

PROCEEDINGS OF THE AUSTRALIAN RANGELAND SOCIETY BIENNIAL CONFERENCE
Official publication of The Australian Rangeland Society

Copyright and Photocopying

© The Australian Rangeland Society 2014. All rights reserved.

For non-personal use, no part of this item may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior permission of the Australian Rangeland Society and of the author (or the organisation they work or have worked for). Permission of the Australian Rangeland Society for photocopying of articles for non-personal use may be obtained from the Secretary who can be contacted at the email address, rangelands.exec@gmail.com

For personal use, temporary copies necessary to browse this site on screen may be made and a single copy of an article may be downloaded or printed for research or personal use, but no changes are to be made to any of the material. This copyright notice is not to be removed from the front of the article.

All efforts have been made by the Australian Rangeland Society to contact the authors. If you believe your copyright has been breached please notify us immediately and we will remove the offending material from our website.

Form of Reference

The reference for this article should be in this general form;

Author family name, initials (year). Title. *In*: Proceedings of the nth Australian Rangeland Society Biennial Conference. Pages. (Australian Rangeland Society: Australia).

For example:

Anderson, L., van Klinken, R. D., and Shepherd, D. (2008). Aerially surveying Mesquite (*Prosopis* spp.) in the Pilbara. *In*: 'A Climate of Change in the Rangelands. Proceedings of the 15th Australian Rangeland Society Biennial Conference'. (Ed. D. Orr) 4 pages. (Australian Rangeland Society: Australia).

Disclaimer

The Australian Rangeland Society and Editors cannot be held responsible for errors or any consequences arising from the use of information obtained in this article or in the Proceedings of the Australian Rangeland Society Biennial Conferences. The views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Australian Rangeland Society and Editors, neither does the publication of advertisements constitute any endorsement by the Australian Rangeland Society and Editors of the products advertised.



The Australian Rangeland Society

CHANGING DIRECTIONS IN MANAGING WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S PASTORAL LAND

B.A. Lloyd

Department for Planning and Infrastructure, PO Box 1575, Midland, WA 6936.

In Western Australia there are approximately 474 pastoral stations covering about 90 million hectares or 36% of the State. Changing community expectations as to how land is managed, along with globalisation and triple bottom line reporting will continue to shape the administrative environment that oversees the pastoral industry. The global community will also be increasingly scrutinising both the quality of product and the processes that produce it, which will ultimately determine the markets for rangeland products. Simply producing volume is no longer sufficient to sustain the pastoral industry.

PASTORAL LAND ADMINISTRATION

The Pastoral Lands Board (PLB) has the responsibility to administer Western Australia's pastoral leases. The adoption of the current *Land Administration Act 1997* saw an expansion of powers and functions of the PLB, with a specific emphasis on the environment. In particular, the PLB is charged with ensuring 'that pastoral leases are managed on an ecologically sustainable basis'. The PLB now also specifically has the ability to:

- Develop policies to prevent the degradation of the rangelands;
- Develop policies to rehabilitate degraded or eroded rangelands and to restore their pastoral potential;
- Establish and evaluate a system of pastoral land monitoring sites; and
- Monitor the numbers and the effect of stock and feral animals on pastoral land.

The PLB's broader focus is reflected in its expanded membership from five to eight, with not only three pastoral representatives, but also a member with expertise in flora, fauna and/or conservation management and an Aboriginal member with pastoral experience.

The PLB's work is carried out by a group of six officers of the Pastoral Land Management section of the Department for Planning and Infrastructure (DPI). These officers include a Manager, an Executive Officer and assistant, a Project and Compliance Officer and two administrative staff. The Project and Compliance Officer is a new position which reflects the PLB's commitment to more effective administration of the State's pastoral lands. This officer provides industry intelligence to the PLB, liaises with all levels of pastoral stakeholders and investigates specific land management issues. The considerable lease inspection program is undertaken by the Department of Agriculture through a Memorandum of Understanding.

NEW DIRECTIONS

The challenges of the modern pastoral industry are being met by the new PLB and its increased powers, by taking a broader and longer term vision for the industry and its role in society.

The PLB and its support staff are not only streamlining existing processes, but developing new ones to provide more positive support for pastoralists, in such areas as goat management, diversification options and training for new pastoralists. With its support staff, the PLB will also quickly and effectively deal with any situations resulting from irresponsible management practices.

The PLB is also well positioned to make strong contributions to future Government decisions on issues such as tenure, access to pastoral leases and land exclusions when all pastoral leases are renewed in 2015. The PLB and its support staff played a key role in a recent series of forums that were convened by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. Key issues affecting the State's pastoral industry were

investigated and reported on, these being sustainability, access, Aboriginal access and living areas, alternative models for land tenure and economic monitoring requirements. A response from Government is due later in 2004.

INITIATIVES

The PLB and its DPI support staff are continuing to develop both strategic and operational initiatives to support the sustainable management of pastoral leases:

- The PLB's new webpage (www.dpi.wa.gov.au/pastoral) provides pastoralists with positive support and relevant information from which to make informed management decisions. The website encompasses information on the 'triple bottom line' of environmental, economic and social sustainability.
- Diversification allows pastoralists to maintain their core pastoral businesses by stabilising cash flow and spreading risk in times of fluctuating commodity prices or during prolonged adverse climatic events, such as drought. The PLB has streamlined its administration processes that provide for more effective referrals for Applications for Diversification Permits to all relevant stakeholders from both government and non Government (such as Native Title claimants), as well as fast-tracking applications from new lessees undertaking diversification activities as done by the previous pastoralist.
- The PLB has improved its Management Plan Template to assist pastoralists in the development of focussed, strategic and timebound station plans to facilitate consequent on-ground improvements. These plans are also often required by the PLB in response to issues raised in lease inspection reports and when a new lessee takes over a station.
- Mining companies that lease stations have some unique issues in conducting two very different enterprises on the lease. The PLB support staff are working with key mining companies in establishing a Mining Industry Reference Group. This group would develop and facilitate the adoption of Best Management Practices on these pastoral leases.
- The PLB supports increasing the management capacity of new pastoral lessees and accredited training for the next generation of the pastoral workforce. Support staff are actively involved with other stakeholders in the development of a pilot training program to enhance the management capacity of Aboriginal pastoral lessees.
- Unauthorised access is an ongoing issue on pastoral leases. There are plans to produce a high quality brochure to inform the increasingly mobile public about responsibilities in accessing pastoral lands. The PLB support staff were also actively involved in the removal of one unauthorised camp on a coastal pastoral lease.
- Irresponsible management by a few undermines the industry's credibility and market confidence. The PLB and its support staff are concentrating efforts on quickly and effectively dealing with individuals that show little regard for their responsibilities as pastoralists.

CONCLUSION

These initiatives emphasise the new direction of the Pastoral Lands Board and will help ensure Western Australia's pastoral industry meets the inevitable industry challenges and expectations of society with a positive and proactive response. The community will ultimately demand greater stewardship and accountability in managing pastoral lands. The PLB's work towards sustainable pastoral leases will lead to long-term sustainability for these regions, with positive outcomes for pastoralists, the industry, the rangelands and the State.