

## Tarrangower Cactus Control Group: Student Field Day Feedback

### Ballarat Specialist School July 2013

In April 2013 nine students (5 males and 5 females) from Ballarat Specialist School attended a one day cactus control field trip to Maldon/Baringhup. The average age was 16.5 years, ranging from 11 to 18 years. Students rated their knowledge of managing environmental weeds before the field day, from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). The average rating was 2.8 (medium) out of 5 (range 2 to 3). They also rated their knowledge of wheel cactus before the field day, from 1 (nothing) to 5 (a lot). The average rating was 2.2 (low) out of 5 (range from 1 to 5). Two of the 9 students (22%) had not been on a cactus control field trip before. Three students (33%) indicated they knew of ways to control wheel cactus before the field day. The methods mentioned were back pack and injector (n=2) and *poison* (n=2).

Students provided feedback on knowledge acquisition and their experience of the field trip. On a scale from 1 (nothing) to 5 (a lot) they rated how much they learned about wheel cactus on the field trip. The average rating was 3.1, ranging from 1 to 5. They were asked to indicate the types of information they had acquired and these results are displayed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Knowledge acquired by students during the field trip**

Knowledge area	Number of students	Percent YES
Country of origin	0	0
How it came to Australia	0	0
Where it is found in Australia	1	11
Growing habit	7	78
How it reproduces	6	67
How it spreads	6	67
Preferred habitat	0	0
What works to control wheel cactus	4	44
What doesn't work to control wheel cactus	0	0

Students rated how much they learned about wheel cactus control during the field trip, from 1 indicating nothing to 5 a lot. The average rating was 3.0, ranging from 2 to 5. On a rating scale ranging from 1 (extremely worthwhile) to 5 (not at all worthwhile) the average rating 1.5 (range 1-3), indicating all the students thought the field trip was very worthwhile. All the students said they would recommend the cactus control field days to other students and/or groups.

Students also provided feedback on what they liked most about the field trip. Eight students liked killing cacti, one liked everything and one also stated: *Hanging out with my classmates, learning new things and people.*

When asked to comment on what they liked least about the field trip four students stated there was nothing they did not like, indicating a positive experience. These sentiments are reflected in the following comments: *I liked everything; I liked it all; It was fun; I liked everything.* One also stated: *Hardly nothing.* Two students commented that they did not like being pricked or stabbed by the cacti and another thought the field trip was *too hot and a little too hard.*