



NSW Wetland Recovery Program Willow Removal and River Restoration along the Macquarie River

What is the NSW Wetland Recovery Program?

The NSW Wetland Recovery Program is a suite of projects that aim to restore the ecological health of the Gwydir Wetlands and the Macquarie Marshes. It targets the urgent needs of two of Australia's most iconic inland wetlands. The land managers, scientists and engineers who are working on these projects are researching the factors that contribute to the future health of these important wetlands. The areas being investigated in the Gwydir Wetlands are located within private landholders whereas the Macquarie Marshes are a mix of private and public lands.

The NSW Wetland Recovery Program aims to develop better land and water infrastructure and management practices in consultation with local landholders, key stakeholders and government organisations. By focussing on these two wetlands, which include areas of international importance, the Program will develop a blueprint for recovery procedures for inland wetlands and river systems across Australia.

The NSW and Australian Governments have jointly funded the NSW Wetland Recovery Program. A total of \$26.8 million has been committed. In 2005 the NSW Government announced funding of \$13.4 million which was matched by a grant from the Australian Government in 2006 through its Water Smart Australia Programme.

The Program is being delivered by the Department of Environment and Climate Change in partnership with the Department of Water and Energy and the Central West and Border Rivers Gwydir Catchment Management Authorities.

Why the NSW Government has removed willows from this area

The main aim of the willow removal project is to improve the flow of water along the Macquarie River Channel that leads into the Macquarie Marshes. The project involves the rehabilitation of a 70km stretch of the Macquarie River which will assist with improvement in water quality and biodiversity in the Macquarie Marshes.

This whole process will be carried out in consultation with local landholders and all the affected land will be rehabilitated including revegetation, follow-up weed and feral animal control.

Extensive mapping to prioritise the willow removal and the hydrological impact of the removal was undertaken. This was followed by Cultural Heritage surveys to ensure minimal risk of disturbance to sites of significance along the riparian areas.

Willow Removal

The willows have been removed using techniques approved under the *Guidelines for the clearing of exotic trees and dead native trees on State Protected Land*, part of the *Native Vegetation Conservation Act 1997*.

A combination of the approved machine cutting and cut and paint techniques were used, where trees were pruned prior to removal to avoid damage to surrounding vegetation.

The willow removal was undertaken in early 2008 and took approximately six weeks. The logs and debris were stacked in strategic piles along the riparian corridor to dry out prior to being destroyed.

Additional information about these guidelines and specific removal methods can be obtained by contacting the Central West Catchment Management Authority (CWCMA) (contact details listed at the bottom of this page).

Follow Up Rehabilitation

Phase II of this project involves rehabilitation of both sides of the 70km river length. Landholders along the river will be able to access funding from the Central West CMA to undertake fencing, construction of off-river watering points, erosion control work, revegetation, weed and feral animal control. Any willow regrowth will be destroyed as part of the rehabilitation works.

This work is scheduled to commence in July 2008. If you would like further information or you would like to be involved in this phase of the project please contact the CWCMA.

Project Management Details

The project is being managed by the Central West CMA. For more information, contact:

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