



## November 2014 Edition 20

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### Latest news from the REC

- The REC website has changed and there is a new address for the site (see end of this newsletter). The new website includes a range of resources to help land managers and the 2013-14 REC annual report.
- The REC now has a presence on social media. Like the REC on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/nswrec> and follow the REC on Twitter @NSWREC

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## Regional REC Meeting in the Hunter

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The regional meeting of the NSW Roadside Environment Committee (REC) was held in the Hunter district on 25 and 26 August. The meeting involved 26 participants including representatives from six local councils and the Hunter Local Land Services (LLS).

The meeting opened on 25 August with a welcome to the participants and a presentation on the role of the REC, its member organisations, the importance of linear reserve environments and the four steps relating to Roadside Vegetation Management Plans (RVMPs).

This was followed by a presentation from Eva Twarkowski of the Hunter and Central Coast Regional Environmental Management Strategy (HCCREMS) providing an overview of the regional Roadside Management Program, priorities for councils, the Roadside Management Toolkit, outputs of the Roadside Marker Scheme, and the future of the Program.

The afternoon included three 'soapbox' presentations which were provided to highlight local linear reserve environmental issues and on-ground programs:

1. Managing threatened *maundia* species in drains (Sally Whitelaw, Port Stephens Council)
2. A strategic approach African Olive control within EECs (Lorna Adlem, Hunter LLS)
3. Specific Management Guide for Ground Orchids in the Gosford LGA (David Tierney, UNE).

A field trip was conducted to learn more about local linear reserve environment issues and management. The three sites visited were:

- Maitland Vale Road to look at a regional strategic approach to managing African Olive infestations
- Summerhill Road to look at program relating to creek crossings and managing highly erodible soils in the Dungog LGA
- Ausgrid easement to inspect some techniques used for environmental management in utility easements.

The REC held its quarterly formal meeting on 26 August. The REC wishes to thank HCCREMS for hosting the meeting.

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### **Tomago Bulk Supply Point 132kV Feeder Connections**

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Ausgrid worked closely with Transgrid to develop a proposal for six 132kV transmission lines connecting Transgrid's proposed 132kV bulk supply point and Ausgrid's existing 132kV network. The proposal involved clearing approximately nine hectares of native vegetation, including hollow-bearing trees and stags, and constructing approximately 1.6 km of access tracks.

A Species Impact Statement (SIS) was undertaken which assessed both the Transgrid and Ausgrid proposals due to the potential to significantly impact on threatened species and endangered ecological communities. The SIS was submitted to DECC (now the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage) with an application for concurrence in accordance with Section 112C of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. The DECC considered the application, the SIS and a commitment by Ausgrid and Transgrid to jointly purchase 120 hectares of land nearby to be dedicated as an offset, and granted concurrence to the proposals subject to a number of conditions.

Vegetation and Fauna Management Plans were developed to best practice standards incorporating these conditions in order to mitigate impacts from the proposals. Key mitigation measures included:

- installing 124 nest boxes in adjacent areas prior to clearing to provide a suitable surrogate for displaced fauna (photo below)
- retaining understorey vegetation in six bands across the easement, a minimum of 15 m wide, where trees were retained at 7 m height to act as glider poles.
- donating approximately 150 trees to the Department of Primary Industries project 'Bringing Back the Fish' to construct 'fish hotels' in the Hunter River.
- E-pave was used for the access tracks for piling rigs, cranes and EWPs. E-pave uses layers of whole, recycled tyres filled with large gravel placed on top of geotextile fabric. Key benefits of E-pave include no excavation,

minimal compaction, re-use of waste tyres, the aggregate is kept in place and there are minimal maintenance requirements.



For more information contact Diana Charteris, Senior Environmental Officer – Planning, AUSGRID phone 02 9394 6643

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### Roadside Environmental Management Award

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The Excellence in the Environment Awards recognise outstanding achievements by Local Government in NSW in managing and protecting the environment. The Awards include a **Roadside Environmental Management Award**, sponsored by the REC. This Award recognises excellence and innovation in roadside environmental management planning and implementation. The award incorporates, but is not limited to:

- Assessment of roadside environments.
- Preparation of roadside vegetation management plans or similar.
- Implementation of roadside vegetation management plans or similar e.g. through staff/contactor training, community education, demonstrated integration with other council planning.
- Monitoring and evaluation of roadside vegetation management plans or similar.

The finalists for this year have been notified and invited to attend the Awards presentation day.

The finalists are:

- **Glen Innes Severn Council** - *Restoration of Medium and High Conservation Value Road Corridors*
- **Kempsey Sire Council** - *Rehabilitation and weeding specific priority Kempsey Roads*
- **Riverina and Murray Regional Organisation of Councils (RAMROC)**- *Linking, Thinking and Acting: Roadside Vegetation in the Murray Catchment*
- **Sutherland Shire Council** - *Green Streets - Realising the biodiversity value of roadsides across Sutherland Shire*
- **Central West Region** - 10 Councils: *Bathurst, Blayney, Cabonne, Dubbo, Gilgandra, Mid Western, Orange, Parkes, Warrumbungle, Wellington - Central West Councils Salinity & Water Quality Alliance Roadside Vegetation Management Implementation Project*

The Awards will be presented at a ceremony at UTS Aerial Function Centre, Sydney on **Tuesday 2 December** 2014. Prior to the Award presentation lunch an Excellence in the Environment Awards Finalists Forum will be held featuring presentations by a selection of 2014 finalists. The Forum will be held from 9am – 12.15pm prior to the Award presentation lunch commencing at 12.30pm and concluding at approximately 3pm. The event will feature a keynote presentation from Amanda McKenzie, CEO, Climate Council. Tickets are available to any interested council or individual to attend the Forum at a cost of \$33 per person (including GST).

Sponsors and finalists are invited to attend the Finalist Forum and the Awards presentation lunch which will include stand-up comedian, Rod Quantock as MC for the event. Additional tickets to both the lunch and the Forum are available at a cost of \$77 per person (including GST). Details on finalists in other categories, or for information on attending the event please visit the [website](#).

Details of the winners will be provided in the February REC newsletter.

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## Threatened Species Maps Released

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The Australian Department of the Environment has recently released more than 1,700 new maps and datasets that local communities can use to find threatened species in their area.

The maps show known and predicted distribution of listed species including areas of potential habitat.

The maps and datasets could prove to be a valuable resource for local groups and natural resource managers, allowing them to target their conservation efforts.

The maps contained in this database are summary versions which have been generalised to ensure locations of species sensitive to illegal collection and disturbance are not made publicly available. The maps are made up of GIS layers containing species distributions generalised to a 10 km grid resolution (0.1°).

The maps are available online now from the Department of the Environment. Members of the public are encouraged to provide feedback through the website so that the maps can be kept up to date.

For more information, see the Species of National Significance webpage

<http://www.environment.gov.au/science/erin/databases-maps/snes>

(Source: *Species of National Environmental Significance Maps Released*)

<http://www.spatialsource.com.au/2014/09/23/species-of-national-environmental-significance-maps-released/>)

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## **NRC Evaluation of RVIP**

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The NSW Natural Resources Commission (NRC) is undertaking an independent evaluation of the Roadside Vegetation Implementation Project (RVIP) on behalf of the NSW Environmental Trust. The evaluation will assess the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the RVIP program and the outcomes of the evaluation will inform future investment in the management of linear reserves.

The NRC visited several project sites during October as part of the evaluation and has interviewed several stakeholders, including members of the Roadside Environment Committee. The evaluation report will be completed by mid-December. A report on the NRC visit to inspect sites in Parkes Shire can be found at <http://www.parkes.nsw.gov.au/component/content/article?id=1164148>

If you have any feedback, questions or comments regarding this evaluation please contact Amy Dula via phone (02) 8227-4303, or email [amy.dula@nrc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:amy.dula@nrc.nsw.gov.au) by **30 November** 2014.

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## **Campbelltown Take Action for Roadside Reserves**

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Campbelltown City Council is home to a very large area of nationally significant remnant vegetation, consisting of Cumberland Plain Woodland on the western side merging with sandstone vegetation to the east creating a long band of shale/sandstone transitional forest along the Georges River corridor. The significant vegetation exists within reserves, land holdings and along portions of roadside corridors throughout Campbelltown Local Government Area (LGA).

Campbelltown City Council engaged Teresa James, a Specialist in Western Sydney flora, to survey approximately 93 km of roadside vegetation, with the aim to map the occurrence of threatened species and ground-truth the existing mapping of endangered ecological vegetation communities within the LGA. The results found significant threatened species within the suburb of Wedderburn and reinforced the current map overlay of endangered ecological communities.

As part of its commitment to protecting the environment, Council has committed funds to develop a plan of management for roadside reserves throughout the LGA and an operational plan for the future protection of threatened species within the suburb of Wedderburn. The final plan of management is expected to be completed by the end of November 2014 before going to Council for adoption in February 2015.

(Article by Bushland Management Office for Campbelltown City Council, Troy Lessels)

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## Northern Tablelands LLS Talks Travelling Stock Reserves

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The Northern Tablelands Local Land Service (LLS) has recently held two events on some of their local Travelling Stock Reserves (TSRs).

The first event, held in May, involved a tour exploring some of the region's unique areas of natural habitat, highlighting the importance of the TSR network for both the agricultural sector, and as a refuge for rare and endangered native species. Hosted by Northern Tablelands LLS and the Uralla Shire Council, the tour explored Threatened Ecological Communities and other environmentally significant sites that can be found on local TSRs.

Representatives from Uralla Shire Council, the University of New England, Southern New England Landcare and Northern Tablelands LLS were on hand to discuss current and future land management projects planned for these areas.

Uralla Shire Council representatives reported that the members of the public showed great enthusiasm for the event. Not only did they engage with the ecological learning opportunity, they also had important views about the management of these locations which Council representatives were keen to hear.

The development of future management policy will recognise the ongoing importance of TSRs for the agricultural sector, as well as considering the social, cultural and environmental benefits of the 'Long Paddock' for the wider community.

For more information about the management of the TSR network on the Northern Tablelands contact your Local Land Services office in Armidale, Glen Innes, Inverell or Tenterfield on 1300 795 299.



*Grahame Marriott, Northern Tablelands LLS Board member, and Ian Beal from Uralla visited Dangar's Lagoon as part of the Uralla TSR Tour*

The second event, which took place in July, involved a small crowd of farmers and locals with an interest in the management of TSRs, who gathered at Hunts Reserve north of Inverell, for a cuppa and a yarn about stock route rules and regulations.

Hans Hietbrink, Chair of Northern Tablelands LLS, hosted the morning tea in the Oakwood region to discuss TSR management.

Issues such as grazing permits, vegetation management, and weed and feral animal control were on the agenda, along with maintenance of TSR infrastructure.

“It was a very informative event and an opportunity to discuss TSR management directly with farmers and others in the local community with an interest in this valuable public resource,” said Mr Hietbrink.

Local Land Services is currently undertaking a review of TSR management with the aim of developing consistent management policies across the Northern Tablelands.

Management regulations varied between the former LHPA regions before the new boundaries were created. Local Land Services is now working to create consistent management policies that will apply across the Northern Tablelands LLS region.

For more information about the TSR Review contact TSR Management Team Leader Ross Fuller on phone: 02 6722 3091 or email: [ross.fuller@lls.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ross.fuller@lls.nsw.gov.au)



*Anne Tink and Denis Horwood (pictured) joined Northern Tablelands Local Land Services Chair Hans Hietbrink at Hunts Reserve*

*(Source: Media releases from the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services)*

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## **Dos and Don'ts on the Stock Route**

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Central Tablelands LLS is reminding the public of the dos and don'ts on the Stock Route network, technically known as Travelling Stock Reserves or TSRs. The TSRs are Crown Land originally established for the droving of sheep and cattle. The 'Long Paddock' remains an important network for the movement of stock and has become a feed reserve for farmers in times of drought.

Stock routes are also valued for their social, cultural and environmental benefits. As a general guide, the following table indicates permitted and illegal activities on TSRs.

PERMITTED Activities	ILLEGAL Activities
Bushwalking	Timber removal / firewood collection
Fishing	Soil, rock and water extraction
Bird watching	Motorbike/Quad riding
Horse riding	Four wheel driving
Cycling / Mountain bike riding	Camping (unless permitted)
Nature observation	Hunting
Swimming	Archery
Picnicking	Pig dogging
	Trapping
	Shooting
	Dumping of rubbish

These restrictions are backed by legislation and subject to various fines and penalties enforced under legislation by authorised officers. TSR Rangers and Field Officers do have to follow this guiding legislation.

Funds to cover the costs of managing the TSR network are raised primarily through fees charged for Grazing Permits. Apiarists also use the TSRs and are charged a fee for keeping their hives on the TSR network.

TSR related policies and procedures are currently being reviewed by Central Tablelands LLS. However, the policies previously applied on each individual TSR will remain in place until the review is finalised.

Opportunities will be provided for feedback on new policies as Central Tablelands LLS works towards a consistent strategy for managing TSRs across the region.

For more information about the dos and don'ts on TSRs, contact Tim Seears, Central Tablelands Local Land Services Team Leader on 02 6363 7871.

*(Source: NSW Government Central Tablelands Local Land Services media release)*

## **Combatting Illegal Waste Dumping**

Bathurst Regional Council (BRC), the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), and the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) will increase joint efforts to curb illegal dumping within the region in a coordinated campaign beginning this month.

Bathurst Mayor, Cr. Gary Rush said illegal waste dumping is an ongoing, costly and a highly visible problem in NSW including the Bathurst Region. It is estimated to cost BRC tens of thousands of dollars a year.

"Bathurst Regional Council is committed to working with the EPA and the Roads and Maritime Services. It's crucial we collaborate with specialist organisations on this important issue in our community," Cr. Rush added.

RMS Western Regional Manager Phil Standen said there were certain times, such as during the Bathurst races, when there was an increase in illegal dumping.

"We have crews who maintain public spaces such as rest areas in and around Bathurst," Standen said.

"Unfortunately at certain times of the year there is a big spike in dumping of items such as lounge chairs and building rubble which diverts crews and resources away from their role in keeping the facility clean for people to rest and revive," he added.

Rubbish can also blow into waterways or bushland, or by their nature result in contamination to land. When hazardous materials such as asbestos or discarded syringes are dumped, the costs associated with the clean-up are very high, often requiring specialist contractors to remove the illegal waste. Often, items can easily be recycled or disposed of for only a few dollars at the tip.

Councils are often left to clean up the mess utilising resources for reporting, investigating and finally removing the dumped rubbish.

Persons found to be undertaking in illegal activities such as rubbish dumping or even firewood collection from Council and state lands may be issued with penalty notices.

(Source: Bathurst Regional Council media release)

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## **NSW Offsets Policy**

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The NSW Offsets Policy standardises and improves biodiversity offsetting for major project approvals in NSW. The policy was launched on 1 October 2014 and will be trialled for a period of 18 months. The policy applies to state significant development and state significant infrastructure under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, including projects such as highways, mines and hospitals.

The policy aims to strike an effective balance between the needs of proponents, communities and the environment by:

- providing clear, efficient and certain guidance for stakeholders
- improving outcomes for the environment and communities
- providing a practical and achievable offset scheme for proponents

For more information go to

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/biodivoffsets/bioffsetspol.htm>

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## Impacts of Road Development on Amazonian Bird Species

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A new study applying the 'roadless volume' shows it is not just how many roads you build but the spaces left between them that determines biodiversity loss.

Road building amply illustrates the kind of difficult trade-offs between social, economic and environmental interests that are inherent in sustainable development. While there is broad – if not universal – agreement that access to roads benefits formerly isolated communities both economically and socially, it is also well recognised that they come at the cost of local biodiversity, both directly and indirectly through environmental damage following the arrival of new settlements and associated clearance of native vegetation. From a sustainability point of view, the challenge is to avoid or minimise the environmental impacts while still providing the socio-economic benefits.

Road building affects biodiversity in a variety of ways, not all of them fully understood, or even known. The most obvious ways are direct habitat loss, the risk of animals being hit by vehicles using the road, and air pollution. Added to these is fragmentation of habitats, with roads acting as a barrier to dispersal and foraging by animal communities; and easier access for hunting, logging and other potentially unsustainable human activities. Together, these effects can result in the increasing dominance of species that proliferate along forest edges and in more disturbed habitats, and a decline species that depend on interior habitats.

A new paper published in the “Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences” reports on the results of a recent study of biodiversity impacts in the eastern Brazilian Amazon, an area where major expansion of road networks looks set to continue, radically transforming vast areas of relatively undisturbed rainforest. To do this, the researchers compared the number and mix of forest birds in 18 small hydrological catchments with the distribution of road networks in 2000 and 2008, using a new metric called roadless volume (RV).

A newly developed method, RV gives a higher value (i.e. a higher RV) to habitats depending on how far they are from all roads, rather than just measuring the area not under the tarmac.

For four months in 2010-2011, a team of field researchers from the Sustainable Amazon Network conducted the most comprehensive survey to date of forest birds in the municipalities of Santarém and Belterra, in Brazil’s Amazonian Pará state. Based on the number of birds of different species heard or sighted, they were able to measure how the number and mix of forest species differed among catchments characterised by different levels of road development across the region.

Even though roads are not a physical barrier to most bird species, the results were clear: biodiversity had suffered from road building. In driving habitat loss and fragmentation, overexploitation of forest resources, and disrupting patterns of movement, roads can lead to the extinction of local species while also isolating sub-populations of the remaining species and making them more vulnerable.

Even more interestingly, RV was a better predictor of biodiversity impacts than direct habitat loss, indicating that it can help to make better predictions of habitat changes such as the proliferation of 'edge' environments, and associated changes in forest structure microclimates. In general, areas with higher RV also appear less vulnerable to selective logging, hunting, fires and roadkill.

'One clear message from our research for road planners in the Amazon is that it's not just how many roads you build, but where. If you want to safeguard the Amazon's world-famous biodiversity, you need to leave at least some habitats far from roads,' says SEI Research Fellow Toby Gardner, one of the researchers on the study.

[Read the article \(external link to journal\) >>](#)

(Source: <http://www.sei-international.org/news-and-media/2938>)

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## **OEH Online Tool to Help Landholders with Native Vegetation Act and Regulations**

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The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage has launched a new range of online services to help landholders work their way through the Native Vegetation Act and Regulations. The information tools are user friendly and focus on helping landholders find which clearing approvals apply to them.

(Source: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/vegetation/onlinetools.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 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  
Environment  
Committee

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