



South West NRM

On-Ground Project Fact Sheet

Developing waters for rotational grazing - Bonus Downs

Landholder Name: Lyle Bernard & Patricia Madonna Connolly

Property Location & Lot on Plan: 'Bonus Downs' - Lot 14 KE104

(Property & project location maps attached at the back of the document).

Property Outline:

(E.g. Property description, size in hectares, enterprise, annual rainfall, and current management practice)

Bonus Downs is located 46 kilometres south west of Mitchell, with an area of 13380 hectares. The property is fully fenced with over 100 kms of new fencing, establishing ten paddocks and three holding paddocks with plans ongoing to subdivide the property further and develop a rotational grazing system property wide. The property owners look forward to taking Bonus Downs to a more productive enterprise continuing to improve the black soil country with blade ploughing, use of electric fencing and an improved water distribution system. The property is currently focusing on more of cattle agistment, than owning most of the stock and also allowing Grant (son) to build up his herd.

Grant has come home after working in Western Australia and Northern Territory as well as obtaining his tickets for all heavy earth moving machinery in the coal mines and is in the process of purchasing and obtaining his license for a gyro. He is implementing low stress management of stock and has recently sold his first lot of weaners for 225 cents per kilo returning an average of \$500 per head.

Gabrielle (daughter) is continuing her studies in Brisbane doing a Bachelor of Early Childhood.

In 2003 Bonus Downs was opened to the public as a farmstay, which is growing in popularity every year. The property owners intend making 2011 a 'century celebration year' commemorating the 100 year old house, and the wonderful work of our pioneers.

The property owners have previously incorporated conservation and biodiversity projects into their management regime, having completed Envirofund projects, and currently considering enhanced management of a Threatened Ecological Community to the south of the property.



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Q2
Coasts
and
Country

This project is supported by South West NRM through funding from the Queensland Government's Q2 Coasts and Country and Australian Government's Caring for Our Country.

Project Description

To install a 10000 gallon poly tank, approx. 2600m of 2" poly piping, 2 concrete troughs and a solar pumping installation to supply additional stock watering points, expanding the current system. Based on this stage of work, further fencing infrastructure will be developed over time to expand and refine the rotational grazing system for the property. This project focuses on an initial paddock size of 5883ha, which will be refined towards achieving a paddock size conducive to rotational grazing, as outlined above.

Project Aim

Bonus Downs has commenced a staged holistic property development project. This project will allow further rotational grazing management to be implemented, facilitated by more gravity fed watering points, strategically located to encourage stock to graze more area. Once waters are established more electric fencing and rotational stock management will be commenced. Project Budget allocation \$11000.00 (incl. GST). Bonus Downs aims to continue property development to achieve sustainable production outcomes, and the property owners are open to new ideas.

Project Outcomes

The gravity fed watering system will be low maintenance, and will facilitate more defined use of the grazing resources on Bonus Downs. When coupled with rotational grazing we expect to see increased retention and expansion of Productive, Palatable and Perennial native grasses (3P's), better water infiltration, and more consistent ground cover and less soil erosion, whilst returning a better income as stocking rates are gradually increased due to implementing this new grazing system across the property.

Outputs

CB1.1 Events; 1 field day in conjunction with Mitchell and District Landcare group; expect approximately 20 persons.

OG3.4 Enhanced terrestrial vegetation; 5883 ha project area, influencing 13372 ha through rotational grazing practices.

OG14.5 Groundcover management; 5883 ha project area, influencing 13372 ha through rotational grazing practices; adopted management practices for 2 property managers and influencing up to another 20 through the field day.

Project Monitoring:

Objectives:

Monitor ground cover response, presence of pasture species and biodiversity, and production benefits in response to installation and development of a strategic stock watering system, coupled with expanded rotational grazing practices covering 5883 ha.

Indicators b&
Methodology:

Indicators: 3P pasture species, percentage groundcover, pasture quantity, rainfall, grazing days, and land condition.
Methodology: Transects and photo points, standing dry mass, use of grazing charts, *Stocktake* monitoring.

Monitoring Schedule:

Establish baseline data prior to the commencement of the project.

To assist project collaboration and holistic data analysis under the project, the initial collection and onforwarding to South West NRM, of rainfall and ongoing production monitoring data (e.g. grazing days / location etc. incorporating actual rest periods for each paddock, yields: stock days / ha, stocking rate), will be the responsibility of the landholder.

Biophysical monitoring every six months in which South West NRM will be responsible for collecting, collating, interpreting and reporting data.

Two pasture monitoring transects considering pasture species and ground cover established within the project area representative of the major land types.

Two photo monitoring sites within the project area representative of the major land types.

One pasture monitoring transect and one photo monitoring site located upon the property, external to the project site, as a comparison site.

Analysis: Return on Investment. Develop a case study comparing return on investment of rotational grazing systems as developed under this project, and comparing the economic return on investment to the project comparison site.