



KEMPSEY
Shire Council

DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES REPORT

13th November 2007

DSS1	MID NORTH COAST WEEDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND ITS REGIONAL WEEDS STRATEGY 2008 TO 2012
	FILE: 373 GWE (NRN) {Folio No. *} }

SUMMARY:

Report on Mid North Coast Weeds Advisory Committee Inc and its Regional Weeds Strategy for 2008 to 2012.

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DESCRIPTION:

The Mid North Coast Weeds Advisory Committee Inc (MNCWAC) was established in 1997 and consists of representatives from councils of Kempsey, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Gloucester, Great Lakes and Greater Taree as well as State Government agencies, the NSW Farmers Association, the Nursery and Garden Industry Association, local environmental and community groups.

The main objective of the group is to promote effective and efficient co-ordination of weed control programs and to facilitate resource and information sharing between member organisations.

The Committee meets on a quarterly basis, the most recent meeting being held on 23rd August 2007, which coincided with the Annual General Meeting of the Committee. Council is represented on the Committee by Councillor Dean Saul and Council's Weeds Officer.

In the minutes of the Annual General Meeting the Executive Committee for the coming year includes:

- Chairperson: Mr Wayne Deer (Greater Taree City Council)
- Deputy Chairperson: Councillor Dean Saul (Kempsey Shire Council)
- Secretary: Mr Terry Schmitzer (Regional Weeds Management Officer MNCWAC)
- Treasurer: Mr Terry Inkson (Noxious Weeds Officer, Great Lakes Council)
- Committee: Ms Deborah Willis (NSW Farmers Association), Councillor David West (Greater Taree City Council) and Paul O'Connor (Port Macquarie/Hastings Council)

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Membership fees for member councils and other member organisations remain the same as previous year being \$250 and \$50 respectively. In addition the contribution towards the Regional Weed Management Officer position remains unchanged at \$3,000 for each council and \$1,000 for other contributing organisations.

The Chairman's report highlights the activities over the past year including the review and updating of the Regional Weeds Strategy, articles in the Town and Country magazine (which has a circulation of approximately 50,000), preparation of further Class 4 weed profile sheets and the production of the annual "A Busy Life" weed control calendars (distribution of 8,000 copies between member councils).

The meeting also recognized the excellent team approach by the various Noxious Weed Officers of the member councils and the work of the Regional Weeds Management Officer, Mr Terry Schmitzer.

In addition to receiving grant funding from the Noxious Weeds Advisory Committee of \$205,000 during 2006/07 the Committee has also been successful in securing a further \$204,300 from the Northern Rivers and Hunter/Central Rivers Catchment Management Authorities (CMA's) for riparian vine weed projects within the Mid North Coast region. It is interesting to note that since the Committee first applied for funding through the CMA's in 2004 a total of \$1,186,400 has been secured to carry out environmental weeds projects. As part of these projects Aboriginal "Green Teams" have been established in the Taree, Kempsey and Nambucca areas to carry out some of the weed control work.

The main business of the General Meeting was to finalise the Regional Weeds Strategy for the period 2008 – 2012. This Strategy is to be tabled at the Council meeting. An extensive review of the previous 5 year Strategy was undertaken. The new Strategy has been reformatted with associated action plans and takes into account the natural resource management sections of the Catchment Action Plans for the Northern River and Hunter/Central Rivers CMA's as well as the sections of the NSW State Plan that relate to environmental and noxious weed control and management.

The Mid North Coast Weeds Advisory Committee at its meeting held on 23 August 2007 endorsed the Regional Weeds Strategy 2008 – 2012 and recommended adoption by the member councils.

The Strategy was extensively reviewed by members of the Committee as well as input provided by officers of the Department of Primary Industry.

The Strategy endeavours to provide a co-ordinated weed management system across the Mid North Coast Region of NSW comprising the Local Government areas of Kempsey, Port Macquarie / Hastings, Greater Taree City, Gloucester and Great Lakes, an area covering some 17,058 square kilometres.

The Regional Weeds Strategy prioritises weeds into various landscapes and details action plans. It is a document to be used by a wide cross section of the community responsible for natural resource land management.

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The Strategy aims to provide landholders and land managers with the knowledge and tools to make informed decisions in weed management and control, taking into account the limited resources and funds available. This strategy provides landholders and land managers with a set of standards and guidelines for implementing effective and co-ordinated weeds control programs. Priority is also given to new incursion surveillance and education and awareness programs.

This Strategy is aligned to the NSW State Strategies & Hunter / Central Rivers and Northern Rivers Catchment Action Plans.

The Regional Weeds Strategy is intended to be an evolving document in a format which will ensure its use by all levels of the member organisations as well as the wider community. The Strategy will be subject to periodic review to reflect the changing needs of the region and allow for expected modification and expansion in technological advancement.

This Regional Weeds Strategy is based on interpretation of the concepts of the National and State Weed Strategies, these being:

- Prevention of new weed problems;
- Discourage environmental changes and management practises which favour weed invasion;
- Development and implementation programs to reduce environmental degradation and the loss of biodiversity through weed invasion;
- Control of weeds which affect human / animal health;
- Develop and promote sustainable cost effective management systems for the control of weeds in crops, pasture and forestry;
- Development of effective and efficient systems for delivery of noxious weed control and the enforcement of weeds legislation;
- Ongoing planning and monitoring of weed control programs to ensure that objectives are achieved in an efficient and cost effective manner;
- Ensure that weed control programs achieve desired production, environmental and health objectives;
- Encourage the creation and implementation of community education, awareness and involvement programs;
- Promote co-ordination and co-operation of weed control activities/ventures across the region;
- To recognise and complement regional and local vegetation management plans and concepts.

The Strategy highlights the Committee's shared vision for the region in regard to weed control and management to minimise the environmental, economic and social impacts of existing, new and emerging weeds in the Mid North Coast region through co-ordination, collaboration and commitment of landholders, land managers and the community.

The Strategy recognises the diversity of the region and endeavours to meet the needs of all stakeholders by addressing particular environmental and noxious weed issues for the following landscapes – coastal, riparian, agricultural, forests, urban and tablelands. It considers weed species that affect the natural environment, agricultural production, social and cultural values. It compliments other local, regional and state management plans, legislation and programs and is intended to be used by individuals, groups and agencies involved in weed management in the Mid North Coast region covered by the Mid North Coast Weeds Advisory Committee.

REPORT IMPLICATIONS:

- *Environmental*

There are no environmental implications.

- *Social*

Increasing awareness of noxious weeds and the implementation of the Mid North Coast Weeds Advisory Committee Weeds Strategy

- *Economic (Financial)*

There are no financial implications of this report.

- *Policy or Statutory*

Nil

- *Director's Review*

The recommendation are endorsed.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report on the meetings of the Mid North Coast Weeds Advisory Committee held 23 August 2007 be received and noted.
2. That Council embrace the Mid North Coast Regional Weeds Strategy 2008 – 2012.

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K N Smith
ACTING DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES