

Indigenous Knowledge and Scientific Research Combines for Perennial Pasture Wellbeing

South West NRM Indigenous Liaison Officer Kevin Collins recently supported a visiting researcher from the University of Western Sydney, Mr Jeffery Chieppa, in his quest to collect various native perennial grass species found in the South West NRM region.

Jeffery is a post graduate student at the University of Western Sydney and is finalising a thesis entitled "*Effects of drought and phosphorus availability on plant and microbial communities in pasture grasslands in Australia*". Jeff's thesis is a linkage project tied to a research project called "*How past rainfall shapes Australia's Dryland ecosystem*", which is being funded through the Australian Research Council, with Dr Uffe Nielsen, Dr Sebastian Pfautsch and Professor Brajesh Singh in partnership with Professor David Eldridge from the New South Wales office of Environment and Heritage. The research team have implemented a research site 8km from Charleville along the Adavale Road which they visit every four months.

Kevin assisted Jeff with his local knowledge about where best to locate various native perennial pasture grasses in the Charleville district, and educated Jeff about traditional uses of the many native grasses they collected. For example, kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*) was used for the production of a long lasting native bread dough, which was produced with themeda seeds. The themeda seeds were traditionally ground on stone nardoo dishes, mixed with water and then baked.

Jeff was in the region for a couple of days and collected a wide range of seeds and rhizomes to take back to the University of West Sydney Greenhouse Facility for propagation and further research. Jeff also attended the South West NRM Weeds of National Significance workshop at Croxdale in December 2016, and kindly gave a brief on the project research he is conducting and how it relates to landscape knowledge and awareness of how climatic variation impacts on our most valuable resource - native grasses.

For further information on this research project, [click here](#).

Right: Kevin Collins from South West NRM and Jeffery Chieppa of the University of Western Sydney Hawkesbury campus inspecting native grass species at Croxdale, Charleville.

