

Plant Cuttings – August 2025

NSW farmers fear job cuts at DPIRD could leave them open to biosecurity threats – ABC News, 31 July 2025

Farmers fear proposed cuts to research and development roles at the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) could leave the state vulnerable to biosecurity and climate threats.

The NSW government on Tuesday announced plans to cut 165 jobs from the department, equating to a 4 per cent reduction in staff. The Public Service Association (PSA) told the ABC 55 of those jobs would be from the DPIRD's agriculture and biosecurity teams.

Farmers in the north of the state are concerned the cuts will leave the agriculture industry open to biosecurity threats at a state and federal level. Toorooka cattle farmer David Duff pointed to biosecurity issues producers were already facing.

"We've had varroa mite, we've had tropical soda apple and we've got red fire ants that are on the march over the border down into New South Wales," he said.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-07-31/nsw-dpird-job-cuts-spark-farm-biosecurity-fears/105594140>

Conservationists say they have been shut out of plans for Queensland state forests as government consults industry – ABC News, 1 August 2025

Conservationists say they have been shut out of planning for the future of Queensland state forests, as the government develops a 25-year plan for the timber industry.

The LNP made a pre-election pledge to deliver a Queensland Future Timber Plan (QFTP) in its first year in government, which will be up in October.

Premier David Crisafulli has promised to give the forestry industry consistency in order to build one million homes by 2044. The Timber Supply Chain Ministerial Roundtable made up of forestry, housing and agricultural industry bodies, met for the first time in May. The group also includes a First Nations representative and a forest and conservation scientist.

In contrast, the previous government's advisory panel included conservation groups.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-08-01/qld-queensland-future-timber-plan-conservationists-logging/105587486>

My Garden Path | Neil and Wendy Marriott – Gardening Australia, 1 August 2025

We visit horticulturists and conservationists Neil and Wendy Marriott, whose property near the Grampians has become a living collection of stunning native plants, and a sanctuary for its local wildlife.

Describing his hilltop home in the Black Range, Neil says, "It's just like stepping back into a wild, sort of a bushland area, but with gardens dotted through it."

"It's a wild garden; it was designed for habitat," adds Wendy.

Neil has written or co-written several books on grassland plants and Grevillea and is regarded as a leading expert on Grevilleas. They both work as environmental consultants, surveying the flora found growing on properties, both weeds and native.

Their property, called Panrock Ridge, covers 200 acres of heathy and grassy woodland. As well as many indigenous plants to the area, they have planted huge collections of hakeas, grevilleas, dryandras, and banksias on the property.

<https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/how-to/my-garden-path-neil-and-wendy-marriott/105598618>

5 ingenious things trees do that human designers can learn from – The Conversation , 4 August 2025

Tasmania's mountain ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*) is the world's tallest flowering plant. It can grow 100 metres tall and live for more than 600 years.

These trees play a crucial role in their ecosystems, providing habitat and contributing to the overall health of the shared living world. But their numbers are dwindling due to logging, land degradation, fire and climate change.

This sad situation is indicative of a much bigger problem: humans consistently undervalue plants, despite having much to learn from them.

<https://theconversation.com/5-ingenious-things-trees-do-that-human-designers-can-learn-from-252735>

Shot-hole borer researchers team up against tree-killing beetle in Perth – ABC News, 3 August 2025

Whether it is development, mining, or dwindling groundwater, Perth's tree canopy is facing a myriad of challenges. In addition, since 2021 the city has been struggling to contain a tree-killing invasive beetle — the polyphagous shot-hole borer. The pest, which produces a deadly fungus, mainly infects exotic trees, but native varieties like melaleucas are also at risk.

To quell the spread of the beetle, the state government has to date removed 4,794 trees, some from Perth's most popular green spaces — Kings Park, Hyde Park and Stirling Gardens.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-08-03/shot-hole-borer-pest-management-progress-perth-trees/105603174>

Can we keep our grass and control it too? – Cosmos Magazine, 3 August 2025

Buffel grass is one of rangeland Australia's most wicked and unresolved challenges – a plant that is valued and vaunted in some areas and despised and feared in others. Although seldom acknowledged by key protagonists, common ground and a win/win for all stakeholders could be found by pragmatic informed discussion. The longer we procrastinate, the greater the division and danger.

Buffel grass is undeniably resilient and well adapted to degraded sites where few other plants can thrive. A drought-resistant C4 perennial introduced from Africa to provide erosion control and cattle fodder where native grasses were scarce, buffel has taken to the Outback like ibis to a picnic ground.

The fast growing 'King of Pastures' has been lauded and passionately protected by much of the northern beef industry against any attempt to rein in its dominance. Other pastoralists are concerned about buffel's replacement of more palatable native forage or buffel-fueled fires that burn their drought refuge 'top-feed'. But the dominant message from northern pastoralists is: "Don't touch our buffel!"

Alongside its pastoral value, there is absolutely no dispute that buffel also represents the most insidious and uncontrollable threat to many Australian arid ecosystems.

<https://cosmosmagazine.com/australia/buffel-grass-control/>

CSIRO could be facing hundreds more job cuts this year, union warns – ABC News, 7 August 2025

There are fears hundreds more Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) jobs could be axed this year, the union has warned.

The Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) issued a statement on Thursday morning saying that Australia's national science agency was enduring its "biggest job cuts in a decade".

Last year, 440 positions were slashed, and the CPSU said "approximately 200 contract jobs were left to expire, with hundreds more cuts expected to be made to research units later this year".

The budget papers for this financial year suggest average staff levels at the organisation would be cut by 450. The union said it had made a submission to the Economic Reform Roundtable, warning the nation's capacity for productivity and innovation was being "actively undermined".

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-08-07/more-job-cuts-on-the-horizon-for-csiro-union-warns/105622456>

Aussie council's warning over 'beautiful' garden feature smothering city suburbs – Yahoo News, 7 August 2025

An Aussie council is again urging residents to keep a wary eye out for a "beautiful" escaped garden plant that is suffocating suburban trees. While it might look stunning in your backyard, Spanish Moss, a hanging plant that thrives in warm, humid weather, is "becoming a serious environmental weed".

In Sydney, Willoughby City Council on the city's Lower North Shore is warning residents about the threat of the weed and encouraging them to take action.

"It's smothering native trees like Sydney Turpentine, Lilly Pilly, Brush Box, and Cheese Tree," the council said in a social media post this week.

"Putting our threatened ecological communities at risk, including critically endangered Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest."

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/aussie-councils-warning-over-beautiful-garden-feature-smothering-city-suburbs-044315249.html>

Removal of trees infested with shot-hole borer in Kings Park has surprising outcomes – ABC News, 11 August 2025

The removal of beloved trees from Kings Park has left a scar across the escarpment and made it vulnerable to dangerous landslides.

But it has also created an opportunity to future-proof the popular attraction amid a drying climate.

Like thousands of trees in Perth, around 42 Moreton Bay figs and coral trees — which once towered over visitors to the inner city park — fell victim to the polyphagous shot-hole borer beetle, which was detected in WA in 2021.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-08-11/removal-of-kings-park-trees-brings-positive-change/105616176>

'Vague' 40-year-old clue helps bring rare species back from the brink – Yahoo News, 10 August 2025

A native plant has been brought back from the brink of extinction, with its yellow daisy-like flowers once again decorating a remote area where it hasn't been seen in 40 years.

The superb groundsel, a "showy" perennial shrub endemic to South Australia, once thrived throughout the state's central Flinders Ranges, with plants stretching "all the way down" to the Mount Lofty Ranges.

However, by the late 1990s, many of the species' populations were presumed extinct, with only one remaining just north of the bluff known as the Dutchmans Stern.

Determined to save the plant from vanishing altogether, officers from the South Australian Seed Conservation Centre (SASCC) ventured out into the field in 2023, after receiving additional funding, with the hope of discovering remnant groups.

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/vague-40-year-old-clue-helps-bring-rare-species-back-from-the-brink-010059014.html>

Liberals walk back plan to open 39,000 hectares of native Tasmanian forest to 'short notice' logging – ABC News, 10 August 2025

Tasmania's government has backed out of a controversial plan to open up more native forests for logging, saying the decision is "in line with community expectations".

But political opponents say the policy "backflip" is a move to woo crossbenchers as the Liberals face the realities of a minority government.

In early 2024, the Tasmanian Liberals announced as an election promise it would make 39,000 hectares of forest available for logging at short notice from what they described as a "wood bank" — Future Potential Production Forest (FPPF).

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-08-10/tasmanian-liberals-backflip-on-native-forestry-logging-plan/105632720>

Environmentalists sound alarm over plan to remove 500 trees next to national park – ABC News, 14 August 2025

Environmentalists are raising the alarm over a plan to remove 500 trees from a development adjacent to a national park in Sydney's north-west.

Developer ISPT is planning a data centre on an industrial plot of land in North Ryde, which backs onto Lane Cove National Park. The site was cleared in 2009 for a development that never went ahead. About 200 of the trees that have been slated for removal are ones that grew back in the previously cleared area.

Local conservationists said many of the other 300 were mature trees that provided hollows for birds and animals.

"They take 100 years or more to develop," Friends of Lane Cove National Park president Tony Butteris told 702 ABC Radio Sydney.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-08-14/lane-cove-environmentalists-sound-alarm-over-plan-to-axe-trees/105653402>

New \$90 million research facility opens at CSIRO to house specimens collected over 150 years – ABC News, 14 August 2025

Millions of irreplaceable biodiversity specimens have been re-homed at a new CSIRO facility that the agency says will support research to better understand and manage Australia's natural environment.

Named 'Diversity', the \$90 million National Research Collections building in Canberra features temperature-controlled vaults that are bushfire and pest-resistant while designed to preserve 13 million specimens for future generations.

Among the specimens, which have been collected over 150 years, are 55,000 birds, 17,000 orchids, 2.4 million moths and seven million beetles.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-08-14/act-csiro-new-research-facility-opens/105651676>

Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action to cut 350 jobs – ABC News, 14 August 2025

The Victorian government plans to cut around 350 jobs as part of a restructure to its Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).

The losses are expected to affect public sector workers in a variety of areas, including Agriculture Victoria, Solar Victoria, the First Peoples group and bushfire and forest services.

"It is devastating for not only regional Victoria, but the Victorian public service," Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) secretary Jiselle Hanna said.

"A lot of people with very specialised and high levels of skill are going to be without jobs at the end of this process."

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2025-08-14/350-public-service-jobs-to-be-cut-in-victoria-deeca-restructure/105652454>

Sydney developer gets 'slap on the wrist' after illegally clearing hundreds of trees to build \$3 million mansion – ABC News, 18 August 2025

Residents are "horrified" after a property developer copped a "slap on the wrist" fine for illegally clearing hundreds of trees in a native wildlife corridor to build his dream six bedroom, eight-bathroom mansion in Sydney's south, without approval.

The 7-hectare site on David Road in Barden Ridge is owned by ACCS Family Holdings, whose sole director is Amir Abu Abara.

A development application for the property formally submitted in 2023 shows Mr Abara planned to build a luxurious \$3 million neo-classical style mansion for him and his wife, Caroline Abara, with scenic views of the nearby Woronora River.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-08-18/fine-sydney-developer-illegally-cutting-trees-for-luxury-mansion/105628970>

Botanical time machines: AI is unlocking a treasure trove of data held in herbarium collections – The Conversation, 19 August 2025

In 1770, after Captain Cook's Endeavour struck the Great Barrier Reef and was held up for repairs, botanists Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander collected hundreds of plants. One of those pressed plants is among 170,000 specimens in the herbarium at the University of Melbourne.

Worldwide, more than 395 million specimens are housed in herbaria. Together they comprise an unparalleled record of Earth's plant and fungal life over time.

We wanted to find a better, faster way to tap into this wealth of information. Our new research describes the development and testing of a new AI-driven tool Hespi (short for "herbarium specimen sheet pipeline"). It has the potential to revolutionise access to biodiversity data and open up new avenues for research.

<https://theconversation.com/botanical-time-machines-ai-is-unlocking-a-treasure-trove-of-data-held-in-herbarium-collections-253236>

Researchers using cryopreservation to save critically endangered Gossia gonoclada – ABC News, 20 August 2025

Cryopreservation was once the stuff of science fiction, but now the technology is being used to help save a critically endangered tree in south-east Queensland.

There are only about 380 *Gossia gonoclada*, or angle-stemmed myrtle, left in the wild, mostly found in riparian and vine forest areas around Logan and parts of the Gold Coast.

The small tree has dense, glossy, bright-green leaves, and plays a role in local ecosystems — but it's under severe threat. A fungal disease known as myrtle rust — which damages new growth — along with land clearing and rising temperatures, has drastically reduced the tree's numbers.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-08-20/cryo-preservation-saving-endangered-gossia-gonoclada-tree/105658392>

Climate change is driving a silent, sinister change in Australia's mountain ash forests – The Conversation, 22 August 2025

Something silent and sinister is happening in Australia's mountain ash forests. As temperatures rise, these ecosystems are slowly, steadily losing their trees – and with them, their ability to store carbon.

Mountain ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*) forests in southeastern Australia can store from 415 to 819 tonnes of carbon per hectare. That's more per hectare than the Amazon rainforest. So the decline of these special trees, the tallest flowering plants on Earth, is a major concern – for the forests and the climate system as a whole.

Our new research shows how mountain ash forests are changing. Half a century of forest measurements show warming is reducing the number of trees these forests can support.

For every degree of warming, a forest loses 9% of its trees. By 2080, when temperatures are expected to be 3°C warmer than pre-industrial levels, these forests could lose a quarter of their trees – and the carbon they store. This has global significance as the trend is likely to be widespread.

<https://theconversation.com/climate-change-is-driving-a-silent-sinister-change-in-australias-mountain-ash-forests-255737>

Retired doctor discovers fungi species in rainforests of NSW and Queensland – ABC News, 26 August 2025

When it comes to finding fungi, Fran Guard has the golden touch. The retired doctor recently added seven new species to her growing list of discoveries in the rainforests of north-east New South Wales and south-east Queensland.

The 80-year-old has described the new species as part of her PhD studies through the University of Southern Queensland. They add to her already impressive back catalogue of fungi finds — a total of 21 since she retired from her work as a general practitioner and took up studying science.

DNA testing has shown they are all separate species of the genus *Marasmius*, which thrive in rainforest environments and work to break down leaf litter and other organic matter on the forest floor.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-08-26/retired-doctor-discovers-fungi-species-nsw-qld-rainforests/105692792>

Plant find in Aussie backyard leads to arrest over alleged \$10,000 national park heist – Yahoo News, 28 August 2025

A man will face court next month after being accused of unlawfully removing plants from a national park and attempting to sell them to members of the public.

According to NSW Police, the individual is suspected of pilfering native plants worth as much as \$10,000 as authorities and councils around the country continue to deal with reports of plant theft, both from private properties and on public land.

At about 10am on Wednesday, officers attached to Lake Illawarra Police District in NSW with the assistance of the National Parks and Wildlife Service executed a search warrant at a home in Lake Heights, in the southeast of the state.

Officers allegedly located and seized nine native plants — with an estimated value of \$10,000.

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/plant-find-in-aussie-backyard-leads-to-arrest-over-alleged-10000-national-park-heist-031142857.html>

Coles and Woolworths split on beef sustainability standards – ABC News, 28 August 2025

Supermarkets, green groups and Australia's cattle industry are at loggerheads over the sustainability of Australian beef and the land clearing associated with it.

The debate has emerged after Australia's two major supermarkets released their annual sustainability reports this week, revealing the retailers have very different beliefs about how land is managed by beef producers.

The reports outline environmental and social impacts of products and future environmental goals, and both focus on reducing their associations with deforestation, or land clearing.

In a first for the company, Coles said it was working to remove beef linked to deforestation. At the same time, Woolworths has "re-rated" the deforestation risks posed by Australian beef as low.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2025-08-28/coles-and-woolworths-release-beef-sustainability-2025-goal/105703130>

Events and Opportunities

Ecological Impact Awards – Applications close 31 August 2025

The Ecological Impact Awards have been established by the ESA's Practitioner Engagement Working Group to highlight work with 'big ecological impact' and celebrate the role of practitioners in ecological projects, initiatives and research. The awards aim to showcase collaborative projects based on robust ecological science and to support opportunities to build on project successes.

In 2025, two different awards will be available:

Award 1: Research – Practitioner Collaborations

Award 2: Practitioner-Led Initiatives (New in 2025)

<https://www.ecolsoc.org.au/grants-awards/ecological-impact-award/>

9th National NRM Knowledge Conference – Cairns QLD, 8-12 September 2025

Co-hosted by North Queensland regional NRMs (Cape York Natural Resource Management, Gulf Savannah NRM, Terrain NRM, NQ Dry Tropics NRM & NRM Regions Queensland) and running from the 8-12th in and around Cairns, our sector's conference is for anyone working, participating or interested in natural resource management – to share, learn and inspire.

<https://nrmregionsaustralia.com.au/articles/9th-national-nrm-knowledge-conference/>

15th Biennial International Society for Seed Science Conference 2025 – Perth WA, 15-19 September 2025

The International Society for Seed Science fosters research, education, and communication in the scientific understanding of seeds, and the ISSS 2025 will bring together, for the first time, two of the Society's premier events as a joint conference to celebrate seeds and to inspire synergies across the seed science community.

<https://iss2025.com.au/>

Building Private Land Conservation in Western Australia – Fremantle WA, 16-17 September 2025

Western Australia is home to 8 of 15 national biodiversity hotspots making it a significant area of interest for conservation efforts. With the right policy and support from government, we can revitalise WA's dormant covenanting program and attract funding for public-private partnerships for protected areas creation in Western Australia.

The symposium will bring together leaders from private and public conservation organisations across Australia to explore the future direction of private-land conservation in WA.

<https://events.humanitix.com/building-private-land-conservation-in-western-australia>

ePetition – Habitat development in urban Canberra – Closes 17 September 2025

The petitioners request the Assembly to call on the ACT Government to:

- Cease mowing treed areas except where necessary for fire or visibility and within 2 meters of paths, and repurpose associated funding towards weeding and the planting of understory vegetation;
- Retain dead and fallen timber within the landscape where it does not obstruct public amenity or present a risk to safety;
- Incorporate shrub and understory planting practices into the Government's tree-planting and maintenance activities; and
- Replace gravel median strips with grass, shrubs and trees where appropriate.

<https://epetitions.parliament.act.gov.au/details/e-pet-028-25>

Australasian Seed Science Conference – Horsham VIC, 22-25 September 2025

Hosted by the Australian Grains Genebank and Australian Seed Bank Partnership, the ASSC2025 is a leading conference exploring research and innovation across the agricultural and biodiversity conservation sectors. This conference provides a platform for Australasian seed researchers, industries, policymakers, and communities to promote research, insights, technologies, and exchange ideas on how we can address similar scientific, legal and policy challenges.

<https://www.seedpartnership.org.au/events/assc25/>

Dieback Information Group (DIG) Conference 2025 – Perth WA, 23-25 September

The DIG Conference serves as a dynamic platform for national and international Dieback stakeholders from diverse sectors to come together, exchange ideas, and advance the collective understanding of Phytophthora Dieback and other environmental biosecurity challenges.

This year's conference theme "Strength in Our Roots" – emphasises the vital role of grassroots leadership and community empowerment in environmental biosecurity.

<https://www.dwg.org.au/dig-2025/>

2025 National Landcare Conference – Gold Coast QLD, 21-24 September 2025

The program dates for 2025 are:

Sunday 21 September – First Nations Gathering and NextGen Summit

Monday 22 September – Conference and Welcome Reception

Tuesday 23 September – Conference and 2025 National Landcare Awards Gala Dinner

Wednesday 24 September – Field Trip Program.

We welcome Landcare champion and ABC TV presenter, Costa Georgiadis, as the master of ceremonies for both the National Landcare Conference and National Landcare Awards events.

<https://nationallandcareconference.org.au/>

Australian Land Conservation Alliance 2025 Annual Conference – Cairns QLD, 7-10 October 2025

Across Australia and beyond, diverse communities, businesses, and organisations are leading with solutions that tackle the biggest environmental challenges of our time by enabling, delivering, and scaling conservation, land management, and restoration action.

The 2025 ALCA Conference will showcase these efforts, celebrating the people and partnerships driving this work: from Australia's First Nations leaders to dedicated conservation, farming and business professionals, community volunteers, and local champions— their collective onground efforts strengthen the cross-sector and cross-cultural solutions we urgently need.

<https://www.alcaconference.org.au/>

Australian Citizen Science Association Conference 2025 – Melbourne VIC, 13-15 October 2025

#CitSciOz25 is your chance to exchange bold ideas, expand your network, and learn how citizen science can be the catalyst for transformative change in your community.

The event will bring together practitioners, researchers, government agencies, and community leaders to showcase the latest innovations and insights from Australia and beyond. Don't miss your chance to shape the future of citizen science at Australia's leading event!

<https://citizenscience.org.au/citscioz25/>

The Biodiversity Conference 2025: Nature Positive – Perth WA, 28-30 October 2025

The Biodiversity Conference 2025 brings together custodians, researchers and practitioners from across Country, academia, government, industry and community to share knowledge to protect, conserve, and enhance our incredible biodiversity. In a rapidly changing environmental and political landscape we need to employ a diverse array of strategies to curb our impacts on the environment and pivot to a Nature Positive future.

<https://www.biodiversity2025.com/>

With a strong Western Australian focus, this conference is jointly supported and run by all five WA Universities, the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attractions and The Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute.

2025 BGANZ Congress - Advancing our reach: Innovation and leadership in botanic gardens – Canberra ACT, 2-5 November 2025

The next BGANZ Congress will be in Canberra, on Ngunnawal Country. The main venue will be Old Parliament House (OPH), with unique social events at both OPH and the gardens, and field trips from subalpine regions to the sea, as well as our national public institutions focusing on education and horticulture.

Congress attendees will have the opportunity to share knowledge and experience to advance the role of botanic gardens and arboreta as globally recognised centres of excellence for plant science, conservation, education, and outreach.

<https://www.bganz.org.au/2025-bganz-congress-2/>