



SCRUBBED UP

An update on the Invasive Native Scrub Research Program

Issue 2 - November 2007

Highlights:

Nyngan and Cobar community workshops well attended and receive positive comments from community.

Landholders providing access to range of sites for research.

Biodiversity and classification/ mapping projects out in the field.

Welcome again to Scrubbed Up – a regular newsletter for those involved or interested in the Invasive Native Scrub (INS) Research Program.

The program is now in full flight and our researchers are out and about in the Nyngan-Cobar study area. Some will be nearly locals soon, having visited the district quite a few times now.

We recently held community workshops in Nyngan and Cobar to explain what the various projects involve and how landholders can participate. These days were well attended and there was much positive dialogue with the community.

Info sheets are now available on each of the eight projects and on the overall program. These are available from <www.cw.cma.nsw.gov.au>.

Cheers,

Carolyn Raine
Chair
INS Research Program Management Team

Team members - Carolyn Raine (Central West CMA), Russell Grant (Western CMA), Brian Wilson (DECC), Sue Briggs (DECC) and Gary Howling (DECC).

About the INS Research Program

A suite of research and communication projects are being undertaken in the central-west and western regions of NSW dealing with Invasive Native Scrub (INS).

INS is native shrubs and trees that are INS-listed species, and have either regenerated thickly following disturbance or have encroached on vegetation communities where they previously didn't occur.

This issue can have a serious adverse impact on habitats, wider landscape health, communities and farming operations.

Through carrying out this research, we hope to better understand how INS treatment options vary between areas and how these treatments can be accommodated. Our intent is that regulations, incentives and advice will facilitate good practice.

Community involvement, landholder knowledge and scientific research are all central to this program and will be used to update and complement findings from previous INS studies.

The overall INS Research Program is being coordinated by the Central West and Western CMAs, in collaboration with the NSW Department of Environment and

Climate Change (DECC). This work is possible through funding from the NSW and Commonwealth Governments.

The program incorporates the knowledge and advice of farmers in several ways, including having landholders on the program's Advisory Committee.

The overall product will be a resource outlining what the program has learned from landholders and the research projects — i.e. what INS management techniques work under different circumstances.

This resource will give us a vehicle to distribute research findings widely amongst landholders, government agencies and policy-makers alike.



New South Wales
Government



Australian Government



Working with the community

The success of the INS research program hinges on involving landholders in what we are doing and tapping into their experiences and knowledge.

Measures of community involvement so far are promising:

32 landholders attended the September community workshops.

Of these, 11 wanted to be updated on the program and eight offered sites on their properties for research.

Overall, around 60 landholders across the study region have been working with us on the program one way or another.

While the workshops have shown there is a degree of uncertainty amongst landholders about where the program will lead, the community was generally supportive of researchers and comments received were positive.

Landholders also gave feedback on how they prefer to hear about project updates and what might be useful as part of the final INS management resource.

The CMAs also found the workshops useful to discuss current management options for INS with landholders.

Direct quotes from workshop feedback sheets:

“Interested and hope all the information does not get lost.”

“Very informative – I’d like to see more workshops – INS is a major problem and will only get worse and managing these areas should be No. 1.”

“Good introduction. Enthusiastic, well educated for our purposes young people. Could people cooperating with them make up a panel after a certain amount of investigation has been completed to produce a document/ interact at a meeting?”



Project updates as at November 2007:

Soil function and soil erosion

- UNE researchers Matt Tighe and Carlos Munoz are working together on a number of common elements of these two projects.
- Their first season soil sampling is now complete and analyses are underway.

Biodiversity

- Veronica and Erik Doerr have been busy surveying study sites for the bird survey. Around 10 survey sites have been surveyed that cover INS, open woodland, native pastures and cropped areas.

Case study

- The Namoi CMA project, which was previously a small case study, has received extra funding and has been expanded to a PhD project looking at INS/Coolabah-Blackbox communities and Mitchell Grass rehabilitation.
- The cropping project has been engaging local landholders and is undertaking a survey of cropped paddocks around the Cobar peneplain region.

Landholder knowledge

- Geoff Cunningham has completed landholder

interviews with 18 people and is preparing community workshops to discuss findings.

Fire

- Brian Dohnt continues to develop networks with landholder community and Rural Fire Service members. He is seeking landholders with experience in actively using fire for vegetation management outcomes.
- Dr Anne Kerle from Dubbo has started a consultancy undertaking a literature review of the use of fire to manage semi-arid rangeland vegetation.

Classification and mapping

- A number of properties have been lined up for ground-truthing of satellite imagery and researchers are current in the region carrying out surveys.

Principles of effective INS management

- Landholders have given feedback of what would be useful as final end-resources, which is being used to further develop this product.

For more information about the INS Research Program, or to added or removed from this list, contact:

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