

BIGG Recovery of Native Pastures after Bushfire

Topic: Sustainable Land Management

Georgie Keynes: BIGG Technical Facilitator/Coordinator, georgieandtoby@bigpond.com, 0409 287 261

Nicola Barnes: A/ Team Leader Landscape Resilience, Natural Resources SA Murray Darling Basin

Taryn Mangelsdorf, Sustainable Agricultural Officer, Natural Resources Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges

Daniel Schuppan: Production Animal Specialist, Landmark

In 2014, areas of the Eastern Mt Lofty Ranges near the Barossa Valley were burnt in two separate fires. The Eden Valley Fire occurred on 17 January and burnt over 24,000 ha between Eden Valley and Truro. The following December the Hutton Vale fire burnt 1,400 ha east of Angaston.

The vast majority of the area burnt in both fires was native pastures, made up of a range of grasses including native perennials, legumes and other plants. These play a crucial role in the local livestock grazing system. In addition, they are critical within the local environment by providing habitat and food for native animals and birds, such as the endangered Diamond Fire-tail Finch.

A community recovering from a major bushfire requires immediate and on-going support. Joint funding from Natural Resources Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges (AMLR), and Natural Resources SA Murray-Darling Basin (SAMDB) enabled the [Barossa Improved Grazing Group \(BIGG\)](#) to investigate the recovery of native grasses following the fires and support producers in managing their pastures and grazing businesses.

BIGG conducted scoping workshops, soil testing, and fertiliser trials at sites monitoring the recovery of pastures after the fire. We also facilitated extension and information sharing opportunities for fire affected landholders. Through these activities, BIGG has empowered over 20 fire-affected producers who are managing 10,000 hectares to sustainably manage the recovery of their native pastures. Two years after the Eden Valley fire pasture dry matter levels remain one third below pre-fire levels; however, the project has helped producers make informed grazing management decisions and improve their skills for the future recovery and management of their pastures.

Networking and information sharing activities to BIGG's network of over 250 producers and stakeholders have helped the community recover from the fires and remain resilient. Most importantly it has also facilitated the development of a case study booklet, video and information sheet. These outcomes have been widely communicated and used by other landholders and agencies in the 2015 Pinery bushfire recovery.

Key Words: Native Pasture Recovery after Bushfire, Case Study Video, Information Sheet, agriculture, grazing