



RGSQ Bulletin

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In this issue

- Lecture - Coal Seam Gas
- Scenic Rim Safari
- Lambert Centre Trek 2013
- Volunteers for Geog Comp
- Underground & in the Skies
- Camp Fridges for Pungalina
- Parking at RGSQ
- Millmerran Camp Oven Festival

From the President

During my term as President of RGSQ I have endeavoured to report on as many different aspects of geography as possible, and that information is never far away with the mountain of information in our daily newspapers, on the net, or available in the various periodicals and geographic journals on our shelves.

Last month while browsing through the periodicals located at the top of the stairs as you enter RGSQ premises at Milton, the cover on *New Zealand Geographic*, March-April 2012, caught my eye. One story, 'Hunting Utopia' on page 72, makes very interesting reading and one could quite readily relate acclimatisation practices in New Zealand to similar ill-informed species introduction into Australia.

In New Zealand 41 birds, 54 mammals and 18 fish species have been 'successfully' established. I delved a little further with the assistance of the internet to research similar problems created by the introduction of non-indigenous species into the Australian biological environment. Here in Australia, we're host to approximately the same number of introduced invasive

vertebrate animal species and many species of plants as well.

We have cane toads, European red foxes, European rabbits, dromedary camels, feral goats, feral cats, feral brumbies, feral pigs, Indian mynah birds, and feral rock pigeons to name just some of the more commonly known species. This menagerie of introduced exotic species was introduced for commerce, sport and sentiment.

Cane toads were released (without sufficient scientific research) to control beetles, trout were released in a number of colder streams for sport, horses and pigs and buffalo went feral, rabbits were probably similarly released with little or nothing known of the inevitable consequences of their ability to breed in their new environment and reach plague proportions.

Native animals found themselves confronted with not only the feral animals, but disease, fungi, and parasites as well. Invasive introduced plants too are difficult to control and pose an environmental problem, and again a threat to our unique biodiversity. We're now threatened with land degradation from goats and feral rabbits and predation by feral cats and red foxes, toxic ingestion caused by cane toads, habitat degradation from feral pigs, and other problems related to exotic rodents.

To control these many invasive species we now resort to trapping, baiting, fencing and shooting as well as biological control. Other factors

such as land use, climate, weeds and grazing pressure have to be considered in the overall control equation. To eliminate Australia's worst invasive species is not achievable in most cases.

Only in the past 50 or so years have we truly come to appreciate and nurture our biodiversity and its place in Australia's truly unique environment. At best we can only hope to reduce the damage caused in the most cost-effective manner and that's an enormous cost to the Australian economy.

If this sounds an interesting read, borrow *New Zealand Geographic* from the RGSQ library and click on the internet for some interesting information on acclimatisation and what's happening here in Australia.

Leo Scanlan

www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/ferals/index;
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasive_species_in_Australia;
www.environment.gov.au

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Lecture – Coal Seam Gas

The April lecture will feature a hot topic in eastern Australia: *Coal Seam Gas Water and Potential Environmental Implications*, delivered by Dr Maruicio Taulis.

Following the success of Coal Seam Gas (CSG) operations in the United States, companies in Australia and New Zealand have been actively exploring and developing this technology for the last two decades. In particular, the Bowen and Surat basins in Queensland have undergone extensive CSG development. Awareness of potential environmental problems associated with CSG was not widespread and legislation has at times struggled to keep up with rapid development.

Nowadays CSG plays a significant role in the US energy market sector; CSG production amounted to about 13% of the total natural gas produced in 2009. In Queensland, CSG production amounted to over 70% of the total natural gas produced in 2010. Similarly, CSG exploration has been taking place in New Zealand with trial production pods in Huntly, Taranaki, and Kaitangata.

In Queensland, CSG operations in the Walloon Coal Measures have the potential to affect adjacent deep aquifer systems. Prior to legislation changes in 2011, CSG operators usually managed their produced water by using large unlined ponds, which was not the best practice. CSG waters in Queensland have the typical geochemical signature associated with CSG waters (brackish, low calcium, magnesium, and sulphate, but high sodium, bicarbonate and sometimes chloride) and thus have the potential to impair soils and plant growth where land disposal is considered.

In general, the environmental impacts that could arise from CSG water extraction depend on the aquifer system, the quantity and quality of produced water, and on the method of treatment and disposal being used. Understanding these impacts is necessary to adequately manage CSG waters so that environmental effects are minimized; if properly managed, CSG waters

can be used for beneficial applications and can become a valuable resource to stakeholders.

Mauricio Taulis is an environmental engineer who specializes in hydrogeology. He is interested in environmental issues related to both the quantity and quality of water. Mauricio has studied the nature of CSG waters and has helped develop treatment methods. He has worked for CSG operators in Queensland and produced groundwater impact studies by developing groundwater flow models to assess potential impacts arising from full-scale CSG operations.

Mauricio is a lecturer at Queensland University of Technology where he carries out investigations on CSG basin hydrogeology as well as research on CSG water management, treatment, disposal and site remediation alternatives.

Scenic Rim Safari

A camping trek around the Scenic Rim is planned from Friday 18 May to Saturday 26 May. Two camping places have been chosen, spending 4 nights at each spot:

- Fri 18 - Mon 21 May: Queen Mary Falls Caravan Park near Killarney offers cabin accommodation as well as camping on powered and unpowered sites
- Tues 22 - Fri 25 May: Mt Warning Rainforest Retreat which has cabins, caravans and powered and unpowered camping sites.

If you wish to participate in the total trek, the RGSQ fee will be \$40 pp and will cover a group BBQ dinner and a group lunch. However, if you only want to join us for one sector or the other, you will be most welcome and the fee will be \$20 pp. Please book with, and pay the fee to, the RGSQ office.

There are many places to visit in this area and we will be doing some of the less strenuous walks, taking in the views, partaking of some of the local food but most of all, enjoying peace and quiet away from the city.

Members will need to make and pay for their own bookings for

accommodation, online or by phone, mentioning RGSQ (approx. \$30 for a powered site):

- Queen Mary Falls - www.queenmaryfalls caravanpark.com.au/index.html; ph 4664 7151
- Mt Warning Rainforest Park - www.mtwarningrainforestpark.com/rates; ph 02 6679 5120

It would be worthwhile to make your bookings sooner rather than later.

A more detailed list of the planned activities will be furnished to those who register for this trek.

Kay Rees

Lambert Centre Trek 2013

A broad plan for a trek to the Lambert Centre in September 2013, has been prepared, and we seek input from interested participants. (The Lambert Centre is the centre of Australia, calculated for RGSQ to celebrate Australia's bicentenary.)

The basic plan is to be at the Lambert Centre on 15 September, the 25th anniversary of the RGSQ visit and erection of the tower in 1988. The Centre is just west of Finke.

The Trek will formally start at Broken Hill in late August to allow time for exploring the Centre Country before 15 Sept. This will include Lake Eyre, Coober Pedy, Uluru and Kata Tjuta (Olgas), West MacDonnells, Alice Springs. The Trek will formally end at Alice Springs. Travellers will return home via one of the northern routes of their choice, that is Plenty Hwy or other route.

This trip could be of up to 28 days, with at least another week in travel to and from home. Much of the trip will be on sealed roads, but some of the places included in the itinerary are likely to require 4WD.

We seek your views within this basic framework of how we should proceed with the plan. Some options are available:

- If interested in a crossing of the Simpson Desert, please advise me. If sufficient interest is shown a

group may be formed, and could break away from the main group after the Lambert Centre.

- If anybody is interested in flying to and from Alice Springs and hiring a 4WD there, we have some basic costs already.
- A safari coach trip could be organized from Brisbane if there was sufficient interest.

It is envisaged that opportunity will be taken both before and after the event, for private touring in NSW and NT.

Any input will be appreciated.

Brian Mealey, ph 3379 2783
bsmealey@bigpond.net.au



Volunteers

Many thanks to the members who mailed out the competition question packs in March:

Dal Anderson; David & Kathryn Carstens; Mary Comer; James Hansen; Audrey Johnston; Bev Leggett; John & Mary Nowill; John Walker; Digby & Helen Warren

Everyone worked so hard that we got the material out in well under two days – a record. Australia Post couldn't keep up with us.

We need a small number of helpers to process returned answer sheets, from about Wednesday 4 April to

Wednesday 11 April. This is dependent on how many answer sheets are returned when. So if you tell Kath when you're likely to be available, she can let you know as you are needed.

The next main working bee is scheduled for **Tuesday 29 to Thursday 31 May**. Please ring Kath in the office (3368 2066) if you can help – or see her at a meeting.



Underground & in the Skies

Well we won't actually be underground or in the skies, but it will seem like that! On Wednesday 6 June we will visit the Legacy Way Tunnel Visitors Centre and the Planetarium. The programme is:

Meet at 10am at the Visitors Centre, 80 Jephson Street, Toowong for morning tea, a talk about the Tunnel project and visit the displays. There is 2 hr free parking in the Wilson Parking area next door. It's a short walk from Toowong Railway Station, and transport should be able to be arranged for those without a vehicle from the Visitors Centre to and from the Planetarium, provided you let us know with your booking.

12.15pm Buffet Lunch with tea/coffee /juice in the Botanicals Restaurant, Mt Coot-tha Gardens.

1.30pm view Transit of Venus. Telescopes will be set up outside to

view, cloud permitting, what really marks the starting point of all Australian geography (from a European settlement point of view), for it was to observe the Transit of Venus in 1770 that Cook came to the South Pacific and mapped the east coast of Australia. The transit concludes at 2.45pm.

Attend the 3pm Show in the Planetarium. Trek concludes 4pm.

There will be time before and after lunch and in the late afternoon to see something of the Gardens.

Cost is \$34 per head (children \$30), and includes morning tea, lunch and Planetarium admission. Book with the office; numbers will be limited, so book early.

Enquiries *Brian McGrath*
brian.mcgrath@bigpond.com



Camp Fridges for Pungalina

Thanks to the members who have loaned/donated items for RGSQ's Pungalina Scientific Study.

We are still after the loan of small gas-operated camp fridges in June/July. We promise we will bring them back!

If you can help, please contact Hayley at the office, email projectofficer@rgsq.org.au, or phone 07 3368 2066.

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2012 Membership Renewal

Membership fees for 2012 were due on 1 January. According to our records, your membership has been paid up to the year shown in the top right corner of your mailing label. (For life members this space is blank.) Please contact the office if you think there may be a mistake in our records. If you have not yet paid, please circle the appropriate fee and send this in with your payment. The mailing label on the back of this sheet gives your name and address. Please correct it if there are any errors. You may like to consider making a tax-deductible donation for the Society's environmental and educational work at the same time. Thank you.

Ordinary	\$40.00
" Pensioner rate	\$25.00
Household	\$55.00
" Pensioner rate	\$35.00
Student/Junior	\$25.00
Schools/Non-profit organizations	\$55.00
Corporate	\$150.00
Life	\$400.00
Donation	\$.....
TOTAL	\$.....

I enclose a cheque/money order payable to RGSQ; or, please debit my Visa Mastercard

Card no.: _____ Exp date: _____

Cardholder name: _____ Cardholder signature: _____

Yes, I'd like my Bulletin delivered by email. My email address is: _____

Parking at RGSQ

There is some confusion as to the parking arrangements at the Society. For Tuesday night meetings, if entering St Francis's grounds from Milton Rd, where their internal roads diverge you can park to the right on the gravel area, and to the left in the paved spaces marked National Surgical. There is a limited amount of parking there so it would be appreciated if it could be left for members with mobility difficulties.

If visiting the Society during the day, you can park in our driveway, including behind any cars already parked there, and in the gravel area described above if there are spaces.

For advice on street parking, please ring Kath (3368 2066).

The situation last meeting was exceptional as Suncorp Stadium parking restrictions were in effect – fortunately the first time it has happened on a Tuesday night.

New Members

We have much pleasure in welcoming the following new members: Elizabeth and John Robinson; Rolf Roduner. We hope your association with your new Society is long and mutually enjoyable. We look forward to getting to know you at Society events.

Millmerran Festival

The Society is planning a weekend at the Millmerran Camp Oven Festival, 5-7 October – more details later.

Accommodation will be in demand, so if you intend to come, please book your accommodation as soon as possible with Tony and Dawn Smith at the Millmerran Village Caravan Park, phone 07 4695 2020, email mvcaravanpark@bigpond.com mentioning you are part of the RGSQ group. Per night costs are powered sites \$26 for 2 persons, studio cabins \$85 for 2 persons; book for the nights of Friday 5 and Saturday 6 October. Please let the RGSQ office know when you have booked.

RGSQ Bulletin

April 2012

Geography Competition, 26 Mar - 4 Apr

Long Weekend Trek, 30 Mar - 3 Apr
What: Camp at Bigriggen

Evening Meeting, Tues 3 Apr 7.30pm
Speaker: Dr Maruicio Taulis
Subject: Coal Seam Gas Water and
Potential Environmental Implications

Overseas Trek, 16 Apr - 10 May
Where: Victoria Falls to Cape Town

Thomson Address, Tues 1 May 7.30pm
Speaker: Prof Graeme Hugo
Subject: Australia's Population Future:
Challenges and Opportunities

Week Trek, 18-26 May
Where: Scenic Rim

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