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From the desk of the Managing Director in October 2009

Dear friends

CRC-REP

Good News! Our proposal for a national Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation (CRC-REP) has been invited to stage 2 of the selection round. This means we will now prepare detailed proposals for one project within each of three Program areas for delivery in two weeks, and prepare for an interview in late November or early December. There will be more on this in next month's newsletter.

'The Institute' takes shape

DKCRC has consulted widely among its partners to explore support for, and various concepts of, an enduring desert research organisation, which we refer to as 'The Desert Institute' (not necessarily its final name). We have been thinking about this for a long time and our earlier unsuccessful Desert CRC bid spurred us to action. The plan for an Institute is driven by the strong belief of the DKCRC Board that the networks, collaborations and research results built up over the past six years of the DKCRC must be preserved and carried on in order to achieve their full value to Australia.

The Board envisions the aims of the institute as to:

- continue the processes applied by the DKCRC and Ninti One to:
 - coordinate activity among desert partners across borders and organisations
 - use this coordination to provide greater critical mass in approaching desert challenges
- provide national and international links to further desert research interests
- work to bring investment and new opportunities to its partners.

Once the DKCRC Board has considered the consultants' report and recommendations, further involvement and advice from partners will be sought.

Camels in our sights



Our big camel control project is truly up and running. The Australian Government has now received the draft project proposal, candidates for National Project Coordinator have been interviewed and contract negotiations will hopefully take place this month.

The operational plan has changed slightly. It is still based on the Management Zones at a high level but initial on-ground operations will be based on tenure – as that seems to be the one

common element that governs what can and can't be done, and by whom, for all states and territories. The project will roll out in 1 year work-plans, each built on the results of the previous year.

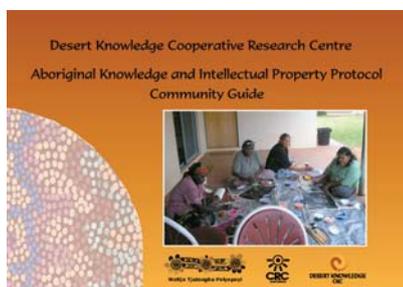
The three areas targeted for Year 1 of the project (2009/10) are the Pilbara, the Simpson Desert and the border area of SA/NT/WA. Different removal/management strategies will be used in each area and the various methods assessed against parameters such as cost, efficiency and biodiversity impacts.

Napperby vision



The DKCRC Board had its latest meeting at Napperby Station, NT, where members were most impressed to see DKCRC's Remote Livestock Management System (RLMS) in action, with cattle busily recording, weighing and even drafting themselves as they came in for a drink. This is undoubtedly the way of the future for pastoralism, adding to the major savings already achievable through our work on remote monitoring and operation of water points. The Board especially commended the vision of pastoralist Roy Chisholm, who saw the potential of this brilliant new livestock technology and has been willing to work with our researchers to make it a reality for his industry.

IP launch



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Tom Calma gave a great speech at the successful launch of DKCRC's *Aboriginal Knowledge and Intellectual Property Protocol Community Guide* in the Federal Parliament recently. "This is an important moment in the very long story of Aboriginal knowledge," he said. "It opens up a way for us to share our wisdom with others without fearing its loss, misuse or abuse, in a way that protects its integrity and its Aboriginal ownership. It will set fair rules for those who wish to access it and benefit from it in a manner that will be respectful."

There was much praise for the plain-language explanation for how IP, a complex topic at the best of times, actually works. This was thanks to the hard work and generosity of our partners at Waltja Tjuṯangku Palyapayi Aboriginal Corporation, whose members helped to prepare it. The suggestion was made that the Community Guide to IP should be in every library in Australia as well as be widely distributed across the research world. See for yourself at: <http://www.desertknowledgecrc.com.au/researchimpact/enduserpublications.html>

Traditional medicine



Patricia Gunter has developed a business making and selling medicines derived from bush products.

Ruth Davies recently attended a national forum run by the National Institute of Complementary Medicine which directs nationally coordinated research into the best evidenced treatments. One area of their work is traditional medicines, which is currently not well coordinated.

Discussion focused on the need to coordinate traditional medicine better in Australia and the benefits this can bring to Aboriginal health. At the moment we are not doing a very good job of research, accreditation and licensing traditional Indigenous medicines. Other issues include ways to protect Aboriginal IP and the need for research to be driven by the people who own the traditional medicine.

As some key invitees in the Aboriginal health area could not attend, it was felt the remit of the group couldn't be further developed without their input. However, everyone wants the discussion to continue – perhaps at the CRCA Conference in Alice Springs in May 2010.

The Big Dirt



Brisbane River under the weight of desert dirt.

Image: Robbo50 via ABC Contribute, with permission.

You might think this a reference to the recent event when 5 million tonnes of desert Australia visited Sydney, Brisbane, Canberra and towns in between – but no, it's to say we have held over the October *desert dirt* until early in 2010, when we plan to put out a bumper issue reporting on the outstanding achievements and outcomes of DKCRC research during its lifetime. This is one you won't want to miss.

iOutback™ movie and survey

The iOutback project is about answering the urgent need for better communication — not just for safety purposes but also to improve the access that desert tourism businesses have to their target markets. This technology will help desert travellers communicate with each other and with the industry and emergency services, and to promote it the project has made a promotional film that can be viewed from our website here: <http://www.desertknowledgecrc.com.au/research/4wdtourism.html>

or from YouTube here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79lxdJM4oG8>

There is also a follow up survey available here: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/iOutbackSurvey> which is very quick to complete and is designed to help the development of iOutback™.

DKCRC in the news

In the month of September the media coverage has slowed down. There were 28 stories, half of them about camel management, a quarter about the launch of the Aboriginal Knowledge and Intellectual Property Protocol Community Guide and the rest spread between the CRC-REP and the Bush Products and DesertBiz™ projects.

Radio continues to be our most popular vehicle for getting news out there: 13 stories were covered on the radio compared with 9 online and 6 in print.

Recent DKCRC publications

Reports

Sanders W. 2009. Fueling large group dominance and repeating past mistakes: A critique of the Northern Territory local government electoral system. DKCRC Report 59. Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre, Alice Springs.

Working papers

Ryder M, Walsh F, Douglas J, Waycott M, Robson H, Singh Z, De Sousa Majer M, Collins T, White J and Cheers B. 2009. Sustainable bush produce systems: Progress Report 2004–2006, DKCRC Working Paper 31, Desert Knowledge CRC, Alice Springs.

Evans L. 2009. Recording Indigenous knowledge on electronic databases. DKCRC Working Paper 33. Desert Knowledge CRC, Alice Springs.

Crouch A. 2009. The community phone project: An overview. DKCRC Working paper 46. DKCRC. Alice Springs.

Cleary J. 2009. Perspectives on developing new cooperative arrangements for bush-harvested bush tomatoes from desert Australia. DKCRC Working Paper 48. Desert Knowledge CRC, Alice Springs.

Central Australian Grazing Strategies project working paper series by D. Walsh:

Spelling in central Australia: Alcoota Station, NT. DKCRC Working Paper 49

Conservative stocking in central Australia: Lyndavale Station, NT. DKCRC Working Paper 50

An extended rest grazing system in central Australia: Narwietooma Station, NT. DKCRC Working Paper 51

A water-controlled rotational grazing system: Rockhampton Downs, NT. DKCRC Working Paper 52

A steer paddock system in central Australia: Umbearra Station, NT. DKCRC Working Paper 53

A maximum sustainable stocking rate system in central Australia: Woodgreen Station, NT. DKCRC Working Paper 54

'Country-condition dependent' grazing in the goldfields: Bulga Downs, WA. DKCRC Working Paper 55

Cell grazing in the Pilbara: Cheela Plains, WA. DKCRC Working Paper 56

The holistic management approach: Etiwanda Station, NSW. DKCRC Working Paper 57

A cow rotation in the Gascoyne: Mt Augustus, WA. DKCRC Working Paper 58

Time-controlled rotational grazing: Tara Station, Qld. DKCRC Working Paper 59

Rotational grazing and conservative stocking rates in the northern savanna: West Eisey, NT. DKCRC Working Paper 60

Flexible rotational grazing: Wyndham Station, NSW. DKCRC Working Paper 61

Interviews:

Link to interview on Canadian radio (CBC): host Anna Maria Tremonti interviews Jan Ferguson.

<http://www.desertknowledgecrc.com.au/research/feralcamels.html> (link on the right hand side of the page)

Movies:

iOutback movie: http://desertknowledgecrc.com.au/view/110816/dkrc_sub/ioutback_8482-movie.html

With best wishes
Jan