

Upper Dawson WPSQ February Newsletter

Compiled by Ann Hobson

Travelling by bus from Toowoomba reveals how fickle the 'wet' season has been. Almost to Chinchilla, we drove through huge acreages of wheat stubble, cotton beginning to flower, and sorghum ready for harvest, some already being stockpiled where silos were inadequate. By contrast, from Miles north, the tinder-dry scrub and paddocks hayed off in the recent heat and patchy rain are a timely reminder that our fire plans need to be in place. Sadly, in some paddocks there's barely enough grass to keep a fire alive, let alone a herd of cattle.

On the way, I took the opportunity to read an article in the Summer edition of "Wildlife Australia" magazine highlighting Simon Mustoe's book "Wildlife in the Balance – Why animals are humanity's best hope". The loss of animal and plant life can increase the intensity of floods; dust in the air can force moisture back out to sea; burrowing animals help soil absorb and maintain moisture; it requires thousands of species of sea creatures to keep a reef healthy; "one percent increase in organic matter means soils can retain up to an extra 38,000 litres of water per hectare." Simon is hopeful – "restoring abundant and diverse wildlife is well within our grasp".

So every effort to keep the wild alive contributes to the livability of our planet for people as well.



The magazine contains a wide variety of topics from endangered nudibranches (very handsome sea slugs) to restoring wildlife on Dirk Hartog Island: from Bushfire research to Koala Kiss Sites: from exploring Norfolk Island habitats to making a hoodie out of crayweed. Past editions of this great magazine are available from Helen on 0427 270 305 or Ann on 0427 504 560.



On the banks of the Dawson in the shade of a red gum and to the tune of many birds, we discussed the engineering and mechanics of wind turbines, the content of coal seam gas water, the rapid growth of harissia cactus following last year's good rain, and the threat to the great artesian basin of injecting carbon dioxide into a deep aquifer of the precipice sandstone near Moonie. We have made a submission opposing this injection trial.

The Council is responsible for weeds on roadsides and stock routes, so if you see any, please either send a photo to enquiries@banana.qld.gov.au or download the Snap, Send, Solve app. and attach the photo. Workers can only act if they know about the problem, and I find them very prompt on potholes, so hopefully that holds for cactus as well.

Our usual practice of holding a campout in either May or August, alternating between inland and coastal venues, is leading us to consider a trek to Lake Dunn in the Aramac district. Details should be available next month and friends and visitors are welcome. Please register your interest with Margery 0448 931 338 or Loraine 0429 931 264. It's possible that we'll join the Fraser Coast for the Central Branches Get Together later in the year. This is a great chance to join with people from all over Central Queensland to hear about their projects, campaigns and local activities - and maybe see some whales.

Please contact the Branch with any concerns or discoveries about the environment, especially those animals that that chew, digest, dig and rot organic matter into productive water-retentive soils to help keep us alive.

Best wishes for March,
From everyone at Upper Dawson.