

# Ecological Consultants Association of NSW

## Vegetation Community Workshop

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> July at Whitesands Function Centre, Shoal Bay Country Club, Shoal Bay

### Program

8.15 – 9.00	REGISTRATION	Tea and coffee available
	TOPIC	PRESENTER
9.00 – 9.05	Introduction	Belinda Pellow ECA President
9.05 – 9.20	Overview Native Vegetation Science Branch NSW OEH	Jeremy Black OEH
9.20 – 10.05	Vegetation classification and mapping: purpose, theory, trade-offs and new approaches	David Keith UNSW
<p><i>Abstract: Classifying and mapping vegetation can be an obsessive enterprise. Sometimes it's easy to lose sight of why we are doing it, and even the scientific theories, principles and methods on which it is built. As a backdrop to presentations that follow, I review some of the motivations and key assumptions that underpin the role that vegetation classifications and maps play in ecosystem management and nature conservation. Niche theory and community assembly theory can help understand both the capabilities and limits of classifications and maps for these purposes, highlighting the nexus between continuum and discrete models of variation in nature. I discuss trade-offs and challenges in developing classifications and maps, and describe new approaches designed to address them. Despite recent advances in methods, the uncertainties in ecological classifications and maps are inherently diverse. I will conclude with suggested strategies for reducing uncertainties and dealing with them in decision making.</i></p>		
10.05– 11.05	Plant Community Type Classification in NSW	Daniel Connolly OEH
<p><i>Abstract: OEH is undertaking a review of Plant Community Types in eastern NSW as part of recent NSW government reforms to biodiversity legislation. The aim of the project is to make NSW Plant Community Types (PCTs) in the region easier to use with biodiversity assessment methods and to reduce uncertainty associated with field identification. We outline some of the problems with the existing schema, and introduce a new state-wide framework for our revisions. The revision will retain current plant community types where they are robust and defensible, remove those that have weak floristic and environmental evidence or duplication and introduce new PCTs where they are supported by new data within an Eastern NSW context. Poorly understood vegetation patterns that require additional data for characterisation and validation will be identified and prioritised for future survey. The objective is to provide a set of PCTs that are defined at a consistent scale based on the analysis of standard field survey plot data and which can be fully described using a standard set of floristic and environmental attributes. The framework we have adopted will enable the application of new diagnostic tools that improve the consistency of assigning new samples (for example, full-floristic BAM plots) to the revised eastern PCTs.</i></p>		
11.05-11.30	MORNING TEA	
11.30-12.30	Final Determinations for TEC's - intent and utilisation	Mark Tozer OEH
12.30-1.30	Plant Community Type Mapping in NSW	Michael Day OEH
<p><i>Abstract: The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) is producing a new map of the state's native vegetation. The State Vegetation Type Map will represent the most complete and consistent information available about the distribution of Plant Community Types across NSW. It has been progressively produced across NSW over the last five years, region by region, and now covers almost 80% of NSW. This presentation will provide a technical overview of the map and demonstrate its format, methods and mapping innovations. Specifically, it will explore what the map contains, how it is generated, its reliability and status, and how it incorporates existing mapping. The presentation will also demonstrate other integral mapping products such as the state wide aerial photo interpretation of vegetation photo patterns and a high resolution categorical surface of the state's native vegetation extent.</i></p>		
1.30 – 2.15	LUNCH	
2.15- 3.15	Vegetation Information (Data and Systems)	Ron Avery OEH
<p><i>Abstract: The past decade has seen a major evolution in vegetation and biodiversity data products in NSW, and there is more on the way. The first part of this presentation provides an overview of the journey so far, including insights into major milestones including</i></p>		



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establishment of the centralised flora survey plot database, plant community type classification system, and VIS map catalogue. More recently the publication of Bionet integrated open data services and their adoption as the primary data supply pathway for a growing list for reporting and decision tools (including BAM) opens the way for greater transparency and innovation opportunities. The presentation will include a live stroll through the BioNet web pages to highlight the current data products, applications, standards and other resources.

To conclude the presentation will examine the current program of works and what's on the horizon:

- Upload of east coast PCTs, and development of a quantitative PCT ID tool
- Integrated open data services: eg delivering vegetation plots linked with each plant community type; or delivering seamless PCT maps live linked to vegetation classification and threatened entities web services.
- Biodiversity Field Data Capture Solution: removing barriers to the capture and supply of data to Bionet, BAM and other programs. Koala pilot project
- Improved Data Value Supply Chain: remove barriers in the supply chain from field data capture to product development and implementation within decisions tools. Recognising the value of data.
- SEED – mobilising industry data; enhancing data and functionality to deliver greater benefits to users including consultants and business programs
- National standards and collaboration
- Joint Species Distribution Modelling Research Program
- BioNet Advisory Council

<b>3.15-3.40</b>	<b>AFTERNOON TEA</b>	
<b>3.40-4.40</b>	<i>Vegetation Information (Data and Systems)</i>	Ron Avery, Dani Murphy, Daniel Connolly, Michael Day
<p><b>Abstract:</b> Ron and Dani will lead you through a live deep dive into the Bionet – Atlas, Bionet -Vegetation Classification and SEED applications to demonstrate how you can use these systems to support your routine tasks. As we go, we will also discuss and seek your feedback on how these procedures can be improved in future.</p> <p>Some tasks we will explore include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desktop investigation of vegetation maps using SEED: determine what's available for my area of interest, and what plant community types are likely to occur there (or in the vicinity).</li> <li>- Running area of interest search for threatened Species in BioNet Atlas.</li> <li>- Search for candidate PCTs in BioNet Vegetation Classification</li> <li>- Running an area of interest (AOI) search in SEED to intersect a predefined list of environmental sensitive layers using the mining and exploration tool</li> <li>- Using BioNet Open Data Web services to access live lists of plant community type, species lists and growth forms. Mashing data services to pull down lists of threatened biodiversity associated with a plant community type</li> <li>- How to submit and upload species sighting and systematic survey data sheets into BioNet Atlas to meet conditions of your scientific license.</li> </ul> <p>We would welcome questions from the floor throughout the session.</p>		
<b>4.40-5.30</b>	<i>Panel Discussion</i>	Ron Avery, Daniel Connolly, Michael Day, Mark Tozer, David Keith
<b>5.30</b>	<b>FINISH</b>	