

# Upper Dawson WPSQ Summer 22-23 Newsletter

Compiled by Ann Hobson

Best wishes for 2023.

## Have you contacted this caterpillar!

Did it hurt!

*Entomologists want to know if it has stinging hairs.*

Last May, I found three on a cassia that they were rapidly stripping. (I carefully avoided finding out if they had stinging hairs!)



Photo Helen Schwencke



Photo Helen Schwencke

Delivered to an expert, they pupated and finally emerged ('eclosed') in December as caramel-coloured moths with hairy-looking shoulders that <remind me of an American bison/buffalo.

This means that scientists want to know what this other caterpillar (called a "wattle cup caterpillar") turns into. (Because they thought *it* was the caterpillar of the caramel-coloured one.) >



Photo Pita Ralaca

If you find some wattle cup caterpillars and deliver them and their > food to a caterpillar breeder, they could find out, eventually, what its moth is. Be careful not to check if the hairs sting. Pita assures me they do! This beautifully patterned and coloured caterpillar likes palm and wattle leaves.

Some of the story of these cup moths can be found in the links below. The first tells show how much was believed about the two species before 'my' caterpillars were grown through to moth-hood <sup>1</sup> <http://lepidoptera.butterflyhouse.com.au/lima/calcarifera.html> and now that their true lineage is known. <sup>2</sup> <http://lepidoptera.butterflyhouse.com.au/lima/ordinata.html>

Notice the statement - "Association of this species with the Wattle Cup Caterpillar *may be mistaken*". Science is always open to correction. More information is needed. You might be the person who provides it. Contact [upperdawson@wildlife.org.au](mailto:upperdawson@wildlife.org.au) or ring Ann on 0427 504 560 for further information.

## Serious Cereus problem



The wetter season has encouraged the spread and fruiting of the so-called "Willows Cactus" (*Cereus uruguayanus*). The millions of seeds in each ripe fruit can be spread far and wide by crows and excreted from branches and fence posts. They can be easily dug out with a hoe to be dried out on a sheet of tin until two metres tall. (Mind the spines and fuzzy prickles. Drag by the roots).

They can also be injected with glyphosate and some other herbicides to kill older plants. Cactoblastis and cochineal don't attack them.

< *Cereus uruguayanus* 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Mature 5m *Cereus uruguayanus* one year after injection.>

Like Harissia, it will become an annual task to control if not eradicated before it flowers and fruits.



### **Safeguarding River Health**

It is pleasing to note that following letters from Dr Matthew Currell, WPSQ and others to the Federal Environment Minister Plibersek, SANTOS has withdrawn its application to discharge more untreated Coal Seam Gas water into the Dawson during “high” flows. Further monitoring is planned to provide information about the present quality of river water and changes that may occur over time. Community members are invited to assist and should contact Dr Currell on [Matthew.currell@rmit.edu.au](mailto:Matthew.currell@rmit.edu.au) if willing to collect water samples.

### **AGM**

Dr Currell also chaired the Annual meeting held on 29 October, with existing office holders continuing in their current roles. It was noted that the number of participating members is decreasing, while the need for a voice for the health of the river, its communities and its wildlife is as great as ever. Everyone is welcome to meet some of us over a cuppa on 18 February at 9am at the most recent old Taroom bridge to discuss what we do in the Upper Dawson Branch. (We’ll relocate if sandflies or flooding persuade us to do so.) Please bring a chair and a friend. *Ann*