

The highlight of the last quarter was undoubtedly the launch of Bruce Munday's book "Those Wild Rabbits". A monumental effort by Bruce inspired and supported by RFA members, the book was launched in a beautiful part of Australia in a unique and memorable setting provided by Hugh and Fiona MacLachlan. The Ian Doyle touch as master of ceremonies, brought an authenticity to the early evening event complemented by Hugh's recollections of a lifetime's experience in dealing with rabbits. The keynote address by Prue Adams while launching the book, demonstrated a remarkably deep insight into the practical side of Australians and their dealings with rabbits, providing a thought provoking contribution to the launch. Two hundred, plus, attendees were then treated to Bruce's insights into what it took to produce the book and some of the many people whose contributions make the book an engrossing read through their original anecdotes and photographs. Those present were then enthusiastic to purchase copies to take home, enjoy and promote to others.

From an RFA point of view the book launch, along with the recent release of the K5 calicivirus, has provided an opportunity to promote awareness of our vision and our activities. Through the efforts of Peter Day, Deane Crabb and Edwina Grant we were able to produce another high quality newsletter and two excellent media releases to complement the launch of the book, the promotions of Wakefield Press and the current interest of some high quality media outlets.

Reflecting on the conversations that have ensued, I can't help but feel that the key message is that the rabbit invasion of Australia has deeply affected the lives of Australians. It is almost a defining aspect of being Australian to have a story about rabbits. From sport to food; from livelihood to bankruptcy; from pest to pets; from fun to heartache; from youth to old age, rabbits feature. The challenge for RFA is to bring a sharp focus to how Australians can respond today and in the future. In Bruce's Late Night Live interview with Phillip Adams, Phillip let slip his view that rabbits are these days "a minor irritant to landholders".

Our vision to eradicate rabbits and the massive effort required to do so, is not as widely shared as we might expect or like it to be. Bruce's book is a timely and welcome contribution to the goal of RFA to raise the Australian awareness of the nature of the rabbit problem and the context and strength of our continuing cry for "bilbies not bunnies"; for eradication, and NOT simply for relief from the worst of rabbit plagues, as near enough and good enough.

Peter Alexander