



April Azimuth 2017

From the Chairman, The Mulloon Institute

This month's update I've called April "Azimuth" as "azimuth" is a navigational (or surveying) term referring to a "bearing" or more in laymen's terms, a "direction". Chosen because when I looked at a quick summary of the many things done or meetings I had during April, steering things in certain directions was fairly prominent.

And appropriately to that theme, for me, the month of April started with me presenting a paper in Sydney at the national conference of the surveying, mapping and spatial sciences industry called Locate 17. My paper was titled "Landscape Repair, Sustainable Agriculture, Spatially Driven". I outlined the work of The Mulloon Institute, our Mulloon Community Landscape Rehydration Project (MCLRP), our UN connection and the vital role of spatial information (e.g. satellite imagery, etc) in that work. I'll have the paper added to our website for those interested in reading further on this subject.

While in Sydney and following the conference, Tony Coote and I caught up with an old friend and colleague of Tony's, David Gonski. A name you will know given the publicity around school funding models. But David's contribution to Australia and the corporate world is much more. You will recall in a previous update I mentioned David Gonski's role as Chancellor of the UNSW and how he launched Colleen McCullough's book about water and Michael Crouch. We spoke to him at that launch and explained briefly the work of The Mulloon Institute and its relevance to water. Our meeting was a follow up to that event.

But David, amongst many roles, is Chairman of Coca Cola Amatil and of the ANZ Banking Group. Coca Cola Amatil obviously have a great interest in water and its sustainability, and ANZ has a strong sustainability policy and works with its farmer clients in that respect. So we were very grateful for David to link The Mulloon Institute with both those corporate entities and we look forward to talking with them about our work and how they might consider supporting it. Involving corporate Australia in landscape repair and sustainable agriculture is just one of the "directions" we are taking The Mulloon Institute.

Another "direction" is with respect to utilizing the incredible technology that is available and growing. I reported on a demonstration of drone technology a couple of months back and April gave us a chance to see another system in use on the MCLRP. A drone acquired photography and other data that resulted in contour information of a small section of the creek and adjoining flood plain. Many other products, for example 3D model, can ultimately be extracted that will assist greatly in our design for the creek and catchment repair. Pete Hazell and Luke Peel are working with the data to determine the most appropriate output before we consider our next "direction".

A visitor to The Mulloon Institute and Mulloon Creek Natural Farms (MCNF) during April was the outgoing Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Australia, Nabil M. Al Saleh. He had heard about MCNF and The Mulloon Institute and wanted to catch up before he departed Australia to return to Saudi Arabia where he will be



involved in family business including egg production. While Saudi Arabia has a very different landscape to Australia there are always areas of common interest when it comes to the environment, farming and society, our catch phrases, so who knows what “direction” such contacts can take us in the future. Mr. Al Saleh wants to keep in touch and receive regular updates on our work.

An opportune seat at a Press Club luncheon courtesy of my wife Rose and Westpac, allowed me to have a few minutes with guest speaker and Minister for Regional Development and other things, Senator Fiona Nash. Senator Nash, a farmer herself, was very interested to know of our work and asked for more information. I’ve had several email exchanges with her subsequent to that luncheon and will be added to my regular updates. The “small world” story out of that contact is that Michael Fitzgerald, MCNF farm manager, sheared his first 100 sheep in Senator Nash’s woolshed! She fondly remembered Michael’s work on her farm.

Another productive meeting during April and another example of my “azimuth” theme was with Guy Webb and Mick Wettenhall, Directors of an organization called “Soil C Quest 2031”. They are doing some very interesting scientific work with respect to soil sequestration through an inoculant for the root system of crops and plants. They have seen that it can be difficult to keep carbon in the soil because of instability and this is at the core of their research. They are very interested in the outcomes we are achieving and we will continue to keep each other informed of our respective work so we can maximize outcomes. Check out their website at www.scq.net.au to better understand their research.

Finally for April I want to report on the SDG Academy course “Feeding a Hungry Planet - Agriculture, Nutrition and Sustainability” that I’ve been doing over the past month or so. As I reported last month, it is

highly relevant to our work and is reinforcing many of the principles that we promote. The course has also provided me with much information on issues around nutrition and wastage in various parts of the globe.

As part of the course, Achim Dobermann, head of Rothamsted Research in the UK and the lead architect of this course, asked me to participate in a webinar to explain to the many students from around the world the work of The Mulloon Institute and in particular our MCLRP. Tony Coote also sat in on that webinar and the other invited guest was the head of sustainability at Nestlé in Switzerland. Achim acted as the interviewer and then there were questions coming from the students. It was a wonderful way to take The Mulloon Institute in yet another “direction”, all around the world.

As I write this update I’m completing the last part of the course and intend putting together an “Executive Summary” covering the extent and key issues contained in it. It will be made available to all.

In signing off this April update, I want to apologise to Duane Norris whose first name I spelt “Dwayne” in my March update. Duane is part of Tarwyn Park Training that is collaborating with us on training workshops, two done and more to follow. I knew when I typed “Dwayne” it wasn’t correct and meant to check the spelling before finalizing the update. I really hate getting those things wrong, so sorry Duane.

Don’t hesitate to get in touch if there is anything in my update that you want more information on or any other issue you would like to raise. All the best and thank you for your ongoing support.

Cheers,

Gary Nairn AO – Chairman

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