



CHIEF WEEDS OFFICER'S REPORT

For the Period June 2022 – August 2022

Submitted to the Illawarra District Weeds Authority Meeting

Friday 16th September 2022

At Shellharbour City Council

Works Depot

From 9.30am to 12.30pm

To Secretary:

1. Property Inspections / Spraying Program

Despite a dry June, the overall winter season has continued to be very wet, with July rainfall figures setting new records. Unfortunately, the ongoing wet conditions have continued to impede IDWA operational and inspectorial programs. The Illawarra District Weeds Authority has however continued to operate on a “business as normal” type approach with some adjustments made to meet the ongoing inclement weather. Residentail / industrial inspections have replaced rural inspections where required, although control activities on council managed roads and reserves have largely continued as normal.

Roadside and Reserve control programs have over the last three months been directed towards Groundsel bush, Bitou bush and Giant devils fig. Private property inspection programs have largely mirrored operational programs.

Groundsel Bush control programs on all council owned lands commenced in late May and were completed in late June with seedling regrowth now being the ongoing cause for concern with respect to this weed. Inspection programs for Groundsel bush on private lands commenced in June and were expanded in known areas of infestation to try to determine the extent of spread. Control of Bitou bush commenced in July with good control now beginning to be achieved in several areas across all three LGAs. The Bitou Bush program is expected to continue until at least the end of September. The drone spraying component of this program should also hopefully be completed at this time with the Walkers beach trial site tentatively scheduled for the second half of the month.

Giant Devils Fig was targeted for control within the Tongarra area where the inspection area was expanded last year and is now rotated on a biennial schedule. This year's program was undertaken in August. No plants at this stage have been found on council land.

721 inspections have been undertaken over the last three months of which 107 parcels recorded one or more weeds present. An additional 7 properties involved extension work and 54 public reserves and council managed roads were controlled for priority weeds. One (1) Section 123 Individual Biosecurity Direction have been issued. No entries have been undertaken. Inspection and control of High Risk Pathways and sites has continued.

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

Inspection and treatment programs for spring growing weeds Boneseed, Mysore thorn, Coolatai grass ((Kiama only) and Cats Claw Creeper are expected to commence later in September to be followed by inspection/control for Serrated tussock, St Johns Wort and Chilean Needle grass in October/November.

Chief Weeds Officer (CWO) - David Pomery

Month of June 2022

- Week 1 – General administrative duties
- Week 2 – General administrative duties
- Week 3 – General administrative duties
2022/23 VCL grant applications
Staff training- Prohibited Matter
- Week 4 – General administrative duties
Parthenium weed inspection & control

Month of July 2022

- Week 1 – Annual leave
- Week 2 – Annual leave
- Week 3 – General administrative duties
Boneseed Taskforce meeting/ Remote Detection Project meeting
- Week 4 – General administrative duties
WAP Annual report
2021/22 VCL reports- Bass Pt & Bevans Island

Month of August 2022

- Week 1 – Property inspections – (Berkeley/ Lake Heights) - Wollongong
- Week 2 – Assist Spray operator - cliff lines (Minnamurra) - Kiama
- Week 3 – Reserve spraying- Berkeley/Lake heights - Wollongong
- Week 4 – Property Inspections – (Unanderra)- Wollongong

Other time spent on property inspection office time, attending (on line) meetings, report writing and general correspondence. Time was also spent supervising staff and contractors and organising work programs.

Inspector - Tony Martin

Month of June 2022

- Week 1 – Roadside GPG inspection program (Diary farms)
Private works
- Week 2 – Property Inspections- (Kanahooka to Berkely) - Wollongong
- Week 3 – Property Inspections- (Kanahooka to Berkely) – Wollongong
Staff training- Prohibited Matter
- Week 4 – Property Inspections – (Dunmore / Shellharbour) - Shellharbour
Parthenium weed inspection & control.

Month of July 2022

- Week 1 – Annual leave
- Week 2 – Property inspections – (Gerringong/Kiama Heights) - Kiama
- Week 3 – Annual leave
- Week 4 – COVID isolation

Month of August 2022

Week 1 - Property inspections – (Gerringong/Kiama Heights) - Kiama

Week 2 – Reinspections- (Kanahooka to Berkeley) – Wollongong

Week 3 - Property inspections – GDF – (Tongarra) - Shellharbour

Week 4 - Property inspections – GDF – (Tongarra) - Shellharbour

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

Operator – Mathew De Faveri

Month of June 2022

Week 1 – Roadside and reserve spraying – Groundsel bush – Wollongong
Private Works

Week 2 – Roadside and reserve spraying – Groundsel bush – WCC/SCC
Reserve spraying- Alligator weed – Shellharbour.

Week 3 – Roadside and reserve spraying – Groundsel bush – WCC/SCC
Staff training - Prohibited Matter

Week 4 – Reserve spraying- Bitou bush- Shellharbour
Parthenium weed inspection & control.

Month of July 2022

Week 1 – Inclement weather

Week 2 - Reserve spraying – Bitou bush- Kiama

Week 3 – Inclement weather

Week 4 - Reserve spraying - Bitou Bush – SCC/KMC

Month of August 2022

Week 1 – Reserve spraying – Bitou Bush – Northern suburbs -Wollongong

Week 2 – Reserve spraying – Bitou Bush – Northern suburbs -Wollongong
Reserve spraying cliff lines- (Minnamurra) - Kiama

Week 3 – Staff unavailable

Week 4 - Reserve spraying – Bitou Bush – Northern suburbs -Wollongong

Casual staff - Joe Carter and Luke Brash

Month of June 2022

Week 1 – Roadside and reserve spraying – Groundsel bush – WCC

Private works

Week 2 – Roadside and reserve spraying – Groundsel bush – WCC/SCC

Private works

Week 3 – Staff unavailable

Week 4 – Reserve spraying- Bitou bush (Warilla) - Shellharbour

Month of July 2022

Week 1 – Inclement weather

Week 2 – Bitou bush control – Southern suburbs- (Wollongong)

Roadside and reserve spraying – Groundsel bush – Shellharbour

Week 3 – Inclement weather

Week 4 – Bitou bush control - Southern suburbs- (Wollongong)

Month of August 2022

Week 1 – Bitou bush control (Wollongong & Shellharbour)

Week 2 – VCL+ Bitou bush control - Southern suburbs- (Wollongong)

Week 3 – VCL + Bitou bush control - Southern suburbs- (Wollongong)

Week 4 – VCL + Bitou bush control - Southern suburbs- (Wollongong)

Casual staff employed up to 5 days per week.

Notices to control issued – Attachment 2

To be distributed and discussed at the meeting – “Private and Confidential

2. Taskforce Herbicide (Fluproponate)

Taskforce herbicide is used for the selective control of certain grass weeds in pastures including Giant Parramatta grass, African lovegrass, Chilean Needle grass and Serrated tussock. It is a systemic herbicide with low contact activity as it is mainly up taken by the roots where it is translocated to other parts of the plant. This process begins after a minimum 5mm of rain. The herbicide acts very slowly, and results may take up to 3 months to become visible. One of the major benefits of this herbicide is its ability to keep killing germinating seedlings for up to 3 years after initial treatment.

Taskforce herbicide is a valuable tool in the management of many invasive grass weeds in the Illawarra particularly Giant Parramatta grass and Chilean Needle grass. The only other commercially available herbicide to control these grasses is Roundup.

Taskforce is manufactured in Australia by Vee Dri (Aust) Pty Ltd. Unfortunately, the herbicide is in very short supply at the moment and currently unavailable. There are several different factors impacting supply and the manufacturer has advised there is no date for new stock so it will subsequently be temporarily discontinued.

The lack of availability of this product has the potential to severely affect management programs in the Illawarra , particularly on GPG where long term selective control is desired within the existing pasture base. The IDWA is investigating alternate options and NSW DPI are aware of the potential impacts on a number of invasive grass weed programs across the State.

This matter is open for discussion.

Photos: GPG control using fluproponate selective herbicide



Before



After



3. NSW Weed Action Program Grant 2020- 2025

Weeds Action Program (WAP) funding applications for the period 2020/25 were submitted to NSW Department of Primary Industries for approval in early 2020. The IDWA formed part of a regional bid with the South East Local Land Services (SELLS) as the lead agency.

The IDWA had requested funds of \$734,884.00 over the next five years supported by council contributions of \$810,967.00.

\$145,377.00 was being requested in grant funds for the 2022/23 period supported by council contributions of \$179,889.00, for a total WAP of \$325,266.00 in Year 3.

At this stage it is not known what grant funds will be received for the 2022/23 year, as no consultation has been forthcoming. Anecdotally it is expected to be similar to the 2021/22 allocation of \$101,472.00, allowing for a small CPI increase.

This matter is open for discussion.

4. IDWA Website

The IDWA website is currently being updated and will appear as a program under the ISJO banner. The website will detail information on weed related Biosecurity issues across the Illawarra featuring rotating screens encompassing State, Regional and Local Priority weeds, Biosecurity News, and Reports, Papers and Policies.

The website can be viewed at isjo.nsw.gov.au/program/illawarra-district-weedsauthority/

This matter is open for discussion.

5. IDWA Administration costs 2022/23.

As discussed previously IDWA administrative costs to ISJO have been reviewed and adjusted for 2022/23 to better reflect corporate overhead expenses. [Attachment 3](#) provides an overview of the corporate overhead allocations (program administration fees) included in this year's budget. The allocations relevant to the IDWA budget area are listed at the bottom of the table.

Journal transfers will occur on the following dates:

- Q1 – 12 September 2022
- Q2 – 10 October 2022
- Q3 – 9 January 2023
- Q4 – 6 March 2023

2022/23 administrative costs have increased 261% on the 2021/22 payment of \$27,247.00.

This matter is open for discussion.

6. Varroa mite Response

The Illawarra District Weeds Authority has lodged an expression of interest with the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) in the provision of assistance in reducing the risk of any further spread of the Varroa Mite. The timeframe for requested assistance has now been extended until 24 October 2022.

The Varroa mite (Varroa Destructor) was first detected at the Port of Newcastle on 22 June. Varroa mite is the number one biosecurity threat to the bee industry. As a result the Biosecurity (Varroa Mite) Emergency Order 2022 has been enacted and includes working of hives to prevent swarming and removal of honey

supers prior to bee euthanasia. The IDWA staff have offered to assist in its implementation. Varroa mites are tiny reddish brown external parasites of honey bees. On their own they are easily identifiable to the naked eye. Left untreated they will kill any bee hive they infect. Further information on the response to the situation may be found at I: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/varroa



Verroa mite on bee larvae and adult bees



7. Staff Changes

Following the recent resignation of the full time spray operator Mr Luke Brash , Mr Matthew De Faveri has been appointed to fill Luke's position on a 4 day per week basis.

Mathew's position as a casual spray operator has in turn been filled by Mr Tony Carter. Tony will be employed on a casual basis for 2-3 days per week as workload and resourcing permits. Mr Joe Carter (no relation) will continue in his casual position for 2 days per week.

Filling of casual positions should allow the IDWA to continue to maintain its existing operational program, however periodic review of the budget position will need to be undertaken to ensure ongoing sustainability of the Authority.

This matter is open for discussion.

5. Budget Summary of Expenses Incurred and Accrued to 1 September 2022

	Budget 2022-2023	Actual to 1 Sept 2022	Draft Budget 2023-24
Income			
WAP Program			
Council contributions	76,417	(125,066)	80,000
State government Grant	103,500	-	105,570
Sub- Total	179,917	125,066	176,417
Other Programs			
			-
VCL Program			
Council contributions	10,400	-	14,100
Grant	53,150	-	53,150
Priority Weed control program			
Council contributions	85,572	-	84,387
IDWA General administration			
Council contributions	5,000	-	5,000
NSW WAP New Incursion Program			
Council contributions	2,500	-	-
Grant	11,407	11,407	-
Bald Hill Boneseed program			
Grant	-	4,000	-
	4,000	4,000	-
Sub Total	172,029	15,407	156,637
Biosecurity inspection fees	500	-	500
Sundry income (interest)	5,000	-	5,000
Leaseback	9,000	1,600	9,000
Private Works	70,000	348	70,000
Sub Total	84,500	1,948	84,500
TOTAL	436,446	142,421	417,554

	Budget 2022-2023	Actual to 1 Sept 2022	Draft Budget 2023-24
Expenditure			
WAP Program			
Management of high risk sites	9,000	174	9,000
Management of high risk pathways	11,000	1,300	8,000
Property inspections	115,000	15,251	117,517
Urban inspections	8,717	-	10,000
Reinspections (compliance)	31,000	124	29,000
Inspection & control of priority sites	15,250	-	15,000
Community awareness and participation (staff publicity)	3,000	330	5,500
Skilled workforce (staff training)	5,200	-	10,000
Reporting/administration (regional coordination).	2,000	1,423	2,000
Sub- Total	200,167	18,602	206,017
Other Programs			
IDWA General administration	5,000	24,105	5,000
Priority Weed Control Program	103,572	14,427	93,887
VCL Program	63,550	2,945	67,250
NSW WAP New incursion Program	13,907	842	-
Bald Hill Boneseed Program	4,000	-	-
SUB -Total	190,029	42,319	166,137
Private Works	36,750	168	38,900
Sub Total	36,750	168	38,900
TOTAL	426,946	81,332	411,054
Credit (Debit)	9,500	23,205	6,500

5b. Budget Summary of Expenses Incurred and Accrued to 30 June 2022

	Budget 2021-2022	Actual to 30 June 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	10,400
Grant	112,000	112,093	53,150
Priority Weed control program			
Council contributions	75,000	75,000	85,572
IDWA General administration			
Council contributions	4,947	4,947	5,000
NSW WAP New Incursion Program			
Council contributions	8,750	8,750	2,500
Grant	22,000	22,000	11,407
Bald Hill Boneseed Program			
Council Contributions			
Grant	6,000	6,000	4,000
Sub Total	242,797	242,797	172,029
Biosecurity inspection fees	-	-	500
Sundry income (interest)		263	5,000
Leaseback	9,000	8,320	9,000
Private Works	50,000	65,860	70,000
Sub Total	59,000	74,443	84,500
TOTAL	469,997	486,912	436,446

	Budget 2021-2022	Actual to 30 June 2022	Draft Budget 2022-23
Expenditure			
WAP Program			
Management of high risk sites	8,000	10,981	9,000
Management of high risk pathways	7,000	9,065	11,000
Property Inspections	90,000	114,892	115,000
Urban inspections	9,000	7,965	8,717
Reinspections (compliance).	31,000	30,885	31,000
Inspection and control of Priority sites	13,000	20,849	15,250
Community awareness and participation (staff publicity)	3,000	3,157	3,000
Skilled workforce (staff training)	5,200	12,106	5,200
Reporting/administration (regional coordination).	2,000	3,556	2,000
Sub- Total	168,200	213,456	200,167
Other Programs			
IDWA General Administration	4,947	4,500	5,000
Priority Weed Control Program	75,000	116,879	103,572
VCL Program	126,100	121,960	63,550
NSW WAP New Incursion Program	30,750	18,050	13,907
Bald Hill Boneseed program	6,000	6,000	4,000
SUB -Total	242,797	267,389	190,029
Private Works	30,000	38,177	36,750
Sub Total	30,000	38,177	36,750
TOTAL	440,997	519,022	426,946
Credit (Debit)	29,000	(32,017)	9,500

Attachment 1 (Figure1)



