

24 September 2008

## **Indigenous community helps improve native vegetation along Darling River**

Members of the Bourke Indigenous community began revegetation works along the Darling River on Thursday, September 18.

The works are part of the \$2.5 million Brewarrina to Bourke Demonstration Reach project being undertaken by NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) in collaboration with the Western Catchment Management Authority.

Seven Indigenous members of the Kurnu-Barkindji Landcare and Cultural Management Group undertook a training session at the Bourke Fishing Reserve in revegetation techniques.

Bourke resident and Barkindji man, Wayne Knight, said he was glad to be involved with the project.

"Bourke is my home and I have a lot of extended family living here, so it's important we look after the river," he said.

"With the water in the river so low, the trees are dying. It's a good idea to put trees back in and help the birds and other native animals to get back to their natural habitat.

"It's a great project for young people and can help them with training and employment options.

"On the training day we planted River Red Gums, River Cooba and Coolabah trees. I learnt how to use the fire-fighter pump and water lances and hoses to plant the trees, which makes it much faster and easier," Mr Knight said.

NSW DPI Conservation Manager, David Cordina, said the training was being provided by Indigenous participants of a similar project run at Coonabarabran through a skills transfer arrangement between NSW DPI and the Coonabarabran Aboriginal Men's Association.

"Now these members of the Bourke Indigenous community have received their training they will be engaged by NSW DPI to carry out revegetation works along the Darling River in the Bourke district.

"NSW DPI recognises that Indigenous communities have a strong connection to the environment and welcomes the opportunity to involve the Aboriginal community in the region in a project which will ultimately improve the health of the Darling River.

"Future opportunities for Aboriginal involvement in natural resource management and on ground works will be encouraged by NSW DPI," Mr Cordina said.



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"Using specialised tree planting methods that increase survival rates, the works will involve the revegetation of sections of the riverbank with almost 7000 native trees grown from seed collected in the Bourke area," Mr Cordina said.

He said degradation of native riparian vegetation along NSW water courses had been listed as a key threatening process under the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* because of its negative impacts on several threatened species, populations or ecological communities.

These species include the endangered ecological community of the lowland catchment of the Darling River, silver perch (vulnerable), western populations of olive perchlet and purple-spotted gudgeon and the river snail.

"To be able to engage the local Indigenous community to assist in revegetation works is a very positive outcome for the region. Plus it is an excellent opportunity for some members of the Coonabarabran Indigenous community to share their knowledge with members of the Bourke Indigenous community," Mr Cordina said.

## **ENDS**

Caption: Mike Nolan of NSW Department of Primary Industries, Trainer Shawn Trindall and Bourke resident, Colin Turnbull planting trees.

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