

'Making Conservation Pay'
Friday, 12 November 2004
Speaker Biographies

Ian McClelland

Chairman, Birchip Cropping Group

Ian McClelland is the inaugural chairman of the BCG (Birchip Cropping Group and Wimmera Farming Systems) which was established in 1994. The BCG has during that period become one of Australia's leading farmer owned and driven groups, dedicated to the mission of increasing the profit and viability of Wimmera and Mallee communities. Birchip is in the North West of Victoria. Ian runs an 8000 ha farm in partnership with his brother Warrick, growing wheat, barley, canola, lentils, sheep and cattle. His interests are in education, research and practical applications on the farm. He is an honorary Senior Fellow of the Institute of Land and Food Resources – Crop production, Melbourne University, a Board Member of Marcus Oldham College, recipient of the 1998 Hugh McKay Innovators Award, a member of the selection panel for Churchill Scholarships, and recipient of the 2004 GRDC Seed of Light Award for Excellence in Research and Extension.

Dr David Freudenberger

Principal Research Scientist and Group Leader, CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems

David is a member of CSIRO's Agricultural Landscapes Program, Canberra. The Program aims to develop and analyse options for integrating nature conservation values with improved farming systems. David manages a staff of 16 scientists and support staff within a program of 90 staff at four different locations. David's current research includes ways of developing vegetation enhancement guidelines to conserve biodiversity and reduce dryland salinity in the Southern Tablelands of NSW and the wheat-sheep zone of eastern Australia. He also has a range of projects examining the biodiversity benefits of revegetation and remnant woodland protection. This work is in partnership with organisations such as Greening Australia, Catchment Management Boards and various Landcare and farming groups. One of his projects with Greening Australia won a 2004 National Landcare Award. He recently completed a consultancy to assist the Rice Growers Association develop a biodiversity conservation strategy for the industry and a project that examined alternative firewood supply options in the Murray-Darling Basin. David is CSIRO's representative on the Commonwealth Sustainable Firewood Task Group, the Biodiversity Benefits Task Group and the Biodiversity Decline Working Group established by the Natural Resources Ministerial Council. David is an author of 69 research publications including 22 papers in internationally peer reviewed scientific journals.

Geoff Park

Catchment Manager (Avoca & Avon-Richardson), North Central Catchment Management Authority.

Geoff Park is a Catchment Manager with the NCCMA in Huntly. Geoff coordinates and leads an interdisciplinary team of 12 staff across a region of 3 million hectares. He is responsible for the management of a range of natural resource management projects encompassing river health, dryland salinity, biodiversity conservation and community development. In his previous role as Biodiversity Manager with the North Central CMA he coordinated a number of large scale projects aimed at revegetation, remnant protection and catchment restoration. Prior to his involvement with NCCMA Geoff worked as a teacher and as an extension education officer with the Department of Conservation & Environment. Currently Geoff is collaborating with the Department of Sustainability and Environment, other Victorian CMA's and CSIRO (Land and Water, Sustainable Ecosystems) on projects involving biodiversity and sustainable cropping systems, revegetation planning and landscape function. Within NCCMA Geoff is a member of the senior management team and is responsible for integrated catchment management planning in collaboration with DPI/DSE, community implementation groups, Local Government and NGO's. Geoff is a trustee of the Norman Wettenhall Foundation and has a long standing interest and commitment to community involvement in nature conservation.

Andrew Weidemann

Farmer, Rupanyup

Farming 2000 acres with his family in the Victorian Wimmera, producing a range of pulses, cereals, oilseeds and fat lambs, Andrew is a dedicated community member. He is a Board Member of the BCG, holds a range of positions with the Victorian Farmers Federation (Branch Grains Delegate, Grains Group Phosphine Working Group, Grains Group Seeds Working Group), sits on the Longerenong Sustainable Advisory Board, and is current President of the Rupanyup Football and Netball Club. He is an inaugural Committee member on the 1st Bendigo Bank Community Bank and Rupanyup & Minyip Finance Group. He has held past positions of VFF Rupanyup Branch President and Wimmera Farming Systems Deputy Chairman. Andrew has an Advanced Diploma of Agriculture, was the 2000 recipient of the Wimmera Conservation Farming James Muller Award, 2000 recipient of the Powercore Best Achievement in Primary Production, recipient of 2004 BRI Achievement Award. Andrew is interested in making his farm more sustainable and reaching the highest productivity possible in his environment, in order to pass the land on to the next generation of farmers in the best possible condition.

Dr Robert Belford

Principal Scientist, Victorian Department of Primary Industries

Currently Robert works part time with the Victorian DPI based in Horsham. His work focuses on remote sensing of crop canopies and soils. He is a member of the GRDC Western Panel and Chair of the GRDC Sustainable Farming Systems Program. Robert also works as a consultant to the BCG and Managing Climate Variability Program Technical Committee. Previously Robert was the Director of the Victorian Institute for Dryland Agriculture in Horsham and wheat program manager in the Western Australian Department of Agriculture. Robert is interested in remote sensing of crop and soils, and the precise management of crops and soils in landscapes.

Professor Timothy Reeves

Director and principal, Timothy G. Reeves and Assoc. Pty Ltd

Tim Reeves has worked for 37 years in agricultural research, development and extension, mostly focussed on sustainable agriculture in Australia and overseas. His professional career includes positions in the Department of Agriculture, Victoria; Foundation Professor of Sustainable Agricultural Production, Adelaide University (1992-95) and Director General, International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) based in Mexico (1995-2002). Current activities include: Member, United Nations Millennium Project Task Force on Hunger; Chair, NSW Agricultural Advisory Council on Gene Technology; Member, European Commission Expert Group - Evaluation of Framework Projects; Chair, Academic Advisory Board on International Community and Development Studies, and Adjunct Professor, Deakin University; Affiliate Professor, Adelaide University; and Professorial Fellow, Melbourne University; Chair, Board, Joint Centre for Crop Innovation, Melbourne University. Tim has received several international and national honours. He is a Fellow of the Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering and in 2003 received the Centenary of Federation Medal. He has published extensively. Tim is currently Director, and Principal of Timothy G. Reeves and Assoc. Pty. Ltd., specialising in national and international consulting in agricultural research and development.

Alexandra Gartmann

Chief Executive Officer, Birchip Cropping Group

Alexandra is Chief Executive of the BCG (Birchip Cropping Group and Wimmera Farming Systems). This not-for-profit business of \$1.4 million delivers agricultural research and development information funded from multiple sources. Alexandra manages 16 research, communication and technical staff. Alexandra consults on international development projects, currently an AusAID funded project in the Qinghai Province of China. Alexandra has worked in Western Australia with local government and landcare groups, involved in perennial pasture extension, salinity management and group facilitation and development. Technical and policy experience with the Murray Darling Basin Commission, Canberra; regional development experience with Greening Australia's 'SRD Toolkit'; technical experience with CSIRO Wildlife and Ecology Rangelands Unit; and undergraduate teaching at ANU add to BSc (REM) Hon qualifications. Locally Alexandra works as a Community Ambulance Officer and holds a number of positions in community and sporting groups.