

May in our Catchment



The frosts are here; the King Parrots are back in Queanbeyan; the days are getting very short! A big thank you, once again, to all of you for doing the sampling and getting the results in so quickly. It was also heartening to see how many of you had a go at sending in information about the algae.

Your Results:

The water temperature is now down to winter levels, and will continue to fall in the wetlands. The elevated pH for the middle site at the Australian National University may be an artefact of the strange things going on near Toad Hall. For a second month, the ANU group have reported a raft of rubbish at that point in Sullivans Creek, and there appear to be several associated problems with water quality. A few of the EC readings have risen again, having come down with the rain.

The dramatic reading in Stony Creek, Carwoola (1090 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$) is also associated with blanket weed in the waterway. The whole blanket weed family flourish in alkaline or mineral rich waters, fresh or salty. The low Dissolved Oxygen Saturation in the bottom of Sullivans Creek is probably a reflexion of the decomposition of that raft of rubbish. And once again, Sullivans Creek in the university grounds shows high phosphate levels, possibly from gardening and playing field maintenance in the catchment below the David Street wetland. David Street, by the way, has lost its scarlet bloom! The slightly elevated phosphates in the Upper Queanbeyan catchment are possibly associated with either pasture improvement or some autumn crop sowing.

Make sure you get to the QAQC barbecue:

It really is important that people make an effort to attend QA/QC events. The Waterwatching community forms the backstop to the water monitoring done by both the Territory authorities and local government, and so we have to be accredited (I almost wrote certified!). By coming along, refreshing your calibrating fluids, checking your techniques, updating equipment and meeting your fellow Waterwatchers you receive that accreditation. Then, when your results are sent in to DECCEW, they can be used with confidence.

Calibration fluids have a shelf life. The pH buffered standards slowly degrade and probably will last twelve months. The Electrical Conductivity standard is only expected to last between three and six months. If your calibration fluid goes back to 2007 or earlier then...

Some of you have Dissolved Oxygen kits that work, others may not. Some DO kits are more satisfactory than others. Tanya, Damon, Martin and myself need to know who has which kit, and how confident they are in using them, and who needs a kit and training. Then we can

budget for kits (the better ones) and support you. And what other bits of equipment do you need or need serviced? Do let me know before Wednesday 26th.

To make the **Catchment Health indicators Program** work we need as many people as possible sending in reports for all the different parameters.

And besides it's a pretty spot and we will put on a good BBQ! We had a great time at both CSIRO and George Harcourt last year.

The walk to Tong's Hole; the Inner North Community Fair and other things.

It was very pleasant last Sunday morning strolling down to Tong's Hole on the lower Molonglo and hearing Darren Roso explain its past, present and future. The autumn grasses were great, even the African Lovegrass! And a big thank you to the students from Hawker College for the welcome morning tea afterwards.



Standing on the site of the proposed Dickson wetland in the afternoon, surrounded by brightly coloured tents, Shetland ponies, stilt-walking ibis and butterflies, and dogs was very pleasant. The comments on the wetland were all positive. The Fair was popular, the children's fantasy bugs unique! A good afternoon out!

Calendar

Saturday 22nd May: 6:45 am meet in the Q carpark, Queanbeyan for an early morning Platypus Walk around the weir.

Saturday 29th May: QA/QC and Barbecue at Molonglo Gorge, starting at 2:00 pm.

Saturday 19th - Sunday 20th June: Waterwatch sampling for June.

Stephen Skinner

Waterwatch Coordinator, Molonglo Catchment Group.