

## February in Our Catchment

That was a wonderful drop of rain, and hopefully we will get some good follow up rains very soon. The season is on the turn but we may still be in for some hot weather. Looking at the farm dams when driving about the district, it appears that most are full and are holding, which may indicate some level of restoration of ground water.

### Your Results:

Water temperatures, except for the upper Queanbeyan catchment, were still greater than 20°C and may remain high for another month, till we get some chilly evenings. Some sites showed an elevated Turbidity reading, which is no surprise after a flood. The only one over standard was Jerrabomberra Creek just outside the wetlands. The Queanbeyan was still quite tea-like when I took samples for classes this week. Some of the fragile banks and walls in many of our waterways may have been undercut in the floods and so may continue to crumble and add to the turbidity. It was interesting to see how many sites have lowered Electrical Conductivity, and it shows up the real ‘limey’ spots and the urban sites. The dissolved oxygen levels are quite sensitive to flood materials, and will remain all over the place while there is still decomposition going on. Flood mud is biologically very active, not only with cyanobacterial crusts (and these produce oxygen) but with soil bacteria, hence the ‘whale factory’ smell. Nitrates are present in low quantities in most of the off-stream wetlands while the bottom of Sullivans Creek still has elevated phosphates.

### The blooms that are with us:

The David Street wetland has been developing a skin of *Euglena* all summer. Now it is definitely at its lurid best. Fiona Dyer and family, who have taken over watching it for our catchment, sent this picture of the Red Sea! *Euglena sanguinea* is an interesting organism. While it does have the capacity to make food from sunlight, it, like most of its relatives can ingest food from its surroundings too. Many *Euglena* and *Phacus* species have distinct storage bodies within their cell; *E. sanguinea* can have two discs, but also fills with granules. The red, water repellent skin on the water is mostly made of encysted cells that may dry out if beached, and blow away to distribute the organism.



There have been reports of various blooms from both Ginninderra and Southern Catchments. Do you know of any interesting ones in your area?

### **The Queanbeyan Regatta:**

In just two weeks time the Queanbeyan Regatta Day will be held on the weir pool. It's probably a bit late to build your gold medal raft or other form of water craft. But it's never too late to be involved. Andy and I will be there with the trailer, showing off what the Catchment group does, and encouraging people to value the biodiversity of the river and the region. Please come along and see us!

### **Chances to broaden your mind:**

Tanya tells me the next Newsletter will be out shortly. We are not going to attempt to send them round to people any more...we will let you know when it has been posted on both the DECCEW website and the Molonglo Catchment Group website. This one should contain plenty of interesting reading.

It will not be long before the next QA/QC event is on. We are hoping to have it and one of the training sessions in our end of the area this autumn. I am putting the finishing touches to the information sheets that will help you record the state of the algae in your Waterwatch sites right now. We hope to have a training afternoon very soon! We also will have sessions on aquatic animals this autumn.

Next sampling day is the 20<sup>th</sup> March, three weekends away! Thank you all for your great work this time, especially all the picture takers...they will be up on your site pages shortly.

**Stephen Skinner**

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