

SYDNEY CENTRAL REGIONAL WEEDS COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday 8th March 2012 at Strathfield Library

Attendance:

Peter Semple	Railcorp
Alex Mackenzie	Strathfield Council
Andrew Jack	Sydney Olympic Park Authority
Rob Stevenson	City of Canada Bay
Daniel Oldfield	City of Canada Bay
Jeanie Muspratt	Sydney Metropolitan CMA
Paul Ibbetson	NPWS Metro North East region
Lana McGee	Canterbury & Rockdale Council
Tom Facey	City of Botany Bay
Sue Stevens	Waverley Council
Jeff Hill	Woollahra Council
Rosanna Luca	Executive Officer

Apologies:

Matt Leary	Randwick Council
Peter Goss	Canterbury Council
Mel Hall	NPWS Metro North East region
Asaad Baheer	Sydney Water

1. Roundtable Sharing

The meeting commenced with the Roundtable information sharing session.

- Ticks have become an increasing problem with recent humid weather. Also leeches in some areas. The Australian Association of Bush Regenerators (AABR) website has some current OH&S info about ticks. www.aabr.org.au
- There was some discussion about how councils are enforcing the *Noxious Weeds Act*, serving notices, use of education initiatives with residents etc

ACTIONS:

Executive Officer to ask Matt Leary to do a short presentation at the next meeting about Randwick's approach with enforcing the Noxious Weeds Act.

Executive Officer to contact Randwick Council (Tina and Matt) about offering some mentoring support to City of Botany Environmental Health Officer regarding enforcement of the Noxious Weeds Act.

Executive Officer to send Botany Bay Officer (Tom) a copy of the 2010 *Alligator Weed Prioritisation Report* (identifies Botany Wetlands as highest priority site)

Jeff Hill commenced chairing the meeting at 11.00am.

2. New Incursions in the region

The definition of a “new incursion” was discussed.

A new incursion is an unfamiliar, strange recently arrived weed. This includes:

- first time seen in Sydney region,
- first time detected (ie the weed might have been there for a while before being noticed)
- first time seen in an LGA, a new area or landscape type.

A new incursion is not a natural and predictable expansion of an existing weed.

Coolatai Grass is spreading more along Parramatta Road, Sydney Olympic Park. It is also spreading more in Parramatta LGA. Becoming more of a concern and control of spread is required. This is more likely to a “natural predicted expansion” than a “new incursion”.

For new incursions, SWC might be able to access some of the DPI New Incursion contingency funding, or set aside some of the Sydney region Weed Action Program (WAP) funding to assist with on-ground control.

Andrew Jack reported two new incursions found and being controlled in Sydney Olympic Park:

- Tall Wheat Grass - *Thinopyrum ponticum*
- Kidneyleaf Mud Plantain - *Heteranthera reniformis* (Class 1 noxious weed across NSW)

Alex Mackenzie gave an update on the Wild Onion new incursion on Centenary Drive. In order to access the site for weed control, traffic control is needed. Alex is meeting with RTA next week to discuss best options for traffic control and what resources are available to control the weed. The site may also contain a threatened plant species.

ACTIONS:

Andrew Jack to complete New Incursion report for both species, so that they can be recorded on the Sydney Weeds GIS layer.

Andrew Jack to report the *Heteranthera* infestations through the DPI website (it is a NSW notifiable weed)

Alex Mackenzie and Andrew Jack to follow up with Executive Officer if the costs to treat the new incursions exceed available resources.

3. Noxious Weeds Act Order 28

(i) Class 4 plans are now not required under the new wording for Class 4 weeds (Order 28)

There is some uncertainty among the council officers about the best approach to take now for enforcing and education about containing spread of Class 4 weeds. And whether the information in the Class 4 plans can still be used, and in what format?

ACTIONS:

Executive Officer to ask the Weed Officers Association if they are able to offer some information and support to Sydney region council officers.

Executive Officer to circulate a draft council report template outlining one suggested approach to take.

(ii) The requested changes for Class 4 declarations that were submitted in 2010 have not yet been approved by DPI and gazetted. There appears to be not enough resources within DPI which has slowed the process. This has caused some frustration as many council officers did a lot of work undertaking the Weed Risk Assessments and their council reports.

There was some discussion about whether the whole process could be changed, possibly delegating more powers to the local control authorities to declare their own class 4 weeds.

ACTION: Executive Officer to prepare an issues paper for the Noxious Weeds Advisory Committee about the process for assessing and declaring Class 4 weeds.

4. How the Weed Action Program (WAP) funding is allocated across Sydney Region

The SWC Board recently wrote to the Minister for Primary Industries seeking clarification about SWC's authority to allocate WAP funding to organisations other than Local Control Authorities (local councils and county council). A response has not yet been received from the Minister.

Jeff Hill tabled a recent letter to Sydney Weeds Committee from the Local Government and Shires Association. The LGSA had a role in the development of the new WAP funding program, and aimed to ensure that the funding is primarily for local control authorities.

There was some discussion about the best use of the WAP funding across Sydney.

Comments to feed back to the SWC Board:

- Some of the WAP funds should always be set aside for the strategic planning work (high risk pathways, high risk weeds etc) which are very important tools for informing the co-ordinated weed control across all land tenures.
- The WAP is the only source of funding that part-funds noxious weed inspector positions to enable councils to enforce the Act. A sudden further reduction of the WAP funding to some councils will mean a reduction in their inspectorial and education campaigns.
- Some of the smaller councils in the region rely on this funding to train and build capacity of staff to facilitate co-ordinated weed control across various land tenures. Council officers have a very important role in initiating and facilitating co-ordination from neighbouring land managers (state agency lands, private properties etc).

ACTION:
Jeff Hill to present the above comments at the next Board meeting.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes from the meeting on 15th September 2011 were accepted by Paul Ibbetson. Seconded by Alex Mackenzie.

The Executive Officer reported that all actions have been completed except one:
"Jeff Hill to discuss the terrestrial weed management funding model being developed by Assad Baheer".

The Executive Officer and the Board are addressing other matters at the moment, so just has hasn't been the time to raise the issue and take on any new initiatives.

6. Nomination of Sydney Weeds Committee Board Members

The SWC Annual General Meeting is being held on 28th March 2012.

Written nominations were made for Jeff Hill and Matt Leary to represent the Sydney Central region once again for the coming year.

Rob Stevenson (Canada Bay) expressed interest in learning more and possibly being nominated for the 2013 AGM.

7. Weeds of National Significance

Hillary Cherry, WONS Co-ordinator, presented an update on the process that has been undertaken to revise the list of Weeds of National Significance.

Of the new proposed list of 12 (the list is awaiting sign off from Federal Minister), the main WONS that are of wide concern in Sydney Central region include:

- Madeira Vine
- Cats Claw Creeper
- Broome species
- Asparagus species
- Fireweed

It is important that the WONS National Co-ordinators are aware of the distribution of these weeds in each LGA across Sydney Central region. This will assist with future grant applications to fund education and control of these WONS.

Other WONS such as Boneseed and Alligator Weed are still important, but are being “phased down” in terms of how much national co-ordination is required from now on. These other WONS have good strategies in place that are now being implemented at the state and regional levels.

ACTIONS:

Executive Officer to post a copy of Hillary’s presentation on the Sydney Weeds Member’s webpage.

Executive Officer to circulate the information request about which WONS are a concern in each LGA.

Lana McGee to contact Andrew Petreoshevsky (Aquatic WONS Co-ordinator) about the *Sagittaria* infestation in Rockdale LGA.

Next meeting date: Thursday 6th September 2012

Host: NPWS (Paul Ibbetson)

Proposed venue: Nielson Park