

Coral Cacti Biocontrol at Wyandra

Through the National Landcare Programme, and in partnership with the Department of Agriculture and Forestry and the Murweh and Paroo Shires, South West NRM has been very busy breeding up a nursery of a biological control insect called *Dactylopius tomentosus* that is specific to Coral Cacti (*Cylindropuntia fulgida* var. *mamillata*). *Dactylopius tomentosus* is a summer breeding insect that feeds on Coral Cacti, which is being used as tool to assist with controlling core infestations of this weed.

South West NRM recently conducted a community education seminar at Wyandra to engage land managers who have Coral Cacti infestations on their properties, and facilitated an opportunity for land managers to take home infected Coral Cacti cladodes for them to release into infestations on their properties. The event also saw a mass release of infected cladodes onto a core patch of cacti at the Wyandra common. This program will be continuing well into 2018 and beyond, so we look forward to sharing with you the results and stories about how effective this biological control insect has been. For further information about the project or to register your interest as a property for biological control release, please contact Kevin Collins at the South West NRM office on **(07) 4656 8500**.



Left: South West NRM CEO Phil McCullough (second from left), and Project Officer Kevin Collins (far right) explaining the *Dactylopius tomentosus* insect to local land managers and Paroo Shire Council staff.

Below left: Phil McCullough showing the insect to Evan Palmer from *Offam Station* south of Wyandra, and Rob King from the Paroo Shire Council.

Below: Phil McCullough releasing the bugs onto a coral cacti plant on the Wyandra common.

