Southern Gulf NRM

MEDIA RELEASE

MONDAY 17/4/2023 3.00PM

The importance of bare ground restoration in the Southern Gulf region

Persistent bare ground is an issue that plagues land managers across the Southern Gulf region. In developing the new Natural Resource Management Plan in 2021/2022 for the region, landholders indicated that restoration of bare ground was a priority concern. In response, Southern Gulf NRM sought funding and has been approved funding from the Australian Government, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, under the Future Drought Fund to deliver a Resilient Soils and Landscapes project in the Upper Gilliat and Hughenden districts.

The project aims to demonstrate cost-effective bare ground restoration focused on the establishment of perennial native pastures. Paddocks with a percentage of bare ground often put pressure on the pastures in the balance of the paddock area if the bare ground is not taken into account in calculating the grazing potential of that paddock. In addition, this project is also undertaking drone photography that will help assess bare ground on a much larger scale. Southern Gulf NRM is working in partnership with James Cook University's earth sciences faculty and the North Queensland Drought Hub to deliver the project to landholders.

This week, the Senator of Queensland, Susan McDonald and the National Soils Advocate, Hon. Penelope Wensley AC, showed their support by attending the project launch at a demonstration site on Cairo Station in the McKinlay Shire. The launch included a soil core and a soil infiltration demonstration and allowed landholders to understand the methods used in the project.

Senator Susan McDonald told the attendees, 'The region's Mitchell Grass Downs soils are a hugely important resource and are one of the region's natural assets that are very valuable to the cattle industry. The cattle industry covers more than 85% of the Southern Gulf NRM region, and protecting our soil assets for future productivity is imperative.'

National Soils Advocate, The Hon. Penelope Wensley AC, joined Queensland Senator Susan McDonald to launch the Resilient Soils and Landscapes Project of the Southern Gulf NRM. Underlining that soil management is fundamental for ensuring food production and environmental sustainability across Australia, Ms Wensley said she was very pleased to see Southern Gulf NRM focusing on the issue of bare ground restoration, a priority concern of land managers across the region.

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If landholders are interested in participating in the Resilient Soils and Landscapes project in the future, please get in touch with our staff for more information.

Upper Gilliat district – Prudence Wharton via email: pru.wharton@southerngulf.com.au
Hughenden district - Robyn Young via email: robyn.young@southerngulf.com.au.

This project is supported by Southern Gulf NRM and James Cook University through funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.

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Photos of the event and the project can be accessed from https://southerngulfnrm-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/lyndy_skea_southerngulf_com_au/EmaCcBro8k1Dsgt4pBwhtbEBLKfGc6qKnttg1duhCMYNfQ?e=qKPbjr

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Southern Gulf 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. The Southern Gulf water catchment region includes all the land whose creeks and rivers run into the southern Gulf of Carpentaria. This encompasses an area of 215,000km square^{2}.