



CHIEF WEEDS OFFICER'S REPORT

For the Period March 2024 – May 2024

Submitted to the Illawarra District Weeds Authority Meeting

Thursday 20th June 2024

Oak Flats Works Depot

132 Industrial Road, Oak Flats

From 9.30am to 12.30pm

To Secretary:

1. Property Inspections / Spraying Program

The past few months have been ideal for weed expansion with flooding rainfall distributing aquatic weeds further and making some areas difficult to access.

Roadside and reserve control programs have over the last three months been primarily directed towards aquatic weeds such as Salvinia, Water Hyacinth, Frogbit and Alligator Weed, also priority pathway control for Giant Parramatta Grass and other listed regional weeds such as Gorse and Groundsel Bush. Private property inspection programs have largely mirrored operational programs.

Aquatic weed control and inspection programs continued during March and April and finishing early May with all known infested private and council-controlled lands inspected and control programs undertaken.

Water Hyacinth at previously infested council property at Coomaditchie lagoon a listed EEC have remained controlled with no new plants detected and Jerarra dam with minor plants located and treated.

Salvinia at Howards Flowers oval has been treated several times over the summer and good control results had been achieved prior to the major flooding event mid-April. Further monitoring will be carried out.

The Alligator weed located at Dunmore wetland has also remained managed after the Alligator flea beetle damaged large areas of floating Alligator weed, although terrestrial based plants continue to persist but have been reduced from other vegetation growth around wetland edges.

The new incursion of the Prohibited Matter weed Frogbit is continually being monitored and treated at the east Corrimal site. An inspection of the creek system in mid-May after flooding events did reveal a new infestation site on public land 700m downstream at Bellambi. Although less than (10) plants located and treated on site further monitoring is required to prevent any reestablishment. Frogbit was also located at the original infestation site at East Corrimal although only several small plants have been found and treated. Close monitoring over winter may eradicate the weed before warmer months.

Parthenium weed (PW) has had a focus during the past three months with a surveillance exercise undertaken early March with a team of 24 personal from DPI, LLS other Council weed officers and other government organisations which resulted in a small number of Parthenium plants (5) being located and controlled. Since March, another inspection in late April revealed another (1) small plant. 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.

Inspections at High-Risk Sites such as weekend markets has been undertaken during March, April, and May in all three council areas. Plant and flower store holders were given information on listed Priority weed species and store holders inspected for listed weed material. Inspection and control of High-Risk Pathways continues subject to prevailing weather conditions.

A total of 473 parcels of land were inspected over the last three months. Of these parcels, 95 recorded the presence of one or more priority weeds. Four (4) properties involved extension work. Of the 95 properties inspected and recorded with a priority weed, 76 were primary inspections, 7 were compliance related and 12 involved control work on public reserves or council-controlled roads. No Individual Biosecurity Directions have been issued.

[Attachment 1](#) (Figure1) provides a breakdown of IDWA weed activity data for the period March 2024 to May 2024 as reported under BIS.

Inspection / treatment programs for Autumn / Winter weeds Groundsel Bush and Bitou Bush will continue during June, July and August with commencement for the early spring weed Boneseed scheduled for September.

Chief Weeds Officer (CWO) - David Pomery

Month of March 2024

Week 1 – Organise and participate in Parthenium weed rapid response inspection & control program - Kiama

- Property inspections- Knights Hill- Kiama

Week 2 – Carers leave

Week 3 – Property Inspections- Dunmore- Shellharbour

- General administrative duties

Week 4 – WAP briefings and online Teams meeting & webinars

Month of April 2024

Week 1 – General administrative duties

- Parthenium weed Taskforce meeting

Week 2 – 23/24 WAP application submission

- General administrative duties

Week 3 – General administrative duties

- Organise work programs
- Resident complaints

Week 4 – Long Service Leave

Month of May 2024

Week 1 – Long Service Leave

Week 2 – Long Service Leave

Week 3 – Long Service Leave

Week 4 - Long Service Leave

Week 5 - 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 and training schedules.

Operator / Inspector - Tony Martin

Month of March 2024

- Week 1- Parthenium weed rapid response inspection & control program – Kiama
- Property Inspections- Aquatic weeds- Kiama
- Week 2- Property inspections – Aquatic weeds – Shellharbour
- Week 3 – Property inspections – Aquatic weeds – Wollongong
- Week 4 – Property Inspections- Bombo/Riversdale- Kiama

Month of April 2024

- Week 1 – Property Inspections – Bombo/Riversdale - Kiama
- Week 2 – Property Inspections – Dunmore - Shellharbour
- Week 3 – Property Inspections -Dunmore - Shellharbour
- Week 4 – Property Inspections – Aquatics - Wollongong

Month of May 2024

- Week 1 – Property Inspections – Aquatics – Kiama / Shellharbour
- Week 2 – Property Inspections – Aquatics - Wollongong
- Week 3 – High Risk Pathways / Site Inspections – Kiama / Wollongong
- Week 4 – High Risk Pathways Inspections – Shellharbour / Wollongong
- Week 5 – Property Inspections – Jamberoo - Kiama

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 March 2024

- Week 1 – Parthenium weed rapid response inspection & control program – Kiama
- Aquatic weed control - Ludwigia / WH / Salvinia / Frogbit- K/S/W
- Week 2 – Aquatic weed control- Alligator weed – Wollongong.
- Week 3 – Aquatic weed control- Alligator weed – Shellharbour/ Wollongong
- Week 4 – Aquatic weed control- Alligator weed – Shellharbour/ Kiama

Month of April 2024

- Week 1 – Annual Leave
- Week 2 – Annual Leave
- Week 3 – Annual Leave
- Week 4 – Priority Pathways Control - Kiama

Month of May 2024

- Week 1 – Priority Pathways Control - Kiama
- Week 2 – Priority Pathways Control - Shellharbour
- Week 3 – High Risk Pathways / Site Control & Inspection - Shellharbour
- Week 4 – High Risk Pathways / Site Control & Inspection - Wollongong
- Week 5 – High Risk Pathways / Site Control - Wollongong

Casual staff – Tony Carter

Month of March 2024

Week 1 – Private Works

Week 2 – Private Works

Week 3 – Private Works

Week 4 – Private Works

Month of April 2024

Week 1 – Private Works

Week 2 – Private Works

Week 3 – Private Works

Week 4 – Private Works

Month of May 2024

Week 1 – Private Works

Week 2 – VCL Bitou Bush Control SCC

Week 3 – VCL Bitou Bush Control SCC

Week 4 – VCL Bitou Bush Control SCC

Week 5 – Private Works / VCL Bitou Bush Control WCC

Casual staff employed up to 2 days per week.

No Notices to Control issued.

2. Bitou bush aerial spraying program – Winter 2024.

The 2024 drone-spraying program has been rescheduled for July due to the late funding announcement from Crown Lands. The CWO has had preliminary discussion with Garth Short from Hunter Precision Helicopters to undertake drone spraying on possibly two sites as part of the Winter 2024 Bitou bush control program. The sites are Bass Point and the adjoining quarry.

This matter is open for discussion.

3. NSW DPI WAP Funding 2023/24

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.

In August 2023 the newly appointed LLS Regional Weed Coordinator undertook a thorough review of the SE WAP based on feedback from member organisations. A revised SE WAP for 23/24 was subsequently submitted to NSW DPI based on risk. The new program was submitted as a variation to the existing WAP for 22/23, with a new set of activities.

On 28th February 2024 NSW DPI issued a press release via the Weeds Extranet outlining NSW Government changes to all NSW Government grant programs, including the NSW Weeds Action Program (WAP). Regional allocations to Local Control Authorities (LCAs) under the WAP must now align with the Grant Administration Guide. Effectively this meant eligible LCAs had to now reapply for these grants for 2023/2024.

On 19th March 2024 NSW DPI released the updated WAP grant guidelines. The IDWA subsequently submitted a new application with submissions closing on 12th April 2024.

Grant funding of \$147,500.00 was requested, supported by council contributions of \$102,115.00. An additional administration allowance of \$14,500.00 was also requested as part of the WAP being a maximum of 10% of total grant funds requested and used to offset administrative overheads associated with managing the project. A total grant program of \$264,115.00 is now being budgeted for in 23/24 comprising \$162,000.00 grant funds and \$102,115.00 council contributions.

An additional \$88,568.00 of council contributions will be spent outside of WAP supporting extra administrative overheads and other weed related program such as CRIF and widespread weed management.

On 16th May 2024, the IDWA was advised of the success of its submission with funding of \$162,000 approved. The IDWA is awaiting finalisation of the Funding agreement.

This matter is open for discussion.

4. Parthenium weed New Incursion funding 2024/25

The IDWA has applied to the NSW DPI to undertake further surveillance activities on Parthenium weed at Broughton Village for the 2024/25 year. The funds come on top of the combined amount of \$29,000.00 received off NSW DPI in 2021/22 and 2022/23 to contain the initial outbreak. The \$5,000.00 will be used next growing season to utilise the dog detection unit as a clearance activity in areas where Parthenium weed has not been found for several months.

Notification has just been received of the success of this application.

5. Crown Reserves Improvement Fund Program – 2023/24

Grants totalling \$61,465.00 were submitted for Bitou Bush control on Crown Land at three sites, Perkins Beach, Bass Point and Bevan's Island in September 2023.

Perkins Beach - \$23,1,000

Bevans Island \$11,715.00

Bass Point \$26,650.00

Notification has only recently been received of the success of each of these projects. Funding is to be distributed directly to member councils Wollongong and Shellharbour with the IDWA to be coordinating operational activities. As a component of the Bass Point and Perkins beach sites the IDWA will be invoicing Wollongong City (\$6,600.00) and Shellharbour City (\$3,000.00) prior to 30 June as works are currently being undertaken by the IDWA to allow completion of the Authority's contract as part of the 2023/24 program.

6. Fees and Charges 2024/25

As mentioned in the December IDWA meeting and then distributed early December 2023 the IDWA fees and charges for 2024/25 are detailed in [Attachment 2](#).

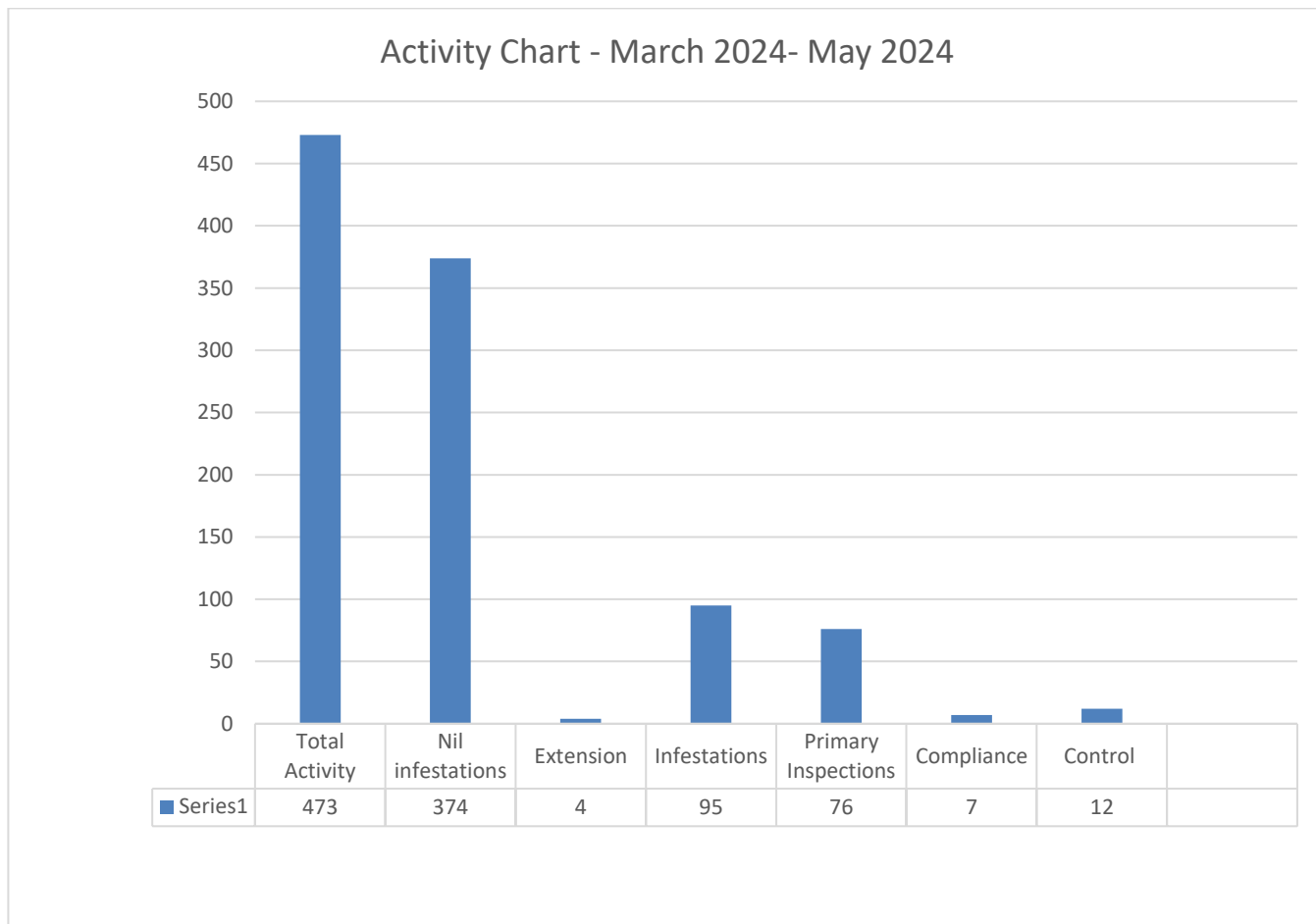
5. Budget Summary of Expenses Incurred and Accrued to 31 May 2024

	Budget 2023-2024	Actual to 31 May 2024	Draft Budget 2024-25
Income			
WAP Program			
Council contributions	102,115	102,115	115,000
State government Grant	162,000	-	170,000
Sub- Total	264,115	102,115	285,000
Other Programs			
			-
VCL Program			
Council contributions	5,100	5,100	5,000
Grant	61,465	-	62,000
Priority Weed control Program.			
Council contributions	20,000	20,000	8,310
IDWA General administration			
Council contribution	63,468	63,468	70,000
Bald Hill Boneseed program			
Grant	5,000	5,000	5,000
LLS Roads and Reserves Program			
Grant	40,821	40,821	40,821
Dunmore Wetlands Program			
Grant	13,890	13,890	13,890
NSW WAP New Incursion program.			
Grant	31,769	31,769	28,500
Sub Total	241,513	180,048	229,521
Biosecurity inspection fees	-	-	-
Sundry income (interest)	5,000	-	5,000
Leaseback	9,000	7722	9,000
Private Works	70,000	71380	70,000
Sub Total	84,000	79,102	84,000
TOTAL	589,628	361,265	598,521

	Budget 2023-2024	Actual to 31 May 2024	Draft Budget 2024-25
Expenditure			
WAP Program			
Management of high risk sites	25,000	15,747	26,000
Management of high risk pathways	25,000	13,774	26,000
Property Inspections	129,115	83,573	137,500
State Priority weed inspections.	8,000	8,704	9,000
State Priority weed control	4,000	5,026	5,000
Monitor Online sales.	2,000	1,739	2,500
Inspection and control of Priority sites	16,000	13,730	22,000
Inspection and control of priority pathways	20,000	14,682	25,000
Community awareness and participation (staff publicity)	2,000	1,873	3,000
Skilled workforce (staff training)	15,000	14,043	10,000
SEWAP regional coordination	3,500	3,719	4,000
Administration	14,500	13,000	15,000
Vehicle running Expenses.		32,731	
Oncosts (25%)		44,152	
Sub- Total	264,115	266,493	285,000
Other Programs			
IDWA General Administration	63,468	78,673	70,000
Widespread weed Control Program	20,000	12,799	8,310
VCL Program	66,565	3,352	67,000
NSW WAP New Incursion program	31,769	4,904	13,000
Bald Hill Boneseed program	5,000	5,000	5,000
LLS Roads and Reserves Program	40,821	-	40,821
Dunmore Wetlands Program	13,890	-	13,890
SUB -Total	241,513	104,728	218,021
Private Works	40,000	26,634	41,000
Sub Total	40,000	26,634	41,000
TOTAL	545,628	397,855	544,021
Credit (Debit)	44,000	(36,590)	54,500

Attachment 1.

Figure 1.



Illawarra District Weeds Authority (IDWA)

Fees & Charges 2024-2025

Private Works Charges

Small Scale Jobs

Works requiring up to 1 hour to complete. **\$130.00 per job**
Includes labour (one operator), plant and chemical
Assumes chemical usage of max 250 ml or 25 litres of mix

Large Scale Jobs

Works requiring more than 1 hour to complete. **\$110.00 per hour**
Includes one operator and all plant / equipment.
Chemical extra

Two operators **\$172.00 per hour**

Biosecurity Act 2015

Section 133 Entry work costs **Actual cost***

Section 133 Entry work Administration Fee **16.5% of section 133 Entry works.**
Minimum Fee \$250.00

Section 133 Entry Work Travel Fee **\$345.00 per site inspection***
Charged when contractors are inducted to site and at completion of work to verify compliance with Direction.

Insertion of IDWA padlock following Entry (if needed). **\$150.00 per padlock**
When gate found locked after notification of Section 133 Entry.

Property inspection and Report (incl Subdivision Clearance Certificate) **\$345.00 per report.**
May be requested by purchaser or vendor with consent of the owner or by the owner in the case of a subdivision approval.

Note: An administration fee of 16.5% applies to all large-scale private works undertaken. Capped at \$550.00 incl GST.

Note: All figures are GST inclusive where appropriate.
*GST exempt