



Dr John Keniry,
Commissioner
Natural Resources Commission
GPO Box 4206
SYDNEY, NSW 2001

5th April 2014

Submission to the Review of Weed Management in NSW

Dear John,

Thank you for providing Landcare NSW Inc with the opportunity to respond to the Review of Weed Management in NSW.

Landcare NSW is the peak Landcare body in NSW. There are over 3000 Landcare type groups in NSW, covering a wide spectrum of activities and interests. Landcare NSW believes that it is important they have the opportunity to directly input their views to the Review. Accordingly we have circulated your information so as to allow any of these groups to respond in the way that reflects the opinions of their individual members.

Landcare NSW only seeks to input on the aspects of your review which concern how the community is engaged and supported to be valued and active participants in the solutions posed by your review and its recommendations.

Please find attached our specific comments on this aspect, and we thank you for the opportunity to provide this input.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Dulhunty".

Rob Dulhunty
Chair, Landcare NSW

Submission to the Review of Weed Management in NSW

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Landcare NSW supports in general the approach as illustrated with your Figure 1 “Proposed roles and responsibilities at the Local Regional and State Scales”.

We particularly like that there is a “feedback loop” approach between the Regional - State scale, - via the Ministerial Weeds Advisory Council, ensuring that there is flexibility for regional approaches, but coordination and consistency across the State for issues beyond the Regional scale, or to address roadblocks at the Regional scale.

We also agree that the approach of the RWC (modelled on the Bushfire Management Committee approach) is a valid one, bringing together key players involved.

However a major oversight in the Review we feel is the lack of investigation into the resourcing and systems required to support active community participation in weed management. This is essential if weed management is to effectively leverage upon the huge financial and in-kind investment undertaken by farmers and groups in NSW.

The Review points to evidence that private landholders spend significantly more on weed management than government - a rough estimation of the figure provided is at least 5 times that of government. (Based on the figure page 69 of the report: \$810 million is estimated to be spent annually by farmers, compared to an estimated \$24.9 million per annum from LCAs, and somewhere around \$50-\$100m annually from State and Federal agencies and programs (based on 3 year cumulative figures \$50m and \$260m investment over a three year period – actual amount spent on weeds was not able to be quantified).

Further there is significant volunteer time spent by Landcare (including Rural groups, Bushcare, Friends of, Coastcare groups) in coordinating and undertaking weed control.

The weeds issue is too large for government’s investment alone. It is thus imperative that the government provides the resourcing to allow the existing investment by farmers, small landholders and the community to be leveraged to provide strategic outcomes.

Rather than invest in “stand alone” support focussed upon weeds alone, this investment should be targeted through the existing trusted local infrastructure that supports community and farmer involvement, or contributes to its development where it is

currently lacking. This support is provided via Landcare Networks, larger scale producer groups, some local governments or some LLS. There is no one size fits all; thus any such resourcing to enable improved delivery of weed management should be directed via each community's desired model of support.

Local Land Services, and Local Control Authorities provide valued technical support, at all scales from the strategic planning scale, down to hands on control methods; however they are often not skilled at group facilitation, community engagement and coordination, all of which are crucial functions if the large existing investment by the community and farmers is to contribute to coordinated and strategic weed management in NSW.

Landholders and community can do far more than merely *"manage weed as required by plans and legislation"* and *"comply with general biosecurity operations"* - they can willingly contribute to achieving a greater good by turning their involvement from an individual investment into to strategic coordinated one, thereby enabling the government to leverage upon their considerable existing investment to the achievements of the weed management strategies and plans. However recognition of the benefit of this and the support that is required for this to occur has been omitted from the current review.

We urge all involved in the review to consider how this support can be factored into the delivery and support of weed management in NSW and we would be only too happy to meet with the Weeds Review team to further discuss this matter.