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Long road ahead

The *Vegetation Management Act* is being considered by a Parliamentary Committee ahead of putting recommendations up to the Government in June. The deadline for written submissions has closed. However, we understand that the Committee intends to get out to the regions for some face to face meetings soon.

We have spent some time reviewing the proposed amendments.

A critical issue for many of our members is a blanket prohibition on clearing for high-value irrigated agriculture.

There are a host of issues to consider. No one wants to see the resource base damaged for the sake of ill-advised development. But locking land up so that it cannot be responsibly managed is equally damaging.

This is a time for new opportunities from new perspectives. We support economic incentives for land managers to diversify their operations and cultivate increasingly healthy landscapes.

The proposed amendments could be better aimed at opening up a sustainable future for the Gulf.

We've put our concerns into a submission which you can review at: <http://www.northerngulf.com.au/news/2016/188> (*The document is written for policy-makers, so please excuse the language!*)

We have no budget to support this sort of policy work, even though it ought to be part of how we represent your interests to the government.

If you have specific ideas for lobbying politicians or wish to get involved, we recommend you work through **Etheridge Shire Council** or the **Gulf Cattlemans Association**.

Resigning Directors thanked

We have been fortunate to receive the energies and passion of **Michelle Martin** (Vice Chair) and **Kim Gaynor** (Industry Sector) over the past few months. This has been a particularly difficult period for the organisation. Despite mutual good will and best endeavours, both Michelle and Kim decided to resign from the Board citing irreconcilable differences with the current leadership. We wish them both the best in their future endeavours.



Renewing connections and building trust in the Gulf: (L-R) Ian Adcock, Lance Owens, Janet Busch, John Brisbin

Board meeting: Normanton 10 May

Your Directors will travel to Normanton for the next Board meeting. We're looking forward to hearing from regional members and organisations.

If you have issues or opportunities you'd like to get on the agenda, please contact your Sector Director (see list below).

Financial update

Over the past four months we have been clawing our way back from the edge of a very difficult financial situation. The Australian and Queensland governments have required extensive explanations related to poor reporting and contract management in prior years.

The problems have been so severe that we will likely see a temporary

pause in two of our signature programmes, including BeefSense.

This is regrettable, but it's unavoidable. We will be working closely with our delivery partners to ensure a minimum of disruption in the community.

Throughout this journey toward recovery we've been generously supported by our regional neighbours, in particular Terrain and Cape York NRM.

The books have been corrected and our accountant is re-auditing the acquittals for 2014-15. The funding bodies have extended a lot of trust and are guiding us toward systemic improvements. They are confident that the current Northern Gulf Board and leadership are committed to properly handling contractual obligations.

We anticipate a favourable outcome for Northern Gulf, and that will mean a huge sigh of relief across the region. We'll be back on track, working with you, and focussed on the business ahead.



Go well, Trevor Parker!

One of our long-serving staff, Trevor Parker, will be leaving for a new opportunity just around the corner at the Mareeba DAF office. He's been offered a fantastic role involved with remote sensing to support productivity in the Banana, Avocado, and Macadamia farming industries.

Trevor has been a Northern Gulf institution, especially on the Tablelands, where his work focussed on efficient, data-driven farming and sustainable irrigation.

Trevor has been a leader in facilitating practice change and improved profitability.

We wish him all the best in the new role and promise to hit him up for some collaborative projects once he gets his feet on the ground.

Gulf Graziers' BeefUp: Tools and information to beef up your business

1-2 June at Mt Surprise

MLA is partnering with Northern Gulf and the Gulf Cattlemans Association to

put on this years' signature industry event. Barb Bishop will chair the Forum. We're expecting good representation from AUSTREX, updates on MLA research and extension activities, and an impressive showing from the trade exhibitors.

More details soon as the promotional material is finalised. For specific queries please contact Barb Bishop directly at: barbara@barbarabishop.com.au

Northern Gulf General Meeting: 2 June at Mt Surprise

On the back of the Gulf Graziers' BeefUp, we'll convene a General Meeting for members and supporters of Northern Gulf. Agenda will include:

- Chair's report and overview of finances
- Directors introductions and comments
- Resolution on Sectors and Membership
- General Business (members' questions)

More info to come closer to the date. **Please let us know of any agenda items you'd like to include in General Business** (chair@northerngulf.com.au)

Sector Directors

Conservation

Ellen Weber, 0439 778 051, conservation@northerngulf.com.au

Community

Ian Adcock, 0408 603 316, community@northerngulf.com.au

Indigenous

Janet Busch, 0400 109 598, indigenous@northerngulf.com.au

Local Government

Allan Holmes, 0498 977 632, localgovernment@northerngulf.com.au

Industry

(temp vacant), John Brisbin, 0407 471 565, chair@northerngulf.com.au



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