

# CASE STUDY - LAKEFIELD STATION

## Mitigating the major threat of fire and weeds

**Who:** Garry and Michelle Riggs

**Where:** Lakefield Station is located 45 km south west of the town Mataranka. It encompasses 58,000Ha of savanna bushland and is populated by a rich variety of natural resources and landscapes, including floodplains, swamplands and freshwater lakes.



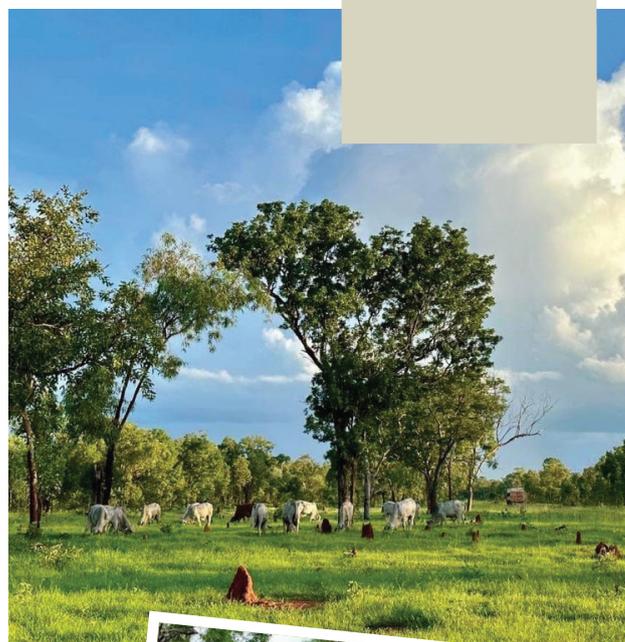
With 6000-7000 head of Brahman and Brahman-cross cattle year round, and a heightened focus on cattle fertility to ensure their breeders are as productive as possible, owners Garry and Michelle Riggs have always run this property with land conservation as the primary focus.

In 2012, Garry and Michelle signed up to a Territory Conservation Agreement (TCA) with Territory NRM to protect a 300Ha site named Flying Fox Waterhole. They followed this with an additional TCA covering six wetlands across 1050Ha, including the largest freshwater lake on the Sturt Plateau, Lake Duggan. The TCA follows on from funding to protect several sites including Lake Duggan, since 2002 through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

Garry and family have a unique relationship with their cattle as they play a pivotal role in fire management of the property. They have an extremely quiet temperament and are easy to work with. Animal welfare is also paramount, as is the use of low stress handling methods. Horns have been bred out of the Lakefield cattle herd to the point where 92% have no horns, creating a safer environment for all.

Over the past 10 years of the TCA, they have mitigated the major threat of fire and weeds by maintaining fences, and carrying out fire management with the help of their grazing cattle.

Garry has seen a vast improvement to the amount of native flora and fauna since the conservation agreements were signed in 2012. The conservation agreement has allowed him to fully utilise and understand the biodiversity values of the land, with many species returning to the area including the nail tail wallaby, agile wallaby, antilopine, wallaroo, euro wallaby, two species of sugar gliders, native rats, native mice and many reptiles, such as olive pythons and inland taipans.



**FARMING FOR THE FUTURE**

This project contributes to the NT NRM Plan



For more information:

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Baseline fauna and flora surveys are currently being conducted on Lakefield Station. This will allow for the monitoring of changes in populations of animals and plants over the next 10 years of conservation.

Protecting the long-term health and biodiversity on Lakefield Station remains paramount to Garry and Michelle, who have now signed up for a further 10 years. Through the renewed TCA, and with the assistance of Territory NRM, they will aim to further ensure the protection and health of the multiple conservation sites on their property which boasts more than 1400Ha of protected native vegetation and landscapes.

The TCA Program assists producers to protect areas of conservation significance on their pastoral leases.

The 10 year voluntary agreements are designed to integrate management for native vegetation and biodiversity into production regimes and property business plans.

For more information on the Territory Conservation Agreement contact Territory NRM on 8942 8300.



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