

Diary

Eurong Bush Regeneration

25 February to 3rd March 2018



The team spent about 10 person hours eliminating Gloriosa lily surrounding this relic avocado at Central Station

Summary

The team of ten volunteers spent five days working as part of FIDO's bush regeneration program based at Eurong that includes the development of the plant stock at the QPWS Eurong Nursery. They contributed an aggregate of 248 hours to weeding, new plantings, nursery work and maintaining areas previously cleared.

- Dispensed over 150 plants from the nursery, potted up many new smaller plants and added new seed plantings and cuttings to grow up new replacement stock;
- Planted out about 100 of those plants in openings along Easton Street and additional plants in the Demonstration gardens and the Reception area.
- Manually weeded the Demonstration garden area at the back of the Eurong Resort and the Roundabout;
- Manually weeded a large area outside and north of the dingo fence as part of the on-going campaign to eliminate this invasive species from this patch of bushland before it spreads further afield;
- Manually weeded the area from the Nature Walk to the bottom of Problem Corner;
- Manually eliminated an isolated occurrence of Gloriosa lily at Central Station;
- Dealt with many Lantana and Cocos palms between the Deer Farm and the Eurong Crossroads



Australian Government

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 Burnett Mary
REGIONAL GROUP
Practical Solutions for Natural Resource Management

Day 1 Sunday 25th February

Dramas on eve of the working bee meant that TAHKA's tyres were wholly unsafe and we needed a reliable 4WD if we were going to manage any working bee. Thankfully as the crisis unfolded Keith Sinclair saw what was happening and offered his Pajero "Balke" (84LKE) as a substitute for TAHKA which he offered to have roadworthy on our return.

Five set off from Brisbane in a convoy of two Pajeros and a trailer at 9.00 am and collected Suzanne at approximately 10.30 and arrived at the King's Noosa home after 11.00 am for a very welcome and generous morning tea. With such under our belt we held out until Maryborough for lunch. It was a squally day with heavy showers between Mt Coolum and Maryborough. We collected Fran at Urangan and reached Mary River Heads at 3.30 with a margin to spare.

There was a magic moment at Mary River Heads when we watched a procession of small terns running relays coming down the river, collecting small surface fish flushed out by the big fresh in the river flow. As they reached the limit of the fresh pickings they would peel off from the front and retreat to the rear of this ever advancing very large flock of small terns engaged in this feeding frenzy triggered by the recent rains. The bulk of the flock was clearly identified as Black-naped Terns.

The track across from Wangoolba Creek to Eurong was very firm after five days of consistent rain but it remains rough. The Eurong Weather station recorded 193mm leading up to today that bodes well for good planting conditions for our bush regeneration program. (Sunday 25th-30mm; Saturday 24th -65mm; Friday 23rd – 40mm; Thursday 22nd – 43mm; Wednesday 21st – 15mm).

We quickly all settled into Talinga and enjoyed a Happy Hour prior to moving to the Restaurant for dinner. Sadly we missed the Resort Manager, Greg Hilton who started leave on Saturday and we learnt of other personnel changes but then after an interesting long day we retired to bed ready for tomorrow's challenges.



Day 2 Monday 26th February

The weather was wet and unpredictable with showers on and off during the day. Decisions were made to change the work program to allow people to work close to cover in the event of showers. By 7.00 am there had been 30 mm of rain but only light showers until lunch and then no more rain before midnight. However the humidity was at saturation point. After an introductory orientation walk through the Resort area and Bampi the group split into two teams with six people working in the resort area and three going to the nursery.

Those working in the resort area worked on weeding the various demonstration gardens developed by FIDO over the last eight years. It is the first weeding for a year and the main weed was couch grass. The work demanded patience. During the process there was some pruning and identification of gaps needing to be filled. Tony dug and watered 33 holes in those gaps in readiness for planting with stock from the nursery to come over the next few days. The work also found a leak in the grey water pipe that the maintenance staff had been trying to locate.

The Nursery team for the day comprised Suzanne, Jennifer, Frances, David and Marion. David returned with things that could be potted up and helped with the potting. Fran washed pots. David and Marion supplied some propagation material with *Syzygium oleosum*, (seeds) and celerywood plants *Polyscias elegans*, *Achronichia imperforata* (Root cuttings were potted up) plus 70 wildings of *Syzygium leuhmannii* that were potted up. Jen and Fran pricked out and potted up 36 *Petalostygma* and 32 *Banksia integrifolia*. The team returned to Talinga with two trays of plants.

After lunch while some elected to go to the pool and chill out Fearless Leader took four mermaids down to the Dilli Village swimming hole and an exploration of Govi and Gerrawea Creek mouths where there was strong flows after the recent rain.

While at Dilli Village that another magical moment of birds occurred. After seeing a couple of elegant and such streamlined Frigatebirds wafting overhead riding on thermals drift off to the north it was thought to be the sighting of the day. However while the mermaids were swimming, a squadron of two dozen Frigatebirds drifted up from the south and hovered overhead for about ten minutes performing an impromptu but oh so graceful aerial ballet as they wheeled and swirled. It was exhilarating and uplifting to see such an aeronautical display performed with barely a bird flapping awing as they sashayed around each other. It was more spectacular than any of the more tightly choreographed figure skating recently seen at the Korean Winter Olympics.

It had been an overcast drizzly and incredibly humid day but we enjoyed the whole experience despite the weather. The day ended with Happy Hour and another dinner at the resort.

Hours worked: 9 x 5 = 45



Day 3 Tuesday 27th February

The weather forecast for today was “rain easing” but 15 mm was delivered in the early hours and the wind had picked up. The misty drizzle suggested that we needed to work close to cover.

The day started with a safety briefing for everyone before Suzanne and John E. set off to the nursery. Six of the team then went to work in Problem Corner while Tony, Maria and John S. hitched up the trailer for the dump runs.

The team under Su’s guidance worked in the Problem Corner area on coral creeper, small Green panic, Fishbone fern, Siratro amongst other weeds. The Nature Walk entrance was also opened up by Tony and Maria before they moved on to the dump runs to dispose of the prunings and weeds cleared from the Demonstration gardens the previous day. Time was critical with an appointment at the Nursery to collect the plants for the new plantings

before Smoko. The two runs to the dump took time but they managed to meet the time schedule despite on pair of hands being excluded from helping. Maria then remained at the nursery after loading 100 plants for use in the resort demonstration areas and elsewhere.

Meanwhile the Problem Corner team continued diligently working at the target weeds defined in the work schedule to 10.45 before moving back to engage in the planting program. Meanwhile Tony was digging holes for the 100 plants ready for the team of planters to follow up. It was a very busy day with everyone wanting to return to finish particular programs such as finishing Problem Corner, and weeding the Roundabout.

After lunch there was an excursion to Kirrar Sandblow that was really enjoyed particularly for its aesthetic values. While this was happening Su returned to Bampi to continue her private project towards a weed free Green Zone. As the main group returned at about 4.45 Su was just moving up to start planting up the 100 holes that Tony had dug and watered beside Eaton Street. Almost immediately she was joined by volunteers who plan filled many holes. Despite remaining until the last light

Hours worked: 10 x 5 plus Su’s work = 55



A stop was made to inspect the monitoring stations installed five years ago to measure sediment accumulation

Day 4 Wednesday 28th February

The sun shone today for the first morning so far, the wind had dropped and the omens looked good. The Fearless Leader contacted QPWS and arranged for the northern gate in the dingo fence to be opened.

Su and Tony returned to the chore of filling the 100 holes in Easton Street with plants from the nursery. This part of Easton Street has been a challenge for about eight years since the mountain of garden

waste was removed. Other planting there hasn't been successful due to dry conditions. Su is confident that with the rain this effort will succeed.

FL led Jenny, Fran, Maria and Jan outside the dingo fence. Their challenging task was to deal with the lush new growth on the rejuvenated Coral creeper. They worked their way across the face of the slope up from the dingo fence and ended up very satisfied with their accomplishment but there was still a lot more waiting to be dealt with.

Sarah Mahoney came down to open the gate in the dingo fence. She goes off shift today and can't join us for the projected work at Central Station on Thursday but we discussed our program for there.

The teams worked diligently at their respective tasks but at 9.00 Tony and FL started mixing glyphosate ready for Su. The weather has finally changed to make spraying of some weeds possible.

After lunch while the main party was on an excursion to Lake Boomanjin Su used up 30 litres of the newly mixed chemicals spot spraying inside Bampi for a variety of emergent weeds in small patches — Purple Splash, Hen and Chicken and Billygoat weed as well as the usual suspects.

It was an early lunch because the team had a priority to use to tide to go to Lake Boomanjin and back via Dilli Village taking advantage of the afternoon low-tide. It was yet another rich excursion where the patterns of wind and tea coloured flowing water on snow-white sand created an infinite variety of patterns to stimulate aesthetic appreciation. The group paused to pose around and an ancient Melaluca with character.

David and Marion Anderson joined us for Happy Hour at *Talinga* and for dinner at the Resort. It was a good ending to another satisfying day

Hours worked: 9 x 5 = 45



An ancient Melaluca on the shore of Lake Boomanjin

Day 5 Thursday 1st March

A cloudless day dawned. It was most welcome as we had been waiting for this which had been forecast all week.

Everyone set off at 7.00 am to fill in two hours of work before heading off for Central Station. The aim was to get as much work done before smoko at Talinga prior to setting out for the day's excursion.

Su, Margaret and Maria worked on the roundabout pruning back the Moreton Bay Ash and weeding out couch grass and tidying up the garden at the busy entrance to Eurong. Margaret also tackled some Painted Spurge and Siratro nearby. It was a task that would be continued the next day by Su as she cleared the walking track sign shelter and track.



The team pruning back the Roundabout

Suzanne, Jennifer and John worked at the Nursery. Potting up lots of cuttings.

Tony, Fran and Jan returned to the Coral Creeper assault outside the dingo fence. They got into the thicker growth closer to the road and began working up the hill.

FL did a dump run with the bags left over by Su and domestic garbage.

After an early Smoko at Talinga the whole contingent set off to Central Station to tackle another task eliminating Gloriosa Lily. It was hot and humid with fierce sunshine as the group spent a full hour diligently digging and feeling out every root runner and bagging them up. It was a busy cooperative effort and all the bags were returned to Eurong for disposal. It was enervating work

The group then explored Wangoolba Creek from the boardwalk enjoying one of the great delights of Central Station. The also made another foray at Pile Valley amongst the great Pibins (Fearless Leader hates calling them Satinays) on the way to Lake McKenzie. They arrived at the Lake at 1.30 and after lunch went for a swim. They left the lake at 3.15 and were back at Eurong by 4.00 pm.

Su and Jennifer spent an hour and a half watering in the new Easton Street plantings.

Hours worked: 10 x 3.5 = 35 plus 3 = 38

**Day 6
Friday 2nd March**

It was another fine day but it was hot and humid. Suzanne, John and Maria visited the Andersons who took them on an exploration of the USL on the southern side of Eurong to assess its potential for seed and nursery stock before heading back to the Nursery to continue the propagation there.

Tony and Fearless Leader went on a Lantana hunt between the Deer Farm and the Crossroads. Not only did they remove at least a dozen lantana, some very large and well entrenched but they discovered about a dozen Cocos palms that were also removed as well as a small outbreak of Brazilian nightshade.

Jan, Fran, Margaret, Jennifer continued to persevere with the Coral Creeper working both sides of the ridge. At the bottom of the back slope there were many seedlings recently germinated and the whole area will require spraying in July to deal with these new emergent.

The group took a long break for lunch with some relaxation before returning after 3.00 when they returned to the fray with such enthusiasm that some lost track of time, over-running the scheduled 5.00 pm knock off.

Hours worked: 9 x 7 plus 2 = 65

**Day 7
Saturday 3rd March**

There was frantic activity preparing to leave by 7.00 am but the objective was accomplished. It enabled the island crossing to Kingfisher to be accomplished without meeting more than a single vehicle on the track. It also left time to relax at Kingfisher where a luxury French tourist ship, La Australe, was anchored on Day 38 of a 40 day round Australia cruise.

The two vehicles parted at Mary River Heads one returning to Brisbane via Urangan and the other via the Sunshine Coast



French cruise liner La Australe off Kingfisher

Potential Weeds

Two tree species now found on K'gari are very worrying and a clear determination of their status on the island is required. They are worrying because they could be potential weeds. One is White Cedar (*Melia azedarach*) and the other is a Beach Almond (*Terminalia catappa*)

White Cedar is now very well established in and around Eurong yet it doesn't appear on the Wildnet list for the island nor does it appear in the Atlas of Living Australia. It is FIDO's belief that although this tree is native to Australia, it is a recent introduction to K'gari should be treated in the same way as Umbrella trees. However unlike Umbrella Trees that occur naturally far from K'gari White Cedars occur naturally on the adjacent mainland. An eradication program should begin sooner than later to prevent the spread of this into the bush.

Beach Almond has a question mark hanging over what its real status is. Atlas of Living Australia shows records for Gladstone and an island in the Capricorn Group but no further south. It is now found in Happy Valley and Eurong as well as at the Lake McKenzie picnic area. The question needing to be addressed is this a recent introduction and how is it being spread. These need to be addressed in considering the question of whether it needs to be treated as a weed and eradicated.

Tasks for July

- The Coral Creeper infestation on the northern side of the dingo fence requires careful spraying to deal with new germinating plants;
- An assault is needed on Green Panic particularly on the southern side of Resort Valley;
- Special attention need to be given to Singapore Alley that was neglected this trip

Choreographing an Aerial Ballet

A children's story by John Sinclair

(Inspired by seeing a display Frigate bird aerial exhibition on K'gari in February 2018)

Freda was the most gentle chick ever raised by a Frigate bird. Her parents had built a primitive nest on the remote and rocky Quoin Island in the far northern section of the Great Barrier Reef which is where they hatched the precious egg that contained Freda.

Unlike most birds Freda's parents, like other Frigate birds laid only one egg but their nest was a shambles of debris and small branches in a low bush. Also unlike other birds frigate birds only raise one chick every second year and they really care for their chicks. Frigate birds spend more time providing parental care than almost any other bird species. They really doted on Freda. The fed her on small fish and [squid](#) and sometimes regurgitated fish that they had robbed from a terrified seabird.

Frigate birds are birds of the wing. They have long pointed streamlined wings that give them), the largest wing area to body weight ratio of any bird. Unfortunately though they aren't great swimmers and they usually catch their food when large predators such as [tuna](#) chase smaller fish to the water surface. Then these birds demonstrate their aerial skills and pluck the fish from the water without getting more than their hooked beak wet.

Their other trick to obtain their fill of seafood is that they watch boobies and noddies flying back to their nests with a crop full of fish. Then they swoop down on the unsuspecting target birds that they gets such a fright that they cough up the fish they were taking for their chicks and the Frigate birds catch this before it hits the water. It is this trick that give Frigate birds a bad reputation. Some people call them Pirate birds.

Sweet gentle Freda was really upset that her parents that had given her the best care should be branded as evil and she was determined to do something to improve the image of these most graceful fliers.

Her great opportunity came one day when Group Captain Fred, the Squadron Leader of the Bunker Island Group of Frigate birds announced that there had been rain that had cause a fresh flow out of the Mary River down south and it was flushing out lots of small fish.

"If those small Black Naped Terns can fly that far down and back in a day to cash in on they rich pickings at the river mouth, we can do it in a couple of hours and we can enjoy flying over beautiful Fraser Island on the way," he stated.

Freda was excited. Being birds mainly of the tropics, normally she and her parents spent most of their

days just wafting over the coral cays at the very southern end of the Great Barrier Reef. This was a new adventure.

They arrived at Mary River Heads and were intrigued by the patterns of Great Sandy Strait and drifted over to have a look at Double Island Point before Group Captain Fred called the squadron together and said, *"This as been a wonderful exercise but we need to maintain our formation as we head home taking advantage of the updrafts caused by the wind."*

They hadn't gone very far on their return flight when Freda saw a group of women swimming in a waterhole below. She saw an opportunity to improve the image and reputation of Frigate birds so she pleaded with Group Captain Fred, *"Please can we do an aerial ballet to impress those women in the waterhole and improve the image of Frigate birds?"*

Group Captain Fred had a soft spot for Freda so he agreed. *"You will have to tell us how you want this done,"* he said.

Freda quickly organized the flight of 24 Frigate birds to whirl and swirl above the mermaids below. They glided, sashayed and pirouetted without flapping their wings. It was graceful and as elegant as any staged ballet but the mermaids were enjoying their swimming so much that they never noticed this brilliant display above them.

Nearby a tired old man alone on the beach was just full of awe as he watched the display. He was so spellbound stopped his writing. He was in such a trance at Freda's choreography that he didn't even think to take a photo. However he was so impressed that he promised never to consider Frigate birds to be evil marauders again. *"Thank you Freda,"* he murmured to himself as the squadron drifted north.



Frigate birds are tropical and subtropical seabirds and the most graceful fliers