



## Sydney Weeds Committees

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

### Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Sydney Weeds Committees Incorporated

Held on Wed 3rd December 2014 12.30PM at the NPWS Regional Office  
Conference Room 10 Valentine Ave, Parramatta

#### Attendance

Name	Organization
Jonathan Sanders	NPWS (Central)
Joel Daniels	Liverpool City Council
Rod Ensbey	DPI (non voting)
Mitchell Johnson	Campbelltown Council
Jeff Hill	Woollahra Council
Alex Burgess	Wollondilly Council
Matt McNaughton	Camden Council
Erin Fardy	Sutherland Council
Stan Rees	Crown Lands (non voting)
Chris Stanfield	Hawkesbury River County Council
Paul Angel	Bankstown Council (non voting)
Bart Schiebann	Bankstown Council
Matt Springall	NPWS (North)
Pino Todarello	Parramatta Council
Steven Smith	Mosman Council
Dennis Ashton	Sydney Catchment Authority
Anthony Schofield	Hawkesbury River County Council (non voting)
Chris Dewhurst	Hawkesbury River County Council (non voting)
Steve Parker	NPWS (South West)
Gareth Debney	North Sydney Council
Scott Herring	NPWS (West)
Anne Duncan	SWC Executive Officer

Number of financial member organizations in attendance = 16

#### Apologies

Name	Organization
Paul Ibbetson	NPWS (Central)
Alex McKenzie	Strathfield Council
Mel Hall	NPWS (north)
Dawn Emerson	Community
Stewart Harris	Sutherland Council
Robyn Cox	Hornsby Council
Pam Bateman	Pittwater Council
Justine Clarke	Blacktown Council
Sue Stevens	Waverly Council
Janet Rannard	Penrith Council
Charmaine Robertson	Bankstown Council
Michael Pattison	Hawkesbury City Council
Jill Macintyre	Warringah Council
Ben Khan	NPWS (Central)

## **1. Welcome**

Jonathan Sanders (Chair) opened the meeting at 12.30pm and welcomed all attendees. Everyone introduced themselves and their organization. The apologies identified above were noted.

## **2. Confirmation of the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2013**

Chris Dewhurst (Hawkesbury River County Council) sought an amendment to the draft minutes. He sought the addition of the words “due to the restrictions of the MOU at the time” to the middle of the second sentence of the second paragraph of Item 4.

Chris Dewhurst moved that the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2013 as amended be accepted. Seconded by Dennis Ashton. Motion carried.

## **3. Matters arising from the Minutes of the AGM held on the 30<sup>th</sup> August 2013.**

The Executive Officer indicated that all actions had been completed with the following exceptions.

- Increase in fees in accordance with CPI: the Board decided that it was not appropriate to do this without being able to first demonstrate improved performance in terms of value for money for members.
  
- Constitutional changes: the Board decided that the organization needed to concentrate on achieving successful operation in the current governance framework before contemplating change.

Notably, the completed actions included that HRCC had returned the SWC general and sponsorship funds to the SWC Inc. bank account.

## **4. Presentation of the Sydney Weeds Committees Incorporated Annual Report (President)**

Jonathan Sanders presented the Presidents Report (attached).

At the completion of the report Jonathan asked if there was any highlights he had not mentioned. The following additional highlight was suggested and noted: the addressing of the need for surveillance at the Sydney markets (one of the highest risk sites in Sydney) by Strathfield Council with support from Jeff Hill and the WAP Project Officer, and funded by the Weed Action Program.

Alex Burgess-Buxton moved that the 2013-14 SWC Inc. Annual Report by the President, as amended, be accepted. Seconded by Chris Dewhurst. Motion carried.

## **5. Presentation of financial report 2013-14 (Treasurer)**

Steven Smith (Treasurer) presented the financial reports to members:

- Income and expenditure statement as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014
- The detailed statement of financial position (the balance sheet) as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014; and the
- Independent auditor's report to the Members dated 28<sup>th</sup> November 2014

The Treasurer invited members to examine the reports and made several comments as follows:

*Income and expenditure statement.*

- 2013-14 has no WAP grant funds, as it did in 2012-13, reflecting the different

- management arrangements for WAP grant funding.
- Income includes \$12,905 from the forum.
- Key feature is that income is less than expenditure (17K) but this loss is less than 2013 (117K).
- Organization is economical 65K costs for 2014 were 30% less than last year (93K) (take off WAP funding and write off from total expenses). Not much scope to reduce running expenses.
- General membership and sponsorship funds were returned from HRCC (\$82,807) – but that this doesn't show up directly as it has been written off against income).

There was a query by Mr. Chris Dewhurst about the size of the administration costs (16K) and he suggested that this indicated that SWC was extremely inefficient. It was explained to Members that this figure was substantially made up of the administration costs for the Weeds Forum (14K), which had been offset by income from registrations, sponsorships and grants.

*Balance Sheet.*

- The balance of funds at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014 was \$81,512 (net assets) - \$17,824 less than 2013. This was consistent with a position where income was less than expenses and would result in a downward trajectory in net assets over time without additional income.
- That the 2013 column contained the 269K debt, the write-off calculated by the auditor (184K)(which can also be seen as expenditure in the 2013 expenditure statement), and the estimated HRCC debt of \$85,567 (noting that the actual debt repaid in 2014 was \$82,807)
- The GST liabilities of \$8708, of which aid \$7800 was paid with a few minor issues still being resolved with the tax office.

The separate financial report relating to the Weeds Action Program funds provided by Hawkesbury River County Council under the MOU was noted.

Jeff Hill moved that the financial accounts for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014 are accepted and the independent Auditor's report adopted. Seconded by Matt McNaughton. All in favour. Motion carried.

**6. Confirmation of 2014 elections for the Regional Weeds Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs**

The annually elected Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the four Regional Weeds Committees form the Board/Steering Group, which is the management committee for the incorporated Association.

The Executive Officer noted that the Chairs and Deputy Chairs elected this year in August/Sept 2014 are:

**Sydney South West Committee**

(Election took place on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2014)

Matthew McNaughton, Camden Council – elected as Chair

Alex Burgess-Buxton, Wollondilly Council – elected as Deputy Chair

**Sydney West Blue Mountains Committee**

(Election took place on 5<sup>th</sup> Sept 2014)

Chris Stanfield, Hawkesbury River County Council– elected as Chair

Michael Pattison, Hawkesbury City Council – elected as Deputy Chair

**Sydney North Committee**

(Election took place on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2014)

Steven Smith, Mosman Council - elected as Chair

Gareth Debney, North Sydney Council – elected as Deputy Chair

**Sydney Central Committee**

(Election took place on 12th Sept 2014)

Jonathan Sanders, NPWS – elected as Chair

Jeff Hill, Woollahra Council – elected as Deputy Chair

Alex Burgess-Buxton moved that the elected Chairs and Deputy Chairs are confirmed, Seconded by Joel Daniels. Motion carried.

**7. Election of Sydney Weeds Committees Incorporated office bearers.**

Anne Duncan, as SWC public officer declared all positions vacant. There was some discussion and general agreement about the need for succession planning and the need for turnover in the Board/Steering Group. It was noted that the new Board had 2 new people.

President: Jonathan Sanders

Nominated by Jeff Hill. Seconded by Alex Burgess-Buxton.

Vice President: Chris Stanfield

Nominated by Jeff Hill. Seconded by Alex Burgess-Buxton.

Treasurer: Matthew McNaughton

Nominated by Steve Smith. Seconded by Jonathan Sanders.

Honorary Secretary: Gareth Debney

Nominated by Steve Smith. Seconded by Dennis Ashton.

**8. General Business**

Mitchell Johnson noted that on 25<sup>th</sup> November he had received a permit for use of 24-D to treat *Ludwigia peruviana* (PER 14922), which was available to Members of Sydney Weeds Committees on the Campbelltown City Council website. The Executive Officer was asked to distribute copies to members.

**9. Meeting Close**

The Annual General Meeting closed at 1.20 PM.

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President's Report – see following pages.

## President's Report

After some personnel changes, and the resultant disruption, I am pleased to report that Sydney Weeds Committees Inc. and its constituent regional committees are alive and healthy.

This is excellent timing, as the context for weed management in Sydney and NSW is changing. Among the factors in this change that occurred this year are:

- The Natural Resources Commission report of their investigation into weed management, and the NSW government response – there is no clear indication of where this will lead us as yet.
- New biosecurity legislation is under debate in the NSW Parliament, and there is the prospect of a new biosecurity information system
- The NSW Invasive Species Plan is under review, (still underway)
- The new Order 30 came into effect – this has had some impacts (both positive and negative) on noxious weed enforcement even at very local levels, with de-listings (e.g. Pellitory) as well as listings (e.g. *Celtis sinensis*).

There are therefore some institutional uncertainties at present, which we will have to deal with as they become clearer. However, there is no uncertainty about weeds and the threat they pose, with a number of new incursions reported this year, and ongoing threats from widespread weeds to biodiversity and the environment! It is now more important than ever that we maintain vigilance about new incursions, and continue to take collaborative and systematic approaches to the more widespread weeds.

### **I would like to draw your attention to the following highlights (with apologies for any that I may have missed):**

- Implementation of the MOU with HRCC and return of the membership and other funds allowed Sydney Weeds to resume full operation.
- Clarification of the relationship with HRCC in a November 2013 workshop facilitated by DPI staff gave clarity, and a constructive way forward
- SWC maintained membership despite the challenges of recent years: 35 paid up members in 13-14 (36 in 12-13), with indications of some renewed interest already in 14-15 (37).
- The Weeds Forum in April was a great success. It was attended by 135 people, mostly local government, but also 14 contractors, 11 volunteers and 5 students.
  - The feedback through the evaluation was very positive – overall experience was very good, most presentations were found to be very useful, and the Forum was good value for money.
  - It cost 25K to run, with registrations and sponsorships covering half of that, and SWC and the WAP splitting the remainder of the contributions (6K each).
- The regular schedule of meetings has been maintained this (calendar) year – three rounds of regional meetings have been held and well attended, by each committee this year (including the SW one earlier today and the Central one tomorrow). Apart from providing a networking opportunity, the meetings have also tried to have a specific collaborative purpose: review of the Alligator Weed strategy (also served as a reminder about weed risk assessment) was the focus at one, and review of high risk weeds list and high risk sites/pathways has commenced at the most recent meetings. This is not only about the next stage of WAP but is part

of ongoing strategy review, which is a key to efficient and effective weed management.

- The website has continued to provide a good resource, receiving a total of 37,500 visits for the year (3100/month, with 70% of them being first time visits) over the year. From each visit, in average 2.5 pages are viewed and 13 files downloaded, 25% of which are images. We only had data for the 6 months of the previous year (not a full year) but these figures for 13-14 are consistent with the levels of the previous 6 months. However we are conscious that it has become a bit dated aesthetically and is in need of a good review and update and it is hoped that this will be addressed before the end of this coming financial year. (Any problems, bugs, annoyances, errors, please let the EO know). Meanwhile technology is catching up and we have just become aware of a free Sydney weeds app done by some volunteers in northern Sydney, which can be downloaded from Itunes, not to mention the DPI weeds app, which will be coming in February.
- Weeds (**Our core business**)
  - There is an ongoing regional priority for boneseed eradication, with all adult plants being successfully removed from a number of sites, while closer investigation has shown that some other sites will take a more sustained effort.
  - New incursions reported by members this year have included:
    - Horsetail – North (a couple of new occurrences found)
    - ‘Ming’ Asparagus – in several locations around the region (north, central, WBM). (*The Botanic Gardens suggest we call this ‘Pom-Pom Asparagus for clarity*)
    - Chinese knot weed – Rockdale
    - Sea spurge in SW and North
    - Kudzu SW
    - *Maurandia barclayana* (Angel’s Trumpet) - SW
    - Bitou Bush - SW
    - Water hyacinth SW
    - Kei Apple – WBM and SW
- The Sydney Weed Action Program is a partnership between SWC and the NSW DPI that involves 19 SWC members. Funds were managed by HRCC on behalf of SWC, under a Memorandum of Understanding. This program (including partner contributions) expended over \$2.24 million across the region during the 2013-14 financial year, which was the fourth year of the program.
- WAP Highlights (courtesy of the WAP PO, Anthony Schofield) included:
  - Development of 5 strategic documents
  - Inspections of 1461 km of high risk pathways
  - Inspections of almost 10,000 private properties and 3,000 high-risk sites for high-risk weeds.
  - 2,331 ha of significant natural assets protected from high-risk weeds.
  - Joint NPWS/Canterbury project to control Corky passionfruit along Wolli Creek.
  - Significant progress with Kudzu on Boundary creek, Penrith
  - High Risk aquatic weeds controlled along 456 km of waterways such as Hawkesbury-Nepean, Georges River and their tributaries.
  - Displays at 79 community events to raise weed awareness
  - Capacity building of 1,100 volunteers in identification and control of weeds.

- Inception of a project to carry out surveillance at the Sydney markets, one of the highest risk sites in the region. This is the result of work by Strathfield Council supported by Jeff Hill Central RWC Acting Chair and the WAP Project Officer Anthony Schofield.

I also wish to highlight that there is a significant amount of weed management undertaken by the 18 other SWC members who are not WAP partners, which work also contributes towards our regional weed management goals (e.g. Boneseed eradication). All of our members, whether WAP partners or no, continue to put in major contributions in weed management, using both external grants (such as the WAP and LLS and the Department of Lands grants), and especially, their own resources, and it is this ongoing determination to achieve our local and regional weed management goals that is the lifeblood of this organisation. (Our initial benchmarking survey in 2011-12 showed that our members' total annual expenditure on weeds across Sydney was over \$22.3 million, and I am confident that this figure would be higher today).

A particular aspect that I wish to acknowledge is the improvements in efforts and participation by associate members e.g. Sydney Trains, and RMS. Building on this collaboration will be essential to achieving management success for many weeds, and especially Boneseed.

In terms of the journey over the past year, I would like to extend sincere thanks on behalf of the SWC Board to:

- our interim Project Officer, Paul Burcher, who kept us safely under sail on an uncertain sea;
- Weeds Forum Manager, Val Close, who got us onto the Weeds Forum bus, and drove us safely to our destination;
- the WAP Project Officer, Anthony Schofield, who kept us focussed on our route, and made sure we followed it;
- Hawkesbury River County Council General Manager, Chris Dewhurst and his staff, who provided much of the engine power that kept us on the road,
- Our new Executive Officer, Anne Duncan, who has given the SWC vehicle a good servicing, and put us back on the road in good condition
- Our Regional Weed Committee Members, who are never passengers, but always valued companions on the journey, and finally,
- My fellow Board Members, past and present, who have always been willing to contribute to the itinerary, but also to put their backs into the hard rowing that has got us here.

I apologise if my mixing of metaphors is confusing, but I am confident that SWC is once again in excellent condition to traverse the weed management landscape in 2014-15, and I hope that you will all come along with us, and trust you will find the journey both enjoyable and rewarding.

Thanks,

Jonathan Sanders  
President  
3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014