keynote Address and the subsequent 1989 publication represent a watershed in Rangeland Science throughout the world and we were privileged to be part of its development at the Armidale Conference.

The other notable event at the 1986 Conference was the barbecue. We felt that Rangeland Scientists are an informal and friendly lot and that a formal Conference dinner would not be appropriate. We settled for a barbecue followed by a bush dance to warm people up. The Armidale weather is never dependable, particularly in August, and managed to turn on a beautiful frost for us. Before the barbecue finished by about nine in the evening, the frost was thick on the ground and the opportunity to warm up at the bush dance was very welcome! Some of my north Queensland friends have never forgiven me, but I'm sure their cardio-vascular systems benefited.

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Longreach (1988)

Paul Novelly, Agriculture Western Australia, PO Box 19, Kununurra WA 6743

The 1988 conference (the 5th Biennial Conference) was held at the Longreach Pastoral College from 14 to 17 June. There was an excellent Organising Committee, essentially spread between the Longreach and Charleville offices of the Queensland Department of Primary Industries, and included a Longreach pastoral representative (Elizabeth Clark).

What were the highlights? Well, we started off with too many people wanting to attend. There were limits based on the facilities at Longreach, and we ended up having to put an article in the *Range Management Newsletter* entitled "We're Overwhelmed", and asking people to stop registering an interest until we sorted out who was coming. It was really the fault of the NSW contingent, with the state agencies doing block bookings and then agency individuals registering as well. What can you expect? We finally got things sorted, with attendees billeted in everything from private homes, shearers' pubs downtown and the student accommodation at the Pastoral College.

We started off with an icebreaker the first night, held at the Arid Zone Research Institute (AZRI) in Longreach. What a night. It finally finished about 6 AM. Of course, the drinking was probably a 'wake' for our keynote speaker (David Wilcox, brought all the way from Perth at great expense) who apparently "leapt" off a culvert at the side of the highway between the Pastoral College and AZRI and broke his ankle. Straight to hospital for the duration of the Conference, and the Treasurer's Report for the 1988 Conference holds the record of being the only one (to date, at least) including as an item "2 pairs of pajamas for keynote speaker". Thank God an unknown to me (at that time, at least) individual called John Morrissey (also from Perth) stepped in and delivered David's opening address.

The exciting part of the conference was our attempt to start addressing the wide stakeholder contingent interested in rangelands, and the issues seen as important by the various groups. We did this first off, by defining a theme of "Fair Use and a Fair Go", the suggestion being that while the rangelands should be used within their capabilities, there was a need to respect the various uses (and users). Secondly, we decided on an 'open forum' (called a 'Grazier Forum' in the Conference

timetable), where we wanted to get a "land managers" perspective on the issues of the day, as well as some feedback on the Conference. This session was very ably managed by Colin Munro of ABC Radio fame, but it did get off to a slow start until the ever-ready Barney Foran started things off with the Foranequivalent of a "Dorothy Dixer" (which he essentially answered himself) and away we went.

Overall, 1988 was a busy conference, but interesting and a great event to be part of. While we did try to get away to some extent from the traditional researcher/extension officer presenting papers (through our Forum), there were still many papers. The papers were variable, although some authors thought they were great. One author (who will remain nameless) on being given the nudge for about the fifth time, and who was running about 15 minutes overtime, turned to the session chairman and said "Why should I stop, they're loving it". Ah, such confidence. Really, however, the comment summed up the whole few days. We loved it!

Carnarvon (1990)

Alec Holm, University of Western Australia, Crawley WA 6009

Ian Watson, Agriculture Western Australia, Northam WA 6401

If we remember the Carnarvon conference for just one thing, it will be the Conference dinner – such a grand affair it was. The dinner, attended by most of the 225 delegates and many partners, was typical of the cooperation of the government people and people from the bush that made the conference so memorable. The Isolated Children's and Parent Association arranged much of the dinner, including splendid decorations of *Ptilotus obovatus* (cotton bush) flowers and a fashion show featuring Anne Dresky-Sumoff's emu and sheep leather gear modelled with great dash by some of the local station people. Wayne Fletcher's ballad, composed of highlights from the conference presentations was a gem – David Tongway's fertile patches came in for some immodest attention.

In a similar vein the mid-conference tour to the Boolathana grazing study, where everyone got to see some first class chenopod country, was memorable. A bonzer bush bbq at the new Brickhouse woolshed capped off a great day. Serious inroads into the mountain of coldies and tucker by hot, thirsty and hungry hordes tested the sponsorship of Wesfarmers and organisation of John Reid and his many helpers.

Much of the sponsorship, and hence Conference profit, was organised by the pastoral members of the organising Committee. This highlighted the good relationship the rangeland extension and research staff have always had with the pastoral industry in WA and also the importance placed on the Conference by the surrounding pastoral industry, i.e. it was seen as a Conference for everyone - not just the boffins.

We also had a well-structured inclusive poster session for those not formally presenting. This is common now, but it was "new" at the time and gave everyone a chance to present his or her work. Leigh Hunt won the inaugural award for the best

poster: 'Sheep grazing intensity, drought and the population dynamics of saltbush'.

Perhaps the highlight paper of the week was that presented by John Holmes from the University of Queensland. John's paper; "Non-pastoral uses of Australia's rangelands" set the framework for many of the developments, issues and challenges for the rangelands during the 1990's including the emerging recognition of Land Rights for indigenous people.

We cannot remember all that Bill Burrows said but it was nice to hear him still being irascible and he used a State and Transition model for probably the first time in an ARS Conference.

Geoff Pickup and his "superfloods": it was suggested to Ian later by several locals that "superfloods" could probably explain much of the erosion found in the Gascoyne !!!

Things have changed for the Society since 1990. Looking back at Mark Stafford Smith's paper on sheep distribution within paddocks, it is amazing how far we have all moved since then. Sheep and vegetation and erosion and range regeneration/restoration and woody weeds dominated the 1990 Conference. These were the traditional topics of ARS meetings, but in nine short years we now largely confine these to "we know as much as we need to know about the bio-physical stuff - it's the socio-economic issues at a regional level we now need to act on".

Poetic Justice for the Rangelands

Wayne Fletcher, formerly Agriculture Western Australia, Kalgoorlie WA

This poem, in the true Aussie tradition of trimming tall poppies, was delivered at the Conference dinner in Carnarvon.

"I'd like to take this chance to thank you all for coming here,
And sharing in this conference, and sharing in the beer.
But apart from the entertainment and honing social skills,
We come here for enlightenment – so we don't turn into dills.
And a wealth of knowledge present as I look around me,
Even though they're a little pissed their potential does astound me,
We're alright, the country's safe, we'll fix it before long.
Who'd have even thought DAVID SUZUKI could be wrong.
Here we have range experts to show us where to go,
and as well as all the experts we have CSIRO.
With the likes of BARNEY FORAN and MARK STAFFORD
SMITH,
Guiding us with rangepak, gloom and doom is all a myth.
Mark is into sheep and where they go and where they crap,
And also abstract art and pretty colours on a map.
When pasture productivity is suppressed by woody weeds,
To rejuvenate the landscape and germinate new seeds,
See HODGKINSON & NOBLE when their new play they hatches,
Bugger the technology, they'll use their box of
Nutrient accumulation round the bushes you can see,
Is assessed by DAVID TONGWAY as he strives to find the key,
And he highlights in his travels fertile patches that he meets –
sounds to me like something that you wash out of the sheets.
GEOFF PICKUP uses satellites to look down from up there,
To see and know all that goes on and to be aware
of changes that occur – this technology that he's mastered,
It seems to me that Geoff Pickup is just a nosey :....

If faced with economic woes on your outback station,
We'll take to that no worries with a NEIL MCLEOD Equation.
With multi function variable and 4 point ordination,
Compounded by the power of the log cosine integration.
I'm not sure what all that means but I know it is real beaut
As long as you've got lots of time and 486 computer.
DICKIE GREENE will keep an eye on soil erosion rate,
MARG FRIEDEL sees to thresholds and post climactic state
(Hmmm?).

ALAN WILSON became expert on everything about,
So much so that Siro had to kick him out.
JOHN LUDWIG makes up strategies and provides lots of advice,
RAY PERRY left to take up the consultants jolly life.
There you go and what a line up, how can they go wrong,
Supported by a budget that's 1/2 a mile long.
And it's not too hard to see the fruit of all their labours,
With glossy publications and scientific papers.
I dream a dream when I grow up I'll help to save this nation,
A super Siro scientist will be my occupation.
With a wheelie point and quadrat, I'll go and pick up turds,
I'll collect masses of data, and will I pull the birds.
I'll travel around the country and advice I will be giving,
Meanwhile I just have to go on working for a living.
We're in good hands, with blokes like this, we needn't have a care,
The rangelands are protected from any threat out there.
So you needn't think we're buggered as a nation –
That's just the Labor Government, and the Wool Corporation,
And knowing that we're in good hands we'll sleep better than before.
BUT lets all cross our fingers to be sure to be sure."

Cobar (1992)

Tony Grice, CSIRO Tropical Agriculture, PMB Aitkenvale QLD 4814

The 7th Biennial Conference of the Australian Rangeland Society, held in October 1992, addressed the theme "Australian Rangelands in a Changing Environment". The meeting was held in Cobar in the Western Division of New South Wales, where 150 years of pastoral settlement have seen significant change in the natural environment, perhaps most notably expressed in the proliferation of native shrubs, widely labelled "woody weeds".

The overall theme of the conference was addressed under seven headings: climate change, changing landscapes, changes in the pastoral/cropping zone, changing grazing management, changing conservation perceptions, changing financial environments and changing community attitudes. Together, these subject areas were intended to encourage the 350 delegates who attended to consider the challenges of changes that confront Australian rangelands and its people. Each was addressed by a group of invited speakers that included two international guests; Prof. Steve Archer, from Texas A&M University and Dr Jock Danckwerts, from the University of Fort Hare. Volunteered papers were presented as posters, which were again grouped by subject area, with authors being encouraged to address the conference theme. Discussion was promoted by arranging guided tours of groups of posters, with authors providing verbal summaries of their material.

So much for the mechanics of the 7th Biennial Conference. What contribution did the conference make to rangeland science and management in Australia?

In considering changes that confront and challenge Australian rangelands and its people, the 7th Conference did raise a number of the issues that, if anything, have become more prominent since 1992. Brian Walker pointed to climate change as an important issue for the rangelands and to the desirability of being able to predict seasonal conditions. These remain prominent topics today. The focus on conservation, spearheaded in a keynote address by Stephen Morton, was probably greater during the 7th than any previous Australian Rangeland Conference. This focus is foreshadowed in the greater recognition during the 1990s that there is a need to "balance" production and conservation goals in the rangelands. Likewise, the notion of "sustainability" was prominent in the fact that the Landcare movement was very strongly represented at the Cobar conference, notably, in the session on Changing Community Attitudes. Furthermore, at no previous Rangeland Conference had there been a conscious attempt to deal with the interface between the rangelands/pastoral zone and the higher rainfall cropping zone.

The 7th Biennial Conference in Cobar contained a number of ingredients that are essential to a successful conference: novelty, variety and controversy. Novelty came in the form of sessions dealing specifically with climate change and climate prediction and the pastoral cropping interface. The invited and volunteered papers certainly encompassed considerable variety, as did the list of delegates (registrants came from South Africa, USA and Iceland, from Australian cities and the bush). Controversy arose in relation to remarks by David Choquenot about the impacts of rabbits (an interesting illustration of perception) and in the push during the Conference to make a definitive public statement on the issue of kangaroo management ... and this is without commenting on John Pickard's shorts or the behaviour of the Queensland delegation when returning from the barbecue at "Bundoon Belah".

Often, it seems that conferences (and not just Rangeland Conferences) address the same old topics, simply repackaging and camouflaging them under thematic headings, and shoe-horning the bits that don't easily fit. The Organising Committee of the Cobar conference did make a conscious attempt to "break the mould" of both content and format, though perhaps as a Society, there is still much more that we could do in this regard. Australian Rangeland Conferences usually attempt to achieve multiple goals. Perhaps, traditionally, they have been used to present general opportunities to tell others what we are doing, as well as to find out about the recent work of our colleagues. As well, they can be used to synthesise ideas and address issues in a corporate or community way. It seems that the latter approach may be a more effective tool for building the Australian Rangeland Society as a force for change in the rangelands. This relates to the question of whether the Society and its Conferences can, or should, serve as a mouthpiece for particular points of view or simply as stimuli to debate. When all is said and done, however, we usually best remember the events and activities that take place outside the formal Conference program. If the program itself does have lasting impacts, they are likely to be embedded in, and confounded with, countless other forces for change.

Katherine (1994)

Tom Stockwell, Sunday Creek Station, via Katherine NT 0850

"Clean country, clean product, clear profit – Best practice for practical rangeland management in Australia" was the theme for the 8th Biennial conference.

Held in Katherine, the centre for the cattle industry of the Victoria River, Sturt Plateau, Gulf and Katherine – Daly Districts, just as the live cattle export trade really started to impact on the northern cattle industry, the conference is memorable for some of the people and the subjects covered, and their subsequent rise and fall.

Wim Burgraff presented an informed and interesting keynote address on sustainable management in the pastoral zone, including the issue of maintaining and measuring biodiversity. Then pastoral manager for Heytesbury, Wim has since moved on and is lost to the north west.

Greg Campbell, the environmental officer for Kidmans, talked about that company's positive attitude to sustainable management. Since 1994, nearly all of the large pastoral companies employ staff of Greg's ilk.

A southern producer, Guy Fitzhardinge, talked about managing drought in New South Wales. The presentation must have impressed some, as Guy is now a Director of Meat and Livestock Australia. Equally, the north must have impressed Guy, as he is now a regular participant at producer forums in the region.

Professor Larry White, our guest speaker from the USA, expounded on the need for integrated management using his Total Ranch Management course as an example.

There were many presentations showing progress in science or management, such as McKeon *et al.*'s advances with climate and pasture modeling, and high science mixed with motivation from Dr Burrows. Then of course, there was the ecologist handing out Amway motivational material in the men's toilets.

Perhaps some of the more memorable events were the informal and social functions. The conference dinner held outdoors, the final dinner held under a full moon at Katherine Gorge followed by a post conference tour taking in the grandeur of the pastoral zone in the VRD reflected the character of the Territory.

Port Augusta (1996)

Merri Tohill, Primary Industries and Resources, PO Box 357, Port Augusta SA 5700

The 9th Biennial Conference will always be remembered as the "conference that dared to be different". For those of you that were there and can remember!., it was essentially one large workshop, designed to examine "potential futures" for the Australian rangelands, 15 years on.

We assembled (for four solid days, some 300 of the best rangeland minds available, with centuries of cumulative experience) asked to focus on just one task. This task was to work together in designated groups to identify the opportunities and threats associated with four "potential futures" or scenarios, and then to develop strategies to best cope with each of these.

The "potential futures" were:

- Economic Growth
- Extra Green
- Best Practice
- Partial Retreat

Looking back at some of the conclusions reached for each of those scenarios, much of what was considered "futuring" just three years ago is, to some extent, happening NOW! Examples include:

- an integrated approach to the management of natural resources;
- diversification of production and income, including utilisation and marketing of native plants and animals; and
- the proposed Adelaide to Darwin railway!!

On reflection, the conference was a very exiting and innovative event. Whilst participation was very challenging for some, for most it was also fun to be part of the adventure. The challenge remains for us to use some of the lessons learned and experienced. The Conference Report is a living document available to be used as we continue to plan and make decisions on the future of the Australian rangelands. It is important the future we have is the future we choose.

Gatton (1998)

Bruce Alchin, Dept. of Natural & Rural Systems Management, University of Queensland, Gatton College QLD 4345

The theme for this conference was "Where the city meets the bush: the importance of effective communication". The conference was timed to ensure continuity of this ARS forum but allowing sufficient time between the biennial conferences and the International Rangeland Congress in 1999.

An update on the latest in rangeland production, ecology, economics and sociology in conference papers and posters provided the basis for extensive discussion. However, in keeping with the theme, the futurist Peter Elyard provided a stimulating address on where rangeland management may move to in the (not too distant) future.

It was clear from Peter Elyard's address that the rapid changes occurring in most spheres of life were now also encompassing the rangelands. Whilst the traditional grazing use of the rangelands will continue, the globalisation of issues from marketing to carbon sequestration means that those involved in the region, from pastoralists to scientists, can no longer work "in isolation". Direct community interest and involvement in land management issues also means that all involved must not only endeavour to achieve "best practice", they must be able to *demonstrate* that they are doing it. Elyard noted that whilst the modern day "rangeland cowboy" may look similar

to the pioneer, the approach to rangeland management will be very different.

Complementary to Elyard's address was Brian Robert's presentation on our responsibility in relation to land ethics. There is no question that sustainable production in the rangelands (whatever the land use) is dependent on those involved having both an understanding of how the whole system works and recognition of a land stewardship responsibility.

The individual papers and posters provided valuable input on informing the participants on what was happening around the country. However, some of the most valuable time was the informal periods when new contacts were made, arguments were won and lost, but most of all participants became more aware of the people and work in other areas.

The contribution of this conference to the Society and its responsibility as a rangeland forum was, in keeping with the theme, to build further bridges between those directly involved in management of the resource with those who are in some other way directly involved in its future.

THE RANGELAND JOURNAL: Chapters of a book on the future of the rangelands

*Allan Wilson, "Cal Col" Deniliquin NSW 2710
Editor of The Rangeland Journal 1991-1998*

The guest editor of *RMN* has asked me to write about *The Rangeland Journal*. His request was that I write about the paper(s) in the Journal, in recent times, that have made the greatest contribution to range management. My initial search for such a seminal paper that had both scientific originality and impact on management yielded a few starters but no winner. Could it be that the journal was worthless! I did not believe that, so I delved deeper.

I then listed about 30 papers that I considered excellent contributions and their value was immediately apparent. These papers, read together, showed an enormous advance in our knowledge on range management and in how we apply that knowledge on the ground to improved management. I found that the theme title that fitted many of these papers was "grazing management" and I thus set out to present this theme to you as a coherent story. Here it is.

One of the great "value-adding" contributions of *The Rangeland Journal* has been to carry papers on all levels – from the theoretical, through the experimental to the application level, and further on to the social environment in which that application must occur. This is one of the great strengths of the Society and I am pleased that this is demonstrated so clearly in the journal papers on grazing management. My presentation is in that order.

Two important papers at the theoretical level on grazing management are those of Ash and Stafford Smith (1996) and Watson *et al.* (1996). The first of these highlights the big effect of stocking rate on both animal production and range stability, but more importantly shows that rainfall variation, the spatial effects of patch grazing and long-term vegetation grazing combine to reduce the value of any short-term static view of the issue. They also suggest that these influences require the application of dynamic models to the solution of the problem. Some of the other papers have indeed made value out of the modelling approach, but others have dealt with the problem in other ways. The modelling work of Hall *et al.* (1998), who examined the long-term impacts of climate change on the carrying capacity of Queensland's rangelands, is one such powerful application. However, other powerful applications, such as the property carrying capacity work of Johnston *et al.* (1996a), use very simple models and combine the output with some practical whole station verification that is critical to its adoption as a field tool.

The paper by Watson *et al.* (1996) shows that change in range composition arising from grazing is both an event-driven effect (e.g. arising from drought, flood, or fire) and the accumulation of continuous change (small change every year). Their rationale for continual management is based on the continuous change that occurs every year, the need to condition the range for the special event (e.g. by having the seed on the ground for when the rain does come) and the mental requirement for managers to be learning as they go. It is a powerful rationale. The paper by Roshier and Nicol (1998), on the importance of variation across large paddocks and through wet and dry years, in determining the outcome of our management is another important contribution in this area.

At the experimental level, the papers by McLeod and McIntyre (1997) and Buxton and Stafford Smith (1996) add further value to the theme. McLeod and McIntyre explore the trade-offs needed between the ecologically optimum stocking rates and animal production. In their trial, the medium stocking rate was the most profitable, but there was a decline in perennial grass cover at this rate, so that it was deemed not sustainable in the long-term. Buxton and Stafford Smith (1996) explore the same theme, albeit in a modelling framework, in their paper on reducing the financial impact of drought on a pastoral property. They concluded that where drought is a common feature of the climate, reduced stocking numbers can actually increase profitability by improving the productivity of the herd.

Other notable contributions at this level are the papers by Auld (1995) and Norbury *et al.* (1993), who show the importance of counting all the herbivores (rabbits, goats and kangaroos) in any measure of grazing impact. The forthcoming paper by Freudenberger *et al.* (1999) adds further to this knowledge base by showing the importance of perennial grasses in providing green leaf for livestock. A small amount of green leaf is essential for good livestock productivity and this can only be provided through the long periods without rain by perennial grasses and sub-shrubs. It is the perennials that can be easily lost through overgrazing, leading to greater lows in livestock productivity in dry years and loss of land stability.

The experimental work of Dowling *et al.* (1996) shows that perennial grasses respond positively to season-long rests from grazing, which points the way to how these grasses should be managed.

At the physical application level, I have chosen to highlight three papers. Scanlan *et al.* (1994) present a framework for calculating "safe" carrying capacities. This is based on the determination of rainfall-use-efficiency for different landscapes and climates, the calculation of forage production based on the condition of the pasture and the woody cover and finally, the estimation of long-term utilisation rates that do not cause pasture damage. Johnston *et al.* (1996a) applied this framework to the grazing lands in south-west Queensland. They added three extra practical components. These were data from grazing trials, consensus data from graziers and scientists on safe levels of utilisation and finally, field verification based on "benchmark" soundly managed properties.

The topic of safe carrying capacity is taken a step further by Landsberg *et al.* (1998). In this paper Rodger Landsberg, as a practical grazier, outlines his new philosophy of conservative stocking, combined with an increased emphasis on pasture resting, the re-introduction of fire and the opportunity that conservative stocking provides for meeting specialist markets. This has allowed him to reduce economic risk and improve long-term sustainability. The paper by Roshier and Barchia (1993) also shows how conservatively stocked properties have a stable production level, despite large variations in rainfall.

My final group of papers explore the social context of grazing management and may at first seem to be well removed from the theme. Ellyard (1998) eloquently explores the topic of the relationship between the city and the bush. The value of this paper to the grazing management theme is to lead us in viewing grazing properties and their management within a world context. Ellyard says that the rangelands can no longer be seen in isolation. They are part of a globalist or "planetist" future, where values are largely influenced by the culture of the city. This future brings opportunities in the form of clean/green produce, but also stresses in the adaptation of our grazing industries to what he calls the future "caring and compassionate culture". The weakness here is that Ellyard lectures the pastoralists from the city. The paper by Holmes and Day (1995) presents the value orientation of pastoralists today. Their analysis shows that pastoralists have a strong sense of identity and self-worth and are conscious of their roles as both producers and custodians of the land. They place high value on their independence and regard intervention by outsiders as a serious threat to their future.

The journal has thus explored both the technical tools of management and the social context of that management in terms of the values and goals of pastoralists and the community at large. In essence this means three players: pastoralists, scientists and the wider community, who need to work together to bring a better future for the rangelands and its people. The paper by Johnston *et al.* (1996b), in which pastoralists have been brought in as full consultants in the process of setting

sustainable stocking rates and developing management plans, points to the way ahead.

This conclusion on *The Rangeland Journal* has been built up on one of several possible themes from its content – it is not confined to grazing management. My theme is that papers in the journal show the way ahead. This way is not discernible in a single paper, but within a series of papers that are akin to a collection of chapters in a book that have not yet been numbered. The journal is published and read one edition at a time, and may thus be seen by practitioners as being of limited value, whereas the value to them is in the whole collection of papers. There is an opportunity here for an aspiring author to rewrite the story as a more coherent book, with the chapters in sequence.

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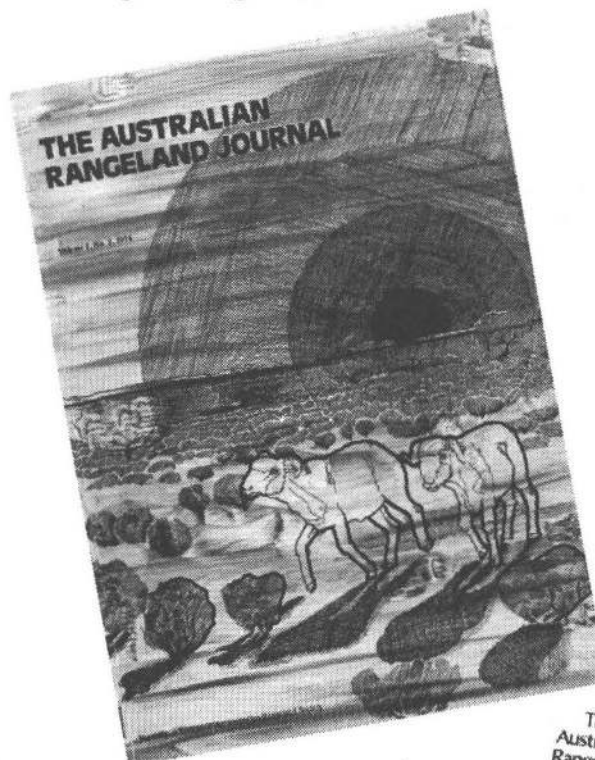
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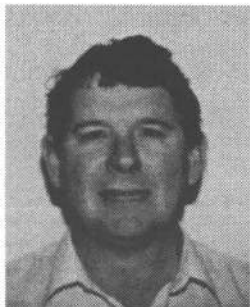


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THE RANGE MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

The Early Years



Don Burnside, Dames and Moore -
NRM

Editor 1982-86

The founders of the Society realised that any decent professional society needs a newsletter – but in this case, instead of starting one, they stole the

Range Assessment Newsletter and its Editor, Graeme Tupper from CSIRO and renamed it the *Range Management Newsletter* (RMN for short). This act of publishing piracy occurred in late December of 1975 and resulted in No. 75/1 of RMN – the beginning of a new era in rangeland discourse.

The captured editor Graeme Tupper, then with CSIRO in Deniliquin, got the ball rolling with eight issues between 1975 and March 1977. The first editorial, by Society President David Wilcox, ended with a plea to *'... consider the ultimate users of the result of research and extension effort. In Australia so far they had been largely ignored'*. This push for pastoralist involvement in the Society and its activities has been a recurring theme throughout RMN's life.

Much of the content of early issues concerned the workings of the Society, with some earnest discussion about range trend from Graham (Hairy Panic) Harrington and a very detailed report on the 1976 Kalgoorlie Arid Zone Conference from Michael Young. Michael noted the diversity in rangeland ecosystems and administrative behaviour as issues to be addressed, with the observation that *'Optimal management strategies for one zone are sub-optimal for another ... the conference repeatedly confirmed the point that there is no one management strategy, which is best for Australia's arid zone'*. It is interesting how long it has taken us as a society to become more comfortable with diversity in the use and management of our rangelands.

John Ludwig described his first impressions of the Australian outback, quoting one of his learned colleagues who noted that there *'sure is a lot of mulga'*!

The editor's baton was passed smoothly to Bill Burrows, at the Charleville Pastoral Laboratory in Queensland who edited five issues between June 1977 and June 1978. Bill's tenancy saw some more discussion about range assessment, with a lively debate about the value and interpretation of point quadrat data between Alex Williams and Greg Robinson occurring over three issues. Hank Suijendorp made the observation that 41 per cent of pastoralists in the north west of WA were doing some off-station work to maintain cash flow, which may be a similar figure to that occurring now over a much wider area. John Childs reported on his research into management behaviour in SW Queensland, with one statement catching my eye:

'Management of a property is a "craftsmans" job. It is learnt from experience, by trial and error. And by exchanges with others practicing the skill'

Increasing the exchange between rangeland practitioners at all levels has been an important role for the RMN, and one that it has addressed admirably.

Contributions from pastoralists increased, particularly from those in the Broken Hill area, including Society Fellow Bill Bolton Smith, Geoff Rodda and Brian Clark. Society functions continued to be well publicised, with the 1977 Broken Hill Conference producing a number of thought provoking responses. Of interest is that the BBQ feed at Silverton during the conference cost \$2 per head!

Tim Fatchen edited six issues of RMN, from September 1978 to December 1979. The newsletter continued to be a faithful reporter of Society doings, with a steady stream of quality contributions from the Broken Hill mob. In No. 78/4, Peter Walker, Roger Stanley, Brian Clarke and Graham Skipper made interesting observations about the financial returns to land rehabilitation, although Brian Roberts warned against extrapolating experience from one location to others.

Bill Bolton Smith, an enthusiastic contributor to RMN over many years reminded readers of the value of understanding our rangeland history as follows:

'..... without looking back for some comparison we will never go forward in Range Management. History, whether made yesterday or last month, last year or 100 years ago is of immense value to managers and scientists alike in drawing up their list of guidelines for managing their stock or experiments. We cannot do without past experience – the pity is that so little of it has been recorded.' (No 79/1, p. 5).

In the same issue Mike Young supported Bill's views, showing that things don't really change, by re-printing a 1927 paper by Henry Lamond entitled 'Pastoral problems - carrying capacity'.

The editorship then moved to CSIRO stalwart Barney Foran who put together eight issues between January 1980 and March 1982, with Margaret Friedel editing one issue through this period. Barney's lively style complemented some great offerings on station management in the WA shrublands from David Fitzgerald, rangeland rehabilitation in the Pilbara as a result of changing land use, drought management in Queensland and the impact of rabbit grazing on mulga regeneration. On the latter, Brendan Lay noted:

'... If rabbits are having a more severe impact on mulga than domestic stock and there is no economic way of controlling their numbers significantly in this country then I may as well pack up and go home or campaign for more funds for rabbit control research.' (No. 81/3, p. 7).

Well, Brendan, this an area where we have definitely made progress!

And then, David Wilcox, who was my boss at the time, rang me out of the blue in early 1982 and said '*Donald, you are going to be editing the Range Management Newsletter!*'. Imagine my surprise when I read in the next issue comments from the outgoing editor, Barney Foran to the effect that '*Don Burnside has agreed to take on the editorship ...*'. Things were done differently in those days

So I had the pleasure of editing 16 issues of *RMN* from Kalgoorlie between May 1982 and May 1986. During this time, *RMN* received a new cover, with a local print shop lifting the quality of production, although it wasn't without its dramas. Other improvements followed, in August 1984 we were able to run the first batch of photographs, consisting of a number of national and international rangeland worthies over nearly libellous captions. Offerings turned up on bits of paper and telex – and we thought we were doing really well when we received copy by fax.

Much of the content over these years reported events run by very active branches in Broken Hill, South Australia and the West Gascoyne – in reviewing the material I was struck by just how much the rangeland agenda benefited from Society activities. The *RMN* proved to be a great vehicle to get relevant material to a wider audience. Of note, there were some great contributions from the practitioners – Geoff Rodda, David Fitzgerald, Paul McClure and Bill McIntosh – to mention only some.

Hardy perennials such as range assessment – techniques and interpretation; the value of exclosures and how they should be used in rangeland research; and grazing management received plenty of coverage. Most of the familiar names weighed in on range assessment – Margaret Friedel, Barney Foran, George Gardiner, Allan Wilson, to name a few. After re-reading all the contributions, I think the debate got us somewhere – Clementsian succession was successfully challenged, the focus shifted from 'how' to assess to 'why' and the need to tailor methods to needs were clear messages.

Bob Henzell, Jim Noble, Richard Silcock and others debated the value of exclosure. Barney Foran provided a set of 12 rules for how to site and use exclosures – with one suggestion being to '*make sure they are located where the outside gets fairly well flogged a couple of times a year*' (No. 84/3, p. 1). David Wilcox discussed the issue of multi-camp grazing systems after jollies to the USA and South Africa and provoked some spirited response – yet the controversy is still very much alive. Overall, some excellent material about 'bread and butter' rangeland management found its way into the *RMN*.

David Fitzgerald from Nambi Station in WA continued his description of his careful and thoughtful approach to station management, which can perhaps be summed up as combining a conservative approach to range management with attention to detail and the keeping of good records. His papers provoked several other responses around the topic of record keeping.

Another familiar topic – managing shrub increase – got lots of column space. *RMN* reported on a number of Branch seminars and research projects, with contributions by Bruce Alchin,

Ken Hodgkinson, Graham Harrington, Peter Walker, Phil Fogarty, Darryl Green, Terry Mitchell, Allan Wilson, David Wilcox and Roger Stanley amongst others. Mike Young documented the financial dramas facing people on shrub-infested properties. Their proponents discussed the relative merits of fire, chemical control, mechanical control and goat grazing. All followed the assumption that shrub removal was the right strategy. Alas, reading all this, one wonders whether we had the right assumption to guide the debate – are we about removing shrubs or managing the socio-economic impacts of shrub increase? Ross O'Shea concluded his review of the 1985 Seminar in Bourke with the following wise observation:

'We have found that graziers with larger properties have a much greater flexibility to roll with the conditions, either seasonally or as related to plant community than those with smaller properties. Smaller properties do not have the physical flexibility to allow the incorporation of any the above management options. These graziers are in a continual cycle of reducing productivity and land degradation.' (No 85/3, p. 8).

Another topic generating plenty of comment was rehabilitation of degraded land and plant introduction, with reports of activity in SA and WA (No. 85/1) and NSW (No. 85/2). Having spent a fair bit of time mucking around with land rehabilitation in the WA Goldfields in the 80s, one is forced to conclude that the doubtful returns did not justify the effort invested. Instead, we have rather wisely shifted our thinking from the 1 per cent of land that is absolutely ***** (insert your own term) to a consideration of the needs of the other 99 per cent. I think the debate in the *RMN* helped us with that shift.

Some new trends in Society and rangeland interests and activities can be detected in the *RMNs* from those years.

Managing rangelands for conservation outcomes got its first decent airing in *RMN* with Graham 'Hairy Panic' Harrington's observations about the Arid Lands Conference held in Broken Hill by the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) in May 1982. Graham noted that the meeting did not result in a slanging match between conservationists and graziers, with no one suggesting that the pastoral industry be 'closed down'. Instead, Graham noted that:

'... The pastoral industry was acknowledged to be the decisive factor in the conservation of the vast majority of our arid zone resource. Workshops established the clear need for the equivalent of an EIS for the continued pastoral use of each bio-climatic zone where the soils, vegetation, climate and topography had a usefully uniform character. Such studies were seen to lead to management guidelines that would be constantly modified according to machinery set up to monitor the effects of management. One wonders whether the ACF will succeed where others have failed.' (No. 82/3, p. 16).

I will leave readers to judge how successful we have been in achieving this state over the last 17 years!

In a similar vein, the management of conservation values in National Parks and the impact of that management on neighbouring landholders got a good airing at meetings held by the Broken Hill (No. 83/2) and SA Branches (No. 84/2). The conclusions implied the need for good range management principles in managing national parks – an issue that is still with us in some places.

Peter Curry contributed two very innovative observations to *RMN*. In the first (No 83/1) he noted the number of Western Grass Wren in a cotton bush (*Ptilotus obovatus*) disclimax which occurred after fire in an acacia shrubland in the Shark Bay area of WA. This bird, known to have disappeared across much of its former known range was doing very nicely in this area that now supported low shrubs instead of tall acacias. As he concluded '*... the cotton bush disclimax is useful to man, and to our little brown bird so that in at least this area, fires, judicious management of stock and endangered wildlife can get along together quite nicely*' (p. 16).

In his second observation (No. 84/4), above a photo of a number of 'awestruck' observers on top of a sandy bank covered in buffel grass east of Carnarvon, Peter commented on the scale and vigour of buffel colonisation on low P soils in the West Gascoyne. While recognising the benefits of its spread, Peter suggested that it may end up out-competing local shrub species. The possibility that buffel grass may be a mixed blessing was novel in 1984 – as Peter put it '*nothing is ever simple, is it?*' (p 13).

Another innovative offering came from Chris McColl, who advocated horticulture as a rangeland use (No. 84/1). He implored the readers not to dismiss the idea as 'lunacy' citing the inherent climatic and market-niche advantages offered in inland Australia for horticulture. It is interesting to see his vision becoming a reality – in WA we have commercial table grapes at Wiluna and Carnarvon, peaches at Mt Magnet and a range of produce coming from the Broome area.

Allan Wilson launched into kangaroo management in No 84/2 with a provocative challenge to those people seeking an end to kangaroo harvesting. He said:

'The numbers of the four species harvested are high ... on a purely conservation basis there would seem to be no problem. The debate about sex ratio and the impact of the drought on populations are all irrelevant to the main issue. There are mobs of them.' (p. 5).

Allan pointed out that while the big kangaroos were prospering, smaller marsupials were endangered and real conservation issues were going un-noticed because of the mixture of animal liberation and conservation values driving the debate. His concluding call '*May conservation again become a noble word*' was taken up by the West Gascoyne Branch of the Society, which held a *Kangaroo in Rangelands* seminar, reported by Peter Curry in No 85/4. Peter concluded that while it was possible for conservationists to find common ground with the kangaroo harvesting industry and pastoralists within

Australia, this desirable state could still be derailed by efficient and effective propaganda overseas.

Finally, the first time I read about land ethics was in a contribution by Brian Roberts to No 85/2. Brian's long advocacy of a new way of thinking about and working with land played an important part in developing the landcare program.

In summary, the contents of *RMN* over this period reflected very closely the emerging 'rangeland debate' and described a very active Society's contribution to it. I believe we can be proud of what we put into the public domain through *RMN* in those years. Finally, the *RMN* remains the one publication that I receive that always gets read cover to cover. Through it I feel in touch with what is happening in the Australian rangeland environment. So ... long may the *Range Management Newsletter* inform, challenge and question how we use and manage our rangelands!

Later On



George Gardiner, PO Box 898, Kununurra WA 6743

Editor 1986-1990

The *Range Management Newsletter* was always intended to provide the vehicle for communication for the whole membership of the Australian Rangeland Society as distinct from

the journal that was to be of standing in the scientific community. From the early days of the Society, a roneoed newsletter provided the newsy communication necessary to create a form of identity for all members. By 1986, membership had grown to include a wide cross section of scientists, technicians, property managers and owners.

There seemed to be two pressures developing within the Society by 1986. The first was a conscious decision by the Council of the Society to lift the profile of the newsletter. The second was recognition of the need to provide a vehicle for articles of a more management and technical orientation that did not meet the scientific rigour necessary to qualify for inclusion in the journal.

It was through the efforts of Don Burnside and his attempts to reach out to all those potential members who were the practitioners of rangeland management that the modern newsletter was borne. The newsletter became a medium to capture and disseminate the knowledge based on experience, observation and on-property investigations while still remaining the vehicle by which the Society continued to develop its identity.

The move to a bound A4 format complete with a glossy cover and professionally printed content heralded the more up-market publication and built upon the changes introduced by Don. A symbolic, artistically designed front cover (which remains today) completed the new image.

Editorial comments, meeting notices and information about all events of import throughout Australia's rangelands provided (and continue to provide) the glue that binds members into a functioning society. These were to be the major fillers for some early issues of the fledgling publication.

Finding the technical and management content in order to fulfil the aims of the *RMN* was never easy. In the early years gathering material was the major task for the Editor, Referee, Operations Manager and Secretary. The Society members were not geared up to provide articles relating to management and technical matters. Many issues were light on and at times the content lacked guts.

Pleas for articles appeared in almost all the issues of the 1980's and at times great pressure had to be brought to bear on prospective authors. The editors developed skills in recognising opportunities for articles, coercion necessary to get authors to cooperate and the patience and persistence necessary to wring the copy out of them. Gradually the value of the newsletter became recognised and articles more oriented to management began to appear so that by mid 1990 the new Editor, Gary Bastin, was able to take on a reasonably supportive base of authors.

While my recollection about the exact content of the early newsletters is now pretty faded there were a number of events that were reported that provided stimulus for a new way of thinking.

In two of the first issues of the Gardiner editorship, papers by David Wilcox (No. 86/3) and Brian Walker (No. 86/4) from conference proceedings began a process within the ARS towards acceptance of the need for change in our approaches to managing the rangelands of Australia. The challenges thrown to all of us by those authors had a significant influence on the nature of future thinking, management and research.

Putting some of those challenges into a practical perspective were two articles about Atartinga "The Story of Umberumba" (No. 88/3) and "Umberumba Revisited" (No. 90/1) in which a whole new approach to managing rangelands was outlined by Bob Purvis and Gary Bastin. That some of the solutions to rangeland degradation might rest in major earth works in order to restore the natural water cycle was foreign to many. Bob's quiet, often retiring ways, partially concealed the depth of his insights. His approach to sustainable rangeland management and the rehabilitation of degraded land is soundly based on powerful observation, clear thinking and real scale implementation. Basic principles included in these suite of articles now form the basis for sustainable use of arid and semi-arid rangelands throughout inland Australia.

To talk about my short time as Editor without mentioning the long running series from Bill Bolten-Smith "Anecdotes from a Past Era 1-7" over the period from (Nos. 87/1 to 88/3) would be to miss one of the most important series of observations recorded for the rangelands of Australia. These articles most embodied the true value of the Newsletter in passing on the wisdom from one generation to the next. Written from within an environment where many first impressions are not correct, the truly amazing observations, insights and wisdom of Bill

will have helped many to better form their own impressions of the often confusing and complex dynamics that are the nature of the rangelands of Australia.

The newsletter today is the publication that Society members look for first, it contains a flow of useful, informative and stimulating articles. While recognising the editor (as all editors do) will still be having difficulty getting copy to meet publication deadlines, the content continues to grow in relevance and quality. In a way the development of the newsletter parallels the development of the Society itself from a loose collection of interested people to a highly regarded society of professional scientists, technicians and practitioners

And Now

Gary Bastin, CSIRO Wildlife & Ecology, PO Box 2111, Alice Springs NT 0870

Editor 1990-

When John Morrissey asked me to "describe the most noteworthy contribution made to the newsletter during my term as Editor", I thought, "that's easy! – a quick flit through the past 'contents' pages, a few scribbled comments and the job's done". Not so – a scan of those contents pages highlights the diversity of contributions made to *RMN*, and a skim of some of the articles shows the quality of the information therein.

I consider that one of the strengths of our Society is the breadth of knowledge and interests of you, the members. This is particularly reflected in the range of articles that have appeared in the *RMN* during my time as Editor. Okay, so I admit that I have had to nurture, cajole and even coerce some of you into contributing, but in the end, all articles have been willingly submitted. All, I believe, have contributed in some way to a greater understanding and appreciation of our rangelands.

Recurring themes over the last ten years have been:

- Feral and pest animals (particularly rabbits, goats and kangaroos) and the issue of total grazing pressure. There have been some outstanding examples of producers' efforts to control rabbits and kangaroos (e.g. *RMN* 91/2, 93/2, 96/2) and healthy debate amongst scientists on the kangaroo issue (e.g. contributions by Grant Norbury, *RMN* 93/1, 93/2; Gordon Grigg, *RMN* 93/3; and Allan Wilson, *RMN* 96/1).
- Monitoring methods and programs.
- Woody weeds and their control.
- Rangeland regeneration and reclamation.
- In more recent issues, biodiversity, sustainability and major rangeland restructuring programs (South West Strategy in *RMN* 95/3 and 98/1, WEST 2000 in *RMN* 95/3 and 97/2, Gascoyne Murchison Strategy in *RMN* 98/1).

One theme that I have particularly tried to nurture during my time as Editor has been recognition of the use of rangelands for purposes other than pastoralism. Thus, we have had contributions describing issues to do with Aboriginal land use, conservation, harvesting of bush food, tourism-related activities and planning for the future. I believe it is important that we,

as a Society, recognise that the rangelands have many (sometimes conflicting) values and that we need to both foster and contribute to the sustainable development of multiple rangeland uses where possible.

Anyway, to try and answer John's question.

I think the award for the most noteworthy contribution to the *RMN* over the last ten years must go to David Freudenberger for his series of thought-provoking scenarios on how the wooded rangelands might be managed in the decade of 2040 (*RMN* 92/3, 93/1 & 93/2). I was disappointed that David's articles drew little response from the membership at the time by way of "letters to the editor". His scenarios are relevant now, long before 2040. They should have provided useful visionary material in developing the draft National Strategy for Rangeland Management and I believe it is timely that his scenarios be revisited during the forthcoming review process of the various regional rangeland recovery strategies.

If I were allowed two further comments, I would have to:

1. nominate Danny Norris's article "Pastoralism: a game of chance or a business of planning" (*RMN* 93/2) as the most novel contribution, and
2. commend the former WA Council (Alec Holm *et. al*) for their work in:
 - (a) developing a direction for the Society ("A vision for the future", *RMN* 93/3 and "Rangeland policy issues", *RMN* 94/1) and
 - (b) co-ordinating ARS's response to the Rangelands Issues Paper (*RMN* 94/1).

It is perhaps timely that we re-visit, revise and re-focus our mid 1990's Vision for the Future as we head into the next millennium.

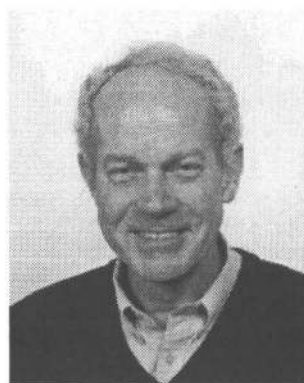
UNSUNG HEROES

John Morrissey, 26 Elizabeth Street, Cottesloe WA 6011

There is a great risk in singling out people for special recognition in a society where so much of the work required to maintain the organisation relies on the effort of individuals who receive little compensation relative to the effort required, or they are not compensated at all for their efforts. There are many individuals who provide the support required to maintain the Australian Rangeland Society. However, among them there are two outstanding individuals who have been recognised by their peers as members of the ARS whose efforts should be publicly acknowledged.

Gary Bastin and Malcolm Howes have made outstanding contributions to the newsletter and the journal respectively. Thank you Gary and Malcolm for jobs well done.

Malcolm Howes



Malcolm Howes migrated from the UK to Perth after graduating from Wye College, London University.

He joined CSIRO in Perth and for seven years worked on pasture plant nutrition. In 1973 when Ray Perry moved to Perth as Chief of the new Land Resources Management

Division he recruited Malcolm as a communication specialist to look after information management including editorial work on the Division's publications. This move was the beginning of 26 years association with rangelands and associated editorial work.

As we learned from David Wilcox and Alan Payne's history of the Society, Malcolm was involved in the early discussions where the formation of the ARS was proposed. He was a member of the Perth-based nucleus group, which laid the foundations for the new society, and he was Treasurer on the inaugural council. At that time Malcolm also commenced his long association with the production of the Society's journal.

Malcolm resigned from CSIRO in 1980 to take up farming. In 1982 the demands on his time to operate the farm made it necessary for him to relinquish his role with the journal. That responsibility then passed on to Gillian Crook and then Eric Lawson at the Western Australian Department of Agriculture.

In 1987 with three sons close to the age when access to tertiary education facilities becomes a priority, Malcolm sold his farm. He joined the WA Department of Agriculture in an editorial position and was persuaded by Eric Lawson to resume his role with the ARS journal and Malcolm continues in that position.

Over the span of 25 years with the ARS journal, Malcolm has enjoyed three different titles; initially the Editor, then Business

Manager and now Production Manager. In all cases he has managed the production of a high quality, cost-effective publication.

For 20 years Malcolm Howes has worked hard, both to establish the ARS and produce the Society's journal. His long service is particularly noteworthy and it is appropriate that his outstanding contribution should be recognised at the time of the Society's 25th anniversary.

John Morrissey



Gary Bastin - Farewell and Thank-you

Rob Richards, Department of Land and Water Conservation, PO Box 235, Condobolin NSW 2877

It is not by some miracle that three times a year the *Range Management Newsletter* ends

up on your desk or in your mailbox. Like Santa Claus, there is a man working hard behind the scenes to make sure the goods are delivered safely on time. After ten years he's moving aside and giving another family the opportunity to gain editorial experience. This man is of course Gary Bastin, so let's discover exactly who he is.

From teat to heat

Gary's an early riser – very early riser. Always the first man up in the camp. He's cleaned up, eaten up, washed up, and packed up before the rest have even woken up. A circadian rhythm which can only be developed on a dairy farm, which is of course Gary's background.

After obtaining a Bachelor of Applied Science from the University of NSW, Gary wound up in Alice Springs in 1976. Not much different from home really – except for the fact that he now needs a satellite image to see as much greenness as you need to feed a dairy cow each day!! Here Gary spent 13 years with the NT Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries; amongst other things, working on assessing the impact of grazing by cattle and feral animals on pastoral leases in the southern NT using ground-based vegetation measurement techniques. Gary was instrumental in establishing the C.R.A.P (centralian range assessment program). During this period, Gary worked extensively with CSIRO scientists such as Barney Foran and Margaret Friedel to develop monitoring techniques that could separate grazing effects on the vegetation from those due to inherent site factors and rainfall. Gary developed considerable knowledge and empathy for the pastoral industry and landscapes of the NT's rangelands. It was in this period that Gary started to develop his talent as an editor producing the Alice Springs *Rural Review* in 1977 and 1978.

Gary was Treasurer of the Rangeland Society in 1981-83. He became Editor of the *RMN* in 1990 and edited the Working Papers for the 1994 Biennial Conference held in Katherine.

Assessment: widespread distribution, resilient, significant to the pastoral industry, recognised qualities, often used for stability.

Most likely family: *Poaceae*

The sky's the limit

In 1990, Gary jumped the fence (no he hadn't taken the "r" out of his name) – did he jump or was he pushed? – probably doesn't matter but it was a **Great Pickup** for the CSIRO team. At any rate, Gary had purchased a new set of glasses and their focal point was definitely for a long-sighted bloke. Enter Gary Bastin to rangeland remote sensing.

Gary recognised some limitations with ground-based monitoring and the need for a broader scale assessment process. Under Geoff Pickup's guidance, Gary applied remote sensing-based approaches to condition assessment across broad landscapes. From that beginning, the CSIRO's grazing gradient methods are now being implemented within the lease monitoring frameworks of some State Government agencies and have also been tested overseas. Soon Gary will be working in Rajasthan with colleagues from Jodhpur testing and adapting remote sensing applications in a new project developed with Margaret Friedel. Always exploring the envelope, Gary and colleagues are now working with John Ludwig to expand the scale of the Ludwig and Tongway landscape function measures with aerial video and possibly, satellite data.

Along the way, Gary has made enduring friendships with local pastoralist families and long time workmate from DPIF and now successful pastoralist Ken Shaw, not to mention his work colleagues.

Assessment: responds well to favourable conditions, can very successfully establish in a new area, common on red earths, very productive and well respected by pastoralists.

Most likely genus: *Eragrostis*

Hands in the dirt

Gary has an ongoing interest in arid zone plants and has held various positions with the local group of the Society for Growing Australian Plants. Holiday travel is something of a bio-geographical education for the Bastin family and shorter bush trips are common. In fact, Gary's family is obviously not only of critical importance to him but also has been to the Rangeland Society. Production of the *RMN* is a family affair with the various tasks of checking, addressing and mailing the 550 or so copies of each issue being shared with wife, Chris and daughters, Jane and Anna. Without this family support, the quality control and timely delivery that we have come to expect with the *RMN* would not be possible.

Assessment: modest species, flowering – all year round but not showy, seedlings very productive, exhibits strong family characteristics, wiry slender stem, ring of villous hairs around the mouth.

Most likely species: sounds like *E. dielsii* - but then again, with all that hairiness around the apex, could be *E. bastinii*

On behalf of myself as Subscriptions Manager, the current and former National Councils, and members of the ARS, I thank-you for your dedication, commitment, and friendship for the last ten years.

CALL OF THE BUSH

By Gate Consultant

With our history steeped in folklore, and though I live "in town"
We're all direct descendants of Banjo's bushman well renowned.
Saltbush Bill or Clancy or the Swagman making tea
Or the Man from Snowy River or that trooper Wuntuthree.
So I thought I best get out there, as the heart it stakes a claim
The inner self is unfulfilled and city life's a drain.

I loaded the Pajero, selected four wheel drive
And headed for the bush. My heart it felt alive.
I drove along quite slowly and watched the scenery change
(Cause you can't do more than forty when you're driving in low range).
Road conditions worsened till I was forced to stop
The bitumen had ended and this gave quite a shock.

I wish I'd paid for diff locks, I hope I packed the tea
The weather looks uncertain and could be the death of me.
I could be bitten by a snake or perish in a bog
I held tight to the mobile and, for coverage, prayed to God.

I re-gathered my composure and went on down the track
An adventurer, explorer, never looking back.
Nature throws up obstacles in this harshest of harsh lands
I negotiated seven grids and encountered some soft sand.
A bluetongue on the road I had to drive around
Talk about adventure – that's exactly what I found.

But nature's final challenge that was to rule my fate,
Stuck there right between two posts – it was – it was a gate.
I only knew it was a gate because it had a sign
"Please close the gate" it said to me, a challenge to my mind.
I couldn't find a hinge; I couldn't find a latch
But I was determined that this gate had met it's match.
I pushed and pulled and twisted, searched for the hidden key
I tried to use a lever and I had a cup of tea.
The crucial piece of wire when moved along a stick
Saw it go off like a trap and unfold itself real quick.
The wood it flew out with a force and then it swung around
And miraculously the length of gate then fell upon the ground.
Nursing only minor injuries it took most of the day
To get that gate to stand back up and allow me on my way.

I went back to the city and told myself right there
I'll no more be fooled by a gate, I'd become gate aware.
I'd read the books and search the web and learn of gate ID
And maybe go to Uni and do a BS(G).

The years did pass and I at last became a gate consultant
And drive flash car, travel far, with enormous fees resultant.
While I can't shear a hundred sheep nor muster on horse-back,
Can't sink a well in granite rock or cause a whip to crack.
I don't know if it's breeding, or something in the dust
But there's a little bit of bushman hidden deep in all of us.
The bush it calls us sometimes, it needs to know we care
I may not go bush often, but it's nice to know it's there.
You may not go bush often, but it's nice to know it's there.

**So endeth the special issue, now to more
normal RMN business.**

RANGELANDS AUSTRALIA

*John Stewart, Chairman, Rangelands Australia Steering
Committee, Rangelands Australia Secretariat, PO Box 846,
Park Ridge Qld 4125*

In this initiative, **Rangelands Australia** capitalises on the earnest concern for the rangelands, evident in the commitment of stakeholders to advance significantly the profitability of enterprises, sustainability of this precious and unique resource and the wellbeing of its communities.

Key stakeholders (e.g.. pastoralists, Aboriginals, mining, tourism, defence, community groups, government agencies and academic institutions), long aware of imposing pressures upon the people and the resource, have chosen to address the issues collectively. The focus and direction for the implementation of a new vision for rangeland management is through the establishment of a centre of excellence in rangeland management education, training and research. In this context they have framed a proposal for a Rangeland Management Institute to be located at the University of Queensland Gatton campus, supporting a nation wide network of Rangeland centres and online services, to provide the most flexible access to rangeland management training ever.

Through the network will be delivered a range of education and training services, to provide urgently required specialist skills in rangeland management, that are critical to the take up of best practice, profitability and sustainability. Those undertaking short course competency-based training in the regions will have a clear pathway to attaining the highest applied academic achievement in the specialist disciplines of rangeland management. Candidates will have the option to secure qualifications across agencies, enjoy portability of credits and will understand, right from the outset, that their education and training is intended to affect improvement in their skills and the resource. Leading edge graduate and postgraduate research in rangeland management, closely integrated with the practical needs of key stakeholders identified above, will address gaps in knowledge. Monitoring of the effectiveness of these measures will demonstrate the intended benefits over time.

A world-renowned rangeland management specialist will be appointed as Professor of Rangeland Management at the Institute, to build relationships and champion the venture, giving substance to the vision to become a centre of excellence in rangeland management education, training and research. The Professor will be the Director of the Rangeland Management Institute and Co-ordinator of the **Rangelands Australia** Network. A Board of Management, made up of stakeholders, will oversee the development and management of **Rangelands Australia**.

Funding of \$9.585m over five years is required, by which time the business is expected to be fully operational, fully staffed, with fee paying students, outstanding education, training and research programs, and blossoming, collaborative relationships with an effective network of Rangeland centres. Funding will be sourced from agencies that stand to benefit significantly from the outputs of **Rangelands Australia**.

Rangelands Australia also provides a focus for, and builds on, the extensive training, education, research and strategic actions already undertaken by a multitude of government agencies and training institutions. The initiative provides a key for timely turnaround in skills and knowledge that addresses the needs to make the difference to the 75% of land area supporting 90% of the country's cattle and sheep population. National Principles and Guidelines for Rangeland Management quotes contributions from mining in Rangelands at \$12 billion, tourism at \$1.7 billion and meat and wool production at \$1 billion. Emerging and other small industries contributed around \$200 million. Our definition of rangelands would considerably increase these amounts.

For further information, please write to me at the above address or:

Tel: (07) 3236.3335,

Fax: (07) 3236.3114 or

Email: john.stewart@agforceqld.org.au

AUSTRALIAN RANGELAND SOCIETY CENTENARY SYMPOSIUM BROKEN HILL August 2000

Past Achievements, Future Challenges

The Organising Committee has advised that substantial progress has been made in regard to the development of a program structure appropriate for the above meeting. While some fine tuning will undoubtedly be undertaken over the intervening months, broad details of the structure have been provided so that prospective registrants may gain some idea as to the nature of the various sessions proposed. A registration brochure is currently being prepared for circulation to all those who have completed the initial expression of interest forms. The brochure will also include a section calling for abstracts of proposed papers to be presented either orally or as posters. As in previous biennial conferences of the Australian Rangeland Society, the Organising Committee will make the final decision as to which papers will be presented orally. Anyone wishing to complete the expression of interest form in the interim may do so by contacting the Secretary of the Organising Committee, c/- Australian Rangeland Society, PO Box 459, Broken Hill, NSW 2880.

The proposed program structure is as follows:

Day 1 – Sunday 20th August

1600 – 1800	Registration
1800 – 1930	Mayoral welcome & conference reception – light refreshments

Day 2 – Monday 21st

0730 – 0930	Registration
0930 – 1000	Opening ceremonies

1000 – 1145	I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT
	Early Settlement Phase (1800 – 1900)
1145 – 1230	Middle Phase (1900-1950)
1230 – 1330	Lunch
1330 – 1400	Final papers on Middle Phase
1400 – 1515	Late Phase (1950- 2000)
1515 – 1545	Afternoon tea
1545 – 1700	Historical review and plenary session
1900 – late	Conference Dinner

Day 3 – Tuesday 22nd II. BIOPHYSICAL ISSUES

0830 – 1000	Ancient Environments – Understanding Change
	Morning tea
1000 – 1030	Rangeland Dynamics – Landscape Ecology in Time and Space
1030 – 1230	Lunch
1230 – 1330	Rangelands in the New Millenium
1330 – 1500	Afternoon tea
1500 – 1530	Structured Poster Session 1
1530 – 1800	

Graduate Diploma and Master of Tropical Environmental Management

Units offered in these courses include:

- Ecology and Management of Tropical Savannas
- Sustainable Rangeland Management
- Tropical Wetland Management
- GIS Applications in Environmental Management
- Design and Analysis of Environmental Studies
- Flora and Fauna Survey Techniques.

External mode and intensive block units available.

Part-time study options.

Course fees payable by HECS.

For further information contact:

Dr Samantha Setterfield, TS-CRC, Faculty of SITE, NTU, Darwin, NT 0909.

Ph (08) 8946 6563/6756, Fax (08) 8946 6847,

Email: samantha.setterfield@ntu.edu.au

These courses are supported by the Tropical Savannas CRC. The CRC undertakes research, communication and education related to the ecology and management of tropical savannas.



TROPICAL SAVANNAS CRC
Cooperative Research Centre for the Sustainable Development of Tropical Savannas



Day 4 – Wednesday 23rd

0830 - 1030 **Structured Poster Session 2**
1030 - 1100 Morning tea
1100 - late **Mid-Conference Tour**

**Day 5 – Thursday 24th III. SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND
POLICY ISSUES**

0830 - 1000 **Integrated Management of
Rangeland Regions**
1000 - 1030 Morning tea
1030 - 1230 **Structured Poster Session 3**
1230 - 1330 Lunch
1330 - 1500 **People in Rangelands**
1500 - 1530 Afternoon tea
1530 - 1600 **Organisations and Policies
in Rangelands**
1600 - 1700 **Conference Plenary Session**

NEW MEMBERS

Vivienne Van Mook
PO Box 1047, ADELAIDE SA 5001

Liphi I Nsibande
PO Box 181, Kwaluseni, Swaziland

Nina Plummer
227 Sixth St, Mildura VIC 3500

Eddie Van Etten
Edith Cowan University
100 Joondalup Drive, Perth WA

Andrea Pardini
DISAT Università
Piazzale delle Caseine 18, 50144 Firenze
Italy

Toshihiro Sugiura
Kitasato University
Towada, Aomori, 034-8628 Japan

Michael. P. Schellenberg
Spare Box 1030, Swift Current SK
Canada S9H 3X2

Jane Hosking
PO Box 30, Palmerston NT 0831

Chris Chilcott
C/- DNR, PO Box 318
Toowoomba QLD 4350

Denise True
PO Box 4010, Wembley WA 6014

Peter Russell Spies
C/- DNR, PO Box 13
Clermont QLD 4721

Peter Jefferey
PO Box 2524, Palmerston NT 0831

Meeting Announcement:

**The Society for Range Management,
53rd Annual Meeting:**

2000 Trails to Boise.

February 13-18, 2000 in Boise, Idaho.
Contact: Society for Range Management,
445 Union Boulevard, Suite 230,
Lakewood, Colorado 80228,
phone: 303-986-3309,
email: srm@ix.netcom.com,
website: <http://srm.org>.

Our objective is to provide scientific and technical programs to enhance our understanding of rangeland ecosystems and contribute to discussions or resource management in the 21st century. Please join us in Boise for our first meeting of the new century.

Annual Meeting Page

[http://www.ars-boi.ars.pn.usbr.gov/2000 trails](http://www.ars-boi.ars.pn.usbr.gov/2000%20trails)

For More Information...

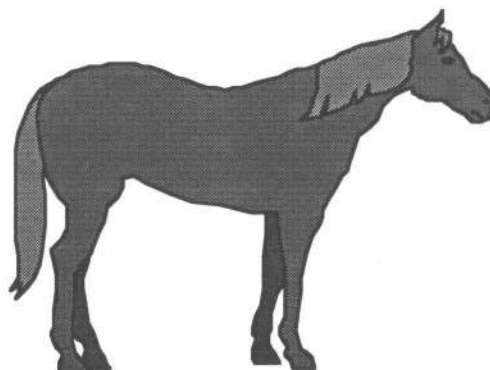
Glen Secrist, co-chair
208-332-8536; gsecrist@agri.state.id.us

Nancy Shaw, co-chair

208-373-4360; nshaw@micron.net

Boise Convention and Visitors Bureau

1-800-635-5240 <http://www.boise.org>



AUSTRALIAN RANGELAND SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Please complete and return to the Subscription Secretary, Rob Richards, PO Box 235, Condobolin 2877 NSW.

I, [name]

of [address]

.....

..... Postcode

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/institution* for the calendar year 2000

☐ Enclosed is a cheque for \$AU for full/part* membership for an individual/institution* for the calendar year 2000

Card No.: Expiry date:

Signature..... Date.....

Membership Rates:

	Australia	Overseas Air Mail
Individual or Family -		
Full (Journal + Newsletter)	\$65.00	\$85.00
Part (Newsletter only)	\$35.00	\$45.00
Institution or Company -		
Full (Journal + Newsletter)	\$95.00	\$115.00
Part (Newsletter only)	\$50.00	\$60.00

Please Note -

- Membership is for the calendar year 1 January to 31 December. All rates are quoted in AUSTRALIAN currency and must be paid in AUSTRALIAN currency.
- Year 2000 membership rates include Airmail for all overseas subscribers.

For Office Use Only:

Membership Number.....

Date Entered in Member Register.....

Date Ratified by Council.....

