

Abating the threat of exotic vines and scramblers in Threatened Ecological Communities

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Summary The invasion and establishment of exotic vines and scramblers (EVS) are listed as a key threatening process to biodiversity in NSW. However, little is known of the ecology, life history, or potential threat of many EVS species. Knowledge of which species are the largest threat to biodiversity, particularly for threatened ecological communities, will allow for the prioritisation of species for removal, and thus resources can be spent efficiently. We present work involving field surveys across 12 Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC's) in NSW to determine which EVS species pose the largest threat to native biodiversity. Initial

results have shown that the prevalence and impact of EVS species varies amongst the different communities suggesting different prioritisation is needed in different TECs. Strategies to establish and invade communities differs between species, with some species having wide distributions, though relatively low abundance in sites, whereas other species have only been recorded in a small number of sites, though in extremely high densities. This highlights the need to understand the ecology of EVS species in order to control them effectively.

Keywords Prioritisation, exotic vines and scramblers, transformer species, management