



Trees and Bees on Peramangk Country Sunday the 13th Oct

The purposes of the Expedition

This expedition grew out of conversations with Waterhouse Club Members interested in native plants, their traditional and contemporary uses, and the important role of native bees in pollination and biodiversity health. We knew hearing from ethnobiologist Neville Bonney, Elder Uncle Ivan Tiwu Copley, and Drs Remko Leijs and Katja Hogendoorn would provide a good basis for an informative and successful expedition.

The timing was decided by Neville Bonney who hosted the day. Mid springtime is usually ideal for flowering plants and reliable weather as the day was to be held outdoors.

The day began with expeditioners arriving at Kitticoola, via Palmer for morning tea and introductions. Uncle Ivan Tiwu Copley generously welcomed us all onto Peramangk Country. Neville provided a tour of his Native Foods Dryland Arboretum.

Neville had prepared presentation spots where he shared key information with seeds, fruit and wood for the group to pass around and some giveaways. There were delicious tastings, including chocolate-covered finger limes. Neville explained the high nutritional value of many of the bush foods and also the value of plants for farmers, pollination and uses for wood and the floral industries.



It is the aim of Kitticoola to be an educational centre. Having Uncle Ivan sharing knowledge of the plants passed down to him by his Elders, and Katja and Remko's native bee expertise was of great interest to Neville as it was for the expeditioners.

Katja and Remko identified 18 species of bees. Eremophilas were their main drawcard. Katja explained the special tricks the Eremophila uses to ensure there is pollen transfer by the insects.

We had lunch under the old Pepper Trees near the Old School Room. After lunch, we made our way to the Peramangk Billabong at the base of a steep and secluded gorge. The expeditioners gathered on rocks and logs as Uncle Ivan shared stories of his childhood with family, visiting caves, gorges, billabongs and the rock art sites on Peramangk Country. He explained as they always knew, looking after land and water systems is essential for the health of our human communities. Caring for COUNTRY just as critical now as it was thousands of years ago.



He performed a water ceremony, explaining how this was done traditionally, and we were all given the opportunity to add our DNA to water collected in a coolamon, which was then thrown back into the Billabong.

There have been very good rains at Kitticoola since our day there and Neville says he is very grateful for the Peramangk water ceremony, as it's been unusually dry there this year!

People to acknowledge

- Neville Bonney and his friend John Del Fabbro whose property the Arboretum is situated. Neville takes time to prepare for tours and spent several days there making sure all was in place, watered and set up for us.
- Uncle Ivan Tiwu Copley who made himself available for the day and generously sharing his Peramangk cultural knowledge.
- Katja Hogendoorn and Remko Leijs who helped us to see the critical role natives bees have for our native plants and their value in our landscapes.
- Alastair Dow for helping on the day with the organisation required in the lead-up to get tables, equipment, food, wine and provide moral support to Rose. Also meeting and leading the expeditioners in from Palmer.
- Andrea Pearce for her assistance in setting up and preparing for the expeditioners.
- Mark and Shylie Mackintosh for collecting the lunch and their assistance on the day.
- Marg Brown and Angela Bannon for their help packing up and assistance with lunch setting up.
- Natalie Rollinson for liaising with expeditioners, and support with communication and all WHC items required on the day.

Rose Dow

Expedition Leader