



THE WITCHIPOOL WORKERS

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RAINFALL

None worth mentioning, but I will anyway. Since the tree planting weekend on 16th September there has been only 83 points –

Rest of September	23 points.
October	1 point
November	33 points
December	26 points

Total for the year of 753 points.

REVEGETATION

The tree planting weekend was well attended as were the social activities in the evening after the close of play and again on the Sunday at Greg Hogan's 80th birthday.



The Planting Area

Trees planted on the weekend were 149 Sugar Gum (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*), 200 Red Iron Bark (*Eucalyptus tricarpa*) and 200 Slender Cypress Pine (*Callitris gracilis*). The trees were supplied by the Banyanda Nursery operated by Peter and Liz Russell.

Since the trees were planted they were watered in early November and again in the week of the 18th of December.

The sugar gums were badly frosted in the nursery and were supplied free of charge by Liz to see if

they would come back, unfortunately only 8 of the 149 survive.

Of the other two species the Cypress Pine have fared the best with 187 of the original 200 surviving to date. Of the remaining 153 Iron Bark most are in good condition with some now growing out the top the carton. The survival rate of these at 77% is considered reasonable.



*An Integral Part of the Well Oiled Tree Planting Machine
(Well most weren't really well oiled until later on)*



Planting Complete the Last of the Watering in Progress

The evening commenced with a few cool drinks followed by a barby and a reasonably large bon fire. Thanks again to those that assisted in the catering arrangements.

The gathering was joined later for a few drinks by The Ged McLoughlan family from Laen and later on by Jon and Jack Onley.

The bonfire was lit later in the evening burning those combustible items deemed not to fit into the category of “might come in handy one day”.



The Relatively Large Bonfire

WATER OR LACK THEREOF

As you may know no dams were filled from the channel system this year. This has created significant problems for household and stock water for the coming year.

Currently, water for stock is not an issue as there are none on the property as nearly all the feed has been consumed. Due to the lack of rain in spring the vetch planted for stock feed did not recover from the initial grazing. This has left the topsoil exposed in some areas and some dirty days in November saw some of the paddocks blowing badly. The results of this can be seen below.



The Partially Filled Channel in Douglas

The worst paddocks has now been worked in strips to minimise the drifting of the remaining topsoil. Some additional areas will be worked in the near future.

The dam in Douglas' is now dry and the level in the house dam is falling rapidly. The water quality is also not great and this was made worse during the bad November days when crap (goat and sheep excrement and vegetable matter) blew into the water.

A week or so after this incident the fish in the dam started to die. Two very large fish and a number of smaller ones died. The number is difficult to ascertain as there were a number of shags lurking around the dam for a couple of days. The largest fish recovered was in excess of 17" long and a second one was around 15"



The Big Dead Fish

NEW TANKS

The Honourable Steve Bracks has generously decided to assist in the provision of on farm water infrastructure through a rebate on water tanks of up to \$3,000 for those who did not receive a dam fill this year. It is to assist in water storage costs for deliveries from town storages and also as a contribution towards on-farm costs of the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline. It is anticipated piping around Litchfield will be completed in 2008.

To maximize the rebate we have purchased 1 x 7,500, 1 x 5,000 and 1 x 2,000 gallon tanks. The rebate has almost halved the cost of the tanks.

The tanks were delivered on Tuesday the 19th of December and all have now been installed.

The large tank has been sited near the old tank stand and only requires a 50 metre trench to be dug to enable it to be connected to the pressure pump to supply the house. The tank has been filled with approximately 1,000 gallons from the dam to stabilise the base.

This tank will be used initially for deliveries of town water with 28,000 litres delivered every two months. Ultimately this tank will be the main storage tank for the piped water from the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline for the House Block.



The Really Big Tank

The second tank (5,000 gallon) is sited on the east side the shearing shed. The works included preparation of a base for the tank, installation of spouting to the shed and attaching the downpipes and overflow pipe.



The Big Tank

The third and smallest tank has been located near the house and replaces the gal tank that recently sprang a leak.



The Wee Tank

This poly tank will ultimately be relocated to the old tank stand and connected into the pressure pump system to provide a gravity backup during power outages etc. This gravity backup would also be able to supply the house.

The tank stand will require some remedial works to bring it up to a standard that will accept the little poly tank.

The pressure pump / gravity backup system will be connected to an number of stock troughs located around the perimeter of the yard area to complete the reticulation system for the House Block.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS

The dry windy conditions partially exposed the foundations of the old blacksmiths shop. Some assistance to the natural process was provided to reveal the full extent of the foundations.

The foundations of the forge at the top left and the remains of an old post at the bottom right can be clearly seen.



The Excavations