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Latest news from the REC

The NSW Roadside Environment Committee held its November meeting at Wingecarribee Shire Council to learn more about Council's 'Wingecarribee protect and grow roadsides program: a data driven strategic approach'.

This project won the 2015 NSW Roadside Environmental Management Award.

At the meeting, the REC also found out about the Southern Highlands koala project managed by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.

2016 NSW Roadside Environmental Management Award



The Local Government Excellence in the Environment Awards were initiated in 1998 and are held annually. The Awards are open to all local government organisations in NSW.

The Awards culminate in two prestigious Local Sustainability Awards: one for overall council performance, and one to recognise the individual achievements of a council staff member or elected councillor in the field of sustainability.

The NSW Roadside Environment Committee has sponsored the Roadside Environmental Management Award for the past six years. The 2016 finalists are:

- **Ballina Shire Council** - Chickiba Roadside Wetlands restoration project
- **Lachlan Shire Council** - Roadside corridor assessment and management guidelines

- **Moree Plains Shire Council** - Roadside environmental management plan

Winners will be announced at a ceremony on Tuesday 29 November 2016 at Doltone House, Darling Island Wharf, Sydney.

For more details about the awards ceremony go to <http://www.lgnsw.org.au/events-training/environment-awards>

Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans Update

Over the last 12 months the eleven statutory Regional Weed Committees, established as community advisory groups under Section 33 of the *Local Land Services Act 2013*, have been developing Regional Weed Strategic Management Plans. The aim is for these plans to be released by Local Land Services for public consultation in February 2017 to allow for final plans to be completed by 30 April 2017.

Membership of the 11 Regional Weed Committees includes regionally based representatives from Local Land Services, Local Control Authorities, NSW Department of Primary Industries, Office of Environment and Heritage, environmental interest groups, Landcare, NSW Farmers, Aboriginal land managers and public land managers.

The establishment of Regional Weed Committees and new Strategic Weed Management plans is part of the government response to the review of weed management in NSW undertaken by the Natural Resources Commission in 2013-14 and the reforms related to the new *Biosecurity Act 2015*. These reforms aim to achieve better land management outcomes across all tenures.

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* will repeal the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993*, which provides regulatory controls and powers to manage noxious weeds in NSW. The Biosecurity Act provides the opportunity to streamline and modernise the way weeds are managed in NSW as it:

- Embeds the principle of shared responsibility for biosecurity risks (including weeds) between the government, community and industry.
- Is tenure neutral, meaning that the Biosecurity Act will apply equally to all land in the state, regardless of whether it is publically or privately owned.
- Supports regional planning and management for weeds, as recommended by the Review of Weeds Management in NSW.

Local Land Services contact: Bridget Boreham Mob 0437 582 318

Ausgrid restoring endangered ecological community

Earlier this year Ausgrid was awarded a \$25,000 biodiversity conservation grant from the Greater Sydney Local Land Services. The grant is funding ecological restoration works of Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub (ESBS) at the Bunnerong substation. There is roughly 1.5 hectares of ESBS mapped within the grounds of the Bunnerong substation with 1.23 hectares associated with the grant project.

ESBS is listed as an endangered ecological community under the *NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* and the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. This type of scrub exists only in Sydney and has been reduced to less than 3% of its pre-1788 distribution. Only approximately 140 hectares remain in scattered remnants.

Bush Habitat Restoration has been engaged to implement the grant project and have spent to date more than 270 hours over nine site visits completing ecological restoration works within 0.62 hectares of ESBS as part of the project.

Ecological restoration activities undertaken include hand removal of weed species, brush cutting Lantana and Bitou, stacking non-invasive weed materials for erosion control and fauna habitat, and flora monitoring works.

Ausgrid is now moving into the second stage of the funding. The team aims to complete restoration works within an additional 0.61 hectares of the site.



Restoration activities at the Bunnerong substation

For more details: Michelle Quinn, Ausgrid, phone (02) 9981 9944

Bringing the Bradley Method to the Hills M2 Motorway

Most weed management plans prioritise weed control based upon the weed levels identified, with areas of higher weed densities prioritised for control. Hills M2 aims to turn this approach on its head.

Transurban owns and operates the Hills M2 Motorway, which is a multi-lane dual carriageway motorway in Sydney's northwest that extends 21 kilometres, linking the Westlink M7 Motorway to the Lane Cove Tunnel.

The corridor has a range of vegetation, including two Critically Endangered Ecological Communities and the vulnerable flora species *Epacris purpurascens* var. *purpurascens*. It also intersects, or lies adjacent to, several reserves including Lane Cove National Park.

Eco Logical Australia was engaged to prepare a Vegetation Management Plan for the corridor. A field study was undertaken along the entirety of the Hills M2 Motorway to update previous weed and native bushland mapping, and to provide advice on management zones, project performance criteria, expected management costs and timeframes.

Where the Hills M2 Motorway intersects with natural reserves, weed control works are prioritised based on areas of good condition bushland first, before moving to the areas of higher weed density. This is known as the 'Bradley method', as described by Joan Bradley in 1988:

“Weeding a little at a time from the bush towards the weeds takes the pressure off the natives under favourable conditions. Native seeds and spores are ready in the ground, and the natural environment favours the plants that have evolved in it. The balance is tipped back towards regeneration. Keep it that way, by always working where the strongest area of bush meets the weakest weeds.” (Buchanan, 1989)

The Bradley method takes into account the ability of native plants to regenerate and suppress weeds naturally, and the low efficiency of works in weed dominated areas. These tend to be relatively stable and require a high level of effort to recreate a sustainable native dominated system. Over a ten year timeframe this approach is proven to be effective in reducing weed levels, whilst also saving significant resources.



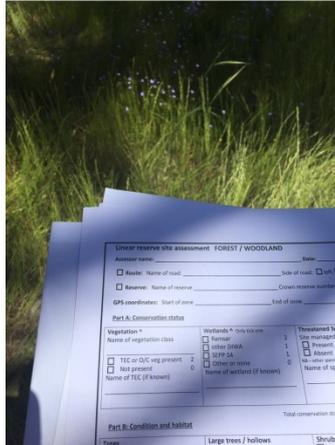
Vulnerable species Epacris purpurascens var. purpurascens, overlooking the M2

For more information contact:



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Rapid Assessment Tool for Linear Reserves



As part of the Linear Reserves Program, funded by the NSW Environmental Trust, Local Government NSW (LGNSW) has been working with Local Land Services (LLS) to develop a rapid assessment tool to enable council and LLS staff to assess the conservation value of council roadside reserves and traveling stock reserves throughout NSW.

Field trials were held in October in the Tweed and Albury areas and involved council staff, LLS officers and NSW Office of Environment and Heritage staff. The tool was well received and will be available to councils to trial in the upcoming round of roadside reserve grants due to open in November 2016.

The rapid assessment tool has been developed to provide councils with a simple approach to assess roadside reserve areas, provide them with the data needed to understand and manage their roadside environment and also to enable consistency in data collection across the state.

The tool is a two page proforma that can be used in electronic or hard copy form. The form identifies three main aspects for collection and assessing; conservation status, landscape context and vegetation condition.

Based on the scoring for each of these aspects and utilising a conservation value assessment matrix, each site is then assigned an overall conservation value of high, medium or low.

More information on the tool will be available at the upcoming overview sessions which LGNSW will be conducting to coincide with the opening of the Council Roadside Reserves grant funding.

For more information or to subscribe to regular CRR project updates please email: kathy.godfrey@lgnsw.org.au or visit the project's [website](#).

Adapting Roads to Climate Change

The AdaptRoads pilot project builds resilience to road infrastructure by developing a business case for adaptation. The tool uses road asset data and hazard geospatial data both from Manly Council and national and international climate

change sources to analyse current and future risks associated with different climate change scenarios. This analysis shows that extreme weather events such as bushfire, riverine flooding and coastal inundation are likely to increase in severity and frequency, which will result in greater risks to road assets. Adaptation pathways were developed and analysed to plan cost-effective adaption options.

NSW local governments manage 90% of the state's road network. Council road assets are valued at over \$65.7 billion and cost approximately \$1.1 billion per year to maintain. Flooding events, coastal inundation, bushfire and extreme windstorms can disrupt use, damage and sharply reduce their usable life.

Road infrastructure will be more vulnerable through increased intensity and frequency of climate and weather hazards. The AdaptRoads pilot project examined 2,300 sections of roads in Manly, in order to quantify risk cost to the asset portfolio and to test and compare the efficacy of a number of proposed adaptation actions.

The project identified a substantial number of road assets within the Council area that are vulnerable to the risk of riverine flooding, coastal inundation, bushfire or extreme wind events. Modelling indicated that if no adaptation measures are implemented the risk to these assets will increase as a result of climate change. The tool displays changes in the risk profile of existing assets in an intuitive and easily interpreted way, supported by a suite of quantitative outputs and analytics.

More details: Dr Lachlan Barnes, Northern Beaches Council, Southern, Phone: 02 9976 1500



Rows of street trees down after a storm

Conference on Restoring Ecological Processes



A Conference on Restoring Ecological Processes: Ecosystems and Landscapes in a Changing World

5-9 February 2017,
University of New England, Armidale NSW Australia

Early bird registration closes 7 December, and the closing date for abstracts has been extended.

The program includes three and a quarter days of plenary presentations, themed symposia, open forums and a poster session, integrated with trade exhibits, displays and an industry expo on-site; a day-long workshop for postgraduate students; a welcoming reception; a three-quarter day conference excursion integrating practical and theoretical perspectives; preconference tours; a conference dinner in a rural bushland setting with transport provided; an arts program to engage delegates intellectually and emotionally and encourage reflection on alternative means of communicating some of the most important issues of our time, and additional social activities.

For more details and registration go to
<http://conferencecompany.com.au/revegconf2017/>

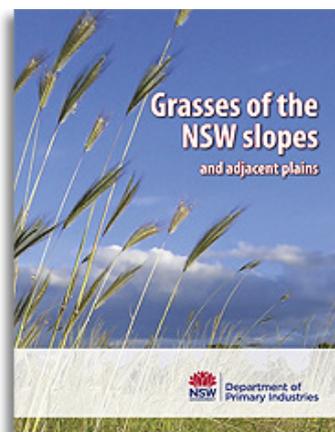
Australian tree range threatened

Climate change could shrink the geographic range of most of Australia's eucalyptus species within the next 60 years.

Carlos González-Orozco, now at the Colombian Organisation for Agricultural Research in Meta, Bernd Gruber at the University of Canberra and their team used models to predict the distribution of some 650 tree species under various climate-change scenarios. They found that a 3°C rise over the next 60 years would, on average, reduce the climatically suitable habitat for 91% of the species by half. And some 90% of suitable habitats that host a high concentration of rare and evolutionarily old species could disappear or move south. These losses could seriously threaten the diversity of the trees and their genetic ability to adapt to climate change.

Source: <http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v537/n7621/full/537453d.html>

Grasses of the NSW slopes and adjacent plains



On the NSW Slopes there are more than 450 species of native and introduced grasses. They are of major importance to farming and grazing industries, regional biodiversity and provide food and habitat for many native animals.

'Grasses of the NSW slopes and adjacent plains' provides an easy reference guide to the common grasses, so they can be recognised and managed appropriately. The book does not seek to cover all grasses in the area, but concentrates on the more widespread and common species which were recorded during surveys of the area.

Published in 2016 by the NSW Department of Primary Industries the book is 170 full colour pages and makes a great glovebox guide. To obtain a copy go to:
<http://www.tocal.nsw.edu.au/publications/list/field-crops-and-pastures/grasses-of-the-nsw-slopes>

Annual IPWEA NSW Excellence Awards

The Annual IPWEA NSW Excellence Awards were presented at a Gala Dinner in the Hunter Valley on 27th October 2016 with a record number of nominations, 101, received.

The night included ten award categories and three individual prizes including the new Special award – The Minister for Local Government's Award for Innovation in Local Government Engineering.

Local Government Excellence in Road Safety (Partnered by Puma Bitumen) was awarded to NSW Police Force for the Roadside Drug Testing Program. The program is predominately funded by the Centre for Road Safety but managed and executed by the NSW Police Force through the Random Drug Testing Unit.

The award for Public Works Leader of the Year (partnered by Boral) went to Mark Roebuck of Wollongong Shire Council. Mark has chaired the local Illawarra group for many years and is always trying to encourage verbal interactions between all participants, especially younger engineers and cadets. He has worked with Wingecarribee Shire Council for four years as

Manager Operations and with NSW Public Works as a Regional Projects Coordinator working with most councils in South Eastern New South Wales.

Tamworth Regional Council was recognised with the new Special award – The Minister for Local Government’s Award for Innovation in Local Government Engineering for the Tamworth Regional Playground. The Tamworth Regional Playground acts to engage the entire community through social inclusion by providing elements for all abilities and age groups.

A summary of award winners is available below, with photos and additional details are available on www.ipwea.org/nsw



Public Works Leader of the Year, Mark Roebuck of Wollongong Shire Council

2016 National Private Land Conservation Conference

The Australian Land Conservation Alliance (ALCA) invites you to attend the 2016 National Private Land Conservation Conference to be held on Thursday 24 November and Friday 25 November at the National Australia Bank Arena, 700 Burke Street Docklands Melbourne.

The National Private Land Conservation Conference provides the forum to hear about the latest innovations, opportunities and successes in private land conservation from conservation leaders, practitioners and supporters. Keynote speakers will provide an inspiring international perspective. Delegates will come from a spectrum of backgrounds that support Private Land Conservation including land trusts, private landholders, indigenous organisations, environmental NGOs, regional NRM bodies, governments, business, finance and the philanthropic sector.

More details: <http://www.alca.org.au/getting-involved/national-private-land-conservation-conference/>

Public Consultation on the Proposed Biosecurity Regulation and Regulatory Impact Statement

The new *Biosecurity Act 2015* provides an opportunity to better manage biosecurity risks that impact on the economy, environment and community.

Before the Act commences, regulations, policies and procedures need to be developed that will provide greater clarity about how risks are managed and what actions government, industry and the community need to take.

Preliminary consultation on the proposed management approach for a number of animal and plant pests and diseases, weeds and contaminants has been ongoing since late 2015 with 37 discussion papers released for consultation, leading to the upcoming consultation on the proposed Regulation and the Regulatory Impact Statement.

From 14 November 2016 the Regulatory Impact Statement and the proposed Regulation will be available for public consultation. A series of community drop-in sessions will be held across NSW during November with the opportunity to talk with DPI biosecurity specialists and give your feedback. Consultation will be open until 29 January 2017.

More details at <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/content/biosecurity/biosecurity-act-2015>

The aim of this newsletter is to share information about the management of NSW linear reserve environments and profile the NSW Roadside Environment Committee (REC). For more information on the REC, including how to develop roadside vegetation management plans, go to:

<http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/about/what-we-do/committees/roadside-environment-committee.html>

Please contact the REC Executive Officer if you wish to subscribe or unsubscribe.



NSW
Roadside
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