**Searching The Wild / Weed Surveillance**

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**SUMMARY**

Parkinsonia (*Parkinsonia aculeata*), also known as Jerusalem thorn, poses a high biosecurity risk to the state of NSW. It can: make mustering difficult, reduce water flows, lower the water table, reduce livestock access to water, reduce pasture productivity, reduce land values, outcompete native plants, reduce food and habitat for native animals, cause erosion, and provide shelter for feral animals. It is a state priority weed that is regulated under a Control Order in NSW.

Parkinsonia was introduced to Australia in the 1800s as a shade and ornamental tree. Infestations have been recorded in SA, WA, QLD and NSW.

In February 2023, there were only 11 active parkinsonia infestations in NSW, in the shires of Moree, Walgett, Broken Hill and Brewarrina. Weeds officers from Moree Plains Shire Council and Castlereagh Macquarie County Council have diligently inspected and controlled the Barwon, Namoi and Narran river infestations over many years of dedicated groundwork.

Flooding in 2020-2022 significantly increased the risk of parkinsonia introduction into NSW through the waterways, but rendered the terrain inaccessible. Staff were no longer able to inspect the riparian areas where parkinsonia could be expected to establish.

The two councils collaborated to conduct aerial surveillance over 5 days, covering more than 250kms of waterways. This paper shares the methodology that used to strategically plan the exercise, how plants were identified and accurately recorded, what was detected, and next steps for control.

**Keywords**: Parkinsonia weed, education and awareness, aerial surveillance, collaboration, inspection.