



# Travel Grant Report

Jasmin Packer  
September 2013



The 2013 Student Travel Award enabled Jasmin Packer to participate in three research meetings focused on invasive weed science and management. This experience has given Jasmin a better understanding of the fundamental and emerging issues in weed research within our region and internationally.

The meetings were:

- Asia Pacific Weed Science Society Conference, Bandung Indonesia
- *Symposium on Biological Invasions*, INTECOL International Ecology Conference, London UK
- and a field trip and discussions with Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge UK

## **Asia Pacific Weed Science Society (APWSS) Conference, Bandung Indonesia (October 2013)**

This regional conference focused on the contribution of weed science to securing food security for the Asia Pacific region. Highlights of the conference included: discussions with CAWS and APWSS members; learning more about the potential implications of herbicide resistance, allelopathy and integrated weed management for environmental weeds; and a first-hand experience of some of the issues facing our region.

Despite the strongly agricultural focus of APWSS and the conference, Jasmin presented a poster on her PhD research with environmental weeds: *Evidence-based impact assessments: benefits and threats of weeds for native fauna in Australia*. The poster sought to highlight the common concerns and approaches within agricultural and environmental weed research, and the importance of taking a holistic approach to weed impact assessments. The poster generated much discussion, including the potential to include environmental weeds as a focus group for APWSS and theme within the 2015 APWSS conference in India.

## **INTECOL International Ecology Conference, London, United Kingdom (August 2013)**

*Presentation in Symposium on Biological Invasions: how to reconcile science, management and policy*

The Symposium presented and discussed invasive species research from many international perspectives, including Switzerland, Myanmar and Australia. Jasmin presented her PhD findings that non-native plants can sometimes act as 'master builders' in novel ecosystems by providing critical habitat for native fauna that contribute to beneficial ecosystem processes. The research highlights the conservation conundrum this creates for land managers, and the importance of understanding the dynamics to manage the system effectively. The presentation triggered discussion during the symposium and conference more broadly, and is continuing through ongoing correspondence. These discussions have already strengthened our draft manuscripts for this research.

**Cambridge, United Kingdom** (August 2013)

*Discussion and site visit to Wicken Fen with Dr Francine Hughes, Anglia Ruskin University*

Wicken Fen, in central England, is the National Trust's oldest nature reserve and its most famous wetland. The fen's "open-ended restoration" approach is at the forefront of landscape restoration and invasive species management internationally. Francine Hughes runs a longitudinal research program at Wicken Fen to monitor responses to management practices such as low impact grazing, slashing and minimal chemical use.

***The generous support of CAWS is very much appreciated. It has given the opportunity to gain a stronger understanding of past and current weed research, strengthen our draft manuscripts, discuss emerging issues, and refine our plans for future research into environmental weeds. The research discussions and potential collaborations triggered by this CAWS Student Travel Grant will be continued into the future.***

***Best of luck to the future applicants!***