



Minutes of the *Eastern Riverina Noxious Weeds Advisory Group*
March 4, 2008
Wagga Wagga Council Chambers

Chairperson: John Ross

Present:

John Ross, Councillor, Greater Hume Shire
Adam Craig, Team Leader Noxious Weeds, Wagga Wagga City Council
Lisa Alexander, ORS Manager, Narrandera Shire Council
Alan Clark, Noxious Weeds Officer, Narrandera Shire Council
Rodney Anderson, Noxious Weeds Officer, Urana Shire Council
Sarah Stuart, Vegetation Management Officer, Albury City Council
Kylie Durant, Murray CMA, Environment Officer, Murray CMA
Peter O'Shannassy, Managing Ranger, Murray RLPB
Mark Luff, Senior Ranger, Wagga Wagga RLPB
Sarah Hill, Noxious Weeds Inspector, Lockhart Shire Council
Jan Mitchell, Noxious Weeds Officer, Albury City Council
Jeremy Crocker, Noxious Weeds Officer, Wagga Wagga City Council
Patrick Minogue, Noxious Weed Inspector, Corowa Shire Council
Thomas White, Senior Noxious Weeds Officer, Greater Hume Shire
Chris Slinger, Noxious Weeds Officer, Junee/Coolamon Shires
Stuart Moorby, Noxious Weeds Officer, Cootamundra Shire Council
Peter Ellison, Weed Inspector, Tumut Shire Council
Shona Cowley, Senior Environmental Officer, Department of Lands

Also in attendance

Paula Bosse, Riverina Noxious Weeds Project Officer
Lisa Mitsch, Riverina Noxious Weeds Project Officer

1) Apologies: Cr Peter Routley, Mark Gardiner, Russel Percival, Butch Lane, Cr Lorna Quilter, Robert Ferguson, John Francis, Steve Campbell, Cr Fred Longmire. Moved **Tom White**, seconded **Alan Clarke**.

2) *Confirmation of Minutes* – Correction noted point 9 & 11 doubled up in original minutes. Corrected minutes accepted. Moved **Rodney Anderson**, seconded **Pat Minogue**.

3) *Business Arising*– Paula to update later.

4) *Introduction of new personnel*

Lisa Mitsch- Riverina Noxious Weeds Project Officer (Tuesday and Fridays)

Sarah Hill- Lockhart Shire Council Noxious Weeds Officer

5) *RNWPO Report see (attached)*

- Discussed Athel Pine (Tamarix) found out at Balranald, Hay, and Deniliquin by Jim Ballnaves and Paul Derrick. National Coordinator' position is currently vacant. Tamarix workshops to be held in Albury Berrigen and Deniliquin.
- Update on the Murray Weeds Strategy- Currently at printers. Paula showed the group a rough proof of cover and some text.
- Update on Regional Plans- mentioned Gorse. Raised the issue if it should be stand alone or put together with similar weeds. A questionnaire to be sent out.
- Still waiting on Boneseed surveys from some Councils. Showed a spread sheet of overdue actions for the entire group.
- Missing Coolatai posters found, sixteen still missing. Mentioned new WONS banners available to Weeds Officer's through the WONS coordinator.
- NSW DPI Extranet is up and running for weed professionals. Need to subscribe to get updates and need to be registered to complete grant returns. New Prime facts available on the net.
- New brochure on Alligator Weed "Can You ID?" New control manual out soon.
- NSW Prickle Bush group-Paula discussed map of Mesquite around the Riverina and the need to update and check records.
- Mexican Feather grass found in the ACT in a National Park. New inserts available for Weed decks. ie. Willows
- New RNWOP job share explained. Paula working Monday,Tuesday, Thursday. Lisa working Tuesday & Friday.
- Explained E-mail about an invitation to ERNWAG to send a delegate to sit on a Committee for the NSW Weeds Awareness Reference Group. The

- Committee will address the needs of a 5 year Weeds Awareness Plan. Paula asked the group who would like to volunteer. Adam Craig agreed to be the ERNWAG delegate to attend a workshop in Orange in April.

Motion

That the group accept Adam Craig as the delegate from ERNWAG to sit on the Weeds Awareness Committee in April. Motioned by Tom White Seconded by Jeremy Crocker.

- Update on ARTC- Paula contacted staff members from the ARTC. Mark Campbell, Mike Green and Bruce McComas. Operational and non-operational lines were explained. Contact for this region is Mike Green- Senior Delivery Engineer- ARTC who has been invited to the next meeting.

Motion

Tom White Motioned that an invitation be sent out to both Mark Campbell and Mike Green to discuss the ARTC's program, defining different lines and to generally improve communication. Seconded by Chris Slinger

- Paula discussed the *What Does Your Garden Grow* workshop and asked for a show of hands who would be interested locally. Also asked if the ERNWAG and WRNWAG groups would be willing to chip in to help subsidise the cost.
- Lisa Mitsch gave a presentation on the newly developed ERNWAG/WRNWAG logo. Cost would be minimal to set up. (180.00 +GST)

Motion

Rodney Anderson Motioned to adopt the new logo. Seconded by Alan Clark.

7) ERNWAG/WRNWAG website

- Paula and Lisa both explained the set up costs for a joint website between the two groups. Discussed the two quotes of \$5720 from Go Creative and \$5764 from WEB Matrix. Web Matrix was the preferred company to deal with. Cost would be split between the two groups as well as the ongoing annual hosting fee of \$1485. Showed several examples. Paula asked the group to adopt the creation of a web site.

Motion

Stuart Moorby motioned to adopt the creation of a website and split the cost with WRNWAG as well as contribute to 50% of the hosting fee. Seconded by Pat Minogue.

Weed Officers Reports

Albury City Council

- Undertook Blackberry ID course and How Does Your Garden Grow train the trainer's course.
- Have found a few Chilean Needle Grass and Gorse infestations.
- Noogoora at Lake Hume.
- Undertaking nursery inspections and finding declared plants for sale.
- Undertaking cross border nursery sales checks.
- Implemented Risk Assessment process in workplace.

Wagga Wagga City Council

- Chilean Needle Grass at the loop/Borambola has been confirmed by the herbarium.
- Inspection program is ongoing. Concentrating on Bathurst Burrs, Blackberry, Spiny Burr grass, Silverleaf Nightshade and Prairie Ground Cherry.
- Target areas include Galore, Harefield, Gelston Park and the Tarcutta/Humula districts.
- Operational program includes the control of Coolatai Grass, Serrated Tussock, St. John's Wort, Silverleaf Nightshade and Caltrop.

Coolamon/Junee

- Coolatai Grass spreading, having ID problems.
- Have run newspaper campaign and live plant ID displays to address problem.
- Coolatai Grass has mostly been treated.
- A program for African Boxthorn has been implemented in the Junee township.
- Finding lots of Bathurst Burrs and Devil' Claw in Wantabadgery, Matong and Ganmain.

Cootamundra

- St. John's Wort Program extensive. Involving contractors.
- Road inspections has formally I'd Serrated Tussock.
- Tiger Pear infestation also found.
- Control program has focused on Silverleaf Nightshade and Coolatai Grass.
- Prairie Ground Cherry has been reduced and road shoulders sprayed. Inspections undertaken for Bathurst Burrs and Devil's Claw.
- Did a talk on biological control at the local club for Farmers.
- Mentioned that no funding was available from Crown Lands.

Corowa

- Chilean Needle Grass found at Howlong, Corowa, and Riverina HWY. Spiny Burrgrass spreading due to season.
- Control undertaken on Silverleaf Nightshade, Bathurst Burrs and Horehound.
- Not as much St. John's Wort as most years.
- Some Blue Heliotrope found. Inspections undertaken in conjunction with roadside spraying program.

Greater Hume Shire

- Control of Serrated Tussock and St. John's Wort.
- St. John's Wort has been difficult to control this season.
- Control and monitoring of Alligator weed has been ongoing.
- Inspection program has concentrated on Blackberry and Bathurst Burrs.
- There have been more perennial grass problems this year. (Coolatai and Chilean Needle Grass)
- Also problems with slashing of grasses.
- New incursion of Devil's Claw found. Have had displays of Chilean, Spiny and Coolatai grasses at Henty, Holbrook and Jindera.
- Held 2 field days resulting in poor turnouts for both events.

Lockhart

- Inspections have found no new noxious weeds.
- Apple of Sodom has been found more frequently during inspections
- Landholders are becoming confused between Quena and Silverleaf Nightshade.
- Detected Spiny Burrgrass on private property.
- Control of Bathurst Burr, Devil's Claw and Spiny Burrgrass.
- No funding for Crown land.
- Finding more Blue heliotrope.

Narrandera

- Undertaken contract control work for Silverleaf Nightshade for the Rural Lands Protection Board.
- Control of Spiny Burrgrass, devils' Claw, Khaki weed and Johnson's Grass.
- Facilitated a meeting with the RTA, ARTC, RLPB and Council to discuss weed issues. Positive outcome with the RTA with priority infestations now marked off as no slash zones.

Motion

Alan Clark suggested to formally invite Paul Amos from the RTA to the next ERNWAG meeting to discuss the issue of roadside weed control and in particular slashing management of RTA roads. Seconded by Stuart Moorby.

Tumut

- Undertaken control of St. John's wort with three units working until the end of January.
- Control works undertaken on St. Barnaby's Thistle and Devil's Claw.
- Inspections carried out for Blackberry and Black Willow.

Murray RLPB

- Having problems with Spiny Burrgrass, St. John's Wort and Silverleaf Nightshade.
- Control undertaken on woody weeds such as Peppercorns and African Boxthorn.
- Ongoing control of Spiny Burrgrass undertaken
- Control of Palm trees and Peppercorn's along the river.

Wagga RLPB

- Board has been kept busy with the Equine Influenza epidemic in Sydney.
- Control has been undertaken on Blackberry, Silverleaf Nightshade, and Bathurst burr.
- Has been some cases of stock poisoning from Hairy Panic grass.
- Reserves operations assistant has undertaken inspections of RLPB blocks in conjunction with Wagga Wagga City Council.

Department of Lands

- Discussed Treasury cuts to Crown Lands to the group and the effects on weed control grants.
- No funding for 07/08-100% cut.

- Have a small program but the funds are not matched as they were prior to Treasury announcement.
- Received requests for 2.2 million in applications. Only \$585,000 in funds made available for the state. South of the state received only \$185,000 in funds out of a requested \$310,000 in applications.
- No funding allocated for weeds function of program.

Upper Murray CMA

- Discussed that the CMA is out of funding and waiting until the next financial year to start any new projects.
- Working on existing projects such as Black Willow and Pussy Willow.
- Projects on Box elder along riparian areas ongoing.
- Bathurst Burr and Blackberry incorporated.

Motion

That the Weeds Officers adopt a standard template for their Weed Officer's Reports from the RNWPO. Motioned by Rod Anderson. Seconded by Lisa Alexander.

Financial report:

Adam Craig from Wagga Wagga City Council delivered the financial report to the group.

- Balance as of the 1 July 2007 was \$5,993.09
- Income from members and Administrative assistance was \$14,193.09
- Expenditure was \$ 7,915.45.
- Balance as of the 29 February 2008 was \$6227.64

Motion

Jeremy Crocker moved that the financial report be accepted by the group. Seconded by Chris Slinger.

Correspondence:

- Discussed Gundagai RLPB membership response. The Group declined to offer a response to the board's letter of correspondence.
- Discussed that the DPI grant applications that are due on the 1 of May 2008. Paula mentioned that you needed to be registered with the DPI's new extranet weed site in order to fill out your grant applications properly.

- Discussed correspondence from the Weeds Officers Association dated the 31 January 2008 requesting a regional delegate from ERNWAG be appointed to represent the group at the next Weeds Officer's Association meeting.

Motion

Jeremy Crocker raised the motion to invite a delegate from the Weeds Officer's association to attend the next ERNWAG meeting and discuss the benefits of membership of the association to the group. Seconded by Tom White.

General Business

- Chris Slinger discussed the Crown Land's funding issue and suggested that the sites be prioritised.
- The Department of Lands representative Shona Cowley suggested that there was a priority matrix already in place and that funding for multi-cooperative agencies was given the first priority.

Motion

Lisa Alexander motioned that the group send a letter to the Minister for Lands noting the group's dissatisfaction with the Treasury's decision not to fund weed control projects. It was suggested that a copy be forwarded to the Minister for Agriculture and the Department of Local Government. The motion was seconded by Stuart Moorby.

Tom White raised the issue of attendance at ERNWAG meetings, bringing concerns to the group about a pattern of low attendance emerging at group meetings.

The discussion resulted in a number of issues being raised:

- The need to send out the Agenda out earlier to delegates as a way to improve attendance and interest.
- That the Weeds Officer's report template be sent out prior to the meeting electronically to stimulate interest amongst members.

Motion

- Motion by Tom White to contact all members stating attendance levels are not as good as it should be. Weeds Officers and Councillors should attend and members should nominate alternatives to delegates. Seconded by Pat Minogue.



Kylie Durant commented on the Highlands Working Group had a similar problem with dwindling attendance.

Paula mentioned the importance of keeping up on current declarations in regards to non-saleable plants.

Next meeting Tuesday 1 July 2007.

Meeting closed at 3:20 pm.

RNWPO Report – 4th March 2008

Tamarix other sp – Information on Tamarix was included in the December edition of CHINWAG. Everyone would have read that Jim Balnaves from DEC went looking for it out at Yanga station where his thoughts were confirmed... he found 100s of trees growing on Yanga station next to the Sturt highway. It appears to have been growing, and flooding from a few years ago (providing ideal conditions) saw 100s of seedlings germinate around the foreshores. Two distinct generations appear to be growing along the high tide mark of the flood waters at the time

Those lucky enough to get over to the WRNWAG meeting will get an update from Jim on what he's found and what his plan of attack is. Unfortunately Sandy Leighton has resigned as National Coordinator so the guys are flying blind as there isn't a lot of available information on Tamarisk (*ramosissima* in particular). As information comes to hand I'll pass it on. Hay Shire has just received confirmation from the herbarium on a single tree within Hay township - may also have some on a reserve between Balranald and Hay – TBC.

Bruce Auld's workshops. The Murray CMA and Bruce have confirmed 3 workshop dates in the Murray Catchment: Albury, SS&A on 17/3, Berrigan SC on 18/3 and Deniliquin Golf Club on 19/3. Workshops will start at 10am and run to 3:30pm

Who should attend?

You'll be able to contribute to this process if you have knowledge in any of the following areas:

- environmental weeds present in the catchment and their distribution
- impact of these weeds on biodiversity in the catchment
- presence and location of high biodiversity sites, e.g. endangered ecological communities, threatened species or high priority vegetation types.

Bruce has been provided with a list of people to invite so if you receive an invite – now you know what it's in relation to. I will email more details to those in the Murray catchment as it comes to hand. Further information on the project can be accessed on their web site – see pg 4 of CHINWAG No 31 December 2007.

Regional Weed Strategy – Murray – currently at the printers, I will distribute once available.

Regional Plans

Gorse – I've been working on the questionnaire/survey for the Gorse regional plan – but it's a bit more complex as I'm still debating whether to develop a multi species plan covering the brooms as well. If I go with the multi species plan the survey will be covering a few species and need wording accordingly. I'll get this out to you via email as soon as I get it together. **Group discussion decided to put the individual Gorse plan together at this stage and assess the need for a Broom plan at a later date.**

Boneseed – I will start collating this plan once I receive all the surveys and prioritisation data back from everyone.

What's overdue - according to my spreadsheet (overhead) everyone has something they need to chase up and forward to me - for some LCAs it is simply the GP worksheets due next Friday!

GP worksheets – after last year's fantastic effort while I was on leave – I expect not to have to chase any draft or final worksheets this year. Draft worksheets due next Friday – 14th. GP workshop in Wagga 27th March. Signed original worksheets due 10th April. All other grant applications Weed Control Coordination etc due to NWAC 1st May.



Missing Posters update – Coolatai grass poster was found. Other regional posters – still missing. 4 sets of 4 posters = 16 massive posters! Can everyone look behind every door in their office as well as council as these are quite expensive to replace and can't have just vanished!

WoNS banners – available from national coordinators. Just contact them.

Extranet – is everyone signed up/registered? If not, get onto the NSW DPI website (www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/weeds/) and subscribe ASAP. This is how everyone will be updated about new information available, declarations etc...

Primefacts – new and available on the DPI website (above):

- resolving conflict in weed control
- garden plants poisonous to people
- noxious weed declarations
- noxious weeds class 4 management plans
- noxious weeds or just obnoxious?
- African boxthorn

Alligator weed - new detection guide for farmers; can you identify it? Control manual

NSW Prickle bush working group – I've received a report from this group and within it was a map detailing reported mesquite and parkinsonia infestations at September 2005. Of concern is the number of reported outbreaks of Mesquite in the Riverina, in particular around Lockhart, Urana, Jerilderie and Narrandera. After checking with Syd he thinks there may be a few misidentified native sp (*Acacia farnesiana*) occurring on the map. This data is being reviewed and we'll get an update when available – in the meantime have a look at the map and keep your eyes peeled if your in the area, as the question will be asked in the near future as to the identity of the sp in the database.

Mexican feather grass – 1st recorded invasion in the ACT found last week in the western side of Namadgi NP, Bendora dam.

Willows – new weed decks available. Sawfly - odd season defoliating in Jan and feb this year

Who's doing what for ERNWAG/WRNWAG? A draft summary has been put together detailing Lisa and my role within E/WRNWAG; I will finetune this information and email it out.

Paula – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday

Regional planning
Funding & reporting
General LCA, RLPB weed enquiries

Lisa – Tuesday, Friday

Website and CHINWAG
Media releases, Field days, weed displays
Extension and education enquiries

What Does Your Garden Grow? Opportunity to run a train the trainer workshop in the Riverina, Wagga depending on interest levels. Paula, Sarah and Jan (Albury) attended a workshop in Wodonga and feel it would be valuable to all other weedos. Max 20 for a workshop.

NSW Weed Awareness Reference Group (correspondence sent to sec) raise if not already.

Action from previous minutes - ARTC contact issues – previous emails and correspondence – report back on contact made... correspondence given to secretary.

ERNWAG/WRNWAG report template – email out to everyone to trial for next meeting.