

Project details

NSW Weed Eradication Detector Dog (WEDD)

Early Detection Capabilities Developed and Implemented

Former *Western Riverina Noxious Weeds Advisory Group (WRNWAG)*



Orange hawkweed

Performance overview

Eradication is the most cost-effective and efficient way to manage new weed incursions: but the ability to 'find the very last weed' is currently limited, and hampers eradication efforts, especially for 'hard-to-find' weeds, such as orange hawkweed (OHW). Detector dogs can increase the ability to find even the smallest fragment of a target plant, making them a potentially powerful tool to improve our ability to delimit and eradicate weeds.



Sally in training

The former WRNWAG and the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH), together with a range of partners, through a pilot study in 2015, trialled the feasibility of using dogs to detect OHW in field situations, including remote bushland and agricultural areas. A key component of the project is trialling dogs that have never been trained on other scents.

Activities completed

- 2 dogs (Sally and Connor) successfully trained to indicate on OHW in field situations. Missy (trained on other pest species) has also detected OHW that was previously undetected in the field.
- [Hawkweed Detector dog video clip \(OEH\)](#) – Detector dog Sally in training.
- [Media Prime7 news clip](#) - *Weed-sniffing dog? Not what you think.* Sally in the field.
- OHW demo days: December 2014, April 2015, NSW Weeds Conference October 2015 & 2017.
- [ABC Goulburn Murray](#) - *Dogs trialled by Parks Victoria to detect hawkweed in Alpine national parks.* March 2017

Outcomes

- A new tool available for NSW to improve detection and delimitation of high risk new and emerging weeds. WEDD will enable rapid response and increase the chances of successful eradication or containment.
- High risk species detected on public land are managed in a timely fashion: WEDD will increase capability of land managers, including public land managers to detect, delimit and eradicate high risk species.
- Land managers have increased knowledge on the use and efficiency of WEDD as a tool of management.



Missy, demo at Tooma field day. Photo: Glen Saunders

Further information

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