

8 December 2008

## **WESTERN CATCHMENT PEOPLE INVEST \$3.5 M TO IMPROVE ENVIRONMENT**

Land managers in the Western Catchment have received \$3.5 million in grants to undertake on-ground works or training to improve natural resource management in their area through the Western Catchment Management Authority's (CMA) 2008 Incentive Program.

Chair of the Western CMA, Rory Treweeke, said 102 applicants received funding towards projects which meet the CMAs natural resource management targets, which include native pasture recovery, riverine habitat and water quality improvement, pest management and sustainable agriculture.

"This is the fourth year that the Western CMA has held its Incentive Program and once again, Western Catchment land managers have shown their initiative and enthusiasm in improving their local area.

"The Western CMA has distributed \$12.3 million since 2005 through our annual incentives program.

"While the Western CMA has provided monetary support, in the majority of cases the land managers have also had to contribute either financially or through their labour, which indicates the level of support the program has enjoyed.

"It is wonderful to see the variety of individuals and community groups who have taken advantage of the program and are really making a difference with tangible on-ground improvements," Mr Treweeke said.

Major projects include:

- \$1.2 million committed to 31 applicants for native pasture recovery. Land managers will use a total of 675km of fencing to assist with the management of grazing pressure which will encourage native pasture growth on a total of 196,730 hectares (1,967km<sup>2</sup>).
- \$778,240 committed to 24 applicants to treat 46,400 hectares (464km<sup>2</sup>) affected by invasive native scrub using a range of techniques including chemical spot-treatment, chaining and raking. This is roughly equivalent to the area of Kinchega National Park. Although invasive native scrub or woody weeds are native plants, they out-compete native pastures while leads to bare and eroded soil, so their management is essential.
- \$91,590 committed to four applicants to rehabilitate 3,225ha of rangelands using a range of measures including crocodiling and engineering works such as water-ponding and water-spreading.

As a result, native pasture recovery works will be undertaken on an area of 246,375 ha (2,463km<sup>2</sup>), which is equivalent to the area of the Australian Capital Territory or approximately four times the size of the Gundabooka National Park near Bourke.



- \$640,000 was committed to 14 applicants for riverine habitat and water quality improvements. 45 off-river watering points will be installed to stop stock accessing waterways and 434km of waterways will be fenced (equivalent to the distance by road from Brewarrina to Wilcannia). As a result, 15,968 hectares (160km<sup>2</sup>) of riverine vegetation will be protected, which is equivalent in size to the Ledknapper Nature Reserve near Enngonia.
- \$437,240 was committed to 14 applicants to control plant and animal pests. 47 trapyards will be constructed and control of pests such as pigs, foxes and rabbits is being undertaken on 4,180,000ha with control of goats and kangaroos being undertaken on a further 74,060ha. In addition, control of pest plants, such as Hudson Pear, is being undertaken on 6,940ha.
- \$48,530 was committed to five applicants to encourage sustainable agriculture through conservation farming. Five machines will be converted to controlled traffic and no-till, resulting in 9,300 hectares (93km<sup>2</sup>) of cropping land converted to minimum or no-till agriculture.
- \$162,340 was committed to two applicants who will manage a total of 208ha for conservation and protecting the variety of plant and animal life (biodiversity). One of those projects is the restoration of the Old Brewarrina Mission Wetland by the Ngemba Billabong Restoration and Landcare Group.
- \$139,900 was committed to seven training and research projects.
  - 57 people will take part in various training courses, including environmental management systems, conservation farming, marketing and Indigenous land management.
  - In addition, rangeland scientist, Gresley Wakelin-King, has been contracted to conduct two research projects on contour furrowing and drylands geomorphology aimed at increasing knowledge of rangeland land functions to enable better land management in the future, and
  - Graham Finlayson of Bokhara Plains Station near Brewarrina is being sponsored to become a trainer in the holistic management principles that has made him well-known throughout the Western Catchment and beyond.

"In addition to the 2008 Incentives Program, the Western CMA also administered the Drought Preparedness program of training and on-ground works and staff are currently processing a record number of applications for the \$400,000 funding through the High Conservation Value Program," Mr Treweeke said.

## ENDS

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Captions:



## 2008\_Bunderrav2:

David Hanlon and Mandy Friend of Bundeera Station near **Brewarrina** received funding to fence the remaining 5km of Culgoa River frontage on their property, after successfully fencing 5.2km with funds from the Western CMA in 2006. This has allowed them to control stock access to the River and to encourage regeneration on a total of 150 ha of riverine vegetation. David and Mandy are photographed in the area they fenced in 2006 and are confident of similarly good results with the newly fenced area.

## 2008\_Carpentersv2:

The Western CMA's Brian Dohnt discusses invasive native scrub management with Stephen Masters of Carpenters Station near **Coolabah**. Stephen Masters and Jennifer Irvin received funds to manage invasive native scrub on 1,200 ha. The INS management is in a Bimble Box woodland with a very thick understorey of Budda, Turpentine and Hopbush. The method of management includes chaining, stick raking and chemical spot spraying to control re-growth. Total grazing pressure is being controlled using trap-yards and complete de-stocking.

## 2008\_Noonamahv2:

Ben Bartlett of Noonamah Station near **Wanaaring** has received funding to construct five kilometres of fencing to better manage total grazing pressure. The new fence sub-divides a large paddock on the Paroo River floodplain by land type and will help Ben protect the vegetation that grows in this localised flood-out area. The flood-out area supports a wide variety of native plant species including Crowfoot and Mulga grass.

## 2008\_Cawkers\_Wellv2:

Charles and Faye Townsing of Cawkers Well Station near **Wilcannia** received funding for total grazing pressure fencing on a 7,690 ha paddock which sometimes experiences flooding from the Grasmere and Dolo Creeks. They will erect 10kms of internal solar electric fencing to divide the paddock according to land systems and put in 3.5kms of poly-pipe and two new watering points. As a result, they will be able to implement and control a grazing strategy aligned to pasture growth phases. During the next twelve months, the Townsings would like to divide the two new paddocks into four and implement some rotational grazing strategies. Charles is pictured with the new fence.

