



# Media Release

Monday, 24 August 2009

## Help clean up the Manilla River in Barraba

Willows might appear elegant but they are hardly a friend of the Namoi and Manilla rivers.

Introduced to Australia in the 1700s, willows are now recognised as one of the most serious riparian and wetland weed species in Australia and have been listed as one of the top 20 weeds of national significance.

With the help of Namoi CMA and the backing of the Barraba landcare group, locals are being encouraged to get behind a project to rid the Manilla River of the invasive weeds around town.

Julie Fenwick has been passionate about clearing weeds such as privett and willows from the Manilla River for a long time now and after meetings with officers from Namoi CMA, funding has now been secured to get cracking and replace these invasive species with native vegetation.

“All this project needs to get started is the permission of the landholders along the river where it runs through town.

“Residents can show their support by joining our own Barraba landcare group, which comes under the umbrella group of Tamworth Manilla Landcare (TMLA).

“The replacement of willows and other weeds with native vegetation is an important step towards achieving a healthy river and a thriving native fish population,” Julie said

Nathan Penny from Namoi CMA said “Willows are deciduous, suppressing native vegetation because of excessive shading in summer and spring, with huge amounts of leaf fall occurring during autumn and winter. This massive leaf fall into waterways results in reduced oxygen and rapid changes in water temperature leading to the death of sensitive aquatic organisms.

“In addition, willows provide poor habitat for snag dwelling fish like the Murray cod and golden perch,” Nathan said.

For more information, contact Nathan Penny from Namoi CMA on 6764 5910 or call Judy or John Sautchuk on 6782 2112 or Julie Fenwick on 6782 1424 or Linda on 6782 1251.

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