

MINUTES
MEETING 6th June 2009
COMMENCING 10 AM
HAY GOLF CLUB

Guest Speakers: R. Ferguson “New Risk Management System”

Welcome : President welcomed delegates and noted that the meeting was being taped.

Apologies: R. Mitchell (Carathool), B. Burford (Griffith), Cr. T. O’Neal (Wakool), K. Hendrickson (ARTC), L. Mistch (Greater Hume),

Attendees: G. Portbury (Jerilderie Shire Council), M. Abney – Hastings (Jerilderie Shire Council), S. Lisle (DPI), A. Thompson (Balranald Shire Council), J. Clyne (Leeton Shire Council), J. Morrison (Leeton Shire Council), S. Battenally (Wakool Shire council), K. Woods (Carathool Shire Council), W. Judd (Wentworth Shire Council), P. Derrig (Hay Shire Council), R. Eade (Riverina LHPA, Narrandera), J. Duryea (Riverina LHPA Hay), A. Berry (Griffith City Council), J. Gamble (MIA Rural), R. Ferguson (RENWA).

Minutes: Moved: M. Abney - Hastings that the minutes as presented are a true and accurate record.

Seconded: J. Duryea

Carried

Business Arising

- Display trailer. Secretary gave an update regarding progress of obtaining quotes. Several more engineering firms were named as possible sources of quotes.
- Griffith Field Days. Approximately 400 through the tent. Support for Griffith over Leeton was discussed. Delegates wish to continue to support both.
- Lachlan Regional Weeds Strategy is to be released soon.
- Weeds Officer Authorisation. Nothing new to report at present. The subject will be addressed when the Act is reviewed.

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**Rural Lands
Protection Boards**

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Other Agencies

Dept Environment &
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National Parks &
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All Correspondence:

Geoff Portbury
The Group Secretary
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Correspondence In

JUNE MEETING 2009			
13/03/09	P. Derrig		Invoice for catering @ WRNWAG 10/03/09
31/03/09	Hay Shire Council		Invoice for catering 10/03/09
31/03/09	National Athol Pine Management Committee		Best Practice Management manual.
24/04/09	NCNWAC		News Letter
24/04/09	Weeds Officers Association		News letter
24/04/09	Noxious Weeds Officers Association		Notice of General Meeting
28/04/09	Alligator Weed Project Officer	Email	Group Funding Application
14/05/09	DPI		Weeds Summit invitation
27/05/09	NWAC		Acknowledge

Correspondence Out

JUNE MEETING 2009			
18/03/09	Cumquat Cuisine		Payment of lunch invoice for the 10/3/09 meeting
31/03/09	NWAC		Administration Grant Application
24/04/09	Accounts Payable		Request for payment of printer account to R. Ferguson
27/04/09	Albury Trays & Lockers		Trailer canopy quote request.
27/04/09	Challenge Camper Trailers		Display trailer quote request
28/04/09	Alligator Weed Project Officer	Fax	Group Funding Application

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Moved: A. Berry that inwards correspondence be accepted and acknowledge outwards correspondence as read.
Seconded: J. Morrison
Carried

Financial Reports

- Moved: G. Portbury that financial report as presented is accepted.
Seconded: P. Derrig
Carried

RWNPO Report

Chinwag

Latest edition was emailed out in May. Available for download on the website

Field Days

- ✂ Murrumbidgee Farm Fair at Yanco was held in late April. Fairly quiet on the exhibitors and patronage scale. Discussion may be held as to whether we scale this field day back to being a local one only and concentrate on Griffith's Riverina Field Day.
- ✂ Riverina Field Day at Griffith was held in early May. Unfortunately I was not able to attend the field day but from all accounts it was fairly well attended and very successful.

Mexican Feather Grass ~ the saga continues.....

- ✂ Victorian-based seed importer and distributor, Ball Australia, pleaded guilty in May 2009 in the Melbourne Magistrates' Court to four offences relating to the propagation and distribution of MFG. The company was convicted and fined \$12,000 and ordered to pay \$3000 in legal costs. Ball Australia agreed to pay \$20,000 compensation to DPI which will go toward clean-up costs.
- ✂ A recent display hosted by the DPI at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS) has resulted in the recovery of more Mexican feather grass plants. 5 reports were made of suspected MFG plants which subsequently resulted in the removal of 11 plants.

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New Regional Plans – Silverleaf Nightshade, Sagittaria and Hardhead thistle

All three revised regional plans are now available on the web.

NSW Weeds Conference

15th Biennial New South Wales Noxious and Environmental Weeds Conference to be held at The Crossing Theatre, Narrabri from the 15th to 17th September 2009.

The 15th Biennial Conference's theme is **"The Old and the New" (Changes in Weed Management)**. Draft conference program available for viewing on the web

Mesquite

During May I completed a brief report for Peter Gray at DPI on Mesquite in the Riverina. Thanks to those who contributed.

Fact Sheets

✂ Hardheads fact sheet being developed. Any fact sheets you would like to see developed please let me know. We just need to establish a process of having these fact sheets formalised and technically vetted for correctness so that we don't get ourselves into trouble!! Any ideas/suggestions appreciated.

Website – www.riverinaweeds.org.au

Still going well – remember if there is anything you want to see on there let me know.

GP Reporting

Paula will be sending this out in early July so just a reminder that when received if we can all make an effort to return ASAP.

Weeds Officers Reports

Weeds Officers presented their reports of activities over the period since last meeting.

General Business

- Project Officers Project :- At the present time the project is running on reduced funding due to the loss of revenue from 4 RLPBS.

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Mr S. Lisle suggested that if an Email requesting additional make-up funding were to be sent to him by no later than Friday the 9th June, he would without making any promises regarding outcomes be able to pass it on to the appropriate parties.

- Hudson Pear:- A report from the DPI has been disseminated to all Control Authorities affirming that Hudson's Pear has maintained its C4 status on the Noxious Weeds list.
- Weeds Conference:- Registration forms can be downloaded from the web site very shortly. All those that registered interest will be notified by email.
- Weed Summit:- R. Ferguson gave a report on the proceedings of the Weeds Summit. The following is a summary of issues discussed.

NSW Weed Summit – Confirmation of the issues discussed

The following key issues emerged from the SWOT analysis.

Strengths

- Noxious weeds do have strong supporting legislation.
- The Noxious Weeds Advisory Committee is in place and provides an effective link between weed operations and the Minister.
- The NSW Invasive Species Plan has been accepted by the weeds community and State Cabinet.
- The Invasive Species Monitoring Document proves that there is good monitoring information being collected at the local level.
- The provision of management and IT support structures for weed management by local government.
- The structure of Regional Weeds Advisory Committees supported by Project Officers, which draw together many organisations at the regional level to collaborate with weeds officers.
- There are enough weeds planning instruments at the local, regional, state and national level.
- Local government has a strong connection with its local community.
- There is a large contribution from local government for noxious weed control (\$14M in 1998, from Cr Robert Gledhill's report) in addition to NSW government contributions.
- The Regional Weeds Advisory Committee websites are excellent sources of weed control information.
- There is voluntary cooperation and coordination between local government, community and other organisations.
- The current system allows flexibility to design locally relevant management structures.
- NSW DPI is an underestimated resource, particularly its publications.
- The rapport local government has with its community provides inclusion in weed control activities.
- Weeds officers have great networks.

Weaknesses

- Some councils do not have weeds on their internet sites.
- There can be too many vested interests if too many organisations are involved in the process.

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- Where we have non-conforming councils, DPI weeds staff need to conduct audits.
- If a weeds officer leaves, and was the only weeds person employed in a general purpose council, the information leaves because there is no standard backup system or succession plan, like there may be in a weed control authority. This is because there may be multiple professional weeds officers remaining, who have a standardised record keeping system.
- A single weeds officer in a council may not have a career path.
- In the current *Noxious Weeds Act 1993*, we have a loophole where councils cannot legally advise a prospective property purchaser of weeds present on the land, if it does not have a current weeds notice standing. Some councils overcome this issue by advising local solicitors to request a weeds inspection.
- Differences remain in the requirements of public lands to control weeds.

Opportunities

- Combining catchment action plans with regional strategies.
- Ask information technology professionals to comment on the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993* review about the ability to analyse data collected to measure the success of the Act.
- Lobby for, or improve the knowledge of low interest loans for weed control on non-productive lands.
- There may be a case to put a position to the Minister to include the control of noxious weeds funded by an environmental levy.
- Remove the delineation between noxious and environmental weeds to open potential income streams for weed control.
- Set standards for effective weed management based on the noxious weed threat. Base these standards on the Rural Fire Service (RFS) standard, and include the management of volunteers using the RFS model.
- Use the RFS funding base model of unimproved capital value.
- Opportunity to change the Caring For Our Country Business Plan for 2010 grants to cover more than Weeds of National Significance Weeds.

Threats

- Undermining the budget of NSW DPI means there may be less community education and research and technical staff access is diminishing as research stations close.
- The closure of inspection stations for headers increases the risk of introduction of weeds.
- The transport of fodder due to drought is a general biosecurity threat.
- A biosecurity procedure is needed for earthmoving equipment and heavy vehicles.
- Crown Lands may not have the resources to manage surrendered stock routes.
- Local government is not aware of Caring For Our Country grants.
- Weed incursions in urban and peri-urban areas may not be as high a priority.
- A political decision being made that forces councils into an imposed structure.
- Lack of a national approach to funding and weed program harmonisation.

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In addition, it was recommended that:

1. Through appraisal of the existing system using the following terms of reference

- 1.1 Carry out an objective assessment of current structures for weed and pest management in NSW, including financial analysis.
- .2 Consider options for regulatory reform including examination of legislation to ensure that legislation and policies implemented and enforced are consistent for effective invasive species management.
- .3 Identify opportunities for more effective and efficient weed and pest management in NSW using the invasive species plan goals and objectives as a guide.
- .4 Identify innovative opportunities for funding for weed and pest management in NSW.

2. In addition to the outcomes from above;

- 2.1 Develop a realistic estimate of what weeds cost the NSW Economy.
- 2.2 Collate the amount spent on weed abatement in NSW by the NSW government, local government, other investors and land managers for weed control and administration.
- 2.3 Model the right mix of incentives to achieve the outcomes of the Act and the Invasive Species Plan.
- 2.4 Model the consequences of not having these incentives.
- 2.5 Map where the different financial resources come from for weed management, and consider the likelihood of being able to apply once for these various funds, or request one report from these funding sources.

3. Recording and reporting

- 3.1 Weeds of National Significance (WONS) and other notifiable weeds have a standardised reporting system.
- 3.2 Recommend a standardised reporting system, which may be interrogated to give an indication of performance against Invasive Species Plan Goal 4.6 "ability to measure the effectiveness of invasive species management".
- 3.3 As part of the thorough appraisal of the existing system, recommend standards of reporting including the reinspection period.

Date, Time & Venue of Next Meeting

- 6th October 2009
- 10:00 AM
- Hay Golf Club
- AGM to precede the ordinary meeting.

Meeting Close: 1:45 PM

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