

# Western Division newsletter

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Produced for landholders in  
the Western Division of NSW



## A tribute to Peter Clark

by Bill Tatnell, (DIPNR) Manager, Lower Murray Darling Projects

As you may be aware, Peter Clark, former Resource Information Manager, with DIPNR based in Buronga, recently passed away. Pete was diagnosed with a brain tumour about 18 months ago but sadly, he lost his battle on 1 July 2004. Pete was a valued colleague, mentor and friend to many who knew him. He will be greatly missed, but has left a lasting legacy to many things including indigenous issues, information management and natural resource management.

The following is an excerpt from a eulogy by Bill Tatnell at Pete's funeral.

'There has been a lot of talk about community involvement in NRM. Pete walked the walk — a practical approach with a human touch. Some examples of Peter's work are:

### **Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area (WWHA)**

The establishment of any World Heritage Area is a long, involved process. Nobody knew the Willandra Lakes as well as Peter, a result of his years of studying to reconnect the landscape with its human and natural history.

The formation of the WWHA represents the stage where Peter was able to bring together and hone his skills in archaeology, natural resource management, and understanding the needs of landholders, indigenous owners and government. To bring such a vision to fruition was an enormous exercise throughout which Peter



Peter Clark 29 April 1955–1 July 2004

had a pivotal and crucial role. He established clear pathways for resolving the maze of complex scientific and administrative issues in a way that no one else had before. The concept of people living and being integral to the world heritage landscape was born. The concept of a human-free wilderness was finished.

His work is, and will remain as the foundation for this area of international significance.

### **Southern Mallee**

Peter was involved in the nationally recognised Southern Mallee project from the concept design through to implementation of land use agreements. 110,000 ha of private conservation reserves have been established which has allowed the expansion of dryland farming.

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by Pixie Jonasson  
Natural Resource Project  
Officer, NSW DIPNR,  
Buronga

**G**'day everyone and welcome to the September-October edition of the Western Division Newsletter.

I would like to dedicate this edition to Peter Clark, a trusted friend and colleague to many. Sadly, Peter passed away on 1 July. A tribute to Pete is provided by Bill Tatnell.

Like the last edition (July-August), I have not focussed on any one theme but have included a variety of articles for your reading. Articles in this edition include an update on the Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority, information on access onto/through western lands leases, the waiving of lease rents, and the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS).

A survey of demand for Pastoral Property Management Training is also included. Please complete this survey and return it to Steve Cressey (details enclosed).

I would like to thank those of you who contributed to this edition. Without you and your articles, there would be no WDN, so keep them rolling in for future editions. Enjoy the read!



NSW DEPARTMENT OF  
**PRIMARY INDUSTRIES**



Department of  
**Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources**

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# Lower Murray Darling CMA update

by Pixie Jonasson, NRPO, DIPNR

## Chair, Board and General Manager Appointed

As you would be aware from the July-August edition, Mark King has been appointed Chair of the Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority (LMD CMA). Other members of the LMD CMA Board are Patty Byrnes, Stan Dineen, Gary Doyle, Howard Jones and Leigh Watmuff.

**Paul Dixon** commenced as General Manager of the LMD CMA on 5 July. Paul brings an extensive knowledge of business operations and administration. He was previously employed with Local Government in Mildura.

## LMD CMA Board Profiles

**Mark King** operates a horticulture and wine business and is a Wentworth Shire Council Councillor. He is an active community member involved in promoting local and regional initiatives. Mark was the Chair of the former Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Board.

**Patty Byrnes** lives on Wamberra Station and was a member of the LMD CMB. Patty is very active in natural resource management and enjoys showing and promoting the private conservation reserves on Wamberra Station. She is currently Vice Chair of RMAP, a member of the Southern Mallee Regional Planning Committee, Secretary of the Pooncarie Field Day Inc. and Treasurer of the South West NSW Land Management Group.

**Stan Dineen** has been a long-standing member of the LMD CMB and its predecessor, the Lower Murray Darling CMC (since 1993). Stan has lived in Broken Hill since 1953 and is currently a Director of Australian Inland.

**Gary Doyle** is part of a family business that runs Petro and Montarna for dryland cropping and grazing. He also manages a 16,000 ha private conservation reserve. Gary was the inaugural President of Mallee Sustainable Farming for 6 years and is a member of the Southern Mallee Regional Planning Committee.

**Howard Jones** is a viticulturist who has an extensive understanding and knowledge of the irrigation industry. The decline of some wetland ecosystems prompted Howard to become a pro-active community member and take an interest in the future management of wetlands and floodplains. He has chaired the MWWG since mid-1996.

**Leigh Watmuff** owns and operates a citrus property in Curlwaa and Coomealla and is a Director of Western Murray Irrigation. Leigh is also a secondary school teacher at Coomealla High School.

The LMD CMA will have a team of staff including the General Manager, with several personnel based in Buronga and one at Broken Hill Office, shared with the Western CMA.

To date, the Board has held two meetings (inaugural meeting at Broken Hill on 17 June and second meeting at Buronga on 4 August).

## Role of the LMD CMA

The LMD CMA will:

- implement on-ground actions to achieve positive natural resource and environmental outcomes;
- deliver incentives to landholders and community groups for on-ground works;
- engage and involve the community in decision making;
- implement a Catchment Action Plan, to manage projects and investment activities for the long term;



Paul Dixon



Mark King



Patty Byrnes



Stan Dineen



Gary Doyle



Howard Jones



Leigh Whatmuff

Continued overleaf

- operate under an Annual Implementation Program to direct annual spending; and
- implement a three year Investment Strategy.

### **LMD CMA Investment Strategy**

This financial year (2003–04), \$4.05M has been committed to projects in the LMD Catchment, most of which are currently underway.

The three year 2004–07 Investment Strategy has been approved to the value of \$17.2M from National Action Plan, Natural Heritage Trust, Land and Water Management Plan and Sustainability Trust funds. This is an impressive funding outcome for this catchment, in excess of

the previous funding, and shows the quality of the Catchment Blueprint and the funding proposal submitted. A range of projects will commence later this year covering key target areas of riverine health, salinity, regional outcomes and vegetation.

The LMD CMA is also seeking funds from sources other than those above.

The CMA will be taking the Investment Strategy and the CAP (Catchment Action Plan) out to the catchment community in coming weeks. If you would like more information on the Investment Strategy or the CAP, please contact Lesley Palmer, Ph: (03) 5021 9443, Mobile: 0428 620 090, Fax: (03) 5021 1308, Email: [lesley.palmer@dipnr.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lesley.palmer@dipnr.nsw.gov.au)

Peter was able to understand these issues from the various perspectives of landholders, governments, conservationists and indigenous people. His contribution to the concept of the private conservation reserves owned and managed by landholders and supported by all interest groups is acknowledged.

### **SunRISE 21**

Peter was an active, valuable and well respected member of SunRISE 21 since its inception in 1994. He was appointed to the inaugural committee by the MDBC on the basis of his expertise and understanding of regional issues. As chairman of the committee, he very enthusiastically set the vision for a unique regional geographic information system that now drives the SunRISE program. It is now a valuable regional resource that has instigated important partnerships across regional agencies and businesses, and has been commended by the MDBC. Peter and his vision, knowledge and enthusiasm will be sorely missed by all at SunRISE 21.

### **Biosphere**

On 12 April 2001, John Irwin (a Mildura solicitor) spoke to Peter and showed him how he wanted to expand the Inland Botanic Gardens. Peter explained the international concept of Biosphere reserves

and suggested that the Botanic Gardens groups look at acquiring land to expand the gardens. John Irwin ran with the detailed information provided by Peter, and as a result the connection between the philanthropists and the Barkindji Biosphere was made.

Peter had the genius to take an idea, and turn it into a feasible project that would be acceptable to government and other interests. Peter is proof of the saying 'from little things big things grow'.

### **Solar Tower**

Again through John Irwin, Peter was approached by EnviroMission to locate a site for the proposed Solar Tower. This development requires 7 square kilometres for a 1 km high tower, and elevation increases across the site of 10 m in 100 m. Peter's eyes twinkled at the challenge and he was able to use his 3D satellite wizardry to identify 4 potential sites within 2 hours. Four days later, the Director walked the sites and negotiation for the ownership of the land followed.

If the solar tower ever gets built at that site, it will be thanks to Peter. His ability to run with an idea and inspire, captures the quintessential Peter Clark."

Goodbye Pete. You were a great friend and colleague; we will miss you dearly.

# Rents for Western Lands Leases waived

by Geoff Wise,  
Regional Director, DIPNR



Rents for grazing and agricultural leases in the Western Division have been waived for a further twelve months.

The rents continue to be waived for the 2004/2005 financial year due to the current extreme and continuing drought conditions, with the whole of the Western Division still officially declared an Exceptional Circumstances Drought Area.

It is clear that the Western Division landholders are experiencing severe financial hardship due to the extenuating drought.

As a result, the NSW government has continued to waive rents for Western Division grazing and agricultural leases for this financial year.

As well as having a further twelve months without having to pay rent, Western Division leaseholders can be assured that when they do, the rent they pay will be under a new system, which is far more equitable.

Mechanisms that allow for the operation of the new rental system, Western Lands Regulation 2004 and Schedule 2 of the Western Lands Amendment Act 2002, became official from June 1, 2004.

They resulted from the Western Lands Review, which was led by Hon. John Kerin whose team undertook extensive consultation with Western Division residents over an eighteen-month period.

The new and fairer rental system was initiated by the NSW Farmers Association and strongly supported by the previous Western Lands Advisory Board.

The new system links rent to land use. Leaseholders pay a base rent plus activities with greater impact on the land result in a higher rent, and approved conservation activities result in a rental reduction (rebate).

A detailed description of the new rental system which allows landholders to calculate their new rent was published in the September-October 2003 edition of the Western Division Newsletter.

A fact sheet containing that information can be found at [http://www.dlwc.nsw.gov.au/care/land/wla/wla\\_fact\\_sheet\\_2.pdf](http://www.dlwc.nsw.gov.au/care/land/wla/wla_fact_sheet_2.pdf) If you would like assistance calculating your new rent, please contact Elizabeth Burke, Client and Tenure Services Coordinator on (02) 6883 3000.

# National Livestock Identification System (NLIS)

by Jean Smith,  
Livestock Officer (Beef  
Products), Trangie  
NSW Department of Primary  
Industries  
Phone (02) 6880 8068

NLIS is Australia's system for identifying and tracing livestock. Cattle are permanently identified with an NLIS device for whole-of-life.

Types of NLIS devices include:

- Ear tag
- Rumen bolus/visual tag combination

Cattle can be tracked from property-of-birth to slaughter through transactions recorded on the NLIS database for food safety, product integrity and market access purposes.

## How will it work?

The NLIS device has two numbers. The RFID (radio frequency identification) electronic microchip number can be read by readers. NLIS number is a visual number printed on the outside of the ear tag. The two numbers are linked on the NLIS database. The NLIS device is linked to your property identification code (PIC) when you order devices or receive cattle. Your PIC is the same as your tail tag number and is assigned by the RLPB to each rateable property with livestock.

There are two different coloured NLIS devices for different cattle. White breeder NLIS device are applied to animals born on your property. Orange post breeder NLIS devices are applied to cattle that have left their property of origin and have no breeder tag (i.e. applied to animals you have brought on to your property that are not already NLIS identified).

The appropriate coloured NLIS device is applied to the animal before leaving the property i.e. either an approved ear tag, or a rumen bolus with matching visual tag. Only apply NLIS devices issued to your property. An NLIS device is designed to remain with the animal for the rest of its

life. If you purchase cattle that are already NLIS identified, do not remove the device or apply a second NLIS device.

As cattle move through the supply chain they are read either visually or electronically. At the time of reading each owners PIC can be recorded and linked to the NLIS device. The transaction information is stored on the NLIS database.

## Implementation of NLIS in NSW

### Starting on 1 July 2004

Cattle born after that date will have to be identified with an NLIS ear tag or rumen bolus before they leave their property of birth.

Exemptions from NLIS requirements in the first year can be accessed at the Department of Primary Industries Website <http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/nlis/nlis-exemptions.htm>

For example: Bobby calves will be exempt from permanent identification but will still need a transaction tag. Unweaned calves that are moved with their dam, or that are moved and sold with their dam, are exempt from permanent identification. The calf and dam must have transaction identifiers if sent to a saleyard for sale or an abattoir for slaughter. Other exemptions relate to calves born on agistment and TSRs; and short term local movements etc.

### From 1 July 2005

All cattle, irrespective of age, will have to be identified with an NLIS device before they leave any property. Saleyards and abattoirs will be required to notify the NLIS database of all cattle sold and slaughtered, respectively.

## **From 1 January 2006**

All movements of cattle between properties must be notified to the database.

## **Who notifies the NLIS database?**

The database can be used to register cattle movements, check the number of tags registered to your property and download carcass feedback data. From 1 July 2005 the saleyard or agent is required to notify the database of cattle sold through the saleyard. From 1 January 2006 for cattle movements between properties, it is the owner or person in charge of the cattle at the destination property that must notify the database. Therefore, within 7 days after a movement the database must be notified by the receiver of the cattle. Where cattle are bought through a saleyard, the saleyard will do this.

## **Do I need a reader?**

This is optional. From 1 January 2006 if you buy cattle privately; move cattle between your own properties (with different PICs); or receive cattle on agistment; then you will have to notify the database of the movement yourself or arrange for someone else to do it for you. This can be done by visually reading and reporting the NLIS number printed on each ear device, or by keeping a list of NLIS or RFID numbers for each mob of cattle. Purchasing a reader may make this easier.

## **Basic Compliance**

Cattle only have to be identified with an NLIS device before leaving the property. Cattle that remain on the property of birth need not be identified unless you want to for management of theft purposes.

### **Choose an approved NLIS device**

Approved NLIS devices have the NLIS logo printed on them. The ear devices cost around \$3.50 each plus GST. Rumen boluses are a little dearer and come with a

matching non-electronic visual ear tag which has the NLIS number printed on it. When applied it confirms that a bolus has been installed.

### **Ordering NLIS devices**

NLIS devices can be ordered through participating RLPB or rural merchant. All orders are then endorsed by the RLPB.

### **Applying NLIS devices**

Always read the manufacturer's instructions before applying NLIS devices. Use the appropriate applicator for the specific NLIS device to prevent damage to the tags electronics. Tags are applied to the middle section of the off-side ear (right ear) between the two lines of cartilage, female side facing forwards. Boluses are applied to cattle older than 3 months of age with the matching visual tag applied to the off-side (right) ear.

## **FAQs**

### **What happens when an NLIS identified animal dies?**

You don't have to do anything. Deaths that occur while in transit, saleyards or abattoirs must be reported to the database. If the device is recovered it is good practice to notify the database.

### **What if an animal loses a device?**

The device does not need to be replaced until just before the animal is moved off that property. If you can find the number of the lost device it is good practice to notify the database.

### **What if the device stops working?**

As long as the NLIS number is still visually readable, there is no requirement to replace non-working devices.

### **Do I still need to use tail tags?**

Yes. Both NLIS devices and transaction tags are required in the phase in period. Once mandatory recording of all movements commences from 1 January 2006 consideration will be given to phasing out tail tags entirely.

Continued overleaf

### **What happens if an animal loses a device on the way to a saleyard?**

The animals are sold provided they have a transaction tag, or a special (emergency) tag is applied.

### **Can NLIS devices be recycled?**

Not yet.

### **Do I need to apply NLIS devices and notify the database when I move stock between my two properties?**

Yes, if the properties have different PICs (property identification codes).

### **Can I amalgamate my properties under one PIC?**

If you have properties with different PICs, you may be able to combine them (if they are not too far apart). A potential disadvantage is that if a disease or residue affected animal is traced to your PIC, then all land under that PIC and all cattle on that land will be considered at risk until further investigations prove otherwise. Please discuss the pros and cons with your RLPB.

### **What about cattle from interstate?**

From July 2004

Cattle may enter NSW from interstate with out NLIS devices, but should be accompanied by an NVD and Waybill. Transaction identifiers are required if the cattle are sent to a saleyard or abattoir.

From 1 July 2005

Cattle which are not already NLIS identified must have a post-breeder device attached within 7 days of their arrival to a NSW property. In addition, the PIC of the interstate property of origin must be reported to the database within a further 7 days. To facilitate this, the consignment will have to have transaction identifiers and/or an NVD Waybill.

From July 2006

All stock from interstate must be identified before entering NSW.

For more information on NLIS contact NSW Department of Primary Industry: Phone 1300 720 405 Website <http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/nlis>

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## **Surveying demand for pastoral property management training**

A C Archer  
Principal  
Murrumbidgee College of  
Agriculture

Dear Landholder

I am writing to you in my capacity as Principal of Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture, Yanco and the CB Alexander Agricultural College, Tocot Paterson. In December 2003, full-time training ceased at Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture with all subsequent full-time offerings being through Tocot.

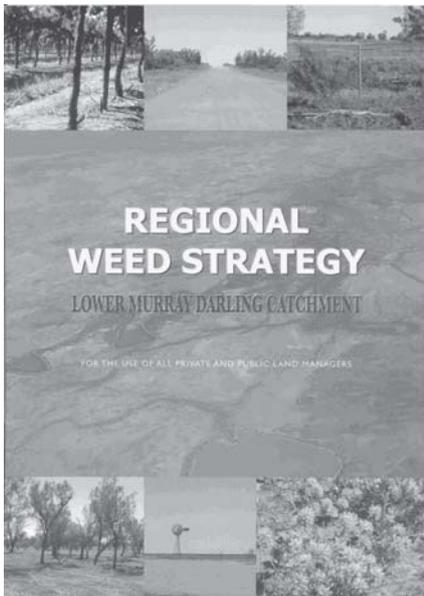
The Advisory Council of Murrumbidgee College and others have remained concerned as to the availability of appropriate training for young people wishing to enter pastoral pursuits in the Western Division of NSW. Therefore I have been asked to undertake a survey of the potential demand for such training across the Western Division.

The enclosed survey has also been distributed through the databases of NSW Farmers, Country Women's Association and the Isolated Children's Parents Association. You may receive one or more surveys for this reason.

I would be most appreciative if you could complete the enclosed survey and indicate your interest in this matter. The contact for the survey is Mr Steve Cressey, Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture. Mr Cressey may be contacted on (02) 6951 2506, fax (02) 6955 7580 or email [steve.cressey@agric.nsw.gov.au](mailto:steve.cressey@agric.nsw.gov.au). You may also like to contact me to discuss this matter. My contact details are w (02) 4939 8812, a/h (02) 4939 8802, mobile 0427 202 948 fax (02) 4939 8919 email: [cameron.archer@agric.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cameron.archer@agric.nsw.gov.au).

# Regional weed strategy available

by Pixie Jonasson, Natural Resource Project Officer, DIPNR



Landholders now have the ability to make informed decisions on weed control in the Lower Murray Darling (LMD) catchment. The easy to use tool outlines a prioritisation process that allows landholders to determine which weed to treat first for best effect.

The Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority (LMD CMA) commissioned development of the Strategy by NSW Department of Primary Industries (formerly NSW Agriculture) via intensive consultation with horticulturalists, farmers and pastoralists. This has ensured a user friendly and practical document.

By implementing the Regional Weed Strategy, the natural resource outcomes will benefit all those within the LMD catchment.

The LMD CMA Rangelands Incentives Project, which is due for implementation in late 2004, will provide some funding toward weed control in the LMD catchment.

The Strategy complements the Australian Government's National Weed Strategy, which is a cooperative approach to reducing the impact of weeds on the sustainability of Australia's productive capacity and natural ecosystems.

Weeds are an important issue that everyone needs to get behind. People will find the Regional Weed Strategy a valuable tool in the fight against weeds.

The Strategy was mailed out to key stakeholders in the LMD Catchment over recent weeks.

For an electronic version or additional copies, please contact Pixie Jonasson, Ph: (03) 5021 9432, Fax: (03) 5021 3328, Email: [pixie.jonasson@dipnr.nsw.gov.au](mailto:pixie.jonasson@dipnr.nsw.gov.au)

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## Private conservation reserves

by Ashley McQueen, NRM Regional Facilitator, DIPNR

The Southern Mallee Project, which has been running since 1999, now has over 106,000 ha placed into Private Conservation Reserves for perpetuity. The project involves landholders 'trading off' part of their property in order to obtain clearing/cultivation consents. This project clearly demonstrates that a balance can be achieved between development and conservation. Many reserves have become the showpiece of the property and the potential for eco-tourism is untapped.

Funding is available through the Native Vegetation Management Fund to protect areas of remnant vegetation throughout the Lower Murray-Darling Catchment. The level of funding is dependent upon the

length of the conservation agreement that the landholder enters into. Agreements involving the area being placed into a conservation reserve for perpetuity attract higher rates of funding than those which have a pre determined time frame. For further information contact Amber Parkinson, Biodiversity Officer, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources on Ph: (03) 5021 9400.

# Access onto Western Lands Leases



by Peter Walker, Manager,  
Resource Access and  
Compliance, DIPNR

There is ongoing concern by Western Lands leaseholders about access by other persons onto their leases, and uncertainty as to who may be entitled to have access. Legal advice to the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) indicates that the Western Lands Act provides no general right of public access along tracks on leases.

Access is available only to those who had a right of access along a track at the time of granting the lease, or are authorised by some Act of Parliament, or by some licence or approval granted by a Government Department on behalf of the Crown.

For example, the Department of Mineral Resources may prescribe a right of access for mineral prospectors and miners; DIPNR may issue licences to third parties for sand and gravel extraction or for a range of other purposes; State Forests may authorise persons to harvest timber or broombush or keep bees; roads authorities may enter land to survey, construct or maintain roads; and DIPNR officers have right of access for official purposes.

Other people may have written agreements with leaseholders for access, and public utility authorities may have easements for access to their infrastructure.

A leaseholder may not refuse access to such people. To do so is a breach of lease conditions.

Members of the public may gain access to leases by invitation or agreement with the leaseholder or by payment (for farm tourism, recreational hunting etc.) to the leaseholder. Persons wishing to do business with leaseholders are also entitled to reasonable access to make contact.

A Local Aboriginal Land Council may seek to negotiate access with a land owner or occupier for a specified Aborigine or group of Aborigines for hunting, fishing or gathering. If an agreement for access cannot be reached the Council may apply to the Land and Environment Court for a permit conferring a right of access.

People who access leases without the authorities or rights outlined above and do not leave when asked to do so by the leaseholder are trespassing and subject to the law of trespass.

DIPNR is currently attempting to put into place practical arrangements for access by people authorised by other legislation, as a precursor to establishing a network of public roads (Shire Roads) and easements to landlocked properties (provided for in the Western Lands Amendment Act 2002). This will be followed ultimately by removal of the lease conditions relating to public access and confirmation of the private status of station tracks.

See page 11 for a notice that leaseholders may use to confirm with persons accessing or wishing to access their lease the rules that apply.



Department of  
**Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources**

**DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE,  
PLANNING AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES**

**FAR WEST REGION**

**NOTICE**

Let it be known that:

Members of the public have no legal right of access onto or through a Western Lands Lease without the consent of the leaseholder, unless they are travelling on a public road or a Crown road.

Persons who do not leave after direction to do so by the leaseholder are trespassing and are subject to the laws of trespass.

Only persons who are authorised by an appropriate Act of Parliament (including but not limited to Mining Act, Forestry Act or Crown Lands Act), by a licence granted for access, by an approval from the Western Lands Commissioner, by grant of an easement, or who had a right to use a track before the lease was granted may access a Western Lands Lease.

Leaseholders may not deny access to authorised persons, and to do so is a breach of lease conditions.

G A WISE

Regional Director, Far West  
and Western Lands Commissioner

23 July 2004

# Scheme for new generation of young farmers

by Margot Fagan  
(WEST 2000 Plus)  
Coordinator, Young Farmer  
Assistance Scheme

The WEST 2000 Plus funded Young Farmer Assistance Scheme was officially launched in August.

The Young Farmer Assistance Scheme aims to encourage 18–35 year olds to establish themselves and remain in the Western Division, through raising awareness of young farmer issues, building skills, and developing and implementing farm business entry strategies. The Scheme is composed of four parts:

- A: Succession Planning Workshops for the whole farming family and business members and a series of Young Farmer Information Workshops to be held around the Division in September/October;
- B: A grant of up to \$2,000 towards the preparation of a comprehensive 'Farm Succession Plan' or 'Farm Business Entry Strategy';
- C: Assistance through a Young Farmer Assistance Grant of up to \$50,000 to implement a Farm Business Entry Strategy, which will meet some establishment costs of a young person who is taking an innovative approach to entering farming in the Western Division; and
- D: A Young Farmer Development Program to be run in 2005 to help young farmers develop skills.

To be eligible for any part of the Scheme you must be a person between the ages of 18 and 35 years inclusive (as at 14 May 2004), who has worked on a farm business enterprise in the Western Division for at least two years, plus other conditions.

WEST 2000 Plus want applicants to consider the range of ways to enter farming and choose the best approach to grow a viable and sustainable farm business over time. Potential applicants

may be intending to start a new farm business enterprise or already involved in a farm business enterprise.

A successful Young Farmer Assistance Grant Application and Farm Business Entry Strategy should show a staged approach to the build up and accumulation of capital assets, equity and skills that can be adapted to different situations or circumstances.

Some examples of innovative approaches to entering farming may include novel leasing arrangements, partnerships, sharefarming agreements, syndication agreements or an alternative land tenure arrangement. Applications are also encouraged for innovative approaches that show a transition into an innovative new farming system or the diversification of income. The Scheme is also seeking unique approaches to fund farm succession and intergenerational transfer of properties.

Further information about the Young Farmer Assistance Scheme can be found on the WEST 2000 Plus website ([www.west2000plus.org.au](http://www.west2000plus.org.au)) or by contacting Margot Fagan, Co-ordinator - Young Farmer Assistance Scheme on 1800 068 072.

# Mt Grenfell historic site handed back to traditional owners

by Jacki Roberts, Senior Public Affairs Officer  
Department of Environment and Conservation  
Parks Service Division, Western Directorate

In the spirit of reconciliation the NSW Government handed back the Mount Grenfell Historic site near Cobar to the Cobar Aboriginal Land Council on behalf of traditional Aboriginal owners on 17 July 2004.

Environment Minister Bob Debus described the event as a 'momentous occasion' for NSW. It is only the second time land has officially been handed back to traditional owners.

Mt Grenfell Historic Site covers more than 1300 hectares and is located 70 kilometres west of Cobar in western NSW.

It is a significant cultural ceremonial place of the Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan Nation and features Aboriginal rock art painting and stencils with spectacular depictions of emus, mammals, reptiles and stick figures.

Speaking during the handback celebrations Mr Debus said he was proud the important piece of Aboriginal cultural heritage was being returned to the ownership of Aboriginal people.

'Aboriginal people left their mark on this land many thousands of years ago. We cannot help but be mesmerised by the layers of stories told with such vivid imagery in such a rugged setting.'

Mr Debus acknowledged the drive and dedication of Elaine Ohlsen, a traditional owner who played an intricate role in the negotiation process from start to finish.

'Her tireless passion and energy, conviction and commitment has been appreciated by the Government as has the involvement of other members of the negotiating panel,' he said.



Front: Sharon Ohlsen traditional owner, 2nd row: Elaine Ohlsen traditional owner, Linda Burnie MP, back: Michael Howison, Chairman Cobar Aboriginal Land Council, Steve Wolter NPWS, Phil Sullivan traditional owner/NPWS, Col Markham, former MP, Bob Debus Minister for the Environment

Mr Debus said a board of management, made up of a majority of traditional owners, along with representatives of the National Parks and Wildlife Service and community, will steer future management of the site.

Among those at the ceremony with Mr Debus were Ms Ohlsen, Member for Canterbury Linda Burney, Member for Murray Darling Peter Black, Member for Wallsend John Mills, former MP Colin Markham, Department of Environment and Conservation Director General Lisa Corbyn, National Parks and Wildlife Service Head Dr Tony Fleming and Director General of Aboriginal Affairs Jody Broun.

The first handback of a NSW national park to traditional owners was Mutawintji Historic Site (west of Wilcannia), National Park and Nature Reserve in 1998 to the Mutawintji Local Aboriginal Land Council.

# New Western Lands Advisory Council announced

by Geoff Wise  
Regional Director, DIPNR  
Western Lands Commissioner

The members of the new Western Lands Advisory Council were announced on 29 July 2004.

The Western Lands Advisory Council was established under the Western Lands Amendment Act 2002 and replaces the Western Lands Advisory Board.

Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources, Craig Knowles has appointed the Council to advise him on matters affecting the administration of the Western Division.

The initial appointments include members representing interest groups such as NSW Farmers and Pastoralists Association of West Darling, local and state government, catchment management authorities and Aboriginal people.

Further appointments may be made shortly for further representation of Aboriginal people and environmental protection groups.

Mrs Jenny McLellan has been appointed the independent chair to the Advisory Council. Upon appointment, Minister Knowles acknowledged Jenny's long involvement with issues in the Western Division:

'Jenny has operated across a diverse range of organisations in the Western Division, including local government, natural resource management, education and health, and was a member of the previous Western Lands Advisory Board. I applaud her appointment as Chair.'

The members of the Western Lands Advisory Council are:

- Jenny McLellan, Brewarrina (Independent Chair)
- Lance Howley, Kyalite, NSWFA
- James Morris, Walgett, NSWFA
- Ken Turner, Pastoralists Association of West Darling
- Beryl Carmichael, Menindee, representing Aboriginal interests
- Rory Treeweke, Lightning Ridge, Western Catchment Management Authority
- Wayne O'Mally, Bourke, Western Division Shires Association
- Clive Linnett, Ivanhoe, Western Division Shires Association
- Terry Korn, Dubbo, Department of Environment and Conservation (formerly NP&WS)
- Geoff Woods, Broken Hill, Department of Primary Industries (formerly NSW Agriculture)
- Geoff Wise, Dubbo, DIPNR and Western Lands Commissioner

All members have been appointed for up to a three year term.

# Guide tunes in to bat frequencies

by Jacki Roberts, Senior Public Affairs Officer  
Department of Environment and Conservation  
Parks Service Division, Western Directorate

The Department of Environment and Conservation has launched a new guide to help identify microbat species, without catching or seeing them.

The Guide to the Bat Calls of NSW, records and documents for the first time, the ultrasonic 'sonar' wave frequencies used by NSW microbat species to navigate and find food.

It is the result of four years of cooperative work by researchers from the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) and State Forests of NSW and about 50 volunteers.

Author and DEC bat researcher Michael Pennay, said in compiling the guide, researchers discovered many things previously unknown about microchiropteran (small insect-eating) bats.

Working to identify bats is a difficult task — they emerge after dark, so are rarely seen and because they call at ultrasonic levels, we can't hear them either.

But the sound waves made by microbats can be recorded in the field using equipment called a bat detector.

What we now know is that different microbat species call using different 'sonar' frequency channels — much like CB radio.

This guide uses the recorded 'sonar' calls to identify different species of bats, reducing the need to capture the bat for research purposes.

It is important to be able to distinguish between microbat species for input into impact assessments, threatened species monitoring and environmental management.



The most significant new find during the compilation of the guide was the discovery that some species change their frequencies dramatically in different parts of the state — for example they call differently in open country than in forests.

The calls of a number of species were recorded for the first time, and researchers also found that some bats, whose calls were thought to be unmistakable, actually overlapped with others.

The project was begun due to previous conflicting levels of agreement between specialists and environmental consultants on which bat belonged to which call.

This guide should clear up quite a lot of the confusion and errors that have existed in the past.

Because we can't see or hear them, many people may be surprised to learn how many species of microbat are out there flying around.

NSW is home to at least 34 different species of microbats, which are much smaller than their cousin — the fruit bat — some weighing less than a five cent coin.

The guide is available on the internet at [www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au](http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au).

## Other microbat facts:

- Some calls are as loud as a smoke alarm (110 decibels)
- Others employ stealth tactics to surprise their prey and 'whisper' very quiet calls
- Some try to call above the hearing range of their prey at frequencies up to ten times higher than human hearing
- Some call through their mouths, others through their noses

# Policies on boundary fences on Western Lands holdings

by Peter Walker  
Manager, Resource Access  
and Compliance, DIPNR

The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) has had several requests about responsibilities for keeping neighbours' stock separated and about potential contamination of wool clips by interaction with coloured sheep, goats, and exotic sheep such as dorper and damara.

The Western Lands Act does not prescribe what types of animals can be run on leases. That is a decision for individual leaseholders, and for industry bodies and/or Rural Lands Protection Boards. The Western Lands Act does require that land not be overgrazed.

Also, a standard Western Lands Lease condition requires that:

'the lessee shall enclose the land leased, either separately or conjointly with other lands held in the same interest, with a suitable fence to the satisfaction of the Commissioner.'

Rangelands Management Officers check whether boundary fences are stockproof and the Commissioner may require works to be done before Consent to Transfer a lease is granted.

The *Dividing Fences Act (1991)* prescribes that boundary fences are the joint responsibility of adjoining landholders (except where one is the Crown), as follows:

7. (1) Adjoining owners are liable to contribute in equal proportions to the carrying out of fencing work in respect of a dividing fence of a standard not greater than the standard for a sufficient dividing fence.
- (2) An adjoining owner who desires to carry out fencing work involving a dividing fence of a standard greater than the standard for a sufficient dividing fence is liable for the fencing

work to the extent to which it exceeds the standard for a sufficient dividing fence.

Longstanding Western Lands policy has been that a sufficient fence is one that is stockproof for sheep. 'Stockproof' is not specifically defined, but subject to adjudication by a Rangelands Management Officer, the Commissioner, or by a Local Land Board. If one neighbour wishes to run stock which require a higher standard of fence to contain them, then that leaseholder is responsible for the upgrade of the fence to an adequate standard. This policy has been endorsed by Local Land Board decisions in cases of dispute between neighbours.

# Wildlife refuges in the spotlight

by Laura Kelly,  
Community Conservation Officer  
Department of Environment and Conservation

Fauna surveys being conducted on Wildlife Refuges in the Darling Riverine Plains are showing mixed results, with the drought and the onset of cooler temperatures in some areas affecting the level of fauna activity recorded.

Community Conservation Officer, Laura Kelly, conducted plant and animal surveys on wildlife refuges across seven local properties from March to May 2004.

Ms Kelly says the surveys are part of project by the Department of Environment and Conservation looking at the contribution of wildlife refuges to conservation across the landscape.

Many landholders in western NSW appreciate the benefits of maintaining biodiversity to sustain a productive enterprise.

Their management practices endeavour to balance enterprise productivity and support biodiversity.

The latest round of surveys occurred on properties at Lightning Ridge, Pilliga, Walgett, Wilcannia and Narromine, examining different land systems from river floodplains to red ridge country and sand dunes.

Overall, 195 native animal species were recorded including 131 birds, 10 bats, 8 other mammals, 30 reptiles and 16 frogs, and 11 threatened species. Over 280 native plant species were also recorded.

On one property at Lightning Ridge over 70 microbats (7 species) were recorded in just two nights of trapping.

But while that result is remarkable, many other results were down on what would be expected.



Marc Irvan, DEC, checking a bat trap

Reptiles and owls were less frequently recorded than might have been expected, with the continuing dry a likely factor in this.

The information collected on each Wildlife Refuge will be reported back to the landholders who can then use this information in decisions regarding the management of their properties. The information will also help landholders see how the flora and fauna on their property fits within their wider regional context.

Fourteen landholders have participated in the project so far, their support and cooperation contributing much to the project's results.

Funded under the NSW Environmental Trust, the 12 month pilot project will continue until September 2004, with further plant and animal surveys to be conducted in spring on other Wildlife Refuges in western NSW.

If you have a Wildlife Refuge and would like to participate, or would like more information contact Laura Kelly, Community Conservation Officer, at Department of Environment and Conservation on (02) 68419200.

# Mesquite warning

by Angus Atkinson,  
WEST 2000 Plus

A number of woody weed species, both native and exotic, are becoming a major concern in some parts of the Western Division and if left uncontrolled, will become a major environmental catastrophe. Mesquite is one of the worst exotic species, with large areas infested in Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory and isolated areas infested in the Western Division.

Mesquite's economic impacts stem from its habit of forming dense, impenetrable thickets which, combined with its large thorns, prevent stock accessing watering holes and make mustering difficult. Mesquite also reduces the productivity of pastoral country by taking over grasslands and using valuable water resources. Other problems caused by mesquite include damage to animal hooves and vehicle tyres from thorns, and poisoning of livestock that consume excessive amounts of seed pods.

Environmental impacts from mesquite infestation include land erosion resulting from the loss of grassland habitat that supports native plants and animals; and the provision of safe refuges for feral animals such as pigs and cats.

## The plant

The various mesquite species come in a range of shapes and sizes. They can be found as multi-stemmed shrubby bushes or single stemmed trees with a spreading canopy, growing from 3 to 15 m tall. Branches have a characteristic zig-zag structure, and the overall impression is of a rather untidy plant, with single branches extending outside the main canopy.

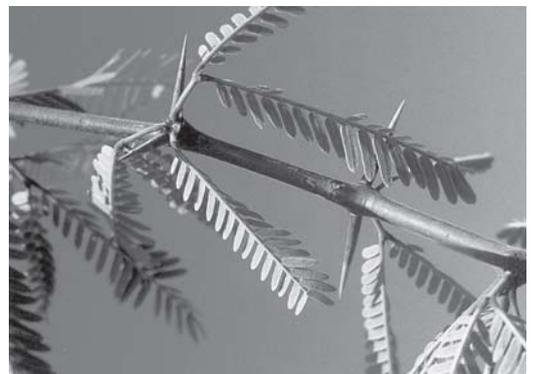
Mesquite leaves are fern-like. They occur at each point where the branch changes direction (the zig-zag) in groups of one to three pairs, often with one or two thorns. The greenish cream-yellow flowers are arranged on a cylindrical-shaped spike that resembles a 'lamb's tail' and are 50–80 mm in length. The seed pod (up to 200 mm



Mesquite tree



Mesquite shrub



Mesquite stem and spines



Mesquite flowers and seed pod

# Movin' on: reflections of an economist

by Bob Wynne,  
Condobolin  
Ph: (02) 6895 3067



With the current restructure, my position as Agricultural Economist will no longer exist, with no such positions available in the new Catchment Management Authorities statewide. So I have taken a voluntary redundancy, and plan to stay in Condobolin.

I started in late 1989 as the first economist with NSW Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and I have been employed by various departments since (CaLM, DLWC, DIPNR). I have greatly enjoyed working with the people of the Western Division, and parts of the Central Division whilst it was part of our turf. Also I have enjoyed working with the dedicated staff, especially the Condobolin office which has long had a 'can do' attitude, and been very willing to help clients and staff in the region. This office has been responsible for many great outcomes, locally and across the Western Division.

Since I started with SCS it has been a rough ride for many due to:

- droughts
- high interest rates
- poor wool prices
- fewer landholders
- fewer agency staff
- lack of irrigation water

But we have seen some significant positive changes such as:

- new breeds of sheep and goats
- diversification into tourism
- capping and piping the bores
- Total Grazing Pressure (TGP) control
- more cropping
- wool is nearly a by-product of sheep
- greatly improved communications
- WEST 2000 and WEST 2000+

The ability to adapt to change is essential to survive. Having worked closely with many families, three main factors emerge that contribute towards success. They are:

- The importance to viability of cropping in suitable areas
- The need to have a 'complete management package'
- A long term lambing percentage of 85% over a ten year period. That means 90% or better in the majority of years, to allow for the odd bad year. If you can do this, most things are under control in my observation.

To all the landholders that I have worked with I thank you for your time and hospitality and I have learnt much from you.

To landholders and agency staff I wish you all well.

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'Mesquite warning' from  
previous page

long) is straight or slightly curved with only very slight constrictions between the seeds. The bark is smooth and dark red-green in young stems, and rough and grey in older stems. The tap root is large and much branched and generally grows to a depth of 20 m.

If you find a plant that could be Mesquite, it is essential that it be identified as soon as possible. If it is Mesquite, a

management plan needs to be completed and control strategy implemented as soon as possible.

For assistance or advice contact the Department of Primary Industries or the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources in your local area.

Reference: Weeds of National Significance: Weed Management Guide, Department of the Environment and Heritage and the CRC for Australian Weed Management, 2003 ISBN 1 920 93209 7

# Western Division Newsletter

NSW Department of Primary Industries

PO Box 865

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## To the Landholder



# Western Division newsletter

The editors of the WDN welcome contributions

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