

NaRLA News



Volume 2, Number 1. January 2006

Nature Refuge Landholders' Association —Queensland Inc.

ACN 64 002 626 445

—Dedicated to the establishment and management of a network of nature refuges for the benefit of the land, wildlife and the community—

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From our President

Greetings NaRLA Members!

First, I would like to thank all those who expressed their confidence in me by electing me to lead NaRLA during the coming year. I would also like to assure all members of NaRLA that during my term as President I shall be striving to the best of my ability to serve the interests of our members and the ideals NaRLA's members share.

We have spent the last year assembling the structures, systems and people necessary to enable us to get on with doing the jobs and providing the services for which NaRLA was established. These things are now in place, so the coming year will see our operations begin in earnest and the benefits begin to flow to our members and others.

Now that we have reached this stage of our development, it is important that we take stock of our most important resource of all —people. We currently have 67 members. I would like to call upon all of our members to work with the Management Committee to determine how best the diverse and extensive pool of knowledge, expertise experience, ideas and views within our membership can be marshalled to provide the greatest benefit to our Association and to the natural environment. This diversity of thought and capability, combined with the unity of ideals and aspirations that brought us together in the first place, and above all, a willingness to support NaRLA's activities by active contribution of the ideas and capabilities that we each bring to NaRLA, gives our association potentially great strength and the ability to achieve great things. Whether this strength and those achievements can be fully realised will depend entirely upon the level of active contribution by our membership. The Management Committee is not some elite group of people! It is composed of ordinary members of NaRLA, just like all the rest of our members. The only thing that is different about the Management Committee is that they have, for the time being, accepted responsibility for guiding the activities of the Association. Without the active support of the membership as a whole, it will be impossible for them to do that job as well as it can be.

To facilitate our all getting to know each other and to enable simple real-time on-line direct communication between our widely dispersed members, we are setting up a Member's Forum page on our website. We expect that the Forum page will be operational in March. As soon as it is

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ready, we will advise all of our members and provide detailed information on how to use the site.

I wish you all the very best, and I look forward to working for and with you towards our common goals during the coming year.

**Marta Hardeman,
President**

Management Committee Elections

The following members were elected to the NaRLA Management Committee at the AGM in December 2005:

President: Marta Hardeman

vice-President: Graham Harrington

Secretary: Position not filled *

Treasurer: Doug MacLennan

Committee Members (Positions available: Ordinary Members- three positions, Associate members- two positions): *Ordinary Members*— Shane Joyce, Maureen Cooper, one position unfilled**; *Associate Members*— Nick Clancy, one position unfilled.

* Doug MacLennan is acting as Secretary until the Management Committee appoints someone to fill the position.

** See News on Page 4 for update.

Vegetation Management Issues —Fire as a nature conservation management tool—

Whether or not landholders choose to use fire as a tool to manage the vegetation on their land for nature conservation purposes, they still need to be knowledgeable about fire, its behaviour, and its effects. They need to know how to manage fire, and they need to understand the effects of fire on any ecosystem they wish to manage. If they are going to use fire as a tool, they must have clear habitat management objectives.

While many of Australia's vegetation communities and the animals that live in and depend upon them have evolved with and are adapted to fire to various degrees, each ecosystem is composed of its own particular complex network of interacting physical and biological factors.

The nature of the physical factors affecting fire, such as latitude, geology, topography, precipitation patterns and prevailing winds that exist in a particular locality tend to be fairly stable over human generational time scales. However, the physical factors and their relationships with and effects on the local biological communities may vary dramatically between different geographic localities and between ecosystems. Consequently, it is impossible to devise an effective one-size-fits-all strategy for the use of fire as a nature conservation management tool.

In contrast to the physical components of an ecosystem, its biological components are immensely more numerous and varied, and all are parts of multiple complex relationships with other biological components of the ecosystem. Hence, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the potential effects of fire on all of the interacting biological networks comprising an ecosystem is a truly daunting—in fact, impossible—task.

Most fire management strategies in Australia are devised and managed to achieve quite specific outcomes in respect to specific elements of the ecosystems in which they are applied (e.g. reducing fuel loads, managing weed species, promoting or inhibiting the growth of selected plant species, etc). They rarely try take into account the whole-ecosystem impact of fire. If the prime objective of using fire is nature conservation, then a much more complex challenge in its management is presented.

While fire is a physical element in the natural ecology of most vegetation communities in Australia, except wet rainforests, the nature of the natural fire regimes in different ecosystems in different parts of Australia may vary greatly. Two major variables are the frequency and intensity of fire. These two factors are part of a circular equation that dictates the effects of fire on different natural ecosystems (See *Figure 1*).

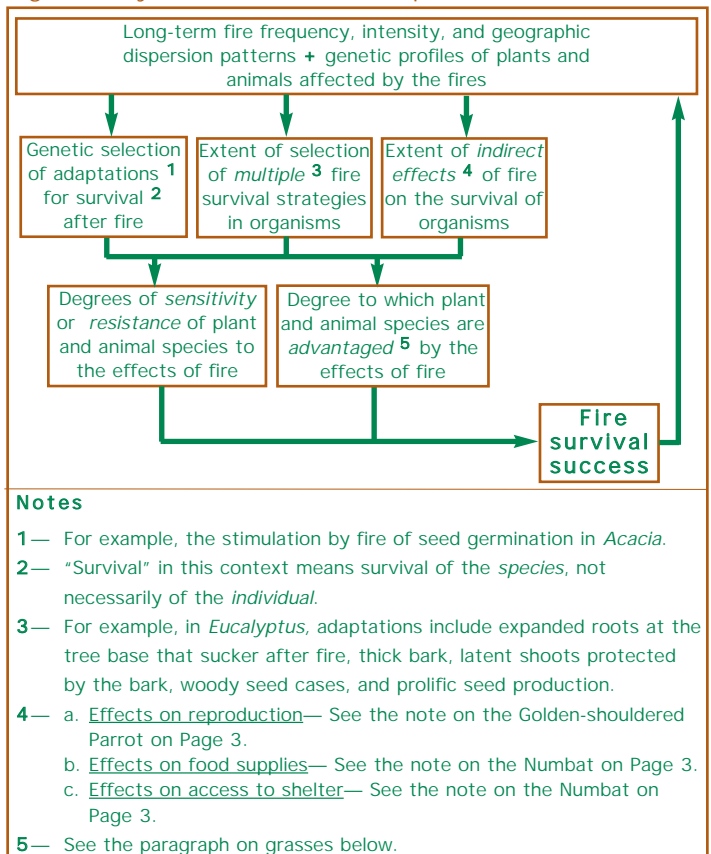
Fire is a powerful and potentially very destructive tool. Consequently, before deciding to use fire as a nature conservation management tool, a number of basic and serious questions should be considered: *viz*

- What 'nature' are we trying to conserve? —the ecosystem as it is now? —the ecosystem as it was before European colonists began to change the landscape? —the ecosystem before it was altered at all by humans? —some other form of ecosystem? Do we want to create an ecosystem according to our own personal vision of what it should be like?
- What elements of the ecosystem do we want to manage by using fire? That is, what exactly are the objectives to

be attained by the use of fire? Is the use of fire the only way to attain those objectives? How do we know the use of fire will achieve those objectives (see the note on Golden-shouldered parrots on Page 3)? What will be the detrimental impacts of the fire on other elements of the ecosystem? How will those detrimental impacts affect the the organisms we are trying to 'conserve' that are an integral part of the same working ecological network as those detrimentally affected?

- Which elements of the ecosystem are we willing to damage or destroy by our use of fire as a tool in nature conservation management?
- Are we prepared to sacrifice existing parts of the natural ecosystem now by burning in the hope/expectation that they will re-establish after the fire?
- Can we be sure that, following the use of fire, the necessary physical and biological pre-cursors required for the re-establishment of the populations of the organisms that we chose to sacrifice will still exist in the ecosystem?
- Is fire really the best and most reliable tool we can use to achieve our nature conservation objectives in the case in question?

Figure 1: Cycle of evolution of adaptation for fire survival



What do we know about the effects of fire in Australian ecosystems?

Grasses dominate much of the dry inland Australian landscape because they are highly flammable. These small, relatively fragile plants can eventually displace woody plants in dry habitats where fires are frequent. The flammability of the grasses itself predisposes to frequent fires caused naturally by lightning, or by human influences. Seedlings of woody plants are easily destroyed by fire and

so their repeated removal by frequent fire over a prolonged period eventually exhausts the seed banks in the soil that are necessary for the woody plants' replacement, thus entrenching the dominance of grasses in the ecosystem. However, suppression of fire in grasslands over long periods may enable the re-establishment of open woodlands, and the suppression of fire over long periods in grassy woodlands may also eventually lead to their conversion to open forests. Hence, the frequency of fire can be a primary factor in the transition over time of vegetation communities from one form to another, with accompanying major changes in the related ecosystems.

Golden-shouldered Parrot

The Golden-shouldered Parrot (*Psephotus chrysopterygius*) nests in large termite mounds in open grassy areas in north Queensland. The grassy areas are maintained by fairly frequent fire (see paragraph on grasses above).

Wildlife managers became concerned that the number of parrot chicks surviving each year was diminishing, and believed that fire was contributing to this reduced survival. So, it was decided to suppress natural burning in the birds' nesting areas.

However, it was found after some time that instead of chick mortality decreasing, it increased.

Further investigation revealed that the regrowth of shrub species previously excluded by fire provided cover for butcher birds — predators on small birds— who took advantage of the new cover to move into the previously clear areas and take parrot chicks.

How long fire must be suppressed to enable the establishment of viable flora and fauna communities of any type will depend on factors such as the state of the soil seed bank, how far it is to the nearest source of potential immigrants, how well the environment separating the potential immigrants and the developing communities can support transient immigrants, the method and speed of movement of immigrants, the sequence and speed of re-establishment of the environmental conditions (food resources, shelter, and available breeding mates) necessary for the immigrants to establish reproductively viable populations, and the immigrants' rates of reproduction.

During a recent survey of populations of Grasswrens (*Amytornis sp*) in Spinifex (*Triodia sp*) country near Mt Isa, Graham Harrington *et al* noted that Grasswrens were entirely absent from Spinifex for at least five years after its being burnt. However, they also noted the absence of the birds in long unburnt Spinifex that was moribund and consisted mainly of dead grass. They concluded that the survival of populations of Grasswrens depended on infrequent burning of their habitat, even though burning was probably lethal for individual birds.

The multiple adaptations to fire manifested in *Eucalyptus* (see Note 3 in Figure 1 on Page 2) enables the genus to dominate most forest communities in Australia. In addition to the mechanisms that facilitate 'post-fire recovery' of *Eucalyptus* trees that are listed in Figure 1, the growth of *Eucalyptus* seedlings is favoured by fire, which destroys vegetation that would otherwise shade the *Eucalyptus* seedlings and inhibit their growth. For example, the boundaries between rainforests and *Eucalyptus* forests are a constant battlefield, with the rainforest front advancing as it shades out *Eucalyptus* seedlings during periods of absence of fire, and then the *Eucalyptus* forest advancing as the fire-vulnerable rainforest edges are pushed back by fire in abutting *Eucalyptus* forest.

In vegetation communities fashioned by fire, the animals they usually support can be expected to be fire-tolerant themselves, or possibly even be indirectly fire-dependent through their relationships with the vegetation (e.g. Grasswrens' dependency on Spinifex for food and shelter). Fire tolerance or dependency by animals does not

mean that individuals will not get burnt in bushfires, but it does mean that without fire over a very long period, the vegetation composition of a fire-dependent community may change so much that populations of some animals dependent on the vegetation may not be able to survive.

The role of fire regimes in fashioning the vegetation communities and ecosystems that they support is critical. However, key factors that must be taken into account when considering the use of fire as a nature conservation tool are:

- The impacts of fire —particularly uncontrolled fire— can be immediately devastating for the majority of organisms in the locality burnt, either by directly killing them or through the destruction of food networks or shelter from predators. Predator impacts include the effects on unburnt vegetation of the concentration of herbivorous 'predators', including insects, on the remaining very scarce unburnt food-plant resources.
- Changes wrought by fire on ecosystems will take a very long time to run their full course.
- It is impossible to use fire for pinpoint targeting of any group of organisms. There will invariably be major 'collateral' damage.
- The full extent of 'collateral' damage from fires will never be known or predictable. The full effects of the destruction of inter-dependent links in ecological webs may take generations to be fully manifested. 'Collateral' damage may extend to neighbouring areas outside the burnt area in cases where refugee fauna from the burnt area invade the territories of animals resident in adjacent areas. If the refugees are predators, predation in the invaded areas will increase. Whether or not the refugees are predators, they will put additional pressure on resident competitors' food resources. Residents' stress levels will be increased by their having to defend their territories and resources. Increased stress levels in resident populations, apart from potentially affecting the health and reproductive success of individuals, will also increase the vulnerability of residents to predation by both resident and refugee predators.

Numbat

Numbats (*Myrmecobius fasciatus*) are small marsupials that live in hollow logs on the ground in Wandoo (*Eucalyptus wandoo*) woodlands in South-western Australia and feed exclusively on termites (eating up to 10% of their own body weight of termites daily). The termites eaten by Numbats feed on the fallen dead wood on the floor of the forest.

'Hot' fires in the Wandoo woodlands destroy dead wood lying on the ground, thus destroying the termites' food resources and in turn, reducing the Numbats' available food resources, as well as the Numbats' shelter from predators.

Fire Plan

If landholders do decide to use fire as a nature conservation management tool, despite all the uncertainties about its ecological outcomes, it is essential that they carefully develop a detailed fire plan. Some good advice on the factors to consider and things that should be done when preparing and implementing a fire plan is contained in the article *Fire for conservation on bush blocks* by Paul Williams, in the December 2005 issue of *Nature calls*, the EPA's Nature Refuge newspaper.

Doug MacLennan, NaRLA

WANT TO JOIN NaRLA?

Go to our web page: WWW.NatureRefuges.com

EPA convenes meeting of key organisations in nature conservation on private lands

The Director General of the EPA, James Purtill, invited representatives of key organisations involved in nature conservation on private lands in Queensland to a working lunch on 17 February.

The meeting was attended by senior EPA staff and representatives of the Queensland Trust for Nature (Tom Fenwick), NaRLA (Doug MacLennan), Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland (Alan Barton), Australian Bush Heritage Fund (Doug Humann), Australian Wildlife Conservancy (Atticus Fleming), World Wildlife Fund (Paul Toni) and the Local Government Association of Qld (Greg Hallam).

Following a welcome by James Purtill, Tim Ellis (Manager, EPA Tenure Actions Branch) briefed the meeting on the Queensland Trust for Nature's 'revolving fund', seeded with \$5 million by the Queensland government, which is used for the purchase of high conservation value lands for

conversion to Nature Refuges and then resale. Proceeds of the sales of the new Nature Refuges are returned to the 'revolving fund' to fund further land purchases.

Geoff Clare (Executive Director, Conservation Services, EPA) briefed the meeting on the Nature Refuge program and other EPA plans and initiatives relating to nature conservation on private lands.

A point of key interest to landholders considering the establishment of Nature Refuges on their land included the re-iteration by Craig McGregor (Manager, EPA Nature Refuge Unit) of the EPA's policy of flexibility in the negotiation of the terms of Conservation Agreements. While there are core provisions that must be included in all Agreements, the EPA has a brief to tailor each agreement to suit the circumstances and aspirations of each landholder, and to provide the landholder with flexibility to deal with future changes in circumstances.

NaRLA's representative, Doug MacLennan, applauded this flexibility, and said it fitted well with NaRLA's policy of encouraging the development of land management practices that will enable the successful integration of concurrent uses of land for nature conservation and other purposes, including income generation.

Geoff Clare described current and proposed incentives for landholders to commit land to Nature Refuges and other formal forms of nature conservation on their land.

It was agreed by those attending the meeting that it is essential that both parties to Conservation Agreements—the State or Local Government and the landholder—diligently preserve the integrity of the Agreements by conscientiously discharging their responsibilities under the Agreements.

Doug MacLennan told the meeting that there is a disturbing apparent lack of willingness by the Queensland government to take action to protect Nature

Refuges from external threats to their nature conservation function. He pointed out that, although over the past year or so a number of such threats have been reported to the responsible Minister—as required under the terms of Nature Refuge agreements, there is no evidence that any action has been taken by any government agency to deal with the reported threats. "The resulting perception by landholders that the government cannot be relied upon to meet their responsibilities to protect Nature Refuges has the potential to become a serious disincentive for landholders to commit their land to Nature Refuges", Doug told the meeting.

The meeting provided a valuable launching point for increased future co-operation and collaboration between all those organisations working in Queensland towards the common goal of expanding the participation of private landholders in nature conservation and promotion of natural biodiversity.

Caboolture Shire Council introduces Urban Wildlife Program

Caboolture Shire Council has developed a new program to assist landholders to protect wildlife corridors and habitats in the urban environment and to promote the value of urban wildlife. The Urban Wildlife Program caters for properties smaller than one hectare that are not part of Caboolture's current Land for Wildlife Program.

Registration in the Urban Wildlife Program is available for landholders who are committed to enhancing nature conservation on their property, or on public land, by managing it in a way that clearly pursues the maintenance and enhancement of native flora and fauna. In addition to the property being less than one hectare in size and supporting established local wildlife habitat, the property must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The property is linked to an area of habitat at least one

hectare in size, such as a Land for Wildlife property, environmental reserve or conservation park;

- The property adjoins or is dissected by a waterway or wetland;
- The property contains established native vegetation representative of local native vegetation communities;
- The property contains habitat suitable for rare and threatened species.

Landholders joining the program are entitled to free on-site consultations for advice on encouraging wildlife, weed management, plant identification and related topics, and to the Landlife Newsletter and to 20 free plants or a nest box.

For further information on the Urban Wildlife Program, please contact Caboolture Shire Council on 07-5420-0100.

NaRLA qualifies for REO

We have just been advised by the Department of Environment and Heritage in Canberra that NaRLA is qualified for admission to the Register of Environmental Organisations.

Formal notification of our admission has not yet been received and we are also still awaiting notification of the granting of 'deductible gift recipient' status by the Australian Taxation Office.

However, it seems that we have finally achieved that vitally important goal that will enable us to begin operating as a tax-deductible charity. This is a major step forward in our fund raising capacity that we have been waiting for to trigger a full-blown public launch of NaRLA!

Achievement of 'deductible gift recipient' status, combined with now having our service delivery network in place (see article on page 5), means that we are ready to commence full operations. This will include the commencement of direct target marketing in Australia and overseas of our custom-designed educational services. The preparatory groundwork for this marketing was begun in November 2005.

Appointment to NaRLA Management Committee

The NaRLA Management Committee has just appointed Dr. Marilyn Shrapnel to fill the Ordinary member's committee position left vacant after the AGM in December.

Marilyn owns a property on the outskirts of Mooloolah in the Sunshine Coast hinterland. Her property is subject to a Voluntary Conservation Agreement with the Caloundra City Council.

She is a psychiatrist who has practised for some years in the Longreach and Emerald districts, as well as undertaking research into the differences between the personalities and attitudes of rural and urban people.

Marilyn's communication skills, professional background, and strong practical commitment to nature conservation will be of great benefit to NaRLA.

The Secretary's and one of the Associate members' positions on the Management Committee are still vacant. Any of our members wishing to really make a big difference in nature conservation in Queensland, can do so by serving on the NaRLA Management Committee. Think about joining the adventure!

CUSTOM-DESIGNED INCOME DIVERSIFICATION WORKSHOPS

If you belong to a rural community, Local Council, business development or land management group, and would like to arrange a workshop on rural income diversification methods and options custom-designed to meet your community's or group's particular needs or interests, contact NaRLA through our web page.

NaRLA nominates workshop for Landcare Conference

NaRLA has been invited by the conveners of the 2006 Queensland Landcare Conference (see Upcoming events on this page) to submit a nomination for presentation of a workshop at the conference.

The conference conveners expressed particular interest in NaRLA's ideas about the potential for income diversification by both rural landholders and urban businesses that is offered by 'co-operative partnerships' between the two, based on the environmental conservation and cultural values of rural lands.

NaRLA has submitted a nomination to present a workshop entitled Across the Great Divide: A new and practical approach to bridging the urban-rural gap.

If our workshop nomination is accepted by the Conference conveners, the workshop will be jointly presented by three members of NaRLA: Shane, Joyce, a cattle grazier from Theodore, and a foundation member of the NaRLA Management Committee; Marilyn Shrapnel, a psychiatrist who has practised for a number of years in Central Queensland and conducted some very revealing research into the differences between the ways

rural and urban people see the world; and Doug MacLennan, who grew up on sheep and cattle stations in Western Queensland, and ran a unique and very successful international business for two decades before becoming involved full-time in the establishment and development of NaRLA.

The NaRLA presenters will work with those participating in the workshop to identify specific causes of the urban-rural gap, the consequences of the various causes, what changes must be made to eliminate the causes and their consequences, and practical ways in which those changes could be made. The establishment of 'co-operative partnerships' will be explored as one way of constructively 'bridging the urban-rural gap'.

It is proposed that the results of the workshop be published and distributed to politicians, government departments, industry and business organisations, natural resource managers, financial institutions, education institutions, landholders, and others with interests in reducing the urban-rural divide and reducing the detrimental environmental, social and economic impacts that it causes, particularly in rural communities.

Phase 1 of establishment of NaRLA's service delivery team complete

Phase 1 of the recruitment of NaRLA's services delivery team has now been completed.

Agreement has been reached with 21 advisory and on-ground service delivery contractors spread around Queensland and North-eastern New South Wales to provide services to Queensland landholders under-subcontract to NaRLA.

Between them, these contractors offer NaRLA's clients the services of a total of 80 specialist consultants and on-ground service providers.

A full range of land and nature conservation advisory services and on-ground services such as flora and fauna surveys and weed and pest control are available across all of Queensland except in some areas

in the far west. Phase 2 of our recruitment program, which has now begun, involves a concerted effort to recruit service providers to cover those western areas.

Those whom NaRLA has accepted as suitable to provide services to our members and other landholders on NaRLA's behalf have been selected through a rigorous screening process to ensure that their services are of the highest standards.

New volunteers

Lucy Halliday, a third year student at Griffith University, joined NaRLA as a part-time volunteer last October.

Lucy is working on the development and marketing of NaRLA's educational programs and on land management liaison.

Geoff Watson, owner of the Manani Nature Refuge at Cape Tribulation in Far North Queensland, joined our newsletter editorial team in December.

Positions vacant

Volunteers — valuable practical training and experience opportunities

If you really think that nature conservation is important, and are looking for a way in which you can make a productive practical contribution to nature conservation Queensland-wide, NaRLA offers a variety of exciting opportunities for our volunteers.

NaRLA does not only offer our volunteers the satisfaction of doing something that will really make a difference in nature conservation in Queensland. In addition, working with NaRLA as a volunteer offers opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and experience in a wide variety of fields related to nature conservation that will be useful qualifications when seeking paid employment.

NaRLA offers individually-tailored on-the-job training programs at any level —from entry to advanced— for volunteers wanting practical work experience and on-the-job training in fields such as:

- * Ecological Field Studies
- * Print and Electronic Publishing
- * Land and Conservation Management
- * Management of Environmental NGOs
- * Ecotourism Operations and Management
- * Promotion, Marketing and Public Relations
- * Logistic planning and management
- * Environmental Education
- * Land rehabilitation

These work experience and training opportunities are particularly suitable for university undergraduate and TAFE students considering a career in these or related fields — a great way to research an assignment, satisfy practical work placement requirements, or test in practice the waters of real life to see if the career you are considering really is for you!

Contact us through our web page for further information about opportunities for volunteer work and training with NaRLA.

Upcoming events

Workshop and Field day Caring for Nature: Local Solutions by Local People

The Mackay Whitsunday Natural Resource Management Group is running a series of free two-day workshop and field programs dealing with community environmental management and protection projects. The first was held at NaRLA's Maureen Cooper's Padaminka Nature Refuge on 3-4 February.

Two further programs will be held: one at Sarina on 3-4 March, and one at Airlie Beach on 24-25 March. Morning and afternoon teas and lunches will be provided.

Those interested in seeing and learning more about what local people can do to protect their local natural terrestrial, estuarine, freshwater and marine environments can arrange their attendance by contacting Patricia Julien on 4966-8025 or email pafjulien@hotmail.com.

2006 Queensland Landcare Conference

The 2006 Queensland Landcare Conference will be held from 21 to 24 August 2006 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The theme of the conference is one close to the heart of NaRLA: viz "Bridging the urban-rural divide". Within the theme there will be six streams: climate change; innovation and partnerships; engagement; peri-urban issues; remote sensing; and ecosystem services (or re-valuing the landscape).

Enquiries about the conference should be directed to Samantha Morris, PO Box 13204, George Street, Qld 4003; Phone: 07-3211-4413, 0421-709-519; Fax 07-3211-4407; email: sam@landcare.com.au; www.landcare.org.au

You can't drink
money—
Conserve water!!

"Of Droughts and Flooding Rains"

This is a synopsis of an *Australian Story* program that was broadcast by ABC television on 6 February 2006. This program was itself a condensed version of a two-part program with the same title that was broadcast on *Australian Story* in 2005. The condensed version was re-broadcast by the ABC on 6 February 2006 because the original two-part program was rated by viewers Australia-wide as the best *Australian Story* of 2005.

This synopsis is included in NaRLA News because it is considered by the Editor as compulsory and compulsive reading for anybody who is interested in the responsible and effective management of Australia's rural environmental resources, for whatever purposes.

Peter Andrews is a racehorse breeder and farmer credited with remarkable success in converting degraded salt-ravaged land into fertile drought-resistant pastures.

When Peter bought the property Tarwyn Park in NSW, the land was environmentally bankrupt: it was a salt-ravaged, scoured property that had no redeeming features.

Peter recognised that for land to survive drought successfully, it is necessary to have reserves of water somewhere. He noted that there were shapes in the sediments in the flood plains on Tarwyn Park that indicated that they worked like a series of giant sponges that filled up, and then trickle-fed the rest of the system through the dry periods. So he decided to fill up the flood plain and see what happened.

To make it simpler to understand the Australian landscape, Peter likes to compare it to a human body: there is a superficial layer like our skin —the soil, which has hair on it —the vegetation on the landscape. Then there is an arterial system, which is composed of the rivers and creeks that feed the wetlands, which in turn perform the same functions as our liver and kidneys, purifying the water as it passes through them. And [like in our own bodies], we can fiddle around with the superficial layer without much threat of terminal disaster, but if we disrupt the functions of the arterial system and the kidneys and liver, it will kill us —which is what happens to the landscape.

The destructive landscape processes that Peter's methods of land management seek to rectify are typified by flooding, consequential high stream flow rates, erosion of stream banks, and soil, nutrients and vegetation being carried downstream and lost. Vegetation loss, particularly of trees, in turn contributes to salination (see article in NaRLA News Volume 1, Number 2)

Peter's land rehabilitation process begins with the prevention of stream erosion. This is done by battering down steep stream banks and then building barriers across the streams. Although they are man-made barriers, they are made out of rocks and old logs, into which willows, reeds, grasses, and anything else that will grow readily (even weed species) are planted to consolidate the barriers. Initially, his downstream neighbours were concerned that he was taking all the water by blocking it up in the creek, but the water flow was simply slowed down, not dammed.

Next time a flood comes, the water hits the barriers and the water level rises and spreads out across the flood plains.

There, any nutrient-laden silt carried in the water is deposited, thereby duplicating the natural processes of alluvial nutrient replenishment that occurred before they were interrupted by prolonged periods of land-degrading farming and grazing practices. The reduced stream flow velocity caused by the barriers also retards erosion and the soil and nutrient losses caused by it. This whole process creates an environment that allows the retention of the water in the landscape and builds up the plant life. The increased availability of decaying vegetable matter from increased production of pastures and native vegetation in turn increases soil humus and fertility.

Despite the demonstrable success of his land rehabilitation methods, it took repeated and persistent approaches to, and meetings with, government officials, representatives of the scientific community, and business people over a period of 30 years (sic), before any serious credit was given to his revolutionary land management methods.

Peter Andrews' dedication and persistence in trying to spread his land management message was pursued at great financial and social cost to himself. Hopefully, the rewards for his dogged commitment ultimately will be enjoyed by progressively-thinking landholders all over Australia. Peter's persistence and sacrifice for the benefit of the land and his fellow [mostly oblivious] landholders are truly inspiring and deserve the greatest admiration. It is now up to those of us who respect the fragility of the Australian landscape, but at the same time, recognise the need for the land to provide in a sustainable way for all Australians into the far future, to take up what Peter has given us and use it wisely and widely.

Obviously, the Peter Andrews' land rehabilitation process is one that needs to be implemented on a catchment-wide basis. Consequently, common sense and concern for the ever-deteriorating quality, productivity and profitability of our rural landscape, and the resulting falling standards of living in many of our rural communities, dictates that every Catchment Management, Natural Resource Management, and Landcare Group in Queensland should be moving without delay to take up this solution and begin working to bring its profound benefits to Queensland landholders, their families and their local communities.

A full transcript of the ABC's *Australian Story* program "Of Droughts and Flooding Rains" that was broadcast on 6 February 2006 is available on www.abc.net.au/austory/content/2006/s1563366.htm

One may just as well try to stop the passage of time
as to try to change the ideas of some!

Not only lemmings plunge on blindly
to their own destruction out of habit!

Want to become famous?

How does a Hollywood career sound?

Here is your big chance!

Enter NaRLA's nature and cultural heritage
photographic competition!

Details on Page 7.

Contact us through our web page, email, write or fax
for more information.

Is there really a bob in it? —Part 2

If you've decided that you're really serious about setting up a new business venture to diversify your income sources, then it would improve your chances of finishing up doing something that you like, and doing it well and profitably, if you do some basic common-sense planning.

Rule 1 In planning: Set clear and precise objectives for every step of the way! —How can you possibly expect to get to exactly where you want to be, or know when you have arrived there, if you haven't decided in advance exactly where that is?! —except perhaps by wandering around aimlessly in the dark and then, a long time and a huge amount of wasted money and effort later, perhaps stumbling upon something you think "might do".

Decisions, decisions!

OK, what sort of business do I want to establish? What sorts of things do I need to take into account when deciding?

- What interests me?
- What will *work*?!?
- What will meet my income needs?
- What will *sell*?! **Beware:** what seems like a great idea for a product or service to you may not seem so to the people to whom you hope to sell it! (more about this in "Itrabii? —Part 3".)
- To whom do I want to sell?
- What resources do I have?
 - * **Dependable, competent** people (family, staff, partners, sub-contractors)?
 - * Money (savings, mortgage, borrowing, liquidation of assets)? How much can I muster?
 - * Infrastructure (living accommodation, catering facilities, work space, roads, tracks, etc.)?
 - * Equipment (office, vehicles, boats, machinery, specialised technical equipment, etc.)?
- Environmental sustainability?
- Economic sustainability?
- What government regulations may limit me?
 - **** **Where do I go to get good advice?** ****

Itrabii? —Part 3 will deal with what needs to be done after you decide what business you want to be in.

Photographic competition

The NaRLA News is launching a photographic competition, open to all members of NaRLA. Entries will close on 31 July 2006, and results will be announced in September in the newsletter and on our web page.

The rules are simple:

- * Entrants must be members of NaRLA or their immediate family.
- * Entrants may submit up to ten photographs to the competition.
- * Photographs must portray natural or cultural heritage features of the photographer's land and up to three may include people.
- * Photographs must be either colour prints or, preferably, digital.
- * Prizes (yet to be decided, but will be related to photography) will be awarded to first, second and third place-getters.
- * The competition will be judged by a professional nature photographer.
- * Prize winners' and other selected photos will be displayed on the NaRLA web page.
- * Entrants must be prepared to allow NaRLA to use their photos to promote NaRLA and nature conservation on private lands.
- * All photos published by NaRLA will acknowledge the photographer.

Nature Refuge for Sale

167 ha, 50 km west of Gympie (all Land for Wildlife; 86% Nature Refuge) • 3 boundaries abut state forest • headwaters of Mary River • 30% rainforest, rest open eucalypt • 15% previously cleared • rich flora & fauna • spectacular views from 4WD accessible hills • some alluvial flats and level lowlands • 2 ephemeral creeks, permanent water hole, dam, 2 bores, water treatment plant • fenced • 3 bedroom brick home, office, outdoor entertaining area • solar heating with mains backup • 28,000 litre rainwater storage • established native plant nursery, small mixed timber planting, native seed resources, small orchard • ecotourism potential (historical mining sites & regional tourist attractions close). \$458,100 —including vehicles, plant and equipment. Enquiries: call 07-5484-1348.

Please note that on the back of this form there is another form on which you can list subjects on which you would find it useful for NaRLA to run educational and training activities in our 2006 program.

—Please detach the slip along this dotted line, fill out whichever of the two forms you wish, and send the slip to NaRLA—

Resources required for NaRLA's custom-designed educational programs.

In the latter half of 2006, NaRLA expects to begin running its custom-designed educational programs for eco-tourists, professional practitioners in the the fields of land and conservation management, and educational institutions. We would like to invite landholders interested in providing, for a fee, access to their land as a teaching resource or in providing any of the other services listed below, to advise us of their interest by completing and returning the form below.

I would like to register my interest in providing the following services for NaRLA's custom-designed educational programs.

Name:..... Postal address:.....

.....Phone:..... Fax:.....

Email:..... Property address:.....

Details of the services I would like to offer are (tick relevant boxes):

- Access to my property as a site for educational activities Catering for visiting groups
- Accommodation facilities for visiting groups — type of accommodation: Campsite Dormitory Cottage
- Capacity of accommodation..... Transport — Type..... Seating capacity.....
- Guiding Teaching/instruction/demonstrations — My fields of expertise are:.....
- Office use

NaRLA membership

In addition to the personal advantages that membership of NaRLA may offer you, your membership will help benefit our Association and all those we seek to serve in much broader ways. For example, a large membership or our Association:

- provides a larger pool of knowledge, experience and ideas to draw upon when charting our directions,
- helps spread wider an understanding of the social, economic and ecological advantages of nature conservation on private lands, and that these advantages can be achieved concurrently with the use of land for income generation and other purposes,
- gives us a stronger voice when dealing with politicians and government departments on matters of concern to our members,
- makes an important contribution to NaRLA's income and, in turn, our ability to keep our members and others informed on practical nature conservation and other related practical land management and financial issues of interest to them, and
- supports an independent voice for landholders who are dedicated to wise stewardship of their land.

A large and actively participating membership makes a strong and productive Association — be in it!

Like it or not, vegetation management legislation is a fact of life in Queensland —whether it “locks up land” or “opens up new opportunities” is up to the landholder.

NaRLA is committed to helping those landholders looking for new opportunities and options to generate income based on the nature conservation or cultural features of their land.

Contact us through our web page, email or write to arrange a group workshop or a private consultation.

Please note that on the back of this form there is another form on which you can register your interest in having your property or services used as a component of NaRLA's custom-designed educational programs.
—Please detach the slip along this dotted line, fill out whichever of the two forms you wish, and send the slip to NaRLA—

NaRLA News - from the editor

Always wanted to make your name as a news reporter? —here's your chance!

Please write to or email us about any Nature Refuge; Land for Wildlife; NRM, Catchment Management, or Landcare group; Local government or other land management or conservation *news* in your district that could be of interest or use to our readers. All original news items will be accredited to the reporter (unless they advise us that they wish to remain anonymous!).

We would like to hear about good news as well as bad. Whistle-blowers are always welcome; gossip is not!

Know of any interesting upcoming land management or nature conservation events? —Spread the word!

If a local or regional community group, NGO, or government agency has any land management or nature conservation-related events coming up in your area that may be of interest to our readers, please let us know about them, so we can publish details. See page 5 for current details of upcoming events.

Please make sure you give us contact details for the organisers of the event.

Articles and 'letters to the editor'

All readers are encouraged to share your opinions or knowledge with your fellow readers by submitting to the editor 'letters to the editor' expressing your opinions, or short informative articles (up to 500 words) on land or conservation management topics that you think will be of interest or help to your fellow readers.

Publication of the NaRLA News in 2006

The Management Committee has decided that in 2006, issues of the NaRLA News will be published in January, May and September.

Please note that the deadline for submission of material such as articles, news, or upcoming events for publication in the May 2006 edition is 31 March 2006.

Topics for NaRLA members' 2006 workshop and field training program

During 2006, we plan to run a series of one day field training programs and workshops around Queensland on nature conservation and related topics that NaRLA members and other landholders will find useful. It will assist us greatly to choose appropriate topics if you would list in the form below the subjects on which you would find it interesting and useful to attend workshops or field training programs, and post the form to us.

If you responded to this request in a previous newsletter, there is no need to do so again unless you have something to add.

I would be interested in participating in educational or practical training programs on these topics:

- 1..... 2.....
3..... 4.....

It would be convenient for me to attend education or practical training programs at the ticked locations.

Brisbane Toowoomba Gympie Bundaberg Rockhampton Emerald Mackay

Townsville Cairns Atherton Mossman Other — Where?.....

The ticked boxes indicate the days most convenient for me to attend education or practical training programs.

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday Office use