LEADERS IN Regional Natural Resource Management

Southern Gulf NRM is the Natural Resource Management organisation for the Southern Gulf region of north west Queensland. We work with the community to deliver projects that improve and protect our region’s natural resources and to maintain the prosperity of industries that rely on these.

What is Natural Resource Management?

Natural Resource Management (NRM) is about looking after our most important natural resources:

- Soils
- Vegetation
- Wildlife
- Water
- People

It’s about caring for the environment LONG-TERM to ensure we have sustainable and productive natural resources for the future.

How do we do this?

Southern Gulf NRM partners with community groups and members to achieve local and regional NRM improvements. We work closely with pastoral, community, conservation, local government, mining, Indigenous, tourism and other industry sectors to identify priorities, projects and partnerships and deliver on-ground solutions. Our current major focus areas are:

- Weed management
- Grazing and rangeland management
- Conservation of biodiversity
- Supporting schools and community groups to participate in NRM

OUR VISION

A strong and vibrant community that prospers through sustainable natural resource management and respects the culture, rights and interests of all stakeholders.

OUR MISSION

Enabling and engaging the community to sustain and enhance, through best practice, the Region's natural assets for current and future generations.

The Southern Gulf Catchments region includes all the land whose creeks and rivers run into the southern Gulf of Carpentaria. This encompasses an area of 215,000km².
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Over **13,168** staff hours worked in 2015/2016 in support of the regional community.

Over **100,000** stakeholders engaged through social media.

**15 Groups** collaborated within our region.

**84 Projects** undertaken in the 15/16 year.

**580 People** engaged in sustainable agricultural practices through the Regional Landcare Facilitator program.

Over **$1,186,000** spent on projects **84 undertaken**.

**$60,000** invested in the region on workshops, forums & field days.
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<th>Statistic</th>
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<td>2,791,990 ha</td>
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<td>AS PART OF THE JUNIA CREEK DUNNART Critical Habitats survey</td>
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<td>604 km of property boundary treated for PRICKLY ACACIA</td>
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<td>under the War on Western Weeds project</td>
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<td>QNRM FUNDING treated 11,250 ha of rubber vine &amp; bellyache bush</td>
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<td>QNRM FUNDING treated 109,260 ha of prickly acacia in the lower Gulf</td>
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<td>The Weed Sniper was responsible for 73,230 of those hectares</td>
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<td>PRICKLY ACACIA TREATED</td>
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<td>14,131 ha</td>
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<td>of mesquite and parkinsonia treated</td>
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<td>The Weed Sniper FLEW 175 HOURS over two properties</td>
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- Critical Habitats survey
- Over 13,168
- Over 100,000
- 84 Projects undertaken
- 580 PEOPLE engaged in
- SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL Regional Landcare Facilitator program
- Over $1,186,000 SPENT ON Projects
- $60,000 in the region on QNRM FUNDING
- 11,250 ha treated
- 109,260 ha of prickly acacia in the lower Gulf
- 14,131 ha of mesquite and parkinsonia treated
- The Weed Sniper FLEW 175 HOURS over two properties
The wetlands that line the southern Gulf of Carpentaria are the largest estuarine wetland system in Australia. The extensive mangrove forests provide vital habitat for fish breeding and the wetlands are recognised flyways for international bird migration.

Listed as nationally endangered in 2016, the Carpentarian Grasswren is largely confined to the Southern Gulf NRM Region. It favours old spinifex grasslands and is vulnerable to habitat loss from extensive uncontrolled wildfires. Grasswrens and pastoralists share an interest in good fire management practices.

Maintaining healthy rangeland pastures is fundamental to the sustainability of cattle grazing enterprises and the natural environment. Southern Gulf NRM’s new Land Condition Guide will help producers systematically assess and monitor trends in the condition of their rangeland pastures.

Prickly Acacia is the scourge of the northern beef industry. Already infesting millions of hectares in the Mitchell Grass downs, it continues to spread. Southern Gulf NRM works with producers, land managers, researchers, local government, Biosecurity Queensland and other partners to limit and reverse the spread of this damaging weed. During 2015/16, Southern Gulf NRM implemented weed control programs over 154,000 ha in the region.
Communication is a major challenge in huge yet sparsely populated region like the Southern Gulf. Southern Gulf NRM has updated its website and increased the use of social media to reach out to our far flung clients and communities.

Partnerships with industry and community groups play an important role in our work. Our partnership with Meat and Livestock Australia at the BEEF UP FORUM IN CLONCURRY helped ensure a high quality program for beef industry participants.

Southern Gulf NRM support for the Bidunggu Land and Sea Rangers helps them to tackle RUBBER VINE AND BELLYACHE BUSH invasion threatening the sensitive environment of their traditional country along the Gregory River.

Our regional shows and field days are part of the social structure of our region. Southern Gulf NRM regularly attend to spread the word about NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.

The native fish of the Southern Gulf are a very distinctive feature of the region. Endangered species like the Freshwater Sawfish live alongside popular angling targets like Barramundi. Southern Gulf NRM support for the MOUNT ISA FISH STOCKING GROUP has helped in the development of an interpretive facility about our native fish species.

Supporting produce skills and knowledge is at the heart of our Regional Landcare Facilitator project. Our WEEDS INNOVATION FIELD DAY in Richmond attracted more than 80 people sharing knowledge about the latest technologies and methods for weed control.
These past 12 months have seen a change to the Southern Gulf NRM board structure with some Directors farewelling Southern Gulf NRM and others being welcomed onto the board. The Standing Independent Selection Panel (SISP) was elected by community members at a general meeting during May. The elected SISP members were Mr Paul Woodhouse, Mayor Belinda Murphy (McKinley Shire Council) and Councillor Craig Young (Carpentaria Shire Council). They had the task ahead of them to undertake a recruitment process on behalf of the Southern Gulf Community in order to elect a new board of directors and a chairperson.

I firstly would like to acknowledge the outgoing directors, Charlie Hawkins, Shane McCarthy and John Taylor. I thank them on behalf of the Southern Gulf team for their tireless efforts, dedication and commitment as board directors as they worked to ensure Southern Gulf remains strong heading into the future.

I must also thank the members of the SISP, whose commitment to our region is evident in the diligent and professional way they went about their task.

It is with pleasure, that I welcome to the Southern Gulf NRM Board the newly recruited Directors, and I look forward to working alongside them. I will have the pleasure of continuing as Chairperson and we also welcome back Sophie Keily. We welcome to the role as new directors, Wendy Brodie, Ray Campbell, Ray Theime, and Anne Neil.

The new board members began their duties in early August with an in depth facilitated induction day introducing them to the roles and responsibilities of being a Southern Gulf Board Director. Thus ensuring they are well aware of the responsibilities and important obligations of being a director for a Not for Profit (NFP) company. The new board is committed to ensuring Southern Gulf NRM follows best practice governance and we will work hard to ensure that Southern Gulf NRM remains in a strong position as it heads into what will likely be challenging times as Government funding and investment priorities continue to change.

On the funding front, the current Queensland NRM program is in its final year. The Queensland cabinet will be making decisions about the nature of any future programs for NRM within Queensland and the level of investment in advance of the 2017 budget.

The board will ensure along with our CEO Andrew Maclean that we continue to engage regularly with the senior officials, MPs and Ministers about the particular needs and challenges for NRM within the Southern Gulf region.

In other news, under a memorandum of understanding approved at board level, both Southern Gulf NRM and NQ Dry Tropics, the NRM bodies for North and Northwest Queensland, have commenced a formal discussion about how they may best collaborate to build and grow upon current NRM service delivery within the two regions.

Although the NRM groups, which are numbered at 14 across the state of Queensland have been successful for many years, both NQ Dry Tropics and Southern Gulf NRM recognise the need to search for new and improved ways of meeting the needs of their own regional communities.
Queensland’s system of community based NRM creates great value for regional communities. Real outcomes are achieved on the ground when the NRM communities agree on the regional priorities and on ways to build on collaborative works undertaken to ensure healthy landscapes, waterways and communities. This is what Southern Gulf and NQ Dry Tropics aim to achieve through the development of this collaboration between the two regions. The process is about seeking an outcome which aims to retain both boards, and their community connections, whilst ensuring we protect the delivery of regional project development and delivery by staff working in each region’s community.

The Southern Gulf NRM board feels positive about the steps we are taking to ensure our continued presence in the region and we look forward to engaging with NQ Dry Tropics through this process as we undertake the detailed analysis of what opportunities will become apparent for each region from forming this collaborative partnership.

During the past 12 months the Southern Gulf NRM Board has worked positively with our management team led by CEO Andrew Maclean, to deliver a range of grant programs, engage with the community and to ensure we maintain good governance practices within the organisation.

Like many other NRM groups across Queensland, Southern Gulf NRM faces significant and ongoing challenges heading into the future. Some of these challenges include reduced grant funding, competition for grant funding across the state, the expectation that grants will be delivered with a minimum administration cost and changing priorities of the state and federal governments who are our main investors.

The board and management team recognises the significant challenges. The challenge in providing on-going support for NRM in our region is to maintain the funds in order to support the community, improve technical and scientific knowledge across the region and continue to be able to provide grants to community members for on ground projects.

The way forward is not yet clear for the future of NRM across our region. However, your board and management team, will continue to work on behalf of the community to ensure that natural resource management remains high on the agenda within our region for the long term future and viability of our communities and our industry sectors.

Megan Munchenberg
Chairperson

The challenge in providing on-going support for NRM in our region is to maintain the funds in order to support the community, improve technical and scientific knowledge across the region and continue to be able to provide grants to community members for on ground projects.
MEET the directors

Megan Munchenberg
CHAIRPERSON

Megan has been on the SG NRM Board for 6 years prior to taking over as Chair. She is the current president of the Gregory Landcare group and has a high level of involvement in projects undertaken to manage and control weeds in the Gregory area.

Megan has a Graduate Diploma in Rangelands Management and a Bachelor of Applied Science majoring in Rangelands Management. Megan has undertaken Governance training to ensure she is continuously improving her professional and corporate governance knowledge.

Working part time as a private consultant, Megan is involved in projects that relate to land and pasture management within the Cattle Industry in the Gulf. Megan has been living and working on cattle stations within the Southern Gulf region for the past 15 years. She is currently based at Gregory Downs Station and has called it home with her family for the past 11 years.

With a keen interest in the Grazing industry, Megan hopes to continue to see the livestock industry thrive in the Southern Gulf region. Megan is also a passionate advocate for the future sustainability of the rangelands and the natural resources in the Southern Gulf. Megan hopes that her contribution may help towards ensuring that communities which rely on valuable natural resources for economic, recreational, environmental and cultural purposes can continue to do so.

Anne Neil

Anne has experience in supporting boards, including previously the Burnett Mary Regional NRM Group and the Queensland Landcare and Catchment Management Council. Anne’s professional background also includes fund and governance management of both the Natural Heritage Trust programs 1 and 2 and the National Action Plan.

Practicing as an Environmental Scientist early in her career, Anne worked in the Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative, and water and vegetation legislation areas. Mid-career, Anne moved into regional planning and development areas, including statutory Regional Plan development for the North West, significant project facilitation and government liaison with stakeholders.

Anne has completed a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies, a Graduate Certificate of Natural Resource Management, a Graduate Certificate of Management and also a Masters in Environmental Management. Based in Townsville, Anne is employed by the State Government and also assists her husband run his small business in Townsville and raise their two young children.

Anne has a long and extensive employment history within the pastoral industry, particularly through her previous roles at Elders and Rabobank as well as running his family cattle operation. Ray also has strong networks with, and support from, the wider community in the Southern Gulf region and has contributed to community groups including rotary club, Cloncurry Merry Muster and Friends of John Flynn Place Committee.

Ray has also proudly contributed to the Regional Landcare Facilitator Steering Committee over the past few years and provided ideas and advice for projects to meet community needs and support.

As a pastoralist, Ray has extensive knowledge of land management in grazing systems. In particular, he understands the importance of balancing stocking rate with long term carrying capacity for overall sustainability. Ray is a passionate advocate for the need for efforts in land management to be coordinated and involve the community to be most effective.

Ray Campbell

A long term (Over 30 years!) resident of Cloncurry, Ray has demonstrated performance in delivering improved natural resource management outcomes through leadership and ongoing coordination of the Upper Gilliat Weed Management Group over the past 7 years.

Ray has built extensive networks within the pastoral industry, particularly through his previous roles at Elders and Rabobank as well as running his family cattle operation. Ray also has strong networks with, and support from, the wider community in the Southern Gulf region and has contributed to community groups including Rotary Club, Cloncurry Merry Muster and Friends of John Flynn Place Committee.
Ray Thieme

Ray and his family have enjoyed a long standing connection with the North Queensland Region over the past 30 years. He is passionate about the region’s future development and sustainability, actively seeking opportunity to contribute and influence to a positive direction.

Having come from a diverse background, Ray chose agriculture as his career path at the age of 16yrs. Now, with 35yrs of experience in the Beef industry, Ray has gained sound industry knowledge and developed practices focussed on optimum production with sustainable outcomes.

His practical background has equipped him with a grounded skill set and an intuitive insight to life.

Ray understands the potential, the capability, and sensitivity of the land and appreciates the importance of Cultural, Social, Environmental and Economic Sustainability.

Ray believes the industry is ready to rise to the next level and it will not rise if our feet are flat on the ground. The next level will be driven by innovative thinking which will be supported by our core values.

Sophie Keily

Raised in Mount Isa, Sophie is the owner and Licensee of Jays Real Estate. Jays is a family owned business in its 33rd year of operation, established by parents, John and Jackie Thinee.

Whilst having grown up in the business, Sophie is also a teacher and has lived and worked across a large number of states in Australia in assorted remote mining towns.

A passionate Mount Isa with a love for region and personal interest in the environment, Sophie believes strongly that the Tourism and Other Industries Sector are important custodians for the protection of this spectacular and unique part of Australia, for future generations.

Wendy Brodie

Wendy and her family own and manage “Redland Park” a property in the McKinlay Shire. She has three children whom she has home schooled through Mount Isa School of the Air.

Wendy has 30 years’ experience working within the rural industry. She has completed various programs on sustainable grazing management and has been involved in several grazing and cattle management trials.

Wendy is passionate about the community that she lives in and is involved with many different community groups. She has local government experience as a past Councillor with the McKinlay Shire Council.

Wendy believes that through education and working together we can create a sustainable future for the Southern Gulf Region.
2015/16 was a year of transition for Southern Gulf NRM. An amended constitution, a new company name, establishment of a new skills-based Board, and changes in management personnel created a new context for the company and for the delivery of its projects.

During the year we reviewed the design and delivery of our Australian Government funded projects and decided that some change was necessary. We need to be sure that these important projects are relevant to our regional context and to the needs of our communities while continuing to meet the requirements of our government investor. This work has established much better projects than had been in place previously.

An example of change is the establishment of our new Pasture Partners project. The condition of rangeland pastures is fundamental to the sustainability of pastoral operations. Pasture Partners directly addresses this by equipping producers with information and tools to systematically monitor the condition of their pastures over time; to see their results in a wider context; and by building collaborations and sharing knowledge. The appointment of a new staff member to drive this work is critical to success.

Other aspects of Southern Gulf NRM project delivery remain strong. For example, our Regional Landcare Facilitator project brings new knowledge and skills to the region in field days, workshops and communications activities. We are making good progress in partnership with land managers in limiting the spread of weeds, in particular Prickly Acacia and Rubber Vine. Our partnership with Biosecurity Queensland in the War on Western Weeds project ensures we are at the leading edge of innovation in weed control. Delivered by the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Savannah Plan and Beef Sense are two very important NRM projects that continue to generate great results for our region.

Community engagement and partnerships lies at the heart of natural resource management. We have renewed our focus on engagement with local government through regular attendance at the North West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (ROC). Local Government is a vital partner for NRM and the ROC is an important forum for information exchange and strategy development. We have also escalated our communication activities, ensuring members and stakeholders are kept up to date with NRM developments. Be sure to like our Facebook page.

Another step forward in community engagement has been the strengthening of our partnership with the Southern Gulf Aboriginal communities. I am excited about the progress we are making in joint project development with the Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and thank the Directors for their willingness to work with us. We are also eager to continue to develop community-relevant partnerships and projects with the Aboriginal Communities in the southern part of our region.

Looking outside of our regional boundaries, we have endeavoured to ensure NRM policy and planning contributes to the needs of our region. Submissions and representations on NRM policy have helped ensure Ministers and their departments are aware of our region’s NRM issues and needs.

A core function of all NRM organisations is the establishment
We need to be sure that these important projects are relevant to our regional context and to the needs of our communities while continuing to meet the requirements of our government investor. This work has established much better projects than had been in place previously.

of a regional NRM strategy. We made very good progress during the year in the development of a new plan for the region that advances NRM principles in a way that is relevant to the distinctive characteristics and needs of our region. The plan will be launched in the second half of 2016.

Project development and funding applications that bring NRM investment to our region is one of the important functions of Southern Gulf NRM. It is clear that, without the capacity Southern Gulf NRM provides, the region would likely miss out on the funding it desperately needs to secure a sustainable future. On this theme, we were very pleased to secure $600,000 of Queensland Government funding – the maximum available for our region – for our continued work in weed control.

Our staff provide a critical foundation for our successes. I must pay tribute to our staff team for their dedication to advancing the cause of NRM, often in very trying circumstances. Compared to their counterparts in more closely-settled regions, there are few of them and they work across vast landscapes in a tough climate. They do not have access to the same resources and technologies that many of their peers elsewhere enjoy: they are both professionally and physically isolated. Yet they continue to offer their very best for the Southern Gulf community every day. We are lucky to have them and I am grateful for their support.

Looking forward, we face some huge challenges as an organisation. Our priority must always be to deliver high quality NRM services for the Southern Gulf Region and that will remain the focus for Southern Gulf NRM staff. But declining financial support from the Australian and Queensland governments and limited opportunities for other revenues for the work we do makes it very difficult to sustain Southern Gulf NRM as a viable business entity. A favourite saying of mine is from the novel The Leopard in which the character Tancredi says: “If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change”. Nothing is truer than that in the Southern Gulf.

Andrew Maclean
Chief Executive Officer
MEET the team

Andrew Maclean
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

As Chief Executive Officer of Southern Gulf NRM, Andrew’s focus is on ensuring high standards of management and governance at Southern Gulf NRM; ensuring good engagement and communication with members and the wider community; and building NRM partnerships and projects that will attract investment for the benefit of the region and its communities. Andrew has worked in diverse senior management and leadership roles in natural resource management and related fields in North Queensland and Victoria for more than 20 years. He holds Masters Degrees in Environmental Management and in Public Administration.

Maree Berlin
BUSINESS MANAGER

Maree has managed the SG NRM business and finances for the past ten and a half years. She is also the company’s Public Officer and is the second longest serving employee at SG NRM. Prior to her time at SG NRM, Maree worked in similar roles within Local Government and a private Accounting firm. Maree has extensive experience in Accounting and financial management, Human Resources, Administration/Operations together with Governance experience in the Not for Profit area.

Charles Curry
PROJECT COORDINATOR

Charles has worked at Southern Gulf NRM for 13 years in a range of roles. Now as Projects Coordinator, he is primarily implementing weed management programs across the region. Charles holds a Bachelor of Science (Forestry) from the University of Melbourne. Before moving to Queensland, he was employed as a forester for 24 years in Melbourne Water’s water supply catchments and prior to that in the Top End.

Steven Cobbin
GIS COORDINATOR / MAPPING

Steve joined the Southern Gulf NRM team after completing his Environmental Science Degree at James Cook University as a mature age student in Cairns. His studies included learning the fundamentals of Geographical Information Systems (GIS). Since then, Steve has joined the Southern Gulf NRM team as the GIS Officer.
Pru Wharton  
REGIONAL LANDCARE FACILITATOR  

Pru has joined Southern Gulf NRM from a rural background and brings a wealth of experience from her time working in the cattle industry over the majority of her life. Her role is to support and facilitate activities & growth within Landcare. Working closely with Land Managers, Indigenous and other community’s producer groups & councils Pru will support the adoption of Sustainable Land Management Practices and the protection of our landscape within the Southern Gulf Region.

Sam Cullen  
TECHNICAL OFFICER, WAR ON WESTERN WEEDS PROJECT  

Sam has recently joined the Southern Gulf NRM team as a Technical Officer for the War on Western Weeds project (WoWW), an initiative of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry. Originally from Townsville, Sam completed her studies at James Cook University in 2009. Upon entering the workforce Sam has been employed in a number of plant science related fields ranging from horticulture to a research position at CSIRO. Sam will be working primarily in research and implementing control measures to reduce the spread of woody weeds, prickly acacia in particular.

Kate Glover  
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER  

Kate Glover joins the SG NRM team as Communications Officer. Kate has a number of qualifications in Business, Stakeholder Engagement and Photography. She has previously worked as a Journalist and in corporate communications and marketing for Local Government.

Shari Rankin  
SUSTAINABLE GRAZING PROJECT OFFICER  

Shari has a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of South Australia, majoring in Environmental Science and Geology, and is working towards a Juris Doctor through RMIT. She has spent time working in both the public and private sector, and has experience with Environmental Issues, Planning, Cultural Heritage, Stakeholder Relations, and Safety throughout South Australia, New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Papua New Guinea. Shari holds an Advanced First Aid for Remote Area Operations certification, and is a certified Lead Health, Safety, Environment, and Quality Auditor.
One of the most important roles for a regional NRM organisation like Southern Gulf NRM is to provide strategic leadership for the design and delivery of NRM programs in the region. This leadership must be both scientifically-based and grounded in the needs and concerns of the regional community.

With deep community connections and access to expertise, Southern Gulf NRM is in a unique position to develop and implement the Regional NRM Plan. Through the Plan, we help to ensure the efforts of multiple investors and delivery partners are aligned towards the important NRM goals for the region. The Regional NRM Plan supports both effectiveness and efficiency in program delivery.

A very comprehensive 2004 Regional NRM Plan served the region well, and provides a solid foundation, but as the years passed it clearly needed renewal. Australian Government funding provided under its climate change program has enabled a general review and renewal of the plan, ensuring also that it addresses key climate change issues affecting the region.

During the year, Southern Gulf NRM made good progress towards completion of the revised Regional NRM Plan. It is built around four programs specifically relevant to our region:

- Building Strong NRM Communities
- Growing Regional Prosperity
- Securing Landscape Resilience
- Sustaining our Natural and Cultural Environment

These programs will provide the basis of Southern Gulf NRM’s work in the future. They provide the structure for this annual report.

A consultation draft was completed in late 2015. Responding to feedback the draft was amended and approved in June 2016. Following graphic design and printing, the Plan will be published in the second half of 2016.
With deep community connections and access to expertise, Southern Gulf NRM is in a unique position to develop and implement the Regional NRM Plan.
The Regional Landcare Program

‘SUPPORTING LANDHOLDERS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES TO INCREASE THEIR AWARENESS OF, AS WELL AS BUILDING THEIR SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE IN THE ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES.’

Over the last 12 months the RLF program has achieved a series of positive outcomes. Starting from July last year we have delivered a number of workshops, produced a weed field guide identification booklet and held a Forum and Field day in Richmond on weed control and innovation. The events were well attended and we received a great deal of positive feedback from our stakeholders on how it is essential for our industry’s to continue increasing their skills and awareness, which in turn is giving the stakeholder better returns for their business.

Looking forward, the RLF program will continue to stretch the boundaries on delivering high quality well informative successful workshops, forums, field days and events in our region. Ongoing projects related to soil erosion and land rehabilitation will play a major part in the RLF program in the next financial year. We will also continue to support our Landcare groups and be looking at establishing Junior Landcare groups around the region with our schools and communities.

We would like to acknowledge the Australian Government’s National Landcare Programme for the support and funding for the Southern Gulf NRM Regional Landcare Facilitator Programme throughout 2015/2016. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with the Australian Government in the future, supporting landholders and rural communities to increase their awareness of, as well as building their skills and confidence in the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices.

Chemical Accreditation Workshops

NORMANTON AND HUGHENDEN

With the support of Ag Force, Regional Landcare facilitator Pru Wharton held two Accreditation Chemical Workshops in the Southern Gulf region. The workshops were held in Normanton and Hughenden on the 24th and 26th of May. Each workshop was subsidised through the Regional Landcare Facilitator program and supported by Ag Force, who provided trainer Cindy Hartwig from Hartbeat Training.

The aim of the workshops was to raise awareness of the potential hazards and risks associated with pesticide use and provide practical information with regards to safe chemical handling and application. Each participant in the workshops walked away with a certificate in Chemical Accreditation. The feedback we received from Landholders, council employees, school representatives and Indigenous groups after completing the course was that they felt confident with the skills and knowledge gained from the course to ensure the safety of their employees working with chemicals. Whether it be on properties, councils, schools or Landcare groups, these workshops have played a vital role in providing important information for maintaining an effective workplace.

Overall the workshops were well attended and a great success. Thank you to both the Carpentaria and Flinders Shires for providing the facilities to hold these workshops.
Looking forward, the RLF program will continue to stretch the boundaries on delivering high quality well informative successful workshops, forums, field days and events in our region.
**WoWW Overview**

War on Western Weeds (WoWW) is a 5 year Queensland Government initiative, led by DAF, which aims to reduce the incidence and spread of prickly acacia in western Queensland. The project focus is on the Mitchell grass downs where prickly acacia has a significant impact on land condition and productivity as well as strategic areas in central Queensland and the lower Gulf. Some of the WoWW project activities that SG NRM has supported over the last twelve months are:

- Establishment of a second Good Neighbour Program case study in collaboration with Barcaldine Regional Council.
- Research trials on spray misters leading to the issue of a Minor Use Permit by APVMA.
- Production of seven factsheets outlining the outcomes of WoWW led research projects and implications for grazier consideration.
- Studies of prickly acacia seedling and pasture response to mechanical control.
- Thomson River Weed Control Project targeting strategic prickly acacia, parkinsonia and rubbervine.
- Central West Pest Management Technical Group bellyache bush control.

War on Northern Invasive Weeds (WONIW) project funded by the Australian Government and led by DAF has commenced and will run concurrently with the WoWW initiative. This project with assist in further refining the Good Neighbour Program, spray misting, scattergun and the weed sniper through additional research trials. A Community Based Social Marketing case study will also be undertaken to better understand and address barriers to community led weed control initiatives.

The project focus is on the Mitchell grass downs where prickly acacia has a significant impact on land condition and productivity...
Muttaburra Good Neighbour Program

CASE STUDY

The Muttaburra GNP case study is a collaboration between DAF, SG NRM, Barcaldine Regional Council (BRC) and participating landholders. The case study follows on from the successful completion of a similar case study undertaken in the Flinders Shire and aims to assess the cost and effort associated with establishing ‘weed free’ property boundary buffer zones. The new case study area had much more complex terrain (braided river channels, sandstone escarpment, spinifex woodlands and Mitchell grasslands) and a wider variety of priority weeds than the initial Flinders study.

Weed free property boundary buffer zones were created at least 20m wide on boundary fence lines and up to 250m on the upstream side of where a watercourse intersects a boundary. Weeds were surveyed and controlled along a total of 604km of boundary by SG NRM, DAF, BRC staff and landholders. To ensure any missed or ineffectually treated plants were controlled, a follow-up control program was implemented and completed this year.

Key figures:
- Properties: 12 (comprising 9 grazing business units and 1 reserve)
- Mapping and surveying: Completed for 604.54km
- Attitudinal surveys: All ten completed
- Boundaries treated: 604.5km with most boundaries treated twice
- Watercourse treated: 67km
- Labour for initial control: 15 to 83 hours per property
- Labour for follow-up control: 3.5 to 38 hours per property
- Initial control costs: $711 to $9824 per property
- Follow-up control costs: $179 to $2970 per property

A more in-depth analysis of the findings will be available in a case study to be published in 2017.

Weed and pasture response to mechanical control

The mechanical removal of established prickly acacia infestations is a potentially cost effective option for many landholders though the risk of mass seed germination is often a consideration of where and how it is used. Southern Gulf NRM’s technical officer Sam Cullen assisted in trials established with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries’ War on Western Weeds initiative to investigate prickly acacia seedling and pasture response to mechanical prickly acacia control.

Two adjacent sites were identified to compare the response of prickly acacia seedling germination and pasture cover in a dozer pushed area and untreated prickly acacia infestation. A preliminary assessment was conducted in April 2015 and reassessed in May 2016 with results presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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<tr>
<td>Un-treated</td>
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<td>96</td>
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<td>-96</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(all dead)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>293</td>
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<td>-293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(62 dead)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Pasture Cover</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>+10.9%</td>
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</table>

A more in-depth analysis of the findings will be available in a case study to be published in 2017.
In this case, the landholder has benefited from valuable prickly acacia foliage fodder when dozer pushing in drought, subsequently doubled pasture cover compared to the untreated site and has had negligible follow-up control expense within the study site. If higher rainfall had occurred, seedling germination and survival would be expected to be much higher.

The study demonstrated that the use of mechanical control has risks but can yield fodder, pasture and control benefits and will not always lead to significant prickly acacia re-establishment or require excessive follow-up control. The results reflect recommendations contained in the Prickly Acacia Best Practice Manual (2000) which noted that to minimise regrowth risks, mechanical control is best undertaken during drought (low rainfall years) and preferably in areas expected to have lower soil seed loads and should consider resources required for follow-up.
Sustainable Grazing Update

“Crucial to the improvement in Land Condition and productivity will be the delivery of skills and knowledge events such as herd efficiency, and pasture budgeting workshops, and the support of producers through mentoring programs, and bespoke training materials.”

In order to position it strongly going forward Southern Gulf NRM’s Sustainable Grazing program underwent a transformation and rebranding exercise this financial year. In line with Australian Government National Landcare Program (NLP) requirements, the success of the revamped Sustainable Grazing program (Pasture Partners) will be measured by the improvement in Land Condition (and thus groundcover percentage) of participating producers who are being engaged in a large-scale participatory monitoring program. The anticipated improvement in Land Condition from a C Condition average to B Condition average is predicted to increase carrying capacity by 50 percent. Crucial to the improvement in Land Condition and productivity will be the delivery of skills and knowledge events such as herd efficiency, and pasture budgeting workshops, and the support of producers through mentoring programs, and bespoke training materials. It is too early to judge the success of the Pasture Partners program, but initial reactions from both industry bodies and producers have been positive, and program uptake is on track to meet targets.

Looking ahead to 2016/17 and 2017/18 Southern Gulf NRM is positioned strongly to meet Australian Government funding requirements, and to develop a landscape scale understanding of pasture health that can be used to drive the long-term direction of the sustainable grazing program.

For their support of the Sustainable Grazing program during the 2015/16 financial year Southern Gulf NRM would like to thank all relevant government and non-government agencies, as well as landholders and land managers. Collaboration with government and non-government agencies and landowners is central to Southern Gulf NRM’s engagement strategy, and the success of the sustainable grazing program.

Herd Efficiency Workshops

Held in partnership with the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries FutureBeef team, and leading cattle production veterinarian Ian Braithwaite, Southern Gulf NRM’s highly successful Herd Efficiency Workshops equipped producers with the skills and knowledge to better manage their pasture and their herds. The workshops provided hands-on training in pregnancy testing, foetal aging, and pasture budgeting, and these tools were tied together with herd and business management principles delivered in an outdoor ‘classroom’ environment.

The Herd Efficiency Workshops were some of the last milestones to be delivered under the Queensland Government Tropical Savannah Grazing program that was concluded in June 2016. Due to the success of the workshops, and the alignment with the Pasture Partners program, further Herd Efficiency Workshops, and follow-up events will be delivered under the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program funding in 2016 through to 2018.

Land Condition Guide

Southern Gulf NRM’s Land Condition guide produced in partnership with the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries FutureBeef team, through funding from the Australian Government is the first in a series of resources to be produced for the Pasture Partners program.

The Land Condition Guide was designed to assist with the visual assessment of Land Condition, and to provide guidance with managing stocking rates, and managing pastures within each of the 14 Land Types across the Southern Gulf NRM region. The Guide can be utilised as a companion to other Southern Gulf NRM publications - including ‘Priority Weeds of the Southern Gulf region of Queensland – a field guide’ - and will compliment other support materials being developed under the Pasture Partners banner.
Crucial to the improvement in Land Condition and productivity will be the delivery of skills and knowledge events such as herd efficiency, and pasture budgeting workshops, and the support of producers through mentoring programs, and bespoke training materials.
As part of our Regional Landcare Facilitator program, North West innovators took centre stage at the Weed Control Innovation Forum and Field Day held in Richmond on 27th April, 2016.

While weeds are a major problem in the region, the event showcased how community and industry innovation is helping to reduce weed impacts and provide more effective and efficient weed control outcomes.

The event, coordinated by Southern Gulf NRM and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, attracted over 80 participants from as far afield as Burketown, Barcaldine and Charters Towers. This included graziers, local government officers, and Indigenous rangers.

The day began with a forum where a range of speakers provided project updates, weed control case studies and the latest in weed research. The highlights of the morning session included:

- Overview of the priority weeds in our region and key features to identify them from Nathan Morgan (DAF).
- Dr Wayne Vogler (Tropical Weeds Research Centre) gave some timely advice on how to ‘shut the gate on weeds’ to reduce seed spread as well as the latest information on biological control studies.
- Kevin Anderson and Billy Jackson from Carpentaria Land Aboriginal Council gave the crowd a presentation on how the rangers are controlling rubber vine, belllyache bush and parkinsonian in the gulf by using aerial and on-ground burning to on-ground weed control treatment on belllyache bush and neem trees.
- Nathan March (DAF) gave an update on the War on Western Weeds initiative and then with Robyn Young (Flinders Shire Council), spoke on the success of the Flinders Shire Good Neighbour Program as a new approach to reducing weed spread between properties.
- Recent project achievements by Southern Gulf NRM were highlighted by Charles Curry.
- David Phelps (DAF) was there to give the crowd advice on the latest research findings for managing Mitchell grass pastures. David also provided new information for graziers on how they can increase their Mitchell grass pastures in the future. Essential advice for both those in drought, as well as those watching their pastures regenerate after drought.

The morning session was capped off by the launch of the ‘Priority weeds of the Southern Gulf Region’ guide by Pru Wharton.

As informative as the morning session was, the crowd was transfixed by the hands-on demonstrations of the afternoon field program. First-off was a visit to a rubber vine infestation on the Flinders River where a splatter gun demonstration was provided by the Tropical Weeds Research Centre team. Next the crowd saw the speed and effectiveness of Fox Helicopters undertaking aerial ignition for rubber vine burning.

Moving on to a prickly acacia infestation site, participants witnessed an array of new control tools in action to increase the speed of tebuthiuron pellet application – including the Epple Skattergun, Cloncurry Mustering Company’s ‘Weed Sniper’, Harrington Systems Electronics’ NN Applicator and then a talk on Fox Helicopters’ strategic control including fence-line treatment.

Some of the old ‘tried and true’ control methods were not forgotten with Ken Springall (Dow AgroSciences) and Nathan Morgan (DAF) taking us through the finer points of basal bark spraying, foliar spraying and soil applied herbicide options.

Dr Wayne Vogler then showed how to get the best results from misting prickly acacia before Kevin Bawden took to his dozer and pushed a few trees as an example of one of the mechanical options.
The event provided attendees with a unique opportunity to see control demonstrations firsthand and speak with inventors and scientists about new tools and improved approaches for weed management.

Weed control in the region has long been a priority for Southern Gulf NRM and these new control tools and innovative approaches will improve not only the organisation’s project success, but potentially those of all land managers throughout the region.

“I really enjoyed the day, there was some great information by the speakers at the forum, especially on the biological research, it is great to see progress being made. The aerial ignition of the rubber vine is a great initiative along with follow up spraying will be a big help in controlling this problem. The various methods of control and eradicating of prickly acacia as well as parkinsonia and mesquite are great to see. These methods I am sure will be of great use to landholders in there weed programmes. Everybody that I spoke with gained a lot of benefit from the day.”

“Southern Gulf NRM has always been supportive of innovation in the field for weed control and this encourages more thinking on new methods to combat our ongoing weed problems. The recent field day in Richmond showcased these innovative ideas and their application in the working environment.”

“Local innovators have looked at local weed problems and developed local solutions – the result is a new toolbox of options for land managers and graziers to draw from application in the working environment.”

“The forum & Field Day showcased the innovations & new techniques available to land managers continuing the battle against Prickly acacia. Innovations in herbicide application techniques and data relating to actual costs of control were a highlight of the day. Congratulations to the team from Southern Gulf NRM for holding an excellent event.”
South32 Cannington through its Cannington Community Development Fund contributed $150,000 to projects centred on the township of McKinlay to continue the long term objective of actively managing infestations of primarily prickly acacia but also mesquite and parkinsonia in McKinlay Shire.

The project follows previous allocations from Cannington Community Development Fund of $250,000 in 2012 and $100,000 in 2014 which concentrated on properties in the vicinity of the Cannington mine - Yurbi rail loading facility road corridor in McKinlay and Cloncurry Shires. The projects in 2016 concentrated on member properties of the Upper Gilliat Weed Management Group and the McKinlay Mesquite Group.

This particular Cannington-funded project has complemented the highly significant achievements over the past 6-7 years of more than 30 landholders in the McKinlay vicinity who through their own considerable contributions and labour and with the help of Cannington Community funds (under both BHP Billiton and South32 ownership), Queensland Government funding sources - Everyone’s Environment Grants and Regional Natural Resource Management Investment program, Australian Government funding - Caring for our Country and Landcare 25th anniversary grants, and McKinlay Shire Council. Prickly acacia has been reduced greatly in extent and density, mesquite is now isolated to two or three properties where it could still be considered a problem and parkinsonia has been cleared up on many properties.

In this 2016 McKinlay vicinity project, local company, Macaroni Contractors was employed to carry out most of the weed management works involving predominantly basal bark spraying of prickly acacia and mesquite.

**Upper Gilliat Weed Management Group**

On Koorooora, 10 operators over 3 days worked on dense prickly acacia infestations along Quart Pot Creek from the Redland Park boundary upstream to within 200 metres of Landsborough Highway covering a distance of 3 km and treating an area 211 ha of moderately dense infestations, all initial treatments. On Redland Park the same contract team over 5 days worked along Quart Pot Creek downstream from the Koorooora boundary in dense prickly acacia infestations to Gilliat River main channel then downstream and also in open country out to the western boundary fence. Stream distance treated was 4 km and area of dense riverine infestations was 66 ha all initial treatment and the area of scattered infestations was 88 ha.

On Cairo and Fickvale where Ray Campbell is close to achieving prickly acacia eradication, the contract team was employed on two occasions in 2016, clearing up previously untreated watercourses and two paddocks on Cairo, area 1000 ha approximately, and completely covering the whole Fickvale property (area 5065 ha) of very scattered prickly acacia regrowth.

On Glen Bede south of Cairo there were 5 days of treatment of prickly acacia on their waterways - Gilliat River channels and Dickey Creek covering 1056 ha, and on open downs country.

On Rutchillo, it has been station labour continuing the property weed management plan of systematically ridding the property of prickly acacia, this time by ground-applying tebuthiuron pellets, basal bark spraying with Access and diesel and foliar overspraying of prickly acacia regrowth and originals, mainly in Eddington Paddock in the northwest of the property.
**McKinlay Mesquite Group - core mesquite infestation**

McKinlay Common – with McKinlay Shire Council co-contributions, the contractor’s 10-strong team over 7 days worked down McKinlay River channels on the common north of Landsborough Highway. Access and diesel (100 litres herbicide with 6,000 litres diesel) was basal bark applied to dense large mesquite seed trees and regrowth and scattered regrowth in the paddocks. A 500 metre “buffer” along the northern fence line was established as part of McKinlay Shire Council’s commitment to their Good Neighbour policy. The area treated was 54 ha dense in the riparian zone and 725 ha scattered in open areas away from the river.

Moorooka station has been treating originally massive mesquite infestations for over 20 years with hugely successful results. The contract treatment over 3 days treated only scattered mesquite on the property as well as regrowth mesquite on Olive Grove station in all channels of McKinlay River. Unfortunately prickly acacia regrowth invading along Martins Creek required treatment in adjacent paddocks. The estimated total area treated was 3100 ha.

Toolebuc-Beaudesert – 5 days contract work saw treatment of large seed trees mainly mesquite but some prickly acacia on watercourses in three main areas in the north of the property, south of Moorooka and east of Broadlands - Nettle Creek, bore and dam and creek lines, Rangeview Creek channels from Nettle Downs boundary downstream to near Cannington Road crossing, and Snake Creek watercourses and timber lines. The area of largely scattered mesquite and prickly acacia regrowth was 5,690 ha.

On Broadlands, station labour has been treating prickly acacia by basal bark method (Access® and diesel) along waterways and with ground applied herbicide tebuthiuron on open downs country.

**MAP.** Redland Park weed management 2015-2016, map produced by SG NRM GIS Officer, showing treatments concentrated on Gilliat River channels. The owners Jim and Wendy Brodie have down the years removed prickly acacia from their Mitchell grass paddocks and are now tackling prickly acacia in the channels.
Southern Gulf NRM’s prickly acacia program in 2015-16 has been the same as that carried out since 2009, funded by the Australian Government’s Caring for our Country initiative 2009-2013, the Queensland Government’s Natural Resource Management Investment program 2013-2016 (continuing in 2016-2017) and BHP Billiton / South32 Cannington Community Development Fund.

The Southern Gulf strategy and associated weed management program is based on the Weeds of National Significance Prickly Acacia Strategic Plan 2012-2017. The vision of the Strategic Plan is – Prickly acacia is eradicated outside the core infestations in Queensland and national impacts are reduced to a minimum.

Southern Gulf NRM has three goals for its prickly acacia program:

1. Prickly acacia is prevented from spreading and strategic outlier infestations in the lower Gulf are controlled.
2. Core prickly acacia infestations are contained through buffer zone implementation in McKinlay, Cloncurry, Flinders and Richmond Shires.
3. Prickly acacia’s impact is reduced in the core infestation area centred on Hughenden-Richmond-Julia Creek through adaptive management.

Combined funding for prickly acacia, mesquite and parkinsonia in 2015-2016 was $497,875 (excl GST) from three sources – Queensland Government NRM $342,875, South32 $135,000 and Australian Government 25th Anniversary Landcare Grant $20,000.

Outputs – what the projects delivered
In 2015-2016, the program concentrated on 10 properties in the lower Gulf (out of the 20 involved 2013-2016) and 10 in the buffer zone around the Prickly Acacia Containment Zone (PACZ). Areas treated were 109,000 ha and 45,000 ha respectively. Within the Containment Zone, projects were conducted on 8 properties of the Walker-Warianna group as well as on five other properties; the area treated was 8,100 ha.

Outcomes – what the projects have achieved
- Of the 20 lower Gulf properties involved over the three years of this project, and the majority of these properties have been involved for up to 10-12 years, great achievements have been made on around 15 of them. Five or so still have a considerable amount of work ahead of them but from the examples of the properties approaching successful outcomes, the combination of perseverance, hard work, continuity and consistency of funding and in-kind contributions do bring rewards in the fight against prickly acacia and its propensity to transform natural grasslands into thorny scrub thickets and present a major threat to biodiversity let alone its interference to mustering, movement of stock and access to water.

Greater areas were treated in the lower and mid Gulf than predicted at the start of this project. This can be explained by the highly significant reduction in areas of dense infestation down the years, meaning much greater areas can be covered by treatment of scattered and far-flung infestations. Magowra is a classic example of what it takes in resources and herbicide to treat dense infestations by comparison with Inverleigh which has moved beyond dense to mopping up scattered regrowth; On Magowra the cost was $75,000 to achieve total treatment of 277 very dense hectares, c.f. Inverleigh $30,000 to cover 65,000 ha (44% of the property) of scattered prickly acacia by R22 helicopter with Weed Sniper.
- In the northern and western buffer zones to the PACZ, there are now reduced risks to landholders through weed control activities on 22 properties resulting in prickly acacia being greatly reduced in extent and density. Those properties in the buffer zones to strengthen the PA Containment Zone who are not actively participating in weed management could gain valuable information about best practice prickly acacia control from the properties that are active in treating prickly acacia, and learn that keeping prickly acacia contained is definitely feasible.
- Inside the PACZ, the overall outcome for the Walker-Warianna group from this ongoing project on eight properties in the Walker-Warianna sub-catchment of the Flinders River catchment has been the rehabilitation of large tracts of Mitchell grass country. Small scale prickly acacia infestations on some properties have been all but eradicated and larger scale prickly acacia infestations on other properties have been greatly reduced through the considerable in-kind efforts and contributions of each property assisted by the small but consistent incentive funding.
... from the examples of the properties approaching successful outcomes, the combination of perseverance, hard work, continuity and consistency ... bring rewards in the fight against prickly acacia and its propensity to transform natural grasslands into thorny scrub thickets...

Redland Park – treated prickly acacia that had been actively growing around a dam

Armaynald – treated prickly acacia with emerging threat calotrope in the background
SECURING landscape resilience
MAP. Southern NRM weed management projects 2013-2016 – prickly acacia projects shaded yellow are concentrated in lower Gulf and buffer zone Julia Creek-McKinlay.
Securing landscape resilience

Southern Gulf’s achievements with other weeds in 2015-2016

Mesquite and parkinsonia – The concentrated mesquite program through QNRM with assistance from South32 Cannington in 2015-2016 was located on 16 properties in McKinlay, Richmond and Flinders Shires. The area of mesquite treated was 13,790 ha and parkinsonia 240 ha.

Most properties including the McKinlay Mesquite Group (4 out of 5 participated), Moonamarra-Lagaven, Maroola and Sarre have been fighting mesquite for many years. Following on from previous years’ activities where the risks to landholders concerned had been greatly reduced, significant progress was achieved towards mesquite eradication on Sarre, Maroola, Boree Park, McKinlay Common, Beaudesert, Canterbury Park and Flinders Dairy.

Because of this concentrated activity, since the 1990s in some cases, the McKinlay/Kynuna core mesquite infestation is no longer a core infestation; only pockets of mesquite remain on two or three properties and re-engagement with those properties will be attempted in the near future if circumstances and conditions are favourable.

Rubber vine and bellyache bush

Funding for rubber vine and bellyache bush in 2015-2016 was $273,948 (excl GST) from two sources – Queensland Government NRM $237,875 and Australian Government 25th Anniversary Landcare Grant $36,073.

Outputs – what the projects delivered

In 2015-2016, the rubber vine program proceeded on 8 properties west of the Rubber Vine Containment Line (RVCL) to the NT border and on 4 properties within the RVCL as well as a number of properties on Emu Creek a tributary of Walsh River in Northern Gulf NRM region. Areas treated were 6,335 ha and 3,812 ha respectively.

Bellyache bush projects were conducted on 8 properties plus those on Emu Creek and an area of 1100 ha was treated. Bellyache bush infestations tend to be very dense and situated in riparian zones so areas of treatment are not great.

Outcomes – what the projects have achieved

Rubber vine

- Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (CLCAC) Gulf coast rubber vine control - there continues to be a greatly reduced risk to properties and coastal wetlands and sand islands from fire management and weed control activities carried out by the ranger team and associated helicopter incendiary device through treatment of regrowth rubber vine before it is capable of setting seed.
- There has been a reduced risk to one property Yeldham, and lowered risk to flood-out areas and pasture on Amraynald, Gregory Downs, Lawn Hill (upper parts of four creek systems) and Bidunggu property and Gregory township through the weed control activities of a contractor and the Bidunggu rangers based at Gregory.
- The Ewamian rangers on Talaroo in Northern Gulf have continued to make major inroads as they followed their rubber vine control management plan. Due to the scale of rubber vine infestations on parts of Talaroo, weed control efforts have largely remained focused on Talaroo but they have ventured on to neighbouring properties in a minor capacity. Their priorities have been to save mature riverine habitat on the Einasleigh River, followed by control of rubber vine along Ewamian Creek and White Springs Creek, and to control all weeds within the Talaroo Mound Springs habitat.
Bellyache bush - significant progress was made reducing the risk to the natural ecosystems of the river systems and flood-out zones that bellyache bush so effectively invades and infests. Progress has been especially encouraging through the following weed control activities on the following properties:

- Nine properties on Emu Creek, part of the Walsh River – Mitchell River system being treated by Mareeba Shire Council and MRWMG. They also treated considerable associated rubber vine.
- Corella River (Rosebud and Timberu stations) above Corella Reservoir – an outstanding result using largely volunteer labour has been achieved with the bellyache bush infestations exponentially down on the previous 10 years, a positive result of consistent and persistent effort especially in times of adversity when it all looked too difficult to achieve a breakthrough in breaking the regrowth cycle.

Concerns now and in the future
The infestations in the riparian zones of the Gregory River and Leichhardt River systems remain very serious environmental problems requiring large scale campaigns which include coordinated fire management and integrated activities.
The Southern Gulf is commonly valued for its extensive rangelands grazing but it also is a region of rich, if perhaps under-recognised natural values. Its extensive river and wetlands systems provide valuable refuge for flora and fauna populations. The extensive estuarine wetland systems that fringe the shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria are the largest of their type in Australia. The bulk of the Australian range of threatened species like Julia Creek Dunnart, and the Carpentarian Grasswren is found in the Southern Gulf region. These and other natural values are the focus of Southern Gulf NRM’s work to sustain the natural and cultural environment of our region.

Grasswren survey demonstrates the need for better fire management

Southern Gulf NRM supported volunteers from Birdlife Australia in their regional survey for the Carpenterian Grasswren and the Kalkadoon Grasswren. These tiny birds rely on long-unburnt spinifex grasslands, mostly in the west and north of the region. Southern Gulf NRM provided assistance with distribution and firescar mapping, communications and logistical support.

The surveys added to the evidence that the range of the Carpentarian Grasswren has contracted – one of the factors that led to it being listed as nationally endangered in early 2016. Extensive, hot dry season wildfires pose a particular risk. Emerging from the survey was recognition that the future of the Carpentarian Grasswren depends on better fire management, with low intensity, early wet season burns breaking up fuel loads, diminishing the risk of habitat loss over extensive areas. In this regard, grasswrens and graziers share an interest in good fire management.

This survey has informed further project development work that will build partnerships to improve fire management in key habitat areas.

Julia Creek Dunnarts are threatened by weed spread

Supported by Australian Government NLP funding, Southern Gulf NRM strengthened partnerships with University of Queensland researchers, McKinlay Shire Council, Nelia community members and landholders in a project to address the risk of Prickly Acacia spread in Julia Creek Dunnart habitat. Julia Creek Dunnarts naturally occur in open grassland communities and shelters in deep cracks in the soil. Prickly Acacia alters both the composition and key structural elements required by the dunnarts. Two related activities were supported: a dunnart survey involving 806 trapnights was conducted to provide baseline data, and funding was provided to assist a landholder to treat a Prickly Acacia infestation in dunnart habitat. The control program laid herbicide pellets over a 5981 kilometre ground and aerial traverse. Engagement in the implementation of this project has informed further project development which will see a smart phone app developed to facilitate community recording of dunnart sightings.

Building Partnerships with Traditional Owners in Wetland Conservation

The extensive coastal wetlands of the Southern Gulf are the traditional lands of several Aboriginal communities who collaborate through the Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (CLCAC). Land and sea rangers employed by CLCAC have a strong track record in projects that address threats to the environmental and cultural values of their traditional country. During the course of the year, Southern Gulf NRM opened a dialogue with CLCAC about development of a project that would support conservation works on the nationally-important wetlands of the southern Gulf coast. Project development progressed, taking particular care to recognise and respect the cultural significance of this country and the proper role of community elders in setting priorities for action. This has laid a strong foundation for a project to be implemented during 2016/17 that will facilitate Indigenous involvement in NRM in this nationally significant landscape.
Grasswrens and pastoralists share an interest in good fire management
FINANCIAL REPORT
2015-2016
### PROJECT EXPENDITURE by Activities 2015-2016

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### SOURCES of income 2015-2016

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INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT TO THE
DIRECTORS OF SOUTHERN GULF NRM LTD

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report of Southern Gulf NRM Ltd, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2016, income statement, statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year ended 30 June 2016, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the directors’ declaration.

Directors’ Responsibility for the Financial Report
The directors of the company are responsible for the preparation of the financial report and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements under the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Act 2012 and are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The directors’ responsibility also includes such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor’s Responsibility
Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We have conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor’s judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity’s preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity’s internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the directors, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Independence
In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Act 2012. We confirm that the independence declaration required by the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Act 2012 which has been given to the directors Southern Gulf NRM Ltd, would be in the same terms if given to the directors as at the time of the auditor’s report.

Auditor’s Opinion
In our opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial report of Southern Gulf NRM Ltd for the year ended 30 June 2016 and complies with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 to the financial report.

Basis of Accounting
Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the directors’ reporting responsibilities to the members. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

O’Regan & Partners
Chartered Accountants
QCCU Building
70 Cambridge Street
MOUNT ISA QLD 4825

Peter O’Regan
Partner
Date: 1 September 2016
Southern Gulf NRM Ltd  
ABN: 15010716276

**Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income**

For the Year Ended 30 June 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>$2,140,041</td>
<td>$3,101,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee benefits expense</td>
<td>(810,136)</td>
<td>(872,811)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation and amortisation expenses</td>
<td>(79,785)</td>
<td>(73,760)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Fees</td>
<td>(135,049)</td>
<td>(71,965)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>(13,262)</td>
<td>(10,944)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Expenditure</td>
<td>(1,186,566)</td>
<td>(1,092,450)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank and Credit Card Charges</td>
<td>(216)</td>
<td>(1,169)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Expenses</td>
<td>(138,067)</td>
<td>(152,947)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting and Planning Expenses</td>
<td>(14,757)</td>
<td>(27,313)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Expenses</td>
<td>(139,203)</td>
<td>(73,662)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Vehicle Expenses</td>
<td>(32,924)</td>
<td>(65,363)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Expenses</td>
<td>(6,304)</td>
<td>(6,633)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Expenses</td>
<td>(78,054)</td>
<td>(41,145)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Profit before income tax</strong></td>
<td>(496,934)</td>
<td>100,795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income tax expense</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Profit from continuing operations</strong></td>
<td>(496,934)</td>
<td>100,795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Profit for the year</strong></td>
<td>(496,934)</td>
<td>100,795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other comprehensive income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total comprehensive income for the year</strong></td>
<td>(496,934)</td>
<td>100,795</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.
**Balance Sheet**
30 June 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ASSETS**

**CURRENT ASSETS**
- Cash and cash equivalents
  - 5  1,667,712  2,324,470
- Trade and other receivables
  - 6  55,189    152,192
- Other assets
  - 8  28,317    35,214
  
**TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,701,218</td>
<td>2,511,876</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NON-CURRENT ASSETS**
- Property, plant and equipment
  - 7  269,000    359,000
- Other assets
  - 6  5,047    3,333
  
**TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>344,712</td>
<td>412,333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL ASSETS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,125,930</td>
<td>2,924,214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LIABILITIES**

**CURRENT LIABILITIES**
- Trade and other payables
  - 9  323,583    442,229
- Borrowings
  - 10  6,343    8,057
- Other liabilities
  - 287,025    442,752
  
**TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>687,731</td>
<td>803,036</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES**
- Employee benefits
  - 11  48,413    44,555
  
**TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>48,413</td>
<td>44,555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL LIABILITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>637,144</td>
<td>938,483</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NET ASSETS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,488,787</td>
<td>1,985,721</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EQUITY**

- Retained earnings
  
**TOTAL EQUITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,488,787</td>
<td>1,985,721</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.
Southern Gulf NRM Ltd
ABN: 15 010 735 778

Auditors Independence Declaration To the Directors of Southern Gulf NRM Ltd

In accordance with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission Act 2012 Section 80-40, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year ended 30 June 2016, there have been:

(i) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission Act 2012, and

(ii) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.


Peter O'Regan, Chartered Accountant

O'Regan & Partners Audit Services Pty Ltd
Chartered Accountants

01 September 2016

70 Camooweal Street, Mount Isa, QLD 4825
**SUPPLEMENTARY information**

Thank you to our members

It has been 18 years since the first committee was formed to start the work that Southern Gulf NRM now maintains.

During that time the membership has grown from that first few to over 50 at the present time. Without the vision and the support of the membership our work fails. Our members come from all walks of life and support us as individuals, families, volunteers, corporations, workplaces and community organisations. The on ground results achieved are often made greater by the in-kind and cash contributions of project participants and demonstrates the support for our work throughout the region.

We know that many of you have been confronted with terrible conditions over the past year and at times struggle to remain positive. Please be assured we recognise the difficulties being faced and understand how hard it is to support groups such as ours when so many other issues take priority.

Even under these circumstances we acknowledge that we simply couldn’t do it without you.

From the Staff, Management and Board of Southern Gulf NRM
- Thank you.

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*The Southern Gulf NRM Environment Fund was established to assist the practical combination of research, education and on ground partnerships already underway within the Catchment.*

As an organisation, Southern Gulf NRM is committed to building and maintaining a sustainable healthy vibrant environment.

Being a tax deductible gift recipient fund allows for tax deductible donations over $2.00 to assist our work in specific environmental projects.

*For further information please contact us.*
As an organisation, Southern Gulf NRM is committed to building and maintaining a sustainable healthy vibrant environment.
Contact
ADDRESS: 43 Barkly Highway, Mount Isa Q 4825
POST: PO Box 2211, Mount Isa Q 4825
PHONE: 07 4743 1888  FREECALL: 1800 676 242
EMAIL: admin@southerngulf.com.au  WEB: www.southerngulf.com.au
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Southern Gulf NRM is supported by: