

## TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Michelle McKemey, Principal of Melaleuca Enterprises Environmental Consultancy Services, was appointed in August 2008 as a contractor for the Conservation Partners Program of the Office of Environment and Heritage, an agency of the NSW government.

The Conservation Partners Program was established in 2000 to coordinate the protection and management of natural and cultural heritage on private lands in NSW. The two main mechanisms for achieving this, is through the establishment of Conservation Agreements and Wildlife Refuges in strategic areas that compliment the reserve system in NSW and indeed Australia. These are complex statutory technical and legal documents that are established under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act (1974)*.

There are established procedures and guidelines for the assessment and establishment of Conservation Agreements and Wildlife Refuges documentation and it is essential that the negotiation of these agreements is done by professionals who have expertise in natural resource management and skills in working with a wide range of landholders.

In 2008 a tender process was undertaken to select contractors with suitable expertise located throughout NSW. Michelle was selected as one of these contractors to work in the northern tablelands and slopes areas. Training was delivered to acquaint contractors with the procedures and guidelines.

Michelle has completed 5 Conservation Agreements and 3 Wildlife Refuges to date as well as undertaking several property assessments that did not progress to an agreement. The skills that Michelle has brought to this work include:

- Knowledge of flora and fauna found in the northern tablelands and slopes areas and ability to undertake surveys to ascertain and identify what species are present,
- Preparing GIS mapping
- Ability to work well with landholders and OEH staff to manage expectations, work through issues and explain both the technical and legal implications of entering an agreement,
- Preparing documentation in a thorough and timely manner,
- Good networks of agency staff and other contractors to gain local information
- Excellent written skills to express both the technical and legal aspects of the agreements
- Excellent verbal communication skills
- Ability to travel and use 4WD vehicles to undertake site visits and meet with landholders

Michelle was a pleasure to work with. She undertakes her work in a professional manner at all times. I wish her well for the future.

Sally Ash, Coordinator, Conservation Partners Program (2000 – 2013)  
20 January 2014