



Resourcing tomorrow's technology



Dubbo Project (DP) Community Newsletter

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Dubbo Project status

As a foundation to achieving financing, Alkane continues to seek fair and binding offtake agreements for the materials the Dubbo Project will produce. The inherent challenge is that potential customers are still mainly buying from China, and although they are interested in establishing a non-Chinese supply chain to diversify supply risk, they want to pay discounted prices to new entrants. Alkane's wholly owned subsidiary, Australian Strategic Materials (ASM), is not willing to become bound to an inferior pricing position; nor is it in Australia's national interests.

We are confident this situation will change soon. The Dubbo Project is well positioned, low risk and 'development ready', while market conditions for its products continue to tighten due to both China's domestic policies and global trade forces. As we continue to interface with the Australian Government and Export Credit Agencies to further the Project, we remain highly optimistic about its prospects.

Several groups have visited the site in the past several months, including foreign potential investors and ANU students looking at environmental management and mine site rehabilitation.

Making the most of the spring rains

The challenging drought conditions of the past year have demanded a great deal of forward and contingency planning by Toongi Pastoral Company (TPC), led by Farm Manager Fergus Job, along with the ability to be flexible and reactive to seize windows of opportunity as they've arisen.

The welcome spring rains in October presented just such an unexpected opportunity. Moisture and ground temperature readings indicated conditions were ideal for planting in one of the fields pre-prepared for a winter crop. With sorghum seed on hand for just such a contingency, the TPC team sowed in the third week of October, thereby making the most of the November rains as well.



Sorghum crop, December 2018

The result of both good planning and providence, the sorghum crop proved large, strong and highly nutritious. Instead of moving cattle in to graze at the end of November as originally planned, TPC decided to make silage as a means of preserving the harvest as fodder for drought reserves. To make silage, the sorghum crop was mown, baled and wrapped in plastic, allowing anaerobic processes to transform and preserve the high-energy fodder. This task was completed on Christmas Eve!



Making sorghum into silage bales



Final rolls of silage

In November 2018, TPC also planted a long-season grazing canola, with the intention of harvesting and stripping for seed to make oil in spring this year. In the meantime, however, the crop will be used for intermittent grazing – the first lambs got a taste in late December.



Canola Crop at Pacific Hill, November 2018, with Josh Driver (Agronomist, Ag-n-Vet) and Fergus Job, TPC Farm Manager

Contacting Us

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Dust Storm at Grandale on New Year's Eve 2018

New Year's Eve dust storm

Dust storms like this one on New Year's Eve are an unfortunate by-product of the current drought, which is challenging TPC, along with most farmers, to maintain sufficient ground cover to preserve top soil. To help manage organic matter, TPC is withdrawing livestock from the fields most depleted of ground cover, and resorting to containment feeding where necessary. Rain in January has also helped to some extent.

Our Community

The TPC team is setting a strong foundation for Alkane's involvement in the local community through participation in a number of local community groups. Both Farm Manager, Fergus Job, and Station Hand, Christian Munge, are members of rural fire service brigades and have assisted in bushfire and motor vehicle accident emergency responses in the area. Fergus is also the President of Playmates Childcare Centre in Dubbo and on the Board of Directors of Little River Landcare.

Dubbo Project Flora and Fauna Database

As part of our commitment to preserving the local environment, Alkane is continuously monitoring and recording sightings of interesting local flora and fauna. The area is particularly rich in reptilian wildlife – not just the Pink-tailed Worm-lizard (PTWL). During a PTWL survey at Toongi in October 2018, Alkane General Manager NSW, Mike Sutherland, spotted and photographed a Wood Gecko (*Diplodactylus vittatus*) (1) and Marbled Gecko (*Christinus marmoratus*) (2).

The Native Secrets team of Phil Thompson and Peter Peckham also contribute to the database, while thinning White Cypress Pine on TPC land. They recently photographed a Bearded Dragon (*Pogona barbata*) (3), Eastern Spiny-tailed Gecko (*Strophurus intermedius*) (4) and Jacky Lizard (*Amphibolurus muricatus*) (5).



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