



Sydney Weeds Committee

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

SWC BOARD MEETING MINUTES Wednesday 28th March 2012 at the Casula Powerhouse

Attendance:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Jonathan Sanders | National Parks & Wildlife Service (OEH) |
| Chris Dewhurst | Hawkesbury River County Council |
| Jillian Macintyre | Warringah Council |
| Joel Daniels | Liverpool Council |
| Jeff Hill | Woollahra Council |
| Steven Smith | Mosman Council |
| Matthew McNaughton | Camden Council |
| Rosanna Luca | SWC Executive Officer |
| Anthony Schofield | Office of the Hawkesbury Nepean (observer) |
| Geoff Hudson | Local Government & Shires Association (observer) |

*Sanders
Chair.*

Apologies:

Matt Leary Randwick Council

Meeting Open

Jonathan Sanders opened the meeting at 1.00pm, and welcomed the two people attending as observers. Geoff Hudson is employed by the LGSA, an advocate for local government across NSW. Anthony Schofield is employed by the Department of Primary Industries, and is currently working in a seconded position with the OHN to provide invasive species support across the Hawkesbury-Nepean region.

Quorum Present: Yes

Declaration of Pecuniary Interests

Chris Dewhurst, Jillian Macintyre, Joel Daniels, Jonathan Sanders and Matthew McNaughton declared that their councils/NPWS are recipients of the WAP grant funding.

1. Confirmation of Minutes from the Previous Board Meeting on 13th December 2011

The minutes from the Board meeting held on Tuesday 13th December 2011 were accepted by Jillian Macintyre. Seconded by Jeff Hill. All in favour.

2. Update on outstanding actions from previous Board meetings

There was some discussion about the outstanding items, that were listed in the meeting papers:

- The letter of Reference for Shelly Slater has now been written by Jonathan Sanders.
- The Executive Officer has done some research and concludes that Sydney Weeds Committee needs to have Workers Compensation insurance to cover its contractors (who come under the definition of 'workers' under the changes to the new work health and safety legislation that commenced from January 2012).
- Interim Year 2 WAP applications have been invited from the two NPWS regions in Sydney. Allocation of the Year 2 funding to NPWS is not guaranteed. The Board is still waiting on a written response of the letter to the Minister for Primary Industries.
- The previous Board Minutes are to be left as they are, and posted on the SWC member's web page, once they have been signed by the President.
- The GIS Officer position has not yet been filled. If required, the Board Technical Group can assist the Executive Officer with recruiting a new contractor and setting work tasks.

f. The DPI inspector at Flemington Markets is monitoring for food health issues, highly unlikely that they would be checking for weeds. Strathfield and Auburn LGAs do not seem to be doing any noxious weed inspections at the Markets. This may be due to lack of resources or capacity.

ACTION: Jonathan Sanders and Chris Dewhurst to write a letter to the General Managers of Strathfield and Auburn Councils regarding non-compliance of their councils to inspect at and around Flemington Markets.

ACTION:

Chris Dewhurst to look into feasibility of expanding the Hawkesbury River County Council to take on administration of the *Noxious Weeds Act* in other local councils such as Strathfield or Auburn.

3. Correspondence

All correspondence received and sent was noted by the Board.

Correspondence In:

22nd December 2011

Ian Drinkwater, Registered Corporations Auditor
Re: 2011 Auditor Report and Financial Statement for SWC

12th January 2012

NSW Department of Primary Industries
Re: Letter of offer for WAP Year 2 funding \$842,674 plus GST

17th February 2012

Bill Giloolly, Secretary General
Local Government and Shires Association
Re: LGSA position on the allocation of WAP funding to local control authorities and NPWS

Geoff Hudson explained the background context of the letter from the LGSA and their key role in the development of the Weed Action Program. The LGSA supports the regional decision making approach under the WAP. The WAP is allocated by the Minister for Primary Industries and is considered as a funding program to support councils in their implementation of the *Noxious Weeds Act*, funding activities such as compliance and community education. The LGSA's concern about allocation of WAP funding away from local government is an issue relating to all state government agencies, not solely NPWS.

Chris Dewhurst thanked Geoff Hudson for the support and clarification provided by the LGSA.

Correspondence Out:

19th January 2012

Minister for Primary Industries
Re: Seeking clarification about the authority of SWC to distribute WAP funding to organisations other than Local Control Authorities.

Jonathan Sanders reported that verbal advice has been provided by John Tracey from the Department of Primary Industries, indicating that DPI supports the nil tenure allocation of the WAP funding, which includes NPWS land. A formal letter has not yet been received from DPI or the Minister's office regarding the issue.

Chris Dewhurst reported that he met with Katrina Hodgkinson MP, Minister for Primary Industries at the NSW Community Cabinet in Springwood on 19th March 2012. Chris was invited and attended this meeting in his capacity as the General Manager of Hawkesbury River County Council. Also present at the meeting was Bart Basset, MP, Member for Londonderry and Mr Alexander Drake, Deputy Chief of Staff, Department of Primary Industries. The issue of allocating WAP funds to organisations other than local control authorities was discussed at the meeting. The response from Minister Katrina Hodgkinson at this meeting was emphatic support for the position of HRCC, and a clear message that NSW Weeds Action Program funds are not to be allocated to other State entities such as NPWS.

4. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer circulated the Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss Statement (at 26th March 2012) at the meeting. The bank balance is approx \$380,000 which includes funds for salaries and some WAP Year 2 invoices not yet paid.

The Treasurer's Report was accepted by Jillian Macintyre. Seconded by Joel Daniels. All in favour.

ACTION: Executive Officer and Treasurer to prepare a proposed budget for allocation of the remaining funds.

5. Executive Officer's Report

The Executive Officer's Report was circulated with the meeting papers. Rosanna Luca is currently working on rewording and condensing the list of targets to be achieved in the Sydney Region WAP. This will enable a more efficient and meaningful reporting process from WAP the project partners and back to DPI. Staff members in DPI have indicated that the targets can be renegotiated to a certain extent.

Rosanna is finding it difficult to keep up with the workload of managing the WAP, strategic projects, Board, sub-committees, administration related to managing the SWC organisation etc.

Jonathan Sanders moved that an additional \$20,000 be allocated towards engaging a contractor to provide extra support to complete high priority work tasks, and that the Executive Officer's Report be accepted. Seconded by Jeff Hill. All in favour.

ACTION: Executive Officer to prepare a detailed work plan, for presentation to the Board at the next meeting.

6. Any other matters arising from the previous Board meeting

No other matters were raised.

7. The strategic direction of Sydney Weeds Committee

There was some discussion about what are/what should be the aims of the SWC. The aims need to be achievable with the currently level of resourcing, and fit a niche that no other organisations are already doing (such as the CMAs, Weed Officer Association etc).

ACTION: Executive Officer to circulate to the Board some proposed aims.

The issue of SWC membership was discussed, and whether a reduced membership fee should be offered to the councils and state agencies that do not received grant funds through SWC. It was agreed to keep the one the annual membership fee of \$1,500 as the same fee for all organisations. Over time, the membership numbers and activity will be useful good indication of whether the SWC Member organisations are satisfied and can still cover the cost of the fee.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA has asked whether the SWC intends to develop a new strategic document, as the *Weed Management Strategy for the Sydney Metropolitan region* has now expired. The SMCMA has offered to allocate some seed funding in 2012-2013 towards developing a new document in partnership with the SWC.

ACTION: Executive Officer, Jonathan Sanders and Chris Dewhurst to approach the Hawkesbury Nepean CMA about providing similar support for developing a new Sydney region weed management strategy.

There is some concern about when the WAP Year 3 funds will be distributed, as the funds were received very late into Year 2.

ACTION: Anthony Schofield to inquire with staff in DPI about the proposed roll out of Year 3.

There was some discussion about the process for allocating the WAP Year 3 funding across Sydney. The Sydney West and Sydney North sub-committees indicated that they wish to discuss amongst themselves how the funding should be allocated each of their regions. This could be done via separate planning meetings scheduled for around July.

ACTION: Executive Officer to prepare information for the proposed sub-committee WAP planning meetings: a list of WAP targets and a summary of activities/sites funded in Years 1 and 2.

There was some discussion about monitoring and data collection for sites where WAP funding is being spent on on-ground weed control. The process of collecting and analysing the data is challenging, as the sites funded in Year 1 and Year 2 are not all the same. Monitoring data was not requested for most sites funded in Year 1.

It was suggested to engage an independent person to undertake audit of the work being undertaken at some WAP funded sites.

8. General Business

There was some discussion about the Kudzu infestation at Boundary Creek (Penrith LGA).

Meeting close

The Board meeting closed at 3.15pm.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for June 2012.

Date and venue to be confirmed.