

Summary of the week

The group consisted of nine volunteers who contributed a most productive week and are close now to getting on top of Eurong’s weed problem making it much more manageable in future years.

Their effort summarized in the table below:

	Bush Regen	Monitoring	Total
Day 2	35	15	50
Day 3	40	30	70
Day 4	45	8	53
Day 5	45	15	60
Day 6	35.5	16	51.5
Day 7	3	2	5
Total	203.5	86	289.5

The team has almost purged Eurong of all of the Easter Cassia and fruiting Brazilian Cherries and hope that the next working bee can finalize these and any other potential tree weeds that might be spread by birds and spread into the natural forest.

The entrance to Eurong Resort Reception building has been transformed with the removal of the exotic species and the replacement with island grown plants. The resort is very pleased and provided some of the accommodation as well as a complimentary meal for the whole group.

The area between the resort and Second Valley has been purged of a huge infestation of coral creeper and other weeds but the Madeira vine in Second Valley remains a problem.

The residents and landholders in Eurong are becoming friendlier and ever more appreciative of our efforts and are actively assisting us in identifying and removing of problem weeds.

The planting of the roadside where all of the Brazilian cherries were removed last working bee is helping win support.

The monitoring program has been extended with 8 more monitoring posts being established on the Lake McKenzie to Kingfisher Resort road, the Lake Wabby Road, the Southern Lakes drive The Woralie Track and near Lake Allom.

Our observations continue to accumulate and provide a more subjective but still valuable monitoring record.

**Day 1
Sunday, 21st April 2013
Brisbane to Eurong**

The journey to Eurong worked with clockwork precision. In fact it was so efficient we arrived at every rendezvous slightly earlier than the ETA which was an unaccustomed and a pleasant relief. It was helpful because the shorter days meant the light was rapidly fading when we reached Talinga at about 5.25.

We had stops along the way for morning tea and to pick up the three Noosa volunteers. It was a golden day as we enjoyed the balmy sunny weather in Maryborough’s Queens Park where the rest of our contingent, JC and JL who were travelling independently in JC’s Suzuki Sierra 4WD caught up with us for lunch.

Within two hours of our arrival the ever-efficiently organized Su had everything stowed away and a great meal on the table to end a perfect day.



The mangrove lined shores of Great Sandy Strait near Ungowa have a special kind of aesthetic appeal

**Day 2
Sunday, 22nd April 2013
Eurong and Wabby Lakes**

There was an early start with breakfast and everyone keen to get started on the hard work. Before the actual work got under way there was a briefing and inspection of the entire Eurong village area to explain the progress that has been made and the remaining problems and also to explain the method of attack for the work. Having become familiar with the village and our project the team then divided into three units.

Unit 1 had the two Johns working to set up the eight monitoring posts that were prepared from the last trip ready for implanting this week. The work involved the preparing the sign names and affixing the rulers to the post. It was fiddly work and took them most of the rest of the day. It was important though for the paint to dry before the implanting that is scheduled to begin the next day.

Unit 2 had Su, Tomas, and Amber working hard. They began work before smoko weeding behind the toilet block. We all met up at 10.00 am for smoko after which they moved on to clearing up the gardens at the entrance to the Resort’s Reception Area. There were many plants that have proven to be invasive weeds growing in the garden including Clivia lilies, Mother-in-Law’s tongues, coconuts and sundry exotic ornamentals with a capacity to go feral.

Unit 3 was the Noosa team of Sonia, Margaret and Tony. They had the formidable task of tackling the

infestation between the back of the resort and the dingo fence Easter Cassia. A wall of Coral creeper covered the steep hillside on the southern flank of the resort. The team focussed on the more accessible patches, leaving the larger solid expanses to be sprayed with Roundup. Other weeds dealt with included syngonium, Brazilian Nightshade, Siratro, and corky passion vine.

While this was going on the Fearless Leader was visiting the QPWS to collect some roundup and plants from the nursery for helping establish and repair the cleared areas. He was also able to elicit the resort cooperation to get plants from the Kingfisher nursery across to Eurong so that they could be planted before the end of the week.

The afternoon outing consisted of a walk to Wabby Lakes. The officially closed track lived up to its reputation as being the most interesting short walk on all of Fraser Island with discoveries of ancient melaleucas thousands of years old, an attractive walk many ground orchids, the fascinating cryptobiotic crust entering the sandblow, the coloured sand and ironstone pebbles resulting from cyanobacteria, the plethora of Aboriginal artefacts, the remnants of a perched dune lake, and the tallest melaleuca in the world beside Little Lake Wabby. At the lake three of the five males immersed themselves although the spectators thought it was mainly an opportunity to impress the nubile nymphs before everyone made their way back to the beach.

It was a pleasant relaxed afternoon and everyone took a leisurely cup of tea at the end of the trail. The relaxed euphoria though soon was transformed to adrenalin as we started back the short distance to Eurong to discover that the very high tide was almost up to the very high bank at the top of the beach and that there was a 60cm abrupt climb to get over One Tree Rocks with waves continually surging around this point. It ended a day of productivity, discovery and excitement

Hours Worked: Bush Regeneration: 35 hours
Monitoring program: 15 hours



Walking across Hammerstone Sandblow is one of the rich experiences in discovering Fraser Island

Day 3 Tuesday, 23rd April 2013 Eurong and Southern Lakes

Everyone had their niche and their day's tasks established when we all dispersed in various directions at 7.30 am. The Noosa team resumed work on the challenges of the Coral creeper near the resort workshop and parking areas. The two Johns worked on finishing the monitoring posts until smoko, Su's team were busy at the resort while the Fearless Leader had fun extracting Easter Cassia using a snatchem strap. After a trip to the dump everyone reunited for smoko after which JC began spraying the walls of coral creeper and the while JL and FL with the energetic and fit Tomas went to work finishing off all Easter Cassia in sight as well as some lantana behind the surfside units working up to 12.15. In the meantime JC continued to work on spraying down from the dingo fence dispensing 20 litres of Roundup before knockoff.

The afternoon program consisted of an exploration of the Southern Lakes route. This proved most exciting especially in passing Lake Benaroon where the water was in one place about a metre deep over the road washing over the bonnet of Supe.

The first monitoring post, numbered 16 and called *Walim* (Honeysuckle small) was installed was on a cutting above the western side of the Gerrawea Creek swamp. 175 metres of road 2.8 metres wide have carved deep into the landscape exposing the rich "B" horizon. Where the sand spills over the edge it has created an alluvial plume that continues right down the steep swamp to the swamp. The hole revealed that the first 30 cms of sand seems relatively newly deposited and probably the deposition from the recent summer rains. The post has been numbered 15. The GPS reading is 25° 35.746' South and 153° 04.779 East.

A second post, Number 14, *Botharum* (Honeysuckle Large presumably *Banksia serrata* or *aemula*) was located adjacent to the Lake Birrabeen toilet block and car park at the base of the long hill. It is located in the alluvium between in a gap in the fence defining the car park closer to the toilet. The GPS reading is 25° 29.904' South and 153° 03.214' East.

The third post *Dhinkar* (brush box) implanted for the day was at the junction of the Lake Birrabeen Central Station road at the bottom of a long hill where the road joins the old rail line. The post is located in the old tramline about 20 metres from the corner where the alluvium seems to be widely dispersed. The GPS reading is 25° 29.9726' South and 153° 04.045' East

Apart from planting three monitoring posts, other monitoring observations made during the afternoon included:

- (1) A visit to the old DM mining site for the first time for some years allowed us to admire the growth and progress of the trial blackbutts

planted by Forestry on the side of the sandmining site in 1975. The mining site itself wasn't inspected but the vigorous lantana invasion has continued to persist for 37 years.

- (2) Lake Boomanjin like other lakes is very full. Lake Benaroon and Lake Barga are overflowing and covering the road overflowing. All lakes are the fullest seen in living memory with no beaches being exposed on Boomanjin and Birrabeen and with the base of their lunettes being progressively eroded away.
- (3) It was refreshing to discover that the QPWS has begun to carry out their environmental burns at a more appropriate time and earlier in the year. Today they carried out a burn on the south side of the road into second Valley and Eurong's one-way "Up road" that we observed as we headed back into Eurong.
- (4) The Southern Lakes drive is not being widely used and seems to have been almost abandoned by tour operators

While the rest of the group was discovering and monitoring Fraser Island, Su surreptitiously went back to work resuming the challenged in Second Valley. We arrived back at 5.35 pm.

After dinner at about 9.30 pm a thunderstorm passed over that delivered more noise than rain

Hours Worked: Bush Regeneration: 40 hours
Monitoring program: 30 hours



No obstacle deterred these volunteers getting the monitoring stations to their intended sites

Day 4
Wednesday, 24th April 2013
Eurong Central Station & Ungowa

The day dawned bright and clear but the landscape was wet and while we were considering when it may be suitable to spray the weeds, the sky clouded over and most of the morning we wouldn't have been surprised to experience a shower.

At 7.30 the Noosa group headed off to resume work on the coral creeper and other weeds on the hill side on the southern side of the resort and we agreed to meet up in Second Valley for smoko at 10.00 am. It never happened. They cleared up the syngonium and the three lots of asparagus fern. And continued until the lunchtime knock-off.

Su and her team and the three Johns went to the Second Valley where Su anguished over how to control the massive Madiera vine problem. Amber went to work on other weeds and Tomas and JC had arm-wrestling contests with ever visible Easter Cassia and even a few Lantana. Meanwhile, JL and FL collected a load of casually disposed garden waste and took the huge load to the dump. Alas, in the process of unloading F.L. accidentally lost his two-week old spectacles that he had just paid \$380 for. A search for a pair of glasses in the rubbish tip was the equivalent of a search for a needle in a haystack just like looking for the wheel spanner lost the previous day.

On their return from the dump the males found a new target, eliminating the Brazilian cherries they had permission to remove from private property including Mike West's. He actually helped us shift some out. It is a massive daunting job without a chainsaw but they are making good headway. There is a problem of many of the stumps suckering and there need to be followed up but the most urgent task is to eliminate all of the fruiting trees. There was much work left for the following day. In the meantime, JL was following up a request from Stan O'Dwyer who asked us to mark the stumps of the Brazilian cherries that had been cut off above ground level.

After a relaxing lunch we set off at about 1.45 for Pile Valley. The large group walked down the walking track to Central Station where Su and JC were waiting with afternoon smoko.

By special request a key objective of the afternoon was to see the patterned fens so we headed for Ungowa to have a close encounter with them before proceeding on to the site of the old Forestry HQ and wharf at Ungowa. It was a pleasant excursion to Great Sandy Strait and we again arrived back at Eurong in the fading light. The evening was marked by a visit from Mike West and his son Mark who added lots of spice to the evening plus some personal insights on the Fens.

Observations: Fire: There was a good opportunity to observe the impact of the fire the previous day. It was an effective cool burn with little scorch reaching the canopy. The fire covered a larger block than had previously been supposed extending right to the Eastern Break and possibly as far south as Markwells Break. It included two of FIDO's recently installed monitoring sites, Dhomba and Wongul. However the fire moved around these two sites and they were unscathed.

Flowering plants: Although summer 2013 was a great growing season there have been surprisingly few plants observed in flower. In most Autumn seasons we would have expected to have seen prodigious crops of Midyim berries. Very few flowers or berries have been produced this year. We had hoped to be able to make a modest contribution to the nursery seed bank. It hasn't been possible due to the poor flowering generally.

Wangoolba Creek: The walk along Wangoolba Creek was insightful because of the obvious extent of some of the alluvial plumes. It seems that it should be a priority to establish some monitoring posts along the track. The highest priority is the plume on the Central Station side of the bridge across the creek. Other monitoring that should also be done is to get some measure of the deflation resulting from the pedestrian use of the track.

Noise pollution: For the second time in a row we were offended by the serenity of Pile Valley being shattered by a bus driver who ran the engine continually while the bus was parked there

Hours Worked: Bush Regeneration: 45 hours
Monitoring program: 8 hours



This wall along the southern boundary of Eurong Resort once a haven for many weeds has now been restored

Day 5

Thursday, 25th April 2013

Eurong & Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora)

Anzac Day started for Tony and Margaret with a dawn service at the Resort with about 30 resort staff and guests attending the service organized by the Resort Manager John Wilkins. For the later risers o the stroke of 7.30 there was a rush to work all focussed on planting. The Resort had procured a lot of plants from the Kingfisher nursery yesterday and the group was eager to plant these and the plants obtained from the QPWS nursery earlier in the week in the ground. The two stocks of plants were blended and a landscape plan for the Eurong Reception entrances soon evolved.

Meanwhile, Tomas and JC were vigourously at work eradicating the Brazilian Cherries in Second Valley.

We left Su, Amber and JL working in planting the Resort area and then left Tomas and JC with some additional work to do planting Banksias to shield the generator shed from our client landholder.

Then the Noosa group also went to work planting. They were using all remaining plants to help meet the request of the residents to establish a screen for privacy and to help stabilize the steep bank beside the road. The work also involved a lot of weeding and tidying up. There is some concern that the huge fig, said to have been planted by Henry Aldridge in the 1880s that is now being weighed down by an enormous runaway Dragon fruit might produce inhibitors to suppress them. We will see.

After smoko while the two planting teams continued their work, JC was busy with the spray having first covered the strip between a pedestrian gate and the dingo fence and the sewage treatment plant and then swinging into Second Valley to spray the daunting Madeira infestation opposite the taxis and being harboured in a heap of garden waste. It has become Su's personal challenge over the past two years of working on Second Valley's weed problem.

Meanwhile F.L. and Tomas were busy removing the fallen Brazilian Cherries and a few stray Easter Cassias and a large Umbrella Tree. By lunch-time we hope that the only fruiting Brazilian Cherries left in Eurong are around Noeline Walk's residence because she has not yet given permission to remove them. We hope that the progress made will be followed up and that we can soon claim to have eradicated Brazilian Cherries, Cherry guavas, Umbrella Trees and Easer Cassia from the Eurong Urban area.

At about 12.15 Kingfisher nursery manager, Peter Burnett rang to see if we had received the plants and we were able to assure him that already all the stock he had sent was in the ground.



The team about to plant the front garden at the entrance of Eurong Resort with island grown plants supplied by Kingfisher Nursery

The afternoon inspection sent us off in a roundabout way to Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora). We went via

Cornwall's Break stopping to admire the view from the Stonetool lookout before taking off on the Wabby Lakes Road where we paused to plant *Mambu* (Dogwood) Monitoring station near the M8 Meeting Point. The GPS reading is 25° 26.561' South and 153° 07.564' East

Then it was on to walk out to the Wabby Lakes lookout on Nullwhar hill. The circuitous road to Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) then followed a route not used by large commercial vehicles to Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) where the observations of 75 mm of sediment on *Gunda* was confirmed.

After some recreation at Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) we planted the second Monitoring station *Kunyam* (Hoop pine) at the base of the hill west of Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) where the road forks one way to Kingfisher Resort and the other to Central Station. The GPS reading is 25° 26.692' South and 153° 02.573' East. We arrived home in the dark.

Su had spent most of the afternoon working on he pet and challenging project eliminating Madeira vine opposite the house. Luckily JC was able to spray the area earlier and we are hoping for repeat treatments in coming months

**Hours Worked: Bush Regeneration: 45 hours
Monitoring program: 15 hours**



Gunda monitoring station has surprised with 7.5 mm of sediment accumulated at its base in four months

**Day 6
Friday, 26th April 2013
Eurong, Dundubara & Lake Allom**

The benign weather continues and so des the enthusiasm. Everyone was chirpy at breakfast and ready to roll at 7.30. The Noosa team went back ro tidying up the hillside near the resort carpark that had been initially so daunting. They added green panic to the list of enemies that had confronted and by 11.00 am there was not a weed to be seen on the area they had worked on.

After pumping out a few tanks of spray mix on other barts of the hillside nearer the Sewage treatment, JC went to the other side of the hill to join Su's crew in a crusade against Madeira vine while Su and Amber manually weeded. JL was added to the team and he went to work on an isolated patch of Coral creeper before it spread any further. He also salvaged some Christmas Orchids that were late relocated to a garden.

After cleaning up some more illegally dumped garden waste mixed with over-ripe prawn waste seething with blowflies and maggots, Tomas and F.L. took a load to the dump and returned to deal with a mini-forest of Brazilian cherries under a fig in a deep gully. Also in the mix were lantana, Easter cassia and umbrella trees. It was a satisfying job and we now think that the only Brazilian cherries capable of fruiting are in Noeline Walk's yard.

What is also satisfying was that we are now being approached by residents and landholders to be told of weeds we hadn't observed. For example, we plan to remove a cherry guava from the Taxi house next time but we have been told of another near the fire station and a well-hidden Umbrella tree behind Bow-Allum. We have also had the infestation of *Luecaena* drawn to our attention but we ran out of time and plan to tackle these in July. Also gratifying is the fact that we have now removed almost all of Eurong's Easter Cassia. We are getting at last on top of a problem area between Jarvis Street and the Resort.

There was frantic activity about the 11.00 am scheduled knock off from weeding. People were rushing, taking another load to the dump, returning pots etc to the Resort and QPWS, and preparing to get off to our longer scheduled outing to Dundubara and Lake Allom.

We hit the beach at approximately 11.30 and headed non-stop to Eli Creek, where Birthday girl Sonia who had previously visited Eli Creek several times for the first time in her life waded down it. Fearless Leader added an ignition key for Supe to his growing list of losses that already includes glasses and trailer light converter. Luckily he had another set with him.

There were a couple of mini stops at the Maheno and the Pinnacles and we arrived at Dundubara at exactly 1.00 pm.

After lunch we were joined by the Dundubara RIC, Sven Lavendar and went straight to Lake Allom. There while JL and F.L examined some nearby disused QPWS barracks, the rest explore the lake although the circuit walk wasn't possible due to the depth.

Fearless Leader returned with a sense of triumph as the barracks he was assessing for the difficulty and any problems to demolish he ended up assessing for there possibilities to being resurrected as a George Haddock Track construction base camp and a potential hikers shelter. He said it could cut \$50,000 in capital expenditure from the budget.

We then placed two monitoring posts on pedestrian tracks leading down to the lake. *Dhuri* (rainforest) is planted closest to the lake. The GPS reading is 25° 11.942 South and 153° 12.573' East.

Bunar (Bloodwood) is located closest to the day-use area. The GPS reading is 25° 11.590' South and 153° 12.577' East.

On the way back to Eurong the third *Deebing* (Tea Tree) post was planted on the side of the road at the base of a very long and deep cutting. The GPS reading is 25° 12.637 South and 153° 12.849 East.

In each place the sediment was widely dispersed and the cumulative impact of deposition is difficult to assess. The main monitoring should be on the alluvial plume in Lake Allom but this is now two metres under water and it will have to wait until the lake water levels subside before any datum post can be established.

Su stayed back to work on cleaning up not only Talinga ready for an early departure but also tending to her pride and joy of the new plantings around the Resort Reception area

After Happy Hour at *Talinga* and good personal scrub-ups, we went to enjoy our restaurant dinner provided as a complimentary gesture of appreciation by the Resort. We celebrated Sonia's birthday yet again with our last remaining cake.

Observations: Busy tourist period: The volume of traffic on the beach was heavy because so many people had taken the day off to create a four day weekend as the long weekend. There were 24 vehicles and a tourist bus at Eli Creek at 12.30pm and a number of vehicles at the Maheno where people were fishing and doing more than just sightseeing. Surprisingly though while the resorts and accommodation were heavily booked the camping along the foredunes was not as heavy as might be anticipated. Also the campground at Dundubara was not as packed as might have been expected and has been seen in September-October.

Beach conditions: Travel along the beach remains difficult with rock exposures and steep high cliffs. The strong winds experienced in March have abated but the high full moon tides were lapping at the base of the cliffs and some trees were continuing to collapse on to the beach. However buses were managing to get through to Eli Creek and the coloured sands.

Backpackers: The problems of backpacker tag-along tours may be getting more of a problem with two convoys of Rainbow Beach Adventure tours regularly coalescing into a single group and delivering 64 persons at one time to already heavily visited sites.

Lake Allom Barracks: The other motive for visiting Lake Allom was to enable the Fearless Leader to inspect the former Forestry Barracks to see what might be able to be reused when work begins on the George Haddock Track. He was amazed to discover that the

building could be used as they were almost in their entirety with a little repair work. He composed a report for FIDO's partner, National Parks Association of Queensland on options to proceed.

Dingoes: There were fewer dingoes seen than during March and there seemed to be less interaction with tourists.

Happy Valley: While time did not permit a close examination of Happy Valley the abundance of Easter Cassia in full flower was in marked contrast to Eurong and helps epitomize the extent of the weed problems in this township and extending down to Yidney Rocks.

**Hours Worked: Bush Regeneration: 35.5
Monitoring program: 16**



This down-cutting on the Southern Lakes circuit is producing the volume of sediment that our monitoring is assessing for its environmental impact

Day 7 Saturday, 27th April 2013 Eurong, Dundubara & Lake Allom

Although we sat down to a 6.00 am breakfast to get away on time, because Su had packed up so much in advance the cleaning took relatively little time. The shed took a little packing and returning the tools and equipment. We were able to take a slower more gentle ride across the island to Wanggoolba Creek Barge terminal. We even had time to pause and discover a unique fungal growth on the bark of the Tallowwoods courtesy of Sonia that was most insightful.

We refuelled and checked our tyres at the Urangan airport before morning tea at Ululah in Maryborough. It was at the Gympie Duck pond (Monkland) for lunch that we said our farewells and made our separate ways home from there.

**Hours Worked: Bush Regeneration: 3
Monitoring program: 2**