

Final report

BeefUp Forums – WA 2024

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Abstract

BeefUp forums are regional events designed and delivered for the northern Australian beef industry with the purpose to raise awareness of relevant research, development, extension and adoption (RDE&A). Attendees at BeefUp forums are provided with an opportunity improve their knowledge of a broad spectrum of topics, spanning animal production, land and feedbase management and business and people management.

The Western Australian 2024 BeefUp Forums were held as collaborative MLA, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), and KPCA events and held in Fitzroy Crossing (Kimberley) on the 7th and 8th March; and Newman and Roy Hill Station (Pilbara) on the 23rd and 24th May.

The programs for both events were collaboratively developed by representatives from the KPCA, DPIRD, MLA, relevant NRM groups and the Kimberley or Pilbara Regional Beef Research Committee (RBRC). Suitable dates, venues and presenters were identified and sourced by these committee members.

The BeefUp Forums promote collaboration, innovation, and knowledge exchange, enabling producers to tackle challenges, take advantage of emerging opportunities, and contribute to the success and sustainability of the Australian beef industry.

The events were successful in attracting 120 attendees, including 50 producers representing 23 pastoral businesses, managing 6.2m hectares of pastoral lands and 65,700 head of cattle. Attendees indicated an 8.8 /10 satisfaction rating with the attendance at the events.

Executive summary

Background

BeefUp forums are regional events designed and delivered for the northern Australian beef industry, particularly producers. The purpose of these events is to raise awareness of relevant research, development, extension and adoption (RDE&A) initiatives and to highlight industry program and opportunities that may benefit the north Australian beef supply chain.

This project delivered two BeefUp forums in northern WA in 2024 through a partnership between MLA, the Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen's Association (KPCA) and WA DPIRD. One event was held in the Kimberley and one event was held in the Pilbara.

Objectives

1. Event attendance of at least 30 producers representing 30 pastoral businesses and 10 million ha under management, as well as engage and encourage participation from industry and supply chain representatives.
 - 50 producer attendees representing 23 businesses and management of 6.22m ha pastoral land and 65,700 cattle.
 - 70 industry attendees
2. At least 90% of attendees indicate they gain an increased awareness and/or knowledge of industry RDE&A from the event(s).
 - 56% of attendees completed the survey forms following the event. Those that completed the surveys indicated an 81% increased awareness of industry initiatives as positive outcomes of the events.
3. Average attendee satisfaction score for the event is at least 8/10.
 - Attendees indicated an 8.8 satisfaction rating and a value for time attending of 8.4
4. MLA, KPCA and WA DPIRD are provided with an opportunity to highlight their programs to producers in northern WA via these events.
 - MLA, KPCA and DPIRD were all involved in the presentations at both BeefUps with all having the opportunity to host an exhibition booth and liaise with pastoralists and industry at the ample opportunities.

Methodology

The Western Australian 2024 BeefUp Forums were held in Fitzroy Crossing (Kimberley) on the 7th and 8th March; and Newman and Roy Hill Station (Pilbara) on the 23rd and 24th May.

The programs for both events were collaboratively developed by representatives from the KPCA, DPIRD, MLA and the Kimberley or Pilbara Regional Beef Research Committee (RBRC) with Associated Advertising and Promotion (AA&P) engaged to undertake the logistics.

Results/key findings

- The collaboration of MLA, DPIRD and KPCA to present the 2024 Western Australian BeefUp program has been of positive benefit to the north Western Australian beef industry.
- An organising committee of on-the-ground pastoral and industry representatives ensured topics were relevant and engaging.

- Panel sessions and presentations by fellow pastoralists were appreciated by the pastoral attendees.

Benefits to industry

The BeefUp forums played a crucial role in:

- Increasing knowledge of research, development and adoption opportunities in the red meat sector by Kimberley and Pilbara pastoralists
- Key opportunity for the presentation of region-specific topics by field specialists greatly enhanced attendees' knowledge and propensity for adoption.
- Provision of two successful events that would not have occurred without collaboration between MLA, DPIRD and KPCA.

Future research and recommendations

Based on the successful outcomes and positive feedback, it is recommended that the forums continue to be delivered in northern Australia. Specific recommendations include:

- Increased utilisation of panel sessions and experienced producer presentations for greater engagement by attendees
- Capacity for host organisation to secure surplus funds for replication of the event in future years.
- Removal of MDC management fee for provision of a MLA branded product.

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1. Background

1.1 BeefUp Purpose

BeefUp forums are regional events designed and delivered for the northern Australian beef industry, particularly producers. The purpose of these one or two day events is to raise awareness of relevant research, development, extension and adoption (RDE&A) initiatives and signpost attendees to industry programs that will support their enterprise productivity and profitability. Attendees at BeefUp forums are provided with an opportunity improve their knowledge of a broad spectrum of topics, spanning animal production, land and feedbase management and business and people management.

Information is delivered through presentations, written resources, demonstrations/workshop style sessions, discussions and direct engagement with research and extension providers. Attendees are also encouraged to build their industry networks and engage with speakers and staff who can provide further information/support following the event.

BeefUp forums are delivered in different locations each year, with an aim to reach producers across north Australia's diverse regions and production systems. The program for each forum is unique and developed by a Working Group of extension providers, producers (including members of the local Regional Beef Research Committee) and project partners to address themes that are most relevant to producers in the area.

The Kimberley and Pilbara BeefUp forums were presented as a collaborative event between the Western Australian Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPRID), the Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen's Association (KPCA) and MLA.

1.2 Objectives

The project would deliver two BeefUp forums in 2024 – one in the Kimberley and one in the Pilbara – with targets as follows:

- Event attendance of at least 30 producers representing 30 pastoral businesses and 10 million ha under
- management, as well as engage and encourage participation from industry and supply chain
- representatives.
- At least 90% of attendees indicate they gain an increased awareness and/or knowledge of industry RDE&A
- from the event(s).
- Average attendee satisfaction score for the event is at least 8/10.
- MLA, KPCA and WA DPRID are provided with an opportunity to highlight their programs to producers in northern WA via these events.

Delivery of the BeefUp forums includes the following deliverables (unless otherwise agreed in writing):

- An event program.
- A proofed and formatted PowerPoint deck, including slides and key messages from all presenters.

- A proofed and formatted event handbook including presenter bios, session overviews, key messages and
- a list of related programs/resources for each session.
- A report summarising the event feedback and key metrics, as outlined in the Additional details section.

2. Methodology

The project delivered two BeefUp forums in northern WA in 2024 through a partnership between MLA, the Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen's Association (KPCA) and WA DPIRD. One event was held in the Kimberley and one event was held in the Pilbara.

Associated Advertising & Promotions (AA&P) coordinated the events. AA&P is responsible for all aspects of planning and delivery. The Event Coordinator will take the lead role in organising and running each Forum.

The Event Coordinator responsibilities include:

- Venue – location, suitability assessment, catering options, PA and audio-visual requirements, set up including seating, trade displays, catering and AV;
- Accommodation and travel – speaker and MLA presenter accommodation and travel bookings, vehicle hire;
- Logistics – coordinate all logistics required for BeefUp Forum setup and delivery;
- Registration – prepare registration sheets, maintain registration data base, name tags;
- Evaluation and skills audits – Event performance and engagement metrics are collected for each event using an evaluation form and post-event follow-up process to identify producer adoption outcomes. A detailed event summary, including overall satisfaction, highest-rated speaker, and producer engagement session feedback (where conducted), is provided to the MLA post-event.
- Manage the operating expenses budget which will include venue hire, catering, printing, non-MLA presenter fees, travel and accommodation, expenses required to maintain travel kits and any incidentals

2.1 Program Development

The Western Australian 2024 BeefUp Forums were held in Fitzroy Crossing (Kimberley) on the 7th and 8th March; and Newman and Roy Hill Station (Pilbara) on the 23rd and 24th May.

The programs for both events were collaboratively developed by representatives from the KPCA, DPIRD, MLA and the Kimberley or Pilbara Regional Beef Research Committee (RBRC). Suitable dates, venues and presenters were identified and sourced by these committee members.

These working groups have a strong understanding of the northern Australian beef industry and the key issues and challenges faced by producers in that region. This localised approach ensures that the topics and sessions delivered at the forums are highly pertinent and customized to meet the specific needs of the area. Through the involvement of stakeholders deeply connected to the local industry,

the program is carefully curated to address vital concerns, explore emerging opportunities, and offer practical solutions.

The BeefUp Forums also serve as a platform to showcase MLA-funded projects like the Pilbara Innovation Partnership, aimed at increasing awareness of emerging research, development, and adoption (RD&A) for the industry. Prior to the event, speakers are provided with guidelines and templates to ensure consistent presentations, and they are also equipped with social media templates to promote the event through their networks. Moreover, AA&P collaborates with speakers to arrange interviews with local media, thereby enhancing outreach and engagement.

2.2 Communications

A thorough communication strategy was implemented to engage producers and industry attendees for the events. Before the events, efforts were made to raise awareness and encourage registrations through the following means:

- Sending direct emails with a "Save the Date" notice via the MLA database and industry/association databases.
- Sharing the BeefUp Forum flyer containing event details and registration information with key networks and promoting it extensively on social media platforms such as Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook.
- Distributed through MLA, KPCA, DPIRD and AA&P networks
- Utilising the MLA website and social media for marketing and advertising purposes.

Registrations were undertaken through the MLA BeefUp portals.

Promotional content was provided by MLA and distributed through MLA, KPCA, DPIRD and AA&P.

2.3 Trade Stands

Local businesses, government agencies, service providers, and not-for-profit organisations had the opportunity to participate in the BeefUp Forums by setting up trade stands. These businesses and organisations were involved through sponsorship. The process for selecting these trade stands is managed through an Expression of Interest process and submitted for approval by KPCA to ensure that they align with the program's objectives and values and are relevant to the audience. Approval is needed to ensure that the trade stands provide relevant and valuable information to attendees. This approval process helps maintain the integrity and cohesiveness of the BeefUp Forums, contributing to their success and relevance in the red meat industry.

2.4 Branding

Both BeefUp events were co-branded as MLA, DPIRD and KPCA events. The collaborative approach to the events resulted in a program that was producer focused and developed to meet the expectation and needs of the region's pastoralists. The ability to draw on the skill set of the three organisations for input, presentations and promotion of the events increased the attendance by both pastoralists and industry and their value in attending.



3. Results

3.1 Kimberley BeefUp – 7-8 March Fitzroy Crossing

The Kimberley BeefUp, held at the Fitzroy Crossing Lodge and the Fitzroy Crossing Rodeo Grounds, commenced with a luncheon on Thursday, 7 March, followed by an afternoon session including market insights, supply chain, pasture management and animal welfare. Pastoralists and industry had the opportunity meet and discuss issues of importance to their industry during the welcome drinks and dinner that evening, prior to the program recommencement at the rodeo grounds the following morning. Attendees benefitted from the efforts of Napier Downs Station, who transported bulls more than 400km to enable an in-depth practical demonstration and discussion on bull genetics. Sessions on AgTech and workforce brought the event to a close.



Event Feedback

Total Participants – 53

Producers Attending – 28

Producer Businesses in Attendance – 18

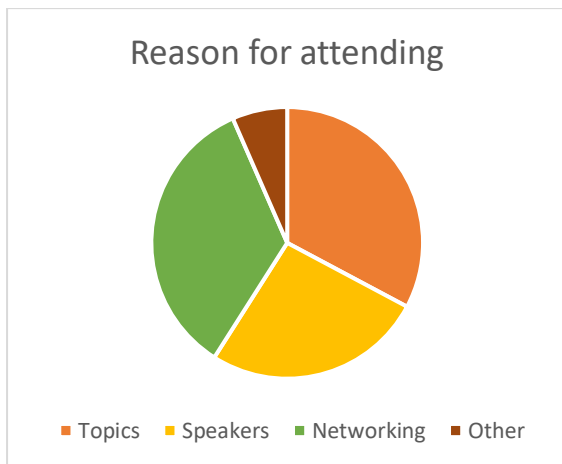
Total area under management – 4.66 million hectares

Total cattle under management – 33,600

Industry Attending (including sponsors) - 25

Note: area and livestock numbers only counted once for each business

BeefUp Attendee Evaluation (55% completion of evaluation form)



Overall ratings

- Satisfaction rating – 9.1/10
- Value rating – 8.6/10
- Intent to change – 85%
- Skills or knowledge increase – 85%

Session ratings

MLA Market Insights	What's new in the Kimberley	Ag Tech a Producers perspective	Genetic Selection Tools	Pick your bull	Bull Soundness Assessment	Managing variable seasons	Harvest Road integrated Supply chain	Panel - looking to the season ahead	Finding the best team	R&D for animal wellbeing
8.34	8.48	9.48	8.81	8.40	8.91	9.64	9.13	9.09	9.00	9.14

Other event feedback

Improvements for next time:

- Separate lunch area from forum area
- More interactive activities
- Longer panel sessions

- Information sheet on terms and definitions for bull section so people don't get left behind
- Something more active after lunch
- Have the panel discussions set up

Topics put forward for RBRC discussion, or next event:

- Local supply chains and stabilities for example hay and other inputs.
- SWOT of local industry supply chain and current areas to focus on
- Supply chains
- Female selection
- Provision of increased training opportunities for staff eg certificates in agriculture.
- What is the holistic cowfect of our Northern Beef Industry
- Diversification case studies.
- Discussion of the supply chain's current situation in the local area.

3.2 Pilbara BeefUp – 23-24 May Newman and Roy Hill Station

A mid-morning first-day commencement of the Pilbara Beef Up, held at Mia Mia in Newman, provided an intensive day of presentations and panel discussions focussing on market insights, AgTech, landscape and pasture management and maximising outcomes from grass-fed beef. Roy Hill station hosted an engaging field day component of the program which included working dog demonstrations, paddock tour and presentations on genetics and bull selection.



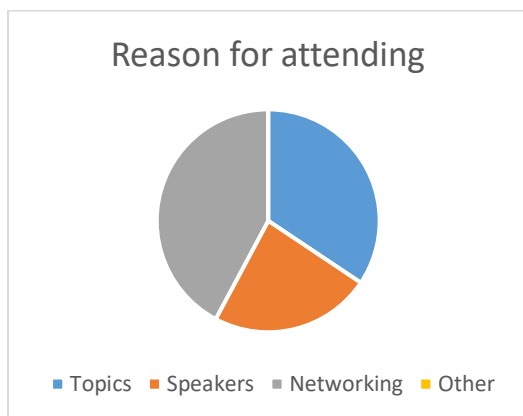
Event Feedback

1. **Total Participants – 67**
2. **Producers Attending – 22**
3. **Producer Businesses in Attendance – 5**
4. **Total area under management – 1.56 million hectares**

5. **Total cattle under management** – 32,100
6. **Industry Attending (including sponsors)** - 45

Note: area and livestock numbers only counted once for each business

BeefUp Attendee Evaluation (58% completion of evaluation form)



Overall ratings

- Satisfaction rating – 8.5/10
- Value rating – 8.2/10
- Intent to change – 81%
- Skills or knowledge increase – 77%

Session ratings

MLA Market Insights	Ag Tech Update	What's new in the Pilbara	Emerging opportunities around Soil and Water Panel	Landscape Management	Environmental Credentials	Working Dog Basics	What are buyers looking for	Current and Emerging Genetic	Biosecurity Panel	Paddock Tour
8.37	8.33	8.25	8.15	8.00	8.03	9.04	8.00	8.30	8.22	8.53

Other event feedback

Improvements for next time:

- Keep building direct relevance for pastoral business & good feed
- More interactive talks
- More owner and manager presentation
- Timing of events in the Pilbara is best in March-April

Topics put forward for RBRC discussion, or next event:

- Soil - national soil action plan

- Working dogs & sales
- More about cattle fodder supplies
- In-depth understanding of cattle nutrition over life
- Early weaner feeding programs

3.2.1 Success in Meeting Objectives

Objective	Outcome	Comments
Event attendance of:		
At least 30 producers	50	Producer attendance exceeded expectations given the time frames available for presentation. All producers attending were engaged and contributed to discussions.
Representing 30 pastoral businesses	23	Whilst the pastoral businesses represented was less than projected, the businesses that attended demonstrated commitment to holistic improvement by organising staff and supply chain attendance.
10million hectares under management	6.22m	Achieving representation of management of 6.22m hectares northern Western Australian pastoral properties at the two BeefUp events provides key opportunities for best practice change across a significant portion of Kimberley and Pilbara pastoral lands, undertaken by motivated and engaged pastoralists.
Cattle under management	65,700	As above the opportunity to provide pastoralists managing a total of 67,500 head of cattle with current research and adoption opportunities was of immense industry benefit.
Industry representation	70	Both BeefUp Forums were attended by a significant number of industry representatives across many supply chain sectors.
90% of attendees gain increased awareness of industry RDE&A	81%	56% of attendees completed the survey forms following the event. Those that completed the surveys indicated an 81% increased awareness of industry initiatives as positive outcomes of the events. This level of increased awareness may be reflective of the calibre of attendees being highly engaged and motivated to seek out information and opportunities.
Intent for practice change	83%	83% of producer attendees are focussed on utilising information attained at the BeefUp events to initiate practice change on-station – a positive outcome from the events.
Average attendee satisfaction score at least 8/10	8.8	The higher than planned average satisfaction with the event rating is credit to the organising

		committee's focus on presenting key topics of interest and concern using trusted and valued presenters.
Value Rating	8.4	A value rating of the time spent at the events of 8.4 out of 10 is again testament to the organising committee's focus on meeting the information and assistance requirements of the regions' pastoralists.
MLA, KPCA and DPIRD have opportunity to highlight programs		<p>MLA, KPCA and DPIRD programs were all featured in both BeefUp events with all sessions rated higher than 8 out of 10 for satisfaction by participants. The BeefUp programs are attached in Appendix One.</p> <p>In addition, MLA, KPCA and DPIRD all had the opportunity to host an information stand at each BeefUp and both events provided extensive opportunities for producer and industry engagement.</p> <p>A copy of the Kimberley BeefUp handbook is available at fitzroy-crossing-beefup-aap_handbook-v9-final.pdf (mla.com.au)</p> <p>A copy of the Pilbara BeefUp handbook is available at mla.com.au/globalassets/mla-corporate/extensions-training-and-tools/documents/newman-beefup-aap_handbook-pdf-final.pdf</p>

4. Conclusion

The collaboration of MLA, DPIRD and KPCA to present the 2024 Western Australian BeefUp program was a positive one with extensive benefit to the beef industry supply chain.

Initiating an organising committee consisting of representatives of the Kimberley and Pilbara Regional Beef Research Committee (RBRC) and on-the-ground staff of KPCA and DPIRD, coupled with MLA's input, ensured the BeefUp topics were relevant and engaging to the region's pastoralists. The increased use of panel sessions and the inclusion of pastoralists in these panels provided a higher level of engagement by BeefUp attendees. This format will be adopted to a greater degree in KPCA's future events of this nature.

5. Future research and recommendations

The capacity to host collaborative BeefUp events in the future is limited by the ability to source 60% seed funding from a supportive organisation. Fortunately, WA DPIRD was able to provide this seed funding with additional sponsorship funding, organised by KPCA, to meet the budget shortfall sourced.

Whilst BeefUp Forums are a valuable inclusion in the regions' extension and adoption activities, a deterrent to an organisation undertaking the 'hosting' role for the BeefUp Forums is the risk of sustaining a loss should the seed funding and MDC funding not cover actual expenses whilst being unable to derive any financial benefit should the event run at a surplus. In addition, that the host organisation must contribute the MLA MDC management levy for a collaborative MLA key event is of concern.

Contributions from pastoralists in providing resources and/or hosting the events, usually at considerable effort or cost, are integral to the success of these events and add significant value to the attendee's outcomes from the events. This was indicated in the evaluation of the session ratings. These contributions should be recognised in developing event budgets or programs.

The Kimberley and Pilbara BeefUp events were a credit to all involved in the funding, organisation and attendance and the north Western Australian pastoral industry is richer in the knowledge of current research, adoption and extension because of them.

6. Appendix

6.1 Kimberley BeefUp Program

Agenda – Day 1

Arrival and registrations from 12pm	
12pm Lunch at Fitzroy Lodge	
Movers and shakers – opportunities for the Kimberley's beef industry	
Welcome	Barb Camp / Producer Chair, Kimberley Regional Beef Research Committee
Market insights	Sarah Strachan / Group Manager – Adoption & Commercial Services, MLA Valeska / Regional Manager – South East Asia, MLA Spencer Whitaker / Market Development Manager – Asia Pacific, MLA
What's new in the Kimberley	Panel discussion with Q&A, facilitated by Harriet Bawden, MLA Sarah Strachan / Group Manager – Adoption & Commercial Services, MLA Trevor Price / Program Manager – Northern Beef Development, WA DPIRD Bron Christensen / CEO, KPCA
2.20pm Break	
The people behind the business	
Finding the best team	Q&A with recruitment agencies and station staff, facilitated by Lauren Bell, KPCA James Camp / Producer Beth Schafer / Producer Raq's Kitchen
3.40pm travel to Fitzroy Rodeo Grounds	
Buying better bulls	
Current and emerging genetic selection tools	Matt Walcott / Australian Genetics & Breeding Unit
Bull soundness assessment	Michael Laurence / Program Manager – Animal Wellbeing, MLA
Pick a winner	Facilitated by Matt Walcott and Michael Laurence
Wrap-up	Barb Camp / Producer Chair, Kimberley RBRC
5.30pm return to Fitzroy Lodge for drinks and dinner	



Agenda – Day 2

Arrival and registrations from 12pm	
7am Breakfast	
What's in store for 2024	
Managing feed and land resources	Jardine MacDonald / Program Manager, Rangelands NRM
Harvest Road's integrated supply chain	Ben Dwyer / Chief Operating Officer, Harvest Road
Looking to the season ahead	Panel discussion with Q&A, facilitated by Barb Camp
10.15am Morning tea	
Innovation for the Kimberley	
AgTech - a producer's perspective	Chris Morrow / Producer, Nerrima Station Jo Stoate / Producer, Anna Plains Mel McDonald / Northern Hub Node Manager, KPCA
R&D for animal wellbeing	Michael Laurence / Program Manager – Animal Wellbeing, MLA
Wrap-up	Barb Camp / Producer Chair, Kimberley RBRC
12pm Lunch served (take-away option for those wanting to hit the road)	
1pm Close	

6.2 Pilbara BeefUp Program



Pilbara, Thursday 23 – Friday 24 May 2024

Venue:	Newman Shire Hall (Day 1) and Roy Hill Station (Day 2)
Time:	Starts at 10.30am on Thursday 23 May Finishes at 1.30pm on Friday 24 May
Cost:	\$50pp, includes lunches and dinner
Register:	BeefUp Forum Newman
RSVP:	20 May 2024

Join us for the 2024 Pilbara BeefUp forum to hear about the latest in local and world-leading research and technologies for the northern beef industry.

- Gain insights on improving livestock, land and business performance.
- Connect with other producers, advisors and researchers.
- Hear about how new practices and technologies are being used on-farm in your region.
- Find out about the programs, tools and resources available to you.

What you can expect at the Newman and Roy Hill BeefUp:

- Get in the yard for a bull assessment and selection demonstration.
- Gain insights on domestic and export markets, including updates from Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines.
- Hear from the supply chain about what they're looking for now and into the future.
- Hear first-hand about the experience of producers using new AgTech.
- Delve into new tools for monitoring and managing land condition.
- Learn about carbon and nature-based markets.
- All meals included, with plenty of time to catch up.



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Agenda – Day 1

Arrival and registrations from 9–10am	
Morning tea with sponsors	
Opportunities for the Pilbara beef industry	
10.45am Welcome	Katrina Weir and Georgie Currey / Pilbara Regional Beef Research Committee
11am Market insights	David Beatty / Group Manager – Productivity & Animal Wellbeing, MLA Valeska / Regional Manager – South-East Asia, MLA Spencer Whitaker / Market Development Manager – Asia Pacific, MLA Fiona Dempster & Montana Walsh Baddeley / University of WA
11.40pm AgTech - a producer's perspective	Lauren Gibson / KPCA TBC
Lunch 12:40 (60mins)	
1.40pm What's new in the Pilbara	Panel discussion with Q&A, facilitated by Andrew Morelli, MLA David Beatty / Group Manager – Productivity & Animal Wellbeing, MLA Trevor Price / Program Manager – Northern Beef Development, WA DPIRD Bron Christensen / CEO, KPCA Liz Moss / Pilbara Innovation Partnership, DPRID
Emerging opportunities	
2.30pm Emerging opportunities around land, soil and water	Panel discussion facilitated by Jo Williams TBC
3.10pm Afternoon tea (20mins)	
Landscape management	
3.30pm Landscape management in the Pilbara Drones in the landscape	Richard Marver / Contour consulting
4.50pm Environmental Credentials for grassfed beef platform – demo	MLA / Environmental Sustainability team
5.15pm Wrap-up	Katrina and Georgie Currey / Pilbara Regional Beef Research Committee
5.30pm Drinks and dinner	



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Agenda – Day 2

Breakfast from 6am 8am arrival at Roy Hill yards (tea/coffee on arrival)	
Paddock tour	Roy Hill Station
Morning tea – 9.30am	
Animal welfare	
10am Working dog basics and weaner management	Neil McDonald / Outback working dogs
Selecting the best animals	
11am What are buyers looking for?	Fiona Dempster / The University of Western Australia
11.40am Current and emerging genetic tools	Matt Wolcott / Animal Genetics & Breeding Unit Billi Marshal / Imperial Bovine Breeding Services
1pm producer case study	TBC
1.20pm Wrap-up	Katrina Weir and Georgie Currey / Pilbara Regional Beef Research Committee
1.30pm Lunch served (take-away option for those wanting to hit the road)	



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