



### **More than meets the eye**

It was humbling to be told at the recent Ayrshire Downs field day and forum with the Wokingham Landcare Group, that our weed work is much more than meets the eye. The message from landholders battling a crippling drought and faced with the daily reminder of the explosion of Prickly Acacia from the last wet, was that DCQ was lifting their spirits. Our weed control work, was giving them hope that their own efforts were no longer in vain, and our down to earth workers, who were stationed on the properties, were providing different conversations in the stressful time of drought.

The day was intended as an opportunity to share with landholders of the upper part of the Diamantina catchment, the latest information about what we are doing. It was also a chance for them to tell us how we are going with delivering on their requirements. They were particularly grateful for the efforts of our on-ground team and for having the added benefit of new technology and regulatory permits to tackle core infestations that would have previously been left untouched. DCQ is seen as a partner capable of achieving the seemingly impossible task of eradication, and attendees urged us to lead the charge on responsible stock movement by highlighting the impact and costs for landholders and all levels of government, local, State and Federal.

Peter Spence, our Field Supervisor wowed them with some statistics of the program, the favourite one being that in 23 months the DCQ field team and our research, development and service delivery partner, PBE Services, have achieved what would have taken eight years with traditional methods.

### **Moisture-challenge**

Water sampling sounds fairly straightforward, but is a real challenge for many of our monitoring sites due to the ongoing drought. However, we strike it lucky occasionally when an isolated storm fills a waterhole and allows us to dip our bottles to run a check on how our riparian and surrounding areas are fairing. This State-funded water quality program is about to enter its third year and is one of the key methods we use to measure land and water health, particularly in relation to the removal of weeds. The sampling sites, downstream of weed control areas, will reflect improvements in riparian vegetation and erosion control as a result of Prickly Acacia eradication.

### **Flashy fish and other stuff**

While Adam Kerezsy is perhaps best known around our region for his expertise and work on fish, especially the Red-finned Blue-eye (*Scaturiginichthys vermeilipinnis*) from Edgbaston Reserve, he recently shared his wider expertise on rare and threatened species through a couple of workshops. These were delivered in mid July to a group of Lake Eyre Basin Land and Sea Rangers, National Parks and Longreach Pastoral College personnel, and then to high school Geography students.

The workshops provided information and entertainment about endangered species in Australia, with a specific focus on endangered species in the Desert Channels region including the Red-finned Blue-eye, Australia's rarest fish; its neighbour, the Edgbaston Goby; the enigmatic night parrot; and the elusive Julia Creek Dunnart. A case study on the Red-finned Blue-eye recovery work run by Adam was used to showcase a recovery plan in action.

The Red-finned Blue-eye grows to about 30 millimetres and is found in only three very shallow (around five centimetres) Great Artesian Basin springs on Edgbaston Reserve north east of Aramac. Its numbers are under threat from the Mosquitofish (*Gambusia holbrooki*), which was introduced to combat mosquitoes; ironically, it turns out that range of native species that *Gambusia* have displaced were better at controlling mosquito larvae.

### **Full Immersion Baptism**

Each of the 56 regional natural resource management bodies in Australia has a manager assigned to them within the Federal Department of Environment... ours is Danielle Carmen. Danielle had never been to our stretch of the Outback before her arrival for a few days at the end of June and, boy, did she get the full baptism: meeting with staff; tour of the office; overview of projects; dinner with Leanne, our CEO; tour of Longreach; sunset river cruise; tour of Coral Cactus infestation; meeting with landholders; trip to Winton; forum with Wokingham Landcare Group; demonstration of weed control with a drone; tour of Winton; and bus trip on to Mt Isa. Danielle left with a greater appreciation of the size and issues of the region, the impacts that drought has on the land and the people, the ongoing resilience of both, and the role DCQ is playing with the help of Australian and State government investments.

### **Janus invoked**

The god of gates, doors, passages and endings has visited DCQ again. In late June we farewelled Roelie Hartwig and Leigh Deutscher, while earlier in the month we welcomed back Brittany Dickson.

Roelie had been with us for seven years in communications, administration, office management and executive support, and leaves to spend more time with her other passion, Montessori education, as well as personal business interests. She is not severing ties with DCQ, however, and you may well see her back in the office occasionally. We will certainly miss her effervescent presence.

Leigh leaves us after almost four years due to our reduced budget, and his departure certainly raises the average age in the office. After another adventurous holiday in the southern part of the Americas, he will take up an appointment in Emerald, still close enough for a visit. We lose not only his sunny personality, but his critter catching stories and movie analogies.

Britt, who had been with us since school (not telling), left us earlier in the year to see if anywhere else measured up to DCQ... obviously not. It's great to have her calm, super efficient hands back in the mix. Happy days!

Janus... beginnings and transitions... thank you for your touch.

### **Shoot a feral... win a prize!**

Budding photographers have a shot at a range of great prizes in the national Feral Photos competition coordinated by the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre. Simply shoot feral animals with a camera for your chance to win. Limit of five photo entries per person; competition closes 30 September 2015. The Invasive Animals CRC is a collaborative research centre working to deliver tools and knowledge to combat invasive animals, and reduce their impact on Australia's economy, environment, and people. Submit your photos online at: [www.pestsmart.org.au/feral-photos](http://www.pestsmart.org.au/feral-photos).