

Voices in ALMS

Number 8, September 2008

Your e-newsletter from the Australian Landcare Management System Group

Voices in ALMS
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LATEST NEWS

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Wool - Leading the way environmentally

The 'Wool-Leading the Way Environmentally' has shown that ALMS is able to underpin the green credentials of wool, a central feature of the recently relaunched Woolmark brands.

The project lead a major Japanese apparel company, Onward Kashiyama, to support ALMS. This decision reflects Onward Kashiyama's policy to adopt the ISO14001 environmental management standard embedded in ALMS.

The project has strengthened also the recognition of ALMS from wool marketers and from catchment management authorities across three States and the ALM Group was awarded the South Australian FarmBis award for excellence in natural resource management training.

The project, supported by Elders and Australian Wool Innovation, showed ALMS as a credible, effective and cost efficient environmental certification system with on and off-farm benefits.

These developments provide a convincing case for industry wide and public program support to accelerate the implementation of ALMS.

Meeting online

Would it help to talk with other ALM Group members? But they are all so far away!



the gate of your property and show your community that you are managing your land in a responsible way.



FOR THE DIARY

ALM Group Board meeting: *Tuesday 16 September 2008*

ALM System Clinics: *St George, 9 and 10 October; Emerald 18 and 19 November; Charleville 2 and 3 December.*

New Directions for Landcare presentation: *Queensland Landcare Conference Monto, 22 September 2008*

Wool and Sheep Besprac Expo presentation: *12 and 13 November, Broken Hill*

ALMS BOARD

ALMS board members are:

John Drinan (Chair)
Jock Douglas (Inaugural Chair)
Genevieve Carruthers
Darren Marshall
Tony Gleeson (CEO)
Bruce Munday
Geoff Penton

The ALM Group now has an online forum that can be accessed from its website. Log in and "chat" to ALMS members across Australia.

Swap notes on experiences with EMS; ask questions of ALM Group management; alert each other to upcoming events or amazing things you have just heard about; and get benefit from the fact that we are all on this journey together.

People attending the Forum can respond to posts or simply browse, and can initiate new Topics at any time.

Why not visit the forum and spend a few minutes at FAQ. Test it out.

If you get stuck, or just feel that somehow you are missing out on something important, contact Bruce at (08) 8538 705 bruce@clearconnections.com.au

Drought submission

The ALM Group recently made a submission to the Federal Government's two drought reviews.

Central to our submission was that drought should be defined as a prolonged climatic event rather than in terms of its impacts. This approach separates cause and effect, enabling recognition of the many causes of stress-related phenomena and of the great variation in impacts.

The submission highlighted the psychological dimension to 'drought preparedness'. This has much to do with empowering people with the reality and the perception of having control over their destiny. Good leadership, good information and enabling mechanisms are important.

Interventions to build resilience should be ongoing rather than being triggered to operate only during drought. For this and many other reasons the Exceptional Circumstances provision should be abolished.

A mechanism to recognise and reward good land management (before, during and after drought) would prompt positive responses from land managers who, with some justification, currently believe that communities impose unrewarded expectations on them, along with significant loss of self control. Such a mechanism would do much to build the resilience of farmers, industries and rural communities.

Innovators get it

Our journey is on properties and landscapes but we always knew the big challenges would lie in the mindscapes: mindscapes fragmented commodity-by-commodity,

Nelson Quinn

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mindscape fragmented issue-by-issue (the eco-services approach), mindscapes trapped by organisational inertia and fear.

But now some eighteen months into our marketing phase we are finding innovators moving ahead, moving out of the pack looking for opportunities, looking for new ways. These are the people who participated in our ALM Group Workshops at Stanthorpe, at Taree and at Tocal since our last edition of VOICES. These are the people who have signed up for workshops at St George, Emerald and Charleville.

Our need now is to find ways to work with these innovators to develop the supportive environments so essential for continuous improvement.

CEO Musings

ALM GROUP CEO, Tony Gleeson, looks anywhere for inspiration.

Caring for taxpayers. At a conference several years ago a couple of tenured academics told me they would have liked to support my publically expressed views but they were constrained by being dependent on competitive funding. I sometimes (and my friends always) wish I had their sense of flight but the irony of excessive competitive funding to improve efficiency can't be ignored. It is hard to find someone in our domain who has not been involved in preparing a submission for the Caring for Country Open Grants. My reading of the figures leads me to conclude that more taxpayers money was spent applying than is available for distribution!

Bush Heritage pays \$3.5 m for Qld grazing land. 'Bush Heritage Australia has paid between \$3.5 and \$4m for Edgbaston, a viable cattle property in Central Queensland' (farmonline 9-09-08). Not quite. The reality is that Bush Heritage, for which read "taxpayers", mainly through grants and tax deductibility, did not pay for 'grazing land' or for a 'viable cattle property'. What the taxpayer and Bush Heritage paid for is an ongoing opportunity to continue to spend, sorry invest, on biodiversity. And the useful question is, would they have got better value by supporting multiple use practices and investing in a credible land management certification system?

Our own 'Toorale'. By the time this hits the email in-trays 'Toorale' station downstream from Burke may have a new owner. The fact-free commentary over past weeks on the impact of property practices on flows in the Darling reminds me of a contention here locally whereby it is alleged the flow in the upper Clarence catchment is being impaired by growth in the local village from eight to ten families. More

seriously, unless authorities get some credible statistics into the public arena in a timely fashion debates such as has erupted over 'Toorale' will undermine the resilience of rural communities to a much greater extent than might be gained by the many programs that attest to be improving resilience.