

Neil Hibberson

Senior Weeds Officer



Blake Ralston, Tayla Bodycott,
Kayleigh Cook and Travis Fox



Culcairn Public School

Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between our funding partners and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to agriculture and natural resource management issues.

www.wirraminna.org/creative-catchment-kids/

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre

The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre is located in Burrumbuttock, north of Albury in southern NSW. Since 1995, the centre, which is adjacent to Burrumbuttock Public School, has provided opportunities for discovery and learning about the natural environment, the ecology of the local woodlands and the beauty of native plants.

www.wirraminna.org

Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by Peekdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.

www.envirostories.com.au

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Senior Weeds Officer

Authors: Blake Ralston, Tayla Bodycott, Kayleigh Cook and Travis Fox

Teacher: Kristy Phillips

School: Culcairn Public School

Local Land Heroes - Securing Our Region

In 2015, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about their 'Local Land Heroes' who are involved in pest management in the Murray and Murrumbidgee regions. These heroes are local individuals, couples, a business or industries that have made a difference in their local community by contributing to the management of pest animals and plants. The program was generously funded by Murray Local Land Services and Riverina Local Land Services.

Local Land Heroes is part of Enviro-Stories, a PeekDesigns education program.



Local Land Services



Australian Government



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Job History

Neil Hibberson grew up on a sheep and cattle farm in Victoria. Before Neil worked for the Greater Hume Shire he worked on a farm, at a timber mill and other Shires.

Roadside Conservation Values



Neil is based in Culcairn as the Senior Weeds Officer. He has worked for the Greater Hume Shire since 2004. He has worked in different roles, including grader driver, and has worked with weeds for 18 years.



Greater Hume Shire



Britta's Reserve

Britta's Reserve is one of many roadside reserves in the Greater Hume Shire. Pest pepper corn trees are being replaced by native trees. The line in the dirt below is where seeds have been dropped, waiting for moisture to help them grow. On these roadside reserves you are not permitted to cut wood unless you have a permit.



Noxious Weeds Act

Part of Neil's job is to enforce the Noxious Weeds Act. This is the law that all community members have to follow. This involves him monitoring and visiting people's properties that may have prohibited weeds. He also allocates other officers to enforce the Act. Biological controls are used to fight weeds. They can be seen below working on the Illyrian thistle.



Noxious Weeds

Neil has been working on controlling green cestrum and St. John's wort (below). Green cestrum is toxic to many animals. St. John's wort competes with useful plants in pastures. It contains the toxin hypericin, which causes photosensitisation in sheep (bottom), cattle, horses and goats. This damages their skin and can lead to weight loss, reduced productivity and, in extreme cases, death.



African boxthorn (below) and alligator weed (bottom) are two other weeds found in the Greater Hume Shire. African boxthorn is an aggressive invader of pastures, roadsides, reserves, bushland and waterways. It has been declared a noxious weed in much of NSW. Alligator weed grows in water and on land, affecting both waterways and floodplain areas. Alligator weed is considered one of the world's worst weeds.



Riverina Pear

The Riverina Pear, or Prickly Pear, grows all through NSW, particularly in the Riverina. This weed can be spread by birds, stock and floods. The Riverina Pear is spikey and has red fruit. Don't touch it, it has little needles in it!



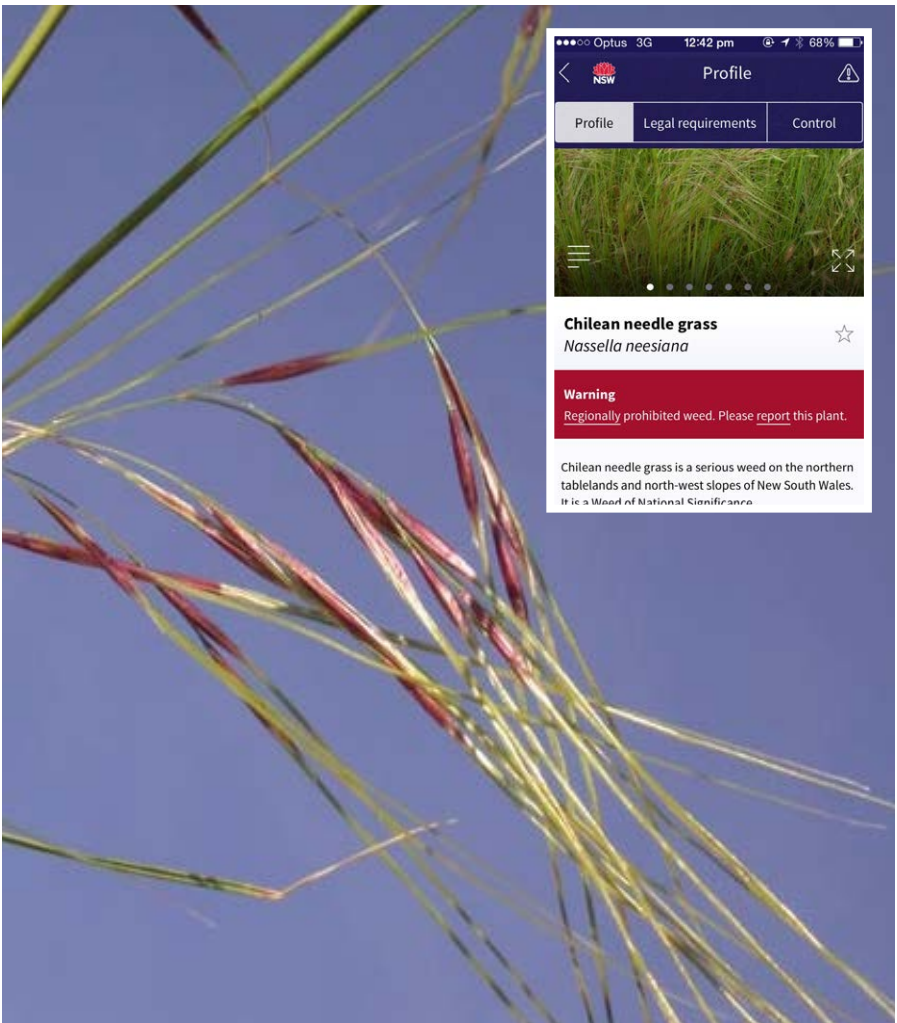
Cochineal Biological Control

The biological control agent used to help control the spread of the Riverina Pear is the cochineal insect. The insects attach themselves to the outside of the plant and suck the moisture out of the plant. The cochineal insect is also used in the production of red food dye!



Chilean Needle Grass

Senior Weeds Officer, Neil Hibberson is keeping the Chilean needle grass in control so it doesn't grow or spread. Chilean needle grass grows 1 metre high and 5 millimetres wide. This plant can produce 20,000 seeds per square metre. If you see this weed on the side of the road or on your property, please notify your shire.



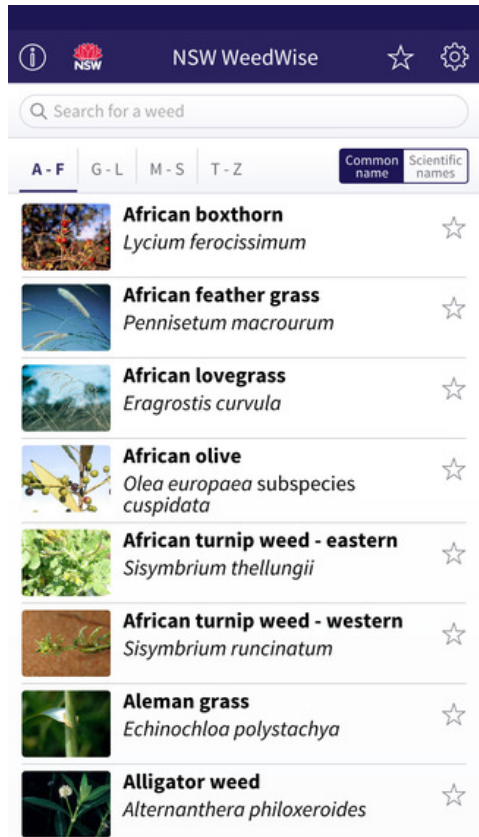
Red Guide Posts

The red guide posts are on the sides of roads. They advise people not to pull over in this area as there are noxious weeds between the red start and end posts. Greater Hume Shire began this project through a grant and you'll now find them on many NSW roads.



Resources

There are many resources that are available for the community to use to help Neil fight the spread of weeds. These include websites such as the DPI, Riverina Weeds and your local council websites. There is also a WeedWise app you can download to help identify unknown weeds.





Travis Fox, Neil Hibberson (Hero), Kayleigh Cook,
Tayla Bodycott and Blake Ralston

2015 Year 6, Culcairn Public School

CONGRATULATIONS

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre and
the Creative Catchment Kids Program won the
2015 NSW Junior Landcare Team Award and will be
competing in the 2016 National Landcare Awards.



Local Land
Services

