

Richest Australian Gina Rinehart talks about Kidman ahead of first anniversary of takeover

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AUSTRALIA'S richest person, Gina Rinehart, has outlined a multimillion-dollar investment in animal welfare and technology in the Kidman cattle empire ahead of the first anniversary of her takeover.

In an interview with *The Advertiser*, Mrs Rinehart has detailed improvements including erecting shade cloth over cattle yards and water troughs, installing more water points and adding digitalised UHF communications systems.

The latter enables remote staff to email, text and make phone calls while working far from the office.

Kidman runs 163,000 beef cattle — with a target of 170,000 this year — over 11 pastoral properties and a feed-lot, covering 80,000sq km across three states and the Northern Territory.



BOLD INVESTMENT: Gina Rinehart, far right, with station workers at one of SA-headquartered pastoral company S. Kidman & Co.

Mrs Rinehart became Kidman's principal owner and chairman on December 20 last year, when the sale price of \$386.5 million was transferred by Australian Outback Beef joint venture partners — Hancock Prospecting and Chinese company Shanghai CRED.

Mrs Rinehart this week toured stations including the 13,000sq km Innamincka property in the state's far north-east, where she said investment had been welcomed by station managers and staff.

"When more of our investments and improvements roll out, we believe we'll have some of the best stations to work on in Australia," she told *The Advertiser*.

Mrs Rinehart said that putting up shade in cattle yards had benefited cattle in hot areas and improved working conditions for staff. Cooler water also helped cattle and extra shade in calving paddocks was likely to improve mortality rates.

Dams also would be fenced and solar pumps installed to divert water to shaded troughs, providing cleaner water, reducing cattle illness and creating more rapid weight gain.

Touring Kidman's North Adelaide headquarters for the first time last December, Mrs Rinehart evoked family history, saying she was proud that Kidman founder Sir Sidney Kidman and her grandfather, James Nicholas, were long-term friends and business partners.

Kidman's headquarters have remained in Adelaide and, reinforcing this, Mrs Rinehart on Thursday night announced sponsorship of more than \$500,000 for the Royal Flying Doctor Service Central Operations (covering South Australia and Northern Territory).

A RFDS flying intensive care unit, a Pilatus PC-12, will bear the S. Kidman & Co logo in recognition of the funding.



Cattle at the In namincka station, in state's far northeast.

Mrs Rinehart said that Kidman's board and staff were pleased to be aligning with the leader in aeromedical and primary health care in rural and remote Australia.

"The RFDS has provided a lifeline to the bush communities for almost 90 years. It's remarkable to think that, in South and Central Australia alone, the RFDS airlifts 25 patients every day — over 100 across the country every day," she said.