



CBV 02-0558 Tom Paragon



CBV Update

What a change 12 months can make!! This time last year we were in severe drought with very low body condition on breeders and very poor quality grass. Now, I'm happy to report year 2010 is the best year I have ever experienced as far as seasonal conditions. The rain has been timely and consistent all year.

CBV has sold over 400 bulls so far this season to five states and territories of Australia; WA, NT, ACT, NSW, and Queensland, mostly going to return clients. These cattlemen are a very interesting group of cattle producers with a close eye on cost of production and profitability.

CBV genetics are icing on the cake of some very well managed cattle operations and we deeply appreciate their support and confidence in our genetics. We are also pleased to welcome 15 new clients to CBV for the year, mostly as a result of word of mouth from existing clients, which we appreciate. I believe that as we get squeezed by climate and economics people are looking more and more for real profit drivers in management and genetics, hence the increase in interest in CBV genetics.

As I have stated before our target at CBV is to have 75% of our calf crop born by 15th of October. This is from the first three cycles of mating. (63 Cow Days exposed). These cattle, in most years, need to re-conceive while lactating and before rain and while losing body condition. **This selection has proven to really pay off.** With last year being the worst year I had ever experienced for protein and energy, the CBV herd still achieved 72% of calves born by October 15 and 81% by October 31. Not quite hitting the target of 75% but not bad under the conditions! It amazes me that some cattle can continue to work no matter what we throw at them. Predictability of production is very powerful in the cattle business as we deal with a lot of variables out of our control.

Once again we thank you for your support during 2010 and on behalf of the CBV team, we wish you a Merry Christmas, and a Happy and Safe New Year.

Alf Collins Jr



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Predictable, Functional Genetics....

Fertile, Gentle, Growthy & Adapted....



Results of our 2010 CBV Bull Sale at "Belah Valley"

Top price; \$20,000 paid twice, for two proven sires, by Eric Simon, "Jimandy", Marlborough.

They were CBV 04-2252 Socrates, and CBV 05-3353 Tom Strategy, from which we already have three Keeper sires retained and more progeny still coming. The Simon Cattle Company has used a significant number of CBV proven sires over the last ten years, with valuable results.

Sale Average; \$3466

Top price for a herd bull was \$7850, to a long-time client from Prairie, NW Qld.

Clients came from diverse regions of Qld, including Lower Peninsula, Lower Gulf, NW Qld, Atherton, Tambo, Moura, Clermont, Banana, Sarina, Bloomsbury, Yuleba, Morinish, Marlborough and Middlemount, as well as Northern Rivers and Boorowa in NSW.

In the same week lines of bulls from two head, or two decks to eight decks were drafted for Northern Territory, Richmond, Yeppoon, Aramac, Mingela, and Collinsville, to conclude a most satisfying week.

The rewarding aspect to us is the long term relationships amongst these transactions, and the good faith of our newer clients. The CBV cattle have earned this support, by representing good value for money, and a high degree of reliability in commercially significant traits.

We are highly motivated by our client's appreciation of the depth of data supplied with CBV bulls. Reproduction information is supplied for four generations. This is backed by data on the functional efficiency of the whole CBV herd for

three decades. The multiplier herd at "Tondara" has played a pivotal part in supply also, for the last eight years.

In keeping with the philosophy of the Helmsman Bid sale system, we encourage our clients to not bid too hard against each other, but rather to walk through the 12 bull yards again to select more of the choice bulls with similar qualities. Most agree that there is not much variation across the sale team, and we try to have plenty to choose from.

There is still the opportunity to compete on all lots, all day with no pressure, but a bull, at or near the base price represents excellent value for money. We have observed that clients who have a need for say 10 bulls, have already marked 30 or 40 in their catalogue as suitable for inclusion in their herd.

A universal comment again this year was the gentle temperament on all bulls offered. They came straight from the paddock to the sale, in basic condition, and certain to grow with no setbacks at their new homes. They have been bred and raised at a low cost per kilogram, and do not disappoint on grass anywhere.

We are committed to supplying fertile, gentle, growthy and adapted cattle; it rings true on these bulls.

Thank you to everyone who attended, as buyers, potential clients, friends, interested cattle breeders and finishers.



Alf Collins Sr





A=F₄F.....Adaptation equals "Fitness for Function"



"This is the measure of true adaptation at work... No pain, no gain... Manage for success... seek adaptation... Capture it... profit by it..."
Mike Stephens' quote;

'Quality is fitness for function' has gravity.

These last few months I have travelled through most of the cattle regions of Northern Australia. That has been illustrative, instructional and educational. Regions visited were Pilbara, Kimberly, Central desert, Sturt Plateau, Barkly, Qld Gulf, Peninsula, Channel Country, Roma, Dalby, and the vast black soil downs and brigalow regions of Qld.

These regions all had one thing in common; **Cattle Country**. This is land that for one reason or another supports nothing else, except for isolated pockets of crops, mining, oil, or gas extraction.

I saw some tourists, tearing up the roads, and cursing the casualties of wandering stock, or the flies, dust or heat!! The positive is that *the best of those tourists* have ably and willingly filled a void of skilled labour. The backpackers, Kiwis, and semi-retirees are a blessing indeed to all of those regions. They are adventurous, willing, courageous, and bring new attitudes and skills to isolated areas, at an affordable rate.



They are mentored by some very experienced 'old hands', with quiet optimism *and the essential sense of humour*. Owners, managers and home tutors all express their appreciation of these new breed of adapted helpers. ADAPTATION IS THE KEY.....again

****Let's paint a quick picture of the perfect beef world. Truly adapted species of cattle would eat very little, convert efficiently, reproduce rapidly and on-time, with minimal support costs and no chemicals.****
*Imagine a total production cost including grass, at \$0.50, or even \$1.00 per kg or less. **Now, that really gives you clout in the marketplace.** That level of adaptation would represent true quality.*

This is the role that highly adapted cattle can fulfill in our beef businesses today. This is the target of every serious-minded cattleman. Store cattle buyers have recently used the 'hump card' to draft out the light fleshed, fast and cranky cattle, and rightly so; and actively sought the productive end of the humped quality cattle, capturing their efficiencies on feed or grass. This has been a rightful correction, as breed or hump size has very little to do with the 'meat quality' outcomes, despite all the hype.

We have seen an abundance of high flying schemes, usually dreamed up by players with no cash on the

table, promoting risky high inputs, amid currently lousy commodity returns. Right now, the rhetoric of 'no Brahman' has taken a beating, as finishers and feeders alike scramble to buy Brahman and Brahman crosses to stay afloat. Large mobs of 'model flatbacks' have languished in the paddock, while buyers took advantage of 10 cents cheaper 'humps'.

I do not agree with the blind advocacy of hump, or ears size to denote adaptation. That belief in some quarters has led to herds of inefficient and undesirable livestock.... The same could be said of selection for size, color, or image. Nor do I accept the blind faith of 'flat-backs' as the key to success. There is **no** universal breed, or market. We operate in a diverse and complex international market, from an isolated and diverse ecology. That is the Australian beef industry. My recent travels were in the Northern Australian beef industry.

True adaptation is a result of selection for 'Fitness for Function'

Everywhere I travelled, the benefits of high levels of adapted genetics, *coupled with keen and tight management* were abundantly obvious. Similarly, the absence of adaptation in other herds was putting strain on profit and survival. *It is rarely too late to change.* I encourage cattlemen to make change to their breeding strategies, before the cost gremlins wreck their core businesses.

THE ROLE OF ADAPTATION IN COST OF PRODUCTION.

The influence of reproduction timing has a profound effect on profit. In our own business at CBV, we try to have the best of our calf crop ruminating before the start of the 'green-feed' period, whenever you perceive that to be.

This timing is not to be confused with pregnancy %, or calving or weaning %.

In reasonable nutrition northern Australia, a target of 75% pregnant, born in the first quarter of the financial year will be most beneficial, compared to calves born in the green-feed period, at say 85%, on a whole-of-herd analysis. One of the immediate benefits is the harvest of empty weaner cows in the same financial year. This frees up good grass, to stack weight on pregnant females.....your greatest asset, and all your high-converting young progeny.

To me, this is the most accurate measure of **true adaption**. You can be certain that we have owned plenty of the less adapted sub-fertile cattle, and certainly





a=f4f continued...

have been rewarded by cashing them quickly. Using bulls from rigorously managed and well analyzed herds is the surest route I know, coupled with no excuses for the lazy breeders. They are inexcusable, and a mighty fine cash flow. This is the most effective management, from our perspective at CBV.

In saying that, I am very aware that perfect cow management is not possible in some areas. 30% to 60% weaned /females mated are often quoted, with the first re-breed as their toughest threshold. Yet there are examples in most regions where big changes have been made, and can be made with minimal costs.

If you can mate your *whole crop* of maiden heifers to good bulls, and preg-test by April, then mate and preg-test the first calvers on schedule the next year, most of the non-productive females will be turned into *cash-flow early*. In some years, you may only have 30 or 40% of your Year# left, by the second pregnancy. ***This is the measure of true adaptation at work... No pain, no gain... Manage for success... seek adaptation.***

With the benefit of good genetics from the bulls selected, the second and subsequent pregnancies will be from only the most adapted females, sired by genetics of integrity, and cash-flow is enhanced. The majority of females sold are young, and attractive in the marketplace. We get paid well to market our failures, as fats or as stores. Each year your heifer crop is getting better genetically, and non adapted free-loaders are sieved out. That seems to me to be a 'Win/Win' all round, and well worth the effort.

The mature cow herd is often not so easy to monitor in extensive herds, though this has been achieved in some places. To preg-test into Calving Bands has great benefit, in my assessment, with the rewards of ease of mustering, handling only the relevant numbers of breeders, to brand, or wean without threat to springers, small calves, or processing unnecessarily large numbers of non-relevant cattle; this sure is attractive on the basis of cost, labour, and risk management.

One of the useful 'flow-ons' from mating all heifers, keeping only the well-adapted pregnant females, is that the herd age reduces, and that has benefits too. Feed efficiency is best in younger cattle. Less numbers of moribund older stock has savings all down the line in pasture and land utilization, handling costs, and more room for the most important pregnant young cattle.

I am not certain of the costs of this in other people's herds in some regions. For instance, maintenance of fences during the wet season with heavy rain and big creek systems can be difficult and costly. New fencing

can be designed on watershed basis, in contrast to some of the old BTEC fencing of simple block-fencing.

ADAPTATION IS 'FITNESS FOR FUNCTION'.

- True adaptation – understand it. Worth the effort.
- **A=F4F** (Adaptation equals 'fitness for function')
- **a = f4f**
- Be aware of false claims for adaptation. There are many.

A Model that Depicts the Dependence of Heterosis on the Level of Environmental Stress (Growth Only)

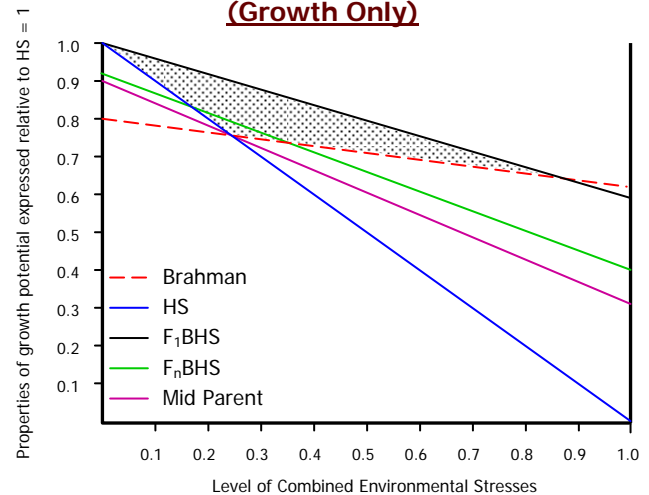


Figure 1 Diagrammatic representation of the G (genotype) x E (environment) for Bos Taurus (HS), Bos Indicus, the interbred cross (F_nBHS) and the F₁ cross (F₁BHS) showing the decline in proportion of production potential expressed as the combined level of environmental stress increases. The shaded area denotes heterosis in the F₁ when heterosis is defined as the increase over the better parent.

Source: Dr John Vercoe & Dr John Frisch, Ref. paper AJAS 1992 Vol.5 (No.3) p405

- Cumulative stressors and the effect on hybrid vigor. Visit this link on the CBV website for more complete interpretation on this graph, http://www.cbv.com.au/index.php?/cbv-site/genetics/dr_vercoes_chart/
 - The challenge is to estimate how many months does our herd endure significant stressors in any year or ten year period, and the effect that has on our herd risk management, function, and profit
 - Cumulative stressors and the effect on costs and risk.
 - Resistance to nature's impacts.
 - Natural fitness means low-cost, productive, functional.
 - Adapted cattle, plants and people... the bottom-line drivers.
 - **True adaptation is worthy of your best attention.** This is, in my opinion, the most dollar-efficient input into your herd. It certainly has been in ours, and many of our clients.
- The evaporation of heterosis, or hybrid vigor, by cu-



a=f4f continued...

mulative stressors is real, and destroys many well intentioned breeding programs. Very few cattle properties operate at the luxurious 'cost of production' that research stations do. **There is the trap. Be aware, be alert. *Everything looks great in a good year.***

Risk management is a real and important strategy of management. The absence of loss sure makes a difference to your bottom line. Low nutrition is a fact of life in Northern Australia. Big sappy late weaners are a complete waste if they subsequently melt as they go into the dry season with their gut on 'milk setting', to suddenly have to handle a few months of dry season grass. Usually big sappy weaners have robbed their mothers of stacks of body weight too, which is a negative, heading into the dry season.

The certainty of an uncertain rainfall is well known. This is by quantity, or distribution, or by intensity. The facts are that, of each ten years, usually we have three good seasons, three or four handy years, and three or four very difficult years. The gains made in the good years are often eaten up by the tough years. We need to be able to do well in the tough years and average years. The few good years are a breeze.

Our future is in our hands alone, the owners and managers that are in control. Highly adapted cattle 'hold on' further out into dry seasons compared to non-adapted, because of their inbuilt survival mechanisms. **Adaptation is bred-in, the genetic results of thousands of years of Natures impact. Our job is to capitalize on this gift, by managing to sieve out the least functional cattle.** The ability of 'bos indicus' to recycle nitrogen from the gut to their bloodstream, then to saliva, with the resulting efficiencies in the digestive tract was unique, in his Belmont cross-breeding research, as related to me many years ago by CSIRO scientist, Dr John Vercoe.

Other important traits, with varying cumulative effect, such as parasite resistance,(ticks, worms, flies, and lice), heat resistance, mobility during mustering, maintained appetite in the face of high humidity, ability to travel, to better feed or water, and defense of calves against predators; all have some influence on risk and costs.

When taken one by one, each stress factor is not too threatening, but cumulatively you can see real impact on your herd, and your cattle business. Risk management is important....

Stocking rate, per hectare, per 100 mm of rain is a simple tool to manage with, that keeps everyone informed ahead of the game, in most cases. Intensive rainfall events can distort the picture. Land cost per kg produced – a massive investment, is

not always accounted for, yet we need to, even if it is on the basis of charging ourselves a grass-cost per livestock unit in our monthly or annual audits

*During my extensive travels, listening, observing, and analyzing, the role of **genetic adaptation stood out as the key issue that could be addressed 'on-property', to improve profit. That is absolutely linked to management for reproduction speed and harvest.***

The cattle industry is dependent on cost control, on property, to ensure a sound bottom-line. No external evaporative promises can match it.

We are aware of the role of resistance in livestock. How about viewing **with a sense of humour** the *resistance to change* in the human psyche? There is room to move again. Opportunities abound.

My humour is provoked, that all of the above seems so simple and easy.... Well, it is simple, but not easy.... Certainly, it is worthwhile.

ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH.

- Cash.
- Equity.
- Rapid and timely reproduction/harvest.
- Fat on cows.
- Carbon stocks in-ground.
- Soil cover.
- Developed pasture and landscape.
- Young cattle herd.
- Kg per hectare.
- Compensatory growth.
- Adapted pastures and legumes

TIME AND TIMING.

- Fixed financial year.
- Fixed periods of interest payments.
- Fixed periods of redemption.

TIMING.

- Mating, preg-testing, weaning and harvesting.
- Calf crop already ruminating at start of 'Green-Feed' period.
- Full utilization of grass and forages.
- Adequate regeneration periods.
- Adequate seed-setting periods.
- 'On-time' cattle harvesting mode.
- No excuses.

COST CONTROL.

- Specialize as grass and logistics managers.
- Focus on core business.
- Fully utilize adaptation.
- See through the often-empty promises of heterosis.
- Understand the flaws of 'heterosis under stressors'.
- Explore cost per kg / hybrid vigor axis.



a=f4f continued...

- Monitor seasonal effect on expression of heterosis.
- Know where your herds balance point is.
- Accept happily cattle/systems that work.
- Reject fast what does not work.
- Accept the seasonal fluctuations as normal.

CERTAINTY OF UNCERTAINTY.

- Stock prices.
- Input costs.
- Rainfall timing and intensity.
- Political and bureaucratic incompetence. (incontinence?)

These last few months of observation, listening, analyzing has been a rich experience. The massive resource of grazing lands, with those **outstanding human resources** that sparsely populate and manage them, and the potential to make even more improvement with utilization of adaptation and time and risk management continues to give me confidence in the future of the beef industry.

It still provokes my sense of humour, that all of the above seems so simple and easy.... Well, it is simple, but not easy.... Certainly, it is worthwhile.

We are now well aware of the role of resistance in live-stock. How about viewing **with a sense of humour** the *resistance to change* in the human psyche? There is still room to move, yet again. Opportunities abound. Keep smiling.

Albert Einstein's formula $e=mc^2$ had massive relevance to science. Prof Einstein's quote; **"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them"** has had enduring relevance to our cattle business at CBV.

Now, remember....

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Personally I acknowledge the hospitality and generosity of spirit that I met with, in all those regions and properties I visited. Open and unbiased discussions were pursued, explored, analysed, and enjoyed; all inspirational stuff from resourceful, courageous, humble, and powerful people; the cattle producing men and women of Northern Australia.

With deep respect, thank you,

Alf Collins Sr



Conaghans, Farewell from 'Gundaroo'

We say farewell to Mick and Lara Conaghan, Madeleine, Campbell, and Reade, from our Gundaroo Stn., south of Nebo.



our business, with their work ethic, sense of humour, good grace, and intelligence. Gundaroo and its cattle are showing the benefits of their dedication.

They will still be near our district, with the children attending Clarke Creek State School. For the last ten weeks they had been commuting 100 extra kilometres daily to attend Clarke Creek School, to achieve the highest standards of teaching available.

Lara was the cattle manager at Belah Valley for three years, until their marriage in 1997.

They continue to grow in stature and competence, and have always made a great impact with their qualities. Their three children contributed every week to all activities, especially pleasing Grandfather on his visits, mustering and in the yards.

Education Qld had not fulfilled this at Valkyrie State School. LNP Member for Mirani, Ted Malone MLA, has been working hard to ensure better outcomes there for new families in the future, as the role of small schools is of great importance to us all.

We will miss them, and treasure the memories.

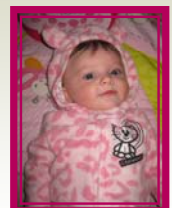
The Conaghan family has been a wonderful addition to

With love and respect, from Father.

We welcome our 21st Grandchild and 8th Grandaughter, Mia Isabella Hogan

Little sister for Flynn.

Mia is the 2nd child for Max and Dallas Hogan. Congratulations Max and Dallas. Mia was born on the 12th of May, weighing 2960 grams.





What Do You Reckon About This?

New Scientist Vol. 207 #2769 excerpts....

It was the cover story "What happens if we all quit meat? Why eating greens won't save the world" that caught my eye on the newsstand.

'What's the beef with meat? Some claim that the only way to save our planet from disaster is for everyone to stop eating meat. Is it really that simple', asks Bob Holmes. 'A vegan world would not necessarily be a better one', he writes.... 'But wait. If everyone opted to give up meat there would be significant costs, too. For most of human history, cattle, sheep and goats grazed on land that wasn't suitable for plowing, and in doing so they converted inedible grass into edible meat and milk. In a world where more than a billion people don't have enough to eat, taking such (marginal) land out of production would only contribute to food insecurity.'



"Persuading the world to eat less meat looks like a tough task. In country after country, as people become wealthier they eat more meat. Between 1980 and 2002, per capita meat consumption in developing countries doubled to 28 kilograms per year, and is projected to rise to 37 kilograms per year by 2030.

That is still less than half what the average person in the developed world eats today, and is still rising. In the West, people ate nearly 8 percent more meat per capita in 2002 than they did in 1992.

When you add this to the growing population, the United Nations' best guess is that by 2050, the world will need to more than double its production of meat – an increase that would be environmentally disastrous." New Scientist (Page 31 excerpt) 17 July 2010. (Ben Holmes, Edmonton, Canada)

*N.B.. Interesting conclusion...The earth is **not** flat, so we need to make sure this is **not** disastrous, in as much that we can all make change, in how we raise beef. No mention of what happens to the wild-fires in the grasslands, or the economic effect of depopulation of the vast cattle lands of Australia. My excerpts are selective and sparse, by necessity.*

To me it was a superficial article, with relevance to North America, environmentally.... However, Holmes raised some interesting and relevant points in the full article. I liked the bit about double the supply by 2050.. Some one will

Do we really need a carbon tax?

The volcanic eruption in Iceland, mid April, in just FOUR DAYS, NEGATED EVERY SINGLE EFFORT you have made in the past five years to control CO2 emissions on our planet - all of you.

Of course you know about this evil carbon dioxide that we are trying to suppress - it's that vital chemical compound that every plant requires to live and grow and to synthesize into oxygen for us humans and all animal life.

There are around 200 active volcanoes on the planet spewing out this crud any one time - EVERY DAY.

When Mt Pinatubo erupted in the Philippines in 1991, it spewed out more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere than the entire human race had emitted in its entire time on earth. Yes folks, Mt Pinatubo was active for over one year - think about it.

The bush fire season across western USA and Australia this year alone will negate all your efforts to reduce carbon in our world for the next two to three years. And it happens every year.

Just remember that your government just tried to impose a whopping carbon tax on you on the basis of the bogus "human-caused" climate change scenario. No mention of a Tax on all the emissions caused by Prescribed Bush Fire Burning? The Prescribed forest burning in Victoria alone puts more CO² into the atmosphere than all power generation in Australia in one year.

And just keep in mind that now the same government is in control, you will have an Emissions Trading Scheme - that whopping new tax - imposed on you, that will achieve absolutely nothing except make you poorer. It won't stop any volcanoes from erupting, that's for sure! So much for "social justice", the frequently used catch phrase used by governments to convince the voting populace that their policies will somehow benefit the not so well off!"

Some excerpts of an article received from Stuart Zlotkowsky, a CBV client with cattle in Qld Gulf and NT. Thanks Stuart.

**Alan Yeomans book 'Priority One', makes for good reading, and the research of Dr Myles Fisher, at **Cali Research Stn, Columbia, also. He addressed the Tropical Grasslands conference held in Goondiwindi last year. I cannot claim to be a denier, but I'm sure we need to be more broadly informed. We are fortunate to breed and grow adapted cattle on adapted vegetation that soaks up excess carbon, and turns it into meals functionally.... This issue has not gone away....Alf Collins Sr..*

The aim of argument, or of discussion should not be victory, but progress... ~Joseph Joubert~



CBV Newsletter

139 Von Allmen Road
Pink Lily, Qld 4702
Australia



predictable functional genetics...



Alf Jr & Louise Collins
"Belah Valley"
P.O. Box One
Marlborough
Qld 4705 Australia

Ph: (07) 4935 6222
Int: 61 7 4935 6222
Fax: (07) 49 35 6177
Mobile: 04 3835 6050

alfcollinsjr@bigpond.com.au

Alf Sr & Wendy Collins
484 Eichelberger Street
Rockhampton
Qld 4701
Australia

Ph: (07) 4926 5165
Int: 61 7 4926 5165
Fax: (07) 4928 2521
Mobile: 04 1972 6420

alfcollins@bigpond.com.au

Mick & Lara Conaghan
"Gundaroo"
M.S 328
Nebo
Qld 4742 Australia

Ph: (07) 4956 8385
Int: 61 7 4956 8385
Fax: (07) 4956 8385
Mobile: 04 4787 1311

conaghans@harbousat.com.au

Tony & Iria Carrett
"Tondara"
M.S. 239
Bowen
Qld 4805 Australia

Ph: (07) 4785 3468
Int: 61 7 4785 3468
Fax: (07) 4785 3468
Mobile: 04 3985 3468

tondara1@bigpond.com

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