

The Moggill Creek Catchment Group in West Brisbane

Bryan Hacker, Landcare Adviser
Moggill Creek Catchment Group

Brisbane is a large and sprawling city, reputedly with the highest level of biodiversity of any of Australia's capitals. However, the population is growing rapidly which is putting pressure on wildlife and ecosystems.

In the west of Brisbane the catchment of Moggill Creek, including its tributaries, covers about 57.6 km², the creek entering the Brisbane River not far from Kenmore Village, now a busy shopping centre. Forty years ago Kenmore was a sleepy village, land use to the west a mixture of banana and pawpaw farms, dairy farms and, nearer to Kenmore, acreage properties, the higher ridges were intact eucalypt forest. Since then farming has almost disappeared, giving way to so-called 'lifestyle' blocks, the steep hillsides, once farmed, reverting to lantana or *Acacia* spp. However, the catchment still includes more bushland than any other suburb in Brisbane, ranging from small pockets of riparian rainforest and dry vine forest to eucalypt woodlands.

The Moggill Creek Catchment Group (MCCG) was founded in 1997 to work with the Brisbane City Council (BCC) towards the implementation of the actions recommended in the Catchment Management Plan published by BCC in June 1997. Since that time the group has grown to have a membership of more than 500 and spread its wings to:

- work with private landholders, providing advice and free local native plants to members,
- work with BCC's Habitat Brisbane, restoring native vegetation on public land,
- publish a quarterly eight-page newsletter focussing on environmental issues,
- run an annual 'Kids Day' at our environment centre,
- run a popular photographic competition in Kenmore,
- organise an annual platypus survey,
- run a creek health monitoring program, and many other activities.



Much of the Moggill Creek catchment in west Brisbane is well-vegetated.
Photo: Bryan Hacker



Left: Cat's claw once well established can totally destroy native vegetation
Photo: Adrian Webb

A current focus of the group is to target invasive vine weeds, particularly cat's claw (*Dolichandra unguicati*), now a Weed of National Significance. This vine, with its pretty yellow flowers, was introduced from South America as an ornamental, and is now a major threat to native forest ecosystems in SE Queensland and north eastern NSW. Unfortunately there is no requirement

to remove it from inner city gardens in Brisbane. It climbs and smothers nearby vegetation, seeds prolifically, produces underground tubers which can be as big as a pumpkin and it suckers from an extended root system. Killing the visible, above ground part of a cat's claw plant is not enough, even if done repeatedly. It will regrow after each assault, fuelled from a string of tubers which are often very large and may be more than a metre underground.

Recommended control is in three stages; first cutting and poisoning stems climbing trees, to prevent flowering; secondly spraying ground cover infestations with glyphosate (other chemicals also recommended) and thirdly any required follow-up. As a group we have taken every opportunity to target this weed that we can. Approaches have been to:

- as far as possible map the local distribution of cat's claw and prioritise actions,
- fund control of key infestations of cat's claw in our catchment through the South East Queensland Catchments Coastal Resilience program,
- advise and help landholders aiming to target cat's claw,
- encourage landholders to apply for grants available to members of the BCC Wildlife Conservation Partnership program to seek help for cat's claw control,
- provide relevant information to landholders at the local Brookfield Show,
- provide help to Biosecurity Queensland in releasing biocontrol agents
- look into opportunities for Green Army input.

We believe that our approach, working with the local Council as well as State and Commonwealth government institutions as opportunities arise, is a good way to go. The challenge is going to be to keep up the momentum. We have made good progress but our enemy has almost limitless resources.

For more information about the Moggill Creek Catchment Group, check www.moggillcreek.org.