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Latest news from the REC

The REC recently provided a submission to the public exhibition of the draft Bathurst Roadside Vegetation Management Plan (RVMP).

Bathurst Regional Council developed the draft RVMP for the Bathurst Regional Local Government Area.

The purpose of the RVMP is to promote effective management of roadside vegetation, particularly in relation to environmental values.

Drone imagery of roadsides incorporated in Council's integrated planning and reporting framework

Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council has received funding to trial high resolution drone imagery to map environmentally sensitive roadsides. The project is part of Local Government NSW's Council Roadside Reserve project funded by the NSW Environmental Trust.

Drone imagery to 0.5cm pixel resolution is verified by a rapid assessment method (RAM) survey. The RAM assesses additional details such as integrity of vegetation structure, habitat features (e.g. hollows, wetlands, rocks) and value, presence of threatened species, weediness and disturbance ratings, and gives a conservation value rating (high, medium or low) based on relative weightings of these features, and the integrity of surrounding vegetation.

The RAM, developed by Local Government NSW and Local Land Services, was designed to be used by an experienced ecologist or equivalent as a drive-by survey. Sites are also 'ground-truthed' to verify both drone imagery and rapid assessments.

The drone image provides sufficient resolution to determine vegetation classification (open forest with grassy and shrub sub-formation); condition (clearing, age structure, weediness and evidence of dieback); and, habitat

features (woody debris, rocks, mistletoe), as well as road and other infrastructure (fences, powerlines, tracks and road surface).

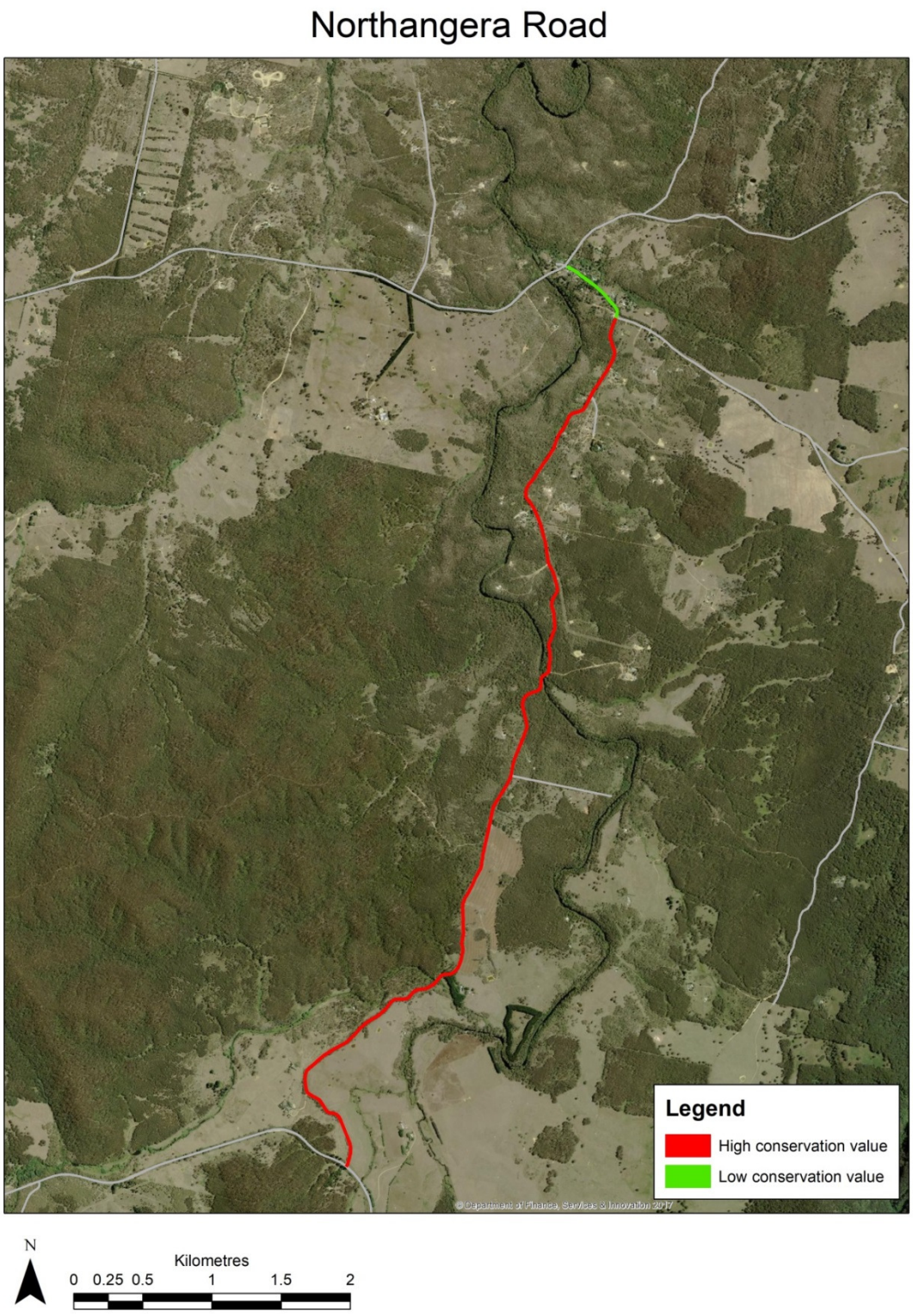
With knowledge gained from RAM and ground-truthing, it is possible to use this imagery to map plant community types (PCTs), basic condition, weediness and extent of clearing. Provisional mapping needs further sampling to verify data and add detail such as the presence of threatened species. When complete, drone imagery would provide the basis for road asset mapping, including natural assets and significance ratings.

Drone image of roadside vegetation. High resolution (0.5cm pixel) imagery reveals details of infrastructure (powerlines, fences, road surface), as well as vegetation type, condition and habitat features

Initial surveys were used to develop a tablet-based RAM, which maps roadside vegetation type and condition in real time, using pre-filled data and categorisation of data (e.g. functional classes versus species) to scale down survey time required. This can be edited later (e.g. to determine the extent of each PCT within a wider landscape context). Major over-, mid- and ground storey species were noted for each road section, as were major weed species and any threatened species. The digitised RAM also includes comments on condition and management.

The resulting mapping allows roadside vegetation to be categorised as low (green), medium (orange) and high (red) conservation value. Details of PCTs, threatened species locations etc. are included in attribute tables. This provides a simple classification system, which together with operating guidelines, allows better management of high and medium conservation roadsides. The final process will incorporate mapping and data into Council's asset management register, which will be used to inform planning and operational procedures within the newly-amalgamated Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

More details from Mary Appleby, QPRC, mary.appleby@qprc.nsw.gov.au



Roadside mapping along Northangera Road, Mongarlowe, using tablet-based rapid assessment method, and showing 'traffic light' system of low (green) and high (red) conservation value areas

Collaborating with local people to provide additional greening to the streetscape

Aspirational in name, "Sustainable Streets" is an Inner West Council program celebrating its sixth year of collaborating with local people to provide additional greening to the streetscape.

By engaging the community to help create and maintain street gardens, it was envisaged that there would be fewer grass verges to maintain. This was the main driver for what started as a pilot project in 2012. Additionally, a plethora of other social and environmental outcomes continues to drive interest and has created a momentum of its own.

Converting grass verges to garden is encouraged and Council offers practical support, site preparation and planting assistance. Participants sign up to the program and are registered as Council volunteers. The Sustainable Streets Officer is the main point of contact, offering guidance and resources as needed and co-ordinating the process from start to finish. She liaises with residents, visits them on site and all this helps to develop relationships within the street.

For properties where there is full width concrete (from boundary to kerb), owners can request new footpath gardens to be created. De-paving is offered on a fee-for-service basis to residents focused on improving their property frontage.

In addition, footpath maintenance and footpath upgrades are an opportunity to provide additional garden space especially around street trees. Less concrete is poured thereby providing a fairly cost neutral way of providing additional areas for gardens. The permeable area around street trees improves rainwater infiltration benefitting the trees as well as improving stormwater quality.

Most interestingly, by providing a positive focal point in the street, gardeners that are out watering or weeding are frequently given compliments and praise from passers-by and there are numerous stories of how the gardens were an impetus to meet and get to better know their neighbours.

For more information visit
https://www.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/environment/sustainability/sustainable-streets

Sustainable Streets Gardeners

Grass conversion, Frazer Street Dulwich Hill

October 2015 December 2017

2018 Australasian Network for Ecology and Transportation Conference

Incentives for private landholders to enhance high conservation roadsides

Mid-Western Regional Council, in conjunction with Central Tablelands Local Land Services (LLS), is delivering a project that aims to plant 4,000 tubestock trees along areas of high conservation value roadsides or roadsides with habitat characteristics for threatened species.

Applications for free native tree plantings are now open for eligible property owners in the Mid-Western Region who wish to create wind breaks along their boundary fences.

The number of trees available are limited and priority will be given to properties adjacent to high conservation value roadsides and landholders who are willing to provide in-kind assistance and a commitment to ongoing maintenance.

This project has been funded and supported by the Central Tablelands LLS Targeted Ecosystems Roadside Vegetation Grant.

More details at http://www.midwestern.nsw.gov.au/resident-services/Environmental-Services/Environmental-Projects-1/rehabilitation-grants/

Weed management on roads

Weed management in NSW is a shared responsibility under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Biosecurity Act). Under the Biosecurity Act, a person or authority who has responsibility for the care, control or management of a road (and roadside), must prevent, eliminate or minimise weed biosecurity risks that they know about or could reasonably be expected to know about.

The *Roads Act 1993* identifies the 'roads authority' responsible for the management of different types of roads within NSW.

There are 11 Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans (the Plans) that articulate how roads authorities, land managers and other stakeholders should prevent, eliminate, minimise and manage weed biosecurity risks in their regional area.

Specifically, the Plans:

- Outline strategic actions for local weed management, resource allocation and investment.
- Prioritise weed management based on risk, impact and feasibility of control in the local area.
- Explain clearly how land managers and general public can meet their general biosecurity duty and weed management expectations.

The Plans were developed by local Regional Weeds Committees, whose membership includes government land managers (Local Government and County Councils, RMS, NSW Department of Primary Industries, Local Land Services, Office of Environment and Heritage/ National Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry Corporation of NSW) and other key stakeholders (indigenous land managers, environmental interest groups, rural landholders and others). More information

on the development of the Plans and Local Regional Weeds Committees is available at: www.lls.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/weed-control

The actions and measures a roads authority must take to prevent, eliminate or manage biosecurity risks posed by weeds depends on what is 'reasonably practicable' for the prevention, elimination and minimisation of a biosecurity risk at a particular time, taking into account and weighing up all relevant matters. Relevant matters include the nature and potential impact of the biosecurity risk, and the cost, availability and suitability of any measures or actions. It is unlikely to be reasonably practicable if the cost is greatly disproportionate to the risk.

What is reasonably practicable may also be influenced by other legislative responsibilities such as a requirement to regulate traffic when conducting weed management activities on road reserves.

Source: NSW Government fact sheet 'Weed Management on Roads'

Conservation value of NSW Travelling Stock Reserves dataset

The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) has compiled a 'best available' spatial dataset containing information on the conservation value of Travelling Stock Reserves (TSRs). This assessment describes conservation value as one of four classes (being High, Medium, Low or Unassessed).

The NSW Environmental Trust has provided $4.75m in funding over three years to LLS to undertake a project "Managing TSRs for sustainable conservation outcomes". This project is being undertaken by Local Land Services in partnership OEH.

This project has collated all currently held data by OEH, LLS, the former Livestock Health and Pest Authority (LHPA) and research institutions on the conservation values on TSRs in NSW, particularly those managed by LLS. In doing so the project has also identified data gaps where TSRs have not been assessed, or where reassessment may be required. The project has also provided a range of supporting data sets to assist LLS in decision making related to the management of TSRs.

A total of 97.9% of all previously assessed TSRs (396,199 ha) are allocated either high or medium conservation value across NSW for TSRs managed by LLS, demonstrating the conservation importance of the TSRs within the landscapes in which they are situated (which are often highly cleared and fragmented). Only 2.1% of all previously assessed TSRs under LLS management are identified as low conservation value.

Unassessed TSRs are currently being assessed by LLS and will then be added to the current 'best available' dataset.

The 'best available' TSR conservation value dataset can be accessed at http://data.environment.nsw.gov.au/dataset/travelling-stock-reserves/resource/8855d7f6-e35f-40d8-b3fe-79cec4283b24

Interim report on the Travelling Stock Reserves Review

There are more than 6,500 travelling stock reserves (TSRs) on Crown land in NSW, covering approximately two million hectares. Approximately 1.5 million hectares, or 75 per cent, of the TSR network in NSW is in the Western Division. Local Land Services is responsible for the care, control and management of about 500,000 hectares of TSR land, mostly concentrated in the Central and Eastern Division.

The NSW Government sought community input on the TSR Review by way of a 10-week extensive community consultation process, which ran from 27 April to 7 July 2017 and included three workshops held in July and August 2017. The review aimed to determine which TSRs were still used or required for the original purpose they were set aside for and to determine if they were important for other reasons.

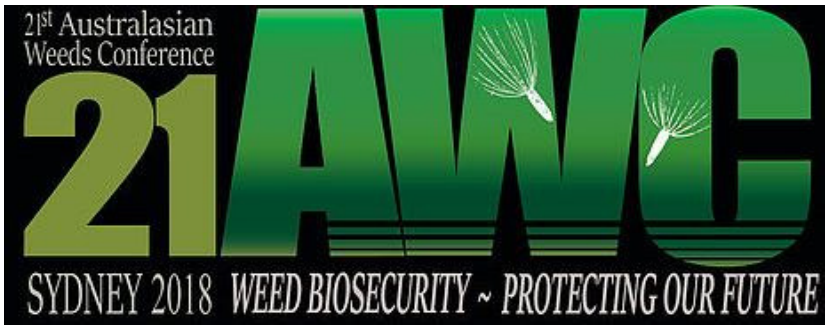
Interim results from the TSR Review show that:

- There continues to be a key network of TSRs connecting NSW with Queensland and Victoria. These are the TSR droving 'highways', allowing livestock to be moved between regions.
- Most TSRs in the Western Division have not been used for travelling stock for more than 10 years.
- TSRs continue to be used and are important for a number of complementary values, including conservation, Aboriginal cultural heritage, public access and recreation.

The interim TSR review report can be accessed at https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/livestock/stock-routes

The final report along with copies of all submissions will be released in early 2018.

21st Australasian Weeds Conference



The Weed Society of New South Wales Inc., on behalf of the Council of Australasian Weed Societies Inc., will be hosting the 21st Australasian Weeds Conference in the popular Sydney beach side suburb of Manly from 9 - 12 September 2018.

The conference attracts over 250 delegates from across Australasia and globally. Delegates will come together to network with peers, engage with industry sponsors, listen and participate in presentations and field trips on a variety of topics including:

- New technologies in weed management
- Biological, mechanical, and chemical weed control and research
- Herbicide resistance
- Weeds of crops and pastures
- Environmental weeds and Weeds of National Significance.

More details from https://www.21awc.org.au/

$1 Million in grants to support environmental research

NSW GOVERNMENT | Office of Environment & Heritage

Current and future environmental issues will be boosted with grant funding of $1 million now available as the NSW Environmental Trust Environmental Research program opens.

Office of Environment and Heritage Director Grants, Peter Dixon said the funding supports academics and scientific institutions, working in close collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

"Projects to be funded will use applied research to investigate new knowledge and advanced techniques to answer complex environmental issues," Mr Dixon said.

"For the 2018 grant program, new research priorities have been set and proposals must focus on resource management; wetlands and river systems; landscape management and/or marine, coastal and estuarine ecosystems.

"The funding supports projects preventing environmental harm and forging successful, real-world solutions to solve environmental problems in NSW.

"Individual grants of up to $150,000 are available and I encourage interested researchers to apply.

"Past funding has played a critical role in a variety of projects, from investigating how to integrate Aboriginal Culture into long-term successful engagement in environmental issues, to developing a theoretical model to reduce the environmental impacts of unsorted waste leaving construction sites.

"A total of 146 expressions of interest were received in the last funding round so I anticipate high interest in this round too," Mr Dixon said

The 2018 Environmental Research program, run by the NSW Environmental Trust, is now open and will close on **Monday 12 March**.

To find out more about the application process visit the Environmental Trust's website: www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/research.htm

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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 about the REC: https://landcare.nsw.gov.au/groups/nsw-roadside-environment-committee/

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

NSW Roadside Environment Committee

For more information contact:
Neil Dufty - Executive Officer - (02) 9354 0300
ndufty@molinostewart.com.au