

# Habitat protection on roadside reserves in the Wingecarribee Shire

## COUNCIL NAME

Wingecarribee Shire Council

## WEB ADDRESS

[www.wsc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au)

## SIZE

2,700 square kilometres

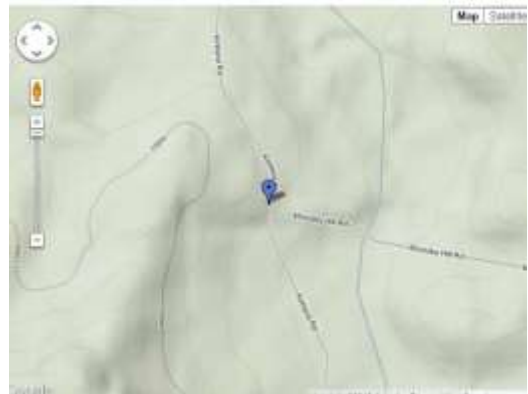
## POPULATION

46,308

## Overview

Wingecarribee Shire Council successfully applied for a Roadside Vegetation Implementation Project (RVIP) grant funded through the NSW Environmental Trust and managed by Local Government NSW (LGNSW). This project has exceeded expectations in undertaking habitat protection and restoration across key roadside reserves in the Shire.

A total area of 26.8 hectares of roadside weed control was achieved, training of council staff undertaken, and community awareness of environmental weeds and significant roadside area promoted.



Example of Significant Road Side Environment signage and map of location of the signage.

## Background

### Roadside Vegetation Management Plan

Wingecarribee Shire has a Roadside Vegetation Management Plan which was produced 14 years ago, following an initial LGA-wide assessment. The plan categorised all major rural roads into condition classes based on high, medium and low condition (A, B or C) and these records have been incorporated into the Shire's GIS.

The RVIP improved environmental condition of Category A and sections of Category B road reserves in Endangered Ecological Communities (EEC) in the eastern section of Wingecarribee Shire (East Kangaloon) including the Southern Highlands Shale Woodland and Robertson Basalt Tall Open Forest EECs.

The funding has been applied to the control of environmental weeds. These are weeds not listed as noxious, but are plant species that have established self-propagating populations in native vegetation, terrestrial or aquatic, outside their natural range. This can include both exotic and native species. Controlling these weeds will significantly enhance the resilience of these roadsides.

Council has legislative responsibility for managing noxious weeds, however the management of environmental weeds is not core business of council and depends on the availability of resources to allocate to such activities. The RVIP provided the opportunity for council to undertake works, which council have committed to maintaining.



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## Implementation

### Environmental weed contractors

Environmental restoration contractors undertook the onground works to control environmental weeds and significantly reduce environmental weed seed sources from road reserves adjacent to, and within, high quality remnant EEC. This provides significant protection to these important areas, and council has committed to maintaining these outcomes through an annual maintenance program to ensure that weed regrowth is treated effectively.

### Awareness raising and training

Training in roadside vegetation management was provided to the Wingecarribee Shire Council roadwork crews. A total of 56 staff participated in this training which focused on enhancing knowledge and skills of roadwork crews in:

- the appropriate management of sensitive roadside vegetation; and
- the legislative responsibility of local government and local government employees, particularly with regard to Endangered Ecological Communities.

Enhancing knowledge and skills, and transferring that to on-ground outcomes was a valuable aspect of the project.

Installation of 'Significant Roadside Environment Area' signs will raise awareness of both council staff and other road users in the East Kangaloon area of the high conservation value of the EEC remnants and the areas that need to be protected.

A full-colour *Environmental Weeds in the Southern Highlands* brochure has been produced, distributed widely throughout the community and made available on council's website. The brochure will play a key role in continuing to raise awareness of environmental weeds, discouraging the planting of environmental weeds and promoting their removal.

## Summary Outcomes

Key project outcomes achieved during this 12 month project include:

- On-ground weed control exceeded planned outcomes by 165%, with 26.8 hectares of roadside weed control achieved, where 16.3 hectares was originally planned.
- High level of roadside vegetation management training completed with 56 council staff participating.
- 'Significant Roadside Environment Area' signs were installed in 11 locations
- Council is committed to maintaining these outcomes through an annual maintenance program to ensure that weed regrowth is treated effectively.
- A revised and expanded Environmental Weeds brochure with a production run of 10,000 copies.

## Key Learnings

The project has improved knowledge in the management of roadside vegetation in high conservation value areas in the Shire. Learnings for council have included the availability of improved roadside vegetation information through the updated categorisation of roadside vegetation in Wingecarribee Shire Council's Roadside Vegetation Management Plan. Tenders developed for weed management are also suitable for future use. The post-works evaluation and data collection is another useful project outcome which will be used in future roadside management projects.

## Contact

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