



7 October 2008

## *Media Statement*

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### **Key organisations work with Aboriginal rangers to conserve vine thickets**

The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), Rangelands NRM Coordinating Group and Environs Kimberley have joined forces to address one of the most significant threats to Monsoonal Vine Thickets in the Dampier Peninsula – weeds.

Monsoonal Vine Thickets are a species-rich patch network of plants and animals reminiscent of a far older and wetter Kimberley. These occur in the Dampier Peninsula in discrete pockets behind coastal dunes. Further north, these ‘Gardens of Eden’ can be found nestled in inland rocky outcrops.

“This threatened ecological community is under fire, quite literally, as invading grasses and other weeds dry out, making these ecosystems much more flammable,” Environs Kimberley Community Weed Project Officer Louise Williams said.

“These vine thickets are an important habitat for animals such as the rose crowned fruit dove. They contain many fruiting bush-tucker plants and hold special significance for Indigenous people. It is important that we continue to work together to conserve them,” Mrs Williams said.

This year, at least some vine thicket patches in Lombadina, One Arm Point and James Price Point have a better chance of preserving their ancient, fruit-laden branches.

Under the Northern Rangelands Biodiversity Project, Environs Kimberley and DEC have implemented weed control in priority vine thicket patches. Key partners undertaking this work have been the Bardi Jawi Rangers, Minyirr Park Rangers, supported by the Kimberley Land Council, and representatives from Goolarabooloo.

“Since last year, DEC, Environs Kimberley and the RCG have formed strong partnerships with the Kimberley Land Council and the Ranger Groups it supports. The project has received approval and appreciation from Aboriginal communities, who are integral to the success of this project,” DEC’s Northern Rangelands NRM Biodiversity Coordinator Alison McGilvray said.

“One of the highlights was undertaking a planting day in a local weed control site with children from One Arm Point Community School,” she said.

Bardi Jawi Rangers head ranger Kevin George said: “It was a great opportunity to pass on knowledge about important vine thicket plants and tell the children about plant language names and uses and let them know about the damage different weeds are doing.”

Many groups have been consulted and have supported this project, including: Rangelands NRM Coordinating Group, DEC, Traditional Owner groups, the Kimberley Land Council and Kimberley TAFE.

The Northern Biodiversity Project and the Vine Thicket sub-project was initiated and funded by the Rangelands NRM Coordinating Group and contracted to DEC and Environs Kimberley.

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Captions:



Bardi Jawi Ranger Terry McArthur, right, with a student from One Arm Point Community School.



Louise Williams in front of an invasion of *Merremia dissecta* at the Djarindjin community.



Stinking passionvine (*Passiflora foetida*) displacing native vegetation in a transitional vine thicket area.

