



## Sydney Weeds Committee

• Sydney Central • Sydney South West  
• Sydney North • Sydney West – Blue Mountains

### MINUTES OF SWC BOARD MEETING

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2011  
Fisherman's Beach, Collaroy  
Chair: Jonathan Sanders

#### Attendees

Jillian MacIntyre	Warringah Council
Steven Smith	Mosman Council
Jeff Hill	Woollahra Council
Geoff Green	Camden Council
Jonathan Sanders	National Parks and Wildlife Service
Chris Dewhurst	Hawkesbury River County Council
Rosanna Luca	Acting Executive Officer
Shelly Slater	GIS/Operational Officer

#### Apologies

Joel Daniels	Liverpool Council
Matt Leary	Randwick Council

#### 1. Welcome

Jonathan Sanders opened the Board Meeting.

Chris Dewhurst was confirmed as a Board member, representing the Sydney West Blue Mountains sub-committee. Maree Costigan has agreed for Chris to replace her Board position as the second representative for SWBM.

Matt Leary was also confirmed as the second representative for the Sydney Central sub-committee.

There was a discussion about the way the Board functions:

- The Board has been running for a year now. The 2 year review is coming up next year.
- As per the Constitution, the Board members are elected by the regional sub-committees. Board members are there to provide guidance and direction for the Sydney region, whilst also serving the interest of their sub-committee.
- Board members are requested to take their "council/agency hat" off, and represent the core values of weed management across the Sydney region.
- Board meetings need to be transparent and functional, with at least a quorum (4) present. Attendance of all Board meetings is requested. Board members are encouraged to nominate a second person from their organisation to attend the sub-committee meetings (to share the load of meeting attendance)
- Membership applications and payments are for the specific regional sub-committee, not the Sydney Weeds Committee. Paid membership entitles voting rights and ability to apply for WAP funds.
- The sub-committees also have other associate members and partners. The SWC needs to remain inclusive of other non-government land managers and stakeholders involved in weed management.

#### **ACTIONS:** Executive Officer to:

Revise the membership forms, so that the paid membership being for the specific sub-committee is clearly communicated in the form.

Circulate final PDF copy of the Constitution to all Board members and check it is on the website. Introduce the Agenda item "Declaration of Pecuniary Interests" for all sub-committee meeting agendas, and discuss with all sub-committee Chairs before the next meetings.

The departure of the previous Acting Executive Officer was briefly discussed, issues relating to the administrative priorities of the SWC and contract performance for this position. Jonathan Sanders emailed correspondence to all sub-committee members and associates explaining the transition of the SWC into a highly administrative phase over the next few months and the employment of Rosanna, to co-ordinate with the WAP reporting and transition into Year 2.

The Board acknowledged and thanked Claire Delacey for her contributions during her time as the Acting Executive Officer.

## 2. Actions from the last Meeting

### NCOSS manual

Jeff Hill presented the manual "Sample Policy and Procedures Manual for Management & Governance" (put out by NCOSS Council of Social Services NSW). The manual contains examples of policies and procedures for running an organisation, and will assist the SWC in developing approaches to strategic planning, working with the media, employing staff etc.

**Action:** Jeff Hill to commence drafting a simple procedures manual for the SWC using the NCOSS example. Items for discussion at the next Board meeting include: clarifying who is the SWC media spokesperson, and the process for communicating SWC procedures back to the members.

### Licences for potted noxious weeds

Jillian McIntyre and Rob Gleeson (Sydney North) both have licences to use live weeds for education.

**Action:** Executive Officer to put information on the website (Members Page) for how organisations can obtain these licences. Insert a link to relevant page of DPI website.

### Bidjigal Reserve targets

Discussion deferred to Item 3.1 Correspondence (letter received from Bidjigal Reserve Trust)

### Year 2 targets

No action or correspondence to date about Year 2 targets and possible amendments.

Rosanna has been focused on administration and reporting for Year 1. Item for further discussion later in the agenda.

### Boneseed mapping

Shelly is collating the mapping done by the SMCMA and OEH. It was agreed that a map of Boneseed distribution for each sub-region would be useful, covering the Hawkesbury Nepean CMA region also.

**Action:** GIS Officer to contact the HNCMA about sharing spatial data, and collate information from the sub-committees about known Boneseed locations across Sydney.

### Insurances

SWC now has Public Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance. The question was raised whether Professional Indemnity insurance is required, as it is expensive, and is the SWC actually advising on any issues that may lead to an insurance claim? It was agreed to keep the website information generic with regard to herbicide use and recommended weed control, with wording such as "some methods for weed control include... Always follow the label and safety precautions etc." The website information should be clearly publicised as *a guide only*, and people need to still consult directly with their Local Control Authority. The need for Professional Indemnity insurance can be revisited as part of SWC 2 year review.

Action: Rosanna to review website wording and place a Disclaimer on the website indicating the information is general, and that information about control of specific weeds needs to be discussed with the relevant LCA.

### **Simplify major points from SWC for the Noxious Weeds Act review issues paper**

Completed by Jonathan.

### **Community reporting system for invasive species, new incursions**

Feedback was gained from sub-committees, and a simplified flow chart/procedure is on the website.

### **Class 4 plans**

The Sydney North sub-committee put the onus back onto each Local Control Authority to update their plans. The generic text was developed by a group of sub-committee members, and each LCA uses and modifies this text to suit their own needs. The Class 4 plan templates are on the Members section of the website.

ACTION: Executive Officer to notify all four sub-committees about the Class 4 plan templates on the website.

### **Weeds Conference**

Frances Pike is unable to attend this year's biannual conference.

Paul Price (Sutherland) and Cameron Bennell (Willoughby) will be presenting papers at the conference.

Action: Executive Officer to make a note for the Board to consider submitting a paper for the 2013 conference (for further discussion in late 2012 - early 2013).

### **Membership**

Rosanna provided Jeff with a current list of member organisations and their nominated representatives. It was agreed by all to ensure all aspects of the set-up phase are complete, all procedures are in place and working well, before the SWC takes on more funding and projects, as well as inviting more member organisations.

Jonathan explained the membership relating to NPWS. For the first time, NPWS is now entitled to receive funding from the Department (DPI) for weed management. Each NPWS area (or region) currently pays membership to a specific sub-committee. Membership entitles voting rights and receipt of WAP funding for that specific sub-committee and region.

## **3. Previous Board Meeting Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed by Chris Dewhurst. Seconded by Jillian Macintyre.

### **3.1 Correspondence**

#### **Outgoing**

9.5.2011 Preliminary progress report to the Department (DPI) for the Sydney Region WAP project. Frances Pike and Mich Michelmore assisted Rosanna Luca with preparing this report. Positive verbal feedback has been received from the Department about the standard and level of co-ordination of the Sydney region WAP project.

ACTION: Executive Officer to distribute a copy of the Progress Report to Board members

April - May 2011:

Various letters, emails and invoices sent to partner councils and agencies regarding outstanding paperwork, membership payments and invoices for Year 1 WAP funds.

## Incoming

14.5.2011 Bidjigal Reserve Trust Board re: Membership - Sydney Weeds Committee  
The BRT Board has declined the invitation to join the SWC and receive the Year 1 WAP funds. The membership fee is beyond the Trust's capacity for expenditure and the reporting requirements are too onerous for them, being an organisation with very little income and run by volunteers.

It was discussed that the membership procedures need to be consistent for all organisations. It is important to stay engaged with the many organisations responsible for land management and weed control, and support their efforts as much as possible. The SWC may be able to assist the BRT Board in some way, if required, to obtain grants funds elsewhere (such as facilitating discussions with Crown Lands department).

**Resolution:** It was agreed to redirect the \$5,500 WAP Year 1 funds allocated to Bidjigal Reserve Trust to other activities within the WAP project. All in favour.

**Action:** Executive Officer and Jonathan Sandersto draft a letter of reply acknowledging the Bidjigal Reserve Trust Board as an important associate member of the SWBM sub-committee, and welcoming their continued involvement.

## 3.2 Treasurer Report

Rosanna recently noticed that the Membership invoices for the 2010-2011 financial year actually said "2011-2012". This was a clerical error.

**Action:** Executive Officer to send an email/letter to member organisations explaining this and that the next invoice sent will be for the year 2011-2012.

Verbal report provided by Steven Smith:

\$374,525 WAP funds (includes GST) are still to be distributed (2nd installments for Year 1).

Other things, not included in this report:

- RTA grant funds not yet received for the linear reserves project (first installment of \$21,000).
- Some outstanding membership payments and WAP (first installments, Year 1)
- Anticipated GST refund from the ATO. The SWC accounts were audited by the ATO. The SWC is to receive a GST refund.
- Possible \$2,500 expense for a SWC stall at ABC Gardening Expo in August 2011.

Written Treasurer's Report to be provided by Steven.

*Balance Sheet* and *Profit & Loss Sheet* distributed as PDF documents, with the Minutes.

**ACTION:** Rosanna to send invoices ASAP for 2011-12 membership fees, to ensure adequate cash flow until the WAP Year 2 funds arrive. Request invoice payment date of 30<sup>th</sup> July 2011.

## 3.3 Acting Executive Officer Report

Executive Officer distributed a written report to the Board prior the meeting.

The Board approved Rosanna's work priorities over the next 3 months.

### 3.4 Operational Officer Report

Shelly Slater distributed a written report to the Board prior the meeting.  
The Board approved Shelly's work priorities over the next 3 months.

#### Reporting Forms

An issues paper was distributed before the meeting. There has been some confusion about the draft forms previously distributed to the sub-committees, their purpose, which version to use etc.

It was clarified that, at present, there are currently only two forms for weeds officers to complete:

- WAP Year 1 report form (due 15<sup>th</sup> July 2011)
- New incursion reporting form. This is to be completed (i) now for any known new/recent incursions in last 10 years, and (ii) for any new incursions that are detected from now on.

The draft "Weed Alert" form will not be used. Too confusing. If a new incursion form is submitted for a completely new weed in the sub-region or Sydney region, then a "new weed alert" will be emailed out to all 4 sub-committees, DPI, RBG and other relevant organisations.

The definition of a "New Incursion" can be misunderstood, and needs to be clarified both on the report form and at the sub-committee meetings.

**ACTIONS:** Rosanna to:

Simplify the form and include a clear definition of a "new incursion".

Clarify this definition at the sub-committee meetings.

Insert a catalogue system in the form, as more updates may be done over time, so people know which is the most current version to use.

Place the most recent version of the form on the website (Members page)

Reintroduce a regular sub-committee agenda item "Any new incursions in the region?"

Request 2 representatives from each sub-committee to form a team to assist Shelly in processing new incursion forms and making decisions about appropriate notification and responses across the region.

#### Mapping

An issues paper was distributed before the meeting.

Shelly requested guidance from the Board about undertaking these tasks:

- The mapping of intersection between linear pathways and EEC, high priority assets, how to use this information to identify priority areas to be inspected and managed for weeds.
- The procedure for notifying the sub-committees about new incursions and new weeds alerts
- Map locations of new incursions, and using this information to develop containment lines
- The types of base maps to be developed, and that can be uploaded onto the website

Shelly has compiled "Data Structure Specifications" (DSS) for data that has been received as a result of request for weed mapping from councils & organisations. These DSS form the metadata (ie content) of the data the SWC now holds. Shelly requested guidance from the Board on which species distributions are now to be mapped. (Boneseed was mentioned earlier in the meeting. Are there others?).

**ACTION:** These issues still require further discussion and clarification in order to progress the relevant actions in the WAP project and RTA funded project (minimising spread of weeds in linear reserves).

## 4. Agenda Items

### 4.1 Weed Action Program

An issues paper was distributed before the meeting.

#### Original application process

The application process required councils and agencies to submit bids to meet certain targets, and an estimated cost. Frances Pike looked at each application, the projected targets and the relative efficiency of each application. (eg \$20 vs \$50 per km of weed control). The applications were assessed by two Board members whose organisations did not submit applications for WAP funds: Steven Smith and Jeff Hill.

#### Status of Year 1

These issues were discussed and agreed by all:

- Year 1 funds have not yet been distributed to 4 councils, and Bidjigal Reserve Trust Board allocation.
- Provide a 3 week deadline for the 4 councils that have an outstanding signed MOU, membership payment and/or invoice for the first instalment. Explain that after the deadline, their Year 1 WAP funds will be redirected to another area within the Sydney region and their organisation will no longer be eligible to receive these funds.
- Simple maps need to be provided with the Excel sheet reports, indicating where the WAP funds have been spent on the ground – weed control, proactive property inspections, survey locations.
- Board members will need the maps to undertake random site visits/audits from September 2011.
- 15<sup>th</sup> July 2011: Deadline for progress report and maps
- 29<sup>th</sup> October 2011: Deadline for all councils and agencies to have spent Year 1 funds.
- Deadline for final reports: end of November 2011.
- This reporting will also be required from the organisations who did not receive WAP funds, but still provided targets for the Sydney region WAP submission.
- Communicate to all organisations involved that if these reporting deadlines cannot be met, their chance of receiving funding in future years will be jeopardised.
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**Action:** Executive Officer to:

Contact the four councils about the 3 week deadline for outstanding paperwork.

Communicate reporting deadlines and procedures to all WAP project partners and other organisations that provided targets.

#### Preparation for Year 2

There was discussion about whether to apply for a significantly larger amount of WAP funding in Year 2, in light of the pre-election promise by the new State Government. These issues were discussed and agreed by all:

- Whilst this would be a timely opportunity, it was agreed by all to get the administrative and reporting procedures in place and fully functioning, before major expansion of the Sydney region WAP project. Requesting a significantly larger amount will be considered for Year 3.
- If existing project partners wish to receive the same amount (as per the original 5 year submission), an application for Year 2 is not required.
- Existing project partners will be invited to submit slight increases for Year 2 (up to 20% additional funds, with adequate justification).
- NPWS (Metro South region) will be invited to be a new project partner for Year 2. The relevant staff position was vacant last year and they missed out on the application process.
- Funds for administration and co-ordination of strategic activities will be requested again for Year 2.

**Actions:**

Executive Officer to:

Provide an update on Year 1 and 2 at the next sub-committee meetings.

Co-ordinate re-application process and transition into Year 2 (June & July).

Consult the Board about application of funds for administrative and strategic actions

Draft a yearly planning cycle for the Board ie. preparation for next WAP funding round, AGM, revisit constitution.

Jeff Hill and Steven Smith to assist with assessment of any applications requesting an increase of funds for Year 2.

**4.2 "Regional Inspection Program"**

An issues paper was distributed before the meeting. This is a measurable outcome of the WAP Year 1.

There was discussion and clarification about what this activity involves. The use of the word "inspection" is causing some confusion. Sometimes, officers will survey areas and not always do formal inspections, issue a notice etc. A survey can also lead to inspection. Collating information about both is considered important, but careful use of the terminology is required as "inspection" is a very specific legal and administrative activity undertaken by Local Control Authorities, relating to declared noxious weeds and the Noxious Weeds Act.

The Blue Mountains Council model of targeted inspections across sub-catchments is excellent, although it took many years to set up. There was general agreement that most councils are not at this stage yet.

Issues such as a "super inspector" or sharing weeds inspector resources across councils were discussed. Further discussion is needed at a later in the year to assess the demand, practicalities and feasibility of these arrangements. Legal advice would also need to be sought.

Originally a planning workshop was proposed for August 2011 for weeds officers. Instead of an additional workshop, Shelly and Rosanna will organise interactive mapping activities and discussions for each of the sub-committee meetings. This will commence the process of identifying regional priorities, current inspection regimes (ie. reactive, proactive, minimal) and areas of concern where the officers are surveying, keeping an eye on, undertaking proactive property inspections, opportunities and limitations.

**ACTION:** Rosanna to:

Inquire if there is a DPI inspector at Flemington markets.

Clarify the activities in the WAP that refer to "inspections" as to whether this means the legal administrative process, or surveying.

**4.3 Policies and procedures document**

Item discussed earlier. Jeff to commence drafting SWC procedures manual.

**4.4 Sydney Weeds membership**

Item discussed earlier.

**Action:** Executive Officer to email updated Board contact list.

**4.5 SWC staff arrangements**

The Board approved these staff arrangements:

- Frances Pike – continue current period of leave until September 2011.
- Rosanna Luca – extension of contract until September 2011.
- Shelly Slater - extension of contract until December 2011.

**Actions:** Executive Officer to:  
Update both contracts (Shelly & Rosanna) and organise signing by Jonathan.  
Liaise with Frances about September sub-committee meeting dates and handover period, and inform the Board of dates.

## 5. General Business

### Sub-committee meeting attendance

Attendance of sub-committees lately has been low. Many managerial staff have been attending the meetings (probably due to the focus of the SWC set up and the WAP). Less of the operational technical staff have been attending.

It was agreed to start engaging again with the operational staff, as much of the administrative phase is now complete, and the next phase is to commence the technical actions of the WAP project.

**Action:** Executive Officer & GIS Officer to make the next sub-committee meetings interactive, encouraging sharing of knowledge and technical information. Other suggestions for running the sub-committee meetings include: a timed Agenda, email invitations encouraging technical officers to attend, Chair's briefing notes, less meeting time used for administrative issues which can be communicated effectively via email (eg WAP reporting procedures and deadlines).

### Feedback from the Board

The decision and feedback from the Board meeting needs to be fed back to the sub-committee meetings.

## 6. Next Meeting date & host venue

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2011**  
Venue and host TBC