



managing native  
vegetation  
and biodiversity

improving farm profits  
through biodiversity

# LandWater & Wool

## Shaping the future



Australian Government  
Land & Water Australia

another australian wool innovation  
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### MANAGING GRAZING ON NATIVE PASTURES IN TASMANIA



#### The Key Principles of good grazing management for native pastures:

- Match the stocking rate to the carrying capacity
- Remember that stocking rate varies from year to year and from season to season
- Understand the lifecycle of all pasture species (desirable and undesirable)
- Allow enough recovery time following grazing
- Strategically graze pastures so that competition and seed production from undesirable species is reduced
- Many producers report that they value native pastures more in terms of shelter and in helping combat land degradation
- In dry times, native pastures need more rest and stock need to be moved more regularly to maintain their health.

Native pastures are valued for being low-input pastures and are an important component of many fine wool enterprises. Native pastures require careful management to ensure that their productive and natural values are maintained.

There are no fixed recipes for managing native pastures in Tasmania – in fact the adoption of different and diverse management practices is the most useful approach, especially for the conservation of native plants and animals.

**Land, Water & Wool (LWW)** is a joint investment between the wool industry's peak research and development body, Australian Wool Innovation Limited, and the nation's premier investor in natural resource management research, Land & Water Australia.

**Native Vegetation and Biodiversity** is one of eight **Land, Water & Wool** sub-programs. The others include:

-  Benchmarking and Evaluation
-  Sustainable Grazing on Saline Land (SGSL)
-  River management and water quality
-  Managing climate variability
-  Managing pastoral country
-  Future woolscapes
-  Sustainable Grazing Systems Harvest Year

#### Native Vegetation and Biodiversity

The *Native Vegetation and Biodiversity* Sub-program of Land, Water & Wool is exploring ways of managing landscapes so as to maintain enterprise profitability while meeting natural resource management objectives. It is achieving this by working closely with woolgrowers, drawing on the research already undertaken through the Native Vegetation R&D Program managed by Land & Water Australia and undertaking new research on the links between wool production and biodiversity.

The Tasmanian regional project, *Biodiversity conservation integrated into sustainable grazing systems*, is looking at how woolgrowers currently manage their native vegetation for conservation and production purposes on-farm.

This fact sheet aims to describe the forage characteristics and qualities of native grasses and how best to graze them to get the most from them.



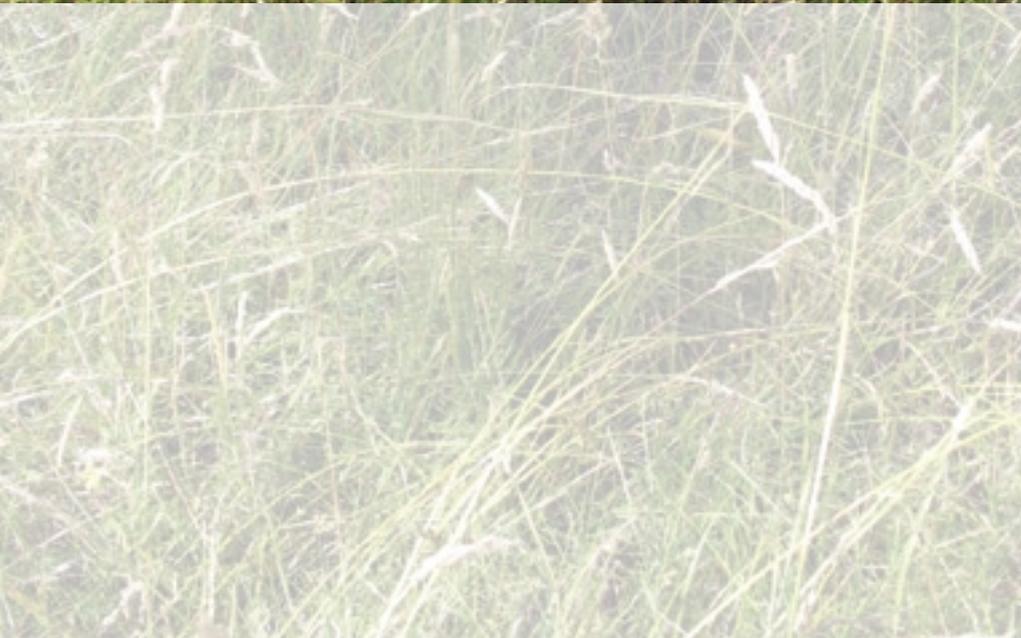
To get the most out of native pastures, it is important to know how different pasture species respond to grazing at different times of the year. For example, resting a pasture when desirable species are sensitive to grazing (e.g. when flowering and setting seed) and grazing when undesirable species are most sensitive to grazing.

Some native grasses grow during the warmer months (e.g. kangaroo grass) while others grow during the cooler months (e.g. wallaby grass). Maintaining a mixture of native grass species will give you greater flexibility in managing native pasture.

Managing separate areas of native pastures differently will result in grasslands in a range of condition and with diverse species. For example, grasslands that aren't grazed regularly may have an abundance of slow growing woody shrubs (e.g. native cranberry and peach heath berry).

#### Production advantages of native pastures:

- Good staple strength of wool
- Lower worm infestations in stock
- Shelter for stock
- Low inputs of time and costs
- Well-adapted to the Tasmanian climate (drought and frost)
- Relatively resistant to pasture pests



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#### Further reading:

*Grazing native pastures in Tasmania - the best way to manage grassy weeds in native pastures* (fact sheet)

*Grazing native pastures in Tasmania - managing kangaroo grass pastures* (fact sheet)

*Grazing native pastures in Tasmania - the forage characteristics and qualities of native grasses* (fact sheet)

*Grazing native pastures in Tasmania - managing wallaby grass pastures* (fact sheet)

*Common grasses of Tasmania: an Agriculturists Guide*, by P. Lane et al 1999

*Tasmanian Bushcare Toolkit: a guide to managing and conserving the bushland on your property*, by JB Kirkpatrick and L Gilfedder, DPIWE 1999

*Native grasses: An identification handbook for temperate Australia*, by M. Mitchell, Landlink Press 2002

#### Acknowledgements:

Information from *Managing Tasmanian Native Pastures - a graziers guide* by K. Mokany, D. Friend, J. Kirkpatrick, L. Gilfedder, F. O'Connor (currently in production) and *Native grasses: An identification handbook for temperate Australia* by M. Mitchell, Landlink Press 2002 were used for this fact sheet.

Comments were provided by Doug Friend (doug.friend@dpiwe.tas.gov.au).

Photographs were taken by Kerry Bridle, Louise Gilfedder and Matt Appleby.

#### Stay informed

If you are interested in receiving regular research and other updates from the Native Vegetation and Biodiversity Tasmanian project, please complete the section below and fax this entire page to:

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