



New plant species

Coffs Harbour bypass

Transport for NSW is committed to protecting the flora and fauna in the Coffs Harbour region by minimising impacts to the natural environment. Prior to major construction, the environment team is carrying out ecological surveys of the area.

What have we found?

During the early work ecological surveys currently being undertaken as part of the Coffs Harbour Bypass project, two new species have been discovered.

The previously unrecorded species include the *Fontainea* sp. Coffs Harbour and a species of *Pittosporum* sp. Coffs Harbour that differs in several characteristics from other known species from that genus.



Fontainea sp.



Senior Project Development Manager, Rochelle Hicks with the *Fontainea* sp.

Where have the new species been found?

Both the *Fontainea* and the *Pittosporum* have been found in brush box-rainforest sites just north of Coffs Harbour. The *Fontainea* occurs in a narrow zone along drainage lines and gullies, the *Pittosporum* can also be found in drainage lines and gullies, however also grows further upslope. Additional potential habitats are yet to be surveyed, so further finds are possible.

What has been done with the find?

After the new species were recorded, Transport has followed the “unexpected finds” procedure which involves: collection of floristic samples and submission of samples to the Queensland Herbarium and Royal Botanic Gardens for further determination of species type.

Fast Facts

- Two new species have been found, the *Fontainea* and the *Pittosporum*.
- The new species were found during ecological surveys prior to construction of the Coffs Harbour bypass to gather information on the number and size of the threatened species - Rusty Plums (*Niemeyera whitei*).
- The two plant species were discovered by specialist, Dr Andrew Benwell. Dr Benwell was engaged by the project to carry out the ecological investigations.
- The plants were found in brush box-rainforest sites just north of Coffs Harbour.

How will the new species be protected?

Transport is committed to protecting and minimising impacts to the new species. The proposed flora management plan describes how the new plants will be further investigated to improve understanding of the ecology and science of the species.

Actions to protect these species include:

- Transport are treating both of these new species as if they were listed as threatened species (Critically Endangered) under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016.
- Potential changes to the bypass design to avoid direct impact and ensure protection of the plants ecosystem.
- Propagation of a substantial number of plants from cuttings and seeds by propagation specialists.
- The translocation of a small number of plants which cannot be avoided. The translocation sites will be selected based on expert advice, replicating the ecological requirements of the new species.
- Undertaking genetic analysis of new species to assist with effective conservation by ensuring genetic diversity.
- Creating an exclusion zone which cannot be accessed for construction works.

Will the Coffs Harbour bypass timeline be impacted?

Transport are currently working with botanical specialists and the Energy Environment and Science Group to find a solution that will ensure the new plant species is protected in perpetuity

whilst keeping to project timeframes. At the moment, the project has not been delayed and we are working together to find a solution.

Previous Preservation Success

Transport has extensive experience in the preservation of rare species in Northern NSW, including working with local Aboriginal groups to preserve the endangered Bolivia Wattle during work on the New England Highway upgrade at Bolivia Hill.

Other successes have included:

- **Woolgoolga to Ballina project:**
16 threatened flora species have been re-established close by in the local area including the *Eucalyptus tetrapleur*, *Melaleuca irbyana*, *Maundia triglochinosides*, *Centranthera cochinchinensis*.
- **Warrell Creek to Urunga project:**
6 species translocated including the endangered Floyd's grass (*Alexfloydia repens*) and the Spider orchid (*Dendrobium melaleucaphilum*).
- **Tintenbar to Ewingsdale project:**
Successfully re-established rainforest communities and the threatened species including, *Diploglottis campbellii*, *Macadamia tetraphylla*, *Syzygium moorei* and *Tinospora tinosporoides*.



Pittosporum flowering

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