Recovering bushland on the Cumberland Plain

Best practice guidelines for the management and restoration of bushland

Department of
Environment and Conservation (NSW)

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Contents

Background

Acknowledgements

1. The Cumberland Plain and its vegetation ____ 1

Introduction ____ 2

The Cumberland Plain and its people ____ 5

Geology, soils and climate ____ 6

Identifying the plain's native vegetation ____ 7

The plant communities ____ 10

Species richness ____ 13

Cumberland Plain Recovery Plan ____ 14

2. Guidelines for managing native vegetation ____ 15

Protecting remnants is the top priority ____ 16

How Cumberland Plain bushland becomes degraded ____ 17

Managing riverside bushland ____ 21

Bringing back native animals ____ 23

Where to protect or plant native vegetation ____ 25

3. Identifying management options through site assessment ____ 27

Framework for ecological restoration ____ 28

Site assessment: determine the most appropriate restoration approach ____ 30

4. Bush regeneration and the use of 'triggers' ____ 35

Restoration through bush regeneration ____ 36

The use of regeneration 'triggers' ____ 44

5. Restoration through revegetation ____ 50

Revegetation versus natural regeneration ____ 50

Species selection ____ 50

Seed collection ____ 51

Site preparation and planning ____ 54

Direct seeding ____ 56

Planting ____ 59

Pattern and sequence of revegetation ____ 61

Care and maintenance after planting ____ 65

6. Monitoring ____ 67

References ____ 69

Appendices ____ 75

1. Reference sites ____ 76
2. Demonstration sites ____ 77
3. Cumberland Plain weeds and their treatment ____ 81
4. Weed removal techniques ____ 85
5. Funding opportunities ____ 89
6. Contacts ____ 91
7. Recommended reading ____ 92
8. Legislation ____ 94

Western Sydney Parklands demonstration site, Eastern Creek, Doonside. (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources)

Background

The biodiversity of the Cumberland Plain in western Sydney is among the most threatened in New South Wales and has been identified as a priority for conservation. The native vegetation of this region has been extensively cleared since European settlement with only 12 per cent remaining as intact bushland.

The conservation of threatened species, populations and ecological communities is crucial for the maintenance of the state's unique biodiversity. The NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* provides the framework for the conservation and recovery of threatened species, populations and ecological communities in the state. As of January 2005, 12 vegetation communities on the Cumberland Plain, comprising most of its remaining bushland, had been listed as endangered under the Act.

Given the endangered status of Cumberland Plain bushland, the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) is coordinating a recovery program for the area. The practice of restoring damaged and degraded ecological communities is a relatively new activity within Australia and internationally. In the context of urban Sydney, the process of assisted natural regeneration only began in urban conservation reserves in the 1970s (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b). These reserves were mostly in the Hawkesbury sandstone areas of Sydney.

Restoration work on the vegetation of the shale soils of the Cumberland Plain is more recent, with substantial work commencing in only the last 15 years. Therefore the time spent observing, researching, working on, and understanding the Cumberland Plain vegetation communities has been much shorter than for Sydney's sandstone-based vegetation communities.

As a result of this, DEC has identified the need to provide both theoretical and practical 'best practice' guidance to land managers wishing to conserve bushland on all or part of their properties. The aim of these guidelines is to increase the potential for recovery of these endangered ecological communities.

While this publication acts as a theoretical aid to land managers conserving Cumberland Plain bushland, the development of demonstration sites will provide them with practical on-ground examples of numerous best practice restoration techniques for restoring and establishing native vegetation.

It is important that all restoration projects in western Sydney are managed to current best practice standards, as inappropriate restoration can significantly affect the long-term viability of endangered ecological communities.

As a large proportion of the Cumberland Plain's remaining bushland is situated on privately owned rural land, successful recovery of the bushland needs the support of the community of western Sydney. The NSW Government's vision for the management and recovery of these unique communities is to create a network of protected and restored bushland across the Cumberland Plain on both private and public lands. The development of these guidelines and their associated demonstration sites is just one of the many tools that will be used to assist with this process.

Pultenaea parviflora*, Shanes Park. (P. Watson)*

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The development of this publication would not have been possible without funding from the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust and the assistance of the project partners. They include the Hawkesbury–Nepean Catchment Management Authority, NSW Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), the NSW Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources, the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Camden Council.

The project involved the production of best practice management guidelines and the development of associated demonstration sites. Its aim is to provide guidance to land managers wishing to conserve bushland on all or part of their land. The guidelines will assist agricultural enterprises in relation to management of endangered Cumberland Plain ecological communities on their farmland, as well as guidance to councils and other land managers on restoration of these communities within rural and urban lands. The guidelines have been developed in consultation with state and local council representatives, agricultural landholders, and development and agricultural peak bodies.

These guidelines make use of, and expand on, many of the essential elements discussed in the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003 document, *Bringing the Bush Back to Western Sydney* and the *Bush Regenerators' Handbook* published by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) in 1991.

The production of this publication would also not have been possible without assistance from Greening Australia (NSW), through their knowledge and understanding of the ecological restoration processes that occur on the Cumberland Plain.

The author also acknowledges the assistance of many farmers and professional colleagues who provided input and comment during the development of the guidelines. Special thanks are due to:

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CHAPTER 1

The Cumberland Plain and its vegetation

Introduction 2

The Cumberland Plain and its people 5
Aboriginal heritage 5
European settlement 5

Geology, soils and climate 6
Soils 6
Climate 6

Identifying the plain's native vegetation 7

The plant communities 10
Woodlands 10
Shale communities 11
Shale sandstone transitional communities 11
Alluvial communities 11
Riverside (or riparian) communities 12
Other communities 12

Species richness 13
Weeds 13

Cumberland Plain Recovery Plan 14

Introduction

The gentle topography and richer soils of the Cumberland Plain in western Sydney have made the area very attractive for a range of land uses throughout European settlement, beginning with agriculture and more recently urban expansion. Much of the native vegetation of the Cumberland Plain has thus been cleared and its biodiversity is now identified as among the most threatened in New South Wales. This makes it a priority for conservation (National Land and Water Resources Audit 2002).

Today only 12 per cent of the original extent of pre-European native vegetation cover on the Cumberland Plain remains as intact bushland (Tozer 2003). In 1997, Cumberland Plain Woodland, the most widespread community found in the region, was listed as an Endangered Ecological Community under the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*. Since then a further 11 vegetation communities have been listed as endangered, with the result that most of the native vegetation of the Cumberland Plain is now listed. Table 1 uses an estimated distribution of the vegetation communities across the Cumberland Plain prior to European settlement (1750) to provide statistics on the proportion of each community remaining.

Sydney Coastal River-flat Forest (Alluvial Woodland). (DEC/M. Cufer)

Further, two of the 12 endangered communities – Cumberland Plain Woodland and Shale Sandstone Transition Forest – are also listed as nationally endangered ecological communities under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. It is anticipated that additional Cumberland Plain ecological communities may be listed as endangered under this Act.

These endangered ecological communities occur in part of the largest city in the country, in an area where continuing urban growth has led to large-scale clearing. Native vegetation on the plain is thus subject to significant impacts and pressures, with bushland remnants becoming increasingly fragmented and degraded. The consequence of these pressures is that Cumberland Plain bushland communities, in all their diversity and complexity, are in danger of becoming lost from our landscape.

The broad shallow basin of the Cumberland Plain stretches from Ryde in the east to the Nepean River in the west; from Cattai in the north to Thirlmere in the south (see Map 1). The basin consists of a deep, almost unbroken layer of Wianamatta Shale, mostly at altitudes ranging from 20 to 100 metres but up to 330 metres on Razorback Range (Fairley & Moore 2000). Most of the plain receives less than 800 mm of rainfall a year (Benson *et al*. 1996), making it the driest part of Sydney.

The gently undulating countryside with its shale-derived soils contrasts with the ruggedness and relatively poor soils of the surrounding sandstone plateaus. With some of the most fertile country in the Sydney region, the Cumberland Plain has thus been a focus for agricultural production since European settlement (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2000).

The plain's native vegetation is varied, reflecting its range of soil types, landforms and drainage. These different environmental factors have resulted in plant communities ranging from open woodlands with a grassy understorey, to forests with tall ironbarks and turpentine trees, and from dry rainforest to floodplain communities on the Hawkesbury–Nepean River. Each of these vegetation types is recognised as a distinct ecological community.

More detailed information on the vegetation communities of the Cumberland Plain is provided in *Native Vegetation Maps of the Cumberland Plain: Final Edition* (2002) published by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. This publication should be consulted for comprehensive information and species lists for each endangered ecological community.

Research suggests that once clearing levels across the landscape exceed 70 per cent, the 'connectivity' between remnants rapidly declines (Freudenberger *et al.* 1997), resulting in a subsequent loss of biodiversity and thus viability at an even greater rate than before.

In western Sydney this threshold has already been passed, with only 12 per cent of the pre-1750 distribution of bushland remaining as vegetation remnants, and less than 7 per cent of this remaining bushland in conservation reserves (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2002).

Table 1: Cumberland Plain endangered ecological communities

Community	Original extent pre-1750 (hectares)	Current extent of intact vegetation (hectares)	Area in conservation reserves (hectares)
Cumberland Plain Woodland (including Shale Hills Woodland and Shale Plains Woodland sub-communities)	125,446	11,054 (8.8% of original extent)	880.2 (0.7% of original extent)
Shale Sandstone Transition Forest (including Low Sandstone Influence and High Sandstone Influence sub-communities)	43,990	9,950 (22.6% of original extent)	283.6 (0.6% of original extent)
Sydney Coastal River-flat Forest (including Alluvial Woodland and Riparian Forest sub-communities)	39,162	5,446 (13.9% of original extent)	127.3 (0.3% of original extent)
Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest (including Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest and Turpentine-Ironbark Margin Forest sub-communities)	26,516	1,182 (4.5% of original extent)	75.6 (0.3% of original extent)
Western Sydney Dry Rainforest	1,282	338 (26.4% of original extent)	1.7 (0.1% of original extent)
Blue Gum High Forest	3,720	168 (4.5% of original extent)	18.7 (0.5% of original extent)
Castlereagh Swamp Woodland	1,006	616 (61.2% of original extent)	116.4 (0.12% of original extent)
Elderslie Banksia Scrub Forest	Unknown	13.4	0
Moist Shale Woodland	2,034	604 (29.7% of original extent)	6.7 (0.3% of original extent)
Shale Gravel Transition Forest	5,427	1,721 (31.7% of original extent)	233.6 (4.3% of original extent)
Cooks River/Castlereagh Ironbark Forest	12,185	1,012 (8.3% of original extent)	289 (2.4% of original extent)
Agnes Banks Woodland	615	97.8 (15.9% of original extent)	25.7 (4.2% of original extent)
Total (hectares)	**261,383**	**32,202 (12.3% of original extent)**	**2,058 (0.8% of original extent)**

Source: NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (2002)

Of this remaining bushland, 76 per cent is on privately owned land and it is likely that much of this private land will fall under further development pressure to meet the growth demands of Sydney.

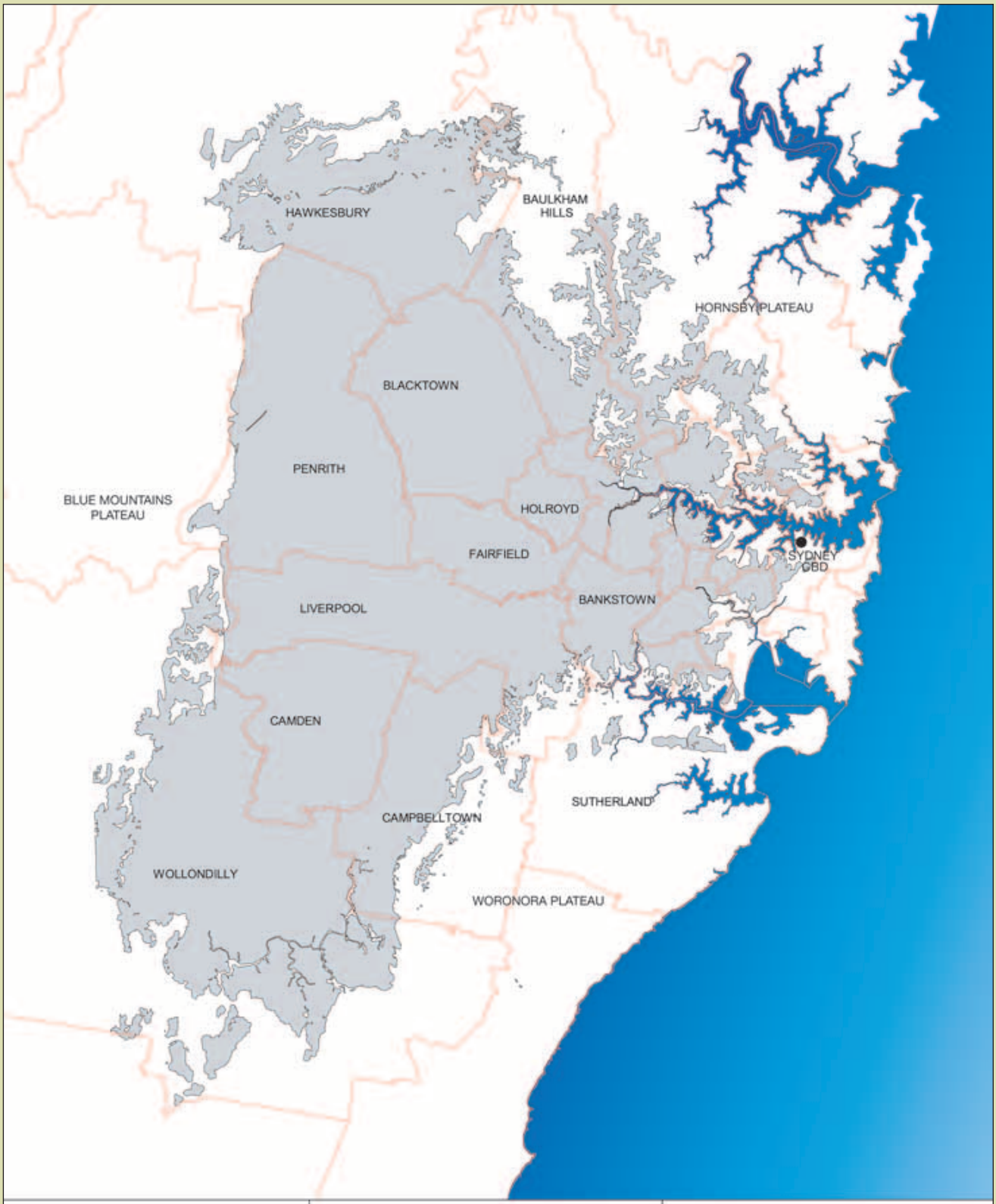
Bushland conservation on the Cumberland Plain cannot be achieved solely by the creation of national parks and other protected areas. The resources to acquire and manage reserves that will conserve viable examples of all the different ecological communities and the species they contain across their full range are beyond the budgets of organisations such as DEC.

Since it is not economically possible to retain all of the bushland communities in conservation reserves, the long-term viability of these remnants is dependent on the restoration of some areas of currently cleared land and the provision of linkages that enable the remnants to be managed as a bushland network across the landscape.

Successful conservation will therefore rely on a cooperative effort by all western Sydney landholders. The NSW Government's vision for the region sees conservation occurring across the whole landscape – a mix of reserves, conservation agreements, appropriate land management in rural areas and even native vegetation in residential backyards.

The importance of connectivity across the landscape …

Source: Land & Water Australia (2004)



The Cumberland Plain and its people

At the time of European settlement, the area that is now western Sydney was occupied by Aboriginal people. Many hundreds of Aboriginal sites have been recorded across the Sydney region, indicating the significance of the whole landscape and its resources to Aboriginal people. Since that time, the area has become part of the largest metropolis in Australia, and the focus of considerable urban development. Today it's estimated that every week Sydney's population grows by over 700 people.

Aboriginal heritage

Aboriginal people, over tens of thousands of years, have managed their land and waterways with the knowledge and understanding of how natural systems operate and how the survival of the whole ecosystem was essential to their own survival.

At the time of European settlement, Aborigines were concentrated in two parts of the Sydney district, the floodplain and the coast. They used a range of plants for food, shelter, canoes, tools, weapons, containers and medicines. For the Dharug people on the floodplain of the Hawkesbury–Nepean River, significant plant foods included vine tubers of the river-flat forests and bulbs and tubers of orchids, lilies and swamp plants of the woodlands on the Cumberland Plain (Kohen 1984, as cited in Benson & Howell 1990a). In the grassy Cumberland Plain woodlands, fires may have been used as often as every five years to stimulate underground food resources and grass for game (Benson & Howell 1990b).

The Cumberland Plain contains a large body of Aboriginal cultural heritage. This includes open campsites, scarred trees, grinding grooves, stone quarries, rock engravings and other places of social and spiritual life (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003c). Along with the extensive clearing of the Cumberland Plain, hundreds of archaeological sites have been destroyed. Both the clearing and destruction of sites have had an impact on Aboriginal cultural traditions. In spite of this, many contemporary Aboriginal people in western Sydney maintain strong connections to the remaining natural environment.

Today scarred trees are a clue to traditional Aboriginal use of resources. (DEC)

European settlement

The first European settlers valued the land and its resources in different ways from Aboriginal people. A few months after the First Fleet anchored in Sydney Cove in January 1788, Surgeon Worgan summarised the settlers' activities:

'*… the principal business has been the clearing of land, cutting, grubbing and burning down trees, sawing up timber & plank for building …*' (Benson & Howell 1990b).

Although some clearing was necessary to provide agricultural and grazing lands, many of the early colonists had an over-zealous antagonism to the bush (Benson & Howell 1990b). The European settlers set to clearing lands immediately upon their discovery. From contemporary accounts and paintings we can tell this process was well underway by 1805, and by the 1820s the Hawkesbury–Nepean floodplain had been virtually deforested (Benson & Howell 1993).

With its gentle slopes and fertile soils, the Cumberland Plain has a much higher capacity to support agricultural and urban use than the surrounding sandstone regions. Agricultural development was underway as early as 1792. By 1810, the area under cultivation had grown to almost 29,000 hectares (University of Western Sydney 2000) and by the middle of the century most of the Cumberland Plain was either being grazed or cultivated. Urban expansion into western Sydney has accelerated the clearing since 1950 (Tozer 2003).

The area's water, land and natural resources continue to support Sydney's growth. Agriculture in the region is worth about one billion dollars and supplies much of the city's fresh vegetables, flowers and fruit. It also produces meat, wool, eggs and milk, and supports extensive horse breeding and turf industries. The Hawkesbury–Nepean river system has historically been Sydney's major source of soil, gravel, sand, clay, shale, basalt, peat and coal. It supplies, for example, 80 per cent of the sand and gravel used by the construction industry in Sydney's greater metropolitan area (NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation 2002).

Before the arrival of the First Fleet, the Cumberland Plain supported about 10,000 Aboriginal inhabitants. It currently supports a population of around 700,000 people, a quarter of whom are migrants from over 100 countries, making the area one of Australia's most culturally diverse. The ongoing increase in population on the Cumberland Plain and the associated pressures on the environment bring with them an urgent need to pursue sustainable management (NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation 2002).

Geology, soils and climate

Western Sydney's geology and soils differ from those of many other parts of Sydney due to two main influences:

- the presence of Wianamatta Shale, which weathers to clay soils
- the Hawkesbury–Nepean River system with its extensive Tertiary (66–1.6 million years ago) and Quaternary (from 1.6 million years ago) alluvial soils (Bannerman & Hazelton 1990).

Soils

The Cumberland Plain is formed on sediments of the Wianamatta Group, from the Bringelly Shale on the plain itself and the Ashfield Shale around the margins. The Wianamatta Group is the upper unit of Sydney Basin sediments and overlies the Hawkesbury Sandstone which outcrops around the margins as a result of subsequent relative uplift (Benson *et al*. 1996).

On the fringe of the plain, the clay soils grade into sandstone (Michaelis 2001).

The Cumberland Plain comprises gently undulating plains and low hills, rising gradually from the flat, low-lying areas just above sea level in the north to an altitude of around 300 metres on the rolling hills of the Razorback Range in the south (Tozer 2003).

Soil landscapes for the Penrith (sheet see Bannerman & Hazelton 1990) relate strongly to geology and can generally be associated with characteristic natural vegetation. Soils from the Wianamatta Group are clay-rich, fine-textured, acid and moderately fertile. Soils derived from Hawkesbury Sandstone are less fertile, sandy, well-drained, strongly acid, and usually deficient in phosphorus (Benson *et al.* 1996).

Along the Hawkesbury–Nepean River and associated creeks such as South Creek, Rickabys Creek and Eastern Creek are extensive younger alluvial deposits, with most of the actual riverbanks formed of material laid down during the last 10,000 years. The most extensive areas of alluvium are on the floodplain of the Hawkesbury River between Penrith and Windsor, and along the Nepean River near Camden.

Between Penrith and Windsor there are also older alluvial deposits of gravel, sand, silt and clay deposited by an ancestral Hawkesbury–Nepean River system.

The Georges River valley also has smaller areas of alluvials (Benson & Howell 1990b).

Climate

Average annual rainfall on the Cumberland Plain is low. Topography and distance from the coast are the main determinants of weather patterns in the region (Tozer 2003). Average annual rainfall in Sydney is highest on the coast and decreases steadily inland as a result of moist air streams flowing predominantly from the east.

West of Parramatta most of the Cumberland Plain receives less than 800 mm annually (St Marys 759 mm, Windsor 757 mm, Bringelly 760 mm). Annual rainfall increases with elevation to approximately 900 mm on the margins of the plain, and reaches a maximum of 1444 mm at Pymble on the Hornsby Plateau.

The average January maximum temperature over most of the study area, from Menangle to lower Portland, is 29°C while the average July minimum range is between 1 and 4°C. Richmond has had a maximum temperature of 48.4°C and a minimum of -8.3°C (Benson & Howell 1993).

The average maximum temperatures are lowest on the coast due to the frequency of onshore winds. Maximum temperatures increase westward as the influence of these winds dissipates, reaching a maximum on the central Cumberland Plain before decreasing with increasing elevation towards the margins of the plain. Average minimum temperatures for the coldest month (July) are highest on the coast and decrease steadily inland away from the moderating influences of the ocean. Temperature extremes occur more frequently with increasing distance from the coast. Frosts also occur more frequently away from the coast and at higher elevations (Tozer 2003).

A higher proportion of the annual total rainfall occurs in the warmer months of the year and summer rainfall is less variable than winter rainfall. Soil moisture availability is relatively high throughout the year reaching a peak in winter when the lower rainfall is more than compensated for by the low evaporation. Plant growth is limited by low temperatures in winter and low soil moisture at other times (Benson *et al*. 1996).

Table 2: Rainfall, temperature and frost statistics for selected weather stations on the Cumberland Plain and Hornsby Plateau

	Cumberland Plain				Hornsby Plateau
	Bankstown	Parramatta	Picton	Richmond	Pennant Hills
Annual rainfall (mm)	921	922	804	806	1102
Av. min. temp. July (°C)	3.1	4.6	1.8	3.6	4.6
Av. Max. temp. Jan (°C)	27.7	28.1	29.5	29.4	27.6
Days where temp. > 38°C (av/year)	–	–	6.1	9.6	–
Severe frost days (av/year)	46	38	133	84	85
Last recorded severe frost in any year	31 Aug	3 Sep	9 Oct	26 Sep	18 Sep

Source: Bureau of Meteorology (1979)

Identifying the plain's native vegetation

To plan for the management of the plain's bushland, we need to know its location and condition. The native vegetation of this area has been mapped and described at various times over the past ten years, using different methods and to different levels of detail (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2000).

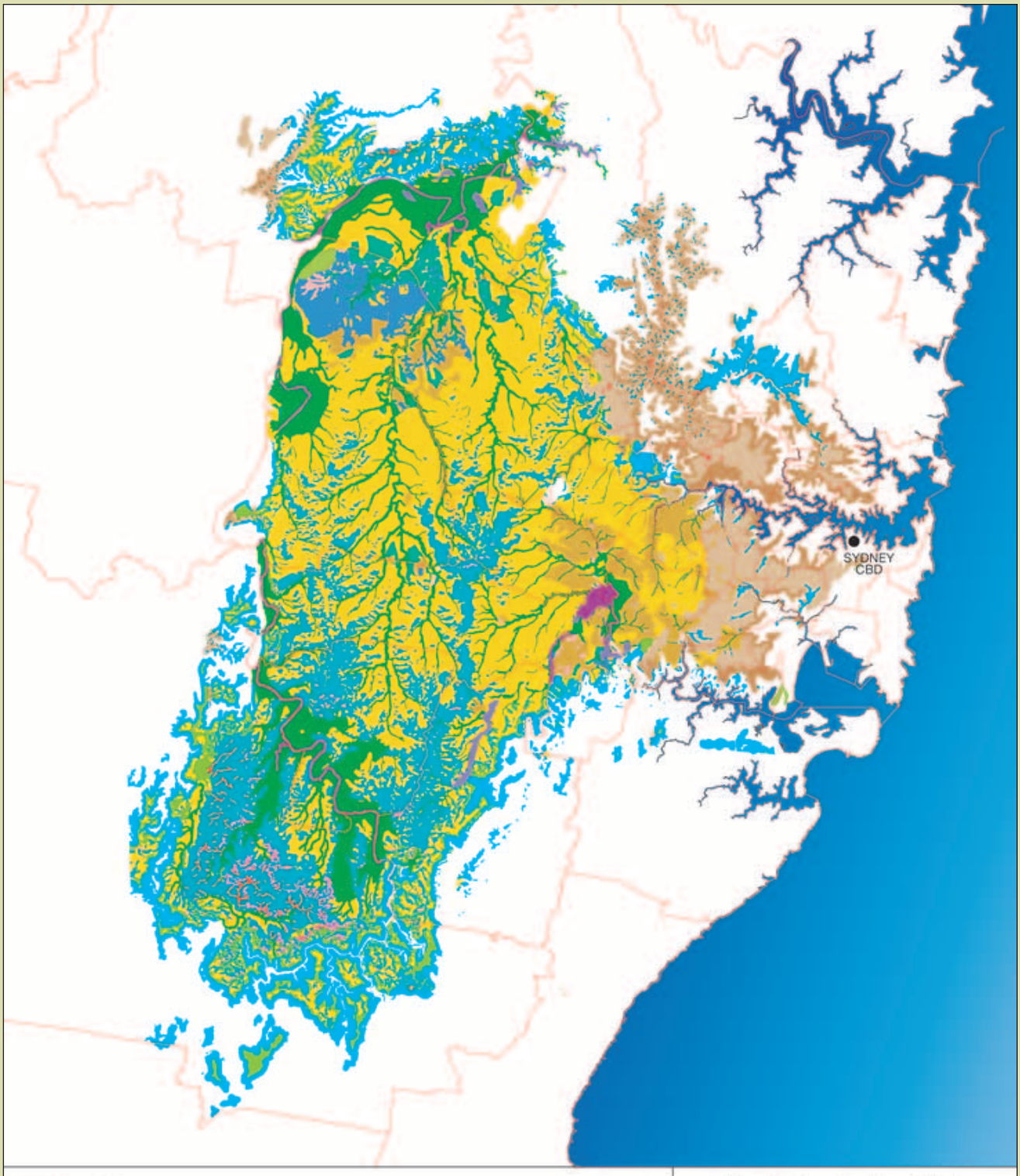
NPWS has now comprehensively mapped the plain's bushland. *Native Vegetation of the Cumberland Plain: Final Edition* was released in October 2002 and includes a series of 16 maps (a set of 15 maps at 1:25,000 scale and one at 1:100,000).

The maps identify the different ecological communities on the plain and describe the condition of its bushland.

They can assist land managers with the identification of the remnant bushland on their property. They can also be used as a tool in identifying what vegetation community would have been present in an area prior to its clearance (see Maps 2 and 3). It is essential that this publication is consulted for comprehensive information and species lists for each endangered ecological community on the Cumberland Plain.

Details on how to view or obtain the report and the maps are found in Appendix 7.

Cooks River/Castlereagh Ironbark Forest. (DEC/P. Cuneo)



Local Government Areas

Modelled pre-1750 vegetation

- Shale Sandstone Transition Forest (Low Sandstone Influence)
- Shale Sandstone Transition Forest (High Sandstone Influence)
- Cooks River/Castlereagh Ironbark Forest
- Castlereagh Swamp Woodland
- Castlereagh Scribbly Gum Woodland
- Agnes Banks Woodland
- Shale Hills Woodland
- Shale Plains Woodland
- Alluvial Woodland
- Riparian Forest
- Western Sydney Dry Rainforest
- Moist Shale Woodland
- Turpentine-Ironbark Forest
- Freshwater Wetlands
- Elderslie Banksia Scrub Forest
- Turpentine-Ironbark Margin Forest
- Shale Gravel Transition Forest
- Blue Gum High Forest

Map 2: Cumberland Plain vegetation communities before European settlement

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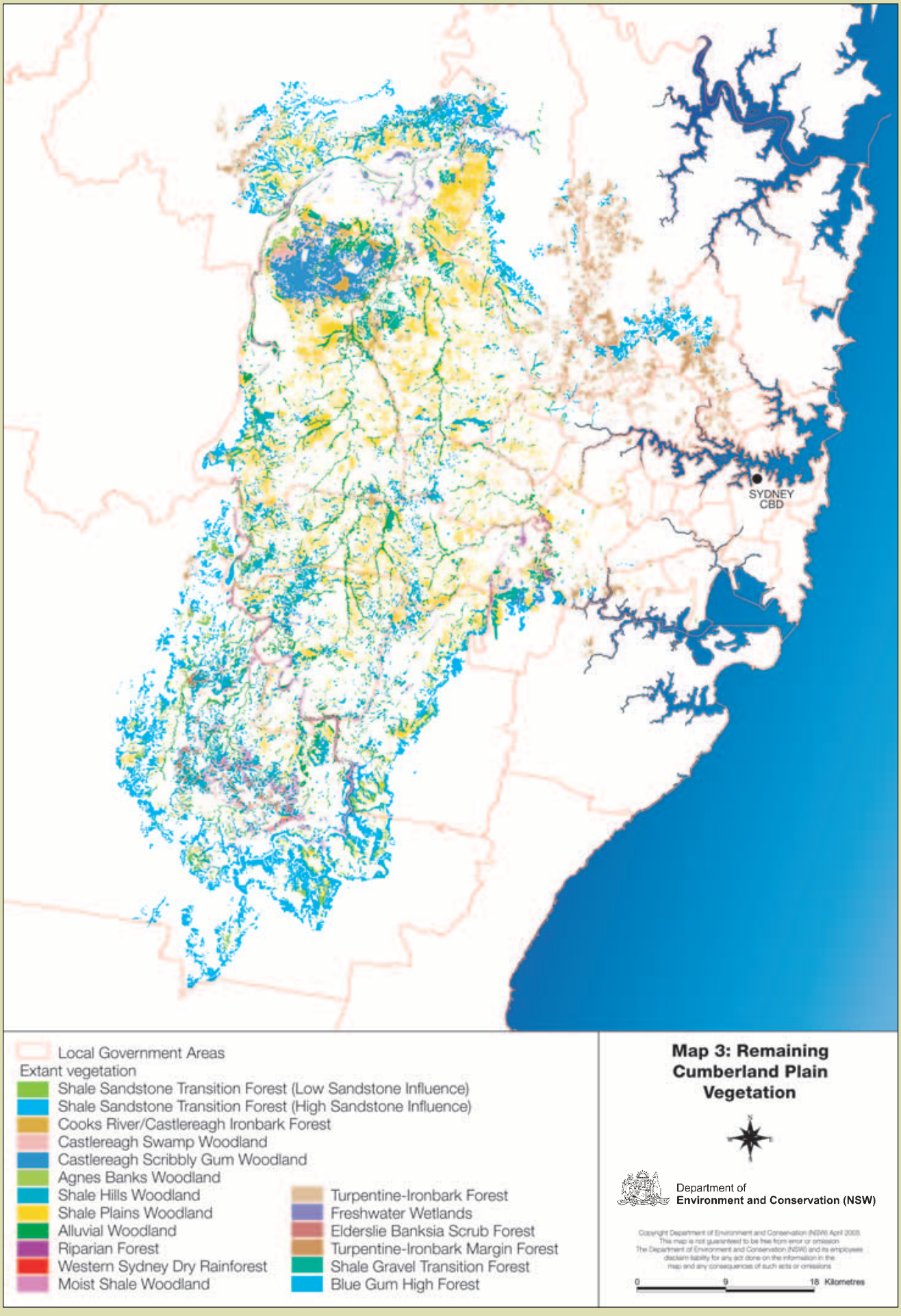
0 9 18 Kilometres


SYDNEY
CBD
Local Government Areas
Extant vegetation
Shale Sandstone Transition Forest (Low Sandstone Influence)
Shale Sandstone Transition Forest (High Sandstone Influence)
Cooks River/Castlereagh Ironbark Forest
Castlereagh Swamp Woodland
Castlereagh Scribbly Gum Woodland
Agnes Banks Woodland
Shale Hills Woodland
Shale Plains Woodland
Alluvial Woodland
Riparian Forest
Western Sydney Dry Rainforest
Moist Shale Woodland
Turpentine-Ironbark Forest
Freshwater Wetlands
Elderslie Banksia Scrub Forest
Turpentine-Ironbark Margin Forest
Shale Gravel Transition Forest
Blue Gum High Forest
Map 3: Remaining Cumberland Plain Vegetation
Department of
Environment and Conservation (NSW)
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0 9 18 Kilometres

The plant communities

'The country through which they travelled was singularly fine, level, or rising in small hills of a very pleasing and picturesque appearance. The soil excellent, except in a few small spots where it was stony. The trees growing at a distance of from 20 to 40 feet [6–12 metres] from each other, and in general entirely free from brushwood, which was confined to the stony and barren spots.'

… Governor Arthur Phillip reporting on country west of Parramatta, April 1788

Woodlands

On the heavy clay soils of the Cumberland Plain, eucalypt woodland with a grassy ground cover is the characteristic native vegetation. This contrasts with the heath, woodland and forest communities of the sandstone plateaus that ring the plain and which are characterised by a diverse, sclerophyllous (hard-leaved) shrub layer. These sandstone communities have very few species in common with the grassy woodlands of the Cumberland Plain (Tozer 2003).

Woodland covers approximately 25 per cent of Australia (see Map 4). It is the sparse foliage cover, rather than the height of the trees, which gives woodlands their characteristic appearance. Trees have well-developed crowns but tend to be well spaced with a total projected foliage cover of less than 30 per cent. Tree height ranges from about five metres to over 30 metres and the understorey is characterised by grasses, commonly *Themeda* species (Buchanan 1989).

Woodlands are found in drier areas than open forest. Generally they occupy regions that may experience extended droughts, high summer temperatures and cold frosty mornings. The soil is infertile by world standards but is not necessarily infertile in the Australian context. As a generalisation, fires are of low intensity due to the wide spacing of the trees (Buchanan 1989).

There are three main plant communities on the Cumberland Plain:

- **Cumberland Plain Woodland** is typical on heavy clay soils. This incorporates the **Shale Hills Woodland** and **Shale Plains Woodland** sub-communities.
- **Shale Sandstone Transition Forest** occurs at the edges of the Cumberland Plain where the shale-influenced soils gradually change to sandstone and includes the sub-communities with **Low Sandstone Influence** and **High Sandstone Influence**.
- **Sydney Coastal River-flat Forest** is found on the moister and the more fertile deposits along creeks and rivers and includes the sub-communities of **Alluvial Woodland** and **Riparian Forest**.

All three communities are under threat from the continuing urbanisation of Sydney.

Today the most common and widespread tree species of the Cumberland Plain are the Grey Box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*) and the Forest Red Gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*) – species dominant in the woodlands 200 years ago. The Grey Box tends to be more abundant on rises, and the Forest Red Gum on the lower slopes and depressions.

On hilly country there may also be ironbarks – commonly Narrow-leaved Ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*) or perhaps Broad-leaved Ironbark (*Eucalyptus fibrosa*), though the latter often indicates the occurrence of ironstone gravels and clays. Near creeks or on poorly drained sites, Cabbage Gum (*Eucalyptus amplifolia*), Blue Box (*Eucalyptus baueriana*), Coast Grey Gum (*Eucalyptus bosistoana*) and Broad-leaved Apple (*Angophora subvelutina*) may be found. Such sites may also have groves of Swamp Oak (*Casuarina glauca*) or the paperbark *Melaleuca decora*.

Beneath the canopy, groundcovers are highly important in contributing to the plant diversity of the woodland. Perennial herbs and grasses together account for more species than the shrub layer (Hill & French 2003). Groundcover in these Cumberland Plain Woodlands is predominantly grassy – native grasses such as *Themeda australis*, *Eragrostis leptostachya*, *Aristida ramosa* and *Aristida vagans* grow with scattered shrubs or patches of dense scrub of Blackthorn (*Bursaria spinosa*). Less common small tree and shrub species include *Acacia implexa*, *Acacia parramattensis*, *Allocasuarina torulosa*, *Clerodendrum tomentosum*, *Dillwynia sieberi*, *Indigofera australis* and *Breynia oblongifolia.*

The clearing for grazing and later for suburban development has reduced most of the woodlands of western Sydney to small remnant stands of trees, and disturbed the ground layer species and replaced them with introduced grasses, particularly Kikuyu (*Pennisetum clandestinum*). Some sites still contain good quality remnant vegetation and are of high conservation value. A list of reference sites for this project can be found in Appendix 1.

Shale communities

Communities on shale soils varied with changes in elevation, rainfall and the degree of sandstone influence in the soil.

Map 4: The current extent of woodland in Australia

Source: Buchanan (1989)

For example, increasing elevation, rainfall and ruggedness from the central Cumberland Plain to the Razorback Range at Picton sees the vegetation changing through a number of communities. **Shale Plains Woodland** is typical of the flat, low rainfall areas but grades into **Shale Hills Woodland** at higher elevations as one moves south. **Moist Shale Woodland** occurs in wetter areas, generally on the upper portion of very steep sheltered slopes, while **Western Sydney Dry Rainforest** is frequently found in sheltered gullies (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2002). An overstorey dominated by *Eucalyptus moluccana*, *E. tereticornis* or to a lesser extent *E. crebra* is typical throughout this gradient.

On the eastern extremities of the plain, Shale Plains Woodland grades into **Turpentine-Ironbark Forest** as annual rainfall exceeds 950 mm. Ascending to the Hornsby Plateau, Turpentine-Ironbark Forest grades into **Blue Gum High Forest** where rainfall is above 1050 mm. Turpentine-Ironbark Forest may be dominated by *Eucalyptus saligna* (Sydney Blue Gum) at the upper end of its rainfall/elevation range. Blue Gum High Forest is frequently dominated by *E. pilularis* gullies (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2002).

Shale sandstone transitional communities

As one approaches the margins of the plain, vegetation changes are affected by the influence of sandstone in the soil associated with the diminishing thickness of the overlying shale layer (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2002).

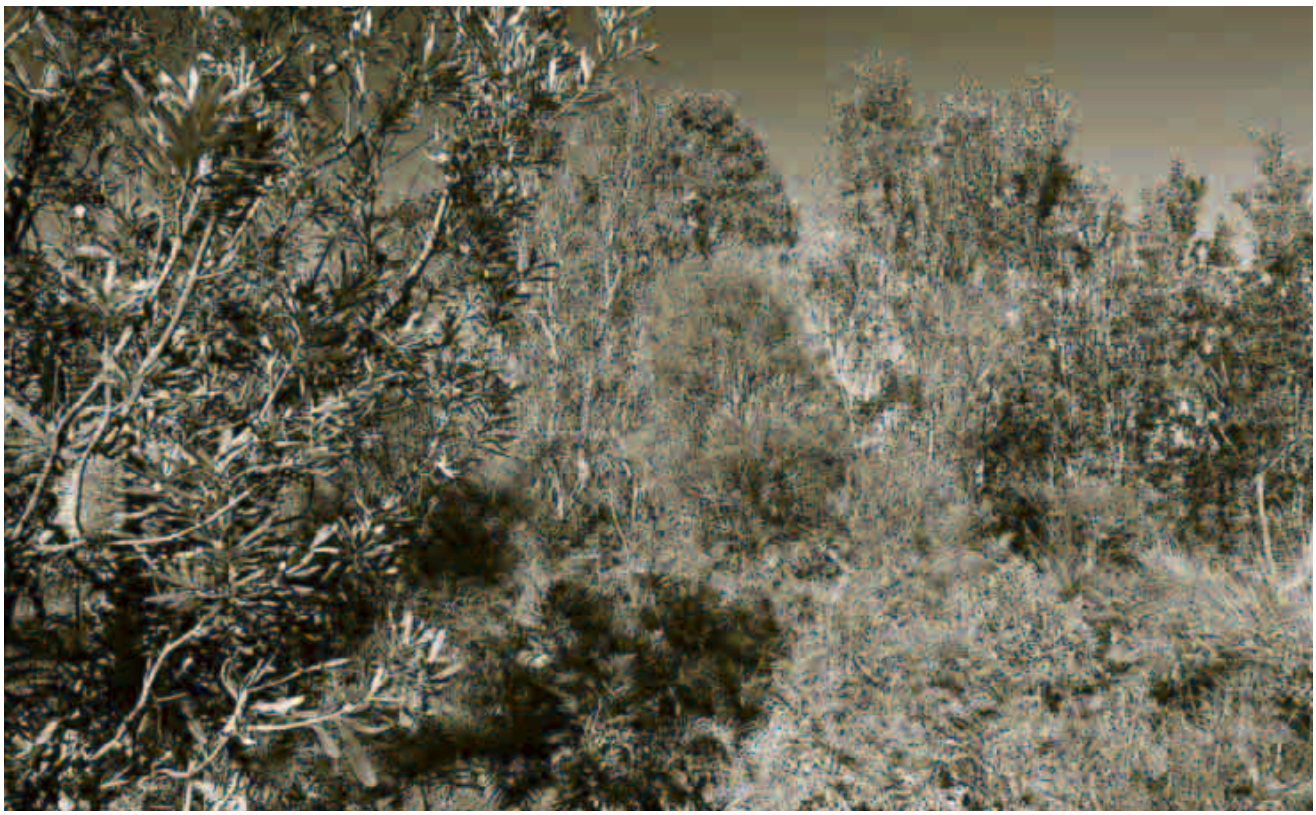
Three separate communities are recognised here. Two, in areas receiving less than 950 mm rainfall annually, reflect high and low levels of sandstone influence. These are **Shale Sandstone Transition Forest** (with **Low** and **High Sandstone Influence sub-communities**). The third community, **Turpentine-Ironbark Margin Forest** was recorded in areas of high sandstone influence and high rainfall, and was represented by sites on the edge of the Hornsby and Woronora Plateaus, and between Grose Vale and Bowen Mountain near Kurrajong. The vegetation in this community was most similar to Turpentine-Ironbark Forest. In these areas, soils derived from Wianamatta Shale are restricted to remnant caps along the sandstone ridges (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2002).

Alluvial communities

Four communities were recognised on two separate alluvial deposits in the north-west (Castlereagh) and south-east (Holsworthy) corners of the plain.

Cooks River/Castlereagh Ironbark Forest occurs on soils with a high clay content while **Castlereagh Scribbly Gum Woodland** is more common on sandy loam soils. Soils with a high clay content underlie sandier soils but are exposed through erosion, especially towards the margins of the alluvial deposits. Castlereagh Scribbly Gum Woodland thus tends to occur on slight rises in the heart of the alluvial deposits. The stand of Castlereagh Ironbark Forest in Castlereagh Nature Reserve is an exception to this rule, presumably reflecting a local occurrence of the Londonderry Clay Formation laid down in a separate depositional phase.

Elderslie Banksia Scrub Forest. (DEC/M. Cufer)



Castlereagh Swamp Woodland occurs in poorly drained depressions in both the Holsworthy and Castlereagh areas. Small aeolian (wind-blown) deposits in the vicinity of Agnes Banks support a distinct community of hard-leaved (sclerophyllous) species known as **Agnes Banks Woodland** (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2002).

On the margins of the alluvial deposits, Castlereagh Ironbark Forest grades into **Shale Gravel Transition Forest** on isolated alluvium overlying Wianamatta Shale (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2002). Unlike other transitional vegetation on the plain, such as the Shale Sandstone communities, it contains few unique species.

The rarest community on the Cumberland Plain is **Elderslie Banksia Scrub Forest** which occurs on the deep sand deposits of the old alluvial terraces of the Nepean River near Camden. Dominated by Coastal Banksia (*Banksia integrifolia* subsp. *integrifolia*) the community intergrades with Cumberland Plain Woodand and Sydney Coastal River-flat Forest. With only 13 hectares of the community remaining, it is regarded as critically endangered.

Riverside (or riparian) communities

Three communities occurred on soils of recent alluvial origin. **Riparian Forest** is confined to stream lines and adjacent swampy areas, and is most closely related to Castlereagh Swamp Woodland in terms of species composition. Riparian Forest is found within 100 metres of the Hawkesbury–Nepean and Georges Rivers and their major tributaries.

Alluvial Woodland is found on major floodplains more than 100 metres from the river (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 1997). Toward the edge of the floodplain Alluvial Woodland grades into **Shale Plains Woodland** (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2002) (see Figure 1).

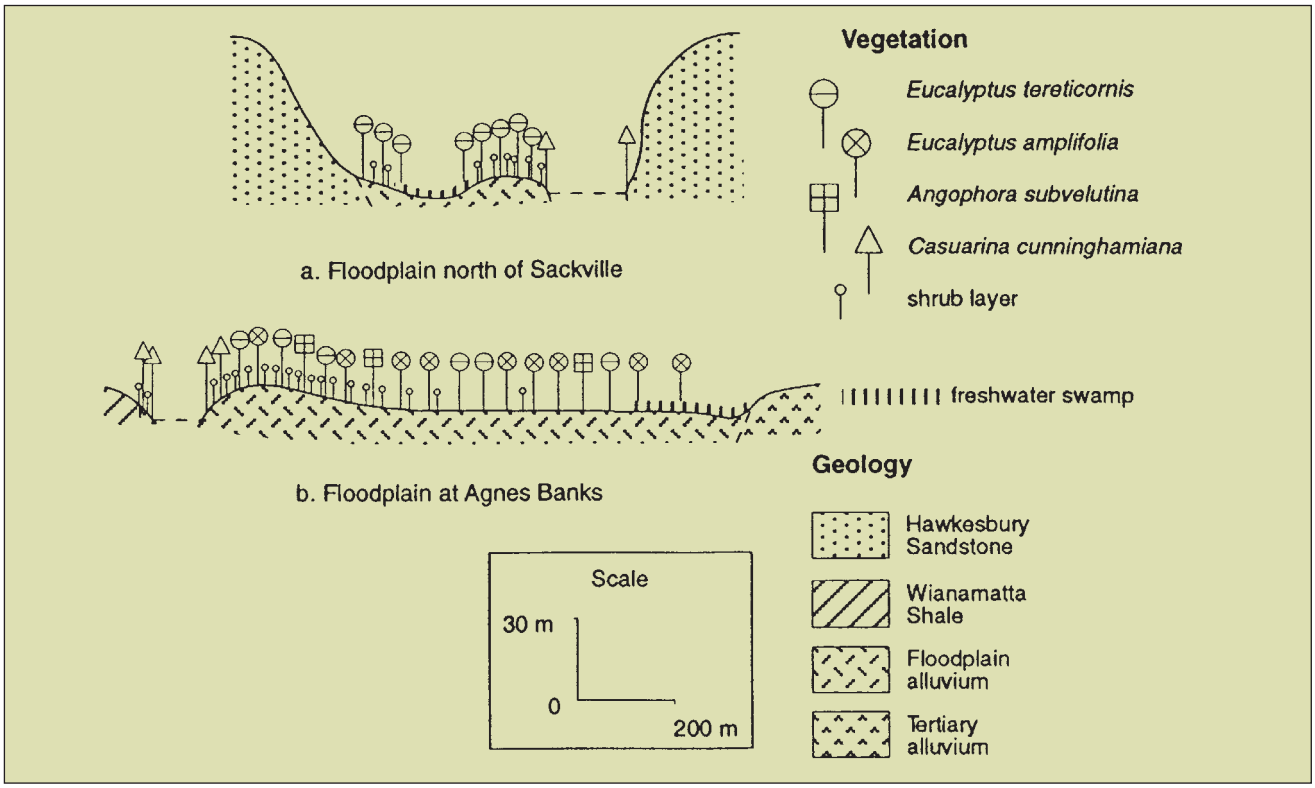
Other communities

Apart from the 12 endangered communities listed in Table 1, another 10 ecological communities are found on the Cumberland Plain:

- Castlereagh Scribbly Gum Woodland
- Sandstone Ridgetop Woodland
- Upper Georges River Sandstone Woodland
- Western Sandstone Gully Forest
- Mangrove/Saltmarsh Complex
- Riparian Scrub
- Freshwater Wetlands
- Eastern Gully Forest
- Woodland Heath Complex
- Vegetation of Volcanic Substrates.

In this publication we have concentrated on the endangered communities as they are the most urgently in need of restoration. For more details on the non-endangered communities, including a comprehensive description of each community with species lists, see the Interpretation Guidelines contained in *Native Vegetation of the Cumberland Plain: Final Edition* published by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service in 2002. Details on how to view or obtain this report and the maps are found in Appendix 7.

Figure 1: Cross-sections of the Hawkesbury–Nepean River at different locations showing development of narrow and broad floodplains for (a) sandstone and (b) shale topographies



Source: Howell & Benson (2000)

Species richness

The known flora of the Cumberland Plain has been estimated in a survey by James *et al*. (1999) at approximately 800 species. Further research by Tozer (2003) recorded some 831 native species.

Species richness varies considerably between communities from an average of 6.3 species (per 20-metre x 20-metre plot) recorded for Mangrove/Saltmarsh Complex to 51.0 species (per plot) recorded on average in Turpentine-Ironbark Margin Forest (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2002).

As one moves from the centre to the margins of the Cumberland Plain, species richness tends to increase. Communities on shale-derived soils generally recorded fewer species per sample than shale sandstone transitional areas, which in turn have fewer species than communities on sandstone (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2002).

Sydney Coastal River-flat Forest communities on alluvial soils tend to be slightly less rich than the surrounding shale communities (French *et al.* 2000). Communities on Tertiary alluvium (Cooks River/Castlereagh Ironbark Forest, Castlereagh Swamp Woodland and Shale Gravel Transition Forest) have moderate species numbers, with more species recorded on sandy soils than clay/loam soils (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2002).

The highest number of species recorded in any community was 359, in Shale Sandstone Transition Forest (High Sandstone Influence). This assemblage also contained a large number of species not recorded in other communities (24). On the other hand, communities with few unique species were Shale Gravel Transition Forest, Turpentine-Ironbark Margin Forest and Moist Shale Woodland (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2002).

Weeds

A total of 220 exotic species were recorded in Tozer's 2003 research. Weed species were most common at sites with alluvial soils, less common on soils derived from Wianamatta Shale, and least common at sites with soil derived from sandstone or Tertiary alluvium.

The most commonly recorded exotic species are *Senecio madagascariensis* (Fireweed), *Cirsium vulgare* (Spear Thistle), *Hypochaeris radicata* (Cat's Ear), *Olea europaea* subsp. *africana* (African Olive), *Setaria gracilis* (Pigeon Grass), *Plantago lanceolata* (Plaintain), *Sida rhombifolia* (Paddy's Lucerne), *Myrsiphyllum asparagoides* (Bridal Creeper) and *Sonchus oleraceus* (Sow Thistle) (Tozer 2003).

Cumberland Plain Woodland. (DEC/J. Plaza)

Cumberland Plain Recovery Plan

In order to 'recover' the endangered ecological communities of the Cumberland Plain, the Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW) is preparing a plan that aims to halt the loss of biodiversity and achieve a net gain in the extent and condition of native bushland. Elements of the plan include:

- **Land-use planning –** The plan will identify the need to work towards conservation through the land-use planning system, by identifying areas required for conservation up-front in land-use planning decisions.
- **Reservation and acquisition of open space –** The plan will identify the need for the continued development of a network of protected areas, such as national parks, council reserves, or private lands under a conservation agreement. Western Sydney already has 18 national parks, nature reserves and regional parks, and five additions to this network are currently proposed.

Blue Gum High Forest. (DEC/M. Cufer)

- **Land management –** The plan will advocate the use of 'best practice' standards by which conservation lands are to be managed. Standards will cover such things as bush regeneration, seed collection, replanting and ecological fire management.
- **Promoting community involvement –** The Cumberland Plain's endangered ecological communities are largely on private land. This means that it is crucial to the success of the plan that the community has an awareness and understanding of the issues it addresses, and is involved in its implementation.
- **Research –** The plan will set research priorities to increase our ecological knowledge of the endangered ecological communities.

The first step in preparing the plan was the mapping of all the bushland of the Cumberland Plain. This was completed in 2002, providing up-to-date information on the distribution and condition of these ecological communities. The maps, reports and interpretive guidelines for this mapping project can be viewed on DEC's website at www.environment.nsw.gov.au under the title: *Cumberland Plain Vegetation Mapping Project*. See also Appendix 7 for details on how to obtain the report and the maps.

This publication will address one of the key actions identified in the plan by setting best practice standards by which conservation lands are to be managed. These standards cover, among other things, bush regeneration, seed collection, revegetation activities and ecological fire management. The standards will aid land managers not only in decisions about which sites to protect or restabilise, but in providing information on how to assess a site's condition and in determining which restoration management options are available.

CHAPTER 2

Guidelines for managing native vegetation

Protecting remnants is the top priority 16
Retain, protect and manage 16

How Cumberland Plain bushland becomes degraded 17
Clearing for development 17
Grazing and mowing 17
Water pollution, sedimentation and increased nutrient loads 17
Weed invasion 18
Inappropriate fire regimes 18
Erosion 18
Salinity 18
Soil compaction 20
Dieback 20
Acidity 20
Other threats 20

Managing riverside bushland 21
Management techniques 21
Guidelines for buffer zones around wetlands and riparian habitats 22

Bringing back native animals 23
Birds as indicator species 23

Where to protect or plant native vegetation 25
Identifying good quality bushland 25
Options for protection and expansion of good quality bushland 25

Protecting remnants is the top priority

More than three-quarters of the endangered bushland of the Cumberland Plain is in private ownership. The full ecological diversity of the plain's plant and animal communities cannot be included in public reserves, as the acquisition resources available to do this are limited. Therefore if we are to protect a representative example of this diversity we need to manage it as a conservation network across the landscape, with private holdings of endangered bushland making a significant contribution to the recovery of the plain's biodiversity.

As many of the threatened species in western Sydney are not adequately protected in formal conservation reserves, smaller parks and reserves maintained by local councils, land held by institutions and service authorities, and areas of remnant vegetation along railways, roads, in cemeteries and along creeks are of great significance. It is important that these patches of bushland are properly protected and managed to complement the formal network of public reserves. Local people and councils have a key role to play in ensuring the conservation of western Sydney's bushland (Benson 1992b).

Restoration of native ecosystems is now a widely recognised imperative for both nature conservation and sustainable production. In 2000–01 the Australian Government spent $36.4 million of its Bushcare Program funds on community grants for 'practical on-ground works' to re-establish and protect native vegetation, provide habitat for wildlife and rehabilitate degraded lands (Environment Australia 1999).

However, the ecological outcomes of projects aimed at restoring degraded lands have rarely been assessed. A recent study by Wilkins *et al*. (2003) developed scientific approaches to measuring the ecological success of restoration projects.

The Short-beaked Echidna is an egg-laying mammal or monotreme found all over Australia, though it is not as common on the Cumberland Plain as it once was. (DEC/P. Sherratt)

The study showed that progress in restoring sites towards a state resembling remnant sites is very slow. The time required for restored sites to match the target state of a remnant community may be many decades with a risk that the desired end point may never be reached (Wilkins *et al*. 2003). The findings indicate that a much higher premium needs to be placed on *retaining* native ecosystems wherever possible, as these bushland communities are not easily replaced.

In most circumstances, the biodiversity benefits of protecting and enhancing existing native vegetation far outweigh those of establishing new vegetation in previously cleared areas. For instance, the habitat resources associated with older trees that contain hollows for nesting and breeding, sites for roosting and large amounts of bark for feeding by insectivorous birds will not be available in revegetation works until they are well established and possibly hundreds of years old.

Stands of remnant vegetation also contain many different habitat components, which may include dead or hollow trees, fallen logs, a groundcover of native grasses and sedges, watercourses or damp areas, rocks, understorey shrubs, and leaf litter. Although many of these features are often present naturally in remnants of native vegetation, it is difficult to recreate such a diversity of habitat features in revegetation works.

Retain, protect and manage

In the conservation of existing remnant vegetation there are three key steps to better management.

First, it is critical to **retain all existing native vegetation where possible**.

Second, **protect any retained native vegetation** from further degradation by fencing it so that it can be managed as a separate unit. Where possible consolidate areas of native vegetation either by fencing small areas together and allowing the gaps between them to regenerate, or by linking remnants through targeted revegetation works (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003a).

Finally, actively **manage all retained and protected native vegetation**. Active management should include activities to suppress weeds, control feral animals and encourage regeneration of native plants. It may also include the linking of remnant vegetation by corridors, increasing the size of remnants through the planting of local native species or the planting of supplementary understorey and groundcover species (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003a).

Options for determining what active management your remnant vegetation requires are outlined in subsequent chapters.

How Cumberland Plain bushland becomes degraded

When listing the Cumberland Plain endangered ecological communities in the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*, the NSW Scientific Committee (an independent group of scientists appointed by the Minister for the Environment) detailed the processes that continue to threaten them. These included:

- clearing for development and subsequent fragmentation
- grazing and mowing
- water pollution, sedimentation and increased nutrient loads
- weed invasion
- inappropriate fire regimes.

These processes need to be addressed before 'recovery' of these communities can be achieved. Described below are some of the principal manifestations of land degradation, with some possible options and strategies for their reversal.

Clearing for development

Clearing in the Cumberland Plain has occurred over many years and continues to occur for a range of rural, residential, industrial and extractive developments. Clearing has led to fragmentation of the landscape, resulting in increasingly isolated small remnants that are more vulnerable to impacts, provide less and less habitat, and support fewer species. The more fragmented a landscape is, the more difficult it is to successfully manage it as a network across the landscape (Major *et al*. 1999; Smith *et al.* 2000). It is extremely important that these remnants are retained and efforts made to link them across the landscape.

Grazing and mowing

Grazing and mowing can suppress the regrowth of native plants, thus stopping the plant community from fully regenerating. Agriculture is an established and legitimate land use on the Cumberland Plain, and agriculture and conservation can co-exist. However, grazing does impact on endangered ecological communities if stock are allowed to enter bushland remnants and graze uncontrolled on native plants. Initial exclusion of grazing animals from these remnants followed by controlled access provides the opportunity for recovery and regeneration.

Mowing is common practice in many council parks and reserves adjoining bushland. Such mowing may encroach on the bushland and contribute to the increased susceptibility of the bush perimeter to pest and weed invasion (known as 'edge' effects). Regular mowing can also deplete the native soil seed bank (James 1994; Lunt 1991). Trials in parks that have been mown for many years have shown that when mowing stops, regeneration of native species can occur (McDonald 1996; James 1994).

In Observatory Park, Pennant Hills a halt to mowing in combination with weed removal allowed the near trebling of native species from 46 to 126 over a ten year period. These results show the extent of recovery possible in bushland with good resilience when mowing ceases (Lewis 2001). Further, less frequent mowing following a mosaic regime where selected areas are mowed at different frequencies and/or heights has been successfully trialled in areas of high fire risk. Close observation of the previously mown area at different times of the year is required to reveal if regeneration is occurring. This action should be supported by follow-up weed control and education of maintenance staff.

Native grasses which can be grown in Cumberland Plain parkland and recreation areas include *Themeda australis* (Kangaroo Grass), *Bothriochloa macra* (Redleg Grass) and *Danthonia* spp. (Wallaby Grass). Stuwe (1981), as cited in Wheeler *et al*. (2002), suggests that in more intensively used areas such as lawns, *Microlaena stipoides* (Weeping Grass) may be successful. Research is currently underway on the use of *M. stipoides* as a pasture crop and as turf in gardens and public recreational areas. It provides an attractive groundcover and has high nutrient value in all seasons. Growing local native grasses in parks and recreation areas means using less water, no fertilisers and lower maintenance.

Water pollution, sedimentation and increased nutrient loads

Urban development leads to 'site hardening', where ground surfaces are covered with buildings, roads and car parks. This results in a large proportion of rainwater being forced into road and stormwater drains rather than being absorbed into the ground. These waters are known as urban runoff, and much of it ends up flowing either overland or via creeks and rivers through bushland. This water usually carries increased sediment and nutrients which, along with the excess water, impact on the bush by encouraging weed invasion and soil erosion.

Active management of riverside (riparian) areas requires a raised community awareness on threats to the bushland within each catchment. Local councils can also play a key role in establishing appropriate planning frameworks to control these urban impacts.

Weed invasion

As an island continent, Australia has been relatively isolated from the rest of the world, and is particularly vulnerable to the introduction of exotic plants, animals and microbes. In Australia, many exotic species have become established over the last 200 years and more are still arriving (State of the Environment Advisory Council 1996).

Along with the clearing of native vegetation, weed invasion is one of the more obvious impacts on remnant bushland. Weeds are able to invade as a result of other impacts on bushland such as:

- soil disturbance through earth moving, land clearing and track encroachment
- increased water from urban runoff and the subsequent increase in nutrients and changes in soil properties
- the presence of very competitive weed species that were not present before European settlement, and the success with which the weeds are being dispersed.

The characteristics of a grassy understorey, relatively fertile soils and past land uses make many of the Cumberland Plain plant communities highly vulnerable to weed invasion. Weeds such as African Lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*), Rhodes Grass (*Chloris virgata*), Bridal Veil Creeper (*Myrsiphyllum asparagoides*), Paddy's Lucerne (*Sida rhombifolia*), African Olive (*Olea europaea* subsp. *africana*) and Boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*), have been able to establish widely. Broad-leafed and Small-leaf Privet (*Ligustrum lucidum* and *L. sinense*) have also infested wetter riparian areas.

Weeds can occur in densities that displace native plants and lead to a decline in native species diversity and regenerative capacity (Benson 1992a). An active management program to suppress weeds and encourage regeneration of native plants should be implemented in those areas severely modified by weed invasion.

Inappropriate fire regimes

Due to its urban setting, arson is a major problem in the bushland remnants of western Sydney and this has a significant effect on the bush which has evolved over thousands of years in tandem with a certain pattern of fire known as a 'fire regime'. The key factors of a fire regime include fire frequency, seasonality and intensity. The high frequency of arson generally disrupts this regime, and the impacts of an inappropriate fire regime on plants and animals can be so severe that it leads to local extinctions (Bradstock & Auld 1995; Thomas 1994). On the other hand, total exclusion of fire can also have a significant negative effect on bushland.

All bushland managers should use fire in their management strategies. The greatest species diversity is maintained by using fire regimes that encourage variation. Variation in the length of inter-fire intervals (within thresholds), in fire intensity, and in season of burn (between August and January) provide the best results for biodiversity management. For detailed information on the recommended fire regimes for the Cumberland Plain see the section on 'triggers' in Chapter 4.

Erosion

Lack of protective plant cover is the prime cause of soil erosion by wind and water. Water erosion washes away soil, nutrients, seed and seedlings. Drought, overcropping and overgrazing by stock and rabbits, followed by high winds, may result in significant soil losses and more difficult conditions for seedling establishment.

Grazing has its own specific problems and damage tends to increase with grazing intensity. Packer (1988), as cited in NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation (2000), concluded that compaction of soils, particularly medium to fine-textured moister soils such as clays, resulted from livestock traffic on virtually all grazed lands. Since such compaction leads to reduced water infiltration rates and increased runoff, grazed plots are frequently found to yield more sediment than ungrazed equivalents.

Wind speed and hence wind erosion also tends to be higher for areas with grass cover than for areas with taller vegetation. Conacher & Conacher (1995), as cited in NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation (2000), estimated that approximately one tonne per hectare per year under pasture would be lost to erosion. This figure, however, may be as high as 50 tonnes per hectare per year under various cropping systems and up to 100 tonnes per hectare per year from bare fallow land.

The best way to minimise the risk of erosion is to disturb the land surface as little as possible. Declining rates of erosion in the latter half of the 20th century were indicated by Wasson & Galloway (1984) and Condon (1986), as cited in NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation (2000), and attributed largely to reduced stocking rates and improved methods of land management, including minimum tillage.

Vegetation can play a role in erosion control through bank stabilisation and sediment control, particularly where the vegetation includes a dense covering of substantial, well-established trees, shrubs and groundcovers. A major geomorphological study of the Hawkesbury–Nepean River found a direct correlation between density of vegetation (tree) coverage on the banks and long-term erosion minimisation. The majority of the eroding banks were sparsely vegetated, while most stable banks were densely vegetated (Benson & Howell 1993).

Salinity

About a third of Australia's soils are affected by salt. Before European settlement, the non-arid areas of Australia appear to have been dominated by mixtures of perennial woody trees and shrubs, and perennial and annual herbaceous species (Oxley 1820 and Cunningham 1824, as cited in NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation 2000). These communities appear to have efficiently utilised available water, and water added to the surface through rainfall was largely taken up in plant growth. Watertables would thus have remained largely below the root zone (NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation 2000).

Salinity poses a significant threat to the endangered ecological communities of western Sydney. A report on the South Creek catchment (NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation 1997) found that 7 per cent of the catchment (4518 hectares) showed signs of being affected by soil salinity and 30 per cent (19,015 hectares) had the potential to become salt-affected.

Salinity occurs in two forms: dryland and irrigation salinity. **Dryland salinity** is caused by reduced transpiration from introduced vegetation where deep-rooted native trees and perennial grasses have been replaced by seasonal crops or grasses that do not transfer water from the soil into the atmosphere as efficiently. Timber clearing in the upper part of a catchment, particularly in recharge zones (areas where the watertable is topped up by rainfall), has resulted in more water entering and dramatically raising the underground watertable (Figure 2). Salts from rock and soils are then dissolved and taken to the surface. The addition of salts into the root zone will eventually kill most vegetation (Buchanan 1989).

Irrigation salinity occurs when the watertable is raised by adding more water to the land (via irrigation) than can be used by the crop or pasture. The rising watertable brings to the surface dissolved salts from within the solid profile (Wakefield 1989).

Prevention and control

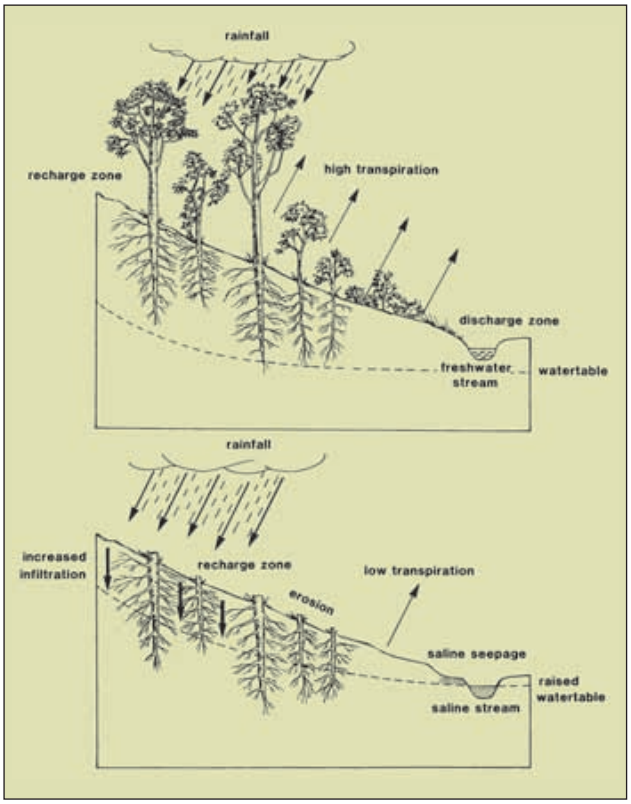
Prevention and control of salinity involves effective water use in the catchment. First, the re-establishment of a good cover of trees on the hillsides (recharge zones) is required to pump water back into the atmosphere through transpiration. Second, vegetation should be planted along the lower slopes and creeks (discharge zones) (Garrett 1993).

Effective activities recommended for reducing and avoiding salt degradation include:

- establishing 30 per cent tree cover in upper catchments (recharge zones), while ensuring a green community is established along the lower slopes and creeks (discharge zones) (Zhang et *al.* 1999)
- preventing soil erosion and particularly keeping stock away from fragile salt-prone areas
- avoiding the development of land with potential salinity problems, particularly the establishment of intensive irrigation in salt-prone areas
- improving farm layouts and growing crops which are more tolerant and less harmful to saline-prone lands
- avoiding excessive use of irrigation water which raises the watertable and brings subterranean salt to the surface
- protecting the big trees which most effectively keep watertables low.

Effective management of saline-affected scalds and discharge areas involves the establishment of salt-tolerant native vegetation, especially on bare areas. Such vegetation limits surface evaporation, promotes water use and leads to leaching of salt lower in the soil profile.

Figure 2: Removing trees causes the watertable to rise and brings dissolved salts closer to the surface



Source: Buchanan (1989)

To vegetate these areas:

- the salt area may need to be fenced to control livestock movement
- trees may be planted along the break of the slope just above the salt outbreak to intercept the water
- extremely scalded areas may need to be covered with old straw or manure to reduce erosion and evaporation
- graded banks may be needed above the site to divert runoff water and control erosion, as it is important that a spillway does not drop water back onto a site that may erode.

Another method to control rising watertables is the strategic placement of tree belts in the landscape to intercept and reduce downslope discharge. Tree belts should be established perpendicular to the flow direction of groundwater systems and planted at the boundary between recharge and discharge zones (e.g. break of slope) (Silberstein *et al.* 2002). For sites that have the specific purpose of acting as a salinity interception belt, the minimum width recommended is 50 metres. With rows spaced five metres apart, this equates to at least ten rows across the belt width.

In both the interceptor belts and recharge areas, it is likely that local native species will be suitable for use in plantings. In areas of groundwater discharge, however, sites are likely to be waterlogged and/or saline and, depending on the salt concentration in the soil, these sites may need to be planted with species that can tolerate waterlogged and saline environments.

Tip:

For more information on the areas in western Sydney potentially affected by salinity, go to the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) website at www.wsroc.com.au

The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources has also produced a document in a series titled *Local Government Salinity Initiative*. Visit their website at www.dipnr.nsw.gov.au for details.

For more information about salinity issues, control and prevention contact the NSW Department of Primary Industries on (02) 6391 3100.

Soil compaction

A compacted soil is one in which aeration is poor and water infiltration is slow, resulting in poor growing conditions. Compacted soils on the Cumberland Plain have been caused by:

- the displacement of soft-pawed native animals by hard-hoofed cattle and sheep
- the successive tilling of the soil
- the introduction of farm machinery.

Natural regeneration will take years in severely compacted soils, so intervention is usually required (Buchanan 1989).

Spelling the land and introducing organic matter will ease the compaction problem. Ripping is generally not recommended on the easily dispersible soils of the Cumberland Plain and should only be considered in cases where compaction is severe. Ripping compacted areas to a depth of 20 to 50 centimetres is recommended, and in severely affected areas (former carparks and roads) deep ripping up to a maximum of 80 centimetres may be appropriate.

Paddock eucalypts showing signs of dieback. (DEC)

Dieback

Dieback occurs when trees die or lose condition prematurely and often rapidly. The causes of dieback are complex and vary in importance from region to region. It is common in rural areas, where it appears to be linked with land-use practices (Heatwole & Lowman 1986 and Beckmann 1990, as cited in NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation 2000).

Direct causes include chronic insect infestations, increased salinity, waterlogging, lack of water along inland streams, and prolonged inundation due to river regulation. At a more local scale, tree deaths can result from fungal diseases, mistletoes, herbicide spray drift or spillage in waterways, girdling of trees by livestock, earthmoving, fire, frost, wind pruning, hail and self-thinning in dense regrowth stands.

Survival of eucalypt seedlings is minimal under most current grazing and agricultural regimes, so paddock trees are not being replaced when they are lost (Wilson 1990). Measures that can encourage recruitment and reduce dieback among paddock trees in grazed and cultivated areas include:

- control of stock movements
- periodic reductions in stocking rates
- temporary or permanent fencing around paddock trees
- minimising herbicide drift.

Successful regeneration only needs to take place in a particular paddock or stand once every 50 to 100 years, so farmers may only need to remove stock for two years over this period to allow seedlings to establish.

Acidity

Increased soil acidity has been observed where native vegetation has been cleared and replaced with improved pasture. Causes are thought to include intense grazing and removal of nutrients by crops or livestock, combined with fertilisation, increased soil organic matter and the addition of nitrate by leguminous plants, which leaches readily with an acidifying effect. Acidity can reduce agricultural yields by up to 50 per cent.

Acidification progresses more slowly where an adequate cover of native, deep-rooted perennial pasture is retained since this recycles calcium more effectively to the soil surface. Surface acidification has also been overcome by applying lime. More recently, it has been suggested that tree planting might reduce soil acidification and the restoration of native vegetation may also offer some potential to limit this damaging process.

Other threats

Other common threatening processes are impacts from trail bikes and four-wheel drives, rubbish dumping and the presence of feral animals, such as rabbits, hares and foxes.

Managing riverside bushland

Riverside (riparian) land includes the often highly productive areas adjacent to rivers, creeks, wetlands and dams. As a result, the land is often heavily cleared and used intensively. Thus the productivity of this land also makes it vulnerable to overuse and to practices which cause degradation.

Over-clearing and intensive use of riparian lands result in more water moving quickly off the surface in times of heavy rain, leading to flooding, stripping of topsoil and accelerated erosion of the banks of rivers, creeks and dams.

Muddy water, salinity and water contaminated with animal manure or chemicals are becoming increasingly common across the country. Algal blooms in rivers and dams, corroded hot water systems, poor herbicide performance and poor animal growth rates are some of the signs of poor water quality.

Early agricultural practice on the Cumberland Plain led to clearing of the immediate riverbanks. The damaging effects of this clearing were recognised early. Governor King at the beginning of the 19th century identified flooding problems associated with removal of riparian vegetation, prohibited the removal of trees and shrubs from the riverbanks, and issued orders for replanting (Benson & Howell 1993). But King's demands went largely unheeded and by 1803 the riparian vegetation along the Hawkesbury had essentially been lost.

Management techniques

It is estimated that at least $50 million is spent each year on preventing or remediating streambank erosion. Given these costs, it is not surprising that there is a rapidly growing interest in techniques to help stabilise streams and their banks. Maintaining healthy riparian vegetation is one technique that can provide relatively cheap and long-term stability.

Apart from retaining riparian vegetation, the key specific measures which should be used to rehabilitate and maintain riparian lands are revegetation of degraded riparian areas and managing access (Garrett 1993).

Revegetation

Replanting of deep-rooted native species indigenous to the area can help stabilise and protect riverbanks in times of flood, and help lower watertables. Good management of riparian land will also decrease the amount of soil and nutrients lost from the land during heavy rainfall.

Recent studies in Australia have shown that both natural vegetation and grassy filter strips can trap around 90 per cent of the sediment moving from upslope. These buffer zones are also effective in trapping and absorbing nutrients. By trapping these sediments and nutrients, water quality in rivers, creeks, wetlands and dams will be significantly improved.

Dam and wetland inflow areas should be well vegetated with local native sedges, grasses, shrubs and trees to act as a filter zone. If stock access is a problem, the area must be fenced to allow vegetation to become established and, once established, only selectively grazed (Hawkesbury–Nepean Catchment Management Trust 1996).

Buffer strips can also control levels of bacteria in runoff, and riparian vegetation has been recommended as a worthwhile additional defence barrier against peak microbial loading for watercourses after rainfall (McNeill 1992). Trees near the water will provide shade and help to reduce evaporation and the risk of unwanted water weeds and algal growth (Hawkesbury–Nepean Catchment Management Trust 1996).

Good management of riparian lands can provide multiple benefits. As well as managing runoff, minimising erosion and improving water quality, buffer zones act as windbreaks and shelterbelts for livestock and crops and provide corridors for wildlife movement.

In some farming areas, controlling the timing, duration and intensity of stock grazing may be all that is required to enable healthy riparian vegetation to re-establish. However if the site is isolated from natural seed sources, deliberate replanting of local indigenous species may be necessary. In difficult situations of active bank erosion, special works such as bank regrading to stabilise the soil surface may need to be considered.

The use of native long-stem tubestock has been trialled as an alternative to the use of willow for controlling streambank erosion, and has proved quite successful on the Hawkesbury–Nepean River. Long-stem tubestock has been found to have higher survival and growth rates than normal tubestock, and requires little follow-up care and maintenance. Its advantage is that rapid growth rates and root development at depth result in more rapid soil stabilisation than standard tubestock (Hicks *et al*. 1999). Consideration of its use in restoration projects where the potential for bank erosion is high may be an option.

In planning a revegetation project on riparian lands it is important to put the right species in the right places, as species naturally found along the top of the banks will often not grow satisfactorily further down the slope. Under natural conditions, healthy riparian vegetation contains a range of species, and these natural conditions should be mimicked in any revegetation program. Plantings should include native sedges, grasses, herbs, shrubs and trees.

The NPWS report *Native Vegetation of the Cumberland Plain: Final Edition* (2002) should be consulted for detailed information and species lists for riparian communities. See Appendix 7 for more details.

Stream debris

In the past many river management groups and land managers have assumed that any large woody debris within streams had a substantial role in increasing erosion. Today however, actions such as de-snagging, removing bank vegetation and river straightening as part of 'river improvement' programs are seen as ill-conceived and destructive to biodiversity and river health (Benson & Howell 1993).

Research in Victoria suggests that snags dragged back against the bank at an angle to the streambank of 20–40 degrees have little effect on diverting water flow onto the banks. Even where the angle of debris is greater than 40 degrees, careful consideration to their lopping or reorientation should be considered as an alternative to its removal. Your local council should be contacted to see if approval is needed for this activity. Another general rule of thumb is that large logs or living vegetation within a stream channel will have a measurable influence on flow rates only if they occupy more than 10 per cent of the cross-sectional area of the channel.

Guidelines for buffer zones around wetlands and riparian habitats

Various studies with relevance in the Hawkesbury–Nepean catchment have produced recommendations on the width of vegetated riparian strips. Recommended widths range from 30 up to 100 metres depending on size of watercourse, prevailing land use and intended function of the riparian strip (Barling & Moore 1992; Riding & Carter 1992).

Benson & Howell (1993) recommended protection of all remnant native vegetation and remnant native trees along the Hawkesbury–Nepean River and its tributaries, with the long-term aim of establishing a 50-metre-wide strip of riparian vegetation on each bank along the full length of the river system. This vegetation should also be linked with the riparian vegetation found along the tributary creeks, with the ultimate aim of forming a network of indigenous vegetation along all watercourses in the Hawkesbury–Nepean catchment. Linkages should also be made with other areas of natural vegetation to include habitats additional to those along watercourses (Benson & Howell 1993).

Terrestrial habitats surrounding wetlands and riparian zones are critical for the management of water and wildlife resources. These areas provide physical and chemical filtration processes that protect water from siltation and pollution from human activities such as agriculture and urban development (Semlitsch & Bodie 2003). It is recommended that the terrestrial buffers or riparian strips on each side of the waterway should be between 30 and 50 metres wide for creeks and between 50 and 100 metres for the Hawkesbury–Nepean River. Such buffers will effectively protect water and wildlife resources.

However, for those land managers who are managing riparian areas specifically for amphibians and reptiles, recent studies have shown that the core terrestrial habitat range (from the edge of the river or wetland) is about 160 to 290 metres for amphibians and 120 to 290 metres for reptiles (Semlitsch & Bodie 2003).

Good management of riparian areas has many benefits including improved water quality and habitat for native fauna. (DEC/P. Matthew)

Bringing back native animals

The Urban Bushland Biodiversity Survey undertaken by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service in 1997 indicated that while 62 species of mammals were known to exist in western Sydney at European settlement, only 15 are now considered to have stable populations in the region. Six were irregularly seen or extinct and 25 species are listed as endangered or vulnerable. The decline in mammal species has been attributed to extensive degradation of the environment.

The real loss from the Cumberland Plain has been those mammals under 5.5 kg, especially ground-dwelling marsupials like the Long-nosed Potoroo, bandicoots, antechinus and arboreal mammals such as gliders and the Brush-tailed Phascogale. These animals generally have high food requirements, necessitating movement between bush remnants which exposed them to predation by cats and foxes. In a recent study by the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation over approximately 12,000 trap-nights in conservation reserves on the Cumberland Plain only a single terrestrial mammal, a bandicoot, was captured (Leary 2005).

Today it is widely understood that protecting natural ecosystems and maintaining biodiversity are fundamental elements of sustainable landscapes in Australia. An essential ingredient in the rehabilitation of degraded landscapes, and a sign of restoration success, is the return of native animals to a new and viable habitat.

The more diverse the plantings in an area, the more animals that will visit, and hence, the greater likelihood of different native plants being re-introduced. The wider the range of plants (including trees, shrubs, grasses and herbs), the wider the range of birds, mammals, insects and microfauna, and the lower the chance of outbreaks of disease and pests. For example, large trees favour bats, sugar gliders and many birds, while the shrub layer naturally favours small birds, ground dwellers and many invertebrates (Buchanan 1989).

Animals may be slow to return to young rehabilitation areas where the availability of resources required by those animals, such as pollen, nectar or tree hollows, is limited. The formation of tree hollows depends on the particular species of tree, its history and location, but is likely to take around 100 years. Thus hollows may not be available for a long time after a rehabilitation project, and land managers may need to consider the use of nesting boxes in the program. The preservation, wherever possible, of mature and standing dead trees is important to provide valuable nesting and roosting sites for native fauna.

Animals are important for seed dispersal, pollination and subsequent promotion of plant diversity, and they also help with litter decomposition and nutrient cycling. The loss of these animals in any ecosystem has profound consequences for the way that ecosystem continues to function.

Connecting vegetation remnants to provide corridors that will allow plants and animals to maximise their ranges is imperative, requiring the cooperation of landholders, councils and government bodies (Buchanan 1989).

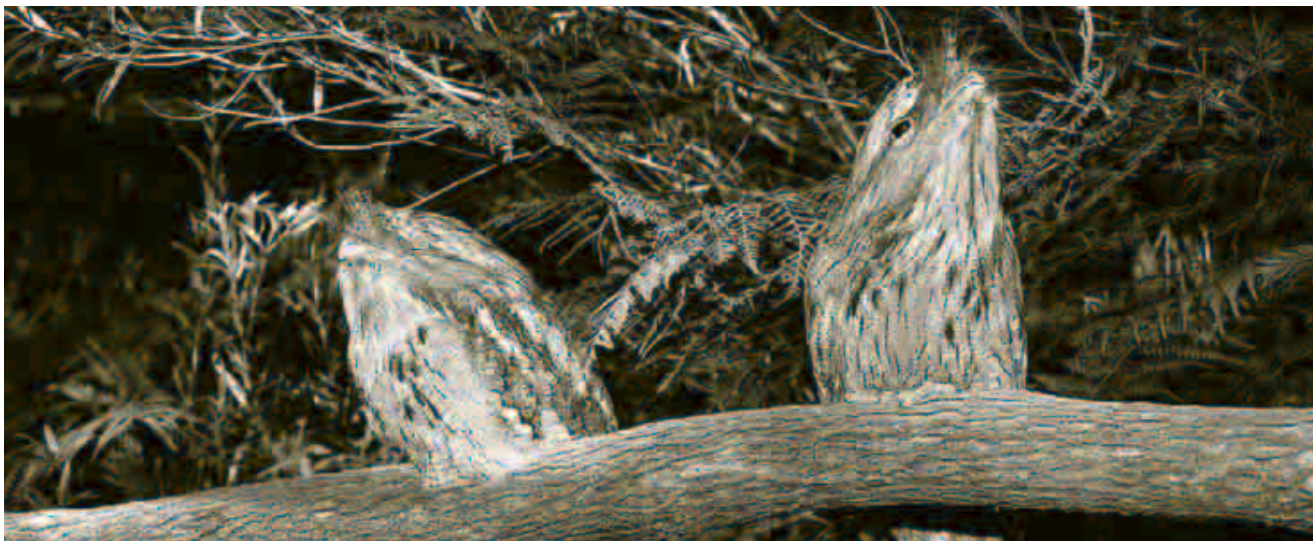
Birds as indicator species

Land with a rich diversity of birds will also have a relatively high diversity of trees, shrubs, mammals, reptiles, frogs and invertebrates. For this reason birds are recognised as an 'indicator species' of the ecological value of a site (Barrett 2000).

Throughout the world there are many examples of the role played by birds and other native wildlife in controlling insect pests. A major cause of eucalypt dieback on farms in eastern Australia is insect attack and a healthy bird community removes between 50 and 70 per cent of leaf-feeding insects, thus playing a major role in keeping trees alive.

For advice on birds and their habitats, contact Birds Australia on 1300 730 075 or visit www.birdsaustralia.com.au

Tawny Frogmouths prefer open eucalyptus woodland and hunt at night eating insects, frogs and small animals. (DEC/M. Cufer)



Checklist: Ten simple guidelines for making your land fauna friendly

1. Local native vegetation should cover at least 30 per cent of the total area

The goal of increasing vegetation to 30 per cent on every property might seem unrealistic, but research indicates that such a measure is necessary to keep trees healthy, halt problems such as salinity and soil deterioration, and maintain sustainable ecosystems.

2. Re-create local conditions

Look at the trees, shrubs and herbs in patches of remnant vegetation and along roadsides to find out what the original vegetation was like, and then try to recreate this habitat over at least 30 per cent of your land. Re-establishment of vegetation cover should aim to protect existing remnant vegetation, as it provides the best habitat for wildlife. Where a site's natural resilience for regeneration is low, plant locally sourced native vegetation. Minimise disturbance such as grazing or mowing of remnant bushland, especially when native groundcovers are flowering and setting seed. See Chapters 4 and 5 for more detail on bush regeneration and revegetation options.

3. Exclude high impact land uses from at least 30 per cent of the area

Manage a third of the area in a manner sympathetic to the local vegetation. Low-impact uses, such as passive recreation and limited seed, timber and honey collection, are acceptable. However, sports fields, roads, hard-surfaced areas, cropping, fertiliser application or frequent grazing, which have high impacts on native vegetation, should be excluded from at least 30 per cent of the area.

4. Maintain native grasses

More than half the declining bird species in temperate Australia forages at least partly on the ground, and depends to some extent upon native grasses. For grassy woodland areas, it has been recommended that at least half the area contain native grass and herb species. For agricultural properties where long-term pasture productivity is essential, it has been recommended that at least half the pasture is made up of native grass species. Maintaining a range of grazing regimes across the property and avoiding heavy, continuous grazing will enhance pasture, understorey and fauna diversity.

5. Native vegetation cover ideally should be in patches of a least 5 to 10 hectares and linked by strips at least 25–50 metres wide

For wildlife, the 30 per cent of the area that is managed to protect local native vegetation is best as a single large patch. But agricultural landholders are likely to want vegetation cover to spread across their property as windbreaks and smaller patches. A compromise is to spread the 30 per cent of native vegetation across the property, but make the patches as large as possible and linked by strips of vegetation at least 25 to 50 metres wide.

6. Manage at least 10 per cent of the area for wildlife

Of the 30 per cent of the area that is local native vegetation, one-third (10 per cent) should be managed primarily for wildlife. As a general rule, the more complex the habitat the more wildlife will be present. Managing for wildlife therefore means creating as much habitat diversity as possible, considering the structure of the original vegetation. Aim to re-create the ecosystem that occurs naturally in the local area (see Appendix 1 for reference sites) including a mix of native shrubs, herbs, groundcovers and trees, and access to water. Leave fallen trees to decompose naturally and control access to remnants.

7. Maintain a range of tree ages

In areas where old trees still occur, the diversity of animals is much greater. Around 300 vertebrate species use tree hollows in Australia (see table). For many species, the shelter and breeding opportunities provided by hollows are essential for survival.

Australian vertebrates that use tree hollows

	Known terrestrial species in Australia	Those species that use tree hollows	Percentage of known species that use tree hollows
Amphibians	203	29	14
Reptiles	770	78	10
Birds	777	111	14
Mammals	268	86	32
Total	**2018**	**304**	**15**

Source: Gibbon & Lindenmayer (2002)

8. Leave fallen trees to break down naturally

Understorey shrubs and fallen trees are often thought to harbour pests, such as rabbits and foxes, and considered to be a fire risk. However, feral pests can be controlled using means other than removing the native habitat. When positioned as windbreaks, native trees, shrubs and fallen trees (particularly associated with wetlands) can slow the progress of fires. For advice on fire risks, contact the Rural Fire Service on 1800 679 737 or visit www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

9. Maintain understorey cover over at least a third of the area within a patch of trees

Ensure that approximately one-third of the area managed for wildlife has a high diversity of locally occurring understorey species (herbs, grasses and shrubs).
For revegetation projects avoid planting too many nectar-producing shrubs. These species are uncommon on the Cumberland Plain and may create a 'honey pot' that will be taken over by large, aggressive birds such as native Noisy Miners and Wattlebirds.

10. Maintain native vegetation around water

The health of waterways can be improved by maintaining tree, shrub and native groundcover in the immediate catchment. For rivers it is advisable that this buffer zone of vegetation is at least 50 to 100 metres wide. Along creeks and small waterways a minimum of 30 to 50 metres is recommended.

Where to protect or plant native vegetation

Since many conservation problems arise from the removal of native vegetation, replacement of vegetation in the landscape may help to reverse these problems. Many existing remnants are not individually capable of the long-term conservation of their resident flora and fauna because they are too small and isolated to function as intact ecosystems.

A solution to the problem is to increase the extent and connectivity between isolated remnants through revegetation (Hobbs 1993).

Identifying good quality bushland

Before rushing off to undertake revegetation work you must first consider and assess the quality of your bushland, so that its conservation significance can be determined. The quality of bushland patches will depend on the type and degree of disturbance to which it has been subjected. Generally speaking, the less disturbed the bush, the better its quality and the greater its habitat and conservation value.

Healthy bushland can be viewed as a number of layers:

- the underground and litter layers, including logs and fallen timber
- an understorey of native grasses, herb and shrubs with regenerating saplings
- a native canopy with various age classes including hollows and dead standing trees.

Good quality bushland may also include access to creeks, rivers and wetlands.

Options for protection and expansion of good quality bushland

There are a few key features that should be considered in the protection and planting of vegetation in order to achieve the best outcomes for both property management and biodiversity conservation.

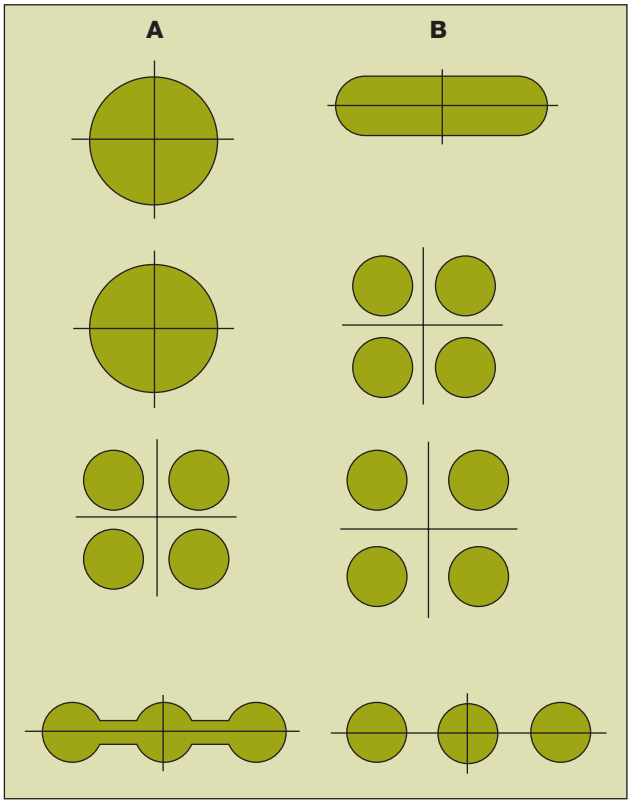
First, plan to have native vegetation in a variety of landscape positions on your land so that different habitat types are represented, for example creeklines, ridgelines, fertile flats, etc. Second, link or enhance existing native vegetation where possible. A recent study of koala populations and movement on the Cumberland Plain found that koalas had been using riparian areas beside waterways to disperse quite long distances (Close *et al.* 2005). Revegetation can further act to protect existing remnants by providing buffer strips and increasing connectivity between them as corridors, or providing additional habitat (Hobbs 1993).

Assessing the conservation significance of remnant bushland on the Cumberland Plain

Remnants are more significant in conservation terms the more they match the following criteria:

- the larger the **size** of remnant
- the better the remnant's **condition**
- the more **linkages** it provides to other areas of native vegetation
- the **less isolated or fragmented** the remnant and the lower **its perimeter-to-area ratio**
- the more **habitat** it provides, and the more significant the habitat
- the less susceptible the remnant is to **threatening processes**, such as weed invasion, high-frequency fire and illegal recreational vehicle use
- the nearer it is to **the limit** of the community's geographic range
- where only a small proportion of the particular ecological community is represented in the **formal conservation reserve system**
- only a small amount of the ecological community **remains on the Cumberland Plain.**

Figure 3: Arrangement and shape of bushland remnants – A preferred over B



Source: Buchanan (1989)

Buffer strips and corridors

Native buffer strips around existing remnants can protect native vegetation from the harmful effects of nutrient inputs, wind damage and weed invasion. Even establishing buffer strips using timber destined for agroforestry is an option.

Corridors are linear strips of bushland that directly link one patch of bushland to another, and allow the movement of wildlife between the patches. Corridors are also important means for dispersing pollen, seed and other genetic material that is essential for the continued survival of native plants and ecological communities. This is particularly important when considering established and developing urban areas (Fowke 2002).

Plant and animal movement may be facilitated by corridors, but corridors are also useful as supplementary habitat in the provision of shelter and soil erosion control. Thus the creation of vegetation strips for windbreaks or in alley farming could also serve a conservation function. Retention and enhancement of riparian strips can also maintain or improve water quality while at the same time serving as a corridor (Hobbs 1993).

As a general rule, the wider the strip the better, as narrow corridors are susceptible to 'edge' effects. The recommended minimum fenced width is between 25 and 50 metres although the benefits of the corridor will increase the wider it is. Wildlife corridors should also be planted with a mix of native indigenous tree, shrub and groundcover species. This will add to the structural complexity of the planting and add diversity to the food and shelter resources of your corridor as it establishes.

In addition, row spacings should be wide enough (two metres or greater depending on the community) to allow natural regeneration of native groundcover species. Groundcovers will regenerate naturally in the gaps between the planted trees and shrubs. In corridors where native groundcovers are unable or slow to regenerate, supplementary planting of native groundcover species, such as grass and herbs, may be undertaken between rows once the tree and shrub species have become established (see Chapter 5 for specific information on appropriate planting techniques).

Extending remnants

Re-vegetated areas can extend the area available as habitat. While replacement of vegetation anywhere in the landscape is beneficial, there are several reasons why it is likely to have a greater benefit if it is located next to an existing remnant:

- the size of the remnant will be increased by revegetating
- native plant species may naturally colonise the revegetated area and native fauna will have less distance to travel to recolonise it
- management of a single area will be cheaper than the maintenance of two smaller areas.

The ultimate goal of any revegetation project should be to reproduce an ecosystem that is structurally and functionally similar to existing remnant vegetation, and the chances are maximised where existing remnants are extended (Hobbs 1993).

Establishing habitat

When considering the management of remnant vegetation for habitat, a number of factors should be considered:

- **Stock access** needs to be controlled where relevant. While bushland can provide useful shelter for stock at critical times, such as lambing or after shearing, stock access needs to be carefully controlled so that plants are not trampled, excess soil nutrients and weed seed from their manure is not introduced and the soil is not compacted.
- **Feral animals** may need to be controlled. Rabbits severely inhibit regeneration of native plants while feral foxes and cats kill wildlife.
- Control **exotic plants**. Weeds are a threat to bushland because they compete with native plants for resources.
- Disturbance from **trail bikes, off-road vehicles and inappropriate fires** will need to be controlled to retain good quality remnant vegetation.

CHAPTER 3

Identifying management options through site assessment

Framework for ecological restoration 28
Implementation of ecological restoration processes 28
Natural regeneration 29
Assisted regeneration 29
Reconstruction and fabrication 29

Site assessment: determine the most appropriate restoration approach 30
Investigate past and present degradation sources 30
Predict the site's potential to recover 31
Determine the most appropriate restoration approach 32
Assessing and planning for habitat 34

Framework for ecological restoration

The practice of restoring damaged ecological communities is a relatively new activity within Australia and internationally (McDonald 1996). In the Sydney urban context, the process of assisted natural regeneration in urban conservation reserves began only in the 1970s, and was restricted mainly to the Hawkesbury sandstone areas of Sydney.

Restoration of bushland communities on the shale soils of the Cumberland Plain is more recent, with work only commencing in the last 15 years. Thus our understanding of restoration processes on the Cumberland Plain is more limited than for the adjacent sandstone areas.

While it is a relatively simple matter to provide an aesthetically pleasing bushland 'garden' in either previously cleared or landscaped bushland, it is much more difficult to ensure that the outcome of restoration activities is a true restoration of the ecosystem, and that the genetic integrity of both the newly restored site and adjacent bushland has not been compromised in the process (Burgin 1996).

This publication was written to help those land managers wishing to restore Cumberland Plain ecosystems find information based on current, best practice techniques. These guidelines are not rigid, in that there is often no one right way, but rather a variety of techniques which can be applied to a restoration site depending on its circumstances (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b).

Implementation of ecological restoration processes

Ecological restoration is defined as the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has to some extent been degraded, damaged or destroyed (Society for Ecological Restoration International Science & Policy Working Group 2004). As much, if not all, of the vegetation on the Cumberland Plain is in such a state, the need for ecological restoration is clear.

Restoration is the process of assisting recovery. It does not necessarily imply total intervention. Current restoration practices in eucalypt woodland involve a number of approaches arranged along a continuum from minimal to extensive intervention (Davies & Christie 2001):

- **natural regeneration**, where recovery occurs purely through natural processes on the site
- **assisted regeneration**, where the natural processes that lead to the re-establishment of native plant species are 'triggered' by management
- **reconstruction**, where more active steps of planting out stocks of native seedlings and/or reseeding are undertaken to start the process of native plant restoration
- **fabrication**, where the entire woodland is built from scratch.

Assessment of site resilience, combined with the goals of ecological restoration, will enable the appropriate approach to be identified. The hierarchy of action discussed below will guide the choice of the appropriate approach.

The 3Rs of restoration

The long-term goal of ecological restoration is ultimately the self-perpetuation of a plant community. The principle of minimal intervention or 'less is more' should be adopted when considering restoration activities. In other words, intervention should only be necessary to deal with the degree of damage on a site, and to achieve restoration goals (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b).

The 3Rs are the key approaches for ecological restoration, and like the above four processes, they are arranged in order of increasing intervention:

- ***Retain*** – Retain remnant indigenous vegetation on site. In many areas of western Sydney little bushland remains, so conserving existing natural areas should be the first priority.
- ***Regenerate*** – Where bushland remains but is degraded by weed invasion, grazing, etc., regeneration should be the primary goal. Even quite damaged bushland is valuable and capable of regenerating if given the right assistance.
- ***Revegetate*** – Where a site has failed to respond to natural and/or assisted regeneration techniques and there is no regeneration potential, reconstruction through revegetation is then an option.

Remember that increased intervention often means increased cost in both environmental and economic terms. The most cost-effective restoration approach is natural regeneration, where the ecological benefits are two-fold. First, the resilience of your site is assessed over a longer period, which is beneficial when establishing genetically diverse site-specific native vegetation. As a bonus, cost savings can also result.

Table 3 highlights the relationships between each process, approach and possible actions. The following sections of this chapter will address the benefits and limitations of each approach. It will become clear that an integrated strategy involving all three approaches may often be necessary to achieve ecological restoration on the Cumberland Plain.

Table 3: Actions used in ecological restoration

Process	Approach	Action
Natural regeneration	Retain	Remnant protection Fencing Stock removal
Assisted regeneration	Regenerate	Bush regeneration Use of 'triggers'
Reconstruction	Revegetate	Revegetation Direct seeding
Fabrication	Revegetate	Revegetation Direct seeding

Natural regeneration

Natural regeneration is the process in which any healthy ecosystem will recover following a disturbance such as fire. The damaged and fragmented nature of bushland on the Cumberland Plain means that there are few entirely healthy remnants left.

There are limitations to using natural regeneration as the sole ecological restoration approach. Environmental weeds such as African Boxthorn and African Olive are widespread on the Cumberland Plain. Fencing of remnants (and the removal of grazing) may result in the proliferation of these weeds. This proliferation can negate or reverse natural regeneration. Do not, however, let this discourage you from fencing remnants. It may just mean that some early-intervention bush regeneration is necessary.

Additionally, the level of degradation of the site limits the rate of natural regeneration. A mixed native/exotic pasture with some canopy overstorey may allow natural regeneration of eucalypts but the process can be slow and results cannot be predicted with accuracy.

If landscape-scale restoration is an aim, retention cannot be used as the sole approach. High-quality remnants only make up a small proportion of the Cumberland Plain. Poorer remnants with high weed levels cannot be restored by natural regeneration alone. Thus, limiting a restoration program to fencing will restrict the area of Cumberland Plain that can be restored.

Finally, a key attribute of a restored ecosystem is that it is suitably integrated into a larger ecological matrix or landscape, with which it interacts through abiotic and biotic flows and exchanges (Society for Ecological Restoration International Science & Policy Working Group 2004). Therefore, a remnant cannot be considered restored unless it is connected to other areas of vegetation.

Assisted regeneration

Assisted regeneration involves active intervention to help an ecosystem recover to near-original conditions. This is mainly achieved through the treatment or removal of environmental weeds and known as 'bush regeneration'.

Environmental weeds are only one degrading influence on the Cumberland Plain. Feral animals (especially rabbits and hares), inappropriate fire regimes and high nutrient loads are all factors that affect ecosystem health. Active intervention to deal with these disturbances is a valid approach to assist regeneration.

There are several benefits to assisted regeneration. Through the removal of weed species, native vegetation can (and often does) recover to near-original condition. Additionally, bush regeneration is excellent as a preventive strategy to stop the likely decline of higher quality remnants through continuing weed invasion.

Bush regeneration is an intensive approach generally involving teams visiting sites over sustained periods of time. The benefits of weed removal can be lost quickly if works cease before the site is self-sustaining. Typically, this may involve maintaining a site for five to ten years.

Reconstruction and fabrication

Reconstruction is the most active intervention to facilitate the restoration of an ecosystem. It generally involves the reintroduction/augmentation of plant species to a site in a process known as revegetation. Importantly, reconstruction relies on some remaining attribute of the former ecosystem to speed recovery such as a partially intact seed bank (viable seeds retained in the soil), some remnant vegetation elements and an intact hydrological regime (the natural water flow across the site). Reconstruction is most successful where these factors are present. Fabrication is the process of rehabilitating a site that has been radically changed, usually through earthworks, salinity, cultivation, etc.

Techniques used in bush regeneration, such as weed removal and feral animal control, are essential site preparation techniques prior to planting. Additionally these techniques need to be applied for a sustained period post-planting to ensure continued ecological restoration. If best practice techniques are used, the maintenance requirements can be lower than that of a bush regeneration program.

Revegetation, with our current techniques and level of understanding, cannot fully recreate the biological complexity of a healthy Cumberland Plain ecosystem. Although we are currently able to reintroduce almost all shrub and tree species, this is less so for the wide variety of groundcovers. The means exist to propagate a range of groundcover species, but the cost involved in planting them out at appropriate densities tends to be prohibitive. Nevertheless, revegetation has been shown to assist the reintroduction of a number of groundcovers (Nichols 2005).

Despite not being able to fully create the former vegetation community in the short term, revegetation can restore a range of important ecosystem functions. Revegetation areas can act as habitat and resources for animals and help restore former hydrological regimes.

Furthermore, reconstruction can be implemented in areas and over scales where assisted regeneration is not appropriate. It is the primary tool for linking areas of remnant vegetation and can also act as a buffer to minimise 'edge' effects such as weed invasion of remnants.

Revegetation is a useful tool to link areas of remnant vegetation and protect remnants from 'edge' effects. (Greening Australia (NSW))

Site assessment: determine the most appropriate restoration approach

The assessment of a restoration site is the process through which we determine the resilience of the vegetation on that site, so an appropriate management plan can be determined. Thus, prior to the commencement of any restoration activities, an assessment of the site and its potential to regenerate naturally is required (Buchanan 1989). The more that is known about the structure and function of the community you wish to restore, the greater the chance of success for your restoration project.

All the assessment models seek to analyse the resilience of the site and follow a similar approach.

1. Investigate past and present degradation sources and the potential for mitigation.
2. Predict the site's potential to recover.
3. Determine the most appropriate restoration approach and within that approach determine the appropriate restoration treatments or interventions.

Investigate past and present degradation sources

There are two main ways to determine the previous land use of an area. Either find documented evidence, or 'read' the land. Some of the questions below may help you find the land-use history of your site:

- Is the stand of trees even-aged or is there a range of ages? An even-aged stand indicates that there has been clearing or harvesting of trees.
- Is there evidence of tree stumps that have been cut? This can indicate past logging.
- Is there evidence of fire scars on trees? An indication of fire history.
- What are the plant types in the understorey? Herbs, especially broad-leaved ones (forbs), and shrubs indicate little disturbance. Grasses, lilies and daisies are often eaten out in areas that have been grazed, leaving mainly the less palatable shrubs.
- What is the percentage weed cover and what weed species are involved? The more weeds in an area the more degraded it is and the less likely it will support native animals.

Due to its ability to disperse long distances, Themeda australis *is a common native grass that occurs across the Cumberland Plain. (P. Watson)*

- Is there a 'browse line' on shrubs? A browse line indicates that the site has been grazed in recent times.
- Is there evidence of herbivore faeces? Their presence can indicate past grazing even if the grazer is no longer present.
- Is there a decline in tree health or dieback? Trees in a rural landscape may have canopies with many dead branches at the tips, or high mistletoe loads. This may indicate an imbalance in the landscape. Past land use such as clearing, grazing or fertiliser application may be responsible for poor tree health.
- Is there evidence of seedling regeneration? Seedlings beneath mature trees indicate that grazing pressure is light enough to allow regeneration. In heavily grazed sites there is little regeneration.
- Is there evidence of soil and rock removal, dumping of rubbish or garden clippings, or vehicle tracks?
- Are there signs of pest animals? Apart from direct sightings, identifying pest animals involves looking for signs of their presence, such as scats (droppings or faeces), rabbit scratchings and warrens, pig rooting or footprints.

Disturbances or other changes encourage invasion by exotic plants. These exotic plants are often 'weedy' disturbance specialists that can quickly colonise bare areas. Succession is the progression of changes in a community's composition, and this process is driven by competition between species for available resources (Bayley & Brouwer 2004). Understanding these successional changes over time and managing these areas to ensure that the balance is tipped to favour native species will be the key factors in establishing full ecological function to your community.

Predict the site's potential to recover

Currently our ability to scientifically predict the boundary between regeneration and reconstruction (revegetation) is limited due to a lack of formal research on the Cumberland Plain. The extent of the migratory zone (the area in which natural regeneration is possible) varies for each species. The distance a plant can disperse its seed correlates with the extent of its migratory zone. Practitioners are encouraged to collect seed only within a plant's dispersal range. The ranges for seed collection identified in Table 5 of Chapter 5 can therefore also be interpreted to indicate a plant's potential migratory zone.

You should avoid planting in areas where natural regeneration is expected to occur. It is a waste of resources and may artificially block niches that may be occupied by regenerating species.

Various factors need to be considered prior to choosing a restoration approach for your site (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b). These include:

- the nature and quality of existing native vegetation on-site will identify potential sources of seed
- the extent, nature, condition and diversity of structural elements present (canopy, shrub layer and groundcover) indicate whether representatives from these elements are likely to regenerate
- the individual native species present indicate the minimum range of biodiversity to be expected on-site
- the reproductive habit and dispersal mechanisms of individual species on-site indicates their persistence and ease of spread
- observed regeneration occurring
- the size of the remnant and its connectivity with other bushland areas
- past land-use and disturbance history, including fire history, may indicate the size and viability of seed in the soil
- soil conditions, including whether the soil has been altered or fill imported to the site, will influence the potential for a store of native seeds in the soil (known as the seed bank)
- nature of current and ongoing levels of disturbance, including adjacent land use and whether this can be controlled or not
- type of weed infestation and its extent and density will identify the type and extent of weed management required.

Encouraging natural regeneration is the preferred and recommended way to rehabilitate natural and semi-natural areas, as it retains the local native genetic component. In some cases this may simply be a matter of fencing areas adjacent to native trees and allowing natural seed fall to provide new seedling growth, while in other areas a more active approach may have to be implemented.

Canopy species

Most native tree species such as eucalypts, melaleucas, angophoras and casuarinas, do not have very effective long-distance seed dispersal mechanisms, and most seed is deposited within a zone one to two crown diameters wide (Benson & Howell 1993). Therefore, sites within this zone from a healthy parent tree might be considered a regeneration zone, where an unassisted and/or assisted regeneration strategy is the recommended option. If regeneration of native species is not occurring naturally over time, a more active management approach may be required, such as using triggers or introducing seed and/or seedlings.

Brunoniella australis *is a common herb found in Cumberland Plain Woodland. (P. Watson)*

Shrub understorey

It can be assumed that sites that have been cultivated, continually burnt or grazed for many decades will have little, if any, resilience and will therefore need to be reconstructed. The absence of a parent plant of a shrub species within dispersal distances (see Table 5 in Chapter 5) may indicate a reconstruction zone for those species. Using triggers (see Chapter 4) to assess the soil seed bank should also be trialled in those areas expected to have moderate resilience.

Grassy herbaceous understorey

Grasslands and herbs can be successfully regenerated through the management of fire and grazing regimes. The high dispersability of many native grasses means that the regeneration zone can extend well into what might be considered a reconstruction zone. However as exotic weeds can generally out-compete indigenous vegetation, a carefully considered weed-control strategy is essential.

Tip:

Native groundcover species, including less common and slower-growing native grasses and herbs, are a strong indicator of resilience. Examples include *Dianella* spp., *Aristida* spp. and *Lomandra filiformis* (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b).

Determine the most appropriate restoration approach

A plan of management for a site is important. Such a plan will clarify the goals and objectives for restoration of the site and clearly set out the proposed actions required. An accompanying work or action plan is also necessary. The work or action plan differs from a plan of management in that it provides specific restoration actions and techniques to be used in your restoration program. A site assessment will guide the works program and denote the type of restoration works required.

When assessing sites on the Cumberland Plain, you should err on the side of optimism, as vegetation in this area in the past has displayed surprising resilience. Underestimating this resilience can result in inappropriate and unnecessary intervention that may compromise recovery.

Knowing which patches of remnant bush are good and which are degraded is important. If funds and resources are limited, you then know which remnants to protect and manage first. Generally, it is better to start with 'healthy' remnants because they need fewer resources to look after and repair than more degraded remnants. An assessment sheet (see Table 4) has been developed specifically to help landholders assess the quality of their own patches of vegetation.

Natural regeneration following the reduction of stocking rates at the EMAI demonstration site at Menangle. (DEC/R. Burton)

Table 4: Assessment sheet for Cumberland Plain remnant vegetation (bushland, grassland and paddocks with scattered trees)

Assessment questions (answer 'Yes' or 'No')	Site number or name			
Is the area fenced to control stock access?				
Is there regeneration of native trees and shrubs or, if in grassland, regular (annual) germination of native herbs?				
Is a diverse range of native tree and shrub species present, i.e. more than 10?				
If grassland, is a diverse range of grasses and broad-leaved herbs present?				
Is the ground covered with litter such as leaves, bark and twigs?				
Are there mosses, lichens or liverworts on rocks, fallen branches or the ground surface?				
Are weeds uncommon, sparsely scattered, absent or mainly found around edges of the area?				
Is there a very low incidence of pest animals, e.g. foxes and rabbits?				
Is the remnant or paddock shape a block rather than a strip?				
Is the area greater than two hectares?				
Is the remnant or paddock linked to other remnants by corridors, e.g. roadside vegetation or scattered trees no more than 50 metres apart?				
Is there a mix of tree ages present, i.e. saplings through to old-growth with hollows?				
If trees are present, is there also an understorey?				
Is the understorey mostly comprised of native shrubs and/or grasses and broad-leaved herbs?				
Are there standing trees (alive or dead) with hollows in the remnant?				
Are trees mainly healthy, with little or no dieback?				
Are less than 20 per cent of trees affected by mistletoe?				
Are there logs and fallen timber on the ground?				
If scattered paddock trees are unfenced, are stock camps absent?				
If scattered paddock trees are unfenced, is evidence of stock ringbarking or rubbing absent?				
Is the area free of herbicide, insecticide or fertiliser overspray from adjoining areas?				
Is the area free from the threat of salinity and/or high watertables in the next 10 years?				
Total number of Yes answers				

Key

Number of Yes answers			Vegetation remnant condition rating	Need for management attention
Remnant bushland	Remnant grassland	Scattered paddock trees		
14+	9+	12+	Healthy	Maintain current management
9–13	6–8	8–11	Good	Needs some management attention
5–8	3–5	5–7	Fair	Needs a significant level of management attention
0–4	0–2	0–4	Poor	Urgent management required

Prepared by McMahan S. & Brickhill J. NSW NPWS, adapted from Disappearing Islands Group (1993) and Goldney & Wakefield (1997)

Assessing and planning for habitat

Site assessment and strategies for restoration projects should take into account the existence and needs of native animal populations. It may turn out that your site was providing an important island of food or shelter in an otherwise inhospitable area, and that the restoration process has unintentionally disrupted this. Sometimes the transitional period during a restoration program can be devastating for the resident wildlife. Therefore maintenance and enhancement of fauna habitat must be an integral part of restoration aims and actions (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b).

Native fauna is dependent on vegetation for survival and this may include exotic vegetation. In turn the role that fauna plays in the pollination and dispersal of native vegetation may be crucial to the long-term regeneration and recovery of indigenous plant communities. The extent and nature of animal populations and the current habitat uses of a site therefore need to be assessed prior to undertaking restoration.

Site assessment and work plans should include actions that maintain and increase habitat. A site's habitat importance can be assessed by the existence of remnant vegetation, mature trees (the presence of hollows), dense understorey (particularly indigenous species), native fauna, exposed rock, logs, leaf litter and clean water. Actions to be considered include:

- Identify potential wildlife sanctuary areas on your site.
- Before removal, consider the habitat potential of weeds, unwanted trees and shrubs, and rubbish such as old pipes, car bodies, etc. and work towards their slow replacement by more natural components.
- Avoid removing weeds in areas providing important habitat for existing wildlife until nearby substitute habitat is provided.
- Retain and where possible reintroduce logs, bark and natural debris.
- For intensive weeding over large areas, adopt a mosaic pattern of weed removal (see Figure 4).
- Remove areas of dense weed infestation only outside peak breeding times (usually spring and early summer) or when they are not providing a major food source.
- Protect mature trees through the removal of weed vines smothering the canopy, and weed competition from around their bases.

This possum is nesting in an African Olive tree, a problematic weed species on the Cumberland Plain. Careful consideration is necessary to account for the habitat value of all vegetation on your restoration site. (Greening Australia (NSW)/R.Wood)

- Selectively retain mature weed trees in the absence of mature native trees until mature-sized native canopy trees are established.
- Remove weed trees gradually and consider poisoning in autumn to mimic the natural cycles of some exotic trees.
- Leave dead trees (including exotics) in place, where feasible, as they will provide habitat in the form of hollows and perches.
- Consider re-introducing artificial nesting boxes, although they need to be monitored to ensure they are not used by exotic animals.
- Consider the potential impacts of herbicide on amphibians.
- Try to repeat the density and species mix in revegetation sites that occur naturally in local remnants (remember to mimic aspect) thus ensuring a diversity of habitats is retained.
- Try to link habitat areas with a vegetated corridor and where possible regenerate/revegetate waterways to maintain bank stability, and provide important corridors and aquatic habitat.

Figure 4: Mosaic weeding pattern

1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	Upslope
3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	Downslope

Choose upslope sites to begin weeding; weed in number 1 areas and allow for regeneration/revegetation to develop in these areas to a height of no less than 1 to 2 metres, or a density similar to the previous weed cover, before commencing on number 2 areas and so on.

CHAPTER 4

Bush regeneration and the use of ‘triggers’

Restoration through bush regeneration ____ 36
Preparing a bush regeneration program ____ 36
Identifying weeds ____ 37
Weed control techniques ____ 38
Patterns and sequence of regeneration ____ 41
Continuing site assessment and maintenance ____ 43

The use of regeneration ‘triggers’ ____ 44
Fire as a management tool ____ 44
Smoke water and smoked mulch ____ 47
Soil disturbance ____ 48
Reduction in plant mass ____ 48
Herbicide and scarification in introduced pastures ____ 48
Grazing management ____ 48
Other triggers ____ 48

Restoration through bush regeneration

In the vegetation communities on the Cumberland Plain, plants in the ground layer are highly important in contributing to plant diversity. Perennial herbs and grasses together account for more species than the shrub layer (Hill & French 2003). This is in contrast to the mix of species growing on Hawkesbury Sandstone, where the vegetation communities have a well-developed shrub layer (Thomas 1994).

Past land-use history, combined with the more open structure of woodland communities, has led to a proliferation of weed species in the ground layer. Cumberland Plain restoration projects often need to deal with large areas of semi-degraded bush containing major weed expanses in the understorey.

Despite these problems, Cumberland Plain communities exhibit much natural resilience in their tolerance to a dramatic range of environmental conditions (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b). Because of these wide tolerances, many Cumberland Plain remnants respond with surprising success to the regeneration techniques employed to restore them.

Preparing a bush regeneration program

Bush regeneration centres on the removal of competitive weeds. These are usually exotic plants, although native plants from other areas are also regarded as weeds.

Specific restoration and regeneration works must take account of the processes affecting weed spread. The cause of the weed infestation (stormwater, nutrient enrichment, etc.) is often overlooked and only the symptoms, that is the weeds, are dealt with. Any bush regeneration program should incorporate strategies and actions which prevent or reduce the degrading influences causing weed spread. Commonly occurring degrading influences include:

- urban runoff
- flooding and siltation in urban watercourses
- creekbank slumping and soil erosion
- overuse (recreational and grazing pressure) and damage to vegetation
- pollution of water, soils and air
- inappropriate fire regimes (burning too frequently or total suppression of fire)
- invasive plantings in local parks, private gardens and agricultural properties
- activities such as dumping, collecting timber or vandalism.

Regeneration of the native plant community from existing seed sources cannot occur where the potential for regeneration (site resilience) is absent. During regeneration, the on-site conditions are adjusted to encourage and favour the native plant community (National Trust of Australia NSW 1991).

It is important to remember that each site is unique. Local environmental conditions, as well as the threats to the area, will determine the best course of action. Three steps are recommended when setting up a bush regeneration program:

- define the aims
- collect information
- prepare an action or work plan.

Aims

An aim is a statement about the project which says what you are trying to achieve in terms of regeneration, your desired outcomes or general intention. It should be a short and clear statement that is realistic and credible.

Collecting information

An information base is an important part of the regeneration process. Gather information about the history of the site, as this often reveals how it became degraded in the first place. Information on the site's history and present condition will allow you to plan a work program and help you avoid costly mistakes later on (National Trust of Australia NSW 1991).

- **Prepare a detailed map** – The map should indicate the boundaries of your site, any major features of the area, e.g. creeks, rivers, drainage patterns, large rock outcrops, outstanding or unusual trees. Also mark constructed features such as drains, walls, paths or sheds.
- **Identify and map the plant communities** on your property. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (now part of the Department of Environment and Conservation) mapped all the remnant vegetation communities found on the Cumberland Plain and a report, *Native Vegetation of the Cumberland Plain: Final Edition*, was released in October 2002. The report and maps can be found on the website www.environment.nsw.gov.au under 'Cumberland Plain Vegetation Mapping Project'.
- **Prepare a plant list –** This should include local native species, weeds and natives introduced from elsewhere. Take note of any species that are locally rare or endangered. The National Herbarium at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney can help identify any unfamiliar plants (see Appendix 6 for contact details).
- **Record any wildlife** you see, e.g. birds, mammals, reptiles.

- **Photograph the site** before work starts. Use fixed photograph points. Continue to photograph regularly during the course of the project (every six to 12 months). Record the date, site and photographer on the back of every photograph.
- **Consider the resources available** – money, people, time, materials, etc.
- **Liaise with local residents** where applicable. Use open days, letter-drops etc. and take the opportunity to explain what your project hopes to achieve before you start work.

Assessing the site

Now that you have gathered your information, prepare a detailed assessment of the site (National Trust of Australia NSW 1991). This should include:

- a colour-coded vegetation map showing the condition of existing plant communities – use a simple grading system for weed density (e.g. almost weed-free bush, light weed infestation, severe infestation, total domination by weeds). Mapping weed density may reveal the source of the weeds and the maps can then beused to develop a weed management program in your action or work plan (Bayley & Brouwer 2004).
- sites which might require planting and the source of the required plants (see section on planting in Chapter 5)
- disturbed areas, both natural and those caused by people – assess whether the problem will continue, and whether it can be eliminated or modified.

Determining weed density

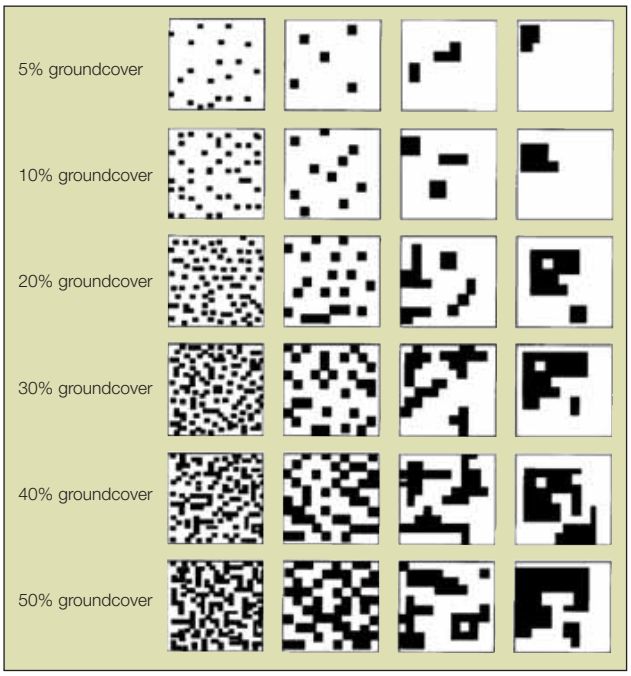
Knowing the density of weeds on your site can help you develop your vegetation map, which in turn will help you decide where to direct your weed-control efforts, and allow you to assess how well those controls have worked over time. By density we mean the proportion of the area covered by each weed species. This is usually expressed as a percentage of the area of infestation. Visual assessment is the simplest way to determine weed density. Figure 5 gives you an idea of how different weed densities, as a percentage of groundcover, may look. Note how dense a cover of 50 per cent appears. The CRC for Australian Weed Management has produced a document titled *Developing and implementing a weed management plan (Module 1)*. For more information on implementing a weed management plan, this document can be viewed at www.weeds.crc.org.au/documents/manual

Prepare an action plan

Although the information you have gathered will help to determine the priority areas and the order in which the work should be done, an action plan is necessary before work can begin. When preparing an action plan you should:

- **consider your priorities** – What are the major long-term threats to the native plants on-site, specific weeds, other disturbing factors such as drainage, fill, grazing? Can the threats be controlled or removed?
- prepare a **rough map of the site** by dividing it into logical zones (work zones) which will reflect the condition of the vegetation and the function of the zone, e.g. creek, boundary, stormwater discharge

Figure 5: A guide for the visual assessment of weed infestation as a percentage of groundcover



Source: Bayley (2001)

- decide on a **sequence of work** – Is the site best treated zone by zone, or is it better to treat the site as a whole and target particular weeds progressively?

Prepare a short-term plan of action. Which areas or weeds will be treated over the next couple of months? This plan should be flexible. Although you may not stick to it, it will give you direction. You need to be prepared to revise the plan if circumstances change (National Trust of Australia NSW 1991).

Tip:

Depending on the age of the vegetation on your site, resources such as tree hollows for native wildlife may not be available until a long time after rehabilitation, and you should consider importing habitat material such as logs or nesting boxes of appropriate sizes to attract the desired target species back to the area. Don't forget to plan for fauna in your action or work plan.

Identifying weeds

Knowing which plants are weeds and which are natives is an integral part of your bush regeneration program. If you have the resources, employing professional bush regenerators is a good way in which to ensure professional advice and techniques are used on your property. If funding is an issue and you plan to undertake the work yourself, but need help and training in weed identification and/or bush regeneration techniques, there are many resources available to help you with this endeavour.

For more information on identifying weeds, see Appendix 6 (contacts) and Appendix 7 (recommended reading).

Weed control techniques

The first step in any regeneration program is to identify the weeds on-site and, based on the priorities in your action plan, start to selectively remove them.

Primary weed clearance: This is the first step. It may involve herbicide or hand removal. Areas receiving primary treatment have varying degrees of weed infestation.

Secondary treatment or follow-up: Secondary treatment is intensive weeding in areas which have already received primary work. Areas which have been badly degraded (e.g. prone to runoff or next to roads and paths) may need intensive weeding for a longer time, while sites in good condition will need little follow-up.

Maintenance weeding: The amount of weed seed stored in the soil is incredibly large, even in our best remnants. Animals and wind are continually carrying in weed seed. Although competition from native plants will reduce the ability for these weeds to establish, a range of weed species is still able to establish even in the most pristine systems. These weeds need to be controlled regularly as they arrive in the remnant.

All areas should be monitored at least twice a year, particularly in spring and early summer (when herbaceous weed growth is at its most rapid), so that weeds can be detected and removed. Edges of roads and tracks will need to be targeted to keep the weeds at bay, but healthy bushland should only require infrequent weeding (National Trust of Australia NSW 1991).

Weed management aims to free up the resources, such as the availability of light, soil moisture and nutrients required by native plants, so that they can regenerate. Under the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993*, there are requirements relating to certain weed species that must be met by land owners and managers. A copy of the noxious weeds in each local government area is also available from your local council or through the NSW Department of Primary Industries website www.agric.nsw.gov.au/noxweed (see also the list of noxious weeds in Appendix 3).

It should be noted that not all environmental weeds that pose a problem in bushland areas are on the noxious weeds schedule. A list of the environmental weeds common on the Cumberland Plain and their treatment techniques can be found in Appendices 3 and 4. The Australian Association of Bush Regenerators (AABR) also has a comprehensive list of the environmental weeds in NSW on their website at www.aabr.org.au

Tip:

Do not attempt to clear more weeds than your resources will allow you to control. If weed control maintenance is not undertaken throughout the entire process of seedling germination and establishment, your strategies to control weeds may be at best ineffective and at worst may lead to increased weed proliferation and a decrease in the site's native seed bank and its future resilience.

Weed management on the Cumberland Plain requires an ability to identify weed and native species, particularly grasses and native groundcovers. Weed management also requires the resources and commitment to long-term follow-up weed control.

Long-term control is essential because, if you provide the resources (increases in light, moisture, nutrients, etc.) for native seedling germination by initial weed removal but do not continue weed control, the weeds will almost undoubtedly re-establish, out-compete and kill off the native seedlings. You will then have depleted the valuable native seed bank stored in the soil for no result, and the seed bank may even be exhausted in this unsuccessful attempt.

When setting weed management priorities, the following factors should be considered:

- size of the site
- level of threat to native species posed by particular weeds
- level of weed control needed to achieve the site's objectives
- stage of the reproductive cycle of the weeds involved and whether they are annuals or perennials
- ease or difficulty of controlling specific weed species, which is influenced by external constraints such as the weed's biology, uncontrollable upstream weed sources, the soil and weather conditions
- resources available and time constraints
- ecological function of the weeds – the habitat value of weeds should not be underestimated, and weed control measures may need to be staggered in time and space to accommodate the needs of wildlife.

Tip:

The extent and diversity of weed problems on the Cumberland Plain are generally high and many sites are large. To tip the balance to greater native diversity will require the progressive targeting of weeds over time. It is essential that the long-term resources to maintain and control weeds are factored into any bush regeneration program.

An effective approach involves monitoring changes as work proceeds, with the flexibility to revise priorities as site conditions change.

The aim should always be to use a combination of techniques that achieve the agreed objectives with the least intervention practicable (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b).

The various best practice methods used to control noxious and environmental weeds common on the Cumberland Plain can be found in Appendixes 3 and 4. See also Appendix 6 for sources of more information on identifying and controlling weeds.

Tip:

Two exotic species, *Olea europaea* subsp. *africana* (African Olive) and *Myrsiphyllum asparagoides* (Bridal Creeper), have been identified as a major threat to conservation of native flora on the Cumberland Plain due to their wide distribution and ability to out-compete native species (Tozer 2003). It has been found that, compared with surrounding areas, the litter under African Olive trees is deeper and the soil has higher pH and phosphorus levels. This combination may be bad for the regeneration potential of native species (Cooke 2005). Control of these weeds should be a high priority in any weed management program (Tozer 2003).

The most commonly used methods and techniques applied in the management of weed infestations on the Cumberland Plain include:

- hand removal
- application of herbicides
- slashing, mowing, cutting back or fire to reduce the mass of large weed infestations
- weed matting and mulching
- mechanical clearing
- biological control.

An integrated approach involving combinations of the above is usually necessary. Appendix 4 describes the various methods used to control and remove weeds.

Hand removal

Because of the risk of damage to adjacent vegetation, removing weeds by hand in areas where they grow close to native or desirable plants is always preferable to using machinery, fire or spraying herbicides.

The frequent hard, dry and compacted nature of soils means, however, that digging and removing weeds can be time-consuming and lead to unacceptable levels of disturbance. Timing is important and wherever possible you should take advantage of favourable seasonal factors, such as moist soil conditions after rain (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b).

Basic hand-weeding techniques can be applied to particular groups of plants. For example, plants with tap root systems are removed using methods different from those for layered woody plants, or vines or scramblers that root at the nodes. Appendix 4 discusses the various methods of removing weed by hand. Always try and use the most efficient and labour-saving techniques.

Herbicides

The use of herbicides to control weeds is increasing, especially with the availability of biodegradable chemicals such as glyphosate (marketed as Zero, Roundup Biactive® or Glyphosate 340).

Given the scale, nature and extent of weed infestations across many Cumberland Plain sites and the limitations associated with hand removal, herbicides are important tools in a restoration project. A range of selective and non-selective herbicides are constantly being trialled to address weed problems across the Cumberland Plain.

A targeted bush regeneration program at Camden Town Farm demonstration site will allow land managers to selectively control weeds over time, thereby reducing competition between native plants for resources, such as light, moisture and nutrients. (DEC/R. Burton)

Roundup® is a herbicide commonly used in bush regeneration, whereas **Garlon®** is sometimes used to control weeds such as blackberry, prickly pear, lantana and privet. Other herbicides include **metsulfuron (Brush-off), fluroxypyr (Starane),** and **triclopyr and picloram (Access** and **Grazon).**

When choosing a range of herbicides for bushland rehabilitation work, care should be taken not only to choose the most effective chemical for the job, but to check the chemical's persistence in soil and water, its toxicity and the different effects it might have on individual weed species.

Use herbicide strictly in accordance with the labelling and ensure that any permits, orders or other 'off-label' use requirements are obtained and complied with. Permits for off-label uses should be sought from the Department of Primary Industries (phone (02) 6391 3100 or visit www.agric.nsw.gov.au).

Application techniques

While herbicides are valuable aids in weed management, they will also destroy native vegetation if used indiscriminately. There are many ways you can apply herbicides. Decide on which parts of your site you are going to use it and what method of application would be suitable. Appendix 4 has detailed information on the various techniques used for the application of herbicides, given the weed's form and habit.

You should limit the use of non-selective herbicides in native grassy woodland. Herbicide application here should be confined to carefully targeted spot-spraying by experienced operators. Further, avoid spraying to such an extent that the soil is left bare and susceptible to erosion.

When to apply herbicides

Time the application of herbicides to achieve maximum effectiveness. The right time to apply systemic poisons is when water and sugars are being rapidly moved (translocated) around the plant (usually spring and summer). Herbicides are likely to be less effective on plants which are not growing due to the season (winter) or which are stressed by drought, cold, frost and waterlogging (Buchanan 1989).

Plants which sucker easily from the roots, and plants with underground reproductive organs must be treated just after flowering when sugars (and hence herbicide) are moving down into the bulb or tuber. Treatment when sugars are moving upward from the underground organs to form the new season's shoot will be useless (Buchanan 1989). While this is the general rule there are always exceptions, so check the CRC for Australian Weed Management website at www.weeds.crc.org.au for more details.

Reducing weeds by slashing or mowing

Reducing weed bulk (biomass) by the selective use of slashing or mowing may be useful as an interim measure to provide access and allow more targeted and effective weed control. This is especially so in native grassy woodlands, where herbaceous weed growth can be difficult to selectively control.

Slashing or mowing can also be used in bushland areas (grassy native understorey) as an initial or holding treatment to reduce weed mass. It allows for more efficient follow-up as fast-growing re-shooting weeds can be spot-sprayed with herbicide among areas of native grasses and herbs.

Mowing and slashing provides an effective means of weed control in non-bushland areas, such as agricultural land, in clearings, along tracks and firebreaks, or where bushland adjoins suburban housing and protection from fire is an issue.

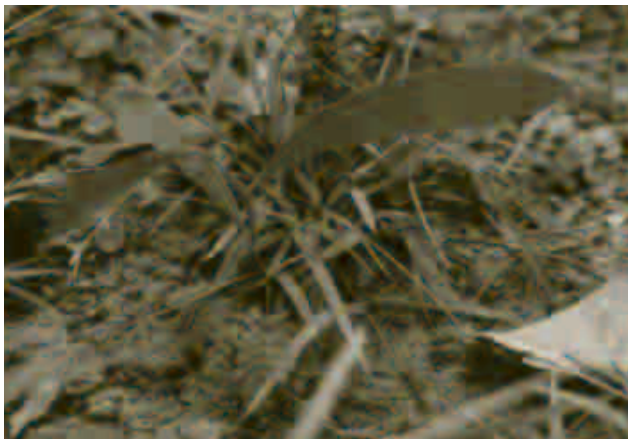
Mowing or slashing will reduce the weed biomass and, if carried out regularly over the growing season, can prevent the weeds from flowering and fruiting thereby reducing weed numbers in the following season. However, if mowing/slashing is irregular or is carried out after seeding has commenced, long-term weed control will not be achieved.

To effectively control exotic annual herbs and grasses, mowing or slashing must be done at least monthly in summer (possibly more frequently if conditions are warm and wet and weed growth is accelerated). For perennial weeds which mature in mid- to late summer, mowing or slashing may be reduced to two to three times each season, with the final treatment being applied late in the season as the fruit ripens and seed becomes viable.

The timing and height of cut also needs to be considered, as it may be possible to allow some native grasses to run to seed despite the mowing (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b). Slashing or mowing should not be used where endangered or vulnerable species may be present.

Reducing weeds with fire

In bushland, burning stimulates native plant seeds in the soil canopy. As weeds are also stimulated by fire and respond with regeneration, fire can be an incredibly useful tool in an integrated weed control program, and implementing an appropriate fire regime can help ensure certain weed species are kept in check. However, the deliberate use of fire to reduce weed biomass is not a technique to be used too regularly, because frequent burning in the same area will reduce structural diversity and abundance of native species. Planned and careful weed treatment is needed both before and after burning (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b). Fire should be an important component of any bushland management plan for the Cumberland Plain. For detailed information on the use of fire as a management tool, see the section on triggers later in this chapter.



Natural regeneration of native seedlings after fire. (P. Watson)

Mulching and matting to suppress weeds

These are generally inappropriate treatments in areas where native regeneration is predicted although matting may be considered in areas where erosion is a significant issue. Mulching can be useful on the edges of reserves to delineate the limits to mowing zones, and to suppress the encroachment of exotic lawn grasses. Only mulch if you are sure that the mulch is good-quality native leaf litter without seeds or bulbs.

Mechanical weed removal

Heavy machinery is frequently used to remove dense weed growth on roadsides, in wasteland or in areas where no desirable vegetation remains. In some situations, particularly where the soil is underlaid by weedy fill, 'scalping' the top ten centimetres of soil is a very effective means of removing both the weeds and a large part of the weed seed bank. However, machine clearance provides the very conditions which favour weed re-infestation, namely soft bare soil and high light levels.

When weeds are cleared by machine, large areas of bare soil are created. In erosion-prone areas it is essential that some form of cover is quickly established to prevent soil erosion and suppress new weed growth. Two techniques used to control erosion are:

- weed mats (discussed above)
- introducing new vegetation such as fast-growing colonising grasses.

Fast-growing native species like *Chloris ventricosa* and *Capillipedium spicigerum* can establish quickly. Once the area has been stabilised, both short- and long-lived trees, shrubs and groundcovers can be incorporated into the planting program.

In addition to sowing grasses (preferably native or sterile exotics), an ongoing weed control program must be initiated. In the short term, the use of mulch, weed mat or sowing a cover crop to stabilise the bare soil is recommended. Remember that mulch, plantings and weed matting on any large scale are generally considered inappropriate treatments in areas where native regeneration is predicted.

Patterns and sequence of regeneration

Bush regeneration in resilient sites

In sites that exhibit signs of resilience, the use of natural regeneration techniques only, or in combination with both natural and assisted regeneration, may be all that is required to stimulate regeneration of native species.

On agricultural properties where stock have been excluded from the restoration site, the area may experience some flux. Vigilant weed control will probably be required to ensure any germinating native seedlings are not out-competed by weeds. Strategic target weeding and comprehensive follow-up will lead to a gradual but significant improvement in the condition of the native vegetation (Davies & Christie 2001).

Weed control in areas with a native understorey

Controlling weeds in areas with a native understorey is more difficult. Hand removal is too time-consuming on large sites and problematic in hard, dry, compacted soils. Herbicide control is also problematic, because of the dangers to adjacent natives, and hand application is again too time-consuming.

The following practices demonstrate how a combination of methods can achieve maximum weed control and survival of native species in situations where a native understorey is present:

- Where annual weeds are tall, apply herbicide using a 'wick wiper' (see Method 9 in Appendix 4 for a description of this technique).
- Where it is required to control small privets, *Sida* (Paddy's Lucerne) and other small woody species in native grasslands use Garlon® at low concentrations.
- In areas of no or few native grasses, the use of the selective herbicide Fusilade® to control exotic grasses will allow native herbs to survive.
- Bulbs such as Watsonia in grassy native areas can be effectively controlled by a process of first whipper-snipping back the grass and bulbs. Subsequent regrowth in the bulbs is at a faster rate than the native grasses, allowing discrete herbicide treatment of bulb leaves during times of active bulb growth.
- To prevent seed drop from grasses and herbaceous weeds in areas of native understorey, target the aerial parts using a hand-held flame thrower to consume the plant and scorch seed.
- Reducing weed levels by slashing or mowing (as outlined above) may be a useful interim measure.

Tip:

A study by Semple & Koen (2003) found that regeneration in grazed native pastures is more likely than in grazed areas dominated by exotic plants. The results suggest that competition from annual and perennial exotics is a major limitation to the survival of eucalypt seedlings in their first two years.

CASE STUDY

Large-scale bush regeneration in Sydney Coastal River-flat Forest

As part of the Greening Western Sydney Project, Greening Australia has responsibility for restoring the remnants along 40 kilometres of Ropes, South and Eastern Creeks. Over 12 years Greening Australia has gained experience in applying efficient and effective strategies and techniques suited to this scale of work.

Before restoration most of the sites contained a scattered *Eucalyptus amplifolia* and *Casuarina glauca* canopy with occasional patches of shrubs, such as *Bursaria spinosa* and *Acacia parramattensis.* Native groundcovers were present but limited in extent. The sites were dominated by a dense mid-storey of African Olive and privets.

Primary works

Cut and paint woody weeds using chainsaws for large weeds and hand saws or loppers for smaller weeds.

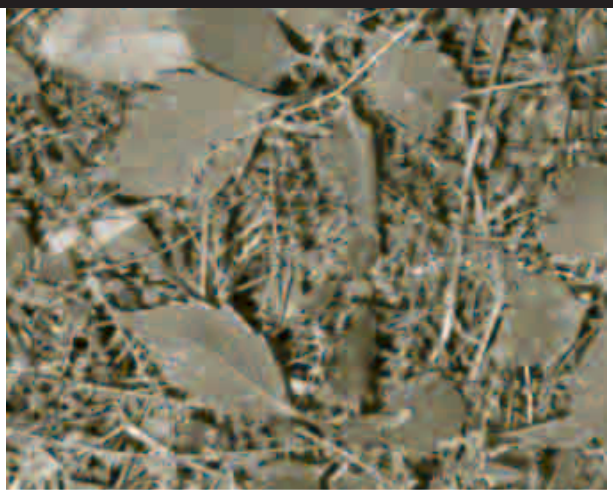
Brush-cut large areas of young growth to ground level and spray regrowth (before it exceeds 30 to 50 centimetres) with appropriate herbicides.

Create long and thin piles of woody debris for ecological 'pile burns'. The ecological value of pile burns in highly degraded areas where there is a lot of woody weed growth may be limited. However pile burns will allow the testing of the site's soil seed bank while also being an effective and cheap means of removing woody debris. Use the following method:

- remove large woody debris and pile or scatter separately for habitat
- spray water on piles to regulate temperature while burning
- on sites where it has been established that the soil seed bank has been exhausted, scatter locally collected native seed of hard-seeded species such as acacias onto cooling pile burn embers, and other herbs and grasses days later when the embers have completely cooled
- fence ash area with 'silt' fence to keep rabbits from grazing native regrowth (a 'silt' fence is a cloth fence used primarily to trap sediment but also works well to exclude grazers).

Rake up Wandering Jew, *Tradescantia fluminensis*, in the following way:

- rake and pile on weed mat or tarpaulin to allow for relocation
- pile in sunny location above high water level of nearby waterways where possible (larger taller piles leave less edge for regrowth)
- monitor piles for regrowth and spray edges with appropriate herbicide where necessary.



Employing best practice bush regeneration techniques will see a gradual return to 100% native groundcovers. (Greening Australia (NSW))

Follow-up works

Monitor continually straight after primary works and treat weed seedlings as they germinate.

Weeds generally come back first so:

- spot-spray privet/olive seedlings
- spot-spray any weedy herb seedlings, e.g. *Sida rhombifolia*, *Solanum pseudocapsicum* and *Cirsium vulgare* seedlings
- monitor the weeds' progress and allow a month or two for annual weed growth to reach about 50 centimetres or prior to seeding, then spot-spray.

Where annual weeds have not been treated as seedlings and have reached approximately one-metre high:

- brush-cut areas of tall annual weeds prior to seeding
- rake and pile weedy debris that has been brush-cut, which concentrates any debris that might set seed after cutting and allows you to monitor the germination of any seeds which can be treated more easily when piled rather than scattered around – treat as for Wandering Jew above
- return approximately two weeks to a month later (sooner if necessary) and spot-spray any reshooting annual weeds
- continue to monitor and spot-spray to keep annuals at bay
- monitor and repeat any time that tall annuals begin to dominate the site (although careful monitoring and follow-up should make this unnecessary)
- hand treat any persistent or woody weeds, e.g. *Cestrum parqui*, *Phytolacca octandra* and small woody weeds.

It should be remembered that repeated brush-cutting is not a long-term management option.

Sustained follow-up has led to the restoration of a dense native groundcover, including *Dichondra repens*, *Centella asiatica*, *Einadia* spp., *Solanum prinophyllum*, *Hydrocotyle* spp., *Veronica plebia*, *Pratia purpurascens* and *Microlaena stipoides.*

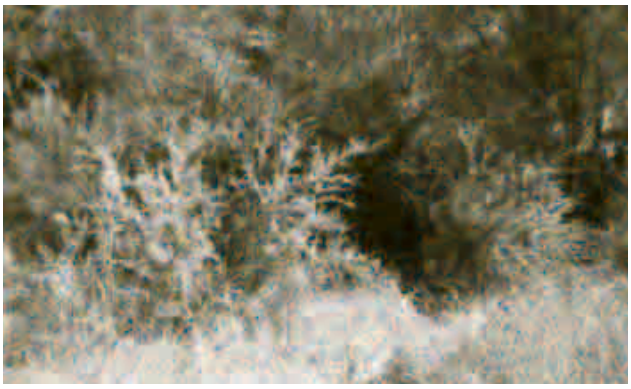
Continuing site assessment and maintenance

Rehabilitated areas need to be monitored and managed after rehabilitation. Rehabilitation success is often compromised by the invasion of weeds, stock, feral animals and human activities. Self-sustaining conditions may take many years to reach.

Maintenance of remnant areas may include:

- repairing any erosion problems
- fire management
- pest and weed control
- fencing maintenance
- assessing the site's resilience and introducing seed or seedlings from a known provenance if required.

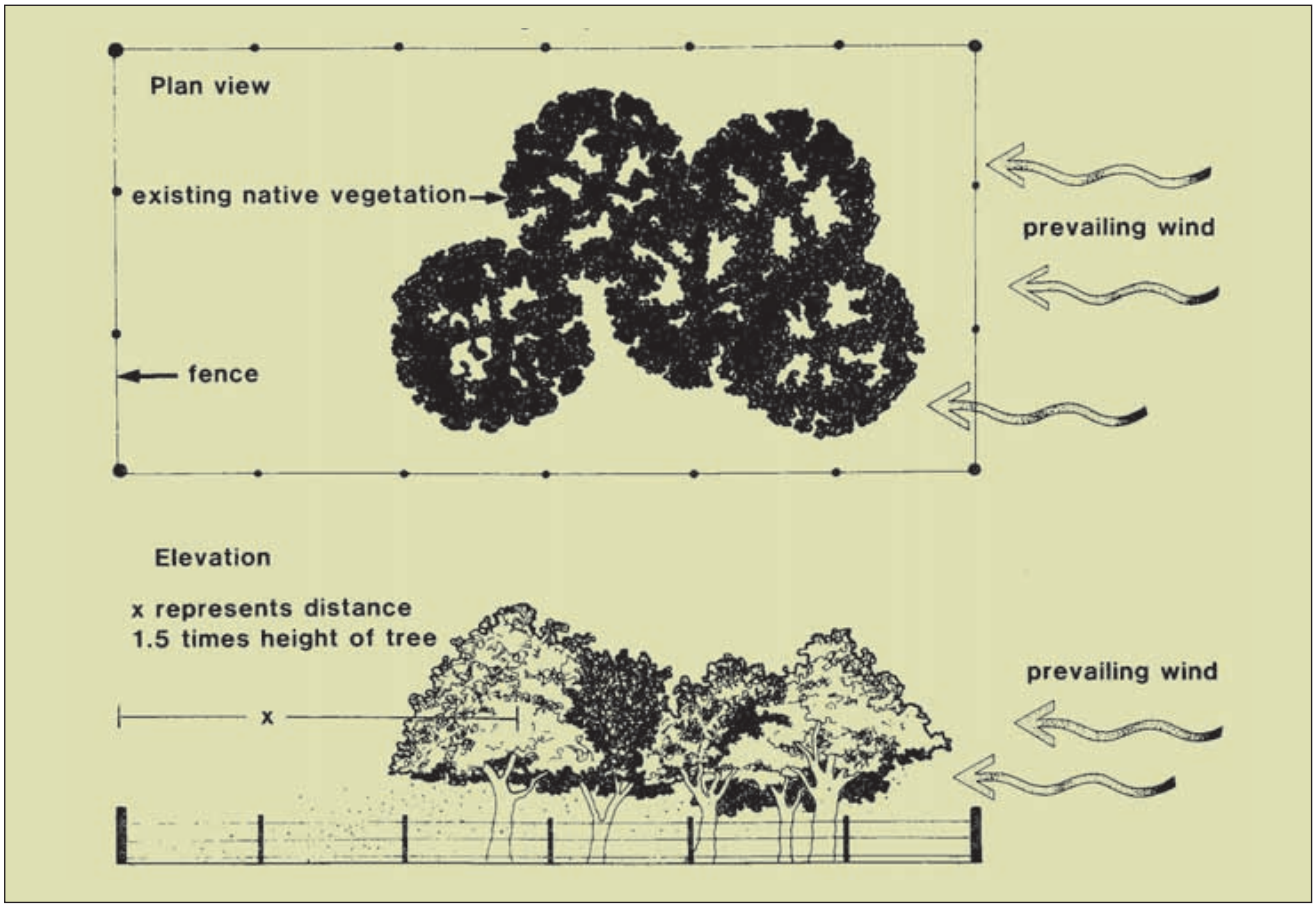
Once an area of remnant vegetation has been fenced to protect from stock or other uses which damage native vegetation (see Figure 6), and vermin and weeds controlled, the bush may grow back from stored seed, coppices and underground organs. Remember it may take one to two years before seedlings germinate. However, if no *regeneration* is taking place and the remnant is not responding to regeneration techniques (including both natural regeneration and/or assisted regeneration, including the use of 'triggers'), *revegetation* activities such as direct seeding or planting may need to be considered (see Chapter 5).



The Eastern Creek demonstration site at Doonside before bush regeneration techniques were employed. (Greening Australia (NSW))

Nine months after bush regeneration techniques began at the Eastern Creek site. (Greening Australia (NSW))

Figure 6: Fencing of remnant eucalypts to encourage natural regeneration



Source: Venning (1988)

The use of regeneration 'triggers'

In the past, disturbance to an ecosystem has generally been perceived negatively: as an event involving damage or destruction. However it is now understood that disturbance is a natural process integral to community and ecosystem dynamics (Thomas 1994; Pickett *et al.* 1992).

In areas like the Cumberland Plain that are integrated with urban and farming communities, natural disturbance regimes either no longer exist or have been extensively modified, and sometimes environmental disturbance 'triggers' may be needed to aid regeneration and maintain the ecological health of the bushland.

Fire as a management tool

In the grassy Cumberland Plain woodlands, fire was traditionally used to stimulate underground food resources and grass for game (Benson & Howell 1990b; Kohen & Downing 1992). Fire is an important part of the Australian landscape, and much of the country's flora and fauna have evolved in its presence. Inappropriate fire regimes may significantly reduce the biodiversity of Cumberland Plain communities.

Numerous studies indicate that many of Australia's plant species require fire, or some other form of disturbance, to regenerate from seed. Fire may induce seed germination through breaking the seed's dormancy in some way allowing seed release from canopy stores, or by altering the environment to provide better conditions for germination. These better conditions include the temporary improvement in seedbeds or making scarce resources more available (Hobbs 2002).

Many species have evolved in fire-prone habitats and have adaptations that allow individuals to survive fire (Gill *et al.* 1981). Such adaptations include epicormic buds (formed under the bark), the ability to resprout from underground organs called lignotubers (these plants are referred to as 'resprouters'), and the establishment of soil-stored seed and canopy seed banks (referred to as 'obligate seeders').

Bordered on three sides by national parks, Sydney has a sprawling urban area also containing significant bushland reserves. Prescribed (fuel reduction) burning is a major tool used in managing the threat of wildfire to suburbs and outlying rural areas adjacent to bushland. However low-intensity prescribed fires for fuel reduction may be detrimental to the conservation of native plants because the heat derived is insufficient to stimulate the germination of buried, dormant seed (Bradstock & Auld 1995).

The use of fire for ecological purposes is not as common as its use for the reduction of fuel loads, despite the evidence of numerous ecological benefits such as the promotion of species diversity.

Fire exerts a powerful influence on the native vegetation found on the Cumberland Plain. If we want to conserve western Sydney's vegetation communities, we must consciously manage fire. The components of a fire regime include season, intensity and frequency.

Seasonal timing of fire

The early European settlers found that from 1788 to 1845 the pattern of fire around Sydney was markedly seasonal with 87 per cent of fires occurring from August to January, i.e. in spring and early summer. Although incomplete, written records of fires in the Sydney area in this period provide some indication of pre-settlement fire regimes and possible Aboriginal land management practices. In the earliest years, local Aborigines were described as frequently 'setting fire to the country' (Phillip 1791; Hunter 1793; Tench 1789) particularly in the summer, or when it was dry or windy (Hunter 1793). Writers commented on the Aboriginal practice of burning the previous season's grasses to encourage new growth (Atkinson 1826 and Bennett 1834, as cited in McLoughlin 1998).

In contrast with this earlier 'natural' or historical fire season, current prescribed burning practices follow a distinctly different seasonal pattern. More than 60 per cent of prescribed burning for asset protection in Sydney between 1980 and 1995 was conducted in autumn and winter (McLoughlin 1998).

A fire regime between August and January has been identified as the optimal seasonal range for many of Sydney's plant communities. It may be unsuitable to consider prescribed burning in the hottest part of this season (November to January), and the occasional burn in winter or autumn would not be too detrimental. However, the ecological implications of the seasonal timing of fire in the remainder of this period merits consideration in fire management plans and prescribed burning programs, along with frequency and intensity, as changes to the fire regime over time may result in altered vegetation composition (McLoughlin 1998; Whelan 1995).

Intensity of fire

Work to date on the seed banks of eucalypt woodlands suggests that while many species germinate in the absence of fire, the fullest range of species is obtained when fire is present. Work by Hill (2000) suggests that there is a substantial soil seed bank (1000 seeds/m^2) under Cumberland Plain Woodland. More heat-responding species than smoke-responding species were identified in research by Thomas *et al.* (2003).

Although smoke and ash can stimulate seed germination, for many species with hard seed coats the breaking of seed dormancy occurs with heat (Auld & O'Connell 1991). Legume species are an important component of the shrub species found in many of the vegetation communities on the Cumberland Plain. Studies of legume species have concluded that the highest germination for most species occurred at 80°C, while little germination occurred at temperatures below 40°C (Hill & French 2003).

Tip:

Experimental studies show that grazing can reduce the survival of seedlings that germinate following fire (Leigh & Holgate 1979). Grazing should be excluded from burnt areas for the first one to two years after fire, and while perennial species are setting seed.

Low-intensity fires often provide a competitive advantage for resprouting species over 'seeder' species. This is due to the fact that most obligate seeders are fire-sensitive and adult plants are generally killed outright, whereas vegetative resprouters often survive such fires. If low-intensity fires are not hot enough to induce germination of seed stored in the soil or canopy, the result is relatively little seed regeneration. In contrast, high-intensity fires will favour the seeders in any vegetation community (Thomas 1994).

Fuel loads in Cumberland Plain vegetation are markedly lower than those of vegetation communities found on the Hawkesbury Sandstone areas of Sydney. On the shale soils of Cumberland Plain Woodland, for example, the accumulation curve for fuel load builds up to around 9.5 tonnes/hectare then flattens out, while for sandstone woodland it reaches over 30 tonnes/hectare (Watson, forthcoming). Lower fuel loads will directly influence fire intensity. So although property protection is still a priority when managing Cumberland Plain vegetation, there is not the same degree of conflict between burning for ecological purposes and for asset protection as occurs in the sandstone areas of Sydney.

Fire frequency

Fire frequency can be defined as the number of fires occurring in a given time. Fire frequency has a major effect on communities through its interaction with plant species characteristics, and can affect both community structure and composition.

The understorey of most vegetation communities on the Cumberland Plain is dominated by herbaceous plants, with only patchy shrub representation. This contrasts markedly with the shrub-dominated Hawkesbury Sandstone communities. Herbaceous species tend to have shorter life spans than larger woody plants. This could be a significant advantage in a community that is subject to frequent fire events, suggesting that this vegetation type may be reflecting a long-term adaptation to frequent fires (Thomas 1994).

Fire regimes that encourage a balance between trees and shrubs, and open patches dominated by forbs and grasses may hold the key to maintaining species diversity in many of the Cumberland Plain vegetation communities. A study by Watson (forthcoming) suggests that an open grassy woodland with obligate seeder shrubs is best maintained using variable intervals between fires of between four and 12 years. Inter-fire intervals need to be long enough to allow regeneration of obligate seeder shrubs. Almost all Cumberland Plain Woodland shrub species will be producing seed three years after a fire. On the other hand, fire needs to occur before short-lived fire-dependent species and their seed banks lose their viability (senesce).

Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda*) is potentially vulnerable to this viability problem. Recent research suggests this species may play a key role in ecosystem function in grassy woodlands, regulating nitrogen to the advantage of native perennials over annual weeds (Prober *et al.* 2004). In Victorian grasslands, *Themeda* declines due to self-shading between six and 11 years after fire, and does not recover to any great extent if burnt after 11 years (Lunt & Morgan 1999). Although *Themeda* in Cumberland Plain Woodland may be slower-growing due to poorer soils, it has been suggested that inter-fire intervals in *Themeda*-dominated remnants on the plain should not exceed 12 years to ensure the vigour and persistence of this species is maintained (Watson, forthcoming).

A related issue may exist with Native Blackthorn (*Bursaria spinosa*). Research suggests that frequency and dominance of this species increases as fire frequency decreases. Shrubs other than *Bursaria* may be more abundant in areas where fire is moderately frequent than in areas burnt often or rarely. Although *Bursaria* has a tendency to dominate Cumberland Plain bushland landscape under particular circumstances, this does not imply that it is a problem plant in itself. *Bursaria* is a natural and important component of all Cumberland Plain remnants. Its thorny nature and tendency to form thickets make it important habitat for many birds (Watson, forthcoming).

Bursaria spinosa *dominates in a long unburnt site, Scheyville National Park. (P. Watson)*

In contrast Themeda australis *is dominant with small patches of* Bursaria spinosa. *This site at Holsworthy has shorter inter-fire intervals. This picture was taken 12 months post-fire. (P. Watson)*

However its management may be a consideration when planning for species diversity.

The relatively low abundance of other shrubs in long-unburnt areas may reflect competitive interactions with *Bursaria*. Some ground species favour open patches, and will therefore decrease in abundance if these patchy areas are lost from the landscape (Watson, forthcoming).

Given uncertainties around minimum intervals for maintaining obligate seeder shrubs, and maximum intervals for limiting *Bursaria* expansion and maintaining *Themeda*, it is suggested that managers monitor sites for:

- **Flowering of obligate seeder shrubs** – Fire should normally be excluded until these species have had a couple of good flowering years.
- ***Bursaria* expansion** – Managers may want to apply fire more frequently if *Bursaria* is encroaching into previously open areas.
- ***Themeda* health and density** – Burning should revitalise *Themeda* and open up the grass sward so herbs can regenerate.

These simple monitoring measures will assist in tailoring fire regimes to particular sites and growth rates, which will vary with differences in rainfall and topography.

The understorey in Shale Gravel Transition Forest has a higher shrub component than the grassy Cumberland Plain Woodland. Shrub species such as Dillwynia tenuifolia, Pultenaea parviflor *and* Ozothamnus diosmifolius *are in abundance. (P. Watson)*

In contrast, grasses such as Microlaena *and* Themeda *dominate the understorey at this moderately burnt Cumberland Plain Woodland site at Ropes Creek. (P. Watson)*

In some remnants, *Themeda* will be uncommon and/or *Bursaria* dominant, possibly indicating a low exposure to fire. These remnants may have woody weeds. An experimental approach to the use of fire is suggested on these sites. Introduction of *Themeda* through seeding, using seed from a known source, could be considered. Short inter-fire intervals could be trialled in parts of the landscape using mosaic burns to assess possibilities for weed control, and to create open patches. If *Themeda* patches exist, experimental fires could perhaps focus on these areas.

As the shrub complement of Cumberland Plain vegetation increases, appropriate fire frequencies are also likely to increase. As explained above, to maintain grassy Cumberland Plain remnants, fires should probably be a minimum of four years and a maximum of 12 years apart. Castlereagh Woodland contains more shrub species, including the slow-growing obligate seeder *Petrophile pulchella*. Thus minimum intervals need to be somewhat higher than in Cumberland Plain Woodland; approximately six years is suggested with a maximum interval around 20 years (Watson, forthcoming).

Across the plain, the gradient in fire frequency thresholds can be expected to match the gradient in grass/shrub dominance, ranging from Cumberland Plain Woodland (4 to 12 years), through Shale Gravel Transition Forest (5 to 15 years), Castlereagh Ironbark Forest (6 to 20 years), Castlereagh Scribbly Gum Woodland (6 to 20 years), and Agnes Banks Woodland (7 to 25 years).

In all vegetation types, greatest species diversity is likely to be maintained by ensuring variation in the length of inter-fire intervals within these thresholds (Keith & Bradstock 1994; Morrison *et al.* 1995). In all cases, careful observation of regeneration methods, flowering times and senescence will help refine these estimates.

As with all thresholds, the occasional violation is not likely to cause major problems. Patchiness in time and space may, in fact, lead to some parts of landscapes being burnt very frequently and others very rarely, and this may even benefit biodiversity if the extent of these areas is limited. However repeated frequent fire across a landscape will most likely result in loss of species diversity, as will long-term fire exclusion (Watson, forthcoming; Worboys *et al*. 1998). To allow for seed production and building of seed bank reserves, a period of three reproductive years should be added to the minimum fire interval for sites that have recently experienced an inter-fire interval below the relevant minimum threshold (Keith *et al.* 2002).

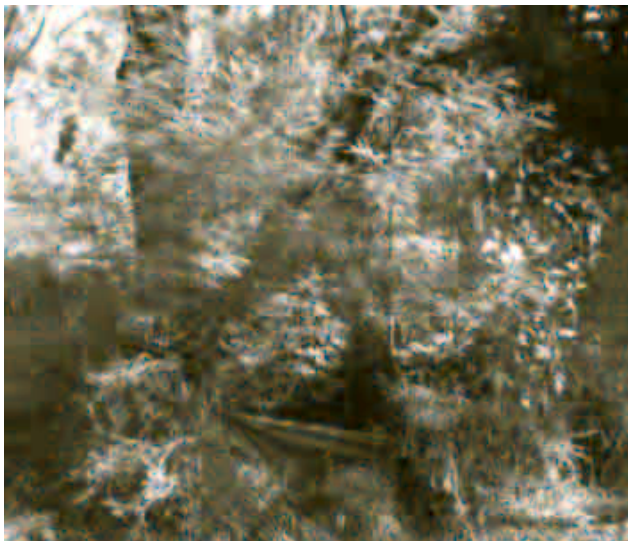
Research also suggests there are considerably fewer weeds in frequently burnt Cumberland Plain Woodland sites than in those with moderate or long inter-fire intervals, suggesting that frequent burning along the edges of larger remnants may actually be a good way to control weeds, manage fire hazards and control some edge effects (Watson, forthcoming). However it should be noted that a single fire should not be used to control weeds, as many weeds are also stimulated by fire and fire as such should be just one technique in a well developed management program (Howell 1992).

Integrated and mosaic fire patterns

The deliberate use of strategically placed pile burns has been very successful in stimulating the regeneration of native vegetation on restoration sites. The pile should be kept below one metre high and not cover more than ten square metres to ensure the fire is controllable and does not sterilise the soil by producing too hot a burn for soil-stored seed. Using weed debris from the site can result in both labour and cost savings (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b). Hand broadcasting of native seed in the ashen area has led to successful germination of natives.

Broader patch burns have also been successfully used on the Cumberland Plain. This technique is often integrated with prior weed management. For example, herbicide spray or wiping of weeds has occurred to control standing populations of weeds such as patches of *Pennisetum clandestinum* (Kikuyu) or *Eragrostis curvula* (African Lovegrass), with the dead weeds providing fuel for the fire (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b). The months after a fire may also offer good opportunities for weed control, as some resprouting weeds or weed seedlings may be targeted more easily without damaging native species.

Results of a successful pile burn at the South Creek demonstration site, Erskine Park. (Greening Australia (NSW))



In all Cumberland Plain vegetation communities fire is best used in a mosaic pattern. This will ensure a variety of post-fire age classes of vegetation, which in turn will provide habitat for a full range of animal species and maximise the chances of plant diversity. When planning for the use of fire, one consideration should be coordination of your program with that of your neighbours so a variety of post-fire vegetation classes is achieved in a mosaic pattern across the landscape.

Tip:

Greatest species diversity is maintained by using fire regimes that encourage variation. Variation in the length of inter-fire intervals (within thresholds), variation in fire intensity and a variable season of burn (between August and January) are likely to provide the best results for the native biodiversity of your bushland.

Planning the use of fire

When planning to use fire in a restoration project, land managers will need to consult the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) and the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC). Approvals and permits are sometimes required for conducting hazard reduction burns.

The RFS provides environmental approvals for hazard reduction works only. If the planned fire is for ecological reasons rather than for hazard reduction, approval may be required from DEC. The RFS or NSW Fire Brigades will still need to be contacted about conducting a safe and legal burn.

Local bushfire risk management plans are prepared by the local bushfire management committee and these should be first considered when planning a hazard reduction or bush regeneration burn. Contact your local RFS fire control centre or NSW Fire Brigades for more detailed advice.

Landholders also have responsibilities under the *Rural Fires Act 1997* to prevent bushfires on their land and to minimise the danger of a fire spreading onto other land. As such, it may be inappropriate for a large property to encourage the regeneration of vegetation along the boundary with adjoining properties, particularly where assets on adjoining land may be at risk from bushfire. Depending on the size of the property and possible risks, it may be appropriate to leave a break or conduct burns aimed at hazard reduction along this boundary area. It is therefore important to plan any regeneration burns and revegetation works carefully. The local RFS fire control centre can provide advice on these matters.

Smoke water and smoked mulch

More Cumberland Plain Woodland species respond to heat than smoke (Morris & Wood 2001) and the heat signal from fire is important for maintaining community composition in this vegetation community. Other studies have shown that for some native species it is the elements in smoke that trigger regeneration, rather than fire itself (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b). The limited use of smoke water may then be used as a potential tool to 'trigger' regeneration in some areas where burning is considered improbable.

Soil disturbance

Deliberate soil disturbance can be used to relieve the often severe compaction problems arising from past management regimes on the Cumberland Plain, releasing soil-stored seed banks and creating niches for regeneration. Bare, compacted areas, such as former car parks and old tracks, provide good targets for this technique (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b). Please note that deep disturbance (ripping) is not generally recommended for Cumberland Plain sites and should never be undertaken in saline or waterlogged areas.

Reduction in plant mass

Greening Australia has observed that slashing seems to favour native grasses. This is because it removes the bulk of grass shoots, preventing exotics from achieving dominance in the grassland (D. Williams, Greening Australia (NSW), pers. comm., 2004). However slashing is more suited to grassy agricultural lands and should not be used in good quality remnants.

At the Greening Western Sydney Hoxton Park site, managed by Greening Australia (NSW), a fire in January 2001 led to large-scale germination of *Acacia* seedlings. An alternative approach to controlling plant mass could be to let the *Acacia* seedlings grow on and out-shade the exotic grasses. The introduction of native shrubs and trees may be a means of favouring native species on the ground (Davies & Christie 2001; D. Williams, Greening Australia (NSW), pers. comm., 2004).

Herbicide and scarification in introduced pastures

In remnants where introduced pasture vegetation is prevalent, natural regeneration is not likely to occur due mainly to the intense competition from introduced species and the density of the groundcover. Techniques that can encourage regeneration include using a knockdown herbicide combined with scarification to reduce weed competition and soil compaction.

When many desirable native species are already present in the understorey, natural regeneration is likely to occur with minimal physical intervention. In these situations, some small-scale trigger disturbance, such as scarification of the soil or the use of fire, can be beneficial.

Reducing stocking rates and careful management of grazing regimes will allow natural regeneration to occur on pasture land. (DEC/K. Wale)

Grazing management

Timed pressure ('crash') grazing or managed selective grazing may also provide the disturbances required for a sustainable and healthy remnant community. Fencing out remnants allows the landholder to appropriately manage the area as a separate land unit.

Grazing can also be used as a tool for controlling weeds and reducing fire hazards. However, care should be taken that grazing regimes are appropriate: ensure that at least twelve months to two years has passed after the initial exclusion of livestock. During this period, any natural regeneration can be observed and the appropriate management options addressed (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003a).

Crash grazing involves the use of many hungry animals for a short period, as the most damage is usually caused when animals become full and bored. Also, keep in mind where the animals have previously been grazing and the possibility of weed seeds being introduced to the area through faeces or attached to wool or fur.

Other triggers

Some species may sucker from their root system when they have been disturbed, and bushland restoration managers may deliberately disturb plant roots to trigger natural regeneration. This has often been most successful in relation to *Casuarina glauca* regeneration where suckering from the root system has been achieved by mechanical disturbance. Some suckering of wattle species, such as *Acacia parramattensis* and *A. implexa*, has also been observed in the course of hand digging to remove weeds (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b).

Another method to stimulate natural regeneration is to water or irrigate. This method induces a trigger response from vegetation resulting in seedling germination when artificially simulating favourable conditions after flood (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b).

CHAPTER 5

Restoration through revegetation

Revegetation versus natural regeneration 50

Species selection 50

Seed collection 51
Genetic integrity and diversity 51

Site preparation and planning 54
Erosion control 54
Soil compaction 55
Mulching 55
Weed and feral animal control 55
Watering 55
Fencing 55

Direct seeding 56
Site preparation 56
Sowing techniques 57

Planting 59
Propagation 59
Site preparation 59
Planting techniques 60
Translocation and transplanting 60

Pattern and sequence of revegetation 61
Planting all layers at once 61
Planting groundcovers 62
Creating a woodland framework 62
Multi-species tubestock planting 62
Adding shrubs later 62
Species selection and revegetation in saline areas 62
Management of edges 63
Develop a yearly program 64
Re-creating habitat components in a revegetation program 64

Care and maintenance after planting 65
Watering 65
Fertilising 65
Weed control 65
Weed matting and mulches 66
Tree guards 66
Staking and tying 66
Insecticides 66
Control of stock access and feral animals 66
Fire 66
Replacing losses 66

Revegetation versus natural regeneration

Revegetation is an excellent tool for linking areas of remnant native vegetation. However its ecological and genetic value is limited in restoring areas which have the potential to regenerate naturally.

The more that is known about the structure and function of the community you wish to restore, the greater the chance of success. Resilience on any Cumberland Plain site can be surprisingly strong and persistent in or adjacent to remnants, even in extremely degraded and altered areas not likely to be formally classified as woodland (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b). Many Cumberland Plain remnant and regrowth areas have endangered ecological status and revegetation in or immediately adjacent to them requires approval from the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC). Licensing queries should be directed to DEC's Wildlife Management Unit on (02) 9585 6540.

Revegetation measures should only be considered when:

- the regeneration potential of a site has been wholly or severely depleted
- attempts to trigger regeneration of soil-stored seed by a range of techniques have failed
- key missing species can not be naturally recruited to an area.

In revegetation programs the aim is to use the minimum intervention necessary to re-establish natural regeneration processes. This is a sound philosophy from both a resource and ecological perspective. In relation to the vegetation communities on the Cumberland Plain it means that we need to be aware of the potential to oversimplify ecosystems through revegetation.

There is very little documentation on the past distribution of native vegetation on the Cumberland Plain and it is important that the full range of species variation is retained (Benson & Howell 1993). We are only beginning to understand the subtle complexities in biological diversity, and in many areas small remnants provide the only records of the pre-European vegetation (see Appendix 1 for a list of reference sites). Thus it is easy for us, often unintentionally, to distort the natural community by introducing non-local plant material through our revegetation projects. As a result, the valuable genetic resources of an area can be irrevocably lost.

Species selection

'Best practice' in species selection has changed markedly over the past few decades from the simple use of Australian native species, through using only locally indigenous species, to propagating material from the particular bushland area to be planted. The use of indigenous species grown from local seed is essential for revegetation projects. These local species are adapted to the local climate and soil conditions and provide natural resources for the local wildlife.

The aim of restoration projects should be to repair and enhance. They should not impair the site's ecological values in order to simplify the restoration process. The increasing use of propagated and planted material, the pressure for quick results and the pressure for increased planting variety at the local level raise questions about maintaining genetic integrity in restoration programs.

It is generally the more easily obtained, collected and propagated species that tend to be used in revegetation projects, and these are typically canopy trees such as eucalypts and certain pioneer shrubs (often species of the family Fabaceae such as peas and wattles). Groundcovers, particularly in any quantity or diversity, are less often used, if at all (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b).

Historically there has been a lack of detailed knowledge about the structure and diversity of Cumberland Plain communities. Recent studies by Tozer (2003) and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (2002) now provide valuable information on the species and diversity found in the plain's endangered ecological communities.

These documents should be consulted for comprehensive information and species lists about the endangered ecological communities on the Cumberland Plain. The report *Native Vegetation of the Cumberland Plain: Final Edition* (2002) can be found on the DEC website www.environment.nsw.gov.au under 'Cumberland Plain Vegetation Mapping Project'.

When planning the distribution and abundance of the vegetation community you wish to emulate, you should also be guided by your observations of existing nearby remnants. A good way to tell if a plant is local to your area is to look at vegetation along the roadsides or in conservation reserves. Appendix 1 provides a list of reference sites. Another good source of information is Greenweb. A list of species for each local government area can be found on their website www.greenwebsydney.net.au

Seed collection

Genetic integrity and diversity

Material for propagation is best found on-site or close to it. This is known as 'local provenance'. The use of site-adapted local seed for propagation is best for restoring pre-existing plant communities and conserving local biodiversity. It is also more likely to lead to a successful self-perpetuating plant community, as local provenant seed is adapted to local soils, climatic conditions and ecological processes.

The rate of change in Cumberland Plain endangered ecological communities is considered very slow, with many species (particularly understorey species) remaining highly localised and dispersal very limited. Table 5 provides guidelines on seed collection ranges based on estimated dispersal distances for various plant categories.

Table 5: Guidelines for seed collection ranges

Plant categories	Collection range	Pollination by	Seed dispersal	Life span	Population density
Forbs and herbs	1	Wind Insects	Birds Insects Mammals Gravity	Short	Low-high
Wattles	1	Insects Birds Mammals	Insects Gravity	Short-medium	Low-high
Peas	1	Self Birds Insects	Insects Gravity	Short-medium	Low-high
Orchids and lilies	1	Insects	Wind	Short-medium	Low-medium
Ferns and allies*	1	Spores: no pollination	Wind	Short-long	Low-medium
Heaths and understorey shrubs	2	Insects Wind Birds Possibly self	Insects Gravity	Short	Low-high
Daisies	2	Insects	Wind	Short-medium	Low-high
Grasses	2	Wind	Wind	Short	High
Fleshy fruit plants (not trees), e.g. *Dianella*, *Exocarpus*	2	Birds Bats Other mammals Insects	Birds Bats Other mammals	Medium	Low-high
Banksias	2	Birds Mammals Insects	Wind Gravity	Medium-long	Low-medium
Casuarinas and conifers	2	Wind	Wind Birds Gravity	Long	Low-high
Eucalyptus, Angophora, Syncarpia, Callistemon	2	Birds Bats Other mammals Insects	Wind Gravity	Medium-long	Low-high
Trees with fleshy fruits	3	Birds Bats Other mammals Insects	Birds Bats Other mammals	Long	Low-medium

* Ferns and allies are a special case because of their reproductive physiology. You may need to check how each species interchanges genetic material.

Key

Collection ranges	Guideline for seed collection
1	Crucial to collect as locally as possible from remnant or adjacent (same vegetation and microclimate).
2	Collect locally but can extend to nearby remnants that were formerly contiguous. For small plant populations, use general principles.
3	Can collect widely, but preferably not beyond subivisions of the state.

Life span		Population densities
Short (Years, including annuals)	Low	< 10 plants per/ha
Medium (Decades)	Medium	10–50 plants per/ha
Long Centuries)	High	> 50 plants per/ha

Source: Hawkesbury–Nepean Catchment Management Trust Draft Provenance Protocols

The collection of suitable material is more difficult when small, isolated remnants are involved, and where the plant community is restricted in occurrence. The limited availability of source material creates pressures that could lead to over-collection of seed or even place remnant plant populations at risk. Only ten per cent of a species' total annual seed crop should be collected from an area. It is important to leave seed on-site as it can play an important role in natural regeneration of the plant community, as well as providing valuable food resources for fauna.

For best results, it is recommended that you collect seed only from naturally occurring areas of native vegetation and where there are relatively large numbers of individuals. This will ensure that local genetic diversity is maintained, seed is viable and good establishment of plants is achieved.

Tip:

Most bushland communities on the Cumberland Plain are listed as endangered under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* and a licence from the Department of Environment and Conservation is required to collect seed from species and communities listed under this Act. Contact the Wildlife Licensing Unit on (02) 9585 6540.

Hardenbergia violacea *in a seed orchard in the Western Sydney Parklands, Hoxton Park. (Greening Australia (NSW))*

A consistent supply of quality seed is essential for the success of revegetation projects. For large-scale revegetation, or projects that will be undertaken over a number of years, it might be worthwhile establishing a seed orchard of native provenance species. This will protect the genetic integrity of the restored bushland site while also producing significant time and cost savings for your project. Where only very small amounts of propagating material is available because of the rarity of the species or the small size of the natural populations, stocks of such material for revegetation work may be built up over time by cultivation (Howell *et al*. 1995).

A licence to collect seed

Under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*, a licence is required when undertaking an action that is likely to 'harm' an endangered ecological community. This definition includes collecting seed from such a community, and licensing provides a mechanism for addressing the dangers of over-collection. In licensing seed collection, DEC also gives consideration to the issue of provenance and maintaining genetic integrity. For the purposes of these guidelines, DEC's position on seed collection and provenance is guided by the FloraBank guidelines available at www.florabank.org.au

There is an issue about how local the stock should be and how far afield appropriate collection might be. Currently 'local' is interpreted to mean as close as possible to a site. However, the DEC-issued licence to collect seed will indicate collection distances on a case-by-case basis. You should closely match conditions present at the collected location to those of the planting site. Of course the plant community, geology and soil type should be the same but aspect should also be considered.

When buying or ordering stock from a nursery, it is advisable to specify from which provenance you wish the seed collected. If purchasing seed from seed merchants, ask for seed that was collected from the same area where you intend to plant. You should also ask in which year the seed was collected, especially for eucalypt seed that can lose viability quickly if stored inappropriately. Other seeds such as hard-coated Acacia seeds have long storage lives and the year of collection is less critical. Alternatively, you could engage a seed collector to collect from your required provenance and then provide this seed to the nursery, or engage a grower who will collect from your site and grow the seedlings for your project.

Table 6 details the approximate collection times on the Cumberland Plain of seed from the species described in this guide. This timetable can be used for planning your seed collection year. Be sure to monitor trees and shrubs for more specific details of when individual species' seed is ripe. Please note that seeding times of species described in this table can vary from year to year and even across the region depending on local conditions and seasonal variation.

Table 6: Collection times for Cumberland Plain species

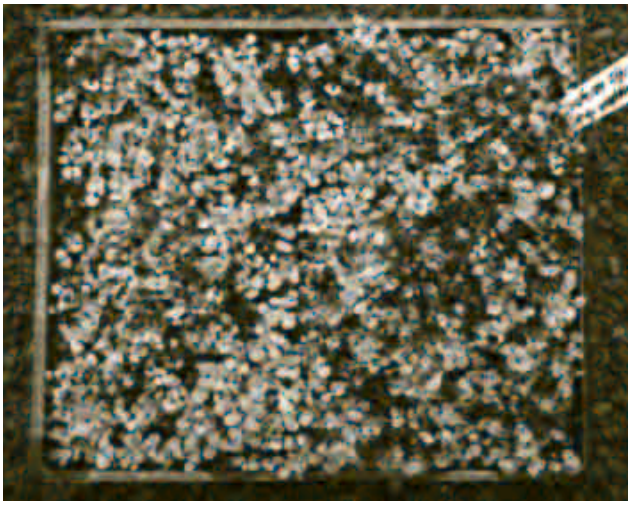
Species	Collection window
Acacia binervia	November–December
Acacia decurrens	Early to mid-December
Acacia elongata	November
Acacia falcata	Late November–early December
Acacia floribunda	Late November–early December
Acacia parramattensis	Late November–early December
Acacia ulicifolia	October–January
Acmena smithii	May–September
Ajuga australis	Late December–end January
Allocasuarina littoralis	All year round
Angophora bakeri	April–July
Angophora subvelutina	February–June
Backhousia myrtifolia	December–January
Banksia spinulosa	All year
Billardiera scandens	December–March
Bulbine bulbosa	November–early January
Bursaria spinosa	April–May
Callistemon salignus	All year
Carex appressa	December–January
Casuarina cunninghamiana	All year
Casuarina glauca	All year
Clematis glycinoides	November–early December
Danthonia tenuior	December–May
Daviesia genistifolia	November–January
Daviesia ulicifolia	November–January
Dianella caerula	November–February
Dichelachne micrantha	December–January
Dillwynia juniperina/sieberi	November–early January
Dodonaea falcata	November–December
Dodonaea viscosa	October–February
Echinopogon caespitosus	December–early March
Eleocharis spp.	December–January
Eucalyptus amplifolia	Late July–early March
Eucalyptus crebra	December–May
Eucalyptus eugenioides	June–September
Eucalyptus fibrosa	April–October
Eucalyptus globoidea	March–June
Eucalyptus maculata	January–May
Eucalyptus moluccana	January–March
Eucalyptus parramattensis	November–February
Eucalyptus punctata	October–February
Eucalyptus sideroxylon	August–February
Eucalyptus tereticornis	January–March
Geranium solanderi	December–February
Glycine tabacina	October–June
Hakea sericea	All year
Hardenbergia violacea	November–December
Indigofera australis	November–February
Juncus spp.	December–March
Kunzea ambigua	December–March
Leptospermum spp.	All year
Lomandra longifolia	December–March
Melaleuca decora	All year
Melaleuca linariifolia	All year
Melaleuca styphelioides	All year
Microlaena stipoides	November–February
Ozothamnus diosmifolius	November–January
Poa labillardieri	December–March
Pultenaea microphylla	October–February
Solanum spp.	December–March
Sorghum leiocladum	Beginning of January
Stipa spp.	November–February
Themeda australis	Late December–early January
Wahlenbergia gracilis	December–February
Wahlenbergia stricta	November–February

Source: Greening Australia (NSW)

Checklist: Planning for seed collection

- A self-perpetuating plant community is promoted by the use of site-adapted endemic propagation material.
- Seed collection should be carried out within the framework of a formal seed collection policy or code of practice. *The Model Code of Practice for Community Based Collectors and Suppliers of Native Plant Seed* (1999) by FloraBank is the most recent and can be found on the FloraBank website at www.florabank.org.au
- Collectors need to meet requirements under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* including a section 91 licence from DEC when seed is collected from a plant community that is listed under the Act. Most plant communities on the Cumberland Plain have been listed.
- Seed should be collected on a project-by-project basis with the amounts collected based on the requirements of that project. Do not aim to stockpile seed.
- The proportion of seed taken from any one site should only be 10 per cent of a species' total annual seed crop from that site.
- Collectors require a clear understanding of the provenance range and vegetation communities involved.
- Collectors need to be aware that some species are protected under Schedule 13 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and that it is an offence to pick these plants.

Germination of Angophora floribunda *seed. (Greening Australia (NSW))*



Site preparation and planning

Revegetation work needs clear goals and objectives and a realistically long planning horizon. Planning should identify the ideal or preferred range of species to be included. As much time as possible – 12 months would be a good minimum – should be allowed so that local provenance seed collection and propagation can be carried out and planting staged, allowing as many species as practicable to be included from the range identified. This is particularly important in relation to the key component species of the community.

Sufficient resources to implement the revegetation work, for prior weed control and for ongoing maintenance also need to be allocated if efforts are not to be wasted (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b).

Tip:

One lesson that can be drawn from Cumberland Plain restoration projects is that good ground preparation and pre-planting weed control were the most important factors for ensuring the survival of planted tubestock and seeding operations.

Like any other restoration approach, revegetation requires the mitigation or treatment of any degrading influences. Thus environmental weeds and problems such as erosion need to be addressed. Additionally, any efforts that can be put into site preparation will greatly benefit the restoration results.

Erosion control

Before deciding to clear vegetation, you should first consider if stabilisation will be an issue. If the soil or soil/slope/climate combinations are prone to erosion, you will need to act quickly after clearing the site.

The methods for clearing unwanted vegetation are limitless. They range from pulling up individual weeds, to large-scale herbicide application, to using bulldozers. All techniques are legitimate in certain situations.

When selecting some form of physical soil stabiliser (in contrast to plantings) a number of factors should be considered. The most important will be the erosion risk, then the size of the site, and of course the resources available. Other factors will include the effect of the stabiliser on soil aeration, water penetration and soil

Managing badly eroded sites will need to incorporate erosion control techniques. (DEC)

temperature, any weed suppressant properties, germination conditions for desired plants as well as the longevity of the stabiliser. There are many effective weed and erosion-control mattings available on the market.

Depending on the scale of the operation and the erosion risk, a few logs thrown across the slope or, if necessary, pegged into place can also be a useful erosion-control technique.

In areas of moderate to low erosion risk, fast-growing native colonising species can be used to stabilise the soil. Some native grasses, such as *Chloris ventricosa*, *Austrodanthonia racemosa* or *Capillipedium spicigerum* will grow and establish cover quickly (Berryman 2005). Once the area has been stabilised using a fast-growing cover crop, both short-lived and long-lived trees, shrubs and groundcovers can be incorporated into the planting program.

Soil compaction

Ripping is a method used to relieve soil compaction and improve moisture retention. Ripping is not generally recommended on the Cumberland Plain except for severe compaction problems such as on old roads or carparks. A rip line should be no deeper than 20 to 50 centimetres, and where slopes are involved the rip line should follow the contour of the land. Deep ripping is not recommended in saline or waterlogged soils as it can create further problems.

Ripping should be undertaken early in the planting season or several months before. For saline areas, mounding of the soil may be required. See Chapter 2 and later in this chapter for specific information on planting in saline areas.

Mulching

Mulching of areas or around individual plants will both conserve moisture and delineate revegetated areas clearly. This is especially useful for sites that are bounded by mown areas. Undoubtedly the best mulch is the original leaf litter but on many sites it is unavailable in large quantities. An alternative is to approach the local council for mulched tree loppings, but be careful of material which contains seeds from unwanted plants. Some companies sell leaf litter and eucalyptus mulch.

Cypress pine woodchips are also available, as is a wide range of pine products. Recycled material, such as layers of newspaper, cardboard and the felt underlay of carpets, can be good weed suppressants. Dead weeds themselves are also handy suppressants and mulches. However, remember that if the mulch is deep enough to suppress weed growth, it will also suppress any native plant regrowth (Buchanan 1989), so for areas where native plant regrowth is an objective other weed control techniques should be used.

Weed and feral animal control

Weed control should be undertaken prior to planting, preferably two to six or more months before to deplete as much weed seed bank as possible. The section on weed control in Chapter 4 discusses many weed control strategies in detail. For the various treatment methods used on individual weed species, see Appendix 4.

Rabbit control is an ongoing issue on the Cumberland Plain. In some situations rabbit control should be done during the site-preparation phase, but seedling loss from herbivorous feral animals can generally be minimised by using tree guards.

The use of tree guards in combination with weed mats has been very effective on the Cumberland Plain. This technique protects the seedlings from rabbits, weed competition and the extremes of weather while also retaining valuable moisture (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003c).

Watering

Pre-watering of holes and plants prior to planting is beneficial. Newly planted seedlings should be watered in. Watering following planting is usually beneficial depending on site characteristics, resources and weather conditions, but is not always possible.

Fencing

Protective fencing or other barriers may be used to restrict access, and protect and delineate planting areas. When fencing to exclude stock from your rehabilitation area, it is important to consider the following:

- make sure animals cannot reach over the fence to graze the vegetation (electric fencing is a cheap way to exclude stock)
- exclude stock from the rehabilitation areas for at least one to two years after revegetation and during the flowering and seeding periods of the new plantings.

Rabbits will eat young seedlings and rural revegetation projects on the Cumberland Plain may need to consider protecting them from these pests. (DEC)

Direct seeding

Direct seeding has many advantages. It is quick, there is little labour involved, the cost per plant is low, plants grow quickly because their roots have not been disturbed, and the random placement looks more natural. There is some evidence to suggest that directly seeded trees, once established, are more resistant to drought and better able to recover from insect defoliation. Total failure can also result if the seed is not viable, the ground not moist enough and the temperature is wrong for germination. Drought can also be disastrous and heavy storms can wash away the seed if the site is poorly prepared.

Various methods of seed harvesting. (Greening Australia (NSW))

The advantage of direct seeding is that it is a much cheaper method for revegetation than tree planting. Costs as low as 5–20 cents per tree are possible, although realistically a final cost of about 50 cents per tree could be expected. In comparison, contractors can charge up to $3.50 per tree for the total cost of tubestock establishment.

Historically, the technique of direct seeding has often been limited to the use of a small range of suitable species such as large-seeded plants like acacias. Recent improvements in direct seeding techniques have meant that a greater diversity in species establishment is now possible. Direct seeding is often successfully carried out in combination with other planting activities.

One of the benefits of collecting local seed is its cost-effectiveness. However, seed collection can be time-consuming and should be factored into your planning program. The collection of seed is an art in itself requiring specialised skills and knowledge, especially if the seed drops as soon as it is ripe or if it is high in the canopy. Some species have dormancy mechanisms which inhibit immediate seed germination. Table 6 details the best times to collect seed from some Cumberland Plain species.

Refer to the organisations and books in FloraBank for more detailed information on how to collect, handle and store native seed, available by visiting www.florabank.org.au

Site preparation

Site preparation and the climatic conditions experienced after seeding are the two major factors in determining how successful your seedling establishment will be. While there is little you can do to control the weather, good site preparation is one area in which land managers can maximise the chances of a successful project.

Good site preparation aims to provide ideal conditions for seed germination and seed establishment. The basic requirements are:

- soft soil (not compacted) so that air, water and roots can penetrate
- bare soil, free of leaf litter and, more importantly, free of weeds, as weeds will compete with your native plants for water and nutrients (Buchanan 1989).

Methods of achieving soft and bare soil depend on the scale of the problem, the size of the site and cost. Bare soil can be achieved by:

- scraping off the debris and leaf litter
- fire alone or in combination with prior weed control using herbicides
- spraying weeds with herbicides three times in the 12 months before seeding (either knockdown and residual control such as Vorox AA® or knockdown only such as Roundup®)

- scraping off the topsoil to remove weed seeds – in paddocks and roadsides the top 2–10 centimetres, depending on soil type, has the highest concentration of these
- spot preparation, where small spots (one-metre diameter) can be prepared by removing weed and grass cover with a mattock or rakehoe and scarified, before being hand-sown (Buchanan 1989).

In bushland areas nothing may need to be done to create soft soil. However in areas compacted by heavy machinery, ripping to a depth of 20–50 centimetres is recommended. For severely affected areas deep ripping may be appropriate, but it is not recommended to rip deeper than 80 centimetres. After this deep ripping, the soil can be scarified by a conventional plough to depths of approximately 20 centimetres.

Ripping and ploughing must be done along the contours. The combination of ripping and ploughing should produce a coarse, rough seedbed which creates furrows for moisture retention and minimises overland water flow.

Weed control is essential for at least the minimum time needed to allow a build-up of soil moisture and to enable good establishment and growth of seedlings in the first year. There are four main options for a weed control strategy:

- controlling weeds for several months prior to seeding – useful for perennial or persistent weeds to deplete the weed seed bank
- controlling weeds only once (usually 30 days prior) before seeding operations
- controlling weeds throughout the first year as this is critical for long-term success, or
- controlling weeds throughout both the first and second years to help ensure survival, increased growth rates and reduced risk from unplanned burns.

The strategy you use will generally depend on the resources available and particular characteristics of your site.

Sowing techniques

Hydro-seeding

Hydro-seeding is provided by commercial companies in three forms: hydromulching, straw mulcher blows and 'glob' seeding.

Hydromulching is where seed, fertiliser and wood fibre or paper mulch are mixed in a tank on the back of a truck. The mix can be applied to steep slopes that are difficult to treat by other methods. The wood fibre provides initial surface erosion control, helps to retain moisture, and moderates ground temperature. On steep slopes or erosive areas, binders such as bitumen emulsion or polymer binder can also be added to the slurry (Buchanan 1989).

Straw mulcher blows is where a stream of chopped straw or hay is blown through a mist of polymer or bituminous binder. Seed and fertiliser can be applied at the same time. This method has greater moisture-retention properties than hydromulching and is therefore recommended for areas with erratic rainfall (Buchanan 1989).

Tip:

Favourable environmental conditions such as moist soil conditions and minimal weed competition are crucial to the success of direct seeding operations.

This mechanical seeder removes the top layer of grass, sprays herbicide, sows the seed and then covers the seed, all in one pass. (Greening Australia (NSW))

Glob seeding is where chopped fibreglass, seed, fertiliser and a coagulating agent are mixed then ejected through a high-pressure jet designed to soak up the slurry into 'globs' (Buchanan 1989).

Current thought is that native grasses fare poorly in hydromulching as the seed prefers to be covered by soil.

Mechanical seeding

For large areas more than a few hundred metres long, it can often be more efficient to use a machine. These machines are designed to either rip or create a raised furrow or a trench along which a predetermined quantity of seed is sown at specified intervals. Seed is often bulked with sawdust, bran, pollard, chick pellets or vermiculite. The seed is generally covered lightly in these specialised machines as the critical factor is to sow the seed at the right depth.

For small seeded species such as eucalypts, melaleucas and she-oaks the seed can be left uncovered or lightly covered by dragging wheat bags, a chain, brush or even a carpet behind the machine (Buchanan 1989). The NSW Department of Primary Industries, Greening Australia and Landcare are useful contacts for more information on seeding operations (see Appendix 6).

Hand sowing

Hand broadcasting seed is a suitable method for small areas or areas where access or slope are issues. Seeds can be sprinkled over the prepared site and covered lightly with soil by dragging a hessian bag half-filled with sand or the back of a rake.

Brush matting

The application of brush matting (cut stems) usually has two aims: to prevent erosion and spread seed. Species which retain seed on the plant but which shed it when the branch dries out (*Melaleuca*, *Eucalyptus*, *Hakea* and *Leptospermum)* are most suitable. If the site is steep or subject to erosion, the brush may need to be pegged down.

There are several disadvantages to this method. The material is usually scarce and its relocation may deplete the original area. Further, the amount of seed can vary enormously, as can its viability. For these reasons it is not always reliable but, combined with other methods, including planting, it can be very successful. It may be possible to obtain material from areas or trees about to be cleared. It is important to check that the seed on brush matting is ripe before cutting and laying.

Sowing depth

Protection is essential because germination is improved in all methods of seeding if the seed is covered, because this improves the availability of moisture to it and stops seeds being eaten. Optimum cover is generally considered to be between two to three times the smallest diameter of the seed. Conventional tyne harrows can bury seed too deeply. Dragging wheat bags and suchlike over the site, compacting seed into the soil using a roller or even tractor tyres, a chain dragged behind the machine or applying a thin layer of soil, coarse sand, fine gravel or vermiculite can all aid protection (Buchanan 1989).

Sowing time

Ideally the soil needs to be moist for several weeks prior to seeding operations to ensure germination and then for many weeks after seeding to successfully establish. As well as moisture, the soil temperature should favour growth and weeds should be at a minimum. In Sydney, early autumn is generally accepted as the best season (Buchanan 1989), as it gives time for the seedlings to establish before winter. Another good time to seed could be early spring, assuming that the seedlings will establish well enough to withstand dry summer conditions. It may be better to stick to an autumn seeding to avoid the risk of heaving to deal with seedling establishment over a particularly hot, dry summer.

Sowing rates

Seeding rates per hectare vary enormously. Common values in agriculture range from 100 grams to more than 4 kilograms per hectare, but rates can be as high as 12 kilograms per hectare. The weight of seed required can be roughly calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Weight of seed required} = \frac{\text{Number of plants required per ha}}{\text{Number of viable seeds per kg} \times \text{\% establishment}}$$

If the viability is not known, the number of seeds per kilogram can be substituted for the number of viable seeds. Percentage establishment may be as low as one per cent for small seeded species such as eucalypts and five per cent for large-seeded species like acacias (Buchanan 1989).

Pre-treatment of seed

Seed pre-treatment is required for seed that has dormancy mechanisms that prevent germination. For example, *Acacia* species require pre-treatment with boiling water before they are direct seeded. *Acacia* seeds should be plunged in just-off-the-boil hot water for about one minute followed by a longer plunge in cold water (up to 24 hours). Other treatments include scarification, where sandpaper is used to scratch hard-coated seeds or the seedcoat is nicked using a scalpel. A cold treatment has been found to be useful for *Bursaria spinosa*, as seed from this species germinates successfully after it has been stored in the fridge for two weeks.

A technique of treating only half of the seed to be sown ensures that not all of the seed will be lost in the event of a fire, drought, heat wave, etc. This technique is particularly good in areas where arson may be a high risk. This method will ensure that not all the seed will be lost in the event of a fire, and germination of half the seed will still result.

Post-sowing weed control

This should not be a problem provided that site preparation is good. However if weeds do invade the site after sowing, they must be controlled. Keep a one-metre-square-radius area around the seedling totally weed-free, as this will substantially increase seedling growth rates.

Consider hand-weeding or selectively applying herbicides which kill grass but not broad-leaved species (Curtis 1991). Hand-weeding is expensive but can be effective for smaller areas. Herbicides can be applied selectively by a skilled operator and, where the weeds are much taller than the wanted species, a wick applicator may be used. Chapter 4 discusses in detail various weed control strategies used for particular site conditions.

Transplanting topsoil

The transfer or replacement of bush topsoil (A1 horizon) can be done on a small scale. A shovel, wheelbarrow and a load of soil from a weed-free area of bush can help regenerate a small, bare area faster than many other techniques.

In large-scale projects such as mining, the removal of the topsoil and its replacement is a well planned operation (Environment Protection Agency 1995). The topsoil is vital for later rehabilitation as it contains seeds, vegetative reproductive organs and most of the organic matter. It is best if the soil can be immediately transferred, as stockpiling reduces the quality of soil resources. Stockpiles become anaerobic, soil structure deteriorates, organic matter and nutrients maybe lost, seed and plant propagules die and beneficial soil micro-organisms are reduced. If topsoil has to be stockpiled, it should be for as short a time as possible. The stockpile should be less than two metres high with a large surface area and revegetated using native species to discourage weeds (Environment Protection Agency 1995).

Planting

Planting of seedling tubestock is the most common method used to reintroduce vegetation. Seedlings are better than seeds in many ways. They have already germinated and have roots to absorb moisture and anchor themselves. However, all the advantages of direct seeding are disadvantages for seedlings. Planting rather than sowing is a slow process, a lot of labour is involved and the cost per plant is higher. Many projects incorporate both direct seeding *and* planting methods. Some difficult-to-germinate species, species that produce little seed, and species required for specific locations are all probably best planted out, while the remainder can be directly seeded.

Plant selection is essential and local species from provenance stock should be used in your planting programs (see above section on species selection). Local species are adapted to the local climate and soil conditions, so they are more likely to survive. They are also more likely to provide the right resources for local wildlife. Local species are ideal except where conditions have significantly changed such as in areas affected by salinity or intense dieback.

There is not such a bewildering array of techniques involved in planting as there is in direct seeding, but there is still a long list of important considerations. Try to plant at the most opportune time of year, usually the wet season. On the Cumberland Plain the optimal season for planting is the same as for direct seeding: early autumn around March. Avoid planting in dry times or during drought periods.

Greening Australia (NSW) and the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources are running an extensive revegetation program at their Hoxton Park site. (Greening Australia (NSW))

Propagation

Propagation of plants for regeneration can be done many ways. Propagation from seed and cuttings is certainly the most common, but techniques such as division, layering and even tissue culture are also used (Buchanan 1989). The surest way to ensure that you are using the right technique for the right species is to talk with a local representative from the Department of Primary Industries. A list of useful references on propagation techniques can be found in Appendix 7.

The most important factors for successful planting include:

- the plants are actively growing
- surrounding soil is moist
- sufficient rain in the following few months
- the plants are free of weed competition.

Tubestock are the favoured-size container for many revegetation projects and achieve the best results. Tubestock are relatively cheap, easy to handle, and are the correct size and root-to-shoot ratio for rapid establishment in the field. Plants six to nine months old are generally used. In broad-scale revegetation projects with minimal weed control, tubestock will have caught up with more advanced plants after only one year.

Tubestock grown from locally collected seed may be available in local nurseries. To ensure that tubestock is grown from local material, ask about the source of seed. Another way of obtaining local provenance material is to ask your local nursery to grow your tubestock from seed that you have collected locally, or to collect and grow your seed for you. An alternative is to propagate your own tubestock from seed you have collected. For detailed information on propagating your own tubestock, see Appendix 7 for a list of appropriate publications.

Site preparation

Before planting, plan ahead and prepare the site. Good site preparation will increase the likelihood of successful planting and assist in good plant growth during the first few seasons. Activities to think about include:

- assessing the site to determine factors which may influence the type of plants that may grow there – is it currently grazed, on a steep slope, does it have saline soils, etc?
- propagating seeds yourself or having the seed you collect from your site propagated for you by your local nursery – remember to only collect 10 per cent of a species' total annual seed crop, and that a licence to collect seed from endangered species and communities is required from DEC, phone (02) 9585 6540

- obtaining good-quality planting stock propagated from material collected in your area from nurseries that specialise in growing local native species
- controlling feral grazing animals such as rabbits
- if the site is adjacent to grazing land, protecting the seedlings by fencing off the area from stock.

As with direct seeding, site preparation is essential. Weed control and soft soil are key factors for seedling establishment.

Weed control can be done mechanically, by pulling, digging, cultivation or by knockdown herbicides such as Roundup®. For a detailed account of appropriate weed control techniques based on specific site conditions see Chapter 4 and Appendices 3 and 4.

Soft soil can be provided by digging over the soil where the stock is going to be planted. If you only have hand tools, the best option is to dig to approximately the depth of the container and at least twice the width (Buchanan 1989).

If you are undertaking a large job where the ground has been compacted and native plants are not present, the use of farm equipment for ripping is ideal. Only rip along the contour and no deeper than 20 to 50 centimetres.

Planting techniques

Planting techniques need to be clarified before you start the project. The two major factors to consider are soil type and equipment.

You need to decide whether you are going to dig 30,000 holes in two weeks with your mattock and spade, or whether you are going to use a mechanical device such as 'Tree Planter' or other mechanical equipment. Two people can plant up to 5000 trees a day using a Tree Planter (Buchanan 1989). The use of mechanical equipment only becomes economical if you are going to plant over 5000 seedlings. Disadvantages are their difficulty of use in rocky soils or on sloping sites and only being able to plant in straight lines.

When planting tubestock:

- give all seedlings a thorough watering the day before planting
- plant at the same depth in the soil as it was in the container
- place the plant in the hole and gently firm the soil around the plant
- give the seedling a good soaking to remove any air pockets.

Whenever possible, tubestock should be watered in and tree-guards erected on the day of planting. Tree-guards provide the seedlings with some protection from drying winds, frosts and grazing by animals such as rabbits and hares. Where practical, individual weed mats or a layer of mulch can be placed around individual plants to help control weeds and conserve moisture.

Spacing of your seedlings will depend on:

- the species involved
- the purpose of the planting
- whether planting is the sole means of revegetation or is supplementing direct seeding.

In moister areas, stems two to five metres apart are common, or six to nine metres apart in drier areas supporting fewer trees. Remember, bush does not normally grow in straight lines. Where practical, try to plant in groups and clusters, especially for groundcover species (grasses, herbs, sedges, ferns). For these plants the best way to ensure establishment is to plant in single-species clumps. Most importantly, do not plant more seedlings than you can maintain.

Translocation and transplanting

A number of common species such as *Commelina cyanea* and *Dichondra repens* can be transplanted easily. The large-scale transfer of soil seed bank from sites about to be cleared is another method of translocation which has been used previously with some success.

However, the endangered status of many sites requires that any translocation planting or soil transfers should only be carried out as a last resort and in accordance with an approval or licence from the appropriate authority such as DEC or the local council. The *Guidelines for Translocation of Threatened Plants in Australia* (Vallee *et al.* 2004) should be consulted before considering any translocation. These guidelines are available via the website for the Australian Network for Plant Conservation at www.anbg.gov.au/anpc

Pattern and sequence of revegetation

To decide what species should be introduced and the timing of their introduction the following should be considered:

- the site's goals and objectives
- the desired (and achievable) plant community
- species availability
- practical management and maintenance issues
- the level of competition from weeds
- the best route to achieve a workable ecological succession.

Planting all layers at once

One approach to revegetation projects is to introduce all layers, including grasses, sedges and groundcovers, at the outset. This approach is very reliant on project resources, since weed control is essential in both the preparation and maintenance phases of the project. 'All-layer' planting is more appropriate where sites are small, and a sufficient quantity and diversity of plants are available. Introduction of all layers is especially useful in projects where there are erosion problems as this method will provide cover and ensure a diversity of root depth.

When using this approach, avoid the temptation to overuse those species that are readily obtainable (e.g. *Lomandra longifolia*) to avoid skewing the species balance of the community. One variation on the all-layers method is to initially plant a basic mix with a minimum group of native species that can be expanded later, for example three tree species (one short-lived, two long-lived), two shrub species (one short-lived, one long-lived), and groundcover species (vegetative spreaders, short- and long-lived perennials). Once these are established, interplantings with a greater variety of species can be made in the now protected environment (Benson & Howell 1993).

The role of short-lived plants, such as *Acacia* species and some colonising groundcovers, is to stabilise the ground surface and provide a protected growing environment for slower-growing, long-lived species. Ensure the short-lived tree and shrub species are planted at moderate densities to allow good light at ground level. For detailed information on the recommended species lists see the description of ecological communities in *Native Vegetation of the Cumberland Plain: Final Edition* (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2002).

It will also be appropriate to change the species mix along longer corridors to suit local habitats, such as wetter depressions and changes in soil type or landscape position, that are encountered along the corridor.

Commelina cyanea *and* Dicondra repens *are hardy native groundcovers that are easily transplanted and respond well in most planting programs. (DEC/P. Rebuck)*

Planting groundcovers

Groundcovers are very important in the structure of most vegetation communities found on the Cumberland Plain. Diversity in the groundcover layer is not only vital for biodiversity, but essential for a functioning ecosystem. When introducing groundcovers in a planting program, it is important to plant them very densely in single-species clusters to achieve solid patches of cover quickly. This method will also help with weed management.

Greening Australia (NSW) has been trailing a technique that reintroduces native groundcovers in areas previously dominated by the exotic groundcover Wandering Jew (*Tradescantia fluminensis*). They have successfully trailed the introduction of two native groundcovers, *Microlaena stipoides* and *Commelina cyanea*. The technique involves cultivating seed onto jute matting and then laying the mat along prepared sections of creek bank. This technique has been used at the South Creek demonstration site at Erskine Park (Appendix 2).

Creating a woodland framework

In both Cumberland Plain Woodland and Sydney Coastal River-flat Forest communities, particularly where shade-loving weed groundcovers are likely, canopy species and fast-growing nitrogen-fixing pioneer shrubs can be planted first with the introduction of groundcovers, native grasses, herbs and climbers deferred for 12 months or longer if natural recruitment of these species has not already occurred.

This method relies upon the theory that once upper strata trees and shrubs are planted (using local provenance seed) and established, the resulting improved soil conditions and intermediate shading will increase spaces for native grasses and broad-leaved herbs (forbs) currently disadvantaged by exotic grass swards (Davies & Christie 2001).

The method assumes that revegetation activities will provide protection and create niche areas for the regeneration and recruitment of native groundcovers. It relies upon sustained intervention over time, tailored to manipulate competition using a weed control program and thereby harness the site's underlying potential for natural recovery.

This strategy aims to provide a woodland framework using selected species found in the site's association of pre-existing vegetation (Davies & Christie 2001). If natural regeneration is slow or non-existent, this method can be undertaken in combination with the introduction of various trigger methods (discussed in detail in Chapter 4) to encourage natural recruitment of native vegetation. The aim is to achieve species diversity over time and in stages. Long-term commitment in both time and resources is imperative.

Tip:

Grassy woodland communities do not naturally have a large shrub component and the planting of trees and shrubs in high densities can have detrimental effects on many native groundcover species. Maintaining patchiness is always a good idea no matter what active management you take.

Multi-species tubestock planting

Another possibility is tubestock planting as a multi-species introduction process. This is where a number of species, including colonisers, are planted in each tube so that planting results in an instant community (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b).

Adding shrubs later

Canopy trees and groundcovers are the focus of the initial planting process while shrubs can be added later when available. It is thought that shrubs are more incidental in woodland habitats and it is more important that the grassland component is not filled with shrubs (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b).

Species selection and revegetation in saline areas

There is considerable debate over species selection for salt-affected sites. There are many non-local natives and exotic species that have a high degree of salt tolerance and which may be useful for addressing salinity and non-biodiversity objectives such as agro-forestry. Fortunately many plants on the Cumberland Plain have a degree of salt tolerance. Two common techniques for species selection in saline areas include:

- using species previously found on the site, with propagules selected from as close as possible to the site – this is the recommended option, although the greater the change in salinity and water imbalance, the less likely it is to be effective
- using species that occur in naturally saline or waterlogged sites in the vicinity – there is far less risk with this technique and results often reflect natural succession on a landscape scale (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b).

Planting and site preparation should be carried out as described in the rest of this publication. However, deep ripping of waterlogged soils is generally not recommended.

Never just plant within the scalded area but in surrounding areas as well including, where possible, the recharge area. In severely affected areas it may be necessary to progressively plant from the surrounding areas towards the centre of the scald over many years.

Where waterlogging is a problem, mounding has proved a useful technique to establish seedlings. Salt tends to accumulate at the top of the mound due to evaporation of the rising watertable. Consequently seedlings should be placed in the dip at the top of the mound or on the sides of the mound (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b).

Management of edges

Many weeds on the Cumberland Plain are not just edge-related or edge-occupying but spread extensively across the whole of the bushland site. One way of countering this is to make buffer plantings of canopy or other elements to extend areas that compete with and shade-out encroaching weeds. It is a good practice to leave gaps, where possible, as an expansion zone (see Figure 6 in Chapter 4). It is anticipated that native recruitment will occur in the gaps between the remnant vegetation and the planted buffer zones. Note that planting as an edge treatment will require DEC approval under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* if adjacent to remnants which are classed as endangered or contain endangered species.

CASE STUDY

Creating a woodland framework in pastureland

Greening Australia (NSW) in association with Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources has been involved in a major Cumberland Plain restoration project known as Greening Western Sydney. This project involves large-scale planting of native provenance tubestock across pastureland. The techniques honed by Greening Australia have been highly successful.

An extensive revegetation program undertaken by Greening Australia (NSW) and the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources at their Western Sydney Parklands site at Hoxton Park. (Greening Australia (NSW))

Site preparation

The site is prepared by slashing existing pasture along the contours on which the plantings will run. Contour planting minimises the risk of erosion problems. The slashed area is left long enough to allow significant pasture regrowth giving maximum results when herbicide is applied. Where pasture is green and not too high, slashing is removed from the program.

Narrow one-metre-wide herbicide lines are sprayed along the contour lines to be planted. This ensures that the young plants are free from competition when establishing. The site is left for one to two weeks until the herbicide has taken effect. In areas of severe weed infestation this technique may be repeated twice before any seedlings are planted.

Planting operation

The seedlings are planted using a Treeliner mechanical planter. The plants are placed approximately two metres apart within each row which are around 2.5 metres apart. This is necessary to provide vehicle access for later maintenance. At these distances some 1920 plants per hectare will be planted with all rows planted along the natural contours of the site. Steep sections are hand planted. Species are mixed and planted in a random fashion as this has been found to give the best results in re-establishing vegetation. All seedlings are planted with individual weed mats and tree guards.

Maintenance

Approximately three months after planting, a follow-up application of herbicide is applied. This will maintain an area free from competition around each plant. Future herbicide application will be applied as required (two to four times a year) for up to three years. An active weed control program targeting environmental weeds is also introduced.

Tip:

Expansion zones are an important aspect of current best-practice revegetation. They are areas at least 20 metres wide that have been left between the remnant bushland and the buffer planting. The aim is for the remnant to 'expand' and gradually fill the gap through natural regeneration. This technique will not only protect your remnant from encroaching weeds but also encourage the natural expansion of important Cumberland Plain remnants.

Installing physical barriers such as logs, bollards or the use of a planted mulched boundary is a useful and acceptable option where access is an issue or the edges of the remnant need to be defined for maintenance problems, e.g. invasive mowing practices. These activities again should be incorporated into a weed maintenance program to control weeds along the edge of remnants.

Other management techniques that can help control invasive weeds along the edges of remnants could be to slash or fire a buffer zone area. Frequent burning of the buffer zone will disadvantage weeds, while advantaging some native species. The buffer area will not have the species complexity and diversity of the remnant, but will act as a good weed buffer for the bushland area while still having a significant native component.

Corymbia maculata *seed. (Greening Australia (NSW))*

These options need to be flexibly deployed according to the specific impacts from adjacent areas. A combination of approaches is often more effective than a single one. What happens over time to the edge needs to be monitored, and management modified as necessary (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003b).

Develop a yearly program

While you are working on your site, make a note of the flowering and fruiting times of all plants. This will help you work out your planting strategy.

In the spring, look at the areas where weeds will be removed. Decide if planting will be needed and which species will be suitable. Collect seeds from the site or from nearby areas. Begin propagating the seeds. Then begin to control weeds from the area to be planted.

Once the weather has cooled down in autumn, begin your planting program. This is also the time when the soil is still moist, so hand watering will not be as important.

Re-creating habitat components in a revegetation program

An essential ingredient in the rehabilitation of degraded landscapes and a sign of the project's success, is the return of native wildlife to new and viable habitat. The more diversity in your planting, such as dense shrub layers and areas of open grassy patches, the greater the value for wildlife habitat.

Lomov (2005) evaluated the success of large-scale restoration projects for the recovery of plant-insect interactions. The results show that, although restoration of Cumberland Plain Woodland may take decades, recovery of certain plant-insect interactions (pollination by bees, seed dispersal by ants) can occur in the early stages.

Birds and other animals, however, may be slower to return to young rehabilitation areas where resources such as tree hollows are not available. These may not be available for a very long time after rehabilitation, and land managers can use nesting boxes of appropriate sizes to attract the desired target species. Introducing habitat material, such as logs and fallen timber, can also add to the diversity of habitat. Plant around remnants so the plantings act as a buffer protecting the remnant. Connecting remnants using corridor plantings can further increase their ecological value.

Care and maintenance after planting

Greening Australia (NSW) has identified the importance of appropriate follow-up maintenance to high seedling survival rates. So remember it is important not to plant more seedlings than you can maintain.

Maintenance includes the application of appropriate herbicides to reduce competition from weeds, slashing, ensuring the quality of bagging and staking, and appropriate fire hazard reduction. This last factor is especially important in the first five years of seedling establishment (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003c).

Watering

For any revegetation project you should aim for as little reliance on watering as possible but instead develop an ecosystem that can cope with local conditions. If you have been unlucky enough to plant just before the onset of a drought, certainly water your seedlings if the resources are available. If the soil is dry when planting, give each plant a good drenching, up to 20 litres each, and then you may not need to water again.

In the first year of establishment some watering may be needed, but aim for several good drenchings a year to encourage a deep root system and a plant capable of looking after itself. Frequent light watering, on the other hand, encourages a shallow root system and plants that die in subsequent dry periods.

The best way of watering seedlings is by conserving water which is naturally in the system: in other words, remove the competing weeds which are losing water by transpiration and provide tree guards, individual weed mats or mulch to keep the soil cool and thereby reduce evaporation (Buchanan 1989). The use of water-retaining granules has also proved successful in revegetation projects.

Fertilising

Fertiliser is not recommended for indigenous plants, as they are naturally adapted to local soil conditions. Fertiliser runoff can also be detrimental to waterways and encourage weed growth. If you do choose to fertilise, for example on soils mistreated during construction work, it is best to apply fertiliser that the tree roots and not the grass roots can reach. One or two slow-release fertiliser tablets placed in the hole beneath the tree roots are generally sufficient. Further fertilisation is not needed after this period (Buchanan 1989).

Weed control

The competition from grass and weeds for water during the first spring and summer is possibly the most important influence on seedling survival and growth. It is vital to reduce weed and grass growth as much as possible during this time.

The finely divided dense roots of many weeds, especially grasses, more than effectively compete with native tree and shrub roots for nutrients and, more importantly, water.

An area of approximately a metre diameter around each plant should be kept weed-free. Methods of weed control are numerous and include the application of residual herbicides to bare soil after planting to prevent weed germination; repeated applications of knockdown herbicides; thick application of mulches; and weed control mats (Buchanan 1989).

Maintenance at the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources, Greening Western Sydney's Hoxton Park site, involves the spraying of Roundup® approximately three months after planting to a small area around the base of new plantings to reduce competition for water and nutrients from surrounding noxious weeds and pasture. Seedlings were maintained using a regime that sprayed around the seedlings twice a year. In some cases where pasture growth was excessive, a third spray was required. This weed control regime is only used for the first 2–3 years of the plant's life after which the plants are self-sustaining. Over the last few years Greening Australia has found that plantings treated in this manner have achieved much higher survival and growth rates.

Within the project, two types of Roundup® maintenance spraying techniques were used depending on the type of planting and terrain. Backpacks were generally used for smaller community plantings or where vehicle access was limited (e.g. steep slopes). For larger plantings, such as the broad-acre mechanical planting at Hoxton Park, a spray arm mounted to a 4WD vehicle was employed. Where the planting lines are relatively uniform and the land surface relatively flat, this is a far more efficient method of maintenance spraying.

This method has also proved beneficial during small grass fires of low intensity. Some plants were noted to have survived these fires due to the lack of fuel in the area surrounding the tree as a result of previous spraying operations (NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning 2001).

An alternative to chemical weed control is to slash between the rows of planted tubestock and/or direct seeding lines.

Herbicide is being applied using a spray arm mounted to a 4WD vehicle. This technique is employed to effectively control weeds on broad-acre mechanically planted sites. (Greening Australia (NSW))

Slashing has the added advantage of not only reducing competition from weeds but also reducing potential fire hazards at the site while maintaining a good mulch layer. Care should be taken around rows of direct seeding, which may need to be marked out to prevent them from being slashed over.

If you are planning to graze your revegetation area as a method of weed control, ensure that it is not during the flowering and seeding times for native vegetation and do not introduce stock into revegetated areas within the first 12 months of seedling establishment (NSW Agriculture and Fisheries 1991). See Appendix 4 for detailed descriptions of the various methods used to remove weeds.

Weed matting and mulches

The use of mulch as a method of weed control around planted tubestock can be time-consuming and costly. However, mulches are a safe and effective method of controlling, or at least ameliorating, soil conditions. Mulching helps control soil water loss, soil temperature fluctuation and weed invasion.

Mulches can be expensive. More economical materials include sheets of newspaper, hay or straw mulch, even a mulch of dead weeds. Combinations can also be used; newspaper combined with dead weeds is cheap and effective. However, some organic mulches, on decomposing, create a flush of nitrogen-fixing bacteria which act on the decaying matter and make the soil very acidic. If young seedlings have been planted into the mulch, the decay action may harm them. For this reason, fine-grained mulches such as sawdust, which decompose very quickly, are not recommended.

Remember, if the mulch is deep enough to suppress weed growth, it is also deep enough to suppress any native plant regrowth. If there is any possibility that the site being treated has native plant seed remaining in the soil or recruitment of native plants is anticipated, then the use of a mulch should be re-considered or at least restricted to particularly weedy sites (Buchanan 1989).

Tree guards

Plant guards are essential in most rural projects, but before you spend a lot of money or time, think carefully about what you are protecting plants from. Rabbits, goats, domestic stock, native animals, children or frost might each require a different solution.

On the Cumberland Plain protecting young trees from rabbits is often a major concern. Commercial tree guards come in different shapes and sizes. The most popular variety is a plastic sleeve held in place with bamboo stakes. A low-cost alternative for keeping rabbits off is old milk cartons or homemade wire mesh tree guards.

Another issue is whether to guard each plant or fence the whole area. This is generally dependant on your resources and the presence of stock. The use of tree guards in combination with weed mats has been very effective on the Cumberland Plain. This technique protects the seedlings from rabbits, weed competition and the extremes of weather, while also retaining valuable moisture (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources 2003c).

In a recent survey undertaken at numerous restoration sites on the Cumberland Plain, Greening Australia (NSW) estimates the survival rate of bagged versus unbagged seedlings was 81 per cent to 16.5 per cent.

Staking and tying

On restoration projects, staking should be avoided wherever possible, as it is time-consuming, expensive and potentially damaging to the plant. Plants with individual guards should not need staking and tying. If you consider that tying is essential, you must prevent the tie or stake rubbing the plant stem as it will damage the bark and, in extreme cases, the wood as well. Such damage can lead to structural weakness and insect or fungal attack. Stems should be tied loosely to prevent ring-barking and to promote root growth (Buchanan 1989).

Insecticides

Large-scale control with insecticides may be tempting but it should only be done in the most extreme cases. Most native species are fairly hardy and can re-shoot after even severe defoliation.

Control of stock access and feral animals

Fencing out livestock and vermin is very important to protect young trees until they are at least two metres tall. Trees planted in groups and permanently fenced from livestock allow an undisturbed area for regeneration. The root zone does not become overly compacted as the livestock have a variety of shaded areas to gather in.

Where native pasture has been established through regeneration or revegetation activities, grazing management of the established pasture should aim to optimise the growth of the sown species. Grazing should not commence until the plants are firmly rooted and cannot be pulled from the ground. Delaying grazing until the year after sowing is essential to most establishing pastures (NSW Agriculture and Fisheries 1991).

Feral animal control, particularly of rabbits, may be required in some situations for approximately the first one to two years after seedling establishment. Fencing and/or individual tree guards are often the most cost-effective methods.

Fire

The best protection for your plants in the first few years is weed and grass control. A fire in the first five years of plant development will kill most of your plants. On the other hand fire will encourage native grasses. In later years your revegetation site should be subjected to a managed fire regime (see the section on the use of triggers in Chapter 4).

Replacing losses

Some seedlings may not survive the initial establishment period and it may be necessary to replace these seedlings.

CHAPTER 6

Monitoring

No one would claim to understand all the ecological processes taking place in an area of bush. Therefore, when we restore native bushland we do not always know exactly what the outcome will be. Because of this it is important to monitor a site to measure how it is responding after restoration work has begun (Nature Conservation Council of NSW 1994).

Monitoring involves observing the changes that take place on your site during and after your work and keeping records to measure the success of your activities.

In the same way it is good to keep records of how the land itself is responding to the way that it is being managed. Monitoring is the process of undertaking regular assessments or surveys, recording results, and periodically comparing and evaluating them to see how effective you have been or how far the project has progressed.

Why is it important?

Monitoring is important for two main reasons:

- it provides feedback on the effectiveness of management actions, and hence whether these actions need to be modified
- it allows us to work out whether natural resources are stable, improving or declining.

So that this can be done, the records need to be consistent, comparable, and easily interpreted by any interested person.

How your data is collected and accessed is important, as there is a very real need to have comprehensive data managed and coordinated by an organisation. Good management of your data will provide useful information for other groups about successful restoration activities and guide future restoration work on the Cumberland Plain.

Document your work

If you clearly specify your desired ecological outcomes and document what you *plan* to do and what you *actually* do, then you are in a better position to monitor your progress, correct any mistakes and evaluate your success. According to Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (2003b), types of documentation should include:

- Repeatable **'before' and 'after' photographs** – When you take a photograph mark your location and return to this exact location for the after shot. Take the photo from the same point in the same direction using the same equipment.
- **Aerial photos to record broad-scale changes** – Photos of every part of the state have been taken every four years since the 1950s. Comparing recent photos with older ones shows the major changes on your property and provides valuable historic evidence of how native vegetation cover has changed over the years. Planning future management of your property is easier using aerial photos which are available from the NSW Department of Lands www.lpi.nsw.gov.au (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2003b)
- **Vegetation maps** showing boundaries of weed infestations and assessed condition of areas based on weed densities – This method gives a good indication about changes in vegetation dymamics, composition and structure over time.
- **Collect and prepare plant lists**, for both native and exotic species, taking note of any rare or endangered plant.
- Collect **lists of animal species.**
- Establish **permanent quadrats and/or transects** to enable quantitative recording of factors such as species densities and diversity and extent of cover.
- Record any new **techniques or approaches** being trialled.
- Record **hours and categories of work.**
- Prepare **reports.**

Sampling methods: rigorous or quick and simple?

Sampling methods using long-term quadrats or transects provide accurate and high-resolution results. They are a useful method for recording changes in native vegetation and weeds, and provide a quantitative account of what is happening on-site. Their use, however, requires skill and time generally lacking in most restoration projects. Long-term management of the data may also be problematic.

The *Community Rapid Assessment and Monitoring (CRAM) Project* promotes community environmental monitoring within the Hawkesbury–Nepean Catchment. CRAM is a project that helps community groups or individuals to assess and monitor their restoration projects.

The CRAM Project brings together a collection of methods that measure indicators of catchment health. These methods, designed as quick and simple checklists, have been devised and tested through community and professional cooperation. You can visit the CRAM website at www.zip.com.au/~aabr/cram/introduction for more information and view the various CRAM manuals (Hawkesbury–Nepean Catchment Management Trust 2000).

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Reference sites 76

Appendix 2: Demonstration sites 77

Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute 77

Camden Town Farm 78

Western Sydney Parklands site, Eastern Creek, Doonside 79

Western Sydney riparian corridors site, South Creek, Erskine Park 80

Appendix 3: Cumberland Plain weeds and their treatment 81

Herbaceous weed and grass control 81

Vine control 82

Woody weed control 83

Major Cumberland Plain noxious weed species 84

Appendix 4: Weed removal techniques 85

Hand removal 85

Removal using a knife or trowel 86

Herbicide treatment 87

Appendix 5: Funding opportunities 89

Government organisations 89

Local government 90

Non-government organisations 90

Appendix 6: Contacts 91

Commonwealth and state government 91

Local councils 91

Non-government organisations 91

Community groups 91

Appendix 7: Recommended reading 92

Major background resource 92

General 92

Native plant identification 92

Weed identification and control techniques 92

Plant propagation 93

Appendix 8: Legislation 94

Appendix 1: Reference sites

Sites that contain remnants of Cumberland Plain endangered ecological communities can be found in the following national parks (NP), nature reserves (NR), state conservation areas (SCA), regional parks (RP) and other conservation reserves and council reserves scattered throughout western Sydney. Most of the reference sites are open to the public and can give land managers an idea of the type of vegetation that may have existed prior to European settlement.

Reserve	Agnes Banks Woodland	Blue Gum High Forest	Cooks River/Castlereagh Ironbark Forest	Castlereagh Swamp Woodland	Cumberland Plain Woodland	Moist Shale Woodland	Shale Gravel Transition Forest	Shale Sandstone Transition Forest	Sydney Coastal River-flat Forest	Sydney Turpentine–Ironbark Forest	Western Sydney Dry Rainforest	Non-endangered communities and unclassified vegetation
Agnes Banks NR	•		•	•			•					•
Bents Basin NR					•			•	•			•
Berowra Valley RP		•								•		•
Blue Mountains NP								•	•			•
Burragorang SCA					•			•	•	•		•
Cabramatta Creek Park									•			
Castlereagh NR			•	•			•					•
Cattai NP					•			•	•		•	•
Chain-o-Ponds NR									•			
Cumberland State Forest		•										
Dalrymple-Hay NR		•										
Darvall Park										•		
Dharawal SCA												•
Duck River Reserve			•									
Dural NR										•		•
Fagan Park										•		
Fairfield City Farm					•	•					•	
Garigal NP										•		•
Georges River NP			•					•	•	•		•
Georges River SCA												•
Gulguer NR								•				•
Kemps Creek NR				•	•		•		•			
Ku-ring-gai Chase NP												•
Lane Cove NP		•								•		•
Lansdowne Reserve									•			
Leacock RP					•				•			
Menai Park										•		
Mulgoa NR					•	•		•	•			
Mount Annan Botanic Garden					•							
Nattai NP								•				•
Newington NR										•		•
Noorumba NR					•			•				
Norfolk Reserve			•									
Nurragingy Reserve					•				•			
Parramatta River RP												•
Pitt Town NR												•
Plumpton Park					•							
Rouse Hill RP					•			•	•			
Scheyville NP					•		•	•	•			•
The Crest Reserve					•							
Thirlmere Lakes NP								•				•
Wallumatta NR										•		
Wedderburn Road Reserve								•				
Werombi Cemetery								•				
Western Sydney RP					•	•			•		•	
William Howe RP					•							
Windsor Downs NR			•	•	•		•					•
Yellomundee RP								•	•			•

Appendix 2: Demonstration sites

Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute

The Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (EMAI) is located on the south-western outskirts of Sydney, about 70 kilometres from the CBD on the western banks of the Nepean River.

EMAI is a 1600-hectare (4000-acre) property that lies within the old Camden Park Estate settled by John and Elizabeth Macarthur in 1805. The property was part of the first land grant to the Macarthurs and as such is the birthplace of Australia's wool, fruit and wine industries. The Department of Primary Industries (formerly NSW Agriculture) became the formal owner of the property in 1990 and is currently developing the property as a demonstration farm in sustainable agriculture.

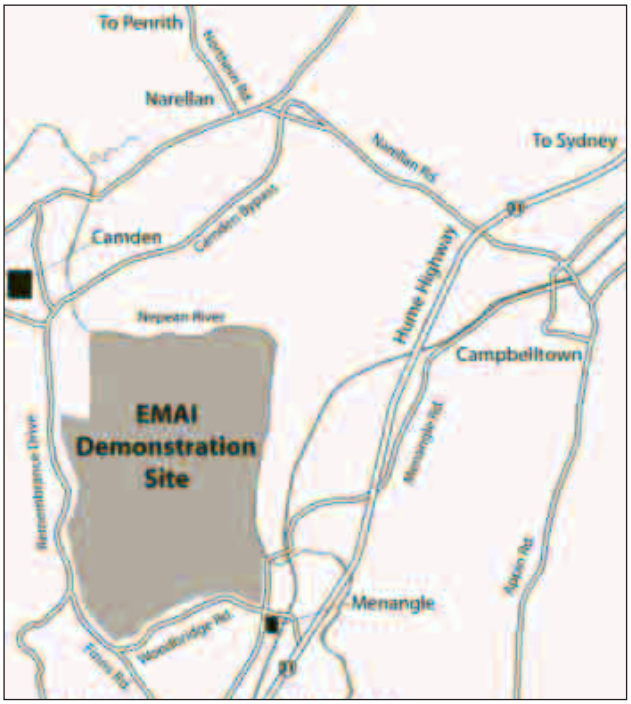
Three endangered ecological communities (Cumberland Plain Woodland, Sydney Coastal River-flat Forest and Moist Shale Woodland) can be found on the site. These ecological communities are classed as endangered under the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*. The site also contains several individual species listed as endangered under the Act, including *Grevillea juniperina* and *Eucalyptus benthamii*.

The land management practices and intensity of agricultural activities on EMAI have largely conserved the biodiversity values of the property, with natural regeneration occurring in most endangered ecological communities. A high level of compatibility has been achieved between agricultural activity and conservation of bushland remnants across the property.

EMAI lies between the Nepean River and the Razor Back Range and has the potential to provide important vegetation corridor links between these two natural landscapes. Past restoration activities have formed conservation corridors throughout much of EMAI. The revegetation works undertaken in 2004–05 for this project (funded by the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust) have ensured that these corridor connections were completed.

The project's restoration works have included fencing a minimum 20-metre buffer zone along parts of the western and southern boundary (Remembrance Drive and Woodbridge Road). Fencing has enabled control of stock access into these revegetated areas. The buffer areas have been revegetated using appropriate mixes of endemic seed and seedlings propagated from bushland remnants found on or adjacent to the property.

EMAI has been used to demonstrate the revegetation techniques of mechanical direct seeding operations and mechanical planting of tubestock. Hand broadcasting of seed and hand planting of seedlings have been undertaken in areas where a native shrub layer was present or where steep site conditions have made access by machine unsuitable. The use of both mechanical seeding and mechanical planting of tubestock in combination has also been trialled on this property.



The revegetated buffer zones provide other benefits including assistance in localised salinity management, improved hydrology, habitat and protection for native fauna and stock, while also enhancing the long-term sustainability of the property. The restoration activities demonstrate the important interactions necessary between environmental conservation and healthy sustainable agricultural practices.

Quadrats and species lists were established before restoration activities began. Monitoring will reveal the changes in both native and exotic species in composition and distribution over time. Assessing the monitoring results will also allow more responsive restoration.

If you are considering undertaking a restoration program on your property and would like information and advice on current successful techniques in use on the Cumberland Plain, a visit to Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute will allow you to see the on-ground results of the various restoration techniques discussed in this publication.

To visit this demonstration site contact:

Institute Manager
Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute
NSW Department of Primary Industries
Phone: (02) 4640 6333
Fax: (02) 4640 6300

Camden Town Farm

Camden Town Farm is a 54-hectare property in the heart of Camden and currently owned by Camden Council. During the twentieth century the farm was used principally as a dairy and dairy stud. Llewella Davies (1901–2000) came to live in Camden as an infant when her father Evan Davies bought the dairy farm. Miss Davies bequeathed the property to Camden Council with the condition that it be used to help the community. The council is currently developing the property as a demonstration farm, with the aim of educating the community in sustainable agricultural practices.

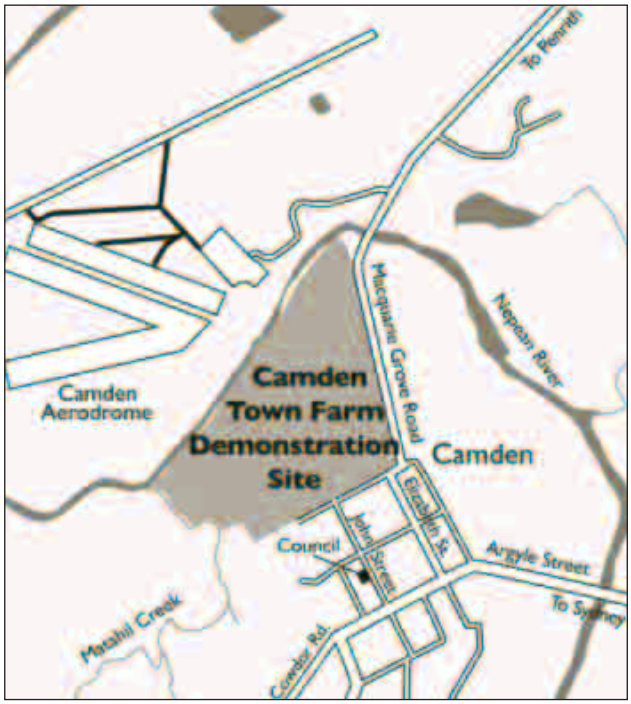
The remnant vegetation on the property is a linear strip adjacent to the Nepean River. This riparian vegetation is classed as Sydney Coastal River-flat Forest, an endangered ecological community under the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*.

The revegetation and restoration works undertaken in 2004–05 for this project (funded by the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust) have demonstrated that restoration of riparian vegetation can be integrated into a productive farm. A commercial agroforestry plot has been established adjacent to the remnant riparian vegetation in order to provide a buffer between farming and ecological zones, while ensuring that the buffer area also benefits the farm's productivity.

Seedlings grown from provenance seed collected on and adjacent to the site have been hand-planted along part of the northern boundary. These plantings have been undertaken in an area that was heavily infested with woody and environmental weeds and where natural regeneration was considered unlikely. The plantings will act as a buffer between the adjoining carpark and road, while also protecting the remnant native vegetation regenerating along the Nepean River.

The riparian remnant was heavily infested with woody and environmental weeds, but had an established canopy and the potential to regenerate from soil and canopy-stored seed. Best practice techniques in bush regeneration were used in this zone.

Both the riparian remnant and agroforestry plot have been fenced to control stock access. The species used in the agroforestry plot were selected for their ability to provide useful wood upon maturity (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*, *E. amplifolia*, *E. crebra*, *E. elata*, *E. eugenioides*). The plants propagated for the agroforestry plot were grown from seed collected locally (within a two-kilometre radius) – a factor that increases the ecological value of the plot. An area of approximately 20 metres has been left between the mechanically planted agroforestry plot and the regeneration zone. This was to allow for natural recruitment, regeneration and expansion of the riparian remnant.



The commercial agroforestry plot acts as a buffer, protecting the regenerating and established riparian vegetation from the activities of the farm. Other benefits of this planting include a lower watertable, reduced water contamination, provision of a windbreak and shelter and emergency fodder for stock and acting as a barrier to weed encroachment into the riparian areas.

Quadrats and species lists were established before restoration activities began. Monitoring will reveal the changes in both native and exotic species in composition and distribution over time. Assessing the monitoring results will also allow more responsive restoration.

If you are considering undertaking a restoration program on your property and would like information and advice on current successful techniques in use on the Cumberland Plain, a visit to Camden Town Farm will allow you to see the on-ground results of the various restoration techniques discussed in this publication.

To visit this demonstration site contact:

Camden Council
Phone: (02) 4654 7777
Fax: (02) 4654 7829

Western Sydney Parklands site, Eastern Creek, Doonside

The Eastern Creek demonstration site at Doonside forms part of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) Western Sydney Parklands.

Restoration works have been undertaken at the site since 1992 as part of a program called Greening Western Sydney (GWS).

Restoration works in conjunction with both the GWS project and the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust in 2004–05 have ensured that the rural landscape character of the broad floodplain has been retained and enhanced. A relatively dense corridor of riparian woodland along Eastern Creek and Bungarribee Creek has been restored and expanded. The restoration work aims to conserve and link endangered ecological communities across the Cumberland Plain.

This precinct contains 137 hectares of land set aside purely for conservation purposes. There are two endangered ecological communities (Cumberland Plain Woodland and Sydney Coastal River-flat Forest) on the site. The site also contains several individual specimens of the endangered *Grevillea juniperina*.

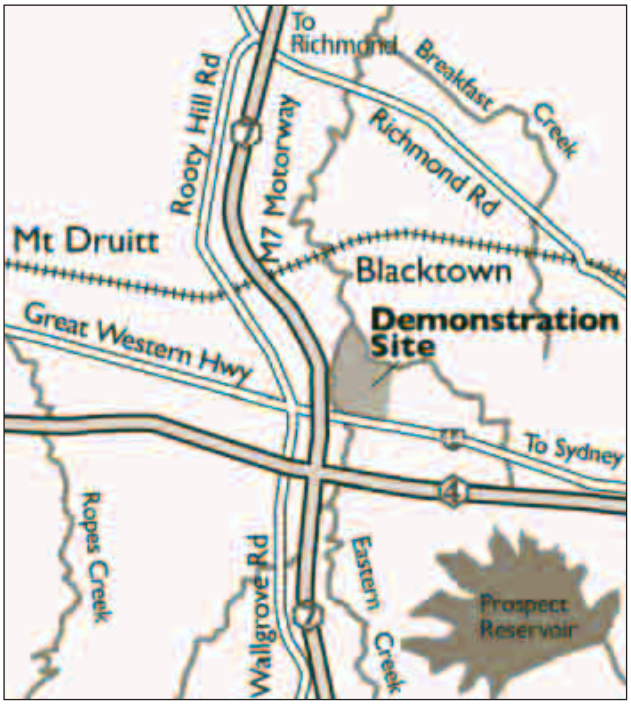
The management strategies to restore and expand the bushland on this site have included:

- works that focus on restoring the remnant riparian vegetation using bush regeneration and weed control techniques
- an extensive planting and direct seeding program in pastoral land adjacent to these riparian areas.

Current and successful best practice techniques in bush regeneration have been used in the riparian remnants along Eastern and Bungarribee Creeks. These techniques concentrate on controlling and removing environmental and noxious weeds, thereby reducing competition with native vegetation and allowing natural regeneration to occur.

A fence has been erected along the creeklines to control stock access into the regeneration and revegetation areas. The fence provides a 100-metre buffer area between the pasture and riparian vegetation along the creekline. This is a significant buffer zone and a good example of best practice riparian management.

Extensive planting and direct seeding has been undertaken along the eastern side of Eastern Creek and the southern side of Bungarribee Creek. Seed used in these operations has been collected from remnants on or adjacent to the site. An area 20–40 metres wide has been left between the remnant riparian vegetation and the revegetation zone to allow for natural recruitment, regeneration and expansion of the remnant riparian vegetation. The restoration works will assist in the long-term management and recovery of the endangered species and communities on the site by increasing areas suitable for their establishment.



Quadrats and species lists were established before restoration activities began. Monitoring at the site has revealed changes in both native and exotic species in composition and distribution over time. Assessing the monitoring results also allows more responsive restoration.

If you are considering undertaking a restoration program on your property and would like information and advice on current successful techniques in use on the Cumberland Plain, a visit to Western Sydney Parklands site, Eastern Creek, Doonside will allow you to see the on-ground results of the various restoration techniques discussed in this publication.

To visit this demonstration site contact:

Land Management Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources
Phone: (02) 9895 7626

Western Sydney riparian corridors site, South Creek, Erskine Park

This site is part of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) western Sydney riparian corridors site at South Creek, Erskine Park. The site is presently undergoing long-term restoration works as part of DIPNR's Greening Western Sydney project, a land and vegetation management project operating since 1992 in the DIPNR-owned open space corridors in western Sydney. The works under the program aim to transform old farming paddocks into recreation and conservation areas.

The site has also been used as a demonstration site for the project funded by the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust in 2004–05. The site demonstrates best practice techniques in restoration of endangered ecological communities on the Cumberland Plain. Regeneration works have been undertaken at this site since 1998 and revegetation works since 2000. The site provides land managers with the opportunity to see an established restoration program.

An endangered ecological community, Sydney Coastal River-flat Forest, is found on the site.

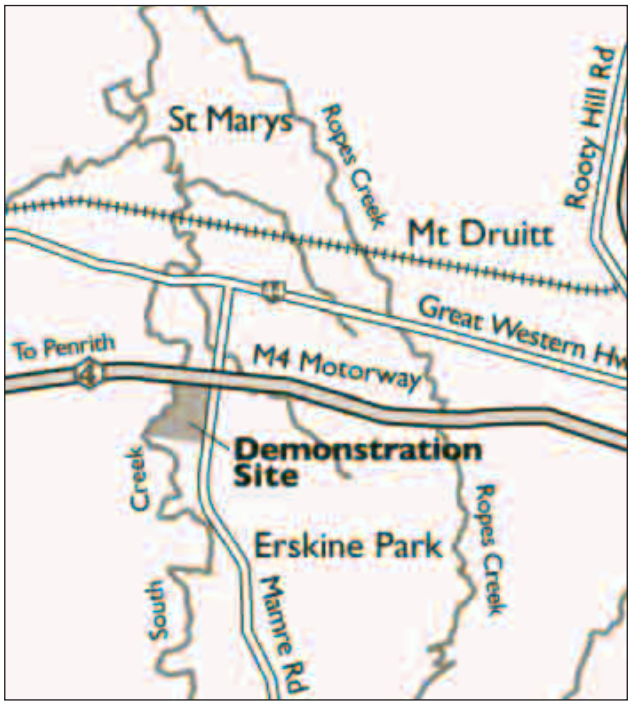
Restoration works have been ongoing at this site since 1998. The management strategies to restore and expand the bushland on this site have included:

- works that focus on restoring the remnant riparian vegetation using bush regeneration and weed control techniques
- an extensive planting and direct seeding program in pastoral land adjacent to these riparian areas.

Current and successful best practice techniques in bush regeneration have been used in the riparian remnants along South Creek. These techniques concentrate on controlling and removing environmental and noxious weeds, thereby reducing competition with native vegetation and allowing natural regeneration to occur. The artificial use of disturbance events, such as pile burns, have also been trialled with the aim of 'triggering' a regeneration response from native vegetation.

A fence was erected in 1999 along the creekline to control stock access into the regeneration and revegetation areas. The fence has provided a 50 to 100-metre buffer area between the pasture and the riparian vegetation along the creekline.

In 2000 extensive planting was undertaken along the eastern side of South Creek, with seed collected on or adjacent to the site. An area of approximately 20 metres has been left between the remnant riparian vegetation and the revegetation zone to allow for the natural recruitment, regeneration and expansion of the remnant vegetation. The restoration works will assist in the long-term management and recovery of the endangered species and communities on the site by increasing the areas suitable for their establishment.



An old oxbow section of the river was recognised as a significant frog habitat area. The area had an excellent mix of native grass species but was devoid of trees and heavily infested with Blackberry. Revegetation programs in 2001–02 established Sydney Coastal River-flat Forest vegetation around the site and linked this area with the remnant vegetation along South Creek.

Monitoring at the site has revealed changes in both native and exotic species in composition and distribution over time. Assessing the monitoring results also allows more responsive restoration.

If you are considering undertaking a restoration program on your property and would like information and advice on current successful techniques in use on the Cumberland Plain, a visit to the South Creek riparian corridor site at Erskine Park will allow you to see the on-ground results of the various restoration techniques discussed in this publication.

To visit this demonstration site contact:

Land Management Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources
Phone: (02) 9895 7626

Appendix 3: Cumberland Plain weeds and their treatment

Herbaceous weed and grass control

Common name	Scientific name	Hand remove	Cut and paint	Spraying Roundup Biactive® rate	Possible selective herbicide and other techniques
African Love Grass	*Eragrostis curvula*	•		1:100	Slash or mow, spray regrow with Roundup® Spot-spray also possible.
Alligator Weed	*Alternanthera philoxeroides*			1:100	
Amaranth	*Amaranthus* sp.	•	•	1:100	
Asparagus Fern	*Asparagus aethiopicus*	•		1:75	Brush-off
Asthma Weed	*Parietaria judaica*	•		1:100	
Black Thistle	*Cirsium vulgare*	•	•	1:100	
Blackberry Nightshade	*Solanum nigrum*	•	•	1:100	
Cobbler's Peg	*Bidens pilosa*	•	•	1:100	
Common Couch	*Cynodon dactylon*	•		1:75	
Creeping Buttercup	*Ranunculus repens*	•		1:100	
Crofton Weed	*Ageratina adenophora*	•		1:100	
Drain Sedge	*Cyperus eragrostis*	•		1:100	
Ehrharta	*Ehrharta erecta*	•		1:100-1:500	
Fat Hen	*Chenopodium album*	•	•	1:100	
Fennel	*Foeniculum vulgare*	•			
Fireweed	*Senecio madagascariensis*	•		1:100	
Flatweed	*Hypochaeris radicata*	•		1:100	
Fleabane	*Conyza* spp.	•	•	1:100	
Giant Bamboo	*Bambusa* sp.		•		
Giant Reed	*Arundo donax*		•		
Guinea Grass	*Panicum maximum*	•		1:75	
Ink Weed	*Phytolacca octandra*	•	•	1:100	
Johnson's Grass	*Sorghum halpense*	•			
Kikuyu	*Pennisetum clandestinum*	•		1:100	
Ludwigia	*Ludwigia peruviana*	•	•	1:100	
Mist Flower	*Ageratina riparia*	•		1:100	
Needle Grass	*Nassella* sp.	•			
Paddy's Lucerne	*Sida rhombifolia*	•	•	1:100	Grazon, Garlon®
Pampas Grass	*Cortaderia selloana*	•	•	1:75	
Paspalum	*Paspalum dilatatum*	•		1:100	
Patterson's Curse	*Echium* sp.	•		1:100	
Plantain	*Plantago lanceolata*	•		1:100	
Prairie Grass	*Bromus catharticus*	•		1:100	
Prickly Lettuce	*Lactuca serriola*	•		1:100	
Quaking Grass	*Briza* sp.	•		1:100	
Rhodes Grass	*Chloris gayana*	•		1:100	
Ryegrass	*Lolium perenne*	•		1:100	
Salvinia	*Salvinia molesta*			1:100	
Sowthistle	*Sonchus oleraceus*	•		1:100	
Spider Plant	*Chlorophytum comosum*	•		1:75	
Spiny Rush	*Juncus acutus*	•		1:75	
St John's Wort	*Hypericum perforatum*	•			Garlon®, Grazon
Summer Grass	*Digitaria sanguinalis*	•		1:100	
Wandering Jew	*Tradescantia fluminensis*	•		1:75	Starane; other techniques include raking where no native groundcovers are present
Veldt Grass	*Ehrharta longiflora*	•		1:100	
Wild Oats	*Avena* sp.	•		1:100	
Water Hyacinth	*Eichhornia crassipes*	•			

The information above has been prepared and provided by Greening Australia (NSW).
The list of selective herbicides included in this chart is by no means extensive.
For detailed information consult NSW Agriculture 2004 (available at www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/weeds-general/nox-weeds-splash.htm).
For further options you can search the Australian Veterinary Medicine and Pesticide Authority website at www.apvma.gov.au

Vine control

Common name	Scientific name	Hand remove	Cut and paint	Scrape and paint	Spraying Roundup Biactive® rate	Possible selective herbicide and other techniques
Turkey Rhubarb	*Acetosa sagittata*	•			1:100	Starane
Madiera Vine	*Anredera cordifolia*	•		•	1:75	Starane
Moth Vine	*Araujia sericifera*	•		•	1:50	
Balloon Vine	*Cardiospermum grandiflorum*	•	•	•	1:100	
Cape Ivy	*Delairea odorata*	•			1:75	
English Ivy	*Hedera helix*	•		•	1:100	
Coastal Morning Glory	*Ipomoea cairica*	•		•	1:100	
Morning Glory	*Ipomoea indica*	•		•	1:100	Garlon®
Honeysuckle	*Lonicera japonica*	•		•	1:75	
Bridal Creeper	*Asparagus asparagoides*	•			1:75	Brush-off used under permit is effective. Must apply herbicide at flowering. Note some natives, e.g. *Bursaria*, are sensitive to Brush-off. Spray in combination with hand removal.

The information above has been prepared and provided by Greening Australia (NSW).
The list of selective herbicides included in this chart is by no means extensive.
For detailed information consult NSW Agriculture 2004 (available at www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/weeds-general/nox-weeds-splash.htm).
For further options you can search the Australian Veterinary Medicine and Pesticide Authority website at www.apvma.gov.au

Lissanthe strigosa *flowers. (P. Watson)*

Woody weed control

Woody weed seedlings can often be treated by spot spraying with a Roundup Biactive® solution (check herbicide label for dilution rates). The addition of a surfactant can improve results. Additionally, several selective herbicides can also be used in this way.

Medium-sized woody weeds can be treated using a technique known as basal spraying. A prescribed solution of diesel and selective herbicide (often Garlon®) is applied to the leaves and stems. This can be an effective treatment but consideration must be given to the risk of off-target damage and the impacts on future regeneration. This method should not be used in areas where native regeneration is expected.

Common name	Scientific name	Hand remove	Cut and paint	Scrape and paint	Stem injection	Garlon® or Access-preferred herbicide	Possible selective herbicide and other techniques
African Box Thorn	*Lycium ferocissimum*	•	•		•	•	The use of Garlon® and diesel is a very effective herbicide for this species.
African Olive	*Olea europaea* subsp. *Africana*	•	•		•	•	The use of Garlon® and diesel is a very effective herbicide for this species. Best techniques are cut and paint.
Boneseed	*Chrysanthemoides monilifera* subsp. *Monilifera*	•	•		•		
Blackberry	*Rubus fruiticosus*	•	•	•		•	Hand prune or slash to encourage new growth, spray new growth with herbicide. Follow-up may be needed.
Briar Rose	*Rosa rubiginosa*		•				
Box Elder	*Acer negundo*	•	•		•		
Camphor Laurel	*Cinnamomum camphora*	•	•	•			For small plants apply herbicide by vertically scraping the stem with a knife blade and applying herbicide.
Cassia	*Senna pendula*	•	•		•		
Castor Oil Plant	*Ricinus communis*	•	•				
Coral Tree	*Erythrina xsykesii*	•	•		•		
Cotoneaster	*Cotoneaster glaucophyllus*	•	•		•		
Cox's Coral Tree	*Erythrina crista-galli*	•	•		•		
English Broom	*Cytisus scoparius*	•	•		•		
Gleditisia	*Gleditsia tricanthos*		•		•		Stem injection best from early spring to autumn.
Gorse	*Ulex europaeus*		•				
Green Cestrum	*Cestrum parqui*	•		•	•	•	Garlon® and diesel is a very effective herbicide for adults of this species. Some degree of reshooting may occur with all treatments requiring follow-up.
Hackberry	*Celtis occidentalis*	•	•		•	•	
Indian Hawthorn	*Raphiolepis indica*	•	•		•		
Broad-leaved Privet	*Ligustrum lucidum*	•	•		•		
Montpellier Broom	*Genista monspessulana*	•	•		•		
Mulberry	*Morus alba*	•	•		•		
Ochna	*Ochna serrulata*			•	•		
Pittosporum	*Pittosporum undulatum*	•	•		•		
Radiata Pine	*Pinus radiata*	•	•		•		
Rhus Tree	*Toxicodendron succedaneum*	•	•		•		
Narrow-leaved Privet	*Ligustrum sinense*	•	•		•		
Wild Tobacco	*Solanum mauritianum*	•	•				
Tree-of-Heaven	*Ailanthus altissima*			•	•	•	Tordon is effective in treating this species using the cut and paint technique. Basal bark application of Garlon® and diesel also effective.
Willow	*Salix* spp.	•	•	•	•		
Willow Leaf Wattle	*Acacia saligna*	•	•		•		

The information above has been prepared and provided by Greening Australia (NSW).
The list of selective herbicides included in this chart is by no means extensive.
For detailed information consult NSW Agriculture 2004 (available at www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/weeds-general/nox-weeds-splash.htm).
For further options you can search the Australian Veterinary Medicine and Pesticide Authority website at www.apvma.gov.au

Major Cumberland Plain noxious weed species

The following species are known to have an impact on the endangered ecological communities of the Cumberland Plain and have been listed as noxious under the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993* for some local government areas of the Cumberland Plain. Actions for control categories are shown below.

Common name	Botanical name	Control category
Turkey Rhubarb	*Acetosa sagittatus*	W4b
Crofton Weed	*Ageratina adenophora*	W2
Alligator Weed	*Alternanthera philoxeroides*	W1
Madeira Vine	*Anredera cordifolia*	W4c
Giant Reed	*Arundo donax*	W4a
Bridal Creeper/Baby Smilax	*Asparagus asparagoides*	W4c
Mother of Millions	*Bryophyllum delagoense*	W2 or W3
Balloon Vine	*Cardiospermum grandiflorum*	W4c
Green Cestrum	*Cestrum parqui*	W2 or W3
Bitou Bush/Boneseed	*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*	W2 or W3
Camphor Laurel	*Cinnamomum camphora*	W4d
Pampas Grass	*Cortaderia selloana*	W2
Cotoneaster	*Cotoneaster glaucophyllus*	W4b
Cotoneaster	*Cotoneaster pannosus*	W4b
English Broom	*Cytisus scoparius*	W2
Cape Ivy	*Delairea odorata*	W4d
Paterson's Curse	*Echium plantagineum*	W3
Water Hyacinth	*Eichhornia crassipes*	W1 or W2
Montpellier Broom	*Genista monspessulana*	W4b
St John's Wort	*Hypericum perforatum*	W2
Morning Glory	*Ipomea indica*	W4c
Lantana (pink-flowered) Lantana (red-flowered)	*Lantana camara*	W2
Broad-leaved Privet	*Ligustrum lucidum*	W4b
Narrow-leaved Privet	*Ligustrum sinense*	W4b
Water Primrose	*Ludwigia peruviana*	W2
African Boxthorn	*Lycium ferocissimum*	W2
Cat's Claw Creeper	*Macfadyena unguis-cati*	W4c
Chilean Needle Grass	*Nassella neesiana*	W2
Serrated Tussock	*Nassella trichotoma*	W2 or W3
Ochna/Mickey Mouse Plant	*Ochna serrulata*	W4b
African Olive/Wild Olive	*Olea europaea* subsp. *africana*	W4b
Prickly Pear	*Opuntia stricta*	W4f
Sticky Weed/Asthma Weed	*Parietaria judaica*	W3
Bamboo	*Phyllostachys* spp.	W4a
Castor Oil Plant	*Ricinus communis*	W2
Sweet Briar	*Rosa rubiginosa*	W2
Blackberry	*Rubus fruticosa* (agg. spp.)	W2 or W3
Willow	*Salix* spp.	W4g
Salvinia	*Salvinia molesta*	W1 or W2
Cassia	*Senna pendula*	W4b
Johnson Grass	*Sorghum halepense*	W2 or W3
Rhus Tree	*Toxicodendron succedaneum*	W2
Wandering Jew	*Tradescantia fluminensis*	W4c
Gorse	*Ulex europaeus*	W2
Noogoora Burr	*Xanthium* spp.	W3

Action for control categories

W1 The presence of the weed must be notified to the local control authority and the weed must be fully and continuously suppressed and destroyed.

W2 The weed must be fully and continuously suppressed and destroyed.

W3 The weed must be prevented from spreading and its numbers and distribution reduced.

W4a The weed must not be sold, propagated or knowingly distributed and any part of the weed must be prevented from growing within 3 metres of the boundary of a property.

W4b The weed must not be sold, propagated or knowingly distributed and any existing weed must be prevented from flowering and fruiting.

W4c The weed must not be sold, propagated or knowingly distributed and the weed must be prevented from spreading to an adjoining property.

W4d The weed (a) must not be sold, propagated or knowingly distributed and (b) must be fully and continuously suppressed and destroyed unless it is –

- listed on the state heritage register under the *Heritage Act 1977*
- listed for preservation or protection as a heritage item under an environmental planning instrument under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*
- listed for preservation or protection in a council tree preservation order for the local government area
- included for preservation or protection in a plan of management for a local government area under section 40 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, or
- included for preservation or protection in a noxious weed policy or a noxious weed control program approved by the local control authority for the area for which it is the local control authority.

W4e The weed must be fully and continuously suppressed and destroyed. All reasonable precautions must be taken to ensure produce, soil, livestock, equipment and vehicles are free of the weed before sale or movement from an infested area of the property.

W4f The weed must not be sold, propagated or knowingly distributed. Any biological control or other control program directed by the local control authority must be implemented.

W4g The weed must not be sold, propagated or knowingly distributed.

Appendix 4: Weed removal techniques

[The information in this appendix has largely been sourced with permission from the Bush Regenerators' Handbook *by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) (1991). The illustrations have been supplied by the Australian Association of Bush Regeneration (AABR) and the National Trust of Australia (NSW).]*

Hand removal

Weeds with shallow roots

Weed examples: Crofton Weed, Cobbler's Peg, Fleabane, Purple Top, small grasses and most seedlings

Small soft weeds and seedlings, annuals and tufted grasses that root directly from the base usually have shallow roots. These plants can be pulled out by hand. Even tough perennials like Paddy's Lucerne can be removed this way. Be warned, however, that if some of the rootstock stays in the ground, a different method will be needed.

For seedlings and small plants, take hold of the plant at ground level and pull. If you pull at any higher point on the stem, it may break and the plant re-shoot.

For larger plants, take hold of the stem at ground level and gently rock the plant back and forth until it comes away cleanly. If the plant has a spreading root system, it may be necessary to pull individual lateral roots. Always pull roots horizontally through the soil towards the stem of the plant. This causes the least disturbance to the soil and reduces the chance that the root will break. Never pull large lateral roots upwards as they may break and will then need to be dug out.

Replace any disturbed soil and lightly sweep the mulch back over the spot. All weed debris should be removed. If this is not possible, seedlings and most soft, leafy weeds can be left lying on the ground. Larger plants with substantial roots should be placed upside down on a rock or propped up so that the roots do not make contact with the soil. Ensure that all weeds that are left on-site cannot set seed.

Note: Annual weeds can be sprayed with herbicide before flower and fruit set. If annuals are treated while in flower, there may be enough stored food in the plant to allow the plant to set seed before it dies. Seedling perennials can be sprayed with herbicide as long as the plant contains enough green tissue to absorb the poison. Grasses are best treated with herbicide when the plant is actively growing.

AABR/V. Bear

Weeds with brittle or readily fragmented stems

Weed example: Wandering Jew

Each of the weeds in this group needs careful weeding and regular follow-up. Any fragmented piece of stem that bears a node can regenerate, so all plants must be bagged and removed from the site.

Hand pulling

Use this method if you are working entirely by hand.

1. Take hold of one runner and pull it gently along the ground towards you.
2. When the runner disappears under vegetation or mulch, stop pulling and scrape back the mulch until you get another grip further along the stem. Continue to pull gently until the runner comes away from the soil, then bag it immediately. If the runner breaks, trace it out.

This method is suitable for isolated or moderate infestations, particularly those which are tangled with more desirable species. If the infestation is dense, however, several more efficient methods are available.

Rolling

When Wandering Jew is growing thickly on a hard surface, such as a rock-face or compacted soil, the weed can be rolled up like a carpet.

1. Locate a convenient starting point and two side boundaries. Use a sharp knife to cut along these three sides. This weed has very shallow roots which hold little soil so it is possible to roll the carpet up into convenient lengths.
2. Cut the roll off and bag the lot. Continue in this manner until the weed is completely removed.

If necessary, return to the site and hand-pull all the small pieces that were missed or broken off. A stiff broom will finish the job.

Raking

If no native groundcover plants are present, large infestations can be raked up and bagged. This method is probably the most efficient for large infestations on a base of soil. It is important to return to the site several times and remove the small portions that were passed over. Maintenance and perseverance are the key to eradicating this weed.

Note: Other weed species growing among Wandering Jew should be removed using the appropriate method.

Removal using a knife or trowel

Weeds with large root systems

Weed examples: Plantain, Dock, Cat's Ear, Flatweed

This technique is useful for small soft leafy plants with a larger root system or tap roots or hardy perennials which rely on a swollen root system.

1. With your right hand push a narrow trowel or knife into the soil next to the plant (the knife should be pushed in with the side of the blade towards the plant). Push the handle towards the plant and pull the blade out of the soil.
2. Repeat at right angles, then carefully remove the plant. If the plant does not move, repeat the action around the other side of the plant, remembering to push the knife towards the plant. Repair any disturbance to the soil or mulch.

Weeds with below-surface crowns

Weed examples: Paspalum, Pampas Grass, Ginger Plant, Asparagus Fern, Bamboo

This is useful for weeds which have their growing points below the surface (crowns, corms, rhizomes and clumped or tufted fibrous root systems).

1. Grasp the leaves or stems and hold them tightly so that the base of the plant is visible. Plants with sharp leaves or stems should be cut back first, before you attempt to get in close to the base.
2. Insert the appropriate tool (either knife or lever) close to the base of the plant at a slight angle, with the tip well under the root system.
3. Cut through the roots close to the crown or rhizome. Depending on the size of the plant, two or more cuts may be needed to sever all the roots.
4. Remove the plant. Make sure the hard crown, or base of the plant where the roots begin, is completely removed. If part of this is left in the ground, it will usually re-shoot.

***Note*:** The water tubers of Asparagus Fern can be left in the ground once the crown has been removed, as they contain no food and cannot reproduce.

National Trust (NSW)/V. Bear

Weeds with bulbs or tubers

Weed examples: Oxalis, Onion Weed, Watsonia, Turkey Rhubarb

Plants with bulbs, corms or small tubers must be completely removed from the soil. These reproductive parts can form small off-shoot bulbs or growing points which can form a new plant if broken off.

1. Prepare the area by moving back mulch and other vegetation. Using a trowel or larger spade, dig a narrow channel next to the stem until the main bulb is reached.
2. Check the soil for adjoining bulblets. If present, they must be removed with a substantial quantity of soil, and the whole lot bagged.
3. Periodically check for regrowth.

Plants which form underground tubers are especially difficult to eradicate as they may have several tubers connected by thin roots. Although you might remove the plant body and some tubers from the soil, other tubers which remain in the soil can re-establish the plant. These secondary tubers can develop even when buried deep in the soil.

AABR/V. Bear

Weeds with surface or climbing runners

Weed examples: Honeysuckle, Morning Glory, Jasmine, Cape Ivy

The stems of many climbers or scramblers develop roots and new shoots from the nodes, so broken portions should not be left in or on the ground.

1. Take hold of one runner and gently pull it along the ground towards you. Follow the runners until the main root system is located. Either remove it manually or cut and paint it with herbicide.
2. Continue until all the runners have been removed. Small fibrous roots growing from the nodes along the runners can be cut with a sharp knife as long as there is no stem tissue attached.
3. Check for broken pieces of stem and large roots which may have been overlooked. Replace the mulch.
4. Follow up regularly. Regrowth from underground roots can be sprayed with herbicide or removed manually.

Note: Rampant vines such as Honeysuckle often have several major nodes with numerous runners branching in all directions. All of these runners must be removed. Major infestations of rampant vines can be sprayed with herbicide as long as no native species are present.

National Trust (NSW)/V. Bear

Herbicide treatment

Method 1: Cut and paint

This is useful for all small- to medium-sized woody weeds, and some soft, leafy perennials such as Privet, Ochna, Lantana, Wild Olive, Cotoneaster, Camphor Laurel, Ginger, Bamboo and Arundo.

For larger specimens remove the top of the plant for easy access.

1. With an appropriate tool (secateurs, loppers or bush-saw), cut the base of the plant close to the ground with a straight, flat cut. The cut must be horizontal so that the herbicide rests on the cut area while being absorbed, rather than running away down the side of the stem. The cut should be as close as possible to the ground as stumps are unsightly and dangerous.
2. Immediately spray and paint herbicide solution onto the exposed surface (less than 10 seconds for water-based solutions and 1 minute for diesel solutions), as the sap ceases to flow once the tissues are severed. For convenience, use a paintbrush, eye dropper or small squeeze bottle. For larger specimens, wipe the poison around the outer rim of the cut only.

Note: If plants re-shoot, repeat the method. Ochna is especially difficult, but it has been successfully poisoned by scraping each side of the stem just below the cut. Plants growing in damp areas may require special attention as they are likely to re-shoot.

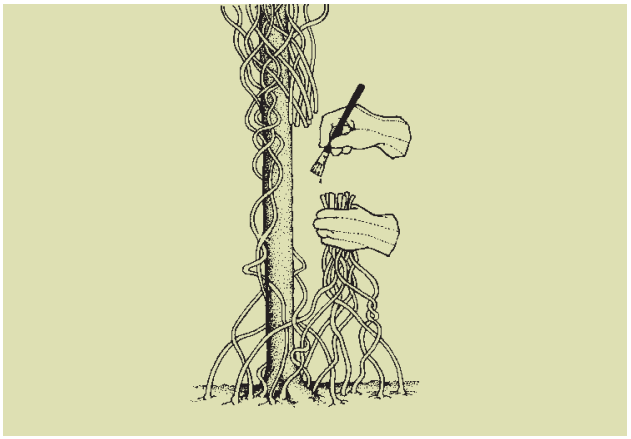
AABR/V. Bear

Method 2: Cut and swab

This method is similar to Method 1, but is suited to vines and multi-stemmed shrubs.

Here the plant stems are cut through completely, close to the ground. Herbicide is then applied immediately to the cut surface emerging from the ground, via spray or brush.

Some vines, such as Morning Glory, Balloon Vine or Moth Vine, have many stems which climb into the canopy. Handfuls of stems can be cut and painted with herbicide. The vines which remain in the canopy will soon die and decompose, and do not need to be removed.



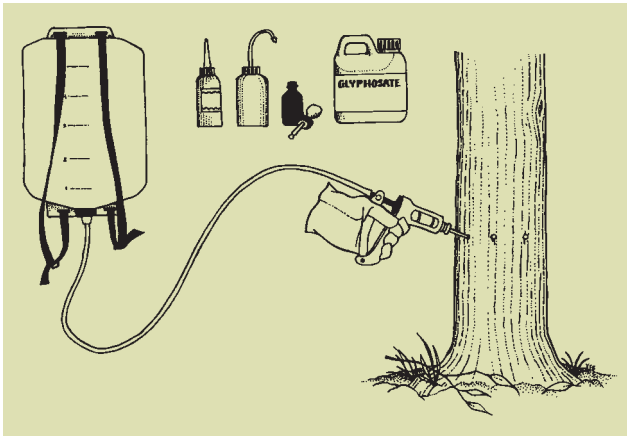
National Trust (NSW)/V. Bear

Method 3: Tree injection

Tree injection and frilling and chipping (see below) are used for trees and woody weeds with stems or trunk greater than five centimetres in circumference. They are also used on inaccessible sites where rubbish removal is a problem, or where the dead tree is going to be left for habitat.

1. Drill holes at an angle into the sapwood approximately five centimetres apart around the tree, using a cordless drill or brace and bit.
2. Place the correct dose of herbicide into each hole as it is cut. If necessary, wait until the liquid subsides then apply the remainder. It is important to follow the manufacturer's recommendations for the correct dose.

Note: Best results are achieved with plants which are actively growing. The success of any systemic herbicide relies on the plant's normal physiological activities to move the chemical through its tissue.



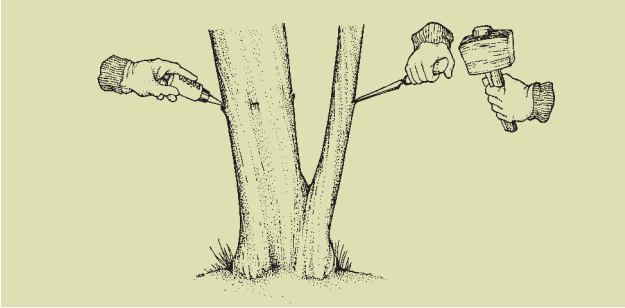
National Trust (NSW)/V. Bear

Method 4: Frilling or chipping

This technique is used when a cordless drill is not available for tree injection.

1. With a sharp chisel or axe, make a deep horizontal cut into the sapwood at regular intervals (no farther than three centimetres apart) around the base of the tree. Take care not to ringbark the plant.
2. Immediately apply herbicide as described in Method 3 above.

Note: For multi-stemmed plants, inject or chip below the lowest branch or treat each stem individually.

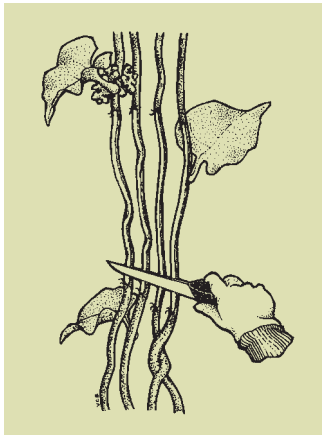


AABR/V. Bear

Method 5: Stem scrape and paint

This is a technique used on many vines, such as Madeira Vine, which has aerial, not underground, tubers. Instead of producing seeds, in the Sydney region the plant drops thousands of these tubers or small 'potatoes' which develop along the stems. These fall to the ground and establish new plants.

1. For seedlings and small plants without aerial tubers, use the hand removal technique (above).
2. For mature vines with aerial tubers, scrape a very thin layer of bark from a 15 to 30 centimetre section of the stem and apply herbicide. The aerial tubers will slowly rot, so do not disturb the vine until all the tubers have shrivelled and fallen. This may take weeks or even months. Do not remove the roots from the soil, as this will prevent the herbicide from circulating through the whole plant.



AABR/V. Bear

Method 6: Foliar spraying

Foliar spraying is the use of herbicide diluted with water or diesel at a specific rate, and sprayed over the foliage to the point where every leaf is wet, but not dripping. This method is most suited to shrubs, grasses and dense vines less than six metres tall. Foliar spraying can be done in a number of ways, depending on the size of the plant or infestation.

1. Blanket spraying using a boom spray mounted from a tractor or 4WD can be used to treat large areas completely infested with weeds.
2. For large infestations that need targeted applications of herbicide, a hose and handgun can be used to spray herbicide from a tractor or tank mounted on a 4WD.
3. Smaller infestations can be spot-sprayed using a backpack spray unit. Spot-spraying is used to treat individual weed plants or areas that have only small clumps of weeds.

Method 7: Spraying of bulbous plants

Bulbous plants should be treated between flower and fruit set. The herbicide will enter the plant's underground storage organ, reducing its ability to store food for the next growing season. Spraying is useful for treating dense infestations of Blackberry.

1. Spray the plant when it is actively growing. Spraying in general should be undertaken between late summer and early autumn, between the flowering and the setting of fruit.
2. When the plant appears dead, remove it from the site using a McLeod tool, rake or brush hook if required.
3. Check for regrowth and treat it using one of the following methods: cut and paint the main stem again; spray the regrowth with herbicide; paint a few leaves directly with herbicide; or remove it manually.

Note: Wandering Jew has been successfully controlled with herbicide. The results vary greatly according to light intensity, season, chemical dosage rate and coverage.

Method 8: Basal bark application

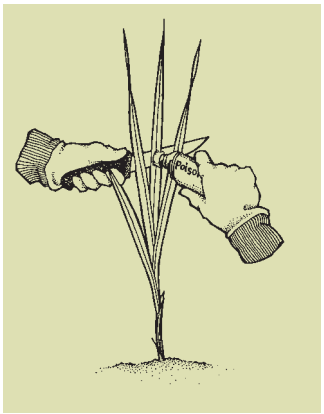
[The information on this method and Method 9 have been sourced from the Noxious and Environmental Weeds Control Handbook *by NSW Agriculture (2004).]*

This method involves mixing an oil-soluble herbicide in diesel and spraying the circumference of the trunk or stem of the plant. It is suitable for thin-barked woody weeds, undesirable trees, saplings, regrowth and multi-stemmed shrubs and trees.

The full circumference of the stem or trunk should be sprayed with herbicide solution from the ground to a height of 30 centimetres. It is important to saturate right around the trunk.

Method 9: Rope/wick applicators and stem swiping

This method consists of a wick or rope soaked in herbicide from a reservoir attached to a handle or pumped to the wick. The wetted wick is used to wipe or brush herbicide over the weed. It is sometimes necessary to provide some resistance for the wiper when the weed leaf or stem is soft. Stem swiping involves using a knife to provide resistance down the back of the stem or leaf, while wiping herbicide down the front.



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Appendix 5: Funding opportunities

Government organisations

Department of the Environment and Heritage

The Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH) advises the Australian Government on policies and programs for the protection and conservation of the environment, including both natural and cultural heritage places. It manages a number of major programs. The most significant of those dealing with natural resource management come under the umbrella of the Natural Heritage Trust and the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality. DEH also manages a National Reserve System Program that offers protection for ecosystems on a priority basis. DEH also coordinates the Australian Greenhouse Office and has many environmental conservation incentive programs including:

- Bushcare
- Threateneed Species Network
- National Landcare Program
- Endangered Species Program
- Fisheries Action Program
- National Rivercare Program
- National Wetlands Program
- Waterwatch.

Contact DEH on (02) 6274 1111 or visit its website at www.deh.gov.au

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

The Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry provides leadership and coordination and management of funding for the sustainable use, management and conservation of Australia's land and water resources, fisheries and forestry. The department has a large number of natural resource management funding programs including:

- AAA Farm Bis – Skilling Farmers for the Future
- Australian Government Envirofund
- National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality
- National Feral Animal Control Program.

Contact the department on (02) 6272 3933 or visit its website at www.daff.gov.au

Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW)

The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) incorporates the former NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Botanic Gardens Trust, Environment Protection Authority and Resource NSW. DEC manages the NSW Environmental Trust grant scheme. DEC also has a range of options available to landholders wanting to be involved with conservation on their property. The Conservation Partners Program includes:

- Voluntary Conservation Agreements
- Wildlife Refuges
- Land for Wildlife and other options that support conservation on private and public land.

For more information on DEC services, phone 131 555 or (02) 9995 5000 or go to www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Hawkesbury–Nepean Catchment Management Authority

The Hawkesbury–Nepean Catchment Management Authority plays a vital role in the management of one of the most important catchments in Australia. The authority oversees the development of strong partnerships in natural resource management and works closely with government agencies, community groups, industry and individuals within the Hawkesbury–Nepean catchment to achieve its goals. The authority has many projects and programs designed to help land managers with improvements in natural resource management.

Contact the Hawkesbury–Nepean Catchment Management Authority on (02) 4828 6747 or email at hn@cma.nsw.gov.au

Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (NSW)

The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) drives, coordinates and streamlines land-use and transport planning, infrastructure development and natural resource management in NSW. DIPNR has many projects and programs aimed at helping land managers with improvements in natural resource management.

Contact DIPNR on 1300 305 695 or visit its website at www.dipnr.nsw.gov.au

NSW Department of Primary Industries

NSW Agriculture is part of the NSW Department of Primary Industries. NSW Agriculture is involved in agricultural research, advisory services, education and regulation and providing practical farm production solutions for profitable agriculture and a better environment.

Contact the department on (02) 6391 3100 or email at nsw.agriculture@agric.nsw.gov.au

NRM Options

NRM Options is a website (www.nrmoptions.nsw.gov.au) maintained by NSW Government specialists containing a synthesis of current research and understanding about natural resource management options in the State. The site helps in selecting and designing management responses for processes threatening natural resource assets.

Local government

A number of local councils on the Cumberland Plain are running or implementing incentive programs. These programs aim to encourage sustainable management of natural resources on private land. These councils are:

Camden Council – Phone (02) 4654 7777
or visit www.camden.nsw.gov.au

Fairfield City Council – Phone (02) 9725 0222
or visit www.fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au

Hornsby Shire Council – Phone (02) 9847 6666
or visit www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au

Liverpool City Council – Phone 1300 36 2170
or visit www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au

Non-government organisations

Greening Australia

Greening Australia has a contract with the Commonwealth's Department of the Environment and Heritage to provide technical support for the Bushcare program in NSW. This involves oversight of the technical delivery of Bushcare projects, including on-ground advice to Bushcare recipients, and project support.

For further information, contact your local Greening Australia office or visit www.greeningaustralia.org.au

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

WWF Australia is part of the WWF International Network – the world's largest independent conservation organisation. WWF Australia is committed to conserving the unique wildlife of Australia and the Asia-Pacific, ensuring sustainable resource use and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

Contact WWF by phoning 1800 032 551 or visiting www.wwf.org.au

Birds Australia

Birds Australia is dedicated to the conservation, study and enjoyment of Australia's native birds and their habitats in addition to providing information about particular bird species.

Contact them by phone on 1300 730 075 or visiting www.birdsaustralia.com.au

Field naturalists

Field naturalists clubs operate all over Australia and are vigorous and practical advocates of conservation and the study of natural history. These community-based clubs undertake a range of activities ranging from botanical and fauna surveys to terrestrial and marine biodiversity research.

Enter 'Field naturalists' on a web search engine for details of the closest club.

Australian Plants Society

The Australian Plants Society caters for people interested in Australia's native flora whether simply appreciating its beauty and diversity or actively propagating, cultivating and conserving it.

Visit their website at farrer.riv.csu.edu.au/ASGAP/index.html

Conservation Volunteers Australia

Conservation Volunteers Australia involves the community in conservation projects in urban, regional and remote Australia. Typical projects include tree planting, seed collection, endangered species protection, weed control, flora and fauna surveys, walking trail construction, and fencing and environmental monitoring.

Contact them by phoning 1800 032 501 or visiting their website at www.conservationvolunteers.com.au

Australian Bush Heritage Fund

The Australian Bush Heritage Fund is a private fund which purchases land of high conservation value. To date, three properties in NSW have been acquired and are managed by the fund.

Contact details are: phone (03) 8610 9100 or website www.bushheritage.asn.au

Appendix 6: Contacts

Commonwealth and state government

Australian Museum: (02) 9320 6000

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry: (02) 6272 3933

Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources: 1300 305 695

Department of the Environment and Heritage: (02) 6274 1111

Forests NSW: (02) 9980 4100

Hawkesbury–Nepean Catchment Management Authority: (02) 4828 6747

Mount Annan Botanic Garden: (02) 4648 2477

NSW Department of Environment and Conservation: 131 555 or (02) 9995 5000

NSW Department of Primary Industries: (02) 6391 3100

NSW Natural Resource Atlas: A website (www.nratlas.nsw.gov.au/wmc/savedapps/nratlas) that provides community access to natural resources information

Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney: (02) 9231 8111

Rural Fire Service: 1800 679 737 and www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

TAFE NSW has numerous courses in bush regeneration: 131 601 or www.tafensw.edu.au

Local councils

Auburn Council: (02) 9735 1222

Bankstown City Council: (02) 9707 9999

Baulkham Hills Shire Council: (02) 9843 0555

Blacktown City Council: (02) 9839 6000

Blue Mountains City Council: (02) 4780 5000

Camden Council: (02) 4654 7777

Campbelltown City Council: (02) 4645 4000

Canterbury City Council: (02) 9789 9300

Fairfield City Council: (02) 9725 0222

Hawkesbury City Council: (02) 4560 4444

Holroyd City Council: (02) 9840 9840

Hornsby Shire Council: (02) 9847 6666

Hurstville City Council: (02) 9330 6222

Ku-ring-gai Council: (02) 9424 0770

Liverpool City Council: 1300 362 170

Parramatta City Council: (02) 9806 5050

Penrith City Council: (02) 4732 7777

Ryde City Council: (02) 9952 8222

Strathfield Municipal Council: (02) 9748 9999

Sutherland Shire Council: (02) 9710 0333

Willoughby City Council: (02) 9777 1000

Wollondilly Shire Council: (02) 4677 1100

Non-government organisations

Australian Association of Bush Regenerators: 0407 002 921

Australian Bush Heritage Fund: (03) 8610 9100

Australian Conservation Foundation: (02) 9212 6600

Australian Network for Plant Conservation: (02) 6250 9509

Birds Australia: 1300 730 075

Cumberland Bird Observers Club: (02) 9484 3017

Cumberland Plain Carers: (02) 9895 5965 (western Sydney environmental community groups' network)

FloraBank: (02) 6281 8585

Greening Australia (NSW): (02) 9560 9144

Landcare Australia: 1800 151 105

Local NSW Aboriginal Land Council: (02) 9689 4444

Nature Conservation Council of NSW: (02) 9247 4206

Planet Ark: (02) 9251 3444

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF): 1800 032 551

Community groups

Many local community groups are associated with either their local council or Landcare. Contact these organisations to find out if there are any community groups active in your area, or alternatively get some like-minded friends together and start one with the support of your local council or Landcare.

Appendix 7: Recommended reading

Major background resource

Native Vegetation of the Cumberland Plain: Final Edition (2002)

This publication should be consulted for comprehensive information and species lists for each endangered ecological community. This report (maps and interpretation guidelines) can be viewed:

- online on the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) website www.environment.nsw.gov.au – put 'Cumberland Plain Vegetation Mapping Project' in the search box
- as a CD available for purchase – phone 131 555 or (02) 9995 5000 for details.

General

Taken for Granted by D. Benson & J. Howell, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney (1990).

Sydney's Bushland: More than Meets the Eye by D. Benson & J. Howell, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney (2000).

Mountain Devil to Mangrove: A Guide to the Natural Vegetation in the Hawkesbury–Nepean Catchment by D. Benson, J. Howell & L. McDougall, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney (1996).

Wildlife in the Home Paddock by R. Breckwoldt, Angus & Robertson, Sydney (1983).

Plan for Trees by D. Brouwer, Paterson, Sydney (1998).

Trees on Farms by D. Brouwer & I. Dutton, Paterson, Sydney (1991).

Urban Bushland Biodiversity Survey, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Hurstville (1997).

Rare and Threatened Plants of Western Sydney by T. James, L. McDougall & D. Benson, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney (1991).

Noxious and Environmental Weeds Control Handbook 2004–05 by NSW Agriculture, Orange (2005).

Losing Ground by S. Rosen, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney (1995).

Green web, WSROC, Blacktown (1997).

Native plant identification

'Ecology of Sydney plant species' in the journal *Cunninghamia*, National Herbarium, Botanic Gardens Trust, Sydney (1993 and ongoing).

Field Guide to the Native Plants of Sydney by L. Robinson, Kangaroo Press (1994).

Native Plants of the Sydney District by A. Fairley & P. Moore, Kangaroo Press (1989).

Flora of the Sydney Region (3rd edition) by N.C.W. Beadle, O.D. Evans & R.C.Carolin. Reed Publishing (1982).

Australian Native Plants, by J. Wrigley, Collins (1983).

Rare Bushland Plants of Western Sydney (2nd edition) by T. James, L. McDougall & D. Benson, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney (1991).

Trees for the Back Paddock by N. Oates & B. Clarke, Goddard & Dobson (1987).

Weed identification and control techniques

South-east Australia

Bush Invaders of South-East Australia by A. Muyat & R.G. & F.J. Richardson, Australia (2001).

The Glove Box Guide to Plants of the NSW Rangelands by G. Brooke & L. McGarva, NSW Agriculture (1998).

Identifying the Weeds Around You by E.M. Felfoldi, Inkata Press, Australia (1993).

Waterplants of New South Wales by G.R. Sainty & S.W.L. Jacobs, Water Resources Commission of New South Wales (1981).

Identifying Thistles, a video produced by NSW Agriculture (running time 14 minutes).

Noxious and Environmental Weeds Control Handbook by NSW Agriculture (2004) (www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/weeds-general/nox-weeds-splash.htm) – an excellent resource for identifying weeds

National

Weeds Australia (www.weeds.org.au) has been created by the Australian Weeds Committee to promote access to key weed regulations, current issues, research and training. Weeds Australia has also developed WEEDeck cards. These cards have been designed as a pocket guide for identifying Australian weeds and are easy to understand and user-friendly.

Weeds: An Illustrated Botanical Guide to the Weeds of Australia by B.A. Auld & R.W. Medd, Inkata Press, Australia (1992).

Noxious Weeds of Australia by W.T. Parsons & E.G. Cuthbertson, Inkata Press, Australia (1992).

Weeds: The Ute Guide by J. Cummins & M. Moerkerk, Primary Industries South Australia (1996).

Field Guide to Weeds in Australia (3rd edition) by C. Lamp & F. Collet, Inkata Press, Australia (1989).

Crop Weeds by J.L. Wilding, A.G. Barnett & R.L. Amor, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Victoria (1993).

More Crop Weeds by M.R. Moerkerk & A.G. Barnett, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Victoria (1998).

A Plain English Guide to Agricultural Plants by C. Pearson, G. Cunningham & D. King, Longman Cheshire Pty Limited (1993).

Plant propagation

Australian Native Plants by A. Blombery, Angus & Robertson, Australia (1977).

Propagating Australian Plants by A. Blombery & B. Maloney, Kangaroo Press (1994).

The Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants by W.R. Elliot & D. Jones, Vol.1, Lothian Publishing Company Pty Ltd, Melbourne (1994).

Australian Native Plants by J. Wrigley, Collins Publishers Australia (1979).

Appendix 8: Legislation

If you are managing the restoration of bushland on the Cumberland Plain it is your responsibility to be aware of the legislative requirements associated with any restoration works.

The Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW) (DEC) encourages restoration of bushland areas on the Cumberland Plain. However, given the disturbance to the landscape since European settlement, virtually all of the vegetation on the plain belongs to one or another endangered ecological community listed under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*.

Under this Act most restoration work will require a licence from DEC. Work requiring a licence would include:

- collection of seed
- revegetating or carrying out bush regeneration activities in areas where an endangered ecological community currently exists
- revegetating or carrying out bush regeneration activities close proximity to an endangered ecological community.

Planting native species propagated from seed collected under a licence into a cleared site that is not immediately adjacent to an existing remnant will not require a licence.

Licensing queries should be directed to DEC 's Wildlife Licensing Unit on (02) 9585 6540.

Other legislation which relates to clearing of weeds or vegetation management is listed below.

Commonwealth and State Acts of Parliament can be found on the internet at www.austlii.edu.au

For NSW legislation, www.legislation.nsw.gov.au is also useful.

Commonwealth legislation

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

NSW legislation

Catchment Management Authorities Act 2003

Commons Management Act 1989

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

Environmental Trust Act 1998

Local Government Act 1993

National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974

Native Vegetation Act 2003

Nature Conservation Trust Act 2001

Noxious Weeds Act 1993

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000

Pesticides Act 1999

Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997

PROJECT PARTNERS

Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW)

NSW DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources

sustainable camden

Greening Australia New South Wales

Hawkesbury-Nepean CMA CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Natural Heritage Trust
Helping Communities Helping Australia
An Australian Government Initiative