

# North Central Waterwatch Story of Change

Kelly Button 2017



Kelly Button is studying Certificate 4 Conservation and Land Management at Bendigo TAFE and is a mother of two young children. In 2016 and 2017, Kelly attended the RiverScan Agreed Level Taxonomy (ALT) workshops, hosted by North Central Waterwatch program in partnership with the Native Fish Recovery Plan (NFRP) and Bendigo TAFE as part of their unit for sustainable water management.

*"The North Central Catchment Management Authority Waterwatch team have formed a great networking relationship with the teaching staff and students at the institution. Students are consistently receiving emails informing them of opportunities to participate in Macroinvertebrate workshops and other Waterwatch events"*

The ALT workshops focused on how to collect and identify macroinvertebrates with expert freshwater ecologist John Gooderham and staff from the North Central Catchment Management Authority. *"Before participating in the workshops my knowledge of River health and Macroinvertebrates role in a river system was limited. I was exposed to the topic briefly at University however this was on a more theoretical basis. Until the ALT workshops, I had not been given the opportunity to investigate and learn about Macroinvertebrates in a practical environment"*.

Since being involved in the program Kelly has improved her knowledge and skills to collect and identify aquatic macroinvertebrate species to genus level, the ALT Key handbook is often used and helps Kelly to identify macroinvertebrates when she is not at a workshop. Kelly said, *"I believe my skills have improved because I am able to discuss and confirm my findings with staff from the North Central CMA, supporting my confidence and my ability to undertake monitoring activities at other sites"*.

*"I have always considered studying catchment and waterway management at a higher level. The*

*workshops highlighted the importance of educating our community about waterway health and further fuelled my enthusiasm to continue to study in the water management field. I am now enrolled in a Graduate Certificate in Catchment and Waterway management at Melbourne University"*.

Kelly found have John Gooderham at the workshops was enjoyable *"sharing his knowledge of macroinvertebrates is inspiring"*. Kelly found John was willing and limitless to his time spent with each of the participants and his charismatic personality were both informative, engaging and entertaining. *"This enthusiasm is not limited to John and is evident in all of the staff involved in the ALT workshops"*.

Kelly suggested the ALT key workshops could be improved by hosting them in catchments with good water quality to provide a more exciting and positive experience for students. *"Sometimes the sites didn't allow for diversity of macroinvertebrates and therefore our opportunity to key out a range of species was limited"*.

Kelly also suggested that she would like staff to discuss their interpretation of the data at the end of the day and how this links to their project and what actions they might take based on the data.