

Media Release

Date: 23 October 2009
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Top land managers make their environmental point to Queensland Governor

Three leading Queensland land holders recently described their environmental credentials at a breakfast hosted by Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland Ms Penelope Wensley AO.

Katie Bucknell (Dirranbandi), Jeff Campbell (Mitchell) and Michael Walker (Moura) are all members of the Australian Land Management Group (ALM Group), a not-for-profit organisation which certifies the environmental management of participating landholders who comply with international standards.

Addressing the guests, the Governor drew on her experience as former Ambassador for the Environment and on her role in developing Australian trade policies to focus attention on the need for Australian agriculture to demonstrate its environmental credentials.

The Governor noted that many of Australia's trading partners are increasingly showing preferences for high standards of environmental production..

Michael Walker, who manages *Thalmera* for the T.V.Fairfax Pastoral Group commented "We operate within the Fitzroy Basin and our land management puts an emphasis on protecting the Great Barrier Reef from polluted runoff water which in turn requires us to control soil erosion and avoid chemical contamination.

"A major objective of our environmental effort is to improve the biodiversity on the property and a key indicator of this will be bird populations. We have plans to start bird monitoring with the help of a local bird watching group to establish a baseline from which we can measure our progress.

"The ALM Certification System has provided us with a great framework for assessing our environmental impacts and the associated risks, and then developing action plans to deal with them.

"All the steps we have taken to manage our impacts are there for the auditor to see and we feel very satisfied that *Thalmera* stands up well to thorough scrutiny."

At the end of the breakfast the Governor welcomed the initiative of the ALM Group in developing a straight forward process of certification.

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About the ALM Group and the ALM certification system

The Australian Land Management Group (ALM Group) is a not-for-profit organisation comprised of a governing board, landholder members and support people. It aims to improve environmental outcomes in rural Australia in ways that enable recognition of the achievements of land managers and of their support organisations.

The ALM Certification System is an externally audited, continuous improvement process where landholders implement plans customised for each property. This avoids the top down, 'one size fits all' approach taken by many natural resource management support programs, including those based on best management practices or externally developed environmental targets.

ALMCS focuses on the causes of environmental impacts, both positive and negative, rather than on environmental symptoms. ALMCS works on a whole-of-farm basis rather than on an industry-by-industry basis as most farms operate two or more industries. ALMCS also works on a catchment-linked basis as all farms are affected by off-farm issues and all cause off-farm effects.