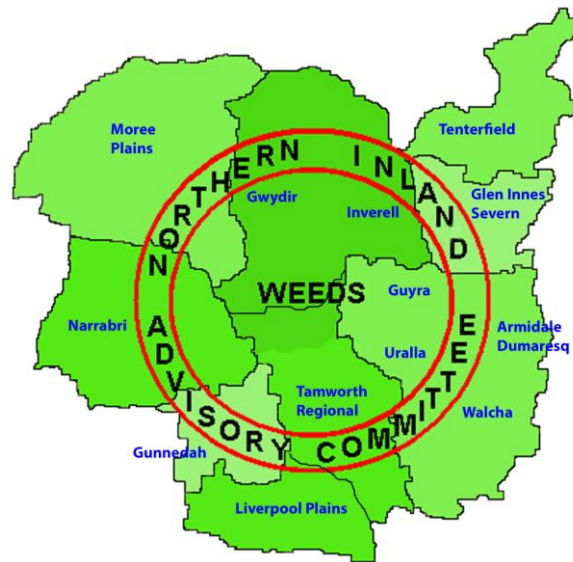


NORTHERN INLAND WEEDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Chairman's Report

29TH NOVEMBER 2011
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 29TH NOVEMBER 2011

CHAIRMANS REPORT Northern Inland Weeds Advisory Committee

I am pleased to present this Annual Report on the activities of the Northern Inland Weeds Advisory Committee (NIWAC) for the period 1 October 2010 to 30 September 2011.

The past 12 months have been a particularly busy period for the group. It has also been a time of significant change in relation to the funding of Noxious Weed control in NSW through the NSW Weeds Action Program.

The Committee has embraced this major change with New England Weeds Authority being the lead agency for member Councils of the NIWAC region in the preparation and implementation of the NSW Weeds Action Program. This has entailed the development of the NIWAC Weeds Action Business Plan for the period 2010-15 and associated plans and strategies enabled and required by the changes under the NSW Weeds Action Program.

I congratulate all concerned, particularly the Weed Officers for their dedication and professional manner in which they have taken on their tasks. The documentation is of a very high standard and appreciation is extended to all involved in the process.

MEMBERSHIP

The support and dedication of the members of the Committee has been greatly appreciated and their commitment of working together to address the many issues that relate to weed control and management in our region has seen some excellent results.

Appreciation is also extended to NSW Department of Primary Industries representative Mr Phil Blackmore for his continued support of the activities of the Committee.

LIST OF DELEGATES

- (a) NSW Department of Primary Industries: Phil Blackmore
- (b) Local Government Councils:
 - Glen Innes Severn Council Clr , Graham Archibald, David Nixon
 - Gunnedah Shire Council Clr Steven Benham, Lee Amidy
 - Gwydir Shire Council Glen Pereira, Stephen Kneller, Doug Steiger
 - Inverell Shire Council Clr R Molesworth, Clr D Baker, Clr Larry Cameron, Dennis McMahon, Les Tanner
 - Liverpool Plains Shire Council Clr Bernie Perkins, Peter Scott, Mike Whitney
 - Moree Plains Shire Council - Clr Peter Strang, Ian Schwartz, Nikki Whale
 - Narrabri Shire Council – Clr George Sevil, Clare Felton-Taylor

New England Weeds Authority – Clr Maria Woods, Wayne Deer, James Browning, Matt Benham, Rachel Betts, Josh Biddle, Rob Williamson
Tamworth Regional Council Ross White, Mal Stein, Penne Brazel, Steve Geddes

Tenterfield Shire Council – Clr Tom Peters, Neil Rossington
Upper Hunter Weeds Authority – Doug Campbell

- (c) Livestock Health & Pest Authorities
 - (i) Central North LHPA – Greg Lumber
 - (ii) New England LHPA – Rob Munro
 - (iii) North West LHPA – David Lindsay
- (d) Catchment Management Authorities
 - (i) Border Rivers Catchment Management Authority - Jonathon Lawson
 - (ii) Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority - David Merrikin
 - (iv) Namoi Catchment Management Authority - Troy Crittle
- (e) NSW Forests – Stuart Boyd-Law, Ken Pines
- (f) Regional Landcare Networks -
 - (i) Southern New England Landcare - Bec Ballard
 - (ii) GLENRAC – Mahri Koch
- (g) ARTC – Christen Henricksen

MEETINGS

Committee meetings were held on a quarterly basis during 2010/11. Meetings were well attended generating constructive discussion, with considerable benefit in the networking and sharing of information that enhances our collaborative efforts.

The rotation of meetings between member Councils has continued to be well received and my appreciation is extended to those Councils for hosting our meetings in their localities:

November 2010	New England Weeds Authority
February 2011	Glen Innes Severn Council
July 2011-	Narrabri Shire Council
November 2011	Gwydir Shire Council

NSW WEEDS ACTION Program 2010-2015

With the initiation of the NSW Weeds Action Program (WAP) by the NSW Government the priority focus of the NIWAC Project Officer and NEWA Officers has been on the preparation of the 'NIWAC Weeds Action Business Plan 2010-2015' adopted in July 2011

This Plan sets out the strategies and mechanisms to consolidate the alliance between members to undertake and implement the Weeds Action Program and for the control authorities to meet their obligations under the NSW Invasive Species Plan 2008-2015 and the Noxious Weed Act 1993.

The first year of the WAP has involved a considerable amount of work by those involved in the preparation and implementation of the activities in achieving the measurable outcomes and reporting requirements.

Appendix One attached provides a comprehensive breakdown of the report requirements forwarded to the Department of Primary Industries for Year One of the WAP.

As part of the WAP, the following plans were developed;

- NIWAC Weed Action Business Plan 2010 – 2015
- NIWAC MERI Plan 2010 – 2015
- NIWAC Communication Strategy 2010 – 2015
- NIWAC Weed Incursion Plan 2010 – 2015
- NIWAC Rapid Response Plan 2010 – 2015
- NIWAC Regional Inspection Plan 2010 – 2015
- NIWAC Weed Officer's Educational Pathway 2010 – 2015

New Landholder kits have been developed, with 5000 Weed Detection and Control on Small Farms booklets distributed to LCAs together with pre-printed envelopes.

A DVD has also been produced that contains resources to assist Weed Officers with their educational programs.

GUEST SPEAKERS

We have again been fortunate to have high quality speakers who have included:

Clare Hamilton (NSW / ACT Serrated Tussock Coordinator)
Subject: Update of Serrated Tussock program in NSW

Jessica Grantly (Communications Officer - Industry and Investment NSW)
Subject – Weed Awareness resources under the new campaign “Make a difference at HOME, at WORK at PLAY”

Graham Charles (Cotton CRC)
Subject - Overview of weed issues in the cotton industry and issues that have arisen following the introduction of transgenic, herbicide tolerant (glyphosate) varieties of cotton.

FUNDING

With the introduction of the Weed Action Program funding for the first year of the program across the 10 member Councils and 3 LHPA's of NIWAC totals \$2,299,628 with LCA's contributing \$1,017,005 and Department of Primary Industries contributing \$1,282, 623

During the last 12 months the Committee has successfully completed additional projects on:-

- Strategic implementation of WONS containment lines and outlier infestation control programs funding through the Border Rivers Gwydir CfoC project - \$230,000
- Extension trailer funded through the Border Rivers Gwydir CMA - \$30,000
- Aquatic Weeds Tour, funded by Border Rivers Gwydir CMA - \$7,000

Appreciation is extended to the Noxious Weeds Officers of our member Councils on their initiative, and oversighting of the on-ground works which has seen a significant improvement in regard to the control of environmental and noxious weeds in our various catchments. A highlight being the

combined efforts of NIWAC Weed Officers in the implementation of the management plan for the new weed incursion of Tropical Soda Apple in the Upper Macleay Valley.

PROJECT OFFICER & NOXIOUS WEED OFFICERS

The Weed Officers met on a monthly basis, not only to discuss the Weeds Action Program plans and strategies but also to share information on new weed infestations, latest control techniques as well as work collaboratively in the preparation of the various plans and funding applications, reports and policy documents.

This group of Officers in conjunction with the NIWAC Project Officer continue to be an excellent team of professional people who are to be commended on the way in which they have assisted in achieving the objectives of not only their own Councils but also the Northern Inland Weeds Advisory Committee.

NEW WEED INCURSION

Over the past 12 months the Committee has been at the fore-front on managing the new weed incursion of Tropical Soda Apple, which has had a successful outcome.

The outbreak discovered in the Macleay Valley was the first known incursion of this weed in Australia and resulted in much publicity and interest from not only state agencies but also the National Biosecurity Committee. The Committee has taken a lead role in the management and control of this weed in association with the Mid North Coast Coordinating Committee who has applied for further funding of approximately \$2,000,000 to continue the control and eradication program throughout the State over the next 5 years. This program will be in partnership with NSW Dept of Primary Industries, the National Biosecurity Committee (under the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA)), NIWAC , NSW North Coast Weed Advisory Committee and the Tropical Soda Apple Task Force.

NSW 16th BIENNIAL WEEDS CONFERENCE – Coffs Harbour

I am very pleased to report on the success of the 16th Biennial Weeds conference held at Coffs Harbour from the 18th – 21st of July, 2011. The Committee was represented by Noxious Weed Officers from member Councils as well as myself as Chair of the Committee.

A number of presentations were made by the members of the Committee, including:

- Josh Biddle and Terry Schmitzter – Tropical Soda Apple
- James Browning and Jonathon Lawson – BRG WONS project
- Terry Schmitzter and Heather Apps – Project Officer review of the WAP.
- Clr Maria Woods – Noxious Weeds Advisory Committee overview

A special mention is also made of Les Tanner who won the 2011 Stephenson Award. Les is the Chief Weeds Officer based at Inverell Shire Council. His commitment and contribution to weed management over his 52 year career are unparalleled.

Mark Daly, IT Manager and Mike Whitney Weeds Officer at Liverpool Plains Shire Council were also nominated for the Stephenson Award for their development of the weed mapping software Tr@cer Weeds.

Josh Biddle from NEWA was successful in winning the photographic competition.

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS AND AGENCY SUPPORT

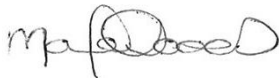
My appreciation is extended to all members and member organisations who continue to support the activities and endeavours of the Committee. In particular, I also wish to acknowledge the valuable work and contribution over the last 12 months of the Lead Agency NEWA and Project Officer, Heather Apps.

THE FUTURE

The Committee is well placed I believe to meet the challenges of the future as long as it continues to show a united regional approach and continues to be flexible and adaptive in its approach to weed management and control issues and the implementation of the Weed Action Program.

CONCLUSION

I thank you for the opportunity of being Chairperson of the Northern Inland Weeds Advisory Committee.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'm. woods', written in a cursive style.

Clr Maria Woods

CHAIRPERSON

Attachment: Year One NIWAC WAP Report