

May Missive 2017

From the Chairman, The Mulloon Institute

You have probably been checking your inbox over the past two weeks wondering when you were going to receive my May update – I can only hope! Seriously though, unfortunately the past three plus weeks have not been pleasant as I've been dealing with the consequences of kidney stones. Long story short, many days in hospital resulting from an aggressive infection and now compulsory rest at home with an operation expected on 23 June. Hopefully back to somewhere normal after that.

However, in studying what has been happening at The Mulloon Institute during May, I "narrowed" my monthly description to 10! Relevant were words such as "mapping", "marketing", "masterly", "message", "mission", "mobilise", "modus operandi", "monetary" and "monitor". I'll explain why some of those words are particularly relevant this month but I settled on "missive". "Missive" is defined as "a letter or written message" and I'll come back to why it "won" this month.

Given I came up with all those words to describe May, clearly there continued to be plenty happening both on the ground, in the office and elsewhere. You will recall last month I mentioned a small pilot project we had done utilizing drone technology. After receiving that data, both Pete Hazell and Luke Peel have been manipulating it and using "mapping" produced from the data to investigate the various uses that will assist with our Mulloon Community Landscape Rehydration Project (MCLRP). It is proving very useful and we are now looking at how we can budget for more drone data to be collected.



Drones flying at Duralla

The Science Advisory Council, chaired by Professor Stephen Dovers, met during May and one of their "messages" was to confirm the benchmark surveys for the MCLRP are very much on track. With the installation of the additional piezometers there will be a lot more groundwater data coming online in the weeks and months ahead. Plenty of ongoing "monitoring".

The third bird survey also got underway during May which will build on the previous two surveys. We are very indebted to Damon Oliver from the NSW Department of Environment and Heritage who has volunteered to do this important benchmarking work for us. The "modus operandi" of such surveys is extremely important and Damon has selected different times of the year for the surveys to get that aspect right.

One of the areas we have been well aware that we were falling short on has been communications



and “marketing”. During May we took a big step in addressing that shortfall with the appointment of Kelly Thorburn. Kelly comes to us with significant experience in both these areas and graphic design in addition to have been working extensively in natural resource management, most recently in WA’s wheatbelt. We very much welcome Kelly to the team which will give us capacity to get our message out to an even larger community.

At The Mulloon Institute we are always on a “mission” to raise funds to be able to continue our good work. So in that regard during May we lodged an application to the waste company “Suez”. Suez has a grants system for the communities within which it operates so being within its greater Canberra region we prepared an application for a \$15,000 grant to assist us carry out additional drone surveys and data capture. Here’s hoping we have some success.

You will recall I outlined last month the UN SDG Academy run course “Feeding a Hungry Planet – Agriculture, Nutrition and Sustainability” that I had enrolled for. It was completed in May and I’m pleased to report I passed “with distinction”. It was a very valuable experience and I am so pleased I invested the time to participate and complete it. I plan to put together a summary document covering the most important aspects and information from The Mulloon Institute’s point of view. Ultimately that will be added to our website.

On-ground work continues on Mulloon Creek Natural Farms and other properties within the MCLRP via the Green Army, 20 Million Trees and other work directed by Peter Andrews and Cam Wilson. Cam is ensuring the project benefits from these initiatives and Peter Andrews in his “masterly” way has been directing some changes “up slope” and converting a small dam into more of a billabong/wetland. And Luke Peel continues valuable training work

in Landscape Function Analysis (LFA) for various landholders and others.

In keeping with our “mission” to involve school and tertiary students in our work and hopefully have a positive impact on education curriculum, at the end



Landscape Function Analysis training

of May we hosted a group of senior students and teachers from The Scots College in Sydney. About 25 boys and four teachers camped at Mulloon in the barn for two nights. There were negative temperatures those nights so it was no walk in the park for them.

During the days they participated in activities to learn about landscape repair and rehydration and also were involved in “hands on” agricultural work under the guidance of MCNF manager, Michael Fitzgerald. I should really say “hands in” rather than “hands on” as they participated in pregnancy testing of MCNF’s cattle and that meant hands going in. The Mulloon Institute staff, including Peter Andrews, were on board to take the students through our research work and our Founder, Tony Coote AM, welcomed them and gave them a detailed background on MCNF, The Mulloon Institute and our work. The Scots

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College has land down on the coast which they are looking for The Mulloon Institute to assist them with its repair and development.

Finally, I chose “missive” for this month’s theme as I have always interpreted its use as meaning the sending of a strong and important message. One of the other words I mentioned at the start, “monetary”, is also relevant in this regard. So the “missive” I want to send at the end of the May update is in relation to the fact that we are only two weeks away from the end of the financial year. At this time of the year I am very aware that many organisations “pitch” for financial assistance before the end of June. There are many great causes out there but I think the work of The Mulloon Institute is amongst them. Our work has been recognized by the UN via the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s) as being of global importance to the health of the planet but it is only through the generous support of benefactors, sponsors, some government support and individual donors that it can continue and grow.

So as you prepare to look at your end of financial year finances please give us consideration, knowing any donation will be allocated to important on-ground environmental repair of our landscapes and it will be tax deductible. If you can help we will be eternally grateful.

All the very best to all our supporters and I look forward to reporting on some exciting happenings in my June update.

Cheers,

Gary Nairn AO – Chairman

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The Scots College – learning about egg production



The Scots College – hands-on agriculture

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