

# LAND TALK

CLMA Newsletter

## **CLMA Coordinator funded for 12 months - Hip-hip-hooray!**

CLMA have battled on without a coordinator since 1999. Last month it was announced that we had successfully gained approval to fund a pastoral coordinator for 12 months. The new coordinator is yet to be appointed.

The coordinator role was one of 18 positions to be funded in the Northern Territory by the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT). CLMA gratefully acknowledge the support of NHT. The money is expected to arrive once the bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and NT governments is signed.

Under the new funding arrangement, the coordinator will be required "to support the development of a regional integrated natural resource management plan". They will ensure that the concerns and views of pastoral landholders are included in a regional plan recognised by government.

Landowners, industries, non-government organisations, local and Territory governments and other interest groups will take part in putting together a regional plan. The planning process will finish with the plan being assessed by the Commonwealth and the NT against a set of criteria agreed to by the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council. When these criteria are met the plan will be accredited. The plans will identify the natural resource management and environmental issues facing the region and what needs to be done to fix them.

Future landcare funding will be based upon the priorities identified in the regional plan.

## **Athel pine project *Bulldozer back in the river***

Bulldozing of Athel Pine in the Finke River will re-start this month. The D6H dozer will start between the Maryvale boundary and Horseshoe Bend homestead and work progressively downstream.

This will be the first bulldozing since floods stopped the project in February 2000.

## **3,500 rabbit warrrens ripped**

CLMA has ripped more than 3,500 warrens over 70 square km's, mostly on Mount Ebenezer station. Only 1% of warrens were re-opened by rabbits and these have since been gassed. The project took advantage of ripping while rabbit numbers were still low, thanks to calicivirus.

Thanks to Victor and Mary for putting up with us for so long near the house.

The project is funded by Environment Australia through the NHT Community Based Rabbit Control Program.

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### CLMA Contact

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## New Pastoral Land Board

### *An introduction to members*

Jim Forwood was appointed chairman of the Pastoral Land Board, replacing Laurence Ah Toy.

#### **Jim Forwood (Chairman)**

Jim has been a member of the NT Pastoral Land Board since it was first established with the introduction of the new *Pastoral Land Act* in June 1992. He was appointed Chairman in June 2002. Jim has been the community member for the Northern Territory on the Australian Landcare Council since 1999 and the Chairman of the Landcare Council NT since 1998. He is a self employed rural consultant based in Darwin, and previously worked as the General Manager for a foreign Government owned group of companies with landholdings in the NT associated with buffalo/cattle breeding, livestock procurement, farming grazing and livestock export.

**Russell Anderson** was appointed to the Board in June 2002. He has been a long term resident of the NT, retiring from the NT Public Service in 2001.

Prior to his retirement, Russell was the Executive

Officer of the Bushfires Council NT and was the Chief Fire Control Officer for a period of 9 years. Previous work experience included two years as Chief Wildlife Management Officer including management of feral animals. Previous appointments included 8 years as a member of the Litchfield Planning Authority and the Deputy Shire President of the Litchfield Shire Council.

**John Childs** was appointed to the Board in June 2001. He is currently Director of Bush Business Consulting P/L, a provider of consultancy services in natural resource investigation, management and use in northern Australia. He is also the Program Coordinator – Resource Management for Meat & Livestock Australia's Northern Beef Program. From 1997 – 2001, John was the Director of the Tropical Savannas Cooperative Research Centre based in Darwin. Prior to this he worked for the Queensland Department of Primary Industries employed as the Executive Director Research, Information and Extension.

**Steven Craig** was appointed to the Board in June 2002. Steve is employed as the Manager

of pastoral operations at Malngin 1 & 2 Aboriginal Land Trusts and resides at

Nelson Springs Station. Steve is Deputy Chairman of the Victoria River District Conservation Association, a Member of the Katherine Pastoral Industry Advisory Committee and a member of the Katherine regional committee of the Bushfires Council of the NT. Previous work experience includes the Manager of Eva Valley (buffalo program) contract bull-catching on Scott Creek and Willeroo Stations and head stockman on Carlton Hill Station (5 years).

**Jim Hayes** has been a member of the Pastoral Land Board since June 1999. Jim is the 4<sup>th</sup> generation of the Hayes family to manage Undoolya Station. The Station has been continuously owned and occupied by the Hayes family since 1907 and is generally regarded, along with Owen Springs, as one of the first Stations to be established in the Northern Territory and is certainly the oldest continuously occupied Station in the Territory. Jim is a past Chairman of the Alice Springs Branch of the NT Cattlemen's Association and is currently Chairman of the Alice Springs East committee of the Bushfires Council NT. Previous appointments include the NT Heritage Advisory

Council, Chairman of the Centralian Beef Producers Consortium and the CLMA.

## News stories

CLMA has given several interviews in recent months, including:

SA Stock Journal: topic 'CLMA activities' – article and photos. Included on-site inspection of warren ripping program.

Alice Springs News: topic – Response to concerns by the Arid Lands Environment Centre about station Buffel Grass.

ABC radio: topic - 'Buffel Grass'.

ABC radio Country Hour: topic 'On-site feature on warren ripping program' - 10 minutes aired.

ABC radio Country Hour: topic 'Monitoring project – Centre Land Watch'.

ABC radio Country Hour: topic 'Rare animals'.

ABC radio Country Hour: topic 'Athel Pine control'.

Le Gras media (national rural news service): topic 'rabbit control'.



*If you missed any of these interviews it's a pity because they were the ones that were really fantastic.*

## CLMA office - looking to move

Elders have provided CLMA with their current office for the past 3 years. THANKS Elders. However, the shed is due to be demolished in early 2003 so we need to find a new location.

CLMA has expressed written interest in a large unoccupied building owned by the NT government. And recently, Greening Australia in Alice Springs approached CLMA about the possibility of sharing the building. This has merit if we could share office equipment and running costs. The matter will be put to the CLMA committee.

## Bob Millington O.A.

Bob Millington was presented with the Order of Australia at an investiture held in Alice Springs on the 29<sup>th</sup> August. A well deserved honour in recognition of his dedication to pastoral industry landcare.

## Audit completed

CLMA's annual financial audit was conducted in August. Thanks to Bob M for another year of keeping the books. What would we do without Sir Bob?

## Mole Patrol Seen any lately?

The rare and endangered Marsupial Moles are some of the most unique but poorly understood mammals in Australia. They are about the size of a small rat, have golden coloured fur, a pouch that opens backwards, completely lacks eyes and they spend almost their entire lives burrowing underground.

The Southern Marsupial Mole inhabits sand dune country throughout the NT, SA and WA. A project is currently underway to try and help identify the distribution and abundance of moles. They are regarded as Endangered because there have been few records of this species over the last 50 years. Are they really endangered or do we simply travel too much in 4WD's now to notice them?

### How you can help

If you see a marsupial mole on the surface, please report details of your sighting to CLMA (8953 4230) or the Threatened Species Network (8952 1541). If you find a dead mole, place the animal in a plastic bag

and put it into a fridge (not freezer) and deliver it to CLMA, Parks & Wildlife or Threatened Species Network. This information will complement detailed research being conducted in the Pit lands. THANKS.

We have applied for these projects and are waiting to hear whether or not they will funded.

There is a Mount Dobbie about 450km NE of Alice. CLMA's Will Dobbie (no relation) has always been fascinated by this and wanting to see it. Imagine his disappointment when a photo turned up at the office labelled Mt. Dobbie only to find it was a set-up - just a termite mound on the Plenty Highway.

## Natural Heritage Trust

### CLMA project applications

The Commonwealth Government's Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) is an important source of funding for CLMA. But this year the NHT has been re-structured. There will be a 12 month gap between the end of NHT 1 and the start of NHT 2. So limited funding has been made available to help bridge this gap so that important projects aren't stopped.

Two CLMA projects were identified as Priority Projects at meetings of the Landcare Council NT and meetings of representative interest groups. The projects are:

- Utility project including weed control, erosion control, ponding and seed harvesting etc.
- Rabbit ripping project to continue ripping while rabbit numbers are still low thanks to Calicivirus.

## Confused?

Question. Who is young enough to win a "Young Researchers Award" for her talk at the recent Rangelands Society conference in Kalgoorlie, but old enough to be in the Masters Games?

Answer. CLMA's Dee Walsh. She may need counselling.



## Disappointing

## Strategy funding knock-back

CLMA sought funding from Meat & Livestock Australia to produce a Land Management Strategy for the industry in central Australia. A strategy would demonstrate a professional approach to land management by the pastoral industry.

Unfortunately, the submission was not successful. MLA said they thought it was a good project but with many other applications to consider, it did not rank at the top of their priorities.

*CLMA - proud winners of:*

- 1998 "Alcoa of Australia National Landcare Community Group"

Award”



- 2000 national “BHP Landcare Research Award”



## Herbicide subsidy scheme – *currently stopped*

The NT governments herbicide subsidy scheme is designed to help overcome financial barriers to landholders wanting to control declared weeds. A 50% rebate on a \$10,000 purchase of herbicide per year was available. However, the scheme is currently over-committed and out of money.

No money is expected to be available until July 2004. Then, new applications will be assessed by the Regional Weeds Advisory Committee. It will be looking for a more strategic and effective approach to weed control. For example, weed control at the top of a catchment may be given priority over landholders further downstream.

## Alice Springs Regional Weeds Advisory Committee

The Alice Springs region is preparing to form a Regional Weeds Advisory Committee (RWAC). The preliminary committee is yet to seek ministerial approval.

The make-up of the committee is currently:

- Pastoral Lands – represented by CLMA President (with CLMA staff as proxy),
- Aboriginal Lands – represented by CLC.
- Crown Lands, Roads and Parks – represented by Department of Infrastructure Planning & Environment,
- Town Land – represented by Alice Springs Town Council,
- Bushfires Council,
- Community Landcare – represented by Greening Australia,
- Departmental Regional Weeds Officer,
- Chair (to be appointed).

The primary role of the group is to involve all landholder groups and gain more strategic and effective weed management across the region.

## CLMA monitoring project – *what it offers*

- Old photos for all existing sites,
- Help to find the sites,
- Help with photography & data collection,
- Accurate GPS records to ensure sites can be found in the future,

- Help with plant identification,
- Personalised recording sheet to suit your needs,
- Advice on the location of new sites where requested,
- Help to get monitoring records in order,
- GPS training.

Phone –  
Dee Walsh 8953 4230.