

The latest news from the Barossa Improved Grazing Group

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Government of South Australia
Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges
Natural Resources Management Board

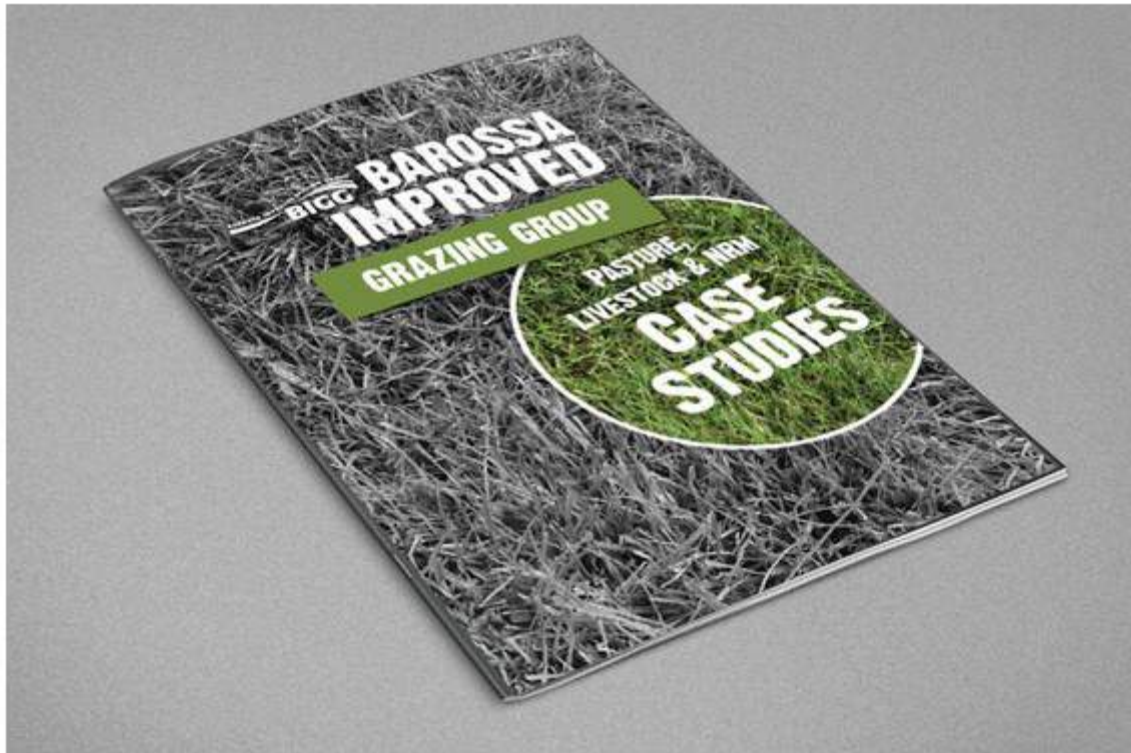


The BIGG Bulletin

December 2014

This is the final edition of the BIGG bulletin for 2014, and we'd like to take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and thank you for your interest and support of BIGG in 2014. There won't be a newsletter in January, but stay tuned for the February newsletter to hear about BIGG's projects and plans in 2015.

BIGG Case Studies



BIGG has developed a case studies booklet to share the learnings, achievements and innovations demonstrated in sustainable pasture management and on-farm NRM activities.

A range of case studies has been compiled, representing on-farm producer led demonstrations and trials through the 2012-2014 growing seasons in the Barossa and surrounding regions. They provide an insight into what has and hasn't worked, and how issues can be overcome to improve management systems.

A huge thanks to the producers who tried something different and were willing to share their experiences to help others learn about and improve their farming systems.

In recognition of their support and in celebration of BIGG's first three years of operation a case study launch will occur in February, so watch this space!

The case studies booklet, which was funded by the Natural Resources Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Action Grant, can be found on the [BIGG website](#).

Grazing in vineyards

BIGG has won a \$5000 community action grant for a new project, 'Livestock grazing management in Barossa Valley vineyards', funded by Natural Resources Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges.

The project will work with the [Barossa Grape & Wine Association](#) to quantify the level of livestock grazing in vineyards, understand the barriers to grazing adoption, and promote the natural resources management and productivity benefits of the practice.

Most grape growers in the Barossa do not graze their vineyards, however good grazing management can deliver significant NRM benefits, including:

- Improved weed control, particularly for herbicide resistant weeds.
- Improved groundcover, particularly under the vines which would normally be sprayed.
- Improved biodiversity through reduced herbicide use, particularly where native grasses are grown.
- Improved nutrient recycling given manure is being added to the vineyard.
- Reduced soil compaction given less mowing or cultivating in the vine mid-rows.
- Reduced reliance on machinery, fuels and herbicides.

The project will comprise three components. Firstly, an extensive survey to quantify the extent of current vineyard grazing in the Barossa, the interest of grape growers to introduce grazing, and identify reasons why grazing has not been adopted.

The second component of the project will be reviewing and elaborating on the survey findings with a focus group made up of a cross-section of grower and industry representatives, and finally, there will be concluding report and associated media communications to increase knowledge and understanding among grape growers about livestock grazing in vineyards.

Georgie Takes on National Landcare Conference



The 2014 National Landcare Conference took place in Melbourne from September 17 to 19, acknowledging 25 years of the Landcare movement at a national level.

The conference was also host to the National Landcare Awards gala dinner, at the World Heritage listed, Royal Exhibition Building.

BIGG's Georgie Keynes attended both the conference and the awards ceremony as a finalist in the South Australian Westpac Innovative Young Landcare Leader. Although unsuccessful in bringing home the national award, she enjoyed the knowledge sharing and networking opportunity afforded by the event.

The conference program focused on the theme of *Celebrating our history, growing our future* and presentations ranged from analyses of the grass-roots movement over more than 25 years in addressing the crisis in land and water degradation to a conversation and documentary screening on growing the movement for the next generation. Many of the ideas focused on the use of innovative technologies such as satellite imagery to monitor ground cover and feed availability and the use of weather forecasting to predict climate variability, with a take home message that those that are willing to try new things often improve their production systems at a much greater rate.

Georgie, on behalf of BIGG, also delivered a presentation to over 40 participants titled '*From Little Things BIGG Things Grow*' where she discussed how BIGG has used practical, 'farmer' focused methods to deliver successful projects across the region. Georgie's conference presentation can be viewed [here](#).

From the Inbox...

- Did you see the latest BIGG [soil moisture monitoring report](#)? You can read it anytime on our website. This was the final monthly report from the Soil Moisture Monitoring in Grazing Systems project, however you will still be able to view the real-time weather station data on [our website](#) going forward.
- The Koonunga Ag Bureau, one of the producer groups which form BIGG, has been featured in the latest NRM newsletter Small Talk. It showcases the activities being conducted for their Sustainability and Biodiversity project. [Read more.](#)
- Next Generation Property Planning: expressions of interest are still open for this program. Read more in our [November newsletter](#).
- Smartphone Apps for Smart Farmers: The AgEx alliance, with support from Natural Resources SAMDB and DEWNR, have updated their popular guide to apps available for farmers, now containing over 400 apps. Find it [here](#).
- Lifetime Ewe Management: Speaking of apps, this course now has an [iPhone app](#) to help producers optimise their energy requirements of their stock.
- MLA has produced an online resource for producers wanting to obtain the productivity and emissions benefits of sustainable grazing. It's available at the [MLA website](#).
- Crime Prevention & Community Safety Grants 2015 are now open, offering up to \$50,000 for community groups to help keep communities safe. Applications close tomorrow (December 17) and can be found [here](#).

Your BIGG Contacts

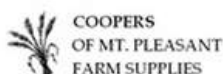
Technical Facilitator / Coordinators:

[Brett Nietschke](#): 0432 804 389

[Georgie Keynes](#): 0409 287 261

Communication Officer:

[Rebecca Barr](#): 0402 788 526



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Department of Environment,
Water and Natural Resources