



PhD Opportunity. *Insect herbivory of an invasive woody weed: identifying biological control agents*

Steinbauer Lab (Insect-Plant Interactions)

Department of Ecology, Environment & Evolution, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Application Deadline: 31 August 2018

Start date: ASAP

Website: <https://latrobe.edu.au/ecology-environment-evolution/research/specialisations/insect-plant-interactions>

Qualifications

(i) overall Honours mark $\geq 86\%$ [inc. thesis mark $> 85\%$] or same Hons-equivalent (e.g. international applicants with Masters degree), (ii) strong background in plant ecology, entomology &/or insect-plant interactions, (iii) driver's licence, (iv) willingness to work in remote locations/alone, (v) high motivation & capacity to publish/disseminate your findings & (vi) desire to deliver results sought by South African collaborator.

Description

Coastal tea tree (*Leptospermum laevigatum*) is a native Australian species that has been widely used for dune stabilisation in both Australia and South Africa. It has become an invasive weed in South Africa, South Australia and Western Australia. Our lab is collaborating with colleagues in South Africa to acquire essential ecological, genetic & chemical information about the plant in its endemic and introduced ranges with the ultimate view of assessing the potential for biological control using native Australian insect herbivores. We will consider PhD candidates with interests and skills relevant to a variety of aspects of the project. For example, the chemical ecology behind differences in herbivory of endemic *versus* invasive populations of the plant could form a major component of the project if such an applicant is interested in the project.

Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship or La Trobe University Postgraduate Research Scholarship (LTUPRS) of AUD27,082 p.a. tax-free (& associated entitlements, inc. tuition fee exemption) + AUD5,000 p.a. scholarship top-up from funding body for 3.5 years. Operating funds for research costs also available. RTP scholarships available only to Australian or NZ citizens or Australian permanent residents. LTUPRS scholarships open to international applicants but additional admission requirements must be met, inc. English proficiency.

Application Materials

Expressions of interest & CV/resumé, inc. names of two academic referees, by email to A/Prof. Steinbauer (M.Steinbauer@latrobe.edu.au). In your email, include a description of your research interests and why you are interested in joining the research group as well as a summary of your prior research experience, your academic background (e.g. relevant coursework) and GPA, GRE, and IELTS/TOEFL scores.

Submit applications and further questions to:

Contact Person: Associate Professor Martin Steinbauer

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