

# Working Bee 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2017

By Terry Lane

A pleasant day although there was a chance it could rain for our April work day. I arrive at the depot around 9am to find Robert Irvine already there putting up the “Working Bee Today” sign at the roadside that leads down to the parking area. I don’t think anyone has ever read the sign and joined us but that’s OK.

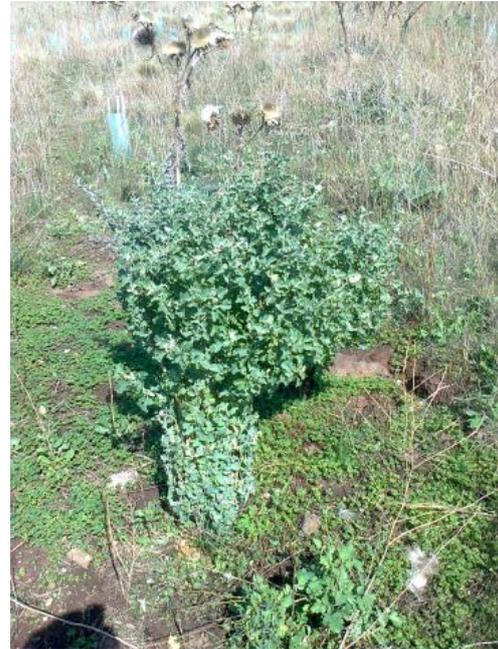
We were soon joined by Maelor, Claude, Doug and Dave Quarrell with his two children Eleanor and Thomas.

The plan for the day was to remove prickly pear sprouting up just off the main track down to the columns before they get too big and free trees and shrubs that had outgrown their wire frames. Robert wanted to go off and see the recent burn down at Costa Block, he found that some of our trees had been killed off but the area was looking good.



Looks like rain is on the way.

He then went up to Gilson Hill to check on the schools plantings which also were looking very healthy.



**Saltbush.**

Meanwhile we were hard at it above Red Gum Flat filling the wool bales with this invasive plant from Central America.



**Claude Odorisio**



Looking down to Red Gum Flat near Rosette Rock.

The first recorded introduction of prickly pear was attributed to Governor Phillip at Port Jackson in 1788.

It is thought that the shipment comprised drooping tree pear (*Opuntia monacantha*) and possibly one or two other species. The reason for introducing the plant was to create a cochineal industry in the new colony. Cochineal is an insect that feeds on certain species of cactus and from which a scarlet dye is obtained. This dye was used to colour the distinctive red coats of the British soldiers at that time.

*(Dept. of Agriculture and Fisheries Qld)*



Doug carefully avoiding the needles



Claude's modified hand trolley, an excellent wool bale transporter.

Eleanor and Thomas were doing a great job and put me to shame with their energetic enthusiasm



I set about removing wire frames to be re-used. The frames on this slope were mainly put in by students from Strathmore College and because the ground is so hard and rocky they had to be secured with star pickets.



Freeing a hop bush (*Goodenia ovata*)



**Sheoak set free**

Claude also started on the bridal creeper which is in abundance.



I had to do my monthly water quality testing down at the pump shed ford, Eleanor and Thomas came along to see what's involved and lend a hand. After recent rainfall runoff the creek was very turbid.



**Next Working Bee Saturday May 27th**



**Future water watchers Eleanor and Thomas.**



All done by 12 so we headed off back to the depot to empty the Ute and fire up the BBQ.