

September 2011 in Our Catchment

We are now in a delicious time of the year when the daytime temperatures are mild to warm and the evenings are crisp. We'd had the golden days of the flush of the wattles and we now have the white shrub interval before the carnival colours of the bush peas. It hasn't been quite as wet a spring so far as the last couple of years, but who knows, it may rain all across October. These are two *Cryptandra* species from Queanbeyan.



Your Results

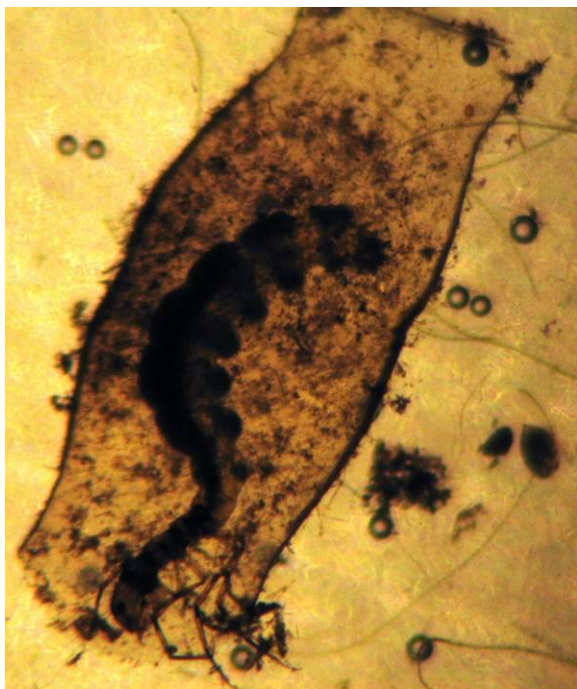
The fire in Mitchell caused a flurry of interest in what might have got into the drain-lines of Sullivans Creek. The EPA had baffles in place quickly and there appear to be few if any releases into the creek. However, at Wattle St in Lyneham the water quality has been very variably of late. In the rain last month the stormwater was very turbid (150+NTU) but all other parameters were well inside regulation. A week later the pH was elevated, the electrical conductivity too, and nutrients were up. And this week the phosphate is through the roof. Much of this has to do with the new suburbs rather than any fire.

Where there are rapid spring flushes of algal growth they are often accompanied by high saturation percentages of Oxygen as the fresh algal cells make plenty of sugars and pump out the oxygen as a bi-product. This is certainly the case at present at the bottom of Woolshed Ck and in the Fyshwick part of the Molonglo River. Premium Dissolved Oxygen saturation is between 105 and 115 %; this gives the rest of the gilled life in the water the best of conditions for life.

It was also great to hear about turtles, dragons and frogs! Thank you all.

The importance of water bugs

Very shortly I will finish compiling both our January–June M-CHiP Report and the ACT Water Report 2010–2011. In the ACT report we include a summary of the detailed analysis of snapshots of macroinvertebrate diversity in the waterways of the ACT in autumn and spring. This is an important way of reflecting on the condition of that water over time. ACTEW has done the same for their reports on Burra Creek as they prepare the way for the Murrumbidgee–Googong Transfer. Admittedly this work is contracted to specialists and includes careful numerical analysis and details of species.



The SIGNAL2 system that is recommended that Waterwatchers use to get their ‘waterbugs’ snapshots is a main component of that detailed analysis adapted for rapid field work.

- No bugs are killed.
- Identifications are broad-brush.
- There are charts that come in the kit.
- Numbers are estimates.
- You only need a pair of wellies to do it.
- It takes about half an hour, twice a year.
- Primary school children regularly do similar surveys ... as do ecologists in the field!
- It’s fun!!!

If you can, come to Carwoola on Sunday 25th at 1:30pm and join Carwoola Landcare on the Molonglo! If not, we’ll try to include this, and Rapid Appraisal of Riparian Condition, at the QAQC meeting at Molonglo Gorge Recreation Area on 13th November. If you want to have a go at this we have plenty of equipment for short term loan!

It is a very important component of the **Catchment Health indicator Program** that is missing from the Molonglo catchment reports.

Calendar

25 th September	1:30 – 3:30 pm	Macroinvertebrates	Carwoola (see flier)
27 th September	6:00 – 9:00 pm	Frogwatch Field Trip	Meet at Doeberl Reserve, Barracks Flat
15–16 October	Any time	Waterwatch Sampling	Your site
13 th November	10:00 am – 1:00 pm	QA/QC	Molonglo Gorge Recreation Area, Kowen Forest.

Stephen Skinner

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