

ISSUE 3, AUGUST 2021

SUSTAIN-A-BULLETIN

FITZGERALD BIOSPHERE GROUP



Needilup workshop attendees at Wade Browns possible Salt Creek reveg site.

FBG Enrich Project

Our farm visit to Pingelly farmer Garry Page in February this year gave us an insight into how he uses native plants as fodder species during the annual feed gap. Garry's system is based on CSIRO research called the Enrich Model and is mostly suited to sheep. In late July we enlisted native plant agronomist Geoff Woodall to show us how best to adapt the Enrich model to our region.

We ran three workshops in which farmers had the opportunity to meet Geoff and discuss Enrich-style revegetation options for their own properties and circumstances. We held the workshops in three different parts of the shire (Needilup, Jacup and Gairdner) to cater for different issues, soil types, rainfall zones and farming systems.

Geoff was particularly interested in trialling combinations and designs suited to different landscapes, whether they be saline, rocky outcrops, waterlogged sections of paddocks or other under-performing areas. He also encouraged us to think outside of the conventional ways in which we might grow certain species. For example, we think of saltbush as a permanent perennial but some varieties may have value as short-term perennials.

In September, Geoff will return to the area and do one-on-one site visits with interested farmers. As part of these visits he will identify endemic species that already grow around these sites and make site-specific recommendations.

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FBG Staff Changes

We recently said farewell to Therese Bell who finished up in her role as our Bremer Bay Projects Officer at the end of June 2021.

Therese started with us in January 2017 and in that time her role has varied from running projects, supporting the Bremer Bay Regional Trails Committee (BBRTC) representing us on steering committees, organising the annual Clean Up Bremer Bay In May Day. She coordinated several projects dealing with environmental weeds in the Bremer Bay region and established a Weed Action Group. Therese has promised she will come back in a volunteer capacity in the future with this group.

Currently, I am supporting BBRTC and representing the FBG on the Bremer Bay Community Development Committee. Another Bremer project, 'RLP TEC' will be run by our NRM officer, Carrie Taylor.

I'd like to thank Therese for the dedication and service she has provided to the Bremer Projects role and to the FBG more broadly in the last four years. It's no easy feat to juggle different projects from multiple funding buckets whilst simultaneously liaising with numerous, varied stakeholders. I greatly appreciate Therese's perseverance in the face of sometimes huge logistical challenges. Therese has been a strong advocate and champion for Bremer volunteers, the Trails Committee, and the FBG overall.

As an integral member of the FBG team, we always knew Therese had our back. We will miss her greatly and wish her all the very best in her post-FBG life.

We are also very pleased to welcome Jolene Daniel who has joined the FBG Team to co-ordinate the new project "Increasing groundcover to build soils in the Western Fitzgerald Biosphere". This project is funded through the Commonwealth of Australia via the Future Drought Fund: NRM Drought Resilience Program (more information on this project below).

Jolene is not new to FBG and has previously been on the Advisory committee and FBG board. Jolene has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Natural Resource Management and many years of experience in Agronomy. Jolene is passionate about helping to restore the health of the natural landscape to provide thriving and productive agricultural and natural ecosystems.



Above: Therese Bell



Above: Jolene Daniel

Increasing groundcover to build resilient soils

The new groundcover project has two overarching objectives:

- 1) To increase soil health across our landscape by encouraging farmers to experiment with new and innovative ways of keeping continuous groundcover in their paddocks.
- 2) Actively seek out and support key local farmers who are innovators and early adopters of transformative NRM practices

The project will provide funding support to establish 70ha of novel, innovative groundcover systems.

Such plantings could include:

- Salt land fodder species
- Multi-species forage pastures
- Cool or warm season cover crops not commonly grown in the area
- Under-sowing of perennial plants under annual crop system



Some of the on-ground activities that are to be provided by the groundcover project build upon the knowledge gained through the Enrich Project that is being coordinated by Jess Brown. Through the Enrich Project, a field trip and several workshops have been run to extend knowledge to farmers on how to increase groundcover and stock feed in marginal and saline parts of the farm through revegetation with native fodder shrub species. If you have a marginal or saline area of land or small parcels of land that you do not know what to do with, please let us know and we can help come up with some ideas to try.

For more details contact Jolene Daniel.

M: 0439 353 069. E projectofficer@fbg.org.au

This project received funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund



There is funding available for:

- Establishment of 70 ha of groundcover (ideally we would like 7 x 10ha demo sites so we can assess different options)
- 6 km fencing at key sites
- Expertise to establish 3 Enrich model demonstration sites of approx. 10 ha each.

Continued from page 1.

If you wish to be involved please email Jess Brown on communications@fbg.org.au as soon as possible so we can schedule the visits.

The main objective of this project (called *Reclaiming the margins - turning unproductive land into sustainable grazing assets using the Enrich Project model*) is to familiarise people with the Enrich model and offer the opportunity for on-going agronomic support through Geoff Woodall as they trial the concept.

While we don't have funding for on-ground works as part of this particular project we do have several other funding options available that can work in with it (please see pages two and four for details on potential funding opportunities through FBG).

Thanks very much to Mick and Rosie Lester and Nick Bertola for hosting the Jacup workshop, Jess and Wade Brown for hosting the Needilup one and Ants Thomas for hosting the Gairdner workshop. Special thanks to Jess Brown for coordinating the whole series.

With thanks to the Federal Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment Smart Farms Small Grants Program, through whom this project is funded.

Leonie McMahon



Background to Enrich Project

The purpose of the CSIRO research project that ran from 2004 to 2013 was to investigate a way of producing year-round stock feed at minimal risk to a farming system using perennial plants already adapted to Australia's difficult and variable climate.

About 96 native species were tested for nutritional value, palatability and other benefits. The shortlisted species were then used to develop a grazing system that integrates into existing farm operations. A high number of species selected are saltbush.

The research showed that planting 10-15% of a property into a mixed perennial system with an annual pasture inter-row had multiple benefits.

Two major benefits were:

- A significant reduction in supplementary hand feeding during the feed gap.
- A financial return from deferred grazing of annual pastures that are considerably more productive for the rest of the year as a result.

Photos 1 & 2: Jacup workshop attendees.

Photos 3 & 4: Gairdner/ Bremer bay workshop attendees.



On-ground funding options through FBG

Salinity Project 2021-2023

In Years 2 and 3 of this project funding is available for:

- 29 ha of biodiversity revegetation
- 13 km fencing

In Year 1 the emphasis is on working with DPIRD and DWER to collate existing data, reinstate a network of piezometers and working out priority areas for on-ground works.

For more details contact Carrie Taylor.

M: 0459 454 713. E nrmprojects@fbg.org.au

This project is funded through the State NRM Community Stewardship Large Grants Program.



natural resource
management program



Other funding options

In 2021 and early 2022 the FBG will apply for additional funding that provides support to landholders who want to reclaim marginal land. Rounds for two federal grant programs: Smart Farms Small Grants and Future Drought Fund, are expected to open late in 2021. State NRM's community stewardship grants will open in early 2022 and the FBG proposes to submit an application that extends on our current salinity project.

If you have specific ideas for on-ground activities that will fit with these programs please contact

Leonie McMahon on 0428 351127 or eo@fbg.org.au

How does salinity affect you?

Let us know in our upcoming survey.

In response to growing concerns around increasing salinity in our area, the FBG sourced funding from State NRM for a project that will support farmers to manage salinity on their properties. Our salinity project started in March 2021 and will run until December 2023. During this period, we will work with DPIRD's hydrologists who are reviewing the extent of salinity using remote sensing and ground-truthing. Using a survey approach, we are seeking input from landholders in the Shire of Jerramungup and surrounding areas as the first step in gathering on-ground information that will be used to develop a clear understanding of the state of salinity in the shire, and formulate a plan to tackle it.

The information we collect in this survey will be analysed in conjunction with DPIRD's findings, which will help us to achieve the following:

- Identify priority areas for FBG funded on-ground works
- Reinstatement of an effective, strategically targeted bore monitoring program
- Contribute to DPIRD's salinity modelling
- Predict which areas are most at risk of developing further salinity, and develop plans for these areas
- Strengthen future funding applications to secure further on-ground funding for salinity management

The survey will be made available as a web link and as a printable document in the coming days. It will be released across the FBG's social media pages and website, and sent via email.

For any inquiries or assistance, please contact Carrie on 0459454713. We will follow up directly with respondents who identify salinity as a concern.

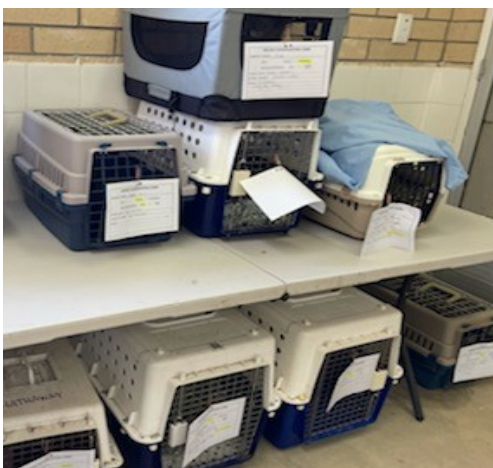
FBG Cat Sterilisation Clinic 2021 Wrap-up

On the 11th of August, FBG held yet another very successful Cat Sterilisation Clinic where 13 cats were sterilised along with many being microchipped and vaccinated. We would like to thank all community members who participated in our 2021 clinic. In doing so you play a big part in protecting many vulnerable native species within our shire by reducing the possibility of more unwanted/ feral kittens.

Feral Cats continue to have a massive impact on native fauna within the Jerramungup shire, including birds, mammals and reptiles living within our reserves, privately managed remnant vegetation and the Fitzgerald River National Park.

A special thank you to the Shire of Jerramungup for your ongoing support towards these clinics and to Dr Cathy Wishart for your time and expertise, it is greatly appreciated!

Jess Brown



SPRING FIELD DAY

8TH SEPTEMBER 2021



PROGRAM

FBG Members—FREE
Non-members—\$30

| Time | Location | Details | Speaker |
|-------------------|---|--|--|
| 8.00am | Jacup Fire Shed | Registration & Breakfast | |
| 8.20am | Jacup Fire Shed | Welcome & Opening | David Turner |
| 8.30 – 9.00am | Jacup Fire Shed | Current Land Values | Ian Donaldson (Rabobank) |
| 9.00 - 9.30am | Travel to Mal Smith's | | |
| 9.30 - 10.15am | Jacup South Road | Alpha Disc | Mal Smith |
| 10.15 - 10.45am | Travel to farmer trial (site 2) Morning tea provided on the way | | |
| 10.45 - 11.30am | Rabbit Proof Fence Road | Variable Rate Nutrition Trial | Brad Bailey Kyran Brooks, (Foreman Rural) Graham Laslett, (Combined Agronomic Service) |
| 11.30am - 12.00pm | Travel to farmer trial (site 3) | | |
| 12.00pm - 12.45pm | Jacup North x Exchange Roads | Illabo Wheat • Winter wheat vs long season types • Hyper yielding opportunities • Other winter crop options | James Lyall, Viridis Ag Jeremy Curry, DPIRD |
| 12.45pm - 1.15pm | Travel to Jacup Fire Shed (site 4) | | |
| 1.15pm - 1.45pm | Jacup Fire Shed | Lunch | |
| 1.45 - 2.15pm | Jacup Fire Shed | Update on RLEM/Insect research | Svetlana Micic, Paul Sanford (DPIRD) |
| 2.15 - 2.45pm | Jacup Fire Shed | Season Update—Chemical strategy | Kyran Brooks |
| 2.45 - 3.15pm | Jacup Fire Shed | Season Update—Harvest strategy | Graham Laslett |
| 3.15 - 4.00pm | Jacup Fire Shed | Speaker Panel | David Turner, Ian Donaldson, Mal Smith, James Lyall, Brad Bailey, Mic Fels (Via Zoom) |
| 4.00pm Onwards | CBH Update and Sundowner (Sponsored by CBH) | | |



GRDC Precision Ag Workshop

On Tuesday 10th August, the second of two GRDC-funded precision ag workshops took place at the Jerramungup CRC. In the first half of the session attending farmers heard from facilitators Alice Butler & Blake O’Meagher of Farmanco on a number of mapping tools and data management programs that can be used.

Following this we heard about grower experiences from FBG Chair, Dave Turner who started using variable rate technologies in his lime program by converting his Marshall spreader relatively cost effectively. Dean Hislop also had some good learnings from his experience using New Holland machinery

and having put out variable rate lime, gypsum, potash and fertiliser for four years now. Darren Hughes from Laconik then ran through the program that he has been instrumental in developing, with the specific aim of getting a better return on fertiliser investment through the use of variable rate tools, as well as the CSBP/DecipherAg team.

After that, growers had the opportunity to speak to the machinery support staff present from Afagri, Farmers Centre, McIntosh & Son, as well as CSBP, Agvantage, Laconik, Vantage and Trimble to work on activities depending on the grower’s business and stage in the precision ag journey.

The day ended with a sundowner and opportunity for farmers to discuss further. This day was made possible by Michelle Condy of the Grower Group Alliance.

Maddy Wylie



Grower Group Alliance Annual Forum – 23 July

On 23 July, project officer Maddy Wylie and executive officer Leonie McMahon attended the annual GGA Annual Forum, this year held at Aloft South Perth, with 130 + attendees. This was a jam packed day full of big picture thinking, industry insights, big picture development and an opportunity for networking with other grower groups and industry representatives.

Some of the highlights for us were:

- Paul Higgins, Emergent Futures – keep your mind open to all possibilities
- Sarah Bolton, Dairy Australia – social licensing in agriculture
- Belinda Moore, Strategic Membership Solutions – appealing and remaining relevant to your members
- Kerry House, DPIRD – carbon farming opportunities
- Nicole Batten, Yuna Farm Improvement Group – positive partnerships and grower group models
- Debbie Dowden, Southern Rangelands Pastoral Alliance – forming a group out of need



FBG GROUNDWATER DRAINAGE WORKSHOP

Following the FBG's 2020 Saltland Masterclass, we received a number of requests for more information pertaining to drainage as a salinity management tool. So, on June 17, 2021, the FBG hosted a drainage information session with John Firth (DPIRD).

Throughout the day, farmers in attendance were able to ask all their questions around drainage, with a particular focus on groundwater drains. John covered a lot during his presentation; explaining what groundwater drainage is, disposal and downstream considerations, different design options, the process of submitting a Notice of Intent to Drain or Pump, how soil types influence drainage, conducting your own site investigations, desilting, costs, and regulations and compliance etc. After a delicious lunch catered by Tobruk's Cafe, the group headed out to Gary Walter's farm in Gairdner to hear John's thoughts on possible drainage options and compliance considerations at the site.

Over the course of the day, John reiterated that drainage is not a stand-alone solution to managing salinity, and should be part of an integrated, whole-farm management plan.

If you are considering groundwater drainage, it is important that any planned drainage is notified, and that you make yourself familiar with the relevant regulations established under the Soil and Land Conservation Act. We encourage you to seek advice around regulatory compliance and design options from relevant DPIRD and Office of the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation staff, and independent consultants to ensure maximum efficiency from your drain, and to avoid non-compliance penalties. We also urge you to seek input from DWER throughout the planning process, and to consider the potential downstream impacts of your groundwater drains.



A few interesting points made throughout the day include:

- Any drain that intercepts groundwater, regardless of depth, must be notified via a Notice of Intent to Drain or Pump (NOID).
- Following submitting a NOID, farmers must allow 90 days before commencing work.
- Test pits should be dug before commencing a drain. John recommended 5 pits / km as a guide. Salinity and pH can be measured from these pits after first flushing them several times.
- Landholders inherit the responsibility of any potentially non-compliant drains on their property that were constructed by a previous owner and should take measures to modify such drains.
- 'Steps' are a useful feature of groundwater drains to prevent infill over time.
- DPIRD has access to frequently updated satellite imagery, making identifying non-compliant drains very easy.

Useful Contacts:

John Firth (DPIRD/ Office of the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation)

For general guidance on design and compliance.

0427 983 642

John.Firth@dpiird.wa.gov.au

Carrie Taylor (FBG Project Officer)

For more information about the workshop or for a copy of John's presentation.

0459 454 713

nrmprojects@fbg.org.au

John Simons (DPIRD Hydrologist)

For general guidance on design and compliance.

0477 704 822

John.Simons@dpiird.wa.gov.au

Lance Mudgway (Wheatbelt Hydrology)

For detailed advice and plans from an independent consultant.

0428 564 971

lancem@westnet.com.au



MOVING FORWARD: FBG OPERATIONAL PLAN 2022 - 2024

Come and share your ideas for the future of the FBG
at our Operational Plan Workshop
with facilitator Lucy Anderton

13TH SEPTEMBER 2021

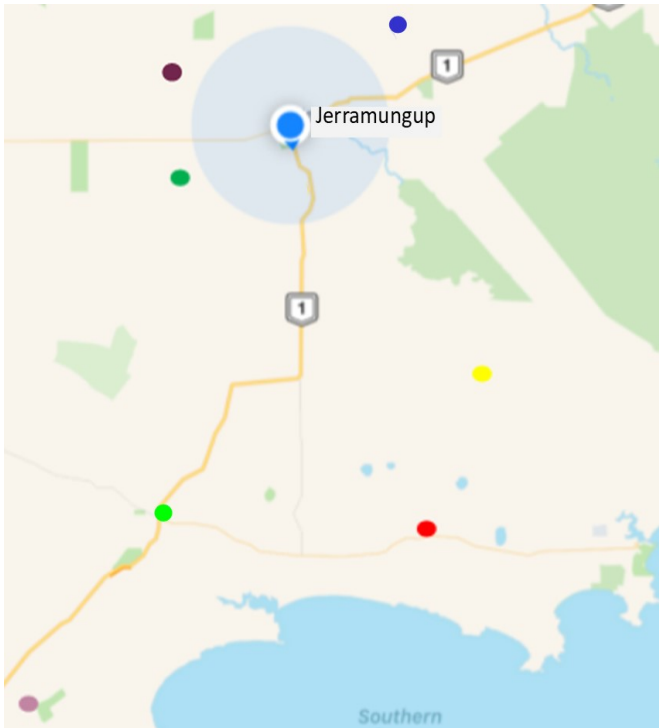
1PM - 4PM

JERRAMUNGUP CRC

SUNDOWNER TO CONCLUDE THE WORKSHOP

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT DAVID TURNER
0419239192

Jerramungup district rainfall



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 20th October 2021 @ 5.00pm
Jerramungup CRC
Please contact eo@fbg.org.au for more
information or phone 0427 351127

Upcoming Events

- Spring Field Day—8th September
- FBG Operational Plan Workshop— 12th September
- FBG Annual General Meeting (AGM)- 20th October

Contact FBG for more details ph. 9835 1127

Email: admin@fbg.org.au

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or visit www.fbg.org.au



| Location | | Jan-Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Total YTD |
|--------------|---|---------|-------|-------|------|-----------|
| Jerramungup | ● | 147.1 | 101.5 | 84.2 | 97.7 | 430.5 |
| Needilup Nth | ● | 88.5 | 68.5 | 58.0 | 81.0 | 296.0 |
| Needilup Sth | ● | 114.5 | 100.5 | 59.5 | 98.0 | 372.5 |
| Jacup | ● | 133.5 | 88.5 | 65.5 | 98.0 | 385.5 |
| Bremer Rd | ● | 161.0 | 163.5 | 98.5 | 83.0 | 506 |
| Gairdner | ● | 151.5 | 95.5 | 110.0 | 73.0 | 430.0 |
| Boxwood | ● | 193.2 | 133.4 | 92.8 | 88.2 | 507.6 |
| Mettler | ● | 220.0 | 168.9 | 112.0 | 80.4 | 581.3 |