CENTRAL SUBNETWORK MEETING

MINUTES

Tuesday 20th February 2024

Caley's Pavilion – Native Plant Nursery St Ives

Members attending	
Raelene White - Canterbury Bankstown (Deputy-Chair)	Travis Roberts – Ku-ring-gai (Host)
Kathryn Scott – Canterbury Bankstown	Evelyn Baker – Ku-ring-gai
Sahiza Ali – Canterbury Bankstown	Elissa Avery – Ku-ring-gai
Bronwyn English – Lane Cove	Jerome Zaini – Ku-ring-gai
Dave Green - Hornsby	Alan Choy – Ku-ring-gai
Lachlan Cole – Ku-ring-gai	Sam Larkin – Ku-ring-gai
Daniel Giannini – Ku-ring-gai	Aminah Rahman – Ku-ring-gai
Kim Griffin – Inner West	Lachlan Prentice – Canada Bay
Associate Members, Supporters and Guests attending	
Amanda Kotlash – SWN (Chair for today)	Graham Wilson - GSLLS
Nick Stroinovsky – Sydney Water Corp.	
Member apologies	
Chris Stanfield – Parramatta (Chair)	Steve Zantides – Canada Bay
Kylie Burrows – Canada Bay	Jeff Culleton – Lane Cove
Craig Wilson – Georges River	Dayna Mellor – Georges River
Mario Mouxouris – Inner West	Fiona O'Brien – Georges River
Donna Fitton - Hornsby	Jacqui Vollmer – Hunters Hill
Maxx Liong - Strathfield	Richard O'Brien - Parramatta
Whitney-May Lever – Inner West	Stephen Pym - Hornsby
Associate Members and Supporter apologies	
Nicola Dixon – DPI	

Item 1	Welcome – Chair Amanda Kotlash (standing in for Chris Stanfield) Acknowledgement of county, introductions, apologies & declarations

	Amanda Kotlash made the following declaration: • The West Subnetwork of the Sydney Weeds Network (SWN) contains the Hawkesbury River County Council's (HRCC) and Hawkesbury City Council's (HCC) areas of operation. Three of the 4 of HRCC's constituent Councils are members of SWN – Hawkesbury, Penrith and Blacktown. HRCC is now also a member of SWN. • I wish to declare my interests in both HCC and HRCC, I am an elected Councillor on HCC and an elected member of HRCC. • I am a Director on the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC). At these subnetwork meetings my role is solely as the Executive Officer of Sydney Weeds Network. I will not discuss or in any way be involved in any matters that are to do with my other roles and civic duties. If there are issues that come up at these subnetwork meetings that relate to my other roles as Councillor/Member, I will, leave the meeting at that time and return after the matter has been addressed.
Item 2	Minutes of the last meeting – Amanda Kotlash The minutes from the 19th September 2023 meeting can be found in ATTACHMENT – Item 2. Sahiza Ali moved to accept the minutes; this was seconded by Alan Choy. All in Favor Carried.
Item 3	SWN Board update – Amanda Kotlash Update on the SWN Board meeting held on 6 February 2024 Code of Conduct and our constitution The Board decided that a separate Code of Conduct was not necessary. The EO is to use the Model Constitution from the Fair Work NSW website as a basis for developing a new constitution that includes conduct principles. Once the EO has developed the new draft constitution it should be sent out to the Board for comment. After this the members will be asked to vote on the new constitution online via a special resolution. BWDO We need to find a venue for the next BWDO on the 5th June. Business Plan The business plan table was used to assess progress against each action. Some adjustments were made.
Item 4	Regional Weed Committee Meeting issues – Amanda Kotlash Start to develop the process of feeding issues up to the RWC and getting things back
Item 5	Update from DPI – Nicola Dixon State Priority Weeds Coordinator (Amanda Kotlash for Nic) DPI UPDATE: February 2024 1. STAFFING • DPI Weeds Biosecurity staff are currently assisting with responses outside of weeds (including Red Imported Fire Ants) • Bill Davidson is now the State Priority Weed Coordinator for the North West region.

	• Matthew McGrath is now State Priority Weed Coordinator for the South-East and the Riverina region. • Emily Thomas is now the State Priority Weed Coordinator for the Murray region. 2. PROHIBITED MATTER RESPONSES • A NSW New Incursion Plan has been drafted and will complement the 11 LLS Regional Inspection Plans (and the High Risk Sites and Pathways within). *Water caltrop* • Seed pods detected for sale at a wholesaler and at a shop in Sydney and widely promoted on social media – visit https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/WaterCaltrop for images of the fruit. • As the fruit can be eaten and has links to local markets, local control authorities are asked to inspect local food markets, particularly those that sell Asian vegetables and groceries. *Parthenium weed* • An exercise is underway to trace livestock movements from parthenium weed infested premises to other properties, and this will guide an inspection program. **Please complete inspections by 30 April 2024 and enter a BIS record for each inspection**, with 'Parthenium Weed' entered for the Weed Name field and then 'Yes' or 'No' entered for the Weeds Present? Field. • DPI will lead parthenium surveillance exercises at Croppa Creek, Missabotti and Broughton Village in Feb-Mar 2024. • The Parthenium Weed Task Force will meet on Tuesday 13 February in Moree and on Teams. The grain harvesting machinery inspection season ran from 13 October – 13 December. It was a quiet season given the early dry conditions. *Hawkweed* • DPI led a multi-agency mouse-ear hawkweed surveillance and control exercise early in this summer season at Kosciuszko National Park from 11-14 December 2023. 31 participants attended representing local, regional, state and interstate agencies. Agencies included were NPWS (9), LCA's (9), DPI (6), LLS (2) and ACT Government (5). NPWS hawkweed program field staff have been visiting the sites once every two weeks since exercise and have successfully prevented any plants from flowering. • Mouse-ear hawkweed is located on 1 Infested Premise (IP) in Kosciuszko National Park on the border of 2 LCA's (Snowy Monaro Regional Council and Snowy Valley Council) from 2 LLS regions (Murray and South-East LLS). • Another mouse-ear hawkweed surveillance and control exercise before the end of the season is planned. • The next NSW Hawkweed Task Force meeting will be at the end of the season TBC. • The new NSW Mouse-ear Hawkweed Strategic Plan has been endorsed by the State Weed Committee. This plan is available on the DPI website. • The Orange Hawkweed Strategic Plan is still in development. • An independent 2023 review of the hawkweed eradication programs has been completed and is being considered by DPI. *Frogbit* • The State Weeds Committee (SWC) has approved a review of frogbit. Frogbit is no longer appropriate to be listed as Prohibited Matter. The SWC has asked DPI to consult with key partners and stakeholders on management tools that align to

	either a Control Order or Biosecurity Zone. Frogbit will remain banned from sale for all of NSW. Have your say by completing the survey available at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WN6WRWG, which will remain open until 20 February 2024. • An environmental DNA (eDNA) assay for frogbit detection is being tested by the DPI research team at Wagga Wagga. Preliminary results show that eDNA can be detected within small, interconnected ponds (up to 10 m apart). eDNA was detected in a pond where control commenced over a year ago, and no plants were visible. This site will be monitored to determine whether this eDNA is residual from successfully controlled plants or if it is coming from the seed bank and/or undetected small seedlings. Sites where frogbit plants have not been observed for several years tested negative. • Environmental RNA (eRNA) research has been initiated for detection of living frogbit. Positive detection of eRNA generally suggests the presence of living target species. *Mexican feather grass* • Please continue to include historic homes with ornamental gardens in your list of high-risk sites and routinely inspect them, as Mexican feather grass was found at such a place in 2019. • A Strategic Plan will be developed in 2024 with key partners. • A Taskforce meeting is set down for 13 March. *Black knapweed* • DPI led a multi-agency black knapweed surveillance exercise in Tenterfield in December. 8 officers representing 3 local control authorities, DPI, LLS and Crown Lands participated with 150 plants found over the two days. The aim of the exercise was to find and mark all black knapweed plants so that drone imagery of the flowers could be collected to support machine learning and ultimately remote detection of black knapweed. The plants were then destroyed. *Miconia & Limnocharis* • These weeds sit under the National Tropical Weeds Eradication program. • No new incursions of these species have been detected in recent months in NSW, known sites are being reinspected at regular intervals. • The National Tropical Weeds Eradication program led by QLD is currently subject to an external review, before the program advances to the next 3 years response plan. *Rubber Vine* • There are currently 6 IPs within the Councils of Bourke, Brewarrina and the Unincorporated Area. • Most recent infestation was discovered in Tibooburra in the Unincorporated Area in 2023, re-treatment of this site and follow up inspections are to take place this month. • Other sites are re-inspected annually. • DPI are currently working on the development of a NSW Strategic Plan. 3. OTHER STATE PRIORITY WEEDS *Water hyacinth* • A NSW Water Hyacinth Strategic Plan is currently being finalised. *Chinese Violet*

- DPI held a Task Force meeting on 14 November 2023 in Hawks Nest.

Tropical soda apple

- DPI will hold a Taskforce meeting on 13 March in Coffs Harbour.
- The Taskforce has finalised a Best Practice Manual, that is currently going to print.
- A NSW Strategic Plan has been endorsed by the SWC and published.

Alligator weed

- A NSW Alligator Weed Strategic Plan is currently being finalised.
- DPI led a multi-agency surveillance exercise along 10 km of Sandy Creek in Tamworth LGA.
- 5 participants representing 3 local control authorities, DPI, LLS and Tamworth Regional Council participated with 10 plants found over the two days.
- A follow up exercise will be held in March/April. Several new infestations of alligator weed have been discovered in Shoalhaven LGA in the last 6 months.
- DPI is leading a surveillance response in Woomargama 5-7 March 2024 and Carrathool in April.

Parkinsonia

- A NSW Prickle Bush Taskforce meeting was held 12 October.

Illegal Online Sales

- DPI is currently trailing the draft online trading of biosecurity matter work instruction.
- During January, 60 sellers of illegal weeds we contacted through Facebook marketplace, eBay and Gumtree, with the weeds involved including a range of aquatic and cactus species.

4. BIOCONTROL

- Biocontrol best practice workshops were held in conjunction with the respective LLS regions on 16 October 2023 (Orange), 12 November 2023 (Muswellbrook), 13 November 2023 (Armidale), 28 November 2023 (Grenfell), 19 December 2023 (Khancoban), 5 December 2023 (Tamworth) and 7 December 2023 (Coffs Harbour).
- Monitoring of mother-of-millions long-term sites occurred in Wee Waa and Turrawan (11-12 December 2023) with the help of Narrabri Shire weed officers, Clare Felton Taylor and Aaron Cross.
- The DPI quarantine facility (based at the Orange Agricultural Institute) continues to conduct research on potential biocontrol agents for ox-eye daisy, mother-of-millions, Harrisia cactus, leaf cactus and narrow-leaf privet.
- The DPI mass-rearing facility (based at Grafton Primary Industries Institute) continues to rear, release and evaluate a range of weed biocontrol agents. Solutions are available for Sagittaria, Salvinia, water hyacinth, water lettuce, Cabomba, Harrisia cactus, cat's claw creeper, Madeira vine, and smooth tree pear.
- DPI continues to conduct long-term monitoring (every three months) of the cochineal biocontrol agent at four Hudson pear sites in Cumborah and Grawin. Sites will next be monitored during the week of 26 February-1 March 2024.
- The NSW Weed Biocontrol Taskforce met at Mount Annan on 9 November 2023, and will next meet on 10 April 2024 at the Taree Council (Yalawanyi Ganya).

Contact Andrew McConnachie (Research Leader) regarding any general weed biocontrol queries (andrew.mcconnachie@dpi.nsw.gov.au) or Fritz Heystek to request biocontrol agents (fritz.heystek@dpi.nsw.gov.au).

5. TRAINING

- "Getting to know Prohibited Matter" training will be undertaken at Ourimbah 5-6 March, 9-10 April location TBA, 27-28 August location TBA. This is for Authorised Officers and is a two-day course. Course cost is $200.
- DPI will deliver New Weeds Officer Induction Training Course at Tocal 6-9 February 2024, Dubbo 29 July - 1 August 2024 and 14-17 October 2024 location TBA. This training addresses: roles and statutory responsibilities of local control authorities and authorised officers; weed prioritisation; high risk site and pathway inspections; working with land managers; DPI systems, where to find support.
- DPI will deliver a one-day Vehicle Hygiene course for Weeds officers and at the Tocal college- Paterson campus on Monday 5 February. An additional course has been scheduled to be held in Armidale on Friday 15 March.
- DPI will deliver a one day condensed Prohibited Matter course at Cobar 20 February, Griffith 22 February, 7 March Ourimbah as well as 11 April and 29 August, locations TBA. These are aimed at people working in the field that may encounter Prohibited Matter such as NPWS, LLS, Water NSW etc. Course cost is $200.
- DPI will be delivering Community Engagement, Moving People Towards Action training at Wagga Wagga 4-5 June and 20-21 August location TBA.
- DPI will be delivering one day identification courses on Opuntioids and waterweeds. These courses are not accredited. They are planned for 20-21 May at Queanbeyan and 23-24 May at Batemans Bay, 8-9 July at Albury and 11-12 May at Griffith.
- Direct all weeds training enquiries to invasives.training@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

6. COLLABORATION

- NSW/Victorian cross border priority weeds meetings are held twice annually to discuss weed programs and to help improve cross border collaboration and contacts. Species such as parthenium, black knapweed, frogbit, hawkweeds, and alligator weed are addressed, with online illegal sales and Prohibited Matter training programs also discussed. The next meeting will be held on the 26 February 2024.
- First NSW/Victorian on-ground weeds collaboration meeting hosted by Murray LLS. This meeting aims to build on the NSW/Victorian cross border priority weeds meeting and share experiences, treatment plans and the location of weeds of interest between Local Councils, Forestry and National Parks within the Murray region of NSW and their Victorian counterparts. This meeting will be held on the 6 February 2024.
- NSW Government will establish the Good Neighbour Program, with $10 million to tackle weed and pest infestations between neighbouring and private lands over the next 3 years.
- Dr Marion Healy was recently appointed as interim Biosecurity Commissioner to provide an initial assessment of the approach to weed and pest animal management in NSW, including compliance activities. Recruitment for ongoing Commissioner is underway.
- The Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) will shortly call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) for the National Established Weeds (NEWP) Steering Group (SG). Establishing the NEWP SG is a key task agreed for

Phase 1 of NEWP implementation, to maintain a collaborative cross sectoral approach and strong support from non-government organisations for NEWP. Key tasks include the assessment of possible new Weeds of National Significance.

7. CAPACITY BUILDING AND ENGAGEMENT

- WeedScan is a nationwide weed identification and reporting tool that was launched on 12 December 2023. WeedScan can identify 268 weeds, 23 of these are NSW prohibited matter and 151 have a NSW WeedWise profile. WeedScan alerts are being sent to DPI when prohibited matter and control order weeds species are recorded in NSW. DPI will assess these reports and notify local control authorities if prohibited matter and control order weeds species are suspected. As of 1 February 2024 there have been 773 WeedScan records created. DPI has received over 20 prohibited matter/control order alerts, and so far, all have been false detections.
- For January 2024, there have been 43,340 users on the NSW DPI WeedWise website including international users.

COUNTRY	USERS
Australia	40K
United States	1.1K
New Zealand	318
India	270
South Africa	173
United Kingdom	159
Canada	107

- The 3D digital interactive weed models have now had over 21,000 views. These models are available on some WeedWise pages and the NSW DPI sketchfab page: https://sketchfab.com/dpicomms/models
- Weeds Wednesday social media posts:

Date	Weeds Wednesday	People reached	Reactions	Comments	Shares
15.11.23	Giant devil's fig	2704	18	5	4
22.11.23	Water hyacinth	2127	8	0	7
6.12.23	Water lettuce	1129	12	0	2
17.1.24	Mouse-ear hawkweed	6123	24	13	9
24.1.24	Common thornapple	2204	24	5	7
31.1.24	Orange hawkweed	1930	14	0	6

8. BIOSECURITY AUDITS

- The local control authority audit program has commenced. It will examine management performance of local control authorities against their statutory functions under the Biosecurity Act by applying the Standard for Weed Management Capacity in NSW. Notification letters have been sent to local control authorities. This is an independent process outside of the State Priority Weed Coordinators. Phil Blackmore will lead this process, who has been assigned as a biosecurity auditor. Phil has programmed in 22 LCAs for the audit process over the next 12 months.

	9. NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION - NSW INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT REVIEW • The Premier of NSW has tasked the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to review the risks and impacts of invasive species in NSW, including the effectiveness of current management strategies. • Draft report due from the NRC at end of March. 10. NSW WEEDS ACTION PROGRAM • The NSW Weeds Action Program is not a general weed allocation initiative; it is designed to prepare for, detect early and respond to biosecurity emergencies. • This investment goes towards preparedness, surveillance, diagnostics and rapid responses to prevent, eradicate or contain new infestations of priority weeds and to build capacity of communities and industries to manage risks and impacts of weeds in NSW. • The annual funding for 2023/24 is approved at $12.8 million, and the split across the regions is identical to last year. • Funding is directed to local councils (as the Local Control Authorities (LCAs) for weeds) and Local Land Services (LLS) to develop a regional team of professionals that can be rapidly deployed to the detection of a new incursion of high-risk weeds and other biosecurity matter. • Over the past 6 years LCAs have undertaken nearly over 430,000 inspections to assist in early detection of weeds. Biosecurity Officers continue to detect early incursions of Prohibited Matter weeds into NSW, allowing for the greatest chances of successful eradication of these new incursions. • There is a review of processes and governance of this program jointly by DPI and LLS, to ensure funds are spent fairly and efficiently for the long-term benefit of NSW. When completed payments to LCAs for this financial year will be processed. • The 5 year cycle of this program ends June 2025. A 5 year report will be completed and there will be an opportunity to assess the guidelines, aims etc to ensure the program still meets its state focus and to implement any accepted recommendations from the NRC review.
Item 6	Executive Officer's Report – Amanda Kotlash The following projects were discussed: • Translation project and website capability • Stop the Spread • Website – public and private pages
Item 7	Business Plan Update – Amanda Kotlash The Business Plan is starting to be used as a useful tool to keep track of projects. It is available on the *Our Page* section of the website under info for Members and Guests.
Item 8	Roundtable reports including: Member reports of activities/issues. **Dave Green - Hornsby** • Stephen Pym, Hornsby Councils Biosecurity Officer, has recently updated the 'weeds page' on Councils website Weeds | Hornsby Shire Council (nsw.gov.au), including the addition of a new 'Bamboo fact sheet' Rhizomatous-Bamboo.pdf (nsw.gov.au) which may be of interest. • Working on a Biosecurity Policy (currently in draft and internal consultation), focusing on Councils position of its functions and responsibilities in regard to the Biosecurity Act. Aiming for Council endorsement by June 2024.

	• Recently have undertaken concentrated works targeting all Pampas Grass within Westleigh Park (>167 individuals). **Rae, Shaz and Kate – Canterbury Bankstown** • Ebay sales of Frogbit… different to methodology for Facebook Market place • *Paederia lanuginosa* – Cheese Leaf/Cheese Plant. Is there cultural significance? What experience does anyone have with it? Is it a risk? • *Piper auritum* – Mexican Pepper Leaf. Similar questions to above • *Setaria sphacelata*? – South African Pigeon Grass. How widespread is this weed? We have recently had 2 roadside infestations. It's uncommon in our LGA • Sticky Nightshade mayhem – We are trying to stop the spread throughout our LGA as it encroaches eastward. Encourage Councils who don't have it to be on the watch and not let it take hold. • issuing fines with repeat offenders. • report on Alligator and Ludwigia control. Clipper effectiveness, *Leaucaena leucocephala* risk **Bronwyn English – Lane Cove** • Large private Landholders update: Correspondence and site meeting with SC Johnson to discuss priority weed management, Alligator weed, in Freshwater Wetland. Collaborative land management activities liaised with Macquarie University in high weed density blocks. • Continue Weed Notices to private properties and invitation to internal Backyard Habitat Program. **Kim Griffin – Inner West** • Water priority weeds are a big challenge i.e. management of existing infestations of Peruvian lily, Salvinia, and isolated outbreaks of Alligator Weed • Inner West Council has adopted a no spray policy in regard to Natural Areas Management resulting in increased biodiversity (i.e. insects and understory layer) • Alternate management strategies such a technique called twist and drizzle has been successfully utilised to manage lawn 'runner' grasses such as couch, kikuyu and buffalo. Used to manage general encroachment of grasses as well as preparing new areas for planting • Increase use of brush cutting to assist management of larger reserves since the discontinuation of herbicide spraying • New Verge Garden policy and program has commenced this year resulting in Officers are identifying priority weeds such as *Opuntia sp.* being planted by residents.
Item 9	Other business No other business was raised
Item 10	Next Meeting - Next CENTRAL subnetwork meeting will be 17 September 2024, The AGM will be held on Wednesday 27th November 2024 (online unless otherwise advised)