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Maia Raymundo is in her last year of her PhD at the University of Queensland under the supervision of Professor Margie Mayfield, Dr. John Dwyer, and Dr. Karlo Hock from the School of Biological Sciences. Her dissertation examines the role of dispersal through several lenses, but broadly as a structuring mechanism in invaded annual plant community assembly. Her research has been carried out in the Southwest Australian floristic ecoregion—a biodiversity hotspot in Western Australia.

One of her research projects involves investigating the extent to which dispersal and biotic and abiotic filtering impose constraints on germination and survival of native annual forb populations in invaded communities through a series of seed addition experiments along biotic and abiotic gradients associated with invasion. Her results showed that native annual forbs were generally seed

limited indicated by the higher number of germinants in seed-augmented plots compared to control plots. However, the mean effect size for seed limitation were all below 35%, showing that only a small fraction of the viable seeds added germinated, which suggests that microsite limitation may be more important for native species at the post-dispersal stage. Overall, post-dispersal processes were the strongest constraints to seedling emergence and overall population size. Canopy cover and soil phosphorus, both structuring factors in these communities did not strongly influence population sizes of added focal species at the seedling and adult stages. Exotic densities also did not strongly limit population sizes across all species. The lack of strong trends indicate native population growth may be more resilient to soil eutrophication and invasion after seedling emergence.

Maia will use the CAWS Student Travel Award to present a poster paper at the International Conference on the Ecology and Management of Alien Plant Invasions (EMAPi) in Prague, Czech Republic in September. This conference brings together researchers from all over the world involved in restoration, invasive species management, and scientists in both applied and theoretical fields. This conference will be a valuable opportunity to network and gain new insights into the research and management of plant invasions globally.