

# UNE to study our thoughts on biodiversity

Researchers at the University of New England are documenting residents' understanding of - and concerns about - biodiversity on the Northern Tablelands. The multi-disciplinary research team

- Dr Robyn Bartel, Professor Don Hine, and Methuen Morgan - has recently conducted a survey of over 400 individuals living in Armidale, Uralla, Guyra and Walcha.

Over 86 per cent of respondents indicated that biodiversity loss

represented an important or very important problem where they live, with the introduction of non-native animals, pollution, urban development and land clearing for farming identified as particularly important threats

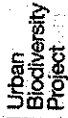
"Biodiversity is clearly an issue that people in the region are passionate about and they'd like to see the matter addressed," noted Professor Hine. "Indeed, over 90% per cent of respondents indicated that they would be willing

to accept higher local rates to establish a dedicated fund to protect and enhance biodiversity in the region. When a large proportion of respondents are willing to pay more taxes, you know that you've struck an important issue."

Most respondents preferred a highly integrated approach for designing and managing biodiversity projects, with input from local government, community organisations, natural resource management groups, scientific experts,

and individual members of the community. Professor Hine said, "Biodiversity is not perceived as just another issue for the Government to solve. Our respondents indicated that they believed that all parts of the community had important roles to play."

The HICUB Project is sponsoring a series of events over the next several months to educate people about biodiversity in the region and how to take action to preserve and enhance it.



if you would like to lend a hand in your community, check out the HICUB website, [www.hicub.org.au](http://www.hicub.org.au), for details of coming events and don't forget to enter the survey for a chance to win a great prize.