

Our Year – Key Achievements

Rangelands-wide

Key facts

- Advancing the concept of landscape-scale projects across the rangelands of WA.
- Advancing rangelands-wide approaches to fire, supporting indigenous land management, carbon awareness and sustainable pastoralism.
- The Rangelands Fire Leadership Group produced ‘Guiding Principles for fire management in the WA rangelands’.
- Ecologically Sustainable Rangelands Management (ESRM)s and Rangelands Self Herding are a priority for sustainable pastoral management.
- **156** photo entries were received from **53** individual students for the 2014 Kaz Collins School of the Air Photo Competition.
- The Rangelands NRM website had an average of **3,600** visits per month, totalling more than **43,000** visits over the year by around **15,900** users.
- By the end of June 2015 we had **520** Twitter followers (@RangelandsNRM) and **285** likes of the Rangelands NRM Facebook page.

CAP Workshop discussions © I. Cotton





Collaboration and Partnerships

Landscape-scale projects

During 2014-15, Rangelands NRM has been exploring and discussing the practical aspects of 'landscape-scale projects' or LSPs. LSPs are typically large (often greater than 100km²) natural resource management projects that encompass multiple tenures, outcomes, stakeholders and management regimes. A forum was held to bring key stakeholders together to share relevant lessons learned, help map out priority actions and also identify collaboration opportunities to help drive the success of landscape-scale projects being undertaken in the rangelands. Subsequently, a number of landscape-scale projects have been initiated namely Wiluna, with others being discussed, following on from the current success Pilbara Corridors Project that has been running in the Fortescue River Corridor since 2012.

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Fire Forum

Rangelands NRM facilitates an annual Fire Forum to bring fire management to the forefront, incorporating perspectives from biodiversity conservation, pastoral and Indigenous groups. The forum provides an opportunity for varied groups engaged in fire management across WA and beyond an opportunity to share experiences and look towards solutions. A short film was produced highlighting the vision from various stakeholders. Rangelands NRM facilitates a Fire Leadership Group to develop and drive action of the forum. This group produced set of 'Guiding Principles for fire management in the WA rangelands' that is now available to land managers to guide fire management in the rangelands of WA.

Carbon Farming Awareness

The Royalties for Regions Carbon Farming Awareness Program provided an open forum for attendees to learn about the 'bigger picture' of carbon farming. Every three months, five of the WA regional natural resource management (NRM) groups meet to provide an overview of their approach to their carbon farming projects and how they aligned to regional strategies. The carbon farming space is a dynamic one and so the collective are working towards developing an understanding in regional WA of the productivity, profitability and sustainability potential of carbon farming, and supporting communities to responsibly manage their natural resources. This cross-regional project is a great example of collaboration and sharing of best practice between the regional NRM groups. As part of this project, Rangelands NRM is gathering essential data about above-ground and below-ground carbon concentrations and stocks in various land systems. This will allow carbon stocks for each trial site to be calculated and the effect of the grazing trial on carbon sequestration to be properly estimated in the future.



Improving Pastoral Practices

ESRM Plans

A focus of the sustainable pastoral program is for people to learn from one another and implement practice change by doing on ground works after completing property plans known as Ecologically Sustainable Rangelands Management (ESRM). ESRM planning takes a whole-of-property approach and attempts to strike the right balance between maintaining the rangeland's natural resource base and achieving the business goals of the land manager. Given the huge size of pastoral properties in the WA rangelands, pastoralists are encouraged to manage pastoral areas according to their values, which may include highly productive land systems, high conservation areas, areas subject to over grazing and/or erosion, cultural sites, carbon sequestration, high fire risk from neighbouring properties, etc.

The result is both environmentally sensitive and highly productive areas being better protected, with areas subject to loss of groundcover, excessive surface water runoff and erosion being appropriately managed. Managing country to land systems produces a variety of environmental outcomes, including a decrease in patch grazing, increased wet season spelling in the north and better stock rotation and nutritional shepherding to more evenly distribute grazing pressure. Other environmental outcomes include increased ground cover, increased water infiltration, decreased run off and erosion and better soil health. Eleven pastoral properties throughout the rangelands completed ESRM plans in 2014-15.

Rangelands Self Herding

Pastoralists in the rangelands have been undertaking trials using principles of 'Rangelands Self Herding' (RSH) where livestock are encouraged to modify their grazing behaviours by using a combination of tactics that combined nutritional attractants, visual and audio cues that act as signals. A series of workshops to discuss the underlying principles and to develop practical implementation strategies with pastoralists in the Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne were delivered through the nutritional shepherding Innovation Grant received from the Australian Government. The project provides interested pastoralists with the opportunity to trial different strategies to work with grazing animal behaviour, their nutritional needs and preferences and the land to change grazing distribution. Three trials sites are up and running at stations (in the Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne with results showing promise to evening distribute grazing in desired areas, away from water sources and from burnt country. This project is connected to ESRM planning.



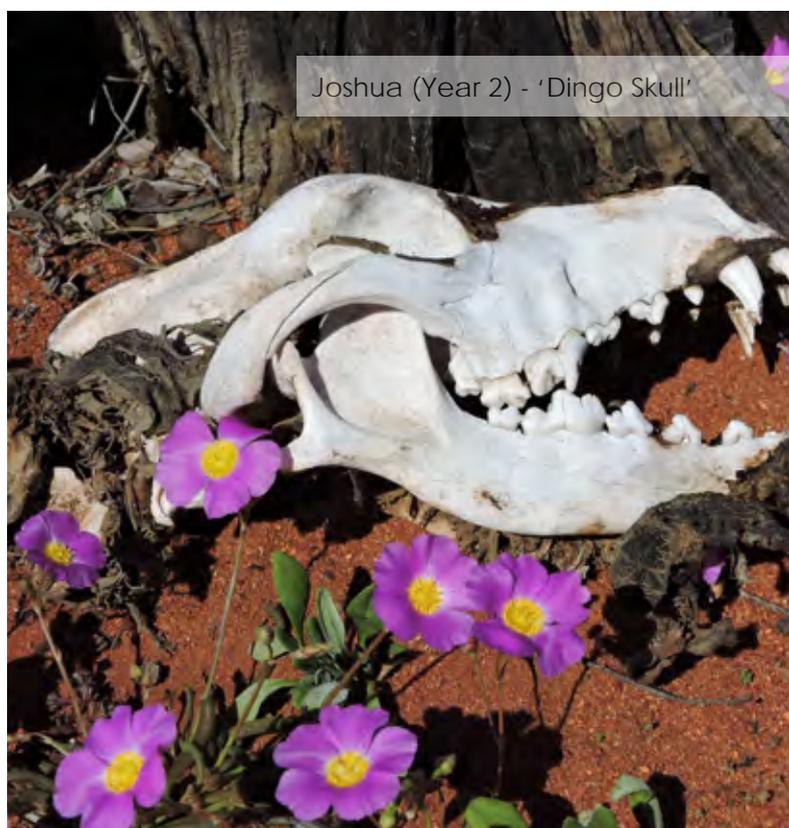
Self Herding Feeder © T. Belcher

Changing land management practices

Development of ESRM plans has assisted pastoral entities to prioritise and implement changes to land management practices and Rangelands NRM have funded a number of these. Program outcomes targeted a more strategic approach to investment (new waters, fencing etc) as a result of the ESRMs, with the intention of making a larger financial return on less stock, and consequently increasing sustainability by reducing the environmental footprint. Incentives include contributing to on-ground works as well as, skills development through peer reviewed learning, participation and leadership development. Projects have included Mia Mia Five Paddock rehabilitation, Carey Downs pastoral management, Cardabia infrastructure development, Towrana Gealla Soak management, Ashburton AC 'total grazing management' yards, Myroodah Lake Daley management and Dampier Downs regenerating productive land system.

Supporting Aboriginal pastoral leases

Rangelands NRM assisted a number of Aboriginal held, owned or managed pastoral leases in the rangelands of WA to manage their properties in an ecologically sustainable way, specifically Cardabia Station (near Coral Bay), Towrana/Gilroyd Stations (south of Gascoyne Junction), Mt Divide (Pilbara), Roebuck Plains (80 Mile Beach), and Myroodah (east of Broome). Working closely with the community, these plans were mapped out on country with long discussions on what the values are on the lease, what needs to be addressed and how to prioritise the work that is necessary in the eyes of the land user.



Engaging Communities

Indigenous framework

Rangelands NRM developed a ranger incubation framework — a step-wise tool to guide aspiring ranger groups through the 'Discovering' phase required before commencing the more focused 'Planning' and 'Doing' phases of a ranger program. A 'So, you want a Ranger Team' poster was developed to assist the process and explains the three phases — 'Discovering', 'Planning' and 'Doing'. A forum was held in March 2015 to share stories and information about the important steps in considering the formation of ranger programs to strengthen caring for country activities.



Public Lectures

During 2014, Rangelands NRM partnered with the WA Museum to run a series of lectures as part of 'In the Wild West'. These were well attended and took place across the rangelands in Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, Carnarvon, Karratha, Port Hedland, Broome and Kununurra as well as Perth and Fremantle. The lectures in the metropolitan centres were recorded and appear for a wider audience on the WA Museum website (<http://museum.wa.gov.au/whats-on/in-the-wild-west>). Topics included frogs of the Kimberley, seabirds of WA, Kimberley marine life and rock art conservation.

Rangelands NRM also partnered with the Roebuck Bay Working Group (RBWG) and Inspiring Australia to support the 'Science on the Broome Coast' talks. The series began in 2014 and following its great success, will continue for 2015 and 2016. Topics have included migratory shorebirds, jellyfish and turtles, the dinosaurs trackways on Broome's coast, how stormwater and groundwater can impact Lyngbya blooms, what the predictions are for cyclones and storm surges in Broome from a changing climate and how Broome's new coastal conservation estates and Marine Park will be managed.



Aidan (Year 3) - 'Birds Eye View'

School of the Air Photo Competition

The 2014 Kaz Collins School of the Air Photo Competition, now in its fourth year, invited children living in the bush to submit photos depicting 'colour' in the rangelands. The competition attracted 156 photo entries from 53 individual students from all five Schools of the Air – Kalgoorlie, Meekatharra, Carnarvon, Port Hedland and Kimberley. The competition is a great opportunity to raise awareness of natural resource management and further involve our next generation of land managers in having pride in our rangelands landscapes and our regional communities. Entries submitted are used to produce a calendar each year and appear in the Annual Report as well as on the Rangelands NRM website and in other publications.

Social Media

The Rangelands NRM website (www.rangelandswa.com.au) had an average of 3,600 visits per month, totalling more than 43,000 visits over the year by around 15,900 users.

We now have three playlists on our You Tube channel (www.youtube.com/rangelandsnrm), showcasing videos on fire management, erosion in the Savannah rangelands and Rangelands NRM projects. The most popular have been The Art of Fire animation (913 views) and the Waru, kuka, mirrka wankarringu - lampaju - Burning, bushfoods and biodiversity (762 views).

By the end of June 2015, we had 520 Twitter followers (@RangelandsNRM) and tweets were made a few times a week, or more regularly if an event was being attended.

The Rangelands NRM Facebook page (www.facebook.com/rangelandsnrm) has seen good engagement with 285 likes as at 30 June 2015, up from 168 at the beginning of July 2014. Daily engagement with the Rangelands NRM Facebook page averaged eight unique users per day, with a total of 2855 instances of engagement in the year (including clicks and shares). The total reach of Facebook content was 26,580 users when adding the daily number of people who saw any content from associated with the Rangelands NRM Facebook page.