

Rangelands Living Skin

Expression of interest

Calling for expressions of interest from rangeland producers and stakeholders in NSW to be part of our Rangelands Living Skin Project.

About

The Rangelands Living Skin project has been designed in close collaboration with producers to focus on soil, plants, animals and people as the living skin of the rangelands. It is about identifying practical, cost-effective practices that regenerate the rangelands to support production now and into the future. This means more reliability from year to year, improved pasture health, improved groundcover, more feed for livestock and recovery of plants after dry conditions.

The project aims to measure the impact of different practices on productivity, business and environmental sustainability. This research will underpin innovation in rangelands management to aid in ongoing prosperity and a social licence to operate.

The aim of this collaborative project is to:

- evaluate new ways to diversify farm income in the rangelands, including carbon farming and incentives for maintaining groundcover
- look at alternate management approaches that aim to improve financial and environmental outcomes for long-term landscape and business viability
- research management practices that are outcomes focused to increase carrying capacity, composition, cover and carbon, in the rangelands.

Collaborative research will be undertaken initially on four rangeland production systems (Producer Demonstration Sites) with wider implementation across the NSW rangelands to follow.

The four R&D sites are:

1. Gus and Kelly Whyte, Wyndham Station and Willow Point (Wentworth, NSW)
2. Andrew and Megan Mosely, Etiwanda (Cobar, NSW)
3. Tony and Meredith Thompson, The Angle (Bourke, NSW)
4. Graham and Cathy Finlayson, Bokhara Plains (Brewarrina, NSW)

How can I get involved?

Being part of the Rangelands Living Skin Project provides you with the opportunity to learn alongside other practitioners and researchers, and test and refine your management goals through training, field days, resources and networking.

There are **two main ways to be involved**:

1. Participating as a project 'observer' (note: this is limited to 20 properties)

Being an observer for the duration of the project (2021 to 2024) means you will be provided with training opportunities in grazing management, soil biology, pasture assessment, carbon farming and soil monitoring. You will have the opportunity to visit the four Producer Demonstration Sites and participate in on-farm training with practitioners, researchers and coaches.

You will be provided with a soil monitoring kit and assistance to design and monitor the impacts of a new management intervention. You will get support to monitor changes in ground cover, feed availability and soil health, and be part of a producer group to discuss results and next steps. You will be supported to report the benefits of your management in regenerating the rangelands.

In addition, observer properties will be mapped (using property boundaries based on title information) and then zoned to identify comparable areas across the property. Zones will be categorised using remotely sensed and digital layers of major biophysical features including soil (NSW digital soil maps at 30 m resolution), vegetation (woody cover and fractional cover) and landform (DEM and western land systems). Observer study sites will be compared with regional averages of fractional cover for the previous 20 years (baseline) and during the project.

2. Keep in touch

Keep in touch with the project to receive notices of field days and workshops and hear about new resources. Being part of this group means you can ask for advice from our skilled project team and learn about how you can implement and monitor changes on your property.

Participation requirements for observers

- manage a pastoral property in the Western Division of NSW
- commit to being involved for the duration of the project (2021 to 2024)
- provide property boundaries for mapping and accessing products tailored for your property
- report annual livestock numbers and class
- Commit to attending project events (e.g. grazing clinics, soil biology workshops and 'keep in touch' days) to identify management/intervention options that you could consider
- report any management interventions
- participate in the producer-led citizen science program (soil and vegetation monitoring) in autumn and spring each year
- optional: participate in carbon accounting and carbon footprint assessments for sheep and beef farms
- optional: participate in Life Cycle Assessment to integrate market effects into the carbon accounts generated.



Interested?

Please email your EOI information (below) to luke.beange@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

RANGELANDS LIVING SKIN EOI

Applicant name:

Property name (if more than one, please list and indicate primary property with *):

Address:

Phone number:

Email address:

Property size (ha):

Total domestic stock number and type:

Land management practices:

Participate as:

Observer Y/N

Keep in Touch Y/N

Other: