

Combined meeting of the SYDNEY WEST-BLUE MOUNTAINS & SYDNEY SOUTH WEST REGIONAL WEEDS COMMITTEES

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday 15th March 2012 at the Grantham Sustainability Centre, Seven Hills

Attendance:

Paul Price	Sutherland Council
Erin Fardy	Sutherland Council
Eddie Ferry	Fairfield Council
Joel Daniels	Liverpool Council
Matthew McNaughton	Camden Council
Andrew Attewell	Campbelltown Council
Alex Burgess-Buxton	Wollondilly Council
Rebecca Coventry	Office of Hawkesbury Nepean
Stan Rees	Crown Lands Division (now part of DPI)
Ian Perkins	Bankstown Council
Lyndal Kaye	NPWS - Cumberland Area South
Jonathan Sanders	NPWS - Cumberland Area North
Dan Long	Blue Mountains Council
David Whiteman	Blue Mountains Council
Janet Rannard	Penrith Council
David Kuhle	Parramatta Council
Pino Todarello	Parramatta Council
Nicola Booth	Hawkesbury City Council
Chris Dewhurst	Hawkesbury River County Council
Nerida Gill	Sydney Metropolitan CMA
Justine Clarke	Blacktown Council
Brendon Andrei	Blacktown Council
Timothy Withers	Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural & Education Centre
Samantha Gorny	Department of Defence
Greg Steenbeeke	Office of Environment and Heritage
Hillary Cherry	National WONS Co-ordinator, OHN
Rosanna Luca	SWC Executive Officer

Apologies:

Anthony Schofield	Office of the Hawkesbury Nepean
Cielo Roldan	Railcorp
John Newton	Sydney Water
Chris Stanfield	Hawkesbury River County Council
Karen Jenkin	Hawkesbury River County Council
Stewart Harris	Sutherland Council
Geoff Green	Camden Council
Craig Shephard	NPWS – Metropolitan South West Region

Welcome

Jonathan Sanders (Chair) opened the meeting at 9.30am, and welcomed all in attendance.

Declaration of Pecuniary Interests

No pecuniary interests were declared at the meeting open.

Tim Withers arrived later, and declared interest of Muru Mittigar as a contractor undertaking weed control, as well as a community based organisation.

1. Roundtable information sharing

An information sharing session was held to provide updates and information of interest to other officers in the region.

- The recent wet weather conditions are making it difficult to do aquatic weed control.
- Hawkesbury River County Council is preparing a 10-year strategy, that aligns with the Invasive Species Plan, as well as SWC and regional priorities.
- Sutherland Council has a regular spot on a local radio station, a good opportunity to promote control of weeds, the Bushcare program etc
- NPWS is currently preparing pest management strategies for NPWS in each Region (Metro South East and Metro North West). Committee members are encouraged to review the draft strategies, as the priorities of NPWS need to be aligned with neighbouring lands surrounding the national parks.
- Department of Defence is controlling African Olive at Orchard Hills this year.

Paul Price reported that Christine Guthrie has recently retired from Sutherland Council. Chris Dewhurst acknowledged both Christine Guthrie and Anna Larson from Sutherland Council, for their contributions towards establishing bush regeneration efforts across Western Sydney. Seconded by Janet Rannard.

ACTION: Executive Officer to write a letter of thanks to Christine Guthrie and Anna Larson.

2. New Incursions in the region

Kudzu

(Penrith LGA) Recent floods caused a large section of the bank in Boundary Creek to slump cause fragments of Kudzu to wash downstream. This site is hard to manage, as the Kudzu is mainly what holds the creek bank together.

(Wollondilly LGA) Council has been spraying with Garlon and Metasulfuron. Good results with no regrowth. Have been skirting canopy trees, the Kudzu stems are large but soft, and easy to cut.

Golden Dodder

(Wollondilly LGA) Found and being treated.

(Penrith LGA) *Tweedia coerulea*, from the Moth Vine family. Found in a bushland area, suspected it has come from a truckload of soil. Seems to be a once off infestation. Positive id has been received from Herbarium.

ACTIONS:

Alex Burgess and Janet Rannard to complete New Incursion report for the reported new incursions, so that they can be recorded on the Sydney Weeds GIS layer.

ACTIONS: Executive Officer to:

- (i) Update Sydney Wide new incursions information on SWC GIS layer, and present to the Board
- (ii) Co-ordinate completion of Weed Risk Assessments for all new incursions

Also need to keep an eye out for local new incursions:

- Serrated Tussock, spreading in South Camden and Wollondilly LGA. Working with HNCMA.
- Coolatai Grass is spreading in Parramatta area, Sydney Olympic Park, Auburn. Parramatta Council is controlling it in bushland reserves, but not road reserves. An increasing problem along Parramatta Road.
- Boneseed at Kemps Creek Dragway (coming off the M7)

There was some discussion about the appropriate procedures to follow when new incursions are found, to ensure a rapid response and co-ordinated control. Often the weeds need to be controlled along roads, which requires the assistance of RTA for traffic control. Traffic control is a big expense, that needs to be factored into the costs of weed control.

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 council officers about the best approach to take now for enforcing and education about containing spread of Class 4 weeds. There was some discussion about what councils can do now:

- The strategic content of the existing Class 4 plans is relevant, and simply needs to be reformatted into a noxious weed policy document.
- The Class 4 plans need to be revoked at a Council meeting, and the new weed policy needs to be adopted.
- The format of the weed policy could include for example
 - A preamble about the legislation (and reason for the policy)
 - List/lists of noxious weed species and the way that they will be controlled in that LGA/County Council area. Note: weed control policies must be appropriate for the Class 4 wording, cannot push weeds up a class from a 4 to 3 for example.

Blue Mountains Council has developed educational fact sheets for their declared weeds with wording such as *“Council’s recommendations to undertake control of weeds in the following ways...”* The fact sheets can complement the information in Council’s weed policy, working well together.

ACTIONS:

Executive Officer to send around a template for a Report to Council re: Order 28.

Blue Mountains Council to share copies of their fact sheets, as templates that could be used by other councils.

(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 that 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.

4. Weed Action Program grant funding

Tim Withers left the room during this Agenda item (pecuniary interest).

There was some discussion about how the WAP funding is allocated across Sydney Region. Jonathan Sanders provided some background about the nil tenure funding allocation approach taken by the Sydney Weeds Committee, and the allocation of \$152,000 of Year 1 funds to NPWS.

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). Jonathan Sanders reported that he has received a verbal response from John Tracey in the Department of Primary Industries, indicating DPI’s support of SWC to allocate the funds to lands of all tenures (councils, NPWS etc), so long as the funds are being used to implement the Invasive Species Plan. A written response to the Board’s letter has not been received to date from the Minister or DPI.

Jonathan Sanders also tabled a 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.

Jonathan Sanders explained SWC's policy that if any Member organisation receives an increase in their budget for weed control, they are asked to use those funds and not apply for WAP funding.

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

- The WAP is an importance source of funding to help justify keeping weed officer positions, especially when those positions are part-funded by the WAP. WAP funding for compliance officers needs to focus on strategic property inspections, not the reactive inspections.
- The regional weed committees need to be aware of the priorities within each council/state government land manager

Comments to feed back to the SWC Board:

- The SWC need to set clear priorities for allocation of the funding
- Importance of documenting the WAP application assessment process in a transparent way
- A peer review of the Sydney Region WAP assessment process is needed

Chris Dewhurst moved that the Sydney West regional weeds committees make a recommendation to the Board that the Weed Action Program funding is to be allocated to Local Control Authorities only. Motion not seconded.

- Jonathan Sanders proposed that the Board needs to urgently review the funding allocation process and priorities for expenditure across Sydney. These priorities include locations for where to manage the weeds, and where to support existing weed officers (part funded by WAP).
- Both of the Sydney West committees indicated that they wish to discuss amongst themselves how the funding should be allocated each of their regions, according to the funding criteria. This could be done via separate planning meetings scheduled for around July.

5. Follow up from Previous Meetings

The minutes from the Sydney South West meeting on 22nd September 2011 were accepted by Matt McNaughton. Seconded by Eddie Ferry.

The minutes from the Sydney West~Blue Mountains meeting on 16th September 2011 were accepted by Chris Dewhurst. Seconded by Justine Clarke.

Actions from both meetings have been completed. No other matters arising.

6. Election of Sydney Weeds Committee Board Members

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

Sydney West Blue Mountains regional sub-committee

Jonathan Sanders and Chris Dewhurst were elected as Board Members.

Sydney South West regional sub-committee

Joel Daniels and Matthew McNaughton were elected as Board members.

Written nominations and signatures of acceptance have been received for all Board positions.

7. General Business

Rebecca Coventry raised the need to inspect and check areas that were recently affected by the flood waters. Weed propagules will have moved and these areas should be included in inspection and surveying programs over the coming year. This includes checking if councils have flood maps and working with the sections of council that clear trash racks and stormwater drains.

ACTION:

Executive Officer to email a reminder to the relevant regional weeds committee officers regarding checking for weed spread flood affected areas.

Jonathan Sanders gave a brief update on a workshop that he and Rosanna Luca attended with DPI staff and other weeds committee regions in late February. The workshop had positive outcomes for improving communication between DPI and the regions, and governance of the WAP.

ACTION: Executive Officer to post workshop outcomes on the SWC Members webpage.

8. Next meeting dates and hosts

Positive feedback was received about having a combined Sydney West regional meeting once a year. The meeting closed at 12.30pm.

Dates and hosts for next meetings in September:

Thursday 13th September: Sydney South West: Campbelltown Council

Friday 14th September: Sydney West Blue Mountains: Hawkesbury City Council

Presentation: Cumberland Plain Recovery Plan

Greg Steenbeeke, Office of Environment & Heritage

Greg is the only co-ordinator of the Cumberland Plain Recovery Plan and is the key contact for exchanging and distributing information, answering questions etc. Greg is interested to hear what activities are being undertaken by land managers for Cumberland Plain recovery, and will send around an email from time to time asking people for updates.

Plan and methodology documents:

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspecies/CumberlandPlainRecoveryPlan.htm>

Best Practice Management Guidelines:

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspecies/CumberlandPlainManagementGuidelines.htm>

A Technical Managers Group has been set up through Google Groups, to facilitate information exchange. **Weeds committee officers working with Cumberland Plain can join this group.** Search for 'Cumberland Practitioners'
<https://groups.google.com/forum/?hl=en&fromgroups#!forum/CumberlandPractitioner>

Access to data sets via <http://mapdata.environment.nsw.gov.au/DDWA>

Questions? More info:

Greg Steenbeeke

Senior Threatened Species Officer, Biodiversity Conservation Section, Metro Region, Office of Environment and Heritage

ph: (02) 9585 6677 email Greg.Steenbeeke@environment.nsw.gov.au

Presentation: Review of the Weeds of National Significance

Hillary Cherry, WONS Co-ordinator, based at NSW Office of Environment & Heritage

Hillary presented an update on the process that has been undertaken to revise the list of Weeds of National Significance. There are 12 new proposed WONS (the list is awaiting sign off from Federal Minister).

It is important that the WONS National Co-ordinators are aware of the distribution of these weeds in each LGA across the Sydney 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.

They are working on getting all of the WONS included into the current review of the Catchment Actions Plans across NSW.

ACTIONS: Executive Officer to:

- (i) Post a copy of Hillary's presentation on the Sydney Weeds Member's webpage.
- (ii) Circulate the information request about which WONS are a concern in each LGA.

Questions? More info:

Hillary Cherry

Weeds Of National Significance Coordinator

Pest & Ecological Management Unit

Office of Environment & Heritage

Phone (02) 9585-6587 email hillary.cherry@environment.nsw.gov.au