



KEMPSEY
Shire Council

DELEGATE'S REPORT

9th October 2007

DR2	14th BIENNIAL NSW WEEDS CONFERENCE
	FILE: 165 CLR DFS KNS (NRN) {Folio No. *} }

SUMMARY:

Reporting on attendance at 14th Biennial NSW Weeds Conference held within the grounds of the University of Wollongong, Wollongong 25th – 27th September 2007.

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DESCRIPTION:

Council was represented at the conference by Councillor Dean Saul, Councils Delegate and Deputy Chairman of the Mid North Coast Weeds Advisory Committee and Mr Greg Egan, Councils Noxious Weeds officer.

The Theme of the 14th Biennial NSW Weeds Conference held at the University of Wollongong, was "Weeds, People, and Partnerships".

Attendees included representatives of various Federal, State, and local government agencies, and Weed Committees. The Conference was partly sponsored by The Department of Primary Industry, and the Department of Environment and Climate Change.

Delegates were officially welcomed by Councillor Alex Darling, Mayor of Wollongong City Council.

The Conference program had several keynote speakers addressing the forum on National Perspectives in Weed Management.

Weeds have a major economic, environmental and social impact in Australia, causing damage to natural landscapes, agricultural lands, waterways, and coastal areas. Weeds impact severely on agriculture by competing with production, contaminating produce and poisoning livestock. Weeds, impact on biodiversity by out-competing native plants and degrading habitat. Weeds, along with other invasive species, now pose one of the most significant threats to bio diversity.

It is estimated that the agricultural cost of weeds to Australia is in the vicinity of \$ 4.6 Billion per annum. The cost to nature conservation and landscape amenity is thought to be of a similar magnitude, as it is not yet fully costed.

National Programs and Initiatives as outlined at the conference include: -

- The Australian Weeds Strategy, and the key principles are,
 1. Weed management is an essential and integral part of the sustainable management of natural resources for the benefit of the economy, the environment, human health and amenity.
 2. Combating weed problems is a shared responsibility that requires all parties to have a clear understanding of their roles.
 3. Good science underpins the effective development, monitoring and review of weed management.
 4. Priorities and investment in weed management must be informed by a risk management approach.
 5. Prevention and early intervention are the most cost effective techniques that can be deployed against weeds.
 6. Weed management requires a co-ordinated approach involving all levels of government with industry, land managers and the community.
 7. The building of capacity across government, industry, land managers and the community is fundamental to effective weed management.

- Defeating The Weed Menace { DWM }

The DWM program commenced in 2005 and concludes June 2008 and is a Coalition Government initiative of \$ 44 M, provided to enhance the national weed management effort by leveraging matching contributions from community and other tiers of government. This compliments the weed work funded from the Natural Heritage Trust via Natural Resource Management regional bodies, Envirofund, Landcare etc.

- Weeds of National Significance {WoNS} Program.

Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) program has been established since the year 2000 and each weed species has a national coordinator and management group.

Twenty Weeds were selected as WoNS. This focused approach hassled to improved weed management. The WoNS program enables increased communication , coordinated research and funding for weeds, development of best practice information , strengthened stakeholder networks and strategic on ground weed control across Australia.

- Weed Warriors

Weed Warriors is a national program designed for schools that aims to increase the awareness of and actively involve students in the management of local weed issues.

The program recognises children as the land managers of the future and seeks to empower and engage them in weed issues through classroom and field based activities. During the program, students work closely with local weeds officers, land holders, and community groups to implement a biological control program for a priority weed in their area.

Councils Weed Officer can benefit by drawing on the resources offered by national programmes, assisting with implementation and providing feedback to state agencies.

The Conference also hosted a Land, Air and Water Based Weed Expo, in the Wollongong Botanical Garden.

Trade Exhibitors at the Expo showcased their products with many featuring static displays and practical demonstrations of air, land and water based weed control equipment. Delegates showed great interest in a new Aquatic herbicide additive, called Hydrogel. This Gel additive shows great potential with the control of submerged aquatic weeds, and is subject to less drift than many water based herbicides, particularly when weed infestations multiply in a town water supply.

The NSW Department of Primary Industries Conference Dinner held on the evening of the 26th, was themed "Together ...100 years". This theme emphasised the centenary of NSW DPI and local govt working in partnership, creating benefits for our local communities.

During the Conference Dinner, Mr Sydney Lisle the State Weed Control Co-ordinator of the Department of Primary Industries, presented the Buerckner & Stephenson Weed Officer Award for the first time.

The Award has been established in honour of the Parkes Shire Council Weeds Officers, Mal Buerckner and Ian Stephenson who were tragically killed on the job in a helicopter accident in 2006, along with the pilot Shane Thrupp.

The Award acknowledges the work of NSW Weeds Officers and their contribution towards protecting NSW from the impact of weeds. Two members from the Mid North Coast Weeds Advisory Committee were amongst the six finalists chosen.

Narrabri was selected as the Host of the 15th Biennial NSW Weeds Conference in 2009.

REPORT IMPLICATIONS:

- ***Environmental***

NSW has a major challenge with noxious weeds and a coordinated approach may bring a uniformed approach to the war on weeds.

- ***Social***

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- ***Economic (Financial)***

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- ***Policy or Statutory***

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RECOMMENDATION:

That the information be noted.

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COUNCILLOR DF SAUL