Sydney Weeds Committees
- Sydney Central   - Sydney South West
- Sydney North   - Sydney West – Blue Mountains

MINUTES of the SYDNEY WEEDS COMMITTEES INC. BOARD (STEERING GROUP) MEETING
9.30 AM Thursday 10th July 2014
NSW NPWS Office, 10 Valentine Avenue, Parramatta

Present
Board
Jonathan Sanders (JS)   Sydney West Blue Mountains Weeds Committee
Chris Stanfield (CS)   Sydney West Blue Mountains Weeds Committee
Matthew McNaughton (MM)   Sydney South West Weeds Committee
Mel Hall (MH)   Sydney North Weeds Committee
Alex Burgess-Buxton (ABB)   Sydney South West Weeds Committee
Jeff Hill (JH)   Sydney Central Weeds Committee
Ex-officio
A. Duncan (AD)   SWC Executive Officer
A Schofield (AS)(part)   Weeds Action Program (WAP) Project Officer

Apologies Steven Smith, Sydney North Weeds Committee

Declaration of Pecuniary Interests
The following declared that their organisations are recipients of WAP funding:
    Matt McNaughton (Camden Council)
    Alex Burgess-Buxton (Wollondilly Council)
    Jonathan Sanders (NPWS Metro South West region)
    Mel Hall (NPWS Metro North East region)
    Chris Stanfield (Hawkesbury River County Council)

AGENDA

Agenda Item: 2. Minutes of previous meeting	
Background	Attachment 2 considered.
Issues	Minor matters the draft version still to be updated in the document and provided to secretariat.
Action	2.1. Final version of minutes to be located (JS) circulated (AD) and signed asap out of session.
Agreed	To be confirmed out of session

Agenda Item: 3. Review of actions arising	
Background	Attachments 3A and 3B
Discussion	• Most actions from previous meeting and RWCs covered elsewhere in the agenda. • In particular, the success of the forum was noted. The Chair thanked the Organising Committee, Project Officer and the many others who had contributed to its success. • It was also noted that the requirement for monthly budget reports from HRCC in relation to the WAP should be followed up as part

	of WAP PO report (item 5).
Agreed	Noted.

Agenda Item: 4. Correspondence

Background	Correspondence attached to meeting papers.
Discussion	Most relate to WAP and will be covered in discussion of WAP PO report.
Agreed	Noted.

Agenda Item: 5. WAP Project Officer report

Background	Anthony Schofield (WAP Project Officer) spoke to his reports on: • WAP budget (Stage 1) (Attachment 5A); • Work progress to date (Attachment 5B); and • Penrith work on Kudzu (Attachment 5C)
Discussion	WAP Budget and work progress • No funding allocated to SWC administration in WAP Yr. 5 budget, as there was no room within the allocated 10% administration costs (DPI funding requirement). • Given preparation for WAP stage 2 required in Yr. 5 Board noted that if the WAP took up a significant portion of EO time then this would need to be revisited. • Board sought overview of Yr. 5 allocations, which WAP PO agreed to provide by Fri 8th August. • Yr. 5 allocation not expected till December, and there would be a need to distribute it fast (WAP PO) and for Councils to be well prepared to ensure that it gets expended before the end of the financial year. It was agreed to bring this to their attention at the next RWC meeting. Boundary Creek • Report noted. Re-allocation of funds for ongoing monitoring supported. Possibility of 6K unspent for re-allocation after project completion in September also noted.
Agreed	Noted - with thanks to AS
Actions	5.1. Overview of Yr. 5 allocations to be provided to Board by WAP PO by Fri 8th August. 5.2. RWC Chairs to brief RW committees on Yr. 5 WAP funding at next meeting. The message is that it will likely not be available until December but will need to be fully expended by end of financial year. Good preparation will be essential to achieve this. RWC Chairs also to brief on need for Boneseed action priority.

Agenda Item: 6. WAP Stage 2 update

Background	AS presented overview of SWC project, which he gave at DPI meeting on WAP Stage 2. This was summarised in the minutes of that meeting (Attachment 6A).
Discussion	Key points of discussion in response to AS presentation: *Re low co-contribution in Sydney compared to state average.* It was suggested that perhaps the breadth of scope of weed management was greater in Sydney compared to other regions, and that this might be a reporting problem. For example for some councils WAP is only a small part of a larger program, so focus on reporting is minimal and

not necessarily integrated with other weed management programs. If this was addressed it was suggested that the reported co-contributions would increase. The Board/Steering Group noted that SWC would need to get smarter about this in relation to Yr. 5.

Re ISP priorities. The Board/Steering Group noted that priorities were not absolutes. If prevention was successful – this could lead to asset protection becoming higher priority in the future. It was also suggested that the WAP had two aims – in addition to achieving outcomes, increasing participation and "buy-in" to weed management was also important.

Re DPI guidance. There was agreement that there was a need for more of this, particularly in relation to program management by RWCs.

Re capacity building. Need for more and broader skills within Sydney region weed managers, not just technical weed management. E.g. how to engage community; running meetings; leadership etc.

Re strategy gaps – Industries and development – are they being sufficiently addressed?

AS suggested that a good place to start for WAP Stage 2 was to convene a workshop and review the strengths and weaknesses of Stage 1 and collect ideas for improvement.

AS report on WAP Stage 2 Planning contained recommendations to the Board/Steering Group, which were discussed. The Board/Steering Group then adopted the following final recommendations.

> *1. Each partner will be required to submit one application covering the 5-year period, to ensure certainty of funding. Applications must address regional priorities.*

> *2. The Sydney region application will focus on strategies to improve prevention, containment and eradication within the region, and prevention of escape to other regions. Participation in weed management is also an important consideration to increase effectiveness as there are many more communities and stakeholders with capacity to be actively engaged. The issue of low co-contributions (or lack of adequate reporting from partners) would also be addressed as part of the application process.*

> *3. Individual applications will be collated to form the Sydney region application. The Board, in its role as WAP Steering Group, will review applications in conjunction with DPI.*

> *4. Review of strategic documents, incorporating spatial data needs to be undertaken to inform the Yr. 5 application (High Risk Pathways and Site Management plan and Regional Inspection plan) by 30 April 2015.*

> *5. High risk local government areas, with inadequate inspection programs should be identified (as part of spatial planning using GIS) and proactively encouraged to apply.*

	6. A program should be developed to build leadership capacity to feed in to Board/Steering Group and RWCs. Aspects could include leadership, meeting procedures, governance and project management, for example. Funding of this type of program could be discussed with DPI as part of the application process, as there was a previous commitment by them in this regard. The Board/Steering Group also noted that a regional workshop to review strengths and weaknesses of Stage 1 was a good idea and that it would give consideration to how this should be implemented, along with the adopted recommendations. It was further noted that the GIS project was an important aspect of any strategic review, including high-risk pathways etc. SWC needed to get the best information and use it to plan with partners. The Chair thanked AS for his reports, his ongoing hard work and substantial contributions to SWC, which were greatly appreciated by both members and the Board/Steering Group.
Actions	6.1. JS to discuss with DPI their previous commitment to funding of capacity building in Sydney region. 6.2. AS to approach DPI and discuss funding for regional capacity building program and the approach anticipated in WAP Stage 2. 6.3. Board/Steering Group to further consider how to implement the adopted recommendations, including the development and funding of a review program to inform WAP stage 2, incorporating up to date spatial information.
Recommendation	The Board/Steering Group: • Noted the presentation by AS • Adopted the recommendations by AS as amended.
Moved	ABB
Seconded	MH
All in favour	

AS departed the meeting at approx. 11.10 AM.

WAP Stage 2 Lead Agency	
Background	Development of WAP Stage 2 is progressing.
Discussion	SWC Inc. made a resolution at the last AGM that SWC would be the lead agency for WAP Stage 2. DPI has been made aware of this on a number of occasions and indicated that this would be acceptable. It was suggested and agreed that discussion with DPI re Lead Agency for WAP Stage 2 is urgent as momentum is building.
Actions	6.4. MM to contact Bruce Christie (Director of Biosecurity, based at Menangle) and set up meeting with JS, JH and MM.

Jeff Hill departed the meeting at 11.30 AM.

Agenda Item: 7. SWC Finances and Budget	
Background	End of financial year status report (Attachment 7) was considered.
Discussion	Membership invoices for 14-15 were discussed.

	Not all members had paid for 13-14. The following approach was agreed:
	• Payment should be sought for both 13-14 and 14-15 from Members who are WAP partners.
	• For those who are not WAP partners then invoice should indicate that contribution for 13-14 would be appreciated, but that if they were unable to pay then they should contact SWC to discuss.
Action	7.1. AD to implement the invoicing as agreed.
Recommendation	The Board:
	• Accepted the financial report
Moved	MM
Seconded	ABB
All in favour	

Agenda Item 8. Administration matters
8.1. Business hours/location/ access

Background	The Contract provides for services to be provided, unless otherwise agreed, for a minimum of 14 hours per week based at the Parramatta office. Experience to date so far has indicated that requirements to be in Parramatta (and Sydney generally) are mainly around meetings and to check mail. The website has recently been updated to provide a phone number and to indicate standard business hours (9-5 Thursdays and Fridays), which can operate regardless of physical location and will give required perception of contact-ability.
Recommendation	The Board:
	• Agreed that the EO attend Parramatta every second week, and as required to attend meetings or meet operational requirements (such as collect mail or run GIS project).
Moved	CS
Seconded	MH
All in favour	

8.2. Banking arrangements

Background	Currently arrangements require that all banking be done with paper cheques. This means that BPay is not possible and even small amounts require physical cheques, which is not cost-effective or efficient. Small payments have continued to be made by staff, requiring re-imbursement, which is not efficient in terms of accounting practice.
	If all signatories had access to electronic banking, then NAB have advised that a double approval process can be implemented to make electronic payments, while still mandating two signatories.
	SWC has received 4 grants from LLS for weed management projects (totalling $77,685). It is suggested that in order to facilitate transparent management of these funds a further business savings account be opened to quarantine them from operational funds and attract a higher interest rate.
Issues	• Non-electronic banking is inefficient for SWC, where signatories

	are remote from each other and Executive Officer.
	• New Executive Officer requires Steering Group approval for account authority and electronic banking.
	• Grants funds need to be kept separate from operational funds to ensure transparency.
Recommendations	The Board:
	• Approved authorisation of the Executive Officer as an SWC account signatory including capacity for electronic banking, within the context of appropriate governance procedures.
	• Requested that the EO develop appropriate financial policies and procedures for Board approval prior to implementation of the electronic banking system. (Comment on these should also be sought from an accountant.)
	• Approved implementation of an electronic approval payment system with dual approvals and in the context of an approved policy and procedures.
	• Agreed to establishment of a separate savings account to manage grants funds.
Moved	MM
Seconded	CS
All in favour	

8.3. Contact management

Background	Currently SWC has a large email contact list. Sending emails to members and associated contacts requires 15 separate emails to be sent. Web based providers exist for marketing (e.g. Constant Contact) which would allow more efficient management of contact lists, management of surveys, and sending of newsletters in standard and professionally appearing formats. Cost of the basic service is $20 per month (500 emails).
Recommendation	The Board:
	• Approved commitment of $20 per month to establish a professional contact management system.
Moved	ABB
Seconded	MM
All in favour	

8.4. Membership invoices and other accounting matters

Background	AD has implemented the use of MYOB to manage finances. This will facilitate the preparation of BAS statements etc., for checking by the accountant. For this year's invoices, preparation will take longer than for preparation by hand on a once-off basis, but will be more efficient in the long run. The use of MYOB on a regular basis for accounting, invoicing and budgets, may mean a change of requirements for accounting and bookkeeping services.
Recommendations	The Board:
	• Approved use of MYOB by SWC for preparation of invoices, budgets and financial reports.
	• Approved the review of structure of accounting services for 14-15 (to be considered by Board/Steering Group out of session).
Moved	ABB
Seconded	CS
All in favour	

8.5. Policies and procedures	
Background	Documentation of administrative policies and procedures is a challenge for all small associations / not-for profits, particularly with part time staff. However it is also essential for transparency and for effective hand-over of staff. A useful document was prepared by Rosanna Luca, which can form the basis of a "manual".
Discussion	It was noted that progressive documentation of administrative policies and procedures is included the ongoing work program of the EO and suggested that financial policies and procedures are the immediate priority.
Agreed	Noted.

Agenda Item: 9. SWC Work Program	
Background	The SWC work program contained in Attachment 9A identifies the services provided by the Executive Officer and also the involvement of the Board. It is a live document, for review at each meeting. Key issues for noting and/or discussion included: • Approach to GIS • Communications with Catchment Groups • Grants funds income received from LLS (77K)
Discussion	JS recommended that all members make themselves familiar with the work program document. Specific issues: **GIS** • EO reported on options and discussions with LLS re use of WAP funding to ensure value for money. • Board agreed that SWC did not want stand-alone system, but to be part of larger, statewide system. • Board recommended further discussions with NSW NPWS re use of their servers for storage and system for mapping (ARC and new NSW Biosecurity system compatible). • MH mentioned a package, which PWS send to contractors to get them to upload the spatial data relating to their work (low tech). This might be suitable option for some Councils with lack of GIS capability. • Spatial data for WAP project needs to be on system, so it can be used for planning for WAP Stage 2. **Catchment/Landscape groups communications** • AD developing RWC linkages with catchment and landscape level groups (operating, often independently in same Councils as members).
Agreed	Progress report noted.
Actions	9.1. AD to contact Scott LaSalle in NPWS head office re hosting of SWC spatial data and Jo Baird (Parramatta) re server storage space/ access etc. 9.2. MH to send info re contractor package to AD for circulation to Board/Steering Group. 9.3. AD to ensure GIS info for WAP sites is on RWC agenda. 9.4. AD to continue to liaise with catchment and landscape level

	groups.

Agenda Item: 10. Business Plan development	
Background	Agenda paper suggested a business plan be developed incorporating suggestions received from RWCs and the SWC Board/Steering Group. It would serve as key communication tool and aid accountability by providing a framework for annual reporting.

Discussion	The priorities of the potential tasks identified in the meeting paper were discussed. It was suggested that the priority for AD would be "the central SWC infrastructure" (continuous improvement of administration, mapping, website etc.) while members should focus on events/ communication/education, with only a small amount of central SWC coordination.
	In particular the following high priorities were identified:
	• Boneseed eradication
	• Website – need people to assist with this – through RWCs
	• Media coverage –
	  e.g. boneseed (coincide with spring), in the Sydney-wide aim to eradicate it, we need everyone to look out for it and send locations to us.
	     e.g. aquatic weeds (e.g. use previous Daily Telegraph coverage of Nepean River weed removal)
	
	ABB mentioned Save our Species Program Workshops he had heard about from Greg Steenbeeke (NSW NPWS).
	
	Alligator Weed Action Plan review was also discussed.
	• It was agreed that it should proceed as part of RWC meetings agendas, followed by a Sydney-wide meeting (making sure to bring in Sydney water/ catchment groups etc).

Agreed	Noted.
Actions	10.1. Board/Steering Group Members to consider business plan priorities and provide feedback. 10.2. AD to follow up with Greg Steenbeeke and take appropriate action. 10.3. AD to provide draft business plan for Board/Steering Group consideration.

Agenda Item: 11. SWC Strategic Issues	
Background	Agenda paper briefly outlined some forthcoming changes for the strategic landscape of SWC for Board members to consider.
Discussion	Some of the issues were discussed and it was agreed that these issues and the SWC governance model/ membership structure required more significant consideration, but that this required more time and a more detailed level of information than was presently available. The priority focus for the moment was to review the regional strategy, engage stakeholders more broadly within the current arrangement, and make sure the present governance model was working well. In that context JS asked Board members to identify if there were any small constitutional issues that required change at the AGM.

Agreed	Noted.
Action	11.1. Board members to identify any small constitutional changes that might be required to be considered at the AGM.

The meeting closed at 1.00PM.