

## Mapping native vegetation communities

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The Native Vegetation Mapping Program (NVMP) is a NSW Government initiative managed by Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources.

The NVMP consists of 3 mapping teams based at Armidale, Dubbo and Wagga Wagga. Each mapping team is focused on producing native vegetation maps at 1:100,000 scale for the northern, central and southern sections of NSW. Mapping is undertaken in priority areas and all native vegetation communities are being mapped including woody and non-woody. Of particular significance is the mapping of non-woody grassland communities, a task not usually undertaken in state-wide vegetation mapping programs.

The structure and composition of native vegetation communities is based on information gathered during botanical surveys. Botanists collect plant species information from hundreds of survey sites. These sites are randomly allocated across different landform, soil and climate regions in order to obtain a representative sample of all vegetation types. A 20 by 20 m area is surveyed at each site and botanists collect plant specimens and record information about

plant structure, type, cover and abundance. This information is entered into a database and analysed to identify native vegetation communities.

The distribution and extent of these communities is based on air photo interpretation. This technique is aided by examining satellite imagery and conducting targeted fieldwork. The boundaries of a community are delineated and captured digitally using a Geographic Information System (GIS) to create a layer of spatial information. Botanical data is then combined with this spatial information to produce native vegetation community maps. These maps can be used for a wide variety of purposes including, catchment planning and salinity control.

The accompanying poster titled Mapping Native Grasslands of the NSW Riverina illustrates some of the beautiful native plants found in the Riverina region. These plants were found in grassland communities identified by the Wagga mapping team. The native vegetation map shows the distribution and extent of these grassland communities. The map also shows where other types of native vegetation communities can be found.