



ILLAWARRA DISTRICT WEEDS AUTHORITY

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ANNUAL REPORT

2020 – 2021

Illawarra District Weeds Authority

Chairperson's Message

2020/21 marked the first year of a new five-year Weeds Action Program (WAP) - 2020-2025. After seeing funding cuts of 30% to its budget over the five preceding years of this program, the Authority was looking forward to the implementation of the 2020-2025 stakeholder supported WAP developed by partners in early 2020. Unfortunately, this did not eventuate as South East Local Land Services (SELLS) chose to persevere with the 2015-2020 version of WAP. \$99,482.00 was subsequently allocated to the Illawarra District Weeds Authority (IDWA) for the 2020/21 financial year – a decrease of \$8,000.00 on 2019/20 levels. The IDWA now sits at 2010/11 funding levels under the current WAP model.

Specifically, over the last 12 months the IDWA inspected and controlled priority weeds along 1,098 km of high-risk pathways, 799 km of priority pathway and managed and protected 31 priority sites from widespread priority weeds. 288 ha of priority weeds were controlled across all inspected council reserves. 2,306 parcels of land were inspected including 1,494 parcels under private or State ownership and 812 under council management. 167 high risk sites were inspected as part of this process and 299 compliance reinspections were undertaken.

Private works to the value of \$105,350.00 were generated along with \$89,811.00 in additional grant funds.

As has occurred in some of the previous years, the Illawarra again recorded another new high risk weed incursion – this time the State listed **Prohibited Matter** plant- Parthenium weed. This is the first time this weed has been found in SE NSW. It was detected by a vigilant landowner with the identification subsequently confirmed by IDWA staff. Funding of \$10,000.00 was provided by Local Land Services to assist in the initial management of the weed, with IDWA coordinating this response since the infestation was reported. An interagency delimitation rapid response program was undertaken in February 2021 involving up to 30 staff, with the (sniffer) dog detection unit utilised to improve detection capabilities.

The IDWA has continued to investigate alternate technologies to replace aerial spraying in the Bitou bush program. The use of drones is being considered for the latter half of 2022, due to their ability to undertake targeted surveillance and control. Two initial sites have been confirmed and funding secured, however trials are subject to COVID restrictions easing and suitable weather conditions prevailing.

The position of temporary full time weed spray operator was extended for a further 12-month period to June 2022. The employment of a third full time member of staff to the IDWA's operations has been a major boost to the Authority's operational capability and will hopefully lead to the position becoming full time.

The Authority met on four occasions during 2020/21, with this period providing plenty of matters for the Authority's consideration. The committee continued to be of great assistance with both policy and technical support and I would like to thank all members for their ongoing commitment to the successful operation of the Authority.

As we commence operations for the second year of WAP 3 (2020-25) the IDWA will strive as budget constraints permit, to deliver on key Policy and Management Plan outcomes. Ongoing implementation of the Biosecurity Act and pursuing development of a meaningful and evidence based WAP 2025 will ensure the Authority is kept busy over the next 12 months.

I am pleased to have had the opportunity to Chair the IDWA over the last five years and I wish the Authority well with the challenges and inspiration that 2022 and the years ahead will bring. The new Council term has brought change, and this year I will be stepping down from my position on the committee. In doing so, I would like to express my thanks to all of those who have been involved with the Authority during my time as IDWA Chair and wish all incoming members an interesting and productive term.

Councillor Kathy Rice

Illawarra District Weeds Authority

Weed Control Program Report 2020/21 Summary of Activities and Outcomes from 01 July 2020 – 30 June 2021

**A Final Report for the constituent member councils of the IDWA
Wollongong City Council, Shellharbour City Council and Kiama
Municipal Council**

Covering page and General Manager Endorsement

A Final Report prepared for the constituent member councils of the IDWA on activities completed from July 2020- June 2021

Name of Organisation	Illawarra District Weeds Authority
Address	PO Box 148 Kiama 2533

Administrative contact (name, position, fax, phone)	<i>Mr David Pomery Chief Weeds Officer Ph 02 4233 1129 email: dpomery@isjo.org.au</i>
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Technical contact (name, position, fax, phone)	<i>Mr David Pomery Chief Weeds Officer Ph 02 4233 1129 email: dpomery@isjo.org.au</i>
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Total Amount of funds received (Income)	Grant - \$99,482.00	For financial year/s	2020-2021
	Council - \$167,644.00		
	TOTAL- \$267,126.00		

Funds Expended	TOTAL
Regional Coordination (staff administration)	\$40,856.00
Property Inspections (Including compliance)	\$142,365.00
Priority Weed Control	\$82,259.00
WAP Priorities	\$50,601.00
TOTAL	\$316,081.00

DECLARATION

I hereby certify that all moneys paid have been expended or incurred by way of expenditure solely on priority weed management activities as defined in the NSW Weeds Action Program policy documents and conditions.

Signature of responsible officer of organisation	
Printed name	David Pomery
Position in Organisation	Chief Weeds Officer
Contact Telephone Number	02 4233 1129
Date	14 th October 2021

Report on Weed Control Coordination Assistance 2020/2021

Outcomes and results from July 2020-June 2021 A Final Report prepared for the constituent member councils of the IDWA

Name Of Organisation	Illawarra District Weeds Authority
Address	PO Box 148 Kiama NSW 2533
Administrative contact (name, position, fax, phone)	David Pomery Chief Weeds Officer Ph: 42 331129 Email: dpomery@isjo.org.au
Technical contact (name, position, fax, phone)	David Pomery Chief Weeds Officer Ph: 42 331129 Email: dpomery@isjo.org.au

FINANCIAL REPORT

Activity	Expenditure	
Regional Coordination (staff administration)	\$40,856.00	
Property inspections – Including compliance	\$142,365.00	
WAP Priorities		
Publicity	\$4,311.00	
Training	\$2,669.00	
High Risk Sites	\$14,279.00	
High Risk Pathways	\$13,824.00	
Management Priority sites	\$15,518.00	
Total	\$233,822.00*	

* Includes on costs

Printed name	David Pomery
Position in Organisation	Chief Weeds Officer
Contact Telephone Number	02-42 331129
Date	14th October 2021

Report on Weed Control Operational Assistance 2020/2021

Outcomes and results from July 2020-June 2021 A Final Report prepared for the constituent member councils of the IDWA

Name Of Organisation	Illawarra District Weeds Authority
Address	PO Box 148 Kiama NSW 2533
Administrative contact (name, position, fax, phone)	David Pomery Chief Weeds Officer Ph: 42 331129 E mail: dpomery@isjo.org.au
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FINANCIAL REPORT

Priority Weeds	Control of Priority weeds on council lands (ha) - reserves	Control of Priority weeds on council roadsides (km)
Priority weed control- Control priority sites and pathways	\$41,792.00 - 288ha	\$40,467.00 - 799km

Total Expenditure	\$82,259.00*
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* Includes on costs

Printed name	David Pomery
Position in Organisation	Chief Weeds Officer
Contact Telephone Number	02-42 331129
Date	14th October 2021

Administration Expenses Report Form

Administration Staff:

Salaries and Allowances: \$16,895.00
Contribution to ISJO Secretariat: \$ 26,712.00

Sub-Total **\$43,607.00**

Other Expenses:

(e.g. maintenance, agreements) \$4,459 .00

Sub-Total **\$ 4,459 .00**

TOTAL: **\$48,066.00**

85% for Apportionment to Grant Program: \$40,856.00

TOTAL **\$40,856.00**

Other Programs Report

Vacant Crown Land Program

Income:

Vacant Crown Lands Grant -	\$73,811.00
Council contribution -	\$8,530.00

TOTAL **\$82,341.00**

Expenditure:

Contractors	\$73,811.00
IDWA staff control	\$5,668.00
IDWA administration	\$ 3,409.00

TOTAL **\$82,888.00**

Funding for Bitou Bush control was approved by the NSW Department of Industry – Lands and Forestry for Weed Control on Crown Land at the following sites in 2020/21.:

1. Coomaditchie lagoon -Northern end of Perkins beach, Port Kembla, (\$27,246.00)
2. Perkins beach Port Kembla (\$17,545.00)
3. Bevans Island Lake Illawarra (\$10,650.00)
4. Bass Point Reserve, Shellharbour (\$18,370.00)

Under this funding the IDWA has been able to undertake additional priority weed control programs throughout the district. These programs, primarily aimed at Bitou Bush, have been essential in ensuring a co-ordinated and strategic approach to Bitou Bush within the local area is achieved. They have helped achieve the stated aims of National, State, Regional and local action plans by –

1. Supporting landholders in a collective program to contain the spread of Bitou Bush.
2. Ensuring funds are targeted to species management where it will deliver the greatest benefit (i.e. asset protection).
3. Developing and implementing programs to reduce environmental degradation and the loss of biodiversity through weed invasion (i.e. NSW Threat Abatement Plan for Key Threatening Processes).
4. Preventing the spread of Bitou Bush within the local area.
5. Reducing the area and distribution of Bitou Bush within the local area.

As with any weed control program, on-going control over several years will be required to control any regrowth or missed plants, and prevent previous time and expense being wasted.

Parthenium weed New Incursion Assistance funds

Income:

Local Land Services - \$10,000.00

TOTAL **\$10,000.00**

Expenditure:

IDWA administration and inspection \$4,167.00

IDWA control \$2,794.00

TOTAL **\$6,961.00**

The primary purpose of the Parthenium weed New Incursion Assistance funds were to assist the Illawarra District Weeds Authority (IDWA) in the Biosecurity management of the State listed Prohibited Matter plant, Parthenium weed.

Parthenium weed was detected as a new incursion for the SE Local Land Services region in December 2020 on a rural property in Kiama. The purpose of this program was to undertake a coordinated and strategic approach to eradicating Parthenium weed from the area. The funds provided for the program were a grant to support costs associated with work to manage Parthenium weed from the area it was found. Management of Parthenium weed involved using best practice within the legislative framework of the *NSW Biosecurity Act 2015*.

Bald Hill Boneseed Program

Income:

Local Land Services - \$16,000.00

TOTAL **\$16,000.00**

Expenditure:

Contractors \$6,000.00

TOTAL **\$6,000.00**

The IDWA was provided funding of \$16,000.00 (ex GST) over three years beginning July 2020 and finishing June 2023 to assist in the eradication of the State listed Priority Control Order weed Boneseed. The funds were provided by South East Local Land Services (SELLS)

A significant infestation of Boneseed is located along the cliff lines on the southern boundary of the Royal National Park at Bald Hill Stanwell Tops. Previous efforts at control undertaken by NSW NPWS achieved some good initial results, however further funding was required to support these initial efforts and ensure the weed was effectively managed and eventually eradicated from this site. The funding provided will be used over a period of three years to assist in employing the services of an experienced, suitably qualified and accredited contractor capable of delivering effective weed management in cliff line situations. NSW NPWS will support the funding provided with an annual \$2,000.00 cash contribution and \$1,000.00 in kind. The IDWA will provide coordination and financial management of the program.

Boneseed control has been undertaken throughout other areas in the Illawarra and south coast, and in the Greater Sydney LLS by NPWS and other stakeholders. The Bald Hill Boneseed program aims to support these efforts and contribute to the eradication objective as required under Biosecurity (Boneseed) Control Order 2017 (Biosecurity Act 2015).

Private works

Income: \$105,350.00

Expenditure:

Labour: \$ 39,241.00

Administration: \$ 7,210.00

Chemicals: \$ 607.00

VRC: \$ 5,603.00

TOTAL **\$52,661.00**

PROFIT: **\$52,689.00**

The IDWA has a policy to promote the use of Authority plant for contract weed control for private and government landholders. This policy allows for continuous and efficient use of resources. When demand exceeds resources, the IDWA will employ sub-contractors for either the public or private works.

Aim:

To provide an efficient and effective private works capability.

Outcomes:

The IDWA generated an annual gross income from commercial spraying operations in 2020/21 of \$105,350.00. Operating profit net of all expenses was \$52,689.00.

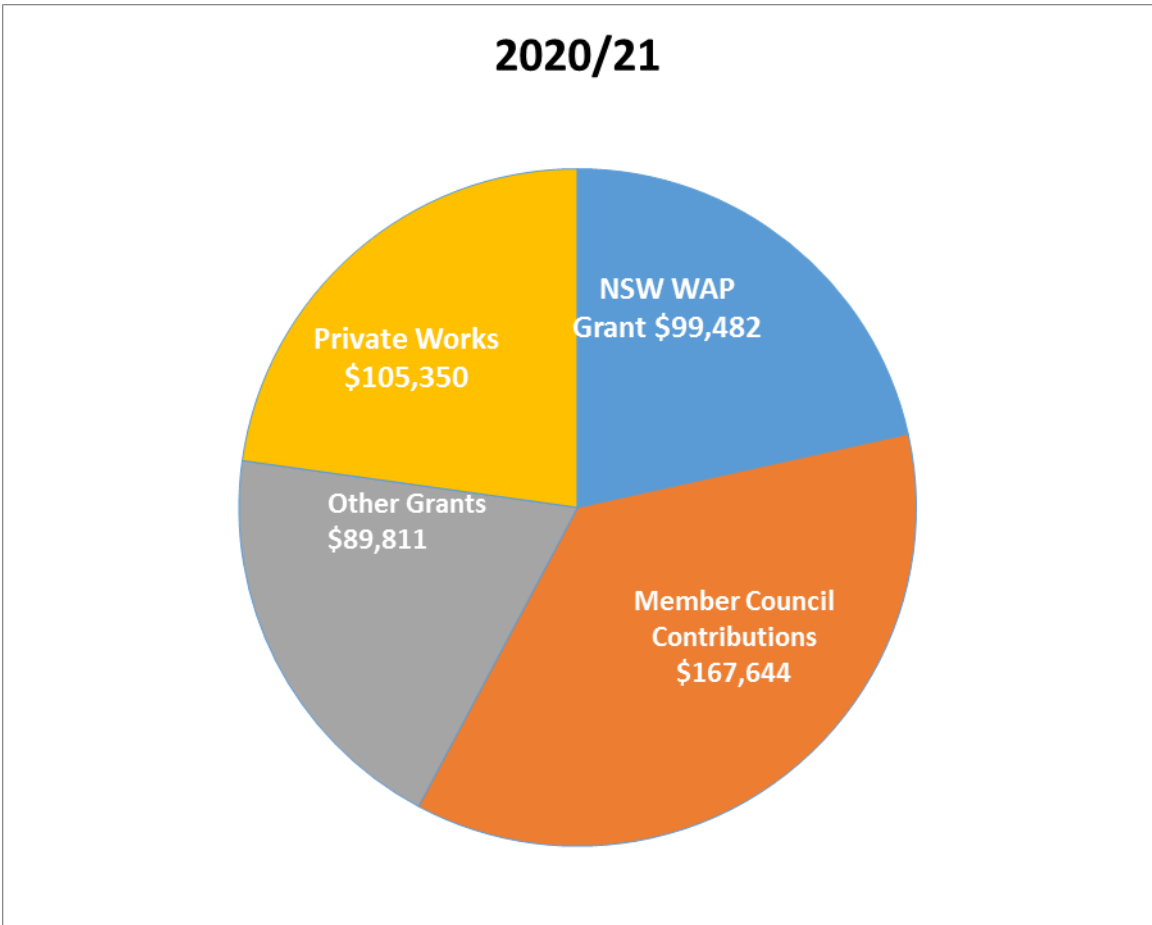
IDWA SUMMARY

- South East Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2017-2022 implemented with funding from the NSW Department of Primary Industries, constituent councils, South East Local Land Services and Department of Lands.
- Update and continued use of WeedMap Pro Summit Biosecurity mapping program to enable IDWA staff to become biosecurity information compliant and report monthly to the NSW Department of Primary Industries on inspections and control activities.
- 2,306 inspections undertaken across all lands within the three member council areas.
1,494 inspections on both public (State owned) and private land.
812 inspections undertaken on council managed lands
299 compliance inspections.
53 extension activities with private landholders.
- 167 High Risk sites inspected.
1,098 km of high risk pathways inspected and treated for priority weeds.
271 council managed sites controlled for one or more priority weed covering 799 km of priority pathways and 288 ha of council reserve land..
31 priority sites managed and protected from widespread priority weeds.

One (1) new weed incursion found for Parthenium weed - Prohibited Matter under Schedule 2 of the Biosecurity Act 2015. (Never previously recorded in the SE region of NSW).

- Coordinated interagency delimitation surveillance program over two days as part of Parthenium weed rapid response protocol. Dog detection unit employed to assist surveillance measures.
- Five (5) media releases issued covering the use of drone technology to control Bitou bush and detection of Parthenium weed in the local area. Three newsletter articles written and two media interviews held.
- Implemented annual Crown Lands weed control program.
- Constituent council contributions of \$167,644.00 received and supported with NSW Weeds Action Program Grant funding of \$99,482.00 to implement inspectorial and operational programs.
- Temporary full time weed spray operator employed for the last 12 months to undertake all operational works across the three member council areas. Inspector/Operator's time redirected to undertake additional inspectorial activities.
- Secured funding of an additional \$89,811.00 for the region through other grant sources.
- Annual gross income of \$105,350.00 generated from private works / commercial spraying operations.

IDWA Income 2020/21



Illawarra District Weeds Authority

**Weed Control Co-ordination and Extension Program Report 2020/21
01 July 2020 – 30 June 2021**

A Final Report prepared for the constituent member councils of the IDWA

Executive Summary

The Illawarra District Weeds Authority (IDWA) representing the local government areas of Wollongong City, Shellharbour City and Kiama Municipal Councils, has over the past 12 months continued to develop and implement an active priority weed control program throughout each of the member council areas.

In maintaining a co-operative regional based approach to priority weed control where funding is linked to outcomes, the IDWA has consolidated the work of previous years and addressed a number of key issues to ensure the Authority's Aims and Objectives are achieved. These issues may be summarised as follows:

- Implemented the Illawarra component of the South East Local Land Services Regional Weeds Management Strategy.
- Identified a priority list of high risk weeds; developed a regional inspection and control program; targeted high risk pathways and sites.
- Secured new weed incursion funding of \$10,000.00 to assist in the management of Prohibited Matter- Parthenium weed. Coordinated interagency delimitation survey as part of rapid response program for Parthenium weed.
- Secured 3 years funding to assist in the control of the State regulated Control Order weed Boneseed on NPWS Estate at Stanwell Tops.
- Secured Crown Lands funding through weed control projects on the State listed Biosecurity zone weed Bitou Bush.
- Regional and local weed control programs for private landholders and government agencies have continued to be given high priority with 1,494 parcels of private and state land inspected. 299 compliance re- inspections were undertaken over the past 12 months on private and state lands.
- Improved co-operation between stakeholders is being addressed through representation on State, regional and local weeds committees.
- Five (5) media releases were issued and 53 extension visits were made to landholders and residents to provide weed biosecurity information.
- Operational programs have continued to be maintained, expanding as time and resources permit, thereby complementing the inspectorial program and allowing the Authority to continue to lead by example. 812 parcels of council controlled lands were inspected of which 271 were found to have an infestation of one or more priority weed. 1,897 km of roadsides and high risk pathways were inspected and treated for one or more priority weeds. 288 ha of reserve lands were controlled. Thirty-one (31) priority sites have been managed and protected.
- Temporary full time weed spray operator employed for a further 12month period to undertake all operational works across the three member council areas. Inspector/Operator's time redirected to undertake additional inspectorial activities.

Control Authority Aims

Aim:

- To provide a framework for dealing with weeds biosecurity risk in the community and ensure compliance with legislation.

Objectives:

- To develop a Biosecurity Weed Control Policy and Management Plan. This plan will provide guidance as to how each priority weed needs to be managed and the expected outcomes needed to ensure landholders meet their obligations and responsibilities under the Biosecurity Act 2015.

Goals:

- To reduce the biosecurity impact of priority weeds on the community, economy and environment of the Illawarra region by establishing mechanisms to:
 - (i) prevent the establishment of new weeds
 - (ii) eradicate or otherwise contain the spread of emerging weeds
 - (iii) manage the impact of existing widespread weeds
 - (iv) ensure public awareness of the impacts of invasive weeds is enhanced and community wide capacity in sharing responsibility for managing weed biosecurity risk within the local control authority area is improved.
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Private Property Inspection Program

The IDWA private property inspection program is primarily aimed at voluntary compliance with all landholders. The IDWA is, however, legally obliged to ensure compliance with the provisions of Sections 22 - 26 of the Biosecurity Act 2015, which state that any person who deals with Biosecurity matter and who knows, or ought to reasonably know, the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed by the biosecurity matter, has a General Biosecurity Duty (GBD) to ensure that so far as practicable, the biosecurity risk is prevented, eliminated or minimised. The General Biosecurity Duty supports the principle of shared responsibility, and means everyone is doing what is reasonable for them to do to prevent, eliminate or minimise biosecurity risks.

Consistent with the risk based approach of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* the IDWA private property inspection program involves undertaking strategic property inspections that prioritise high risk sites over properties that do not require as regular an inspection regime. Inspection regimes are risk-based and reduce the need for arbitrary inspections of properties in low risk areas. Inspection programs as such focus surveillance and inspection activities at high-risk areas using tools such as pathway analysis to determine appropriate inspection intervals.

The core **aim** of the IDWA private property inspection program is to:

1. To prevent the establishment of all Prohibited Matter as listed in Schedule 2 of the Biosecurity Act 2015.
2. Eradicate all State regulated Control Order weeds as detailed in Biosecurity (Boneseed) Control Order 2017; Biosecurity (Tropical Soda Apple) Control Order 2017 and Biosecurity (Pakinsonia) Control Order 2017.
3. Eradicate or otherwise contain the spread of Biosecurity Zone weeds Alligator weed, Water hyacinth and Bitou bush.
4. Prevent, eradicate, contain or otherwise minimise the biosecurity risk of all regional priority weeds on private lands throughout the local control authority area.
5. Undertake local weed control programs to protect local assets.
6. Locate and identify high risk New Incursions and implement appropriate management strategies based on a rigorous weed risk assessment and prioritisation process.

In undertaking its private property inspection program over the past 12 months the IDWA has endeavoured to meet its stated aims and objectives through implementing a coordinated and strategic program of risk based inspections.

Specifically, the IDWA undertook the following actions in relation to its private property inspectorial program in 2020/21:

Summary of Achievements

Inspections conducted:

Total number inspections:	1,494
Compliance reinspections:	299

One new weed incursion was found on private land at Broughton Village within the Kiama LGA for the State listed Prohibited Matter weed – Parthenium weed.

Specific Inspections for high risk weeds

To assist in the early detection of high risk weeds the IDWA prioritises its inspection program on High Risk Pathways and High Risk Sites.

High Risk Pathways can be any linear feature in the landscape where weeds are spreading within/towards a significant asset or further along the linear feature. They are generally heavily trafficked, being main road, rail and river corridors that have a high risk of new weed incursions being introduced from external sources.

High Risk Sites are where weeds *will always have the potential to show up and the potential to spread*. High risk sites are comprised of nurseries, showgrounds, pony clubs, weekend markets, boat ramps, aquaria / pet shops, stock and produce outlets, waste disposal and recycle centres, all found throughout the Illawarra region.

The frequency of inspections on specific high risk sites or high risk pathways is determined by a risk analysis type approach that considers a range of factors including history of prior weed incursions having been found, level of activity/use and proximity to nearby high risk weed locations. In this respect, high risk pathways and sites may be inspected annually or 2- 3 times within a twelve-month period depending on the risk /threat they pose.

With this in mind and noting that the majority of high risk weed spread is a direct result of human activities the IDWA inspection program is prioritised on high risk pathways and sites involving human activity. Being the most prolific form of weed spread it is also the one that is the most preventable and cost effective.

Summary of Achievements

Specific Inspections Conducted:

High Risk sites inspected :(No.)	167
High Risk Pathways inspected (km)	1,098 km

Use of Enforcement Procedures for Priority Weed Control

For the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, 2,306 inspections were conducted across all land tenures, requiring 299 compliance re-inspections. Of the 299 compliance re-inspections twenty (20) Individual Biosecurity Direction notices were issued. These notices were issued only after it was apparent the relevant owner/occupier/s were making no attempt/or an insufficient effort to control the designated priority weed/s as required.

One Individual Biosecurity Undertaking was offered and accepted. One Section 133 Entry was undertaken.

To date, the Constituent Councils have preferred to exercise their power under Section 133 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* and enter problem properties and undertake all necessary control works at that time, rather than implementing costly and time consuming court procedures against the landholder.

To ensure that owners and occupiers of land carry out their obligations to control priority weeds the Constituent Councils through the IDWA prefer to achieve this objective in the first instance through a voluntary compliance approach. Failure to reach reasonable consensus however, will (and has) resulted in council exercising its legal powers to ensure compliance. Prosecution will be undertaken at this time if deemed appropriate by the full committee of the IDWA. Alternatively, a Section 133 Entry will be undertaken (as has been the case to date).

Further, the IDWA will also be implementing on-the-spot fines (SEINS) for offences under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. This action will again be undertaken only if consensus cannot be reached with the landholder to undertake control works on the identified priority weed(s).

Summary of Enforcement Actions

Parthenium weed

Number of Individual Biosecurity Directions	-
Number of Individual Biosecurity Undertakings	1
Section 133 Entry	-

Chilean Needle grass

Number of Individual Biosecurity Direction notices:	3
Section 133 Entry	-

Bitou bush

Number of Individual Biosecurity Direction notices:	6
Section 133 Entry	1

Giant Parramatta grass

Number of Individual Biosecurity Direction notices:	1
Section 133 Entry	-

Cape broom

Number of Individual Biosecurity Direction notices:	1
Section 133 Entry	-

Groundsel bush

Number of Individual Biosecurity Direction notices:	3
Section 133 Entry	

Flax leaf broom

Number of Individual Biosecurity Direction notices:	1
Section 133 Entry	

Mysore thorn

Number of Individual Biosecurity Direction notices:	1
Section 133 Entry	

Gorse

Number of Individual Biosecurity Direction notices:	1
Section 133 Entry	

Coolatai grass

Number of Individual Biosecurity Direction notices:	3
Section 133 Entry	

Weed Recording, Mapping and Reporting Activities

Aim:

To compile accurate and concise information on the distribution of priority weeds in the region over time, providing a benchmark for which performance can be measured and appropriate action undertaken.

Outcomes:

As part of the NSW Weeds Action Program (WAP), the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has developed a standardised mapping program for the state, known as the Biosecurity Information System (BIS). This program is designed to improve identification, diagnostics, surveillance coordination, and reporting capacity for strategic weed management. The BIS program includes the BIS Metadata Procedure which provides standards for data collection to ensure reports are consistent throughout.

Data submitted using this procedure will be used to prepare consistent reports that measure real gains in weed management for all stakeholders. These reports will ensure each stakeholder has access to coordinated data and mapping information for weed management undertaken in their region and across the state.

The BIS was rolled out state-wide in August 2016. To support this process, the IDWA purchased the Weed Map Pro Summit Biosecurity mapping system. Weed Map Pro is fully compliant with the NSW Biosecurity Act Weeds Metadata standard, WAP and BIS reporting requirements. Monthly reporting to the BIS commenced on 1 July 2017.

[Attachment 1](#) details reported BIS data for the IDWA for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 covering all land tenures.

[Attachment 1b](#) details reported BIS data for the IDWA for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 covering local government activities.

Communication, Education, Extension and Publicity Activities

Aim:

To promote public awareness about priority weeds and their control and encourage a sense of shared responsibility.

Outcomes:

Unfortunately, due to COVID 19 related restrictions and uncertainty around holding public events, education and publicity activities have been restricted over the last 12 months, although the IDWA did coordinate an interagency delimitation survey in February 2021 for Parthenium weed with the local print and electronic media being utilised to publicise this event. ([Attachment 2](#)).

In total five (5) media releases were issued covering both the Parthenium weed outbreak and response, as well as investigations by the IDWA into the potential use of drone technology to control Bitou bush along cliff lines and other access restricted sites. .

The Illawarra District Weeds Authority website (www.idnwa.com.au) continued to be updated to reflect changes in the legislation (*Biosecurity Act 2015*), new priority regional and state species lists, and stakeholder obligations and responsibilities as per the General Biosecurity Duty.

A total of 53 private properties were also inspected/visited as part of broader extension activities aimed at enhancing awareness of (priority) weeds and encouraging proactive behaviour in relation to weed management.

Staff Training

Aim:

To retain well motivated staff who are trained to effectively undertake the service that the Authority aims to provide.

Outcomes:

Chief Weeds Officer

Training completed 2020/2021:

RMS working on foot qualifications
Machinery hygiene workshop

Weed Inspector/Operator

Training completed 2020/2021:

RMS working on foot qualifications
Machinery hygiene workshop

Co-operation

Aim:

To effectively and without prejudice, work with all stakeholders within the guidelines of the Biosecurity (weeds) legislation.

Outcomes:

The IDWA is responsible for priority weed control within the constituent local government areas of Wollongong City, Shellharbour City and Kiama Municipal Council. To oversee the supervision of the Authority's priority weed control program and ensure constituent councils' obligations and responsibilities are being met; the IDWA has its own Weeds Committee. The committee meets quarterly and provides guidance and support for the IDWA.

The IDWA is also actively involved with the recently formed South East Local Land Services Regional Weeds Committee, being represented on both the Regional Weeds committee and the associated WAP subcommittee.

IDWA staff also hold casual positions on various working groups at State, regional and local levels providing valuable input and feedback on a range of weed related issues.

The IDWA has a close working relationship with most government agencies and private landholders within the area. A prime objective of the IDWA Policy of Control is to ensure, so far as practical, that residents meet their General Biosecurity Duty obligations and responsibilities with respect to priority weeds. To this effect the IDWA is in constant liaison and consultation with a number of government agencies and private landholders with regard to priority weed management programs. This level of consultation has further been built on through the implementation of the NSW Weeds Action Program and in particular the focus on high risk pathways and high risk sites.

Good compliance has been achieved by most government agencies and private landholders with regard to the Authority's weed control programs over the last 12 months. Most control works are implemented on a reactive basis following requests by IDWA staff, although some government authorities and private individuals have (proactively) undertaken control programs on lands under their care and control prior to inspections being undertaken.

One area of ongoing concern however is land under the management of Sydney Trains. Whilst Sydney Trains have taken a more proactive approach of late, further action may still be necessary to ensure momentum is continued. The IDWA is continuing to work with Sydney Trains staff to iron out any issues that arise from time to time.

Operational Program

The IDWA Operational Weed Control Program is primarily designed to complement the Inspectorial Program whilst ensuring the IDWA continues to lead the way by setting the example.

Aim:

To prevent, eliminate or otherwise minimise the biosecurity risk posed by priority weeds on all council controlled lands.

Outcomes:

The main focus over the past 12 months on Council controlled lands has been to –

1. Prevent the establishment of all Prohibited matter as listed in Schedule 2 of the Biosecurity Act 2015
2. Eradicate all State regulated Control Order weeds as detailed in Biosecurity (Boneseed) Control Order 2017; Biosecurity (Tropical Soda Apple) Control Order 2017 and Biosecurity (Pakinsonia) Control Order 2017.
3. Eradicate or otherwise contain the spread of Biosecurity Zone weeds Alligator weed, Water hyacinth and Bitou bush.
4. Prevent, eradicate, contain or otherwise minimise the biosecurity risk of all regionally listed priority weeds on council controlled lands throughout the local control authority area.
5. Undertake local weed control programs to protect local assets.

The Authority's current Operational Weed Control Program is co-ordinated in such a way as to target areas within the inspection program. Some roadside and reserve spraying is undertaken outside programmed areas following special requests by Constituent Councils / resident complaints.

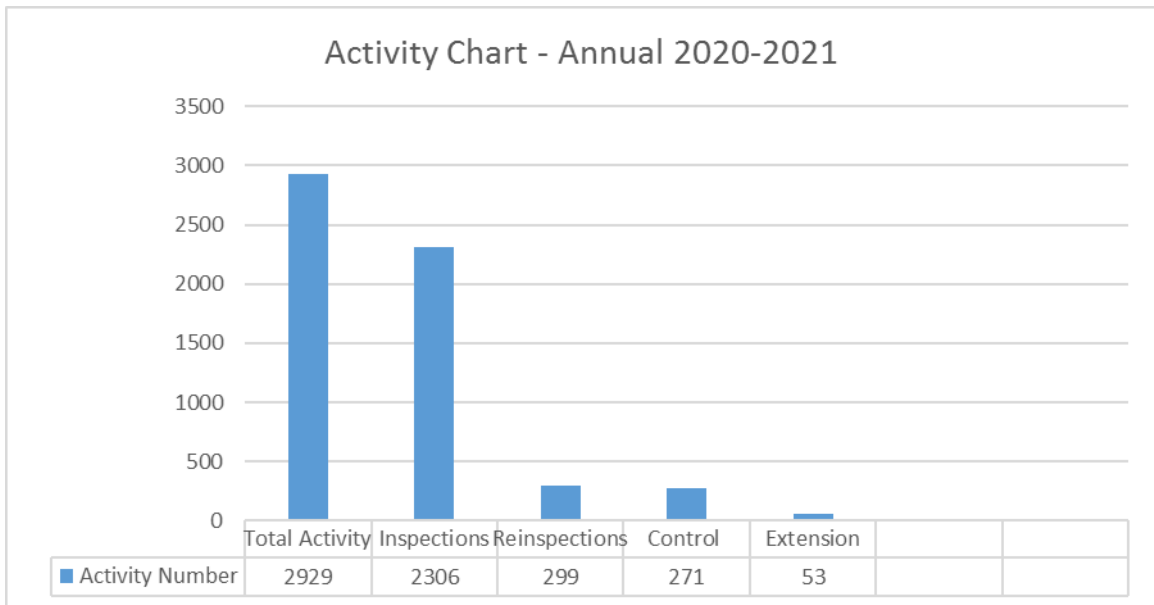
With reference to specific actions and milestones in achieving the stated Aims and Objectives of the IDWA Operational Program the following actions were achieved for the 2020-21 year period.

Summary of Achievements

1. 812 parcels of council land inspected
2. 271 parcels controlled for one or more priority weed
3. 31 priority sites managed and protected from widespread priority weeds
4. 799 km of priority pathways inspected and treated for priority weeds.
5. 288 ha of priority weeds controlled across all inspected council reserves.

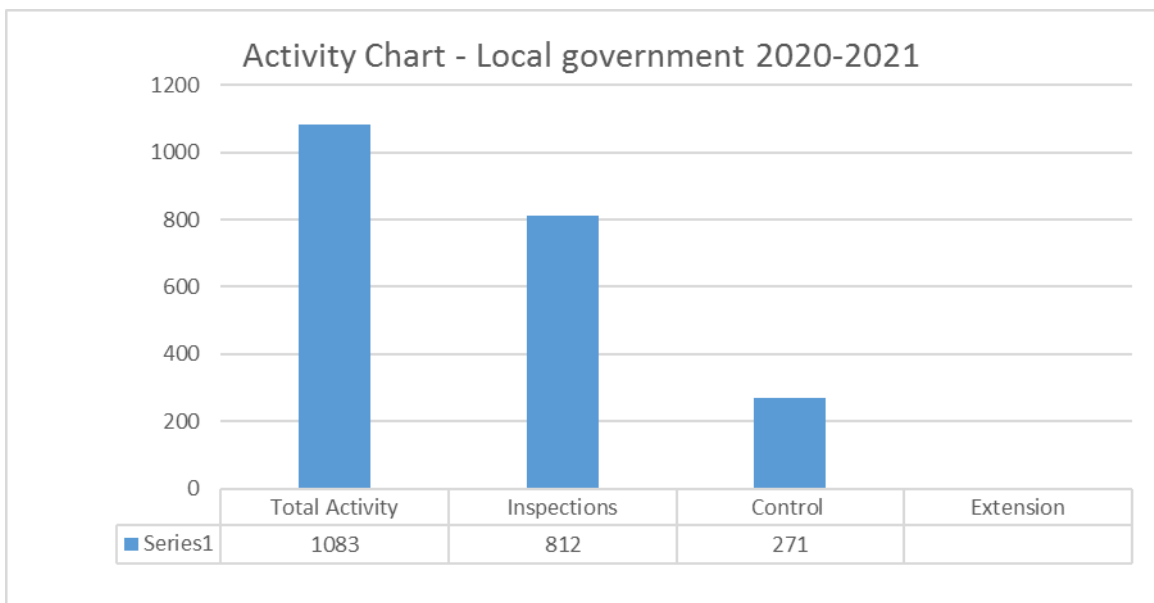
Attachment 1

All land tenures activity chart

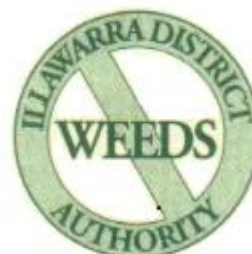


Attachment 1b

Local government activity chart



Attachment 2



MEDIA RELEASE

15 February 2021

Illawarra taskforce aiming to weed out dangerous plants

A taskforce led by the Illawarra District Weeds Authority (IDWA) is stepping up its operations within the Illawarra and Shoalhaven region to ensure the containment and eradication of a recent discovery of the toxic Parthenium weed.

The weed, which is a prohibited matter and considered a significant biosecurity risk to NSW, was discovered late last year and linked to contaminated organic whole grain chicken feed and mash.

The resulting weed incursion was detected by vigilant property owners following a concerted promotional campaign alerting Illawarra residents to the risk after the weed was spotted in nearby regions.

IDWA Chief Weeds Officer David Pomery said the early discovery of the Parthenium weed would aid in its containment and eradication.

“While the Parthenium weed is known to spread rapidly, this is great example of how our system of checks and balances is working well and we are confident in our ability to eradicate the weed from the area,” he said.

“The landowner has proven extremely vigilant and followed all protocols in relation to dealing with this weed. We are now working closely with them to ensure the safe removal of the weed without compromising their operations.

“It is a delicate process that takes time but it is certainly a battle we can win.”

The Parthenium weed is dangerous to animals and can cause serious allergic reactions to people who come in contact with the plant or pollen.

Although recent infestations across the state have been linked to chicken feed, Mr Pomery says it is important for all landowners and residents in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven to be aware of the issue and report any sightings of the plant immediately.

“It is only by working together that we can keep this weed at bay,” he said. “We are asking everyone to be aware of this weed, be vigilant not only on their own properties but at roadsides, areas with bare soil or where soil or compost have been delivered, and where earthworks have taken place.

“If you suspect you have seen this plant, contact either the NSW Department of Primary Industries Biosecurity helpline on 1800 680 244 or the Illawarra District Weeds Authority immediately.”

As part of the current project to contain and eradicate the weed, the IDWA and NSW DPI have formed a taskforce and will conduct ground inspections of properties in the Illawarra on Tuesday and Wednesday. Further inspections will be held in coming weeks, including the use of sniffer dogs for sensitive areas.

The taskforce will also be talking to landowners and residents to further educate them about the Parthenium weed and how to deal with it.

For more information on the weed and how to identify it at different growth stages, go to the NSW DPI website <http://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/weeds/partheniumweed>

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PARthenium: A significant biosecurity risk, discovered last year in NSW, linked to contaminated organic wharfage in chicken feed and mash

Dog on job after toxic weed find

ENVIRONMENT

A NSW IT sniffer dog has joined efforts to eliminate the potentially toxic parthenium after more than 1,000 of the plants were found on a Cerdinanga property.

The discovery late last year was the first sighting in the southeast of NSW, and was linked to a delivery of organic-wheatgrain chaffcut level. Tagging the weed can cause dogs to exhibit reactions in humans, and can be possibly toxic to animals.

A taskforce including the Illawarra District Weeds

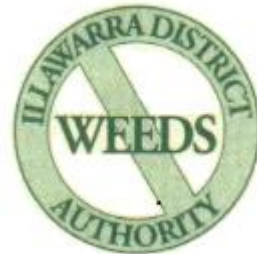
Control Services, NSW Primary Industries and local growers will work on eradicating the weed, with the dog brought in to sniff out specimens that may have spread nearby.

IDWA Chief Weeds Officer David Pomery said the handover cooperative had reported the weed promptly. "The handover has proven extremely vigilant and followed all protocols in relation to sniffing with this weed," he said.

"It's a delicate process that takes time but it's certainly a battle we can win."



FOLLOW YOUR NOSE: Dog trainer Ryan Tata with the Illawarra district weeds authority's David Pomery and English



MEDIA RELEASE

17th May 2021

Drones offer new tool in battling the weed problem.

The Illawarra District Weeds Authority is investigating the possibility of using drone technology to monitor weeds in areas that are hard to access and where infestation levels are increasing.

The new technology is a potential game changer for weed management and has opened up exciting possibilities for local government in a number of areas.

The use and capability of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) or drones is advancing and becoming more common-place. Multi – specification vegetation mapping is already being utilised by the Department of Primary Industry and environment and is assisting with Bushfire Recovery efforts in affected NSW regions. Drones are able to undertake volumetric fuel loading assessments as part of preliminary Hazard reduction activities.

RPAS can also record, compile and disseminate information during the prevention, preparation and recovery phase of operations for data collection and information gathering purposes. This includes pre-incident planning and rapid damage assessment following major incidents such as floods and bushfires.

Operationalising the use of drones for remote weed detection and precision and targeted control will dramatically improve weed management as part of an integrated approach. Drones can be used to help with inspecting and doing

surveillance in isolated and hard-to-access areas. The drones are not only used as an eye in the sky but are able to log GPS co-ordinates, and some can analyse the colour to separate weeds from other vegetation. Intelligent flight control with the assistance of the onboard technology allows drones to achieve unimaginable precision, and maintain accurate height above the vegetation. In this regard they can also be used to undertake precision and targeted control of weeds where required.

The Illawarra District Weeds Authority is hoping to demonstrate and evaluate the drone technology over the next 12 months using bitou bush as an example weed. Results from the evaluation process could then be used as an education platform for farmers, and the broader community to experience the latest innovations related to robotics, digital agriculture and weed management systems.



Drones are being deployed to seed burned land as part of bushfire recovery efforts in NSW.