



REKINDLED CULTURAL BURN SPARKS HOPE FOR RECOVERY OF RARE ORCHID

Earlier this month rangers from Mogo Local Aboriginal Land Council undertook a cultural burn south of Queanbeyan to reconnect to Country and help save a threatened orchid species.

Cultural or ecological burning on Country through the 'Hotspots' project is a joint initiative between the Land Council, Rural Fire Service (RFS), Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council and the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH).

Linda, from the Mogo Local Aboriginal Land Council said the young Aboriginal people were trained in fire management and were taught the importance of traditional land management practices.

"The rangers loved the camaraderie of working together and reviving Indigenous land practises - which bring a strong spiritual, cultural and heritage connection and a welcome return to looking after Country," said Linda.

"The fire also works to get rid of weeds and reinvigorates the landscape," she added.

Rob Armstrong from OEH said the burn also aimed to restore critical habitat for a rare orchid.

"The strategic use of fire at this site may spark a germination event and temporarily reduce surrounding vegetation that competes with the orchid for light and nutrients," Mr Armstrong said.

"The orchid has not been seen at this particular site for more than 10 years as like many small orchid populations it has not recovered very well from the millennium drought.

"This burn is really our last-ditch effort to boost the recovery of this species and by teaming up with the LALC we have also created an opportunity for young Aboriginal people to get on Country and undertake traditional fire management.

Phil Paterson from the Rural Fire Service said the Hotspots Fire Project is about equipping land managers to participate in fire management for biodiversity conservation and risk management.

"Whether you're a ranger, a private landholder or land management agency, it's all about working together," said Mr Paterson.

"We had a shared ecological objective for this burn which was to help save this species but it was also a chance to get together, share and learn from each other," Mr Paterson said.

The burn was one of many species recovery actions part of the NSW Government's [Saving our Species](#) project that aims to secure NSW's threatened species in the wild for the next 100 years.

Photos for media: <https://flic.kr/s/aHskXpaikm>

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