

Weeders Diary for Eurong

October 2005

October 14/15/16, 2005

Preparations, shopping for food and supplies, packing, loading and unloading, unpacking.

Monday October 17, 2005

A group of eight good fellows met and caught the barge to the island and met by the wonderful George (OAM) who transported us across the island pointing out areas of interest – including historical events and plants of botanical interest. We arrived at the houses - which were far more splendid than we had originally been led to believe.

We then met the redoubtable Mary, Su and Colleen; they plied us with much-needed cups of tea and a plethora of invaluable information about the island and the weeds that we will be dealing with during our stay.

After this we took ourselves for walks around the local area and some of us were delighted to find some of the essentials - a decent coffee, chocolate croissants, and a provisions store with newspapers and wine; we were astounded to see planes landing on the beach and the ubiquitous four wheel drives tearing along the beach at alarming speeds. At 1pm. we were met by Ivan Thrash, the Queensland Parks Ranger based at Eurong. Along with George and the two four wheel drives we had a quick tour of areas to see weeds, the tip (this was most edifying) and Second Valley. During this tour we assessed places that required immediate attention. Some of these were Madeira Vine, Brazilian Nightshade, Corky Passionfruit, Painted Spurge, Easter Senna, Singapore Daisy, Siratro and Green Panic.

Some first impressions recorded by the group - "not impressed", "built up", "many boxes", "size of tourist buses", "best accommodation", "satisfying wine and coffee shop". Birds observed by the group during the visit included - Rainbow Bee Eater (quite spectacular and very close to the houses), Lewins Honeyeater, Raptor, Pied Oyster catcher (a rare bird on the island due to four wheel drive activity along beach), Common Bronze Wing, Quails (Mary observed these whilst washing up), Rainbow Lorikeets? Grey Shrike Thrush, Crows, Sulphur Crested Cockatoo, and Pheasant Coucal.

We are thrilled to have Vicki with us due to substantial security checks ...saws, nail clippers not withstanding...sheets and sleeping bags created a problem...but she survived all of this to be cheerful and resilient... then she need a bucket for some odd reason... best known to herself! Some members of the group said it was a PUNishing day... thanks to Jules. No PUNitive measures to be taken against him!

Tuesday, October 18, 2005

Although it rained all night and during breakfast, Julian convinced us to go out weeding at site surveyed yesterday at Second Valley. The morning's weather turned out perfect for weeding, as it was cloudy and cool with no rain.

At the outset the Madiera Vine on the mound next to the road was targeted and we worked methodically through this, in sections to the left of the track coming from Eurong Village. Vicki worked to the right of the track back towards to village at the base of the dune.

Weeds encountered and removed on the area closer to the road included Corky Passionfruit Vine, Fleabane, Mother of M (B)illions, Plectranthus sp, an occasional Prickly Pear. The main issue was the care required to remove Madiera Vine tubers that had a tendency to shred off the vines as they were being removed. In addition, Madiera Vine that has climbed the trees was scaped and painted with pink coloured Roundup herbicide. Tubers were removed from the ground as well. Madiera tubers were bagged for removal to avoid re-sprouting. Care was also exercised to remove all of the Mother of Millions plants, in view of their tendency to re-sprout from any broken plant pieces. It was resolved to return to the Mother of Millions site to complete removal and also leave tape markers to indicate where work was carried out. This is for the future benefit of the National Parks Rangers follow up.

Vicki targeted patches of Fox-Tail Asparagus, Easter Cassia, Corky Passionfruit, a small clump of Lantana and several small Umbrella Trees. It was resolved to follow up the Corky Passionfruit, exercising care as it is entangled with Wonga Vine.

Fauna encountered were a brown hairy-legged spider (8cm width), 2 cane toads (one put in the weed bag, one escaped).

Weather stayed fine and we completed 3 hours of weeding.

By arrangement Colleen and Stephanie met with the head Groundsman from Eurong Resort with a view to convincing him of the benefit of removing several houseplants that are potentially invasive to the surrounding bushland. The included a very large Easter Cassia, a large patch of Fox-Tail Asparagus and Fishbone Fern on the grassy, irrigated area on approach to the Resort. He was amenable to us removing the plants and was willing to consider acceptable native replacement species.

Bird sightings in the area were a Sea Eagle, a Bronze Winged Pigeon, a Brown Pigeon, some Peaceful Doves, a Crested Tern, and a Red Backed Wren. A Dingo was allegedly sighted on the Weerona balcony, as a result of shoes being disturbed in the night.

All retired to the Talinga balcony for a delightful morning tea of Mary's home cooked apple and pecan cake and Anzac biscuits.

Free time for remainder of the day!

However, the concept of 'time credits' to allow later morning risings emerged and after discussion by Vicki and Ross two tearaway groups formed to do some afternoon weeding.

A group of 4 males decided to 'eradicate' the Lantana in view from the Taringa kitchen as a result of a challenge intimated by Mary. This was achieved in one hour and several Eastern Cassia were also removed and stumps painted with Roundup. Meanwhile more finesse and attention to detail was employed by 4 female regenerators to remove the remainder flowering Mother of Millions at the morning's site as well as more work on the Corky Passionfruit and Plectranthus.

Dingo sighting at dinner. Productive day by George on the mainland at the Fraser Island World Heritage Advisory Committee.

Wednesday, October 19, 2005

The day started for some at 5 with Mary up getting breakfast. Desperates arrived at 6 and devoured breaky and hurriedly prepared for work ready to hit the briar patch at 6-45. Vicky joined us having slept a little later - hard with her housemates all early risers.

Weather cloudy and overcast with strong southerly, but hit of sun fighting to peep through.

Back to the same spot as yesterday and again addressed the problems of Mother of millions renamed bitch of billions and billions of bastards. Some couldn't face these so attacked the cassia and Madeira vine with Vicky following up the corky passionfruit. Robert the ranger dropped by and left us some more plastic bags. He removed 21 bags yesterday and another 21 today with a further 10 filled before we stopped at 10a.m. Neil enjoyed a spot of poisoning leaving his pink calling card.

Back for morning tea and Mary advised us we had drank quicker the wine allocation and we had the choice of going on the wagon or putting in more funds to purchase additional sustenance. Vote was 100% for (Stephanie may have influenced to vote).

Left for a drive the Central Station headquarters of the logging industry which remained active on the Island until 1991 when finally, sanity prevailed and some of the majestic Kauri Pine, and Satinay (turpentine) were saved. Tour of the information centre and history was well worthwhile; then a walk along Pile Valley. It was just beautiful and most pleasing not to see any rubbish, lantana and really any weeds. Also found the rare Angiopteris Evecta.

Creek was crystal clear protected by a very sound boardwalk for the initial stage.

Arrived at Pile creek where we meet George and the sandwiches prepared by the lovely Su and Mary. More than we could eat topped off with coffee flavoured lollies, which seemed to quieten Julian down.

Drove then on to Lake McKenzie road certainly left much to be desired. Sandra and Mary sat in the front and spoke non stop (maybe this was nerves); George must be deaf because he just continued to drive expertly.

The 9 in the back were regaled with the childhood ailments of Ross and Vicky namely their propensity to carsickness. Despite repeated attempts to change the topic they continue to discuss which may have been their defensive mechanism to overcome a repeat performance. Fortunately for the rest of us this remedy worked. Phew!

Certain typical moronic 4 wheel drivers followed us trying to make George drive faster but he remained unfazed and just drove marvellous and sensible.

Lake McKenzie not as busy as I expected and water was very pleasant. Jules and Steph set off with a flurry of arms and legs and headed for the other side, Mary settled down for a sleep while others alternated between swimming, chatting and just resting. A very pleasant interlude from a morning hard work. Saw 2 cormorants but no marine life.

Left Lake when Mary was awoken by a March fly biting her and she announced we are off. We discussed the water colour on the drive home and resolved the colour was a deep blue while Basin Lake was baby blue. Ross had a problem what colour that was until Mary said the colour of his shirt was baby blue. Conversation deteriorated then with Ian's shirt described as burnt orange and Neil's as Sydney smog grey. As I write this I am subjected to the idle chat of Neil, Ross and Mary and she announced she has developed dish washer hands - cannot understand that - are the dish washing crews not doing their work?

Suggestions Tools

- Gloves supplied would be better if better fitted cotton gloves particularly to remove Mother of Millions.
- Work pouch without the risk of losing tools would be great
- Folding saw
- Poison applicators and stands similar to that used by Julian and Steph
- Heavy duty plastic bags or perhaps used woven plastic bags - Steph suggest ex fertiliser bags which could be reused
- KNIVES

Accommodation: We found ample pillows and blankets but temperature was cooler than anticipated. In future people could be wise to be warned to pack at least a sweater and some form of wet weather gear.

Haiku - Report from Jan:

Tea, toast, work on weeds

Mother-of-millions; all bastards

Walk, lunch, lake, swim, home

Thursday October 20, 2005

Overcast, light drizzle, 20 degrees.

The Resort "Garden Feature" was eliminated except for Lomandra, Melaleuca and Norfolk Island Hibiscus. The technical staff recorded the pre-work site for posterity. The following weeds were removed - Senna, Asparagus Fern, Fishbone Fern. This project was miraculously finished in 2 hours highlighting a tremendous effort by the team.

At 9.30 AM we re-grouped with one team working methodically northward removing Senna, Corky Passion Vine, Red Alternanthera and Brazilian Nightshade.

Vicki and George picked up an impressive heap of human rubbish. This rubbish appeared to have been spread by dingoes.

The second crew worked on a private property removing a large Senna tree and collecting seed pods. They also later on removed Siratro (an invasive climbing vine), more Senna and its seedpods and the Red Alternanthera, which was clustered around the disposal, drain of the effluent concealment drain.

The vegetation in this area was of the same type as Second Valley, comprising Grassy Semi-mesic Coastal White Cypress Open Forest - it's interesting to note that the weed species occurred in the first twenty metres adjacent to the road.

FIDO AND THE TEAM REALLY APPRECIATES THE CO-OPERATION, GOOD NATUREDNESS AND PROMPT REMOVAL OF WEED TRASH BY QUEENSLAND PARK SERVICE ESPECIALLY ROBERT AND IVAN.

Seven ute loads from the Resort grounds were removed to the tip and a further 5 bags were collected from Second Valley in the afternoon where three workers returned in the afternoon to remove Mother of millions and Corky Passion Vine releasing several native shrubs.

Sue and Sandy had a wonderful up close and personal experience with a tagged female dingo that showed an interest in our activities and then ambled off towards the village, satisfied that all was above board in its territory.

Friday, October 21, 2005

Late start at 7.30am, worked 2hrs to 9:30am, heavy rain stopped work. Continued hand removal of Mother of Millions, a small patch of Singapore Daisy was weeded near the Mother of Millions. Returned soaked for morning tea.

Discussions ensued during morning tea adjournment, Scrabble playing, reading till lunch. A lot of eating (nothing else to do) sandwiches followed by fish bake with onion topping (leftover treat) plus more Marshmallow Surprise.

Rolled into the back of the 4WD for trip to Yidney Rocks and Happy Valley. Saw previous worksites from 2003, situation was generally indicative of a lot of weeding and education needed to remedy the weed problem. There was regrowth of Cassia in particular and we looked at site close to houses, spotting sources of weeds, in particular Cassia, Singapore daisy, Mother in Law's Tongue. Follow up was required both sites, some residents were unhappy with cassia being removed, indicating a need to inform and educate on the consequences of garden escapes and the benefit of a planned ongoing approach to the problem. In particular, better public relations, a planned removal of garden refuse, (palm branches), garden plant selection, (favouring local natives) and ongoing garden weeding.

Continued on to Eli Creek, a beautiful spot, very crowded with tourists. Some members padded (walked) down the clear fast flowing creek. Observed change in creek sea entrance, from north flowing to south flowing, due to changed weather patterns. Observed various native vegetation including Melastoma affine (Blue Tongue, resembles Tibbocina) and Hibbertia scan dens. A lot of rain was in evidence, forming numerous fresh water creeks flowing to the ocean. Jan was on watch to ensure we avoided the deeper beach crossings.

The weather improved as we trekked further north to the wreck of the Maheno, built in Scotland in 1904, beached at Fraser Island in 1935. A Scottish tourist created a bit of interest for two of the males in the party followed by close scrutiny by the rest of the party and much amusement by all.

Returned home to a nice cuppa and another great meal prepared by Mary, Su and Colleen.

Saturday, October 22, 2005

For several days the big house residents have been disturbed by the night time activities of Mr Ratus Ratus

*Hickory dickory doc
The mouse ran up the clock
The clock struck one*

and Ian's state of peaceful somnambulism was rudely shattered when his caring wife Sandra woke him to tell him that Mr Ratus had just ran across his head.

The ensuing ruckus was exacerbated by the arrival of our heroine Colleen armed with a broom and a torch and for the next 30minutes 3 brave intelligent soles armed with torches and brooms chased a poor frightened mouse around the house. How a simple mouse was able to elude these 3 humans remains one of Frazer Island mysteries!

The reason for the use of the torches was that the lack of sunshine had seen the exhaustion of the solar battery power system.

Finally, the sun arose just as weatherman George had predicted. Neil made several calls to seemingly better-qualified members of the weather forecasting brigade but obviously they had not spoken first to George as they reported continued rain.

A quick breakfast and the crew once more returned to our favourite patch of mother of millions while Vicki attacked the corky passionfruit.

Is there no end to this stuff? A bit disheartening to find a resident cultivating mother of millions. Returned for morning tea to find the power still not restored despite the sun beating down relentlessly. Some concerns felt regarding the ability of the frig to keep the wine cool. ONE MUST GET ONES PRIORITIES RIGHT MUSTN'T ONE STEPHANIE.

Electricians Ross and his offsiders tried to solve the electrical problem but a distinct lack of instructions made this task harder. (Perhaps a simple note of what to do in the event of the sun not providing sufficient power and a supply of candles would be wise).

A chat to the local taxi driver solved the problem and once more the wine and ice cream was saved.

We returned to the briar patch (mother of you know what) and managed to clear a huge area and generated an enormous pile of bags for Robert and Ivan (parks and wildlife people) to dispose of. They expressed their pleasure with our work by giving us more plastic bags and the promise of a dingo sticker.

It became so warm by 1-00pm that all decided that was enough for the day and we all returned for lunch and the customary sleep as is the norm for the grey haired geratic fraternity.

After lunch George drove us up the Lake Webby lookout a short walk from the car park and Ross introduced us to the delights of Geebung fruits.

It is claimed that the tallest Melaleuca survived here growing from the depths of the lake. The lake is a barrage style lake at the end of the Hammer stone blow.

On the return we stopped to overlook the stonetool blow another sand dune with a forest of dead ancient hardwoods perhaps even syncarpia' hillii.

On arrival back we partook of a barbie with special guests "ding and kinus".

Barbeque worked well despite the lack of power as usual we ate far more than we all normally eat.

Jan's little haiku:

*Visited old friends
Corky, Madeira and Squill's mum
Insist we come back*

Sunday 23rd October, 2005

Brown Booby found down the track was bagged and refrigerated.

Another early start, we were off on a major tour of the island – all were in the car and underway by 7.20 am – much to Mary's delight!

First stop was Rainbow Gorge with its miniature city of iron oxide capped citadels. Second was The Pinnacle, the aboriginal dreamtime story explained about the young wife of jealous older man was followed by the old man, while she was making an assignation with her lover the Rainbow man. The old man threw his killing boomerang at her, the lover threw himself in the way, saved the woman but was killed. Her remains there as the rainbow coloured sands, testament to the tragedy to be visited by women.

Third stop was morning tea at Dundaburra, near the National Parks office, where we enjoyed Mary's marvellous Anzac biscuits. Whilst there we met the rangers, Jo and Scott and we were impressed by the preserved snake collection and the depth of their natural science library.

After that George skilfully drove us to Indian Head where we walked to the top of the headland to view clear waters and observed turtles, stingrays, wild shoals of fish, sharks, seven dolphins, and were daunted by the steep cliffs that plunged into the ocean. We saw White-breasted Wood-swallows, a Booby, Rainbow Beaters, Terns galore, Silver Gulls, Richards Pippit, and Willy Wagtail on a nest. Scores of tiny beetles tickled our feet, whilst we marvelled at the delicacy of the nest.

It was interesting to note large

areas of algae discolouring the water to coffee brown in contrast the beautiful shades of blue and green in the surrounding waters. From there we walked the boardwalk to join throngs of overseas and local backpackers to relish the coolness of the water at Champagne Pools. Having been refreshed by the water we went to Waddy Point and enjoyed ANOTHER delicious and nutritious lunch prepared by Sue, Mary and Colleen... how do they do it!

We all commented on the fact that we were in the enclosure and the dingoes were on the outside... who is being protected from whom?

The tide prevented easy access to Ocean Lake so we took the alternative route – which was fairly rough and bumpy – George handled this with his usual calm aplomb. The lake was calm and serene and there were NO other tourists – bliss... birds abounded, whilst the water was a pale greeny brown it was sufficiently warm for us all jump in to enjoy. After the swim a small group went for a walk through the Callitris forest – the rest of us sat by the waters edge and enjoyed the peace and tranquillity.

As we prepared to leave two four wheel drives arrived with loud occupants... impeccable timing!

At this point we were at the apex of our trip and we began to head south and home- we simply HAD to stop at Cathedral Beach Resort for much needed refreshments in the form of ice-creams, Mary bought herself a cute blue hat with a dingo paw on the brim!

As we drove along the beach we passed seagulls, oyster catchers, dotterels, beach fisher folk, pippi and beach worm gatherers and researchers, arriving back at 5pm all tired but happy from a wonderful and interesting day. In the evening we shared a simple meal and enjoyed some party pieces by Ross and Jan (will Clint Eastwood ever be the same?) and a geography quiz was prepared and presented by Ian and Sandy – most entertaining, it was Ross and Jans' last night... their humour and ecological knowledge will be sorely missed.

October 24, 2005

The party divided into 3 males who concentrated on Eastern Cassia removal close to the rear of the Eurong Resort, whilst 5 females continued at the Second valley site. Ross and Jan visited and then departed with George to the Wangoolba Creek 9.30am ferry. Ross and Jan will be missed.

Although we all started at 7am the heat and humidity meant the Cassia work could only continue to 8am. However, a good start was made on cutting/poisoning and removal of the large amount of Cassias in evidence at the rear and edges of the Eurong resort. After a short break the remaining males adjourned to the Mother of Millions site, grateful for the cooler work in that site.

From this work it is clear that Eurong Village needs to develop a strategy for proper removal of garden clippings, as these are the cause of stimulating weed growth, due to excessive nutrient loads.

The female party completed the removal of the Mother of Millions up to second walkway and continued removal of the Corky Passionfruit Vine adjacent to the entrance track back to Eurong Resort. A Dingo was encountered, without incident and a Lace Monitor emerged from the surrounding ferns, surveying his new environment.

All returned to morning tea at 10am, and rested till lunch at 1pm.

After lunch Mary, George and Neil arranged with QNPWS for more supplies of Roundup, booked in an interview with Ivan Thrash and a potential identification of the Brown Booby, currently stored in our freezer. The remainder of the group rested, due to the heat.

The group decided to resume afternoon work from 3.30pm to 5pm.

4 males continued poisoning and removal of eastern cassias.

The females extended the work area further along the street into a Fishbone fern area. Another Mother of Millions area was identified even further along the street. In the Corky Passionfruit area more work was continued, most the CP has been removed from the native vegetation and a smaller area now remains covering the ground. A native Climbing Orchid (*Erythrorchis Cassythoides*) was located and identified. Numerous seedpods were attached.

As a result of a minor fall today (into a area of broken glass discarded with garden refuse), it is suggested that all volunteers should have tetanus injections before embarking on this assignment.

After a hard day working in the heat, we all enjoyed a pleasant happy hour and another superb meal.

One suggestion to deal with the heat in future years would be to time the trip in winter months outside school holidays to allow cooler, more pleasant working temperatures.

October 25, 2005

The ongoing saga of Sandy's disturbed sleep continues with her being awakened by what she believed was the return of Ratus Ratus on his nocturnal wandering. In fact it was her erstwhile friend and husband merely in search of a glass of water. Ian was somewhat offended by the misidentification and terse words ensued.

Another early breakfast (don't these people ever sleep in at least until 7 or even 8 cried Neil) and we joined George in the trusty troopie and drove to Lake Wabby.

Cloudy overcast weather with lightning and thunder caused Neil to wisely remain behind and catch up on his sleep and Mary also stayed behind making pikelets.

We started the walk up the sand dune lead by our intrepid tour guide George. He pointed out some remains of cherts, which had been used by the indigenous people. The lightning and thunder become closer and out came the wet weather gear. Some people had differing and original garments or lack thereof. Sandy look smart in a yellow poncho by Sue while Julian and Stephanie went for the more natural approach stripping down to swimmers and clothes stored in the black plastic garbage bags.

We reached the lake after a Sahara type exhausting walk / trek (Lawrence of Arabia expected to appear at any moment).

As Julian, Stephanie and Ian hit the water the heavens opened and the rain bucketed down. The water was warm but no amount of effort could convince the others to join us. Maybe it was the catfish or lack of lifeguards. In fact no one else was at the lake which says something about the intelligence of our group. Though arriving there at 8 o'clock sure beats the crowds and the sand is not hot then again the rain may have been a factor also.

Finally, Ian and Julian joined the others and we huddled under a tree with our backs into the wind like a bunch of cows seeking sanctuary for the weather (waste of time we still got wet)
George tried hard to convince us to wait that the weather would improve but the thought of morning tea and the usual delights prepared by Mary was irresistible and we then walked back via the forest walk sighting many splendid trees and ferns and grasses plus a wonderful chorus of birds.

Back at our home Mary was surprised to see us and made us wait for morning tea. Worth the wait as the pikelets appear with the golden syrup.

So by eleven most of us had collapsed and rested our eyes in preparation of the normal scrummy lunch. Due to the request of George out came the Shepherds s pie. Stephanie became the pie sheriff and caught Ian having his third helping.

2-00pm and finally we marched off to work after Julian visited the Parks and Wildlife people for a replenishment of poison.

The ladies continue with the excellent work in second valley removing Corky passionfruit and fish-burn fern The area is starting to take on a new character with the removal of much of the invasive weeds.

The guys again attacked the Senna along the southern side of the resort with some removal also of Ross's favourite Lantana. (Sadly Ross and Jan had left to return home to their family of lizards and were missed both their knowledge, humour and enjoyable companionship)
We finished the day by moving into the resort gardens and cutting out several large Senna's but still zillions remain. What twit planted these originally?

Dinner was corned beef with white onion sauce and rat a toe (nothing to do with Ratus Ratus). George has just had the perfect days his favourite foods for lunch and Dinner. Dinner was topped off with fruit salad and then out came the chocolate/cream mousse. An extra cholesterol-lowering tablet will be necessary tonight.

And so ends another enjoyable day.

Wednesday, October 26, 2005

We went off to work at 6.45... the men (Neil, George, Ian and Jules) to tackle the Senna in the resort grounds, Peter the resort groundsman, came with his huge truck shortly after they arrived so they all swung into loading it up with the trunks and branches that they have dealt with over the last three days to be taken away to the tip. Peter was extremely grateful for their help.

The women (Colleen, Sue, Sandy and Steph) headed off, (Vicki came across later to continue her work on a large patch of Corky Passionfruit) to continue work on the Fishbone Fern and the remainder of the Mother of Millions. Whilst working a man who is renting a house adjacent to the work area came over to talk to us and ask what we were doing and why – he (Phil Coles) is a scientist and is working on Coconut Palms – he expressed his dismay at seeing them on the island as they are not native to the island – apparently they are on the list of plants to be removed in a long term strategy.

Mike Willey from Maryborough Council also visited the site and expressed his delight at seeing so many weeds being removed – he took some photos of the Fishbone Fern and Ground Asparagus for inclusion in a brochure to be produced by the council for landholders within the Shire.....we were pleased with his desire to educate the community about the problems caused by weeds, at the same time we asked for some signage to be placed adjacent to the houses at Second Valley telling the residents not to dump their vegetative matter in this area. All of us felt we had a most successful morning and came back for morning tea.

As soon as we finished that we piled into the car and set off for another eventful trip to places of beauty. We followed the Eurong to Central Station Road, turning off to the southern lakes link track driving through tall Hoop Pines and Satinay Forests, the mosses and dappled light between the trees was a delight to behold. We passed Lake

Jennings visible through the trees, but took a turn to the right heading to Lake Birrabeen, passing an area set aside specifically for tour operators, George took us to a different area and we walked down a well made track where a vision of heaven took us all by surprise... pristine white sand, turquoise waters and wind sculptured trees and NO other people... bliss. We very rapidly put swimmers on and plunged in – the water was a very pleasant temperature – the comment was made that this was the perfect way to relax and revive after a hard mornings' work. Some of us went for a short walk and found large patches of Hyacinth orchids flowering – their beautiful mottled pink flowers shone with the pure white sand as their background.

Whilst we were disporting ourselves Mary and Sue made ANOTHER splendid lunch – which we all enjoyed sitting in the shade of a beautiful Satinay and admiring the view.

We reluctantly left to continue on our journey, stopping next at Benaroon Lake, Droseras and multicoloured reeds edged the lake... the water was a greeny brown and somewhat windswept.... not particularly tempting after the earlier lake. We drove along quite a bumpy track, admiring the Foxtail Ferns and Casuarina as we went, George stopped at Boomanjin Lake for us to admire the coloured sands – these looked like superb Japanese water colours with misty browns, soft greys and creams across water rippled sands, the water was a ti-tree colour and quite tepid. A small group walked to look at the melaleuca forest whilst other in a state of exhaustion walked to the camp ground to wait for the others as we were waiting we were amazed to see the type of camp site – with an 8ft high fence surrounding it and a very forbidding gate... not surprisingly there were no campers on the inside. Again we piled back into the car and headed for Dilli Village – now an extension section of the University of Sunshine Coast – it looked very well maintained and a pleasant place to study. THEN we headed home along the beach. Once back we headed to our rooms for a rest. Having had a rest, we came out - someone put some smelly shoes out to air... and a very inquisitive dingo thought they smelled VERY attractive – it was amusing to see the owner of the shoe in hot pursuit with rake in hand... he returned with shoe in hand and the dingo vanished into the bush.

Thursday, October 27, 2005

Last day and energy levels are flagging after a very intense week. However, all participants happily started at 7am.

Four males spent one hour in front of the resort targeting Easter Cassia by cutting and painting with concentrated (100%) Roundup. The eastern sun was too intense for us to continue and two of them continued targeting Easter Cassia at Eurong Second Valley and two hands weeded Corky Passionfruit Vine with the ladies at Second Valley.

Vicky weeded Plectranthus near the dumped timber mound from an adjacent property at Eurong Second Valley. She also targeted Fox Tail Asparagus and Corky Passionfruit Vine amongst native vegetation including Dianella and Midyam.

The remainder of the female workers completed the work in the Eurong Second Valley towards the end of the loop road system, targeting Fish Bone Fern and Mother of Millions.

Finally, the entire group came and joined Vicky targeting Mother of Millions and Plectranthus. Work in this section was completed as far as one door down from 'Wal's Place'. All work stopped at 10am.

Observations from work carried out in the Eurong area:

1. **Eurong Second Valley** - garden refuse was dumped in bushland opposite the properties, allowing weed s to thrive from the nutrients, making weeding particularly dangerous and difficult. In addition to plant material, glass, plastic, metal, car batteries, car parts, oilcans, wire cable etc were encountered. This presented difficulties with species such as Madeira Vine, Mother of Millions that had a tendency to be brittle and drop tubers and plantlets respectively. Likewise, Corky Passionfruit Vine and Fox Tail Asparagus roots were difficult to access amongst the dumped dead branches. We are unaware of any Council clean-up mechanism, and the instructions as to the use of the local tip.

2. **Eurong Resort** - many of the weeds encountered (Easter Cassia, Lantana, Fox Tail Ferns) were often difficult to access by the presence of bottles, cans, glass, building refuse, coconuts, coconut fronds, lawn clippings and tree pruning's that have been dumped in the gardens. This practice will probably increase the nutrient levels to higher levels than native plants (esp. Banksia) can tolerate. The resort truck was too large to access many grassed areas (too tall, catches on trees overhead, with the consequence of cuttings being left in the gardens or surrounding bushland).

Recommendations:

1. **Eurong Second Valley:** Council to initiate a weed management strategy including resident/owner education programme on weed identification, garden escape species, weed removal methods, proper disposal and appropriate replacement species. A public relations exercise of dissemination of this material, followed up by regular Council clean-ups would be a positive way for Council to preserve valuable bushland surrounding the resort. This special treatment of the garden/bushland interface would be beneficial to Fraser Island's World Heritage status.
2. **Eurong Resort:** proper maintenance of grounds requires extra investment to eliminate the problems of waste management. This includes the provision of a suitable truck to allow access to all garden areas and increased staff to allow proper grounds maintenance. The Eurong Resort is located in a World Heritage Area and this is a selling point in the promotion of the Resort. Consequently, the Resort has a responsibility to provide grounds that are in keeping with the surrounding bushland. We recommend that grounds staff be supported with suitable training in bushland management. This could involve liaison with appropriate staff from QPWS and Maryborough Council, external training courses (eg TAFE, Australian Association of Bush Regenerators), development of a species list of plants suitable for the resort that are local (endemic) and non-invasive to the surrounding bushland.

In the afternoon we visited the QPWS office, dropped in the Brown Booby for identification, observed displays and reported the evening Dingo sightings. Mary hopes to liaise with Ivan Thrash on the follow up with respect to the group's activities, especially with respect to waste pickup, future support in the use of tools and the provision of poison. The relationship with QPWS was valuable and important to the success of our exercise in the island.

Closer cooperation with and support by Maryborough Council in future would be crucial to the ongoing success of the program; e.g. the development of a resident education programme in the follow up of the valuable work carried out by our volunteer team.

October 28, 2005

Mary and George waved farewell to Sandy, Ian, Steph, Jules, Vicki and Neil; returning to the house they found Su and Colleen well into the preparations of clearing, cleaning and packing. Sitting down to a cup of tea was a sad affair with the absence of the volunteers.

We took the watermelon to the Parkies at 12 to find the office closed and locked, so it was offered to Lisa and Steve who accepted it with delight. Su used her influence to obtain a 50% discount for Talinga next year; it will be HQ for the operation. Mary and Su went over to the Resort to confirm the accommodation for the next trip: May 20, 2006 for two weeks. Lisa promised to liaise with owners of properties that she manages and her neighbouring properties so that we can gain access in the future to assess weed problems.

After lunch Ivan showed up and sat with us for some time, promising continued support for next year: help with waste removal, chemicals and backpacks for spraying etc. He was most interested in Ross's mud map (with Jules filling in after Ross left) and offered to work with us in mapping the weeding progress with his slightly more sophisticated equipment. He also studied Steph's recommended list of plants (for Peter Ware) and noted several that he has in his nursery.

October 29, 2005

The rest of the team left Talinga before 7 a.m.

I wish everyone was there to see George, our hero, drive onto the barge on soft loose sand, with vehicles bogged in it left and right and centre. Fraser Island does its best to detain its visitors in more ways than one.

We had lunch with John, who took over his vehicle and brought us all back to Su to unpack. Mary and Su went to see the butcher and green grocer who refunded \$46 in total.

Mary caught the 5pm flight out of Brisbane.