



# 2018 NATIONAL LANDCARE AWARDS

11 October  
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

**Nominee: Barkly Landcare and Conservation Association, NT**

**Category: Australian Government Excellence in Sustainable Farm Practices Award**

A threat to cattle properties in the Barkly Tablelands, where it affects the large lake systems, Parkinsonia (*Parkinsonia aculeata*) is an introduced weed affecting productive grazing country around waterways. Barkly Landcare and Conservation Association (BLCA) has been fighting the weed's spread for over a decade, partnering with other Landcare groups as well as industry, academia, and government agencies to reduce the weed's impact on grazing.

Spurred by a lack of available information about biological controls, BLCA began collaborating with researchers in 2004 on naturally occurring pathogens that kill Parkinsonia while leaving native species unharmed. Following initial research by the University of Queensland (UQ), that collaboration led, after 13 years, to the manufacture of Parkinsonia Di-Bak, a commercially available biological aid which uses naturally occurring fungal pathogens to induce dieback.

One of the biggest challenges faced by the BLCA is scale. The average property size of BLCA members is roughly 6650 kilometres (665,000 hectares), with around 25 staff only to run each grazing operation. Coordinating efforts to manage infestations over vast landscapes is, needless to say, tricky, particularly over the wet season when accessibility is compromised.

Running across property boundaries, the Sylvester and Tarrabool Lake systems support native birds and aquatic species but also aid the spread of the weed – in turn affecting the biodiversity of the wetlands. The BLCA has used helicopters to map the infestations, and tracked spraying and control programs to measure ongoing process.

The partnership with UQ has also seen the BLCA liaise with researchers and host multiple field trips to the region since 2004. The Association has supported a UQ post doctorate student with trials, and the student's thesis (*"Parkinsonia dieback: investigations into its cause, ecology and potential for biological control"*) will be a valuable ongoing resource for expanding knowledge.

Two Indigenous weed control contractor businesses were established with the assistance of the BLCA, and Indigenous people from the Barkly region have been employed to undertake best practice chemical control. These initiatives have been maintained despite staff turnover within the BLCA as well as among commercial properties and government agencies, making strategic continuity challenging. Detailed records and geographic system data have been key, in addition to a briefing policy that makes sure new staff are across the parkinsonia threat.

Looking to the future, the BLCA is faced with the ongoing necessity of sourcing short-term external funding to support its control work. Members are often forced to adapt components of their containment program to the available funding rounds. Fortunately, the BLCA's previous success in attracting funding for comprehensive mapping has established a base for control work – now and in the decades to come.

This program is supported by Landcare Australia and the National Landcare Network, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.





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Landcare is a grassroots movement that harnesses individuals and groups to protect, restore and sustainably manage Australia's natural environment and its productivity. Groups that fall under the Landcare umbrella work on a diverse range of environmental projects and include farmers embracing sustainable farm management and any community group that partakes in volunteer environmental activities. To find out how you can become a Landcare volunteer and for full details on all 2018 National Landcare finalists, visit [www.landcareaustralia.org.au](http://www.landcareaustralia.org.au)

## Ends

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## Web Summary

Introduced weed *Parkinsonia* (*Parkinsonia aculeata*) is a threat to cattle properties in the Barkly Tablelands, where it affects the large lake systems and productive grazing country around waterways. Barkly Landcare and Conservation Association (BLCA) has been fighting the weed's spread for over a decade. The BLCA has used helicopters to map infestations and tracked spraying programs to measure ongoing process, in addition to supporting the establishment of two Indigenous weed control contractor businesses. BLCA's research partnership with the University of Queensland has also led to the manufacture of *Parkinsonia* Di-Bak, a biological aid using naturally occurring fungal pathogens to induce dieback.

## Pull-out quote:

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