



CHIEF WEEDS OFFICER'S REPORT

For the Period December 2021 – February 2022

Submitted to the Illawarra District Weeds Authority Meeting

Friday 18th March 2022

At ISJO Offices Terralong St Kiama

From 10.00am to 12.30pm

To Secretary:

1. Property Inspections / Spraying Program

The season to date has seen well above average rainfall, which has resulted in a profusion of weed growth. This is the second consecutive year of above average rainfall which has created ideal growing conditions for all weeds, especially aquatics.

Roadside and reserve control programs have over the last three months been primarily directed towards Blackberry and the aquatics Salvinia, Water Hyacinth and Alligator Weed. Private property inspection programs have largely mirrored operational programs.

Aquatic weed control programs commenced in December with all known infested private and council controlled lands inspected and control programs undertaken. Due to the excessive growth rates associated with aquatic weeds it is desirable at least two to three control treatments be undertaken on all infestations over the summer growing season. This will ensure growth is restricted, spread reduced and control / eradication achieved in the shorter term. The main impediment to this however is the weather, (i.e. excessive rain) which this season has restricted access, slowed control efforts and help spread aquatic weed considerably. Inspection and control programs are expected to be completed by the end of April.

Unfortunately, a new incursion of the aquatic weed Water Hyacinth has been found in Coomaditchie lagoon at Kemblawarra, a listed EEC. Some preliminary control has been undertaken, however access is restricted along the southern shoreline necessitating the use of contractors. The IDWA is working with WCC to get this infestation under control as asap.

Reserve and roadside treatment for Blackberry commenced in February and will continue through March. Private property inspections are expected to commence mid-March along with inspections for Giant Parramatta grass (GPG).

Parthenium weed (PW) continues to persist on a rural property in the Broughton Village area south of Gerringong. First reported and confirmed in December 2020 the property is inspected and controlled at least monthly. Manual control of the PW on the affected property is undertaken with seedlings now being the main cause for concern. Plant numbers have dropped considerably from a year ago when several thousand plants were identified to numbers averaging less than 100 per visit this year. Ongoing maintenance and monitoring of the area will continue to be undertaken at least monthly for the next 12-18 months with a 7-10 year eradication time frame expected.

A total of 509 parcels of land were inspected over the last three months. Of these parcels, 144 recorded the presence of one or more priority weed.. Only 2 properties involved extension work. Of the 144 properties inspected and recorded with a priority weed, 79 were primary inspections, 44 were compliance reinspections and 21 involved control work on public reserves or council controlled roads. . No Section 123 Individual Biosecurity Directions have been issued.

Inspection and control of High Risk Sites has been given increased emphasis over the last three months with all nurseries, florists and aquaria outlets inspected for priority weeds. Inspection and control of High Risk Pathways continues subject to prevailing weather conditions.

[Attachment 1](#) (Figure1) provides a breakdown of IDWA weed activity data for the period December 2021 to February 2022 as reported under BIS.

Commencement of inspection / treatment programs for autumn growing weeds Groundsel Bush, Pampas Grass and Gorse are expected to commence in May with Bitou Bush scheduled for June / July.

Chief Weeds Officer (CWO) - David Pomery

Month of December 2021

- Week 1 – Private Works- Transport for NSW
 - High Risk Pathway inspections – Wollongong
- Week 2 – General administrative duties
 - VCL Final reports
 - Aerial spraying guidelines review
- Week 3 – Private Works- Transport for NSW
 - Parthenium weed inspection & control
- Week 4 – Annual leave
- Week 5 – Christmas / New Year break

Month of January 2022

- Week 1 – Annual leave
- Week 2 – General administrative duties
 - Parthenium weed inspection & control
- Week 3 – Annual leave
- Week 4 – Annual leave

Month of February 2022

- Week 1 – Reinspections- Unanderra / Figtree - Wollongong
- Week 2 – Property inspections- Jamberoo- Kiama
 - Assist spray operator aquatic weed control – various
- Week 3 – Property inspections- Jamberoo- Kiama
 - Parthenium weed inspection & control
- Week 4 - General administrative duties- Isolation

Other time spent on property inspection office time, report writing and general correspondence. Time was also spent writing grants/preparing acquittals, supervising staff and contractors and organising work programs and training schedules. .

Operator / Inspector - Tony Martin

Month of December 2021

Week 1- Property inspections – CNG – Wollongong
Week 2- Property inspections – Aquatic Weeds – Shellharbour
Week 3 – Private works- Shellharbour/ Wollongong
- Parthenium Control – Kiama
Week 4 -
Week5 – Christmas/ New Year break

Month of January 2022

Week 1 – Annual Leave / working from home
Week 2 – Annual Leave / Parthenium Control – Kiama
Week 3 – Aquatic weed inspections – Kiama
Week 4 – Reinspections- Mysore.Thorn / CCC/ Bitou Bush – Shellharbour/ Wollongong

Month of February 2022

Week 1 – Reinspections – CNG / Aquatic Weeds – Shellharbour/ Wollongong
Week 2 – Property inspections HRS / Inspections Aquatic Weeds – Shellharbour/ Wollongong
Week 3 – Widespread weed control / Staff Training / - Wollongong
- Parthenium Control – Kiama
Week 4 – Property inspections - HRS – Nurseries- Shellharbour/Wollongong

Other time spent on property inspection office time, plant maintenance, casual staff supervision and general administration duties.

Weed spray Operator - Mathew De Faveri

Month of December 2021

Week 1 – Reserve spraying –Aquatics- Kiama + Wollongong
Week 2 – Private works + reserve spraying – Aquatics - Wollongong
Week 3 – Private works + reserve spraying – Aquatics - Shellharbour
Week 4 – Private works + reserve spraying – Aquatics - Shellharbour
Week 5 – Christmas /New Year break

Month of January 2022

Week 1 – Roadside and reserve spraying – Blackberry - Kiama
Week 2 - Roadside and reserve spraying – Blackberry - Kiama
Week 3 - Roadside and reserve spraying – Blackberry – Shellharbour
Week 4 - Roadside and reserve spraying – Blackberry – Shellharbour

Month of February 2022

Week 1 Reserve spraying – Aquatics - Shellharbour
Week 2 – Reserve spraying – Aquatics - Kiama
Week 3 – Reserve spraying – Aquatics - Kiama
Week 4 – Inclement weather

Casual staff – Joe Carter and Luke Brash

Month of December 2021

Week 1 – Private works

Week 2 –Private works + Vacant Crown Land

Week 3 – Private works

Week 4 –Private works

Week 5 - Christmas /New Year break

Month of January 2022

Week 1 – Christmas /New Year break

Week 2 – Vacant Crown land

Week 3 – Private works

Week 4 – Roadside and reserve spraying – Blackberry – Wollongong

Month of February 2022

Week 1 – Private works

Week 2 – Aquatic weed control - Kiama

Week 3 – Private works

Week 4 – Inclement weather

Casual staff employed up to 4 days per week.

2. Crown Land Funding 2021/22

Advice has been received from Crown Lands of the success of all five projects submitted under the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund Program (CRIFP) for 2021/22.

Grants totalling \$112,093.00 were submitted for Bitou Bush control on Crown Land at five sites, Perkins Beach, Coomaditchie Lagoon, Bass Point, Bevan's Island and East Corrimal/Towradgi

Perkins Beach - \$22,100.00

Coomaditchie Lagoon \$29,738.00

Bevans Island \$11,715.00

Bass Point \$23,320.00

East Corrimal \$25,220.00

Works will primarily involve ground control methods encompassing mechanical removal and chemical spraying.

Funding will be allocated accordingly:

Perkins Beach - \$16,500.00 contractors

- \$5,600.00 IDWA staff

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Coomaditchie :Lagoon - \$27,238.00 contractors

- \$2,500.00 IDWA staff

Bevans Island – \$11,715.00 contractors

Bass Point - \$16,500.00 SCC

- \$6,820.00 drone spraying contractors

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East Corrimal- \$25,220.00 contractors

NB: GST is included in these allocations

3. Bitou bush aerial spraying program – Winter 2022.

As discussed at the last IDWA committee meeting held on 4th December 2021, the 2021 drone-spraying program did not eventuate due to a combination of COVID restrictions and inclement weather. The CWO has since had preliminary discussion with Gath Short from Hunter Precision Helicopters about the possibility of doing the trial drone spraying on two selected sites as part of the Winter 2022 Bitou bush control program. The trial sites are Walkers Beach crown reserve and Bass Point.

Planning is in the preliminary stages and will involve a joint program with Shoalhaven City Council. .Late May/early June is being proposed for the trial work.

This matter is open for discussion.

4. Weed Alert - New Incursion

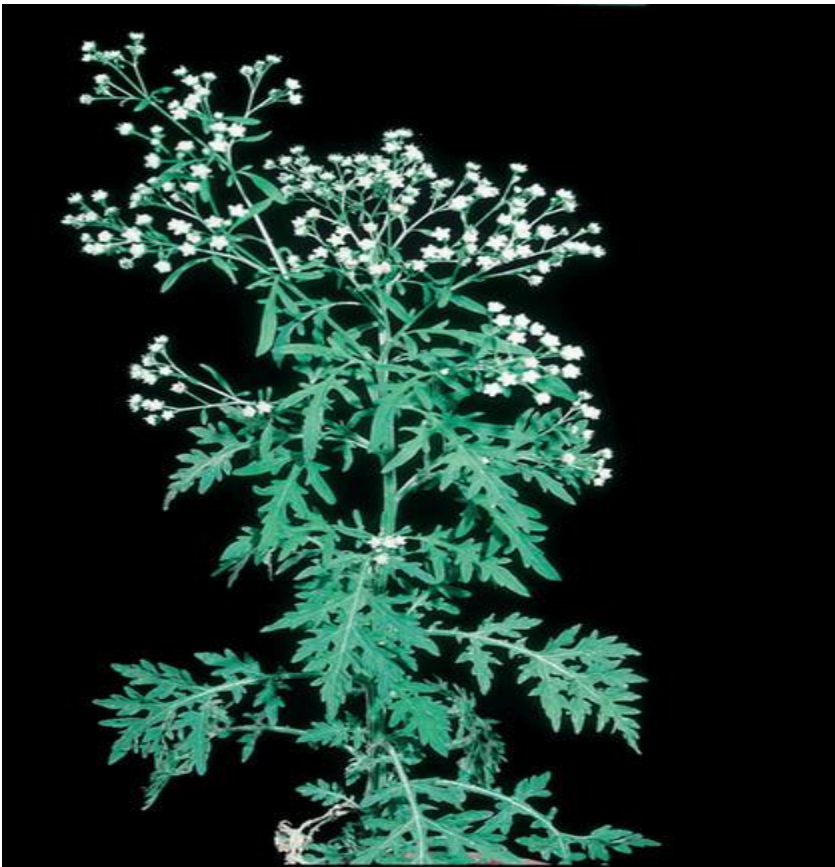
As previously reported an infestation of the highly invasive Parthenium weed (*Parthenium hysterophorus*) was discovered within the Kiama Council area south of Gerringong.

Not yet widely established in NSW and currently restricted to isolated outbreaks in mainly western NSW, the Kiama outbreak represents the first time this weed has been found in SE NSW.

Listed as Prohibited Matter under Schedule 2 of the Biosecurity Act 2015, Parthenium weed is considered a major biosecurity risk to NSW.

[Attachment 2](#) provides a summary of the IDWA Response Program to date.





5. Fees and Charges 2022/23

[Attachment 3](#) details Fees and Charges for the IDWA for 2022/23

6. Advancing Pest Animal and Weed Control Solutions Competitive Grant Round

Weed managers guide to Remote Detection: Understanding opportunities and limitations of multi-resolution and multi-modal technologies for remote detection of weeds in heterogeneous landscapes.

As previously advised \$600,000.00 over 3 years will be provided to Charles Sturt University through the [Graham Centre for Agricultural Innovation](#) to develop a Weed Managers guide to remote detection to assist in understanding the limitations and opportunities of multi-resolution and multi-modal technologies for remote detection of weeds in complex landscapes. The project to which the IDWA is a partner aims to better use the technologies to rapidly detect weeds in mixed landscapes, such as native grasslands and woodlands, coastal dunes, alpine areas, and other diverse natural systems.

Remote detection is a 'game changer' for weed management but current high-tech systems are expensive and inaccessible for most land managers. This project will use nationally-significant 'model' weed systems to test the limitations of high-resolution colour, multispectral and hyperspectral technologies across various airborne platforms (drone, satellite) using multi-modal machine learning to detect weeds in vegetative stages within heterogeneous landscapes.

This research will inform development of an information portal for weed managers to understand opportunities and limitations of remote detection technologies in complex landscapes. Decision support will enable targeted investment and optimal usage of aerial technology and image analysis. A Community of Practice will enhance research to end-user interactions facilitate improvements and application of technologies. Guidelines will educate and empower land managers to use remote detection technology for a range of weeds and invaded landscapes, dramatically improving the mapping and management of weeds in heterogeneous environmental and agricultural landscapes.

Killalea State Park has been selected as a trial site for the project using Bitou bush as the target weed. Trial work is expected to commence in the coming weeks. A copy of the latest newsletter is attached ([Attachment 4](#)) for members information.

This matter is open for discussion.

7. Staff Changes

The IDWA weed control operator Mr Luke Brash recently tendered his resignation to take up a part time position with Wollondilly Shire Council as a Weeds Biosecurity Officer. Luke had been employed by ISJO on a temporary full time basis until at least June 2022. He will however continue to work for the IDWA as a weed control operator on a casual basis two days per week.

Casual weed control operator Mr Mathew De Faveri has since been appointed to fill Luke's full time role on a 4 day per week basis, until 31st December 2022 with a view to offering full time permanent work subject to satisfactory performance and budget constraints.

This matter is open for discussion

8. Staff Training

IDWA staff recently attended a two day (re) accreditation course in relation to Implementing Traffic Control Plans. The course provides training for personnel who are required to set up and work with Traffic Control Guidance Schemes/Traffic Control Plans at a work site. This course does not qualify a participant to control traffic with a Stop/Slow bat, or to modify existing traffic control plans.

An RMS Statement of Completion (SOC) certificate will be awarded which will allow staff to work in the Traffic Control Industry immediately whilst waiting for final assessment of the "On the Job Evidence". The SOC is required for an application that the training provider submits to the RMS for the photo-card licence and is issued once the "On the Job Evidence" is assessed. The photo licence is valid for 3 years.

As the IDWA either uses TCP 76 or a modified version the CWO has asked Accelerated Training (registered training provider) to provide a quote to prepare at least two modified versions of TCP 76 that can be signed off by Accelerated Training as approved plans. The alternate to allow the IDWA to use a modified plan is that the CWO attend a 3 day Prepare Work Zone Traffic Management Plans course costing \$850.00 + assessment.

Staff also updated and completed their First Aid Certificates.

9. SEWAP Small Grants

Advice has been received of the success of the SEWAP small grant application submitted by the CWO to undertake surveillance and inspection activities on public and private land for the State listed aquatic weed Alligator weed. The program will focus on lands adjacent to known core infestation sites within the Dunmore wetlands where control and management programs will be put in place to suppress and limit the spread of the weed. \$12,240.00 has been allocated to undertake this program.

10. Budget Summary of Expenses Incurred and Accrued to 1 March 2022

	Budget 2021-2022	Actual to 1 March 2022	Draft Budget 2022-23
Income			
WAP Program			
Council contributions	68,200	68,200	76,417
State government Grant	100,000	101,472	103,500
Sub- Total	168,200	169,672	179,917
Other Programs			
			-
VCL Program			
Council contributions	14,100	14,100	14,100
Grant	112,000	112,093	112,000
Priority Weed control program			
Council contributions	75,000	75,000	78,900
IDWA General administration			
Council contribution	4,947	4,947	5,000
NSW WAP New Incursion program			
Council contributions	8,750	8,750	-
Grant	22,000	22,000	-
Bald Hill Boneseed program			
Grant	6,000	6,000	4,000
Sub Total	242,797	242,890	214,000
Biosecurity inspection fees	-	-	500
Sundry income (interest)		-	8,000
Leaseback	9,000	5,600	9,000
Private Works	70,000	32,945	70,000
Sub Total	79,000	38,545	87,500
TOTAL	489,997	451,107	481,417

	Budget 2021-2022	Actual to 1 March 2022	Draft Budget 2022-23
Expenditure			
WAP Program			
Management of high risk sites	8,000	6,506	9,000
Management of high risk pathways	7,000	6,747	8,000
Property Inspections	90,000	85,690	98,500
Urban inspections	9,000	1,156	10,000
Reinspections(compliance)	31,000	18,604	29,000
Inspection and control of Priority sites	13,000	9,052	13,917
Community awareness and participation (staff publicity)	3,000	1,071	5,500
Skilled workforce (staff training)	5,200	3,286	4,000
Reporting/administration (regional coordination).	2,000	1,793	2,000
Sub- Total	168,200	133,907	179,917
Other Programs			
IDWA General Administration	4,947	2,166	5,000
Widespread Weed Control Program	75,000	79,201	78,900
VCL Program	126,100	12,738	126,100
NSW WAP New Incursion program	30,750	5,573	-
Bald Hill Boneseed program	6,000	6,000	4,000
SUB -Total	242,797	105,678	214,000
Private Works	30,000	24,045	32,000
Sub Total	30,000	24,045	32,000
TOTAL	440,997	263,630	425,917
Credit (Debit)	49,000	187,477	55,500

Attachment 1.

Figure 1.

