



## MEETING 14 OUTCOMES – 26 February 2020

The NSW State Weed Committee held its 14<sup>th</sup> meeting at the Orange Agricultural Institute on 26 February 2020. The agenda covered:

### 1. Centre for Invasive Species Solutions (CISS) – Weeds Program presentation by Pete Turner

The Committee noted a presentation of the Weeds Research Programs with the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions provided by DPI's Pete Turner. Projects include investigation of online advertising of weeds banned from sale nationally, national weeds webpages to become live in March (weeds.org.au) and be launched in October; development of artificial intelligence for weeds identification/WeedScan, and an invasive grasses draft RD&E business plan.

### 2. Drought recovery for primary industries

The Committee noted pests and weeds as a focus area in drought recovery for primary industries. This included discussion on the immediate strategic outlook and the longer term outlook over 2020 and beyond, to recover primary producers to a profitable state. The project has been identified as a high priority within DPI and includes coordination with Local Land Services (LLS) and NSW agencies. Project directions are in development with an executive level Steering Committee.

### 3. NSW Weeds Action Program (WAP)

A number of items were discussed and noted by the Committee, including:

- WAP is currently in its fifth year of its second round, concluding June 2020 (please see below item – Proposed process for WAP review). The Committee noted proposed state sub-program submissions for the third round (2020-2025) including:
  - State priority weeds coordination and response
  - Enabling voluntary compliance
  - Regional engagement
  - Implementing the biocontrol pipeline.
- Streamlining the administrative processes. DPI is investigating:
  - Timeliness of distribution of annual funding
  - The facilitation of a single payment to LLS for the 11 regional sub-programs
  - The Committee providing in-principle recommendations to the Minister on priorities for funding of state and regional sub-programs based on expected annual budget
  - The provision of a baseline capacity allocation to each region.
- Proposed process for review of the 2015-2020 round, with discussion covering:
  - A process of review to understand successes and failures of the Program and report them to the Minister, and build the insights into WAP's third cycle, 2020-2025. The Committee provided positive feedback for the program, and made a number of suggestions including (but not limited to) funding allocation processes, WAP funded projects and how this aligns with Government priorities such as the NRC's Review of Weed Management in NSW, training and professional development of operational staff, partnerships, governance and compliance, and benchmarks to build upon. It is envisaged the review will commence in May, to be completed in December August 2020.

#### **4. Special Guest, Scott Hansen, Director General DPI**

The Director General addressed the Committee and acknowledged the difficulties of measuring progress in a preventative context such as weeds management. He outlined what he saw as the Department's priorities, especially in light of the extreme challenges presented by the drought and bushfires over the 2019-20 summer. The focus in the immediate short term is on recovery and this will require a collaborative approach across Government agencies and the public. Mr Hansen also fielded questions from Committee members.

#### **5. NSW WAP state sub-program updates - New weed incursions and secure borders 2015-2020**

The Committee was updated on the outputs and outcomes from 2 state sub-programs and noted the substantial outcomes for the state:

- The New Weed Incursion state sub-program and its two primary components
  - Rapid response capability to address new weed incursions as soon as they are identified support for presence and delimitation surveys, determining sources of infestations and trace-back actions and aerial surveys if required.
- Secure Borders – State sub-program that covers inspections of grain harvesting machinery entering NSW from Queensland for Parthenium weed matter.

#### **6. Weed Control Orders attached to land**

An issue raised by the Committee's NSW Farmers representative, for clarification on the application of biosecurity directions and the recovering of fees from landholders where the fees are registered against the land. Discussion covered legislative provisions in the NSW Biosecurity Act and the Local Government Act to give effect to this. DPI will develop a short communication covering the process.

#### **7. Minimum reporting to SWC**

The Committee noted a possible report structure based on a review of the MERI framework for Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans, the Standard for Weed Management Capacity in NSW, the NSW Weeds Action Program and the Biosecurity Information System - Weeds. Themes for reporting include Partnerships, Training, Regulation under the Biosecurity Act, Extension, Weed risk and weed presence, Response to incursions, Coordination, Funding, Reporting and Change over time. The Committee was presented with the metrics that can be generated through the current digital partnerships and requested the establishment of a pilot region to trial the reporting prior to rolling out.

#### **8. NSW Biosecurity Act – Shared Responsibility and the General Biosecurity Duty**

The Committee discussed the two primary concepts of the Biosecurity Act and if public land managers are meeting their requirements. The Committee agreed that there is opportunity to conduct audits via the Standard for Weed Management Capacity in NSW.

#### **9. Biosecurity Information System - Weeds update**

The Committee noted that DPI is working with Local Control Authorities (LCAs) and Regional Weeds Coordinators to increase the number of LCAs uploading data every month to BIS Weeds. Maps fed by the BIS-Weeds data will soon be available in NSW WeedWise.

The Committee will next meet in May 2020.



Reg Kidd  
**SWC Chair**  
**4 March 2020**