



CHIEF WEEDS OFFICER'S REPORT

For the Period March 2023 – May 2023

Submitted to the Illawarra District Weeds Authority Meeting

Friday 16th June 2023

At Shellharbour City Council

From 9.30am to 12.30pm

To Secretary:

1. Property Inspections / Spraying Program

The season to date has for once shown some consistency with warm temperatures and a drying trend from the constant rainfall that has characterised the last couple of years. The more consistent rain and warm temperatures has in turn created good growing conditions over the last 3 months.

Roadside and Reserve control programs have over the last three months been directed towards Giant Parramatta Grass (GPG), Blackberry and the aquatic weeds Salvina, Water Hyacinth and Alligator Weed. GPG roadside control was limited to priority pathways adjacent to operating dairy farms to minimise the potential impact of GPG entering these properties. Fluproponate supply issues has also meant a rationing of stocks to priority sites/areas.

Private property inspection programs have largely mirrored operational programs, although enforcement action on widespread weeds like Giant Parramatta grass and blackberry will not be undertaken unless a clear biosecurity risk exists and an associated impact is imminent.

Property inspections for Blackberry and GPG were completed in late May along with the final reinspections of all priority aquatic weed sites.

Groundsel bush control on council lands commenced in May, with private property inspections scheduled for June.

The Parthenium weed incursion continues to require monthly inspections and control with only three (3) plants found over the last three months.

A total of 533 parcels of land were inspected over the last three months. Of these parcels, 159 recorded the presence of one or more priority weed. 372 parcels recorded nil infestation. 2 properties involved extension work. Of the 159 properties inspected and recorded with a priority weed, 65 were primary inspections and 25 reinspection's. 69 involved control work on public reserves or council-controlled roads.

One Section 123 Individual Biosecurity Direction has 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 March 2023 to May 2023 as reported under BIS.

Inspection and treatment programs for autumn growing weeds Gorse and Pampas Grass are expected to commence in late June to be followed by inspection/control for Bitou Bush and Boneseed in July/August.

Chief Weeds Officer (CWO) - David Pomery

Month of March 2023

Week 1 – General Administration duties

Week 2 – Assist Bitou bush control- Coastal cliff lines - Kiama

Week 3 – Priority pathway inspections and control – Kiama/ Shellharbour
Shellharbour

Staff Publicity

Week 4 – Coordinate and assist GPG boom and spot spraying priority pathway program- Kiama /
Prohibited Matter inspections.

Week 5 – Long Service Leave

Month of April 2023

Week 1 – Long Service Leave

Week 2 – Annual leave

General administration duties

Week 3 – General administration duties

Organise Drone spraying operations.

Week 4 – Parthenium weed inspection & control.

Update PW Biosecurity Undertaking

Resident complaints – K/S/W

Month of May 2023

Week 1 – Drone spraying operations

Week 2 – Property reinspection's - Jamberoo - Kiama

Week 3 – Night works- Priority Pathways – Wollongong

High Risk Pathway inspections- Wollongong

Week 4 – Long Service Leave

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

Biosecurity Inspector - Tony Martin

Month of March 2023

Week 1 – High risk site inspections- Kiama

Week 2 – High risk site inspections- Shellharbour

Week 3 – High risk site inspections- Wollongong

Week 4 - Property inspections (Tongarra)- Shellharbour

Week 5 – Property inspections (Rose Valley) - Kiama

Month of April 2023

Week 1 – Aquatic weed reinspection's – K/S/W

Week 2 – Long Service Leave

Week 3 – Long Service Leave

Week 4 – Long Service Leave

Month of May 2023

Week 1 - Long Service Leave
Week 2 – Long Service Leave
Week 3 – Long Service Leave
Week 4 – Long Service Leave

Biosecurity Operator – Matthew De Daveri

Month of March 2023

Week 1 – Roadside and reserve spraying – Blackberry - Shellharbour
Week 2 – Roadside and reserve spraying – Blackberry - Shellharbour
Week 3 –
Week 4 – Roadside spraying GPG - Priority Pathways- Kiama
Week 5 – Roadside and reserve spraying – Blackberry - Wollongong

Month of April 2023

Week 1 – Roadside and reserve spraying – Blackberry - Wollongong
Week 2 – Roadside and reserve spraying – Blackberry - Wollongong
Week 3 – Roadside spraying GPG - Priority Pathways- Shellharbour
Week 4 – Roadside spraying GPG - Priority Pathways- Shellharbour

Month of May 2023

Week 1 – Assist drone spraying operations.
Private works + aquatic weed control- K/S/W
Week 2 – Reserve control GB – Kiama/Shellharbour
Week 3 – Reserve control GB – Wollongong
Week 4 – Reserve control GB – Wollongong

Casual staff

Month of March 2023

Week 1 – Private works
Week 2 – Bitou bush control- cliff lines- Kiama
Week 3 – Private works
Week 4 - Private works
Week 5 – Roadside and reserve spraying- Blackberry- Wollongong

Month of April 2023

Week 1 – Private works
Week 2 – Private works
Week 3 – Private works
Week 4 - Private works + VCL control

Month of May 2023

Week 1 – Private works
Week 2 – Private works
Week 3 - Private works + VCL control
Week 4 – VCL control

Casual staff employed up to 3 days per week.

Notices to Control issued - refer to Attachment 2 (to be distributed at meeting) - "Private and Confidential"

2. Bitou bush drone spraying program – Autumn 2023.

As discussed previously Hunter Precision Agriculture P/L have been contracted to undertake drone control work at four (4) sites in the Kiama and Shellharbour LGAs. Initial work commenced at Bass Point and Bombo the week beginning 1st May, however strong winds later in the week prevented completion of programmed spraying at all sites.

Remaining sites at Gerringong/Gerroa have now been rescheduled to the week beginning 19th June. Additional spraying may also be undertaken at Hanson Quarry Bass Point subject to landowner approval.

Notification procedure will be as per the Pesticides Notification Plan 2021- 2026 and the program will be carried out following recommendations contained in the *Best Practice Guidelines for Aerial Spraying of Bitou Bush in New South Wales* published by the Department of Environment and Conservation.

This matter is open for discussion.



Pampas grass control- Bombo quarry



Bitou bush control- Bass Point



3. NSW Weeds Conference – August 7th – 11th- Dubbo

The 22nd NSW Weeds Conference will be held 7th- 11th August at the Dubbo Regional Convention Centre, Dubbo. The theme for the conference is "Weeds Gone Wild". The conference represents an ideal opportunity for IDWA staff to liaise with other in the industry, develop technical expertise and keep up to date with the latest in weed technological advancement.

The CWO will be giving a presentation at the conference entitled "Managing Risk on High-Risk Pathways". A copy of the Abstract is attached (Attachment 3) for members information.

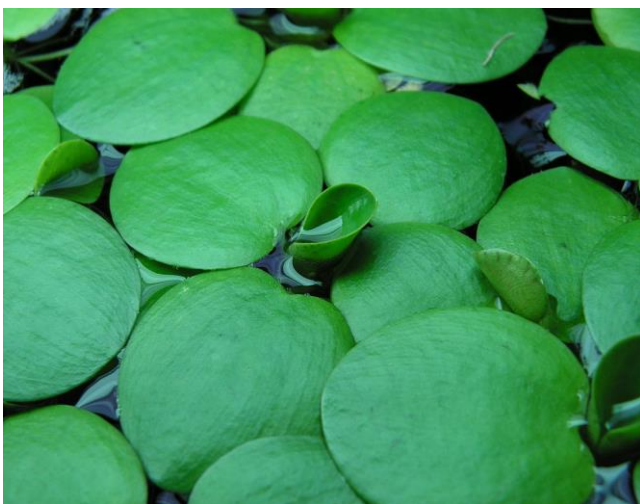
Recommendation: That the CWO, Biosecurity Inspector and Biosecurity Operator attend the 22nd Biennial NSW Weeds Conference in Dubbo in August 2023.

4. Weed Alert - New Incursion

Following a Publicity talk to Yallah TAFE in Late March three (3) new incursions of the Prohibited Matter plant Frogbit (*Limnobium laevigatum*) were reported, along with the regionally listed eradicate weed Water lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*). All plants were confiscated and destroyed.

Not yet widely established in NSW and currently restricted to isolated outbreaks along the coast north of Wollongong, the presence of these weeds in the Illawarra represents the southern limit of the weed in NSW as presently known, and as such they pose a serious threat to the broader region.

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



Frogbit



Water lettuce

5. SE Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2023-2027

The DRAFT SERSWMP has recently been sent to the Minister for endorsement and commencement under the Biosecurity Act 2015. The final plan is a more streamlined document on that developed initially; focussing heavily on new and emerging weeds as opposed to the more common and widespread weeds that typically were the focus of past regional programs.

A copy of the Draft plan is attached for members information. (Attachment 4).

This matter is open for discussion.

6. Night Road Works

As previously discussed, the IDWA has started night spraying operations on identified high risk rural roads where high daytime traffic volumes and limited roadside verge is deemed a Work, Health and Safety issue for staff.

Identified roads include Marshall Mount Road, West Dapto Road and the Princes Highway at Kembla Grange within the Wollongong City Council area and Jamberoo Road and Jamberoo Mountain Road in the Kiama/Shellharbour areas.

Initial operations commenced on the Wollongong roads in May without incident as per Traffic Control Plan 76 (modified) and based on TCAWS Manual 2018 and Australian Standards 1742.3.

Other roads will be assessed over time via the risk assessment process (SWMS) as conditions determine.



7. Budget Summary of Expenses Incurred and Accrued to 1 June 2023

	Budget 2022-2023	Actual to 1 June 2023	Draft Budget 2023-24
Income			
WAP Program			
Council contributions	122,738	122,738	125,000
State government Grant	133,190	133,190	135,000
Sub- Total	255,928	255,928	260,000
Other Programs			
			-
VCL Program			
Council contributions	10,400	10,400	10,500
Grant	58,465	58,465	60,000
Widespread Weed control program			
Council contributions	15,000	15,000	15,987
IDWA General administration			
Council contribution	29,251	29,251	15,500
NSW WAP New Incursion program			
Council contributions	2,500	2,500	2,500
Grant	11,407	11,407	4,000
Bald Hill Boneseed program			
Grant	4,000	4,000	5,000
LLS Roads and Reserves Program			
Grant	45,740	45,740	54,540
Sub Total	176,763	176,763	168,027
Biosecurity inspection fees	500	-	-
Sundry income (interest)	5,000	-	8,000
Leaseback	9,000	7,360	9,000
Private Works	70,000	79,613	70,000
Sub Total	84,500	86,973	87,000
TOTAL	517,191	519,664	515,027

	Budget 2022-2023	Actual to 1 June 2023	Draft Budget 2023-24
Expenditure			
WAP Program			
Management of high risk sites	9,000	10,886	10,000
Management of high risk pathways	21,890	19,227	22,000
Property Inspections	146,000	138,485	146,000
State Priority weed inspections.	6,300	5,385	6,500
State Priority weed control	1,500	3,761	1,500
Inspection and control of Priority sites	21,851	19,461	22,000
Inspection and control of priority pathways	32,250	28,931	33,000
Community awareness and participation (staff publicity)	3,500	3,017	5,000
Skilled workforce (staff training)	6,947	2,515	7,500
SEWAP regional coordination.	5,000	5,809	5,000
Monitor Online sales	1,690	1,245	1,500
Sub- Total	255,928	238,722	260,000
Other Programs			
IDWA General Administration	29,251	14,312	15,500
Widespread Weed Control Program	15,000	35,146	15,987
VCL Program	68,865	5,705	70,500
NSW WAP New Incursion program	13,907	6,339	6,500
Bald Hill Boneseed program	4,000	4,000	5,000
LLS Roads and Reserves Program	45,740	-	54,540
SUB -Total	176,763	65,502	168,027
Private Works	36,750	45,679	38,900
Sub Total	36,750	45,679	38,900
TOTAL	469,441	349,903	466,927
Credit (Debit)	47,750	169,761	48,100

Attachment 1:

Figure 1.

