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# The BIGG Bulletin

February 2018

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**B I G G   C O N F E R E N C E   2 0 1 8**



## The speaker panel answering the audience's questions



Bruce Hancock received a gift as a thank you from the committee for his ongoing support as BIGG Mentor.

## Janie Evans with keynote speaker Mark Aiston



SAMDB Regional Landcare Facilitator Eliza Rieger talking to producers during the tech display



Alan Jackson (Angaston Ag Bureau Chair) and Georgie Keynes (BIGG Technical Facilitator) celebrating BIGG's Landcare Award



Graham Keynes with speakers Mark Aiston and David Hardwick

Building Resilience was held last Thursday, featuring eight expert speakers, activities, networking and dinner at Lambert Estate.

A key theme of the day, across all the topics, was 'you can't improve what you don't understand'. Speakers told us to dig more, measure more and learn more, and our participants agreed, with every single participant heading home with plans to make improvements on-farm.

David Hardwick spoke about the importance of soil health and understanding soils, and how important it is to get a spade out and inspect your soils.

BIGG's technical facilitators talked about our two major projects: Georgie presented the latest results from our Producer Demonstration Site investigating pasture varieties ([download the 2017 report](#)), and Brett explained the importance of soil moisture monitoring for decision-making, and giving us a sneak peak into the upcoming BIGG Pasture Growth Model, which is currently in development.

Mark Branson highlighted a range of tools producers can use to understand what is going on, including soil moisture monitoring, pH mapping and using drones to map paddocks.

Mark Aiston told us a very personal story about mistakes he's made in his life related to alcohol and gambling because he didn't understand the importance of mental health.

The presentations from the conference are available on our website along with contact details from our exhibitors, at <http://biggroup.org.au/resources/event-presentations-and-resources/>

## Understanding soils workshop

*by Kevin Lintern, AMLR Sustainable Agricultural Officer*

David had participants bring along a sample of their soil and had everyone lay the soil out for everyone to see (Image 1).

David then jumped straight into the day and held the 2018 Angaston Soil Competition. David had each participant go through and judge the soil. Participants had to select the top 3 samples according to which sample they felt was the best soil (Image 2).

After a quick tally up the overall winner was Michael Evan's sample. Key things that people liked about the soil was the plant growth and roots and the colour and feel of the soil.

Putting the competition to the side David had the participants' role play nutrient cycling and the interactions between plants, bacteria, fungi, and a number of micro and macro invertebrates.

To finish up the workshop the group split up and dove into the soil samples to see

just what bugs and critters they could find in the soil and to show how simple it is to gauge soil health based on the presence of different bugs and critters. (images 3 & 4).



## Containment areas

As paddock feed becomes limited, livestock producers are looking for alternative options for feeding their stock.

We have put together a video guide with Hamish Dickson to help producers design and manage an effective containment lot.

Hamish says "Quite often containment areas are put in with the idea of being to manage the drought years but there's a lot of handy benefits of having these facilities on farm," he said.

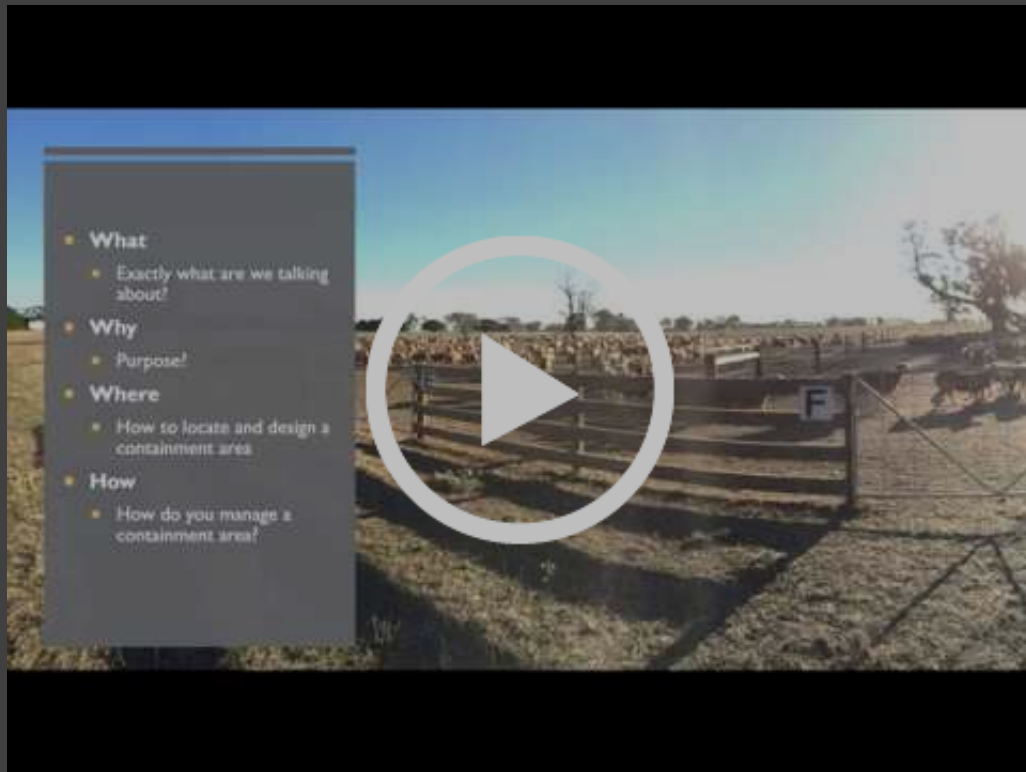
BIGG technical facilitator and Keyneton producer Georgie Keynes agrees.

"On our farm we developed a containment area with a view to using it maybe once

every five years in a drought situation,” she said.

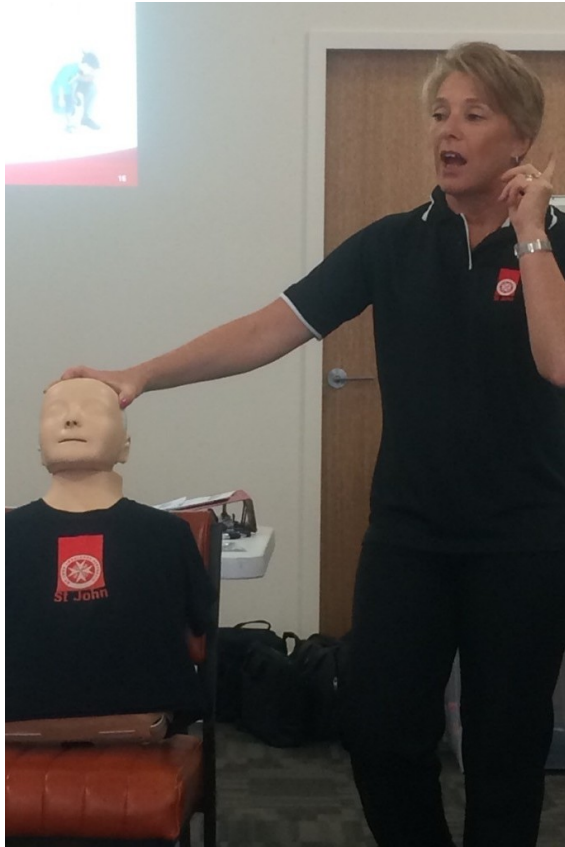
“In the past 15 years since we’ve had it, we’ve used it almost every single year.”

Click on the webinar below, or watch on our channel on YouTube at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbwdb8\\_WUj0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbwdb8_WUj0).



Click to view the containment areas webinar or visit [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbwdb8\\_WUj0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbwdb8_WUj0)

## First aid for farmers



Tina Gregsby, St Johns trainer  
conducting Koonunga Ag Bureau's first  
aid course



David Barnett, Moculta with his 'patient'  
Rob Humphris, Koonunga

Having up-to-date first aid skills for farmers is particularly important given farms can be especially dangerous work places. To help educate local farmers in first aid, the Koonunga Ag Bureau recently ran a one-day first aid course that was conducted by St Johns. The course was attended by 34 participants and covered CPR, basic emergency life support and general first aid.

For many of the participants, it was a timely update of their first aid skills while for others it was the first time they had done such a course. In particular, the course highlighted the importance of applying the DRSABCD action plan when assessing whether a patient has any life-threatening conditions and if any immediate first aid is necessary. DRSABCD refers to:

- D (Danger)
- R (Response)
- S (Send for help)
- A (Airway)
- B (Breathing)
- C (CPR)
- D (Defibrillation)

The course was kindly subsidised by the Light Regional Council through a Community Development Grant that the Koonunga Ag Bureau received.

## From the Inbox...

- **Save the Date:** Angaston Ag Bureau Hogget Competition, 23 March.
- [Barossa Pasture Principles Group](#): 22 March and 17 April, Freeling.
- [Ag Ex Forum](#): 5 and 6 April, Adelaide.
- [NRM Science Conference 2018](#) April 10, Adelaide

## Your BIGG Contacts

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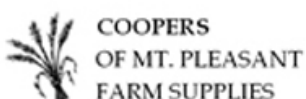
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