

February 28, 2017

## **Joint project to help control local infestations of Cats Claw Creeper**



*(From left) Council's Pest Management Supervisor (North) Brent Tangey, Capricornia Catchments' Volunteer Kim Price, Capricornia Catchments' Project Officer Lisa Del Riccio, and GAWB Operations and Maintenance Manager Sarah Lunau inspect the new nursery facility for Cats Claw Creeper.*

Calliope is now home to a Biocontrol Nursery to facilitate a project which is the first of its kind in the Gladstone Region.

The nursery, located on Racecourse Road, will be used to manage Cats Claw Creeper, a pest weed native of tropical America that is an aggressive climber and has the ability to smother native vegetation.

Gladstone Region Mayor Matt Burnett said the nursery would act as a biocontrol facility to rear the weed's natural predator, the Jewel Beetle (*Hylaeogena jureceki*).

"The Jewel Beetle will feed off the Cats Claw Creeper weed before being moved to a nominated local property, predominately within the Boyne Valley area, to control rural infestations," Councillor Burnett said.

"Although the Jewel Beetle will not eradicate the weed, the biocontrol method is a cost effective way to reduce the vigour of widespread infestations."

Councillor Peter Masters, a member of the Capricorn Pest Management Group, said the project was a joint project by Gladstone Regional Council, Capricornia Catchments and the Gladstone Area Water Board (GAWB).

"Council provided the land and funded the construction of the nursery and the purchase of biocontrol agents," Cr Masters said.

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## media release

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"Capricornia Catchments purchased the nursery with financial assistance through the Queensland Government and support from the Fitzroy Basin Association.

"Its volunteers, who were fundamental in its construction, will continue to operate the nursery through watering and weeding activities.

"GAWB funded the provision of nursery benches to host the several hundred Cats Claw Creeper weeds at the biocontrol nursery and shade house," he said.

The project is a first for the Gladstone Region and is one of many pest management initiatives that Council will implement to assist local landholders.

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