

July Juncture 2017

From the Chairman, The Mulloon Institute

The Collins Australian dictionary defines juncture as, “a point in time, especially a crisis; a state of affairs; a joining or being joined; a point of joining or connection”. There has been plenty going on at The Mulloon Institute during July to fit with some, if not all, of those definitions, except of course the bit about a crisis!

Adopting “a state of affairs” definition and demonstrating good governance, the Board met during July to oversee our activities including our budget. Our expenditure remains within our means and while we would like to be spending more, we need to attract more donations to ensure we do that responsibly.

Increasingly, we are being approached to advise and assist landholders and communities in their quest to improve their landscapes, so one of the topics of the Board’s discussion was how best to respond. Effectively we have been consulting in this fashion, but now believe we can take this to a higher level, and in the process earn income for The Mulloon Institute (TMI) to enable our work to be expanded. Getting the structure right and the resources in place will be our immediate work in progress. This is certainly a very positive “juncture” for TMI.

All the staff also got together for a day of updating and planning to ensure we are working effectively and coordinating the various activities. Everything from the work of the Green Army overseen by Cam Wilson, to preparing for school and university student visits that need everyone on deck, to Peter



Green Army participants

Hazell finalizing details for our application to the Office of Water, to public communications and social media campaigns directed by Kelly Thorburn, and of course the ongoing scientific benchmarking coordinated by Luke Peel, were the subject of discussions and planning. You can join us on social media by liking our Facebook page www.facebook.com/TheMulloonInstitute/

And not to forget the pursuance of appointments and contacts that Jen Southwell assists me and Tony Coote as we continue to raise the profile of TMI and the principles of landscape repair that we advocate for. That is a task we have to be diligent about as governments at all levels seem to regularly put such matters in the too hard basket. But we won’t let them.

Not in our too hard basket is our crucial benchmarking research and during July Luke Peel received the most recent bird survey carried out



by Damon Oliver. This was the third survey and his report reveals that there has been sightings of six rare/declining species and two threatened species. Importantly there was also a sighting of a Scarlet Robin! This is exciting news given its rarity and very encouraging for diversity in the Mulloon Catchment. Full details of the baseline bird survey will be available very shortly.



Kookaburra – image by Lydia Kirk

In previous updates I've mentioned we were supporting a bid under the Cooperative Research Centre Programme, so in July the application, coordinated by the University of New England (UNE), was lodged. The Farming Smarter CRC bid will now be considered by the Federal Government and here's hoping it makes it to the next stage of assessment. In lodging the bid the Expression of Interest provided the following short version summary:

“The Farming Smarter CRC will improve the productivity and profitability of Australian farms through the development of farmer informed farm-centric AgTech enabled solutions. The CRC will have a commercially focussed, cross-sector research program to ensure the benefits are translated to industry. This will result in more prosperous regional and rural communities through the creation of agricultural jobs, while stimulating national and

international demand for Australian grown AgTech”.

Luke Peel has been our contact during the preparation of the bid and I thank him for his expert input on TMI's behalf. The Farming Smarter CRC bid is a good example of a “joining or connection”, another juncture!

Speaking of bids, I'm afraid our grant application to SUEZ I mentioned in my May Missive wasn't successful. There will be many more community and government based opportunities that we will continue to pursue to assist our vital work.

A successful application last year was from the Environment Trust of NSW so July saw Pete Hazell diligently completing a twelve month progress report on how some of that grant has been allocated to preparation work for the next stage of the Mulloon Community Landscape Rehydration Project (MCLRP). The expenditure of that grant will accelerate in the coming months particularly following approval from the NSW Office of Water which we would hope will occur in September/October. That grant will assist build the next stage but a much greater level of expenditure will need to be acquired for the balance.

TMI, Mulloon Creek Natural Farms (MCNF) and the MCLRP have been the subject of interest for some years now with university and school students. Initially, most of that interest came from Canberra Girls Grammar School and the Australian National University (ANU). But we are now receiving more broad interest. Girls Grammar have sent students on a regular basis a couple of times each year and similarly ANU.

September and October will see students from two different Schools at ANU carrying out course

for environment, farming and society



work at Mulloon but we will also have a substantial number of students coming from the University of Canberra. In preparation for their visit they will carry out a drone survey in August of about one square kilometre on MCNF's Home Farm.

I've previously reported on the visit from The Scots College students and I can now report year nine and ten geography students from Braidwood Central School will visit in early August. It is wonderful we are attracting students as their education in landscape repair, rehydration and regenerative agriculture will ensure broader knowledge into the future of this vital work.

In finalising this month's update I remind you that our next highly sought after four day workshop in collaboration with Tarwyn Park Training will be in November. Already we have ten confirmed participants so it is important to register early and details can be found here <http://themullooninstitute.org/events/2017/11/12/natural-sequence-farming-4-day-training-course>. Our team is also working hard to have the first edition of our 'How to Guide' available for the participants in that workshop.

Many thanks for all those who responded positively to my last update and in particular the reference to Jachère, meaning fallow, and its relevance to agriculture. Also many thanks for the best wishes for my health recovery, very much appreciated. There will be more to report at the end of August so I look forward to keeping you up to date at that juncture.

Cheers,

Gary Nairn AO – Chairman

0419 420 108 | garynairn@themullooninstitute.org



Students and teachers from The Scots College visiting MCNF



Natural Sequence Farming training – March 2017



for environment, farming and society