

'BIDGEE BULLDUST' WINTER 2016

Property Report

Conditions

123ml of rain has fallen since Easter. It certainly has put a green tinge on the paddocks. It is pleasant to see green and grey and the smells of bush that is alive and thriving. Lately shareholders have been



restricted due to wet conditions, which is not a problem we suffer from a lot! At this stage the property is closed until the end of July.

We have a high river at the time of

writing this which is pushing water out into Cowans Creek and all other little runners, including meandering its way under the bridge. I will send more photos to the website when I get out of the office. This newsletter has been delayed as it is.

The Dorper fencing project is delayed at present due to weather. It is not ideal having this project on hold but we will reap the rewards of this good season. It just goes to show what rain at the right time of year can do. Also not storm rain, but gentle rain.



We have cows on agistment in Pump Frontage (*above*) which are now calving. Agistment steers that had been on the

property since July 2015 left just before Easter and we had sheep on agistment also for two months. Yesterday another 2 trucks of agistment steers were unloaded at the mailboxes and walked in. There have been many sightings of our fallow deer and domestic goats which is helpful for the breeding process, which neither is allowed to be hunted.

We have put in and obtained a grant from the LLS for a revegetation project that involves planting an area with various types of saltbush.

Easter 2016

Easter was another successful weekend. Beautiful weather, playful children and pets gallivanting around. The fish was delightful and a good role up Friday night.

Winners of the Good Friday Social Shoot were:

Overall and AA	Terry Preston Jnr
A Grade	Bob Callanan
B Grade	Tony Aldred
C Grade	Owen Cavanough
Hunter	Kurt Bohenkamp

A lot of interest was shown by ladies and young ones. We used to have a Ladies category but when numbers dropped off, those remaining joined forces with the men. Once again there seems to be a resurgence in the Ladies and I believe some are going into training for next year as early as next month. Next year also will be a Team shoot so be warned



because I can see Sturzaker stacking his team already!



The Easter Sunday activities went off well and the proud winner of the Duck Race was Greta Quick. I think she told Norm all the way home how she has

won something at Toopuntul! More ducks are coming for next year. Thanks Josh Pingiaro and mates for organising that.

The fireworks were once again stunning.



Every time you think it can't get any better – but it does. Thank you Colin and your team of Justin, Paul and Josh. A great contribution for our enjoyment.

Board Update

At the last Board Meeting Tony Pratt stood down as Chairman after a long and much valued period. Clint Comelli (with family left) was elected the new Chairman. Clint is the grandson of Arthur Comelli who is an original shareholder and had an association with Toopuntul before it became



Toopuntul Holdings Ltd.

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Vehicle policy is still being worked on. Many hours are put in by members of the Board as well as holding down their own businesses.

Shareholder Information Pack

Tim Goodfellow has done a fantastic job at putting together a shareholder information pack that everyone will receive and sign off on. It will include all information and rules etc. This will clean up our sign in/out box.

Engagement News

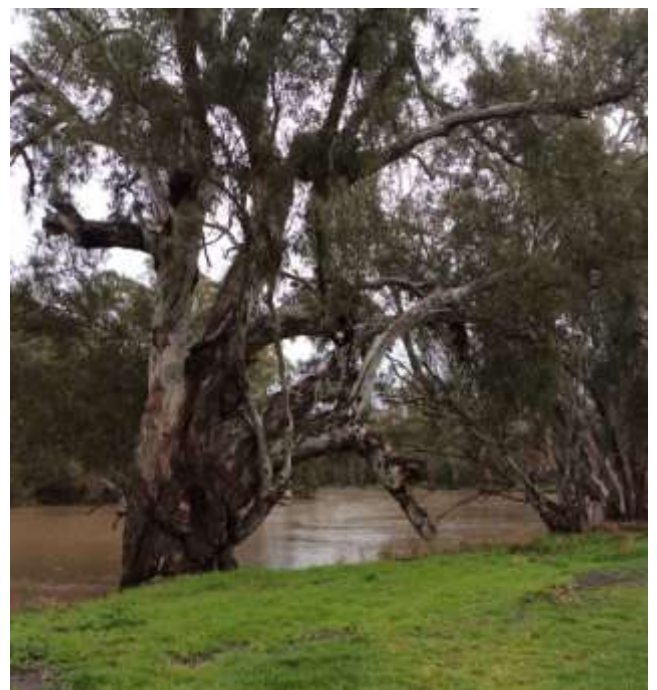
On 30th April I travelled to New York to visit Brett who is working with the HSBC bank there. Whilst I was there he announced his engagement to a lovely vibrant girl Heather Ann. I had a great time over there. I know



a lot of shareholders have also been and it is a world away from Toopuntul but is magic. Must say it was good to drive home seeing gum trees and greenery. Hasn't stopped raining since!

Kate Callanan

The river is up!



New Chairman Elected



Four generations of Comellis: (from left) Clint, Edwina, Cooper, Alice, Arthur and Allan

As already mentioned, Tony Pratt resigned as Chairman at the last Board meeting and Clint Comelli was elected as his replacement. Tony announced his intention to relinquish the role well in advance and Clint has been his understudy for a while. Tony will remain as a Director for a while to assist with the changeover.

Tony became Secretary in November 1988, a Director in March 1995 and Chairman in May 2007. During his 28 years of involvement with the Board he has seen many changes. Floods and drought, including the driest year since records began; good stock levels up to around 1300 head a few years ago down to none (of our own) now, rice growing, water sales, construction of levees, construction of a new farmhouse and an increase in and diversification of shareholder usage of the property.

Tony was one of the group who documented river flows, converting our high water allowance to a 1300mg license which we sold for \$315,000. \$\$\$ from the air almost, as our submission was one of only three granted from sixty applications.

Tony's tenure also saw construction of over 30kms of the stock watering system, construction of new cattle yards, sub division of Airstrip/Skeleton into 5 paddocks (with a fencing grant of \$35,000), refurbishment of the ablution blocks, a revegetation grant of \$20,000 to revegetate bare and clay pan areas in red country (about to start), converting Murrumbidgee lignum country (3,000) hectares to hold dorper sheep and future production of meat lambs for sale (about to start), and creation and oversight of the investment portfolio for Toopuntul

Holdings Ltd. This money invested was obtained from the sale of a package of general security water.

Given the length of time it is not surprising that Tony has had some ups and downs on the personal front as well. This is perhaps illustrated well by his father's attendance at his first AGM as Secretary in 1988 and the recent celebrations of the life of both his parents with a fireworks display at Toopuntul.

His support for the Board and his drive to see Toopuntul thrive for all shareholders has never waned during this period. Well done Tony!



Tony is not always hard at work. In fact in this shot he is clearly preparing for his retirement from the Board!

Robert Sturzaker

Community Shed – Progress Report

Easter period saw some great progress with the completion of the roof & rear wall of the 'Community Shed' (*see next page*).

It was very pleasing to get so many complimentary reports from shareholders and guests over that period.

Our next objective is to complete the walls & demolish the old shed before continuing with internal works.

Mick Ferlazzo has offered to look after the electrical work & Alan 'Big Daddy' Comelli is taking charge of the building of the new barbecues.

We welcome any input & support from you all.

Cheers

John, Bob (Hardway Jackson) & Russell

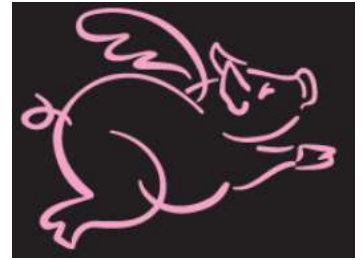
Community Shed (cont.)



Progress on the Community Shed

The Flying Pig

Well it may as well have been. Over Easter some eager young fisher folk caught some carp, and in accordance with the law, they did not return them to the water.



Fast forward to the middle of the night when a passing pig caught a whiff of the carp and decided to wander through camp, ignoring the 70+ campers and their dozen or so dogs which, speaking for my own two watch dogs, slept through the whole affair. Now of course, a feed of fresh fish, or even the rotting kind apparently, is best accompanied by a refreshing ale.

So, the larcenous grunter wandered further through camp until he found a slab of beer, warm but free, that a, soon to be wiser, Toopuntul camper had left unprotected. He tasted one, two, three ... sixteen cans! before he hit the road. No doubt weaving and ducking through the lignum, he made his escape undetected.

Come the morning, while the thief slept it off, our camper discovered to his distress that he was sixteen cans short, with the nearest pub 60kms away! Oh Lord what can be done to prevent such a tragedy occurring again? Well tidy up your beer supplies for one, but also catch the thief. The pig trap was employed and the very next night the pig, quite a stout boar (pun intended) was caught and sent off to supermax to dry out and be rehabilitated to eat the carp but leave the beer!

Robert Sturzaker



The Flying Pig (with wings clipped!)

Fireworks at Toopuntul



The Easter fireworks at Toopuntul have been a favourite for years. Toopuntul shareholder, Colin Quick, is now qualified as a licensed pyrotechnician, and operates a business as *Quick as a Flash Pyrotechnics*. His displays have gone from strength to strength and 2016 saw him and his team really hit their straps with

two shows in one week. This story is about the second such event one week after the Easter show.

The brainchild of Tony Pratt, with the support of his brothers Peter and John (pictured below), the

second event was to launch the ashes of their parents, John and Joyce Pratt, over the Great Cumbungi Swamp in fireworks. John had passed away



some time ago and his ashes were residing with Joyce in a wastepaper bin. When Tony broached the topic of launching John at Toopuntul Joyce said that would be a good idea and she was happy, at the appropriate time, to be part of the event.

The three brothers collected the extended Pratt family (pictured below) from as far away as Queensland, South Australia, New Zealand and France and with input from various family members put on a fabulous lunch featuring oysters, ribs, fatty (don't ask), BBQ pork belly and salad. Such was the array of goodies that dessert had to be postponed until 4.00pm.



After dessert we headed in convoy out to the air boat launch area, discovering on the way that low profile tires might look sexy but do not perform well when you clip a stump, especially with two of them! Nowhere to go then!



Vehicles were lined up facing west and Colin came over to explain events. John and Joyce's eldest great granddaughter Zoe was to fire a shotgun to start the event as soon as the sun had gone down and it was dark.

The audience admired the stars above and sipped champagne as the sun set over the water.

The shots rang out and the show began. A multi colored spectacular with some impressive booms echoing over Toopuntul accompanied my oohh! aaah! And OMG!



Post fireworks we enjoyed some ham on the bone and crunchy bread rolls with some leftover dessert. We all had a wonderful time and sent John & Joyce on their way in style. Well done boys, a great send off and family gathering.

And thanks to all the people who put together a memorable event especially our master of explosions Colin Quick.

Robert Sturzaker



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A Home Away From Home

Camping at Toopuntul at Easter time for us has been a family tradition since I was a child back in the '70s but it's interesting to see how the times have changed. Years ago we would camp in large open canvas tents (think Sahara desert style) down by The Point with our Dad and Uncle. These were times when women were a lot scarcer on the property than they are today and you ate what you shot during the day. We then progressed to a Portacom along the river in a location a little closer to the wonderful facilities block, then came power, running water and a fridge and now in 2016....the Old Manager's House!



For the first time in 40+ years I have had the luxury of not only running water and power but a dining table, a lounge with carpet to relax in, real beds to sleep in and our own private bathroom. Kate had

thought of everything from tea towels to board games and even some hand cream for those dry hands after washing the dishes – curse that river water! I can already hear the sceptics in the audience screaming “that’s not camping” and I agree, it’s most definitely not camping but what it is, is a lovely change from the days of old when doing the dishes in a bucket and bathing the children in one too was the norm.

This year with the privilege of renting the Old Manager's House and all the indulgences we enjoyed it made our Easter holiday with four young children so much easier. We were able to stay for much longer than usual which the children loved as I was on my own a lot with daddy commuting to and from Melbourne for work. Mummy was a lot happier as the children bathed much more frequently than ever before at Toopuntul because they didn't have the effort of getting on the bikes to ride to the showers. The “camp” smelled of roses this year and not the usual four day old socks. We all quickly fell into the rhythm of holidays with our mornings consisting of cooked breakfasts, the obligatory washing up, followed by a cup of tea and a book read out on the lawn in the morning sunshine. Once this huge exertion was completed it

was time to think about what's for lunch and so our holiday routine established.

Memories that are same, same but different were created this Easter for our family. Some wonderful scenes remain unchanged such as the annual Easter dinner and bonfire at the Shed that Mick & Kate always coordinate so well, with fish and salads galore and children hanging from



tree branches; and some things were very different, we went home that night to comfy beds with floral doonas and were able to make a cup of tea without stoking the fire and boiling the billy. We were also able to “entertain” on a whole new level when the extended Pratt family (*pictured below*) amassed under the beautiful aging pepper tree in the garden for the fireworks send-off for my grandparents and our children's great grandparents. That day we were especially grateful for the kitchen with its gas oven and stove top as well as the BBQ in the garden where all the Pratt men could stand around and watch the meat cook whilst the ladies drank champagne, chatted and watched the children run around madly with dogs, soccer balls and bikes.

I've no doubt the Portacom still awaits us for future Easter's but for those considering an upgrade with some little luxuries - I can highly recommend you stay in the Old Manager's House. Plus there's no cleaning up when you leave as it's included in the rental price!

Pernille Cavanough

