

## Assessment of the inaugural Waterbug Workshop

kindly sponsored by Melbourne Water.



### Gauging success

Taxonomic Identifications can be made at various levels - most people can easily perceive differences between orders and classes of organisms (the difference between spiders and insects for example), but family and genus identifications are more problematic and require the use of specialised texts and a microscope. One of the aims of this course was to train the participants to a high level of competency with family level identification. To test whether this was achieved, participants completed a brief test at the commencement and completion of the course in which they were asked to identify 6 freshwater invertebrates to the lowest taxonomic level possible for them. we examined test results at both Order and Family levels of taxonomic resolution.

On average participants increased their ability to identify at the level of order only marginally (but still significantly -comparing before and after scores with a t test). Most participants were able to identify none or few animals to family originally, but at the end of the course, participants were correctly identifying *at least* 70% of their test animals to family level. Sixty percent of the participants correctly identified all their animals in the final test.

### Participant feedback

Feedback forms were filled out by most participants, and the results are tabulated below.

<b>1. How much did the workshop improve your knowledge?</b>			
Not Much	A little	Lots	Inordinate amounts
	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2. How adequate were the resources (animals and equipment) ?</b>			
Inadequate	OK	Good	Amazing
		<b>11</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>3. Was the material covered in sufficient detail?</b>			
No	almost	yes	and some
	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>4. How clearly was the material presented?</b>			
Not Very	almost	clearly	Very clearly
		<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>5. how much did you enjoy the course?</b>			
Not Much	A little	Lots	Inordinate amounts
		<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>6. Was the course value for money?</b>			
No	almost	yes	and some
		<b>23</b>	<b>7</b>

Many participants were kind enough to leave more detailed feedback, and these have also been included.

*Thanks once again for putting on such a great waterbug course last week at Monash Uni. I found it extremely beneficial and learnt heaps!*  
- **Joanne Kearns**

*[the workshop]I really enjoyed it. It was educational and entertaining, nothing like an ordinary uni lab workshop or lecture.*  
- **Renaey Ayres**

*Once again, many thanks for the great course over the 3 days of last week, I thoroughly enjoyed the*

*workshop, the material was well presented, I liked the practicals and while you guys are very relaxed you are clearly & definitely focussed on the topic. Of course I went out dipping a net into all the local waterways over the weekend - **John O'Grady***

*Thanks for last weeks workshop. It was great to talk to some other people who have an interest in bugs, & also very useful to see some stuff that we don't get up here. - **Carolyn Polson***