

February 2010

the **basin**  
**BULLET**

the voice of desert channels queensland



desert  
channels  
QUEENSLAND

*'The world is not altogether asleep...'*

# Bust or Boom?

## INSIDE

- Lemmings of the inland
- Pulse of life
- The agent of death
- DCQ News
- Floodwaters

# C O N T E N T S



## Lemmings of the inland... 3

The population boom we've caused



## Letter to the Editor... 5

Stock routes story gets response



## Pulse of life... 7

Big heart; big beat



## The agent of death... 9

The discovery of a killer



## DCQ News... 11

What's happening around the region



## Hold that thought.. 12

A little something to ponder.



## The nosebag - Feast or famine... 13

Heaven over health



## Floodwaters... 14

Short poem by Helen Avery

# AS I SEE IT EDITORIAL

Boom and bust is much bandied, in economic as well as environmental circles. Nowhere does it appear more obvious, or contrast more starkly, than in Australia's inland. Queensland's mighty Cooper, Georgina and Diamantina systems, is normally a string of unconnected waterholes that retreat to a hardy few in a slowly drying and 'dying' landscape.

When the rains come, as they have in classic wet-season style over the past two months, it reverses overnight – fish, frogs, reptiles, birds and plants all burst into frenetic activity to make the most of the short opportunity to pass their genes to another generation.

It happens so quickly that 'dying' is an obvious falsehood perpetuated by our unshakeable European view of this driest of inhabited continents. The country merely sleeps. It sleeps the clever slumber of one adapted to conserve energy, preserve life, and await the opportunity to burst forth in a nascent wave to envelop the landscape.

And that is precisely what's happened across these mighty river systems, but in different ways. There has been big rain in the upper reaches and the whole countryside is verdant; lower down the catchments, where the rainfall has tailed off, there are still dry patches, and the boom is mainly restricted to the Channel Country, as it reaps the benefits of gravity's effect on water.

This is not a boom and bust system; it doesn't die, it sleeps ... and waits. These cycles are the pulses of life; the heartbeat of the inland. Not as regular as our physiology requires, but on the geological timescale, more often than our own beating hearts.

Boom and bust? No ... a heartbeat ...

*Editor*

For more on the work of Desert Channels Queensland, visit [www.dcq.org.au](http://www.dcq.org.au), email [info@dcq.org.au](mailto:info@dcq.org.au) or call 4658 0600.



# Lemmings of the Inland

*While the analogy is fairly loose, the fact remains that several species of kangaroos are enjoying a population explosion across the rangelands of inland Australia. How much of this is due to natural processes and how much to the interference by humans in the ecological balance? In a process that is increasingly giving a voice to the ordinary person, members of the Longreach Landcare Group have electronically collaborated to get their message out ...*

The natural resource management skills and knowledge of contemporary pastoralists are a far cry from the European-based practices of their forebears. Local graziers working to maintain their ground cover are becoming increasingly frustrated by exceptionally high kangaroo numbers in their destocked paddocks, negating their best efforts in sustainable land management.

Loss of plant diversity, the effect on soil carbon and a decline in ecological and economic sustainability have become major concerns.

With some properties in the area being held by the same families for generations, the collective anecdotal record, in many cases, spans generations. It suggests that kangaroos have always tended to concentrate in certain areas after a long dry spell, but the trend observed over the past twenty years has been an increase in both density and distribution.

What is causing this trend? There are a number of changes at the broad, landscape level.

Thanks to polythene pipe, the number of 'water remote' areas unusable by kangaroos has been drastically reduced. Now, as well as being able to permanently graze more areas and survive droughts in greater numbers, the natural population control measure of lactation failure due to water stress is no longer causing infant kangaroo mortality.

While predator control, especially of dingoes, is an essential part of property management, it reduces another natural population control acknowledged as critical by many pastoralists and scientists.

Land clearing expands suitable kangaroo habitat. It not only increases grassland, it provides a greater length of adjacent woodland fringe (a favoured refuge) due to fragmented patches of remnant timber.

Commercial harvesting is an important part of the local economy but the removal of mature adults from the population appears to cause a skewing that results in more young animals. It affects the hierarchy within the mob and causes an increase in reproduction.

Sustainable grazing management practices aimed at maintaining groundcover and diversity of plant species, including perennial grasses, are the goal of most producers today. Pasture monitoring and decision-making processes, supported by a transport system that allows rapid removal of domestic stock to sale or agistment, help maintain the health of the land.

This also works to the advantage of kangaroos which, unfortunately, do not recognise sustainable grazing practices. Monitoring sites with kangaroo exclusion plots on local properties have clearly demonstrated a continuing decline in land condition after the removal of domestic stock.

*'Most of the time during the last eight or nine years, we have only had 200 to 300 sheep in that paddock but, I would guess, something like 700 to 900 roos. This is apparent when mustering. I would have to conclude that our attempts at looking after the paddock have been completely ineffective due to the roo population living there.'* John Milne, Loongana Station.

# KANGAROO FACTS

Seven species of kangaroos or wallabies are found across the Cooper Creek and Diamantina river catchments, in the area roughly from Kynuna in the north through to Tambo in the south.

The most common are the red kangaroo (*Macropus rufus*), the eastern grey (*Macropus giganteus*) and the common wallaroo or euro (*Macropus robustus*).

Other species that occur in the region are the yellow-footed rock-wallaby (*Petrogale xanthopus*), the swamp wallaby (*Wallabia bicolor*), the black-striped wallaby (*Macropus dorsalis*) and the purple-necked rock-wallaby (*Petrogale purpureicollis*).

Of these, it is really the eastern grey and wallaroo that are the main cause for concern, as they are more sedentary than other species. Large numbers of eastern greys die around waterholes in drought rather than move to other areas. Wallaroos are the least inclined to move, and will die in the hills in drought conditions.

Wallaby species live in very specific habitats with minimal overlap with livestock, while the red kangaroo is the least sedentary species, tending to move when food becomes scarce.

## Continued...

Each of these changes may only have made a small or moderate contribution to the overall picture, but the combined effect is substantial.

No one, including landowners, wants to see the death and destruction of kangaroos on a large scale; however, most thinking people would accept a process that results in an environmentally sustainable kangaroo population.

Replacing defunct natural processes at a landscape scale, by whatever means, would not yield quick results; the population would need to readjust to its new scenario.

The landscape will never return to its pre-European state, so we need practical options to manage kangaroos in the current landscape. Here are methods used by local land managers; there will be others that deserve investigation.

Controlling water availability by fencing dams and turning off troughs in de-stocked paddocks; decommissioning dams, or other artificial water sources, that are no longer required; using modified trough designs to stop kangaroos accessing water; and using animal recognition technology to control which species can access a water point.

Replacing dingo control with the use of Marama dogs to guard sheep flocks has seen an increase in dingoes and a reduction in kangaroos. This is because dingoes are being forced to rely more on their traditional prey.

While exercising damage mitigation permits can reduce a localised population, the resource is left rot. As indicated earlier, it is important not to alter mob hierarchy by removing large adults.

Commercial harvesting needs to demonstrate long-term sustainability at a regional scale. It is driven by the meat industry and does not control kangaroo numbers. To be an effective population control, more young animals

need to be taken, and a larger percentage of mature animals left in each community. This would require a complete overhaul of the current industry format as well as a change in branding and marketing of kangaroo meat.

Strategic fencing, either conventional or relatively low-cost electric, can successfully exclude kangaroos from specific areas.

The Longreach Landscape Group wants action. We want a commitment to science-based analysis of the effect of large kangaroo populations on the ecology and economic productivity of our region. As well, support is needed to develop and promote innovative means of managing kangaroo populations that takes into account the welfare of the animals and the diversity and economic productivity of the landscape in which they live.

Finally, we want to see a regionally-focussed effort to survey and record kangaroo numbers to provide accurate data to support the case for appropriate population management.



# TO THE EDITOR

I wish to clarify some inaccuracies in your November edition of the Basin Bulletin (sic):

The article suggests landholders adjoining unfenced stock routes will be forced to fence them.

This is not the case. Landholders can continue to use unfenced parts of the stock route network provided they enter into a grazing authority and pay the appropriate fees for use of the stock route.

Should a landholder not wish to pay grazing

authority fees for an adjoining unfenced part of the stock route network, they will need to demonstrate that they are not grazing the land, that is most likely, by fencing the area out.

Finally, the reforms are not introducing a blanket mandatory fencing requirement on landholders adjoining unfenced stock routes. An existing provision of the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002,

whereby a local government can direct a landholder to fence their boundary to protect or improve the adjoining part of the stock route network, is intended to carry over to the proposed new stock routes legislation.

The article discusses subsidies for landholders fencing their boundaries with stock routes.

This is not a feature peculiar to the proposed stock route reforms. The Dividing Fences Act

*"Many stock routes are actively used by travelling stock"*

1953 provides the State with an exemption from the requirement on neighbouring landholders to split the costs of shared boundary fencing. Stock routes are State lands and are included in this exemption.

The article suggests the government is a landholder and it is deriving an economic benefit from implementing the grazing authority framework.

While it is true the State Government is a landholder as owner of stock route lands, it is not accurate to say the government is deriving an economic benefit from the proposed stock route reforms. Under the grazing authority



Continued...

framework, landholders will be required to pay for the grazing benefit they are receiving. The grazing authority framework along with proposed increases to droving fees form part of a package aimed at generating sufficient revenue for the ongoing maintenance and management of stock routes for the primary purpose of travelling stock (to support the grazing industry) and for the protection of the network's other environmental and cultural values.

The article questions whether stock routes have a place in the modern world for travelling stock.

Many stock routes are actively used by travelling stock. Use of stock routes by travelling stock has increased since the 1990s following a decline in use from the 1960s when road improvement schemes and more reliable mechanised transport saw road transport become a more attractive option for many landholders.

The State Government has affirmed its commitment to retaining the

stock route network into the future for the primary purpose of travelling stock. Rising fuel prices and climate change leading to more frequent drought events may well see the recent trend of increasing numbers of travelling stock walking stock routes continue.

Yours sincerely,

Craig Magnussen

Principal Policy Officer, Stock Route Management  
Department of Environment and Resource Management



## EDITOR'S NOTE

Craig, thank you for your remarks. You really are supporting the comments of the article: no compulsory fencing? Sure ... not if the cocky enters into a grazing agreement with the Government. So far; so good. If the cocky chooses not to, he or she is liable for the full cost of any fence. Not so good: one rule for the Government landholder; another for the rest. We constantly see anachronistic legislation highlighted (e.g. pubs are required to stable, water and feed the horses of their patrons; taxis must carry a bale of hay in the boot), and it takes little imagination to see the feudal roots of the State Government, as a landholder, not having to pay for

half their boundary fence – the King doesn't pay.

I'm sorry Craig, but try as I might, I can't grasp the logic of saying Government doesn't derive economic benefit, while acknowledging that the fees collected will offset the cost of maintenance. Whether the management of stock routes is revenue negative, neutral, or positive, I'm sure the ATO would recognise fees collected as an economic benefit.

Surely we need to acknowledge the link between drought conditions and the stock routes' consequently reduced capacity to accommodate travelling stock at the very time that you're suggesting they will increase. Precisely when the biodiversity refuge value is at its highest! I'm not sure I follow the logic.

The sustainable management of stock routes is a matter of importance for us all. We need to ensure that their pastoral, cultural and environmental values are preserved.

(Readers, to refresh your memory, see the original article at <http://www.dcq.org.au/basin-bullet-2009-11> )

# Pulse of Life

STEVE WILSON

***Cooper Creek and its tributaries form the most variable major river system on the planet – flows are highly irregular and vary enormously in height and duration. Life along this system spends most of the time waiting: waiting in dormancy beneath dried earth; waiting in the remaining refuge waterholes; waiting in other parts of the country or world; waiting for the signal that now is their time; waiting to become part of the pulse, the heartbeat. Steve Wilson, DCQ's resident 'Nature Boy', writes ...***

The flora and fauna of arid landscapes survive by seizing opportunities when presented. These can be very sporadic with only a small window of optimum conditions in which they can thrive, build condition and reproduce, before bunkering down to wait for the next opportunity, which may be years away.

In all species, there is a timeless drive to thriving and reproduce. In arid landscapes, conditions to do this depend on irregular, short boom times; reproductive success is determined by how much is on offer in the ecosystem's bank with these events.

Typically, the arid zone has unpredictable extremes of climate: excessively hot dry conditions,

periodic dust storms, and even more erratic wet weather events. For the plants and animals that call this country home, adaptation is the key to survival.

The ability to conserve energy reserves for long periods of dormancy is characteristic of many arid zone species. Invertebrates, in particular, are well adapted to this. How is it that after many years of no rain or flood events, that when arid zone wetlands and waterways fill up, they are almost instantly teeming with life. The answer lies in the mud.

When the boom comes and then ultimately fades out; ephemeral wetlands and waterholes go from lush to dry. During the drying process some species deposit eggs

and larvae in the mud, others burrow deep into the soil, to wait patiently for the next pulse.

On its arrival, freshwater 'plankton' appear miraculously to form the basis of many food chains across the system. Floods produce abundant short-term food, plus optimum conditions for eggs to hatch and be distributed across the landscape. Freshwater crabs and the filter feeding freshwater mussels emerge from the mud in big numbers to feed, build condition, and reproduce – the long dormancy causes a flush of urgency.

The desert spade-foot frog emerges from its subterranean cocoon where it waited out the dry in a state of torpor. In less than a month, the next generation is prepared for its battle with aridity. Another burrower is the New Holland frog. Its appetite is so insatiable that it devours its own kind, and its tadpoles can grow to an incredible 100 millimetres.



Further up the aquatic food chain, birds of all shapes and sizes make the most of conditions. Heron, egrets, cormorants and ibis work the shallows while pelicans sedately fish the deeper pools.

On dry land, the flush is much more visual. Many arid zone plants produce a mass of colour to attract insects, notably bees, to transfer pollen; beetles, moths and butterflies produce larvae very eager to feed on fresh new growth. Broad-leaved parakeelya with its recharged, succulent leaves and bright yellow and soft purple flowers produce a carpet of colour, contrasting with its striking red sand dune habitat.

Another dune specialist is the bluebush pea with its dry, stalky stems, furry leaves, and deep roots. It is one of the first arid zone plants to respond to rain, with glorious pastel blue leaves breaking through the sand, closely followed by attractive yellow flowers. And then there are the brush-like blooms of pink mulla mulla carpeting the landscape.

Central netted dragons perch on every available high point – a termite mound, rock or fence post – seeking solar power, and keeping

an eagle eye for predators, rivals and a prospective mate; slight and secretive canegrass dragons work the crowns of newly greened-up spinifex clumps for insects, their elongated bodies perfectly camouflaged with the long spines; smooth knob-tailed are out in force, running down bush cockroaches; and a large, yellow-spotted goanna can be seen patrolling, its blue-grey tongue flicking, tasting the air for an unsuspecting snake or lizard.

Throughout the day the chatter of budgerigars can be heard as they feed on freshly loaded seed heads. Every available tree hollow seems to have an attentive pair of budgies darting in and out, making the most of a short window to breed. Spinifex pigeons, with their distinctive, erect walking style, bob for seeds; and flock pigeons, those great inland nomads, uncannily arrive en masse. Everywhere, there is activity.

The Cooper system, with its braided channels and vast floodplains that link and meander across outback Queensland on their way to Lake Eyre, is the artery of a large, diverse, and beautifully adapted ecosystem. It dutifully sends each pulse further down, then waits ... patiently ... for the next heartbeat.



Pulse of Life

# 007 Unmasked

## Local with a licence to kill is identified

The identification of any deep undercover agent often comes down to luck. Despite the best surveillance technology and measures, it often comes down to plain simple chance ... and a member of the public with sharp eyes and questioning mind.

This was certainly the case with a previously unknown control agent that surfaced because of mysterious deaths in the Northern Territory in 2004. Colleen Westover of the Barkly Landcare and Conservation Association noticed unexplained deaths in Parkinsonia (*Parkinsonia aculeata*) plants at Newcastle Waters Station. She collected some stems and sent them to Dr Vic Galea of the University of Queensland who conducted an informal 'postmortum'.

The presence of fungi in the dead plants led to PhD student Naomi Diplock (under the supervision of Dr Galea and Dr Reiks van Klinken of the CSIRO) undertaking a three-year study that saw the collection of around 200 fungal cultures associated with natural dieback in Parkinsonia plants. Without a doubt, these locally occurring fungi were the cause, rather than a result, of the kill.

Dr Galea said, "... several naturally occurring fungi are involved in this disease process, which can spread through soil from infected trees to others nearby. In some locations where dieback has a long history, the fungi have virtually eliminated this weed without affecting other plant species."

Work by Ruey Toh on the effect of the fungi on germinating Parkinsonia, and Eunice Wong on refining the inoculation techniques, have further contributed to developing prototype biological weaponry for a series of probing attacks deep behind enemy lines.

These trial incursions are to test the effectiveness of the most promising of the fungus cultures under a range of landscapes and conditions. Five workshops, funded by Meat and Livestock Australia, will be held across the west of Queensland from Hazelfield, Cunnamulla (12 April) through Eastmere, Aramac (14 April) and Holmleigh, Prairie (16 April), to Armraynald, Burketown (19 April) and Donors Hill, Normanton (20 April). Here, landholders will be highly trained in establishing trial sites (code for bridge-heads) in enemy territory. They will also be trained in operation of the prototype weaponry, and issued with a licence to kill.

After six years on the front line of the War on Weeds, Desert Channels Queensland has assumed veteran status, and is well placed to promote, organise and run the workshops, and to conduct on-going monitoring of the trial sites.

The military hardware involved in establishing and monitoring the trial sites for Parkinsonia Dieback includes: cordless drill, caulking gun, star pickets, tie wire, GPS unit, digital camera, fungal inoculum capsules, and ... a dress-makers' tape (the girth of the tree is required



Continued...

These trial incursions are to test the effectiveness of the most promising of the fungus cultures



for accurate monitoring, and the distance from the ground where you aim your shot, is critical for the kill). Some of this hardware will be like an old friend to the landholder, others will be frighteningly foreign, but all are essential and will be highly effective in the hands of the well-trained professional.

While there will be nuances of technique that can only be learnt on the day, it basically involves drilling a 10mm hole, 40mm into the tree at a slightly

downward angle, 100mm from the soil level; pushing a single fungal inoculum capsule gently to the bottom of the hole; sealing the hole with silicone; gathering your weaponry; retreating carefully; and moving on to the next target.

To date, engagements with the enemy, using these biological agents, have shown the dieback fungi not only kill targeted trees, but they can spread through the soil and cause welcome

collateral damage to other Parkinsonia plants. Ongoing battlefield testing will help refine weaponry and battle-plans, and determine effectiveness under a range of conditions at different locations.

This campaign is a partnership between Desert Channels Queensland, Southern Gulf Catchments, South West NRM, Meat and Livestock Australia, and the University of Queensland.

**For more information, or to register for a workshop, call Ron Beezley, DCQ Landcare Facilitator, on 4652 7827 or 0428 580 629, or Steve Wilson on 4652 7820 or 0427 427 966, or check out [www.dcq.org.au](http://www.dcq.org.au) .**



## New Year; new energy

The New Year has begun as the old one left off: full of running.

### 'FUTURE GRANTS' 2010

Behind the scenes, the DCQ team is busy preparing for the 12th March launch of the 2010 call for new projects under our Protecting our Future program. Over \$400,000 is available for a range of land management projects such as sustainable farm practices, protection and enhancement of endangered ecosystems, and small community grants. Contact Steve Wilson or Craig Neuendorf from 12th March for further information and assistance in submitting a project application. The closing date for this round will be 16th April 2010, with funds to be disbursed in June/July..

### LANDCARE SUPPORT CONTINUES

With our success in securing ongoing funding for our Landcare Facilitator position, we can continue to provide strong support to the hard-working Landcare groups of the region. For advice or assistance with anything related to Landcare, contact Ron Beezley on 4652 7827.

### TOWN COMMON MANAGEMENT

Our town common planning team, of Mike Chuk and Jade Fraser, has already run the gauntlet of persistent wet weather to conduct preliminary site visits for the development of management plans for both the Blackall and Tambo town commons. Community consultation meetings will be held in Blackall and Tambo during the second week of March as part of this planning process. All are welcome.

### GROUNDCOVER

Despite more than 500 millimetres recorded since Christmas in some areas, groundcover management is still a hot topic (and spare a thought for those who have still had little or no rain). As part of our Landholder Support Service, groundcover management workshops will be held at Dunblane (Barcardine) on the 23rd March and Clovelly (Ilfracombe) 25th March. Steve Wilson will be joined by our DEEDI colleagues, Jenny Milson and David Phelps to show you through the successful land management project work on each of these properties.

### DISHING THE DIRT ON SOILS

The groundcover workshops mentioned above are a follow-on from the very popular soil information days held around the region last year. A very useful booklet of field notes and photographs compiled from the 6 soil information days, which were held in the Mitchell Grass Downs and Desert Uplands bioregions, is available to land managers on request. Call DCQ on 4658 0600 or email [info@dcq.org.au](mailto:info@dcq.org.au) to secure your copy.

### NATURALLY RESOURCEFUL WOMEN

You just can't keep a good woman down, and those naturally resourceful women will be back with a workshop in Tambo on 28th and 29th April. Participants at recent workshops in Boulia and Eromanga are still talking about the great opportunity to network with other women and enjoy presentations from local experts on relevant topics such as succession planning, grant writing, health and wellbeing. The Naturally Resourceful Women's Workshops are provided by our Landholder Support Services project which is funded the Department of Communities.

### PARKY DIEBACK

Interest is already very high in the imminent Parkinsonia dieback workshops (see separate article, 007 Unmasked) we will be running in the region and beyond – Eastmere, Aramac (14 April); Holmleigh, Prairie (16 April); Armraynald, Burketown (19 April); and Donors Hill, Normanton (20 April). The workshops, funded by Meat and Livestock Australia, will demonstrate the outcomes of this fascinating research into biological control of Parkinsonia, and show how you can be involved. Contact: Ron Beezley on 4652 7827 or 0428 580 629.

### SUSTAINABLE GRAZING

Even an enviable wet season can't subvert the knowledge that, as surely as night follows day, bust follows boom. We'll be holding a sustainable grazing forum in Jundah on 26th and 27th May to look at local successful grazing management projects, best practice and issues. Sustainable grazing: doing the best for your land so it can do the best for you.



## PROTECTING OUR ASSETS

Our natural resource management plan is now 6 years old and, once again, we'll be talking to the community of the region about what needs to be in the plan so we can tackle it over the next 5 years. Many of the issues you highlighted as important in 2004 still are, but there are also new issues and opportunities for our region in this quickly changing world. We'll be running a series of input opportunities across the region during the April and May. Dates and venues are available at <http://www.dcq.org.au/calendar>.

## PIZZA AND BEER

Our team and families enjoyed their beer and pizza night with Mark Lodder (Australian Government regional liaison officer for DCQ) and James Wright (Queensland Landcare Facilitator), when they visited in early February. In return, they delivered the 2010-11 Caring for our Country Business Plan, and discussed future funding opportunities. The business plan is very tightly focused, with the DCQ region's opportunity in the next two years likely to be in the areas of weed control and sustainable farm practices. The Business Plan is available online at <http://www.nrm.gov.au/>.

## MONITORING IN THE MUD

With more than 50 new on-ground projects rolled out in recent months, it's been a big challenge for our team to visit each property and assist with setting up monitoring sites for the projects. Team members have covered over 10,000 kilometres, and had some interesting weather-related experiences along the way. Thanks to all our project clients for their enthusiasm, and their involvement in the Protecting our Future program.

## DC SOLUTIONS UPDATE

The DC Solutions team has been busy on a number of fronts as the year kicked off. We have designed and produced signs and banners; delivered training in data capture, management and presentation; finished an online tourism employee induction workshop; produced a series of short films for web viewing; completed concept, survey and planning phases of a series of walking trails; marketed and distributed publications; provided communication services; designed residential gardens; and provided mapping services.

guided through this process, free of charge, by Michael Goldsworthy of Australian Strategic Services and his associate, Mary Tokarczyk. Their kind donation of time speaks volumes for their generosity, and that of Australian Strategic Services. It is also a great example of the power of networks and the unique relationships that DCQ forges with clients, partners and providers.

– researching, designing and producing interpretive

## SURPRISING VALUE



Bankers and advertising executives and the like are highly paid because they contribute so much to society. Well, why else would they get the money they do?

According to the findings of a recent study conducted by the New Economics Foundation in Britain, childcare workers and cleaners contribute more to society than bankers, accountants and advertising executives. In fact, bankers on million dollar salaries and bonuses actually destroyed social value.

While it can be argued that the methodology of the study is not robust as it could be, it clearly indicates that the highest paid amongst us are not contributing as much to society as we might think. After taking into account the economic benefits, as well as the social and environmental impacts across six professions (people who recycle household waste, cleaners, childcare workers, bankers, tax accountants and advertising executives) they came up with some fascinating findings.

*Hold that thought!*

Hospital cleaners contributed 10 times their dollar earnings in social and economic benefits; childcare workers, seven to 10 times; advertising executives, given their role in encouraging over-consumption and debt, cost society about 11 times the value that they create; hospital cleaners contribute around 10 times their wage; and high-flying bankers destroyed more wealth than they have built. In other words, what you get paid is no gauge of what you contribute to society.

You can see more at <http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/bit-rich>.

# The Nose Bag

## Famine or Feast

### GOLDEN WAFFLES

#### YOU WILL NEED:

- 3 eggs
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 cup milk
- 1 ½ cups of SR flour
- ½ cup yoghurt
- 80g melted butter
- Zest of a lemon
- Dash of vanilla
- Pinch of salt

Beat the eggs and sugar until light and fluffy; fold in the milk and yoghurt; add the self raising flour and gently mix to the consistency of a thick batter. Pour about ¼ cup of batter onto a hot waffle iron and cook until golden. If you don't have a waffle iron, cook them in a pan as a flapjack.

Serve with sliced banana, butterscotch icecream and chocolate sauce or your favourite topping. Now feast away.

Wet season weekends can be hell; it seems every creature is feasting, bar me. And as dawn peeked through the blinds of another damp Saturday, I did the mental coin-toss: dry cardboard-like, healthy cereal, or a little indulgence more becoming a wet morning ... mmmm?

Fifteen minutes later, I draped a linen tablecloth on the table, perfectly baristered my caramel latte, and sat down to that little bit of heaven I had been dreaming of. I could have been in any 5 star hotel. Sheer luxury! Time for feasting - the famine comes tomorrow ...

# Floodwaters at night

by HELEN AVERY



*The world is not altogether asleep  
there's an urgency stalking the stars  
a breath-held sense of wonder  
that drives the restless heart to walk.*

*The frogs have not yet begun  
to sing the waters down  
and the normal night noises  
of this country have been swallowed*

*Instead of the dry time  
shuffle of movement there's  
the splash and plunk of small creatures  
and the beat of wings*



*A solitary bird, white and slender  
grazes the water...step side side dip  
adrift like a ghost in the thin light  
of the first full moon after the  
autumn equinox*

*We are floating in shadows  
somewhere between realities  
between what has been  
and what is yet to come.*



*'...between what has been & what is yet to come.'*

Desert Channels Queensland is funded by



DESIGN AND LAYOUT BY DC SOLUTIONS