



South West NRM

On-Ground Project Fact Sheet

IMPROVING PASTURES WITH PLANNED GRAZING

AT KILCOWERA STATION

Landholder Name: Greg and Toni Sherwin

Property Location & Lot on Plan: 90km south of Thargomindah. L4904SP207172, 2828PH276
(Property & project location maps attached at the end of the document)

Property Outline:

Greg and Toni Sherwin have owned “Kilcowera” since 1980 and “Zenonie” has been in the family since the 1950’s. They are situated across the Bulloo River and Paroo River catchments on the western edge of Lake Wyara and manage these two blocks from the “Kilcowera” homestead.

“Kilcowera” (47,906 ha) and “Zenonie” (31,869 ha) are predominantly Hard Mulga (43%), with Sandhills (21%) and Mulga Sandplains (22%); with small amounts of Wooded Alluvia (2%), Soft Mulga (2%) and Dissected Residuals (10%). Average annual rainfall is 11inches.

Cattle have been the primary production; with some sheep, until 2001. Greg and Toni then moved towards breeding cattle and diversifying their business with Ecotourism. The property now welcomes visitors by air and road that are keen to see the wide variety of bird species that inhabit the mulga lands and the edges of Lake Wyara. The Sherwin family have established modern new shearers’ quarters and campgrounds to accommodate their visitors and run guided tours of the property and natural attractions.

Greg and Toni have noted a thickening throughout the Mulga Sandplain country in the last 20 years, which seems to be evident across the Mulga Lands Bioregion. There has been a loss of perennial grass species and an increase in woody weeds, such as sandalwood (*Eromophila mitchellii*) and *Senna* sp.



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Project Description

The project will be a small scale trial of the rotational grazing setup. The project will construct four goat paddocks; of 14ha, 15ha, 15ha and 20 ha, totalling 64 hectares. Water will be piped approx. 1231 meters from a bore to the trial paddocks. The fencing will be of high integrity goat fencing and include 5 gates and 3 water troughs.

Second part of the trial is dependent on rainfall and weather; we may trial fire, chemical spraying and complete spelling with an aim of killing woody weeds.

South West NRM will be contributing \$25,000 to this project, with in kind labour and support from Greg and Toni Sherwin.

Project Aim

The aim of this trial at "Kilcowera" is to reduce the effect of woody weeds and increase the availability of pastures to stock. The project will aim to increase desirable perennial grasses and the monitoring will reflect this. We need to be able to show other people the amount of grazing each paddock receives and if any perennial grass species are establishing or increasing.

The trial paddocks will be stocked with goats and a feed budget done to estimate how long the goats will be in each paddock. Moves will be based on the availability of perennial grasses in the next paddock, compared to the current paddock. Once all perennial grasses have been grazed, to promote root growth, goats will be completely removed from trial paddocks, until the next rain fall event. A 60 day rest period will be used and then another mob of goats will be grazing through the paddocks.

Close monitoring of grass growth and stock condition will be required and all monitoring made available to interested parties and at field days.

Project Outcomes

This project will graze stock (goats) in each trial paddock, moving to next paddock based on the availability of perennial grasses; therefore resting all other paddocks. An increase in ground cover and an improvement in perennial grass species over time is hope to be achieved.

When grass improves the project outcomes will include an increase in grazing days per hectare per DSE, which would increase turnover and production.

All data will be recorded and available during field days and critically reviewed by SWNRM and other landholders from the Bulloo Shire. South West NRM will facilitate discussions about the advantages and problems faced when setting up and using rotational grazing.

Formal monitoring sites with photo and grass check data will allow other landholders to see the results of planned grazing.

Outputs

CB1.1 Events – 1 field day, approximately 20 persons attending.

CB1.2 Publications. 2 fact sheets written. 100 people

CB1.4 Media opportunities. One news paper article created.

CB5.1 Establish 4 grazing learning sites. One established

OG2.4 Fenced terrestrial vegetation. 64 ha fenced with 520m of fencing

OG14.5 Groundcover management. 64ha with planned grazing by one land manager and influencing 70,000ha and 20 other landholders.

P1.1 Complete 15 NRM property plans. One plan completed.

P5.1 Biophysical, economic, social plans. One plan for Kilcowera NRM Trial.

Project Monitoring:

Objectives:

The objectives of monitoring throughout the project will be to assess vegetation composition in the trial area. Project success will be measured by the increase in ground cover percentage, perennial grass species and land condition assessments.

The results will be explained to the Learning Group and they will be used to direct further learning activities; to have these landholders learning from the trial and using some of those techniques on their own property.

Methodology & Indicators:

Indicators: 3P pasture species, percentage of ground cover, rainfall, grazing days and land condition. Number of landholders attending learning days and participating in discussions and planning of grazing on their own property.

Methodology: 'Stocktake' Land condition monitoring, grazing charts, inviting neighbours and interested land managers to learning days, landholder surveys.

Monitoring Schedule:

Establish baseline data prior to commencement of the project.

The landholder has agreed 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).

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

Two pasture monitoring transects considering pasture species and ground cover established within the trial area and a comparison.

10 photo monitoring sites, at least two within each trial paddock, and two to compare.

Analysis: Return on Investment. Develop a case study on the return on investment of the rotational grazing system monitored under this project, and consider the holistic outcomes – economic, environmental and lifestyle.

Analysis: Has the learning group participated in discussions about planned holistic grazing and changed any management on their own properties.