

## Managing fire regimes for brush-tailed rock wallabies at "Currawinya"



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Brush-tailed rock-wallabies along the Clarence River have suffered from habitat fragmentation and an improved understanding of their distribution in the region was thought to be beneficial to the recovery effort. The project aimed to monitor known colonies of brush-tailed rock-wallabies using scat searches and sightings; to map active refuge areas and connecting corridors and incorporate this information into a fire management plan for the property; and to conduct a vegetation survey to assess habitat changes in response to burning.



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### Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby (*Petrogale penicillata*)

Commonwealth Status: Vulnerable (EPBC Act 1999)

NSW Status: Endangered (Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995)

The brush-tailed rock-wallaby is mostly brown, with a reddish rump and grey shoulders. As its name suggests, it is characterised by the thick brush to its tail. This species used to be abundant and widespread through rocky areas of NSW, south-east Queensland and parts of Victoria, but since European settlement thousands have been shot for the skin trade and as agricultural pests. Habitat fragmentation, predation by foxes and competition with introduced herbivores such as goats and rabbits are also thought to have contributed to its decline.

### Project outcomes

This project was conducted by West of Ranges Landcare Inc with the Friends of Currawinya Landcare (FOCL), Hotspots Fire Project, the Rural Fire Service, the Upper Clarence Community Natural Resource Support Officer and other partners, with the assistance of a Threatened Species Network Community Grant. As a result of this project, communication between stakeholders along the Clarence River has been enhanced and the community has a better knowledge of the habitat requirements and threatening processes affecting the brush-tailed rock-wallaby.

The project partners have also identified and managed some key threats to a rock-wallaby population on a privately owned, high-conservation value site, and continue to implement a trial on the use of fire as a management tool for this species. Hopefully this information will be useful in guiding management at similar sites within the brush-tailed rock-wallaby's range. The project also highlighted the previously unidentified threat of excessive lantana on brush-tailed rock-wallaby foraging and dispersal habitat, and a lantana eradication program will be undertaken along 7 km of riparian zone of the Clarence River in 2007.

Strahan, R. (1995) The Mammals of Australia. Reed New Holland, Frenchs Forest.

West of Ranges Landcare Inc (2006) Final Report to the TSN on "Managing Fire Regimes for Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies at Currawinya" (TSN Reference NSW01/105).

#### Outputs

Area conserved: 90 ha

Area surveyed: 190 ha

Volunteers participated: 13

Person days worked: 50

#### Expenditure

TSN grant funds - \$4,950.00

Proponent - \$17,160.00

Total project - \$22,110.00