



June Jachère 2017

From the Chairman, The Mulloon Institute

As three of our months start with the letter “J” (January, June and July) I have obviously set myself a challenge to be not only creative but also relevant when I select a title for my update for those months. Peruse your dictionary and you will quickly see our English language is not blessed with an abundance of “J” words! I’ve already used “jottings” and “journal” for example.

So to remain both creative and relevant this month I’ve delved into my French knowledge and “stolen” a word to describe this month’s update – June “Jachère”. In French, la jachère, means “fallow”. And you know that in English “fallow” means “to remain uncultivated or unused for a time”. This has two particular relevant connections this month.

Firstly, from an agricultural point of view, we know the importance of leaving land “fallow” at particular times so that it can recover. At Mulloon Creel Natural Farms (MCNF) we practice holistic management and cell grazing so giving paddocks time to recover is a key practice. But secondly, personally, I would describe my June as having being predominantly “fallow” or “unused for a time” as I battled the kidney stones and serious infection I described in my May “Missive”.

However, despite that and courtesy of the many wonderful people we have in The Mulloon Institute much was achieved during June which I’ll come to shortly. Re-reading May “Missive” I realized I had a typo near the end where I used the word “monitory” instead of “monetary” when appealing for financial

support prior to the end of the financial year. I’ll put it down to my illness but it may have made you scratch your head at the time!

Early in June our colleague at Rothamsted Research in the UK, and member of our Advisory and Science Advisory Council, Dr John Crawford, let us know that Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Barnaby Joyce, would be visiting Rothamsted later in June. As Barnaby Joyce hasn’t visited The Mulloon Institute I contacted his office and suggested we provide him with a briefing prior to his UK trip to ensure he was aware of our work and our relationship with Rothamsted. I provided a written brief that he was able to read as he travelled overseas.

While I haven’t had a full briefing on his visit, I understand he was very impressed with the work of Rothamsted but possibly not fully aware of how its work relates to our work and vice versa. Therefore it will be very important to continue to work with his office with a goal of getting Barnaby Joyce “out on the ground”, as seeing is believing. Fortunately his senior adviser and current acting Chief of Staff, Matt Coulton, has studied at ANU under the likes of John Field (also on our Science Advisory Council) and others so that should be a big start.

Amongst the many things happening on our Mulloon Community Landscape Rehydration Project (MCLRP) during June, a report was finalized on the aquatic invertebrates and provided by the authors Dr Paul Cooper and Thomas Wallenius from Australian National University. It adds to the many other



baseline studies we have been carrying out to fully understand the environment within the MCLRP prior to the proposed repair works. One of the great revelations in this report is the finding of a potentially previously undescribed species of aquatic invertebrate. If the researchers are correct and this species hasn't previously been described they propose to give it the name "mullooni"! Another environmental breakthrough by The Mulloon

kind words but extremely grateful for the financial assistance from the Environment Trust of NSW.

A very important meeting also took place on site on 21 June with representatives of the NSW Office of Water and other NSW Government departmental officers. They came at our invitation to inspect and discuss aspects of our MCLRP but particularly the Controlled Activity Application (CAA) being prepared by Pete Hazell to gain approval to construct interventions in the creek. Our Science Advisory Council led by Professor Stephen Dovers was also on hand to participate in the discussion along with Peter Andrews and The Mulloon Institute staff with our Founder, Tony Coote.

The day was a great success with Pete Hazell reporting that the instream works should be approved once all the design and other paperwork is finalized. To get the full benefit of those works we also want to ensure the adjoining floodplain is hydrated by using diversions during peak flows. While we would argue the water ultimately finds its way back into the creek, government regulations involving "water removal" are triggered, thus highlighting the need for changes in current



Felicity Sturgiss (South East LLS), Peter Hazell and Michael Dine Institute!

Meanwhile Michael Dine, a Senior Project Officer from the Environment Trust of NSW, visited us to check on how we are using their grant announced in August last year. Pete Hazell took him for a tour and showed how that grant is being put to use on stage one of the MCLRP. Michael was very impressed with what he saw and in an email following his visit also added:

"Another thing that impresses me about your part of the world is the extensive networking that occurs between the various players (professional, community and others) and the linkages that are made to value add to projects where possible whether they be biodiversity or NRM focused. Keep up the great work." We are very grateful for the



Explaining proposed creek interventions to NSW DPI staff

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legislation and regulations. More work to do on this but it is one of our key goals to assist the government in making its legislation more relevant to current circumstances and needs.

Meanwhile substantial other works continued during June including Luke Peel's landscape function analysis (LFA) sites; Cam Wilson directing Green Army work on fencing, log weir construction and planting; Pete, Luke and Cam working with Kelly Thorburn on our educational activities including the development of our "How to Guide"; organizing more school visits with a proposed visit from Braidwood Year 9 and 10 geography students; keeping partners such as South East Local Land Services (LLS) up to date on baseline studies it helped fund; and having a greater presence through social media about our activities since Kelly came on board in May.

So you can see that despite me experiencing some "Jachère" time during June much has been achieved on the ground but also in planning and connecting with the broader community. Also the "fallow" time did provide plenty of time for reflection and thought and in that regard I did put together a draft of what will hopefully become a published opinion piece (termed OpEd by the media) on what we are doing and its relevance to the climate and energy debates.

I'm finding the public debate on emissions and energy incredibly stifling, very negative and divisive. While I don't question the need to reduce emissions, I do question the total focus on that rather than a more positive approach through landscape repair that is demonstrably reversing the effect of the emissions. This is where the focus should be as it has the added advantage of improving the sustainability and productivity of agriculture, an absolute necessity if we are ever going to feed "a hungry planet" without further impact on our environment. More to

come on this!

Thank you again for your interest and support and I look forward to reporting to you again at the end of July.

Cheers,

Gary Nairn AO – Chairman

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Peter Andrews explains parts of the Mulloon Community Landscape Rehydration Project to David Zerafa from the NSW DPI Office of Water.

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