DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INDUSTRY & ENVIRONMENT

BioNet System enhancements
Release notes July 2019 (Release 3.2.1)

Cover photo: Native vegetation, Wallumatta Nature Reserve. John Spencer/DPIE

Find out more about your environment at:

www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Contents

1.   Background

BioNet is the repository of biodiversity data maintained by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, and includes a number of systems; BioNet Vegetation Classification, BioNet Atlas and the Threatened Species app. These release notes specifically refer to BioNet Vegetation Classification, both the Public and Edit applications.

The BioNet Vegetation Classification application has recently undergone a review and enhanced security measures applied as the department strives to implement higher system security standard under its new ISO 27001 security certification.

The BioNet Vegetation Classification Public application was taken offline on 1 April 2019 as a result of concerns raised during security testing. These enhancements correct security issues and restore the system to production.

2.   Who is affected by the changes?

All users of the BioNet Vegetation Classification Public application are affected. While the enhancements primarily affect users of the Public application, the Edit application has also undergone some minor improvements.

3.   New functionality

There is no new functionality.

4.   Enhancements

4.1   Change to reports/exports feature

Applies to: Public application (all users)

In order to resolve a security-related issue, the user customisable reports and exports previously available via the Reports/Exports menu have been disabled. Alternative access to this data is available via two channels. These are:

1. MS Excel Power Queries consuming data via BioNet web services.
2. CSV templates reading data directly from the application database.

The data and field names available via the BioNet web services (and hence Power Query) conform to published BioNet data standards. This is not the case for data provided via the CSV templates.

Power Query spreadsheets can be removed from the application and can be updated via data refresh options in the Power Query .xls. Content in the CSV templates cannot be updated once the .xls is downloaded from the application Reports/Exports page.

Power Queries are the same as those published via the BioNet resources page. This page provides instructions on how to access the relevant data using web services and how to develop your own Power Queries.

4.2   Login now utilises reCAPTCHA

Applies to: Public application (all users)

In order to improve security and protect the BioNet Vegetation Classification Public application from automated software access, users are now required to log into the application via the reCAPTCHA service. The user is required to enter their username and password in the existing login page but will additionally have to pass the reCAPTCHA test. Further information is available at reCAPTCHA.

4.3   Changes to application responses to password reset requests

Applies to: Public application (all users)

In order to improve application security, messages presented to users following registration and password reset requests have been changed. Following new user registration, users will be sent an email to confirm their registration.

4.4   Improvement of password policy

Applies to: Public application (all users)

In order to improve application security, the password policy implemented by the BioNet Vegetation Classification Public application has been improved to ensure appropriate password complexity. Passwords are now required to be a minimum of 12 characters long and contain a minimum of one upper case character, one lower case character, a number and a control character (options are: !,@,#,$,%,^,&,*,?,_,~,-,(,),£).

All users are required to reset their password via the existing 'Forgot Password' process from the login screen to ensure their password meets the new criteria.

5.   Documentation

Documentation for BioNet Vegetation Classification, including the user manual, quick guides and power queries are available via the BioNet resources homepage.

6.   Warnings and known limitations

No warnings or known limitations specific to this release.