

Upper Dawson WPSQ June Newsletter

Compiled by Ann Hobson

Please email upperdawson@wildlife.org.au if you'd like to join us, raise an issue, or share a discovery or observation.

Outing to Lake Cootharaba by ten members of the Branch at the end of an extremely wet season



included a sudden cold snap, and some departing downpours that soaked clothing one night, and collapsed a gazebo during another, but produced two fine days in which to enjoy boating through the 'Everglades', fringed with overhanging trees and branches mirrored beautifully in the calm water below; a walk through a grove of majestic Gympie messmates (*Eucalyptus cloeziana*) along the Doggrell Forest Trail; a ramble among delicate wallum wildflowers in a section of Cooloola National Park; and a stroll to Mill Point where an extractive industry had

flourished in the short term before exhausting its supply of timber, leaving a rusty boiler and a depleted forest for future generations.

As well as natural wonders, our group was inspired by our time with Noosa LandCare's Phil Moran, the manager, who described this amazing enterprise, one of the largest landcare businesses in operation, training and employing skilled workers and volunteers in propagating and selling native plants, regenerating cleared land, weeding, slashing and poisoning invasive species, and partnering with Council in erosion control and regeneration works such as had been seen along the Mary River during our outing last year to Kenilworth. Later we mingled with tourists at the "Hinterhub" - the Landcare shopfront in Pomona - where nursery plants and local art and crafts are sold, and the business interfaces with the community and visitors.



Thanks go to organisers Tim and Viola who had researched the venue and neighbouring activities to provide an opportunity for members to experience a new part of Queensland and learn more about ways in which other organisations are working to protect the amazing natural heritage we have in Australia.

The Season

The cold snap has reminded us that the grass brought by earlier rain will eventually hay off, leaving us with a fuel load to manage later in the year. Strategic stock management, along with maintaining access tracks and equipment will give the best preparation for preventing and managing unplanned fires such as those started by lightning during early storms.

Resource Projects

The change in government has seen increased publicity about plans to decrease fossil-fuel emissions, and much soul-searching about how to manage the transition to renewable energy while providing new opportunities in resource-rich regions such as the Dawson Valley without

serious social dislocation. The threat of power shortages has added urgency to this challenge, while the windfall of increased coal and gas prices world-wide is encouraging coal & gas companies to extract more in order to gain profit for shareholders and short term employment in our communities. Meanwhile, atmospheric heating over Heron Island is endangering the future of marine turtle populations by causing over 90% of eggs to hatch female.

In light of these factors, our Branch's resource projects consultant, Paul Stephenson, has alerted us to proposals for expanding fossil fuel extraction in the Dawson & wider Fitzroy catchments and to the formation of a Central Queensland Landholder Alliance to respond to such proposals. While not a members of this Alliance, our Branch supports efforts to protect our native wildlife and the water, soil and air we all depend on from any damaging impacts of profit-taking extractive industries. In the interest of water quality, Paul has arranged for some fresh water scientists to sample Dawson water prior to expected expansion of the Santos Gas field by a further 360 wells in the Upper Dawson, and the possible approval of the Baralaba South coal mine close to the Dawson in highly productive farm land.

The Branch is opposed to the burial in underground 'bunds' of 'salts' (chemicals) extracted from Coal Seam Gas Water, given that these will lie in the environment potentially for centuries to come, or until the membrane in which they are to be stored is breached and future land managers will have to deal with the contamination. We understand that one option for the companies is to truck the waste to the sea. They don't think coastal communities will approve, but seem to think that inland ones will be more accommodating. Will we?

Wildlife Matters

Save the date and take photos of caterpillars, chrysalises and cocoons for our Butterfly Weekend 15 October in Taroom. It seems that the faux bird poo (April TT) is actually a mating pair of Spotted (or Mottled) Clear-Winged Snout Moths *Genduara punctigera* in the family *Lasiocampidae*. By now, their pale, slim, hairy caterpillars are probably rolled up in a leaf waiting to emerge as moths, but some may still be munching bush cherry leaves (*Exocarpos cupressiformis*) or some other plant that we might be able to tell science about. For details and pictures - <http://lepidoptera.butterflyhouse.com.au/lasi/punctigera.html>

Some Plants seen in Cooloola Wallum Heath

Swamp Banksia Flower
Banksia robur



Chaffy Swamp Pea
Pultenaea paleacea



Yellow Flax Lily
Tricornye elatior

