



Weedscape

Volume 16 Issue 2

Newsletter of the Weed Society of Victoria Inc.

March 2005

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New Executive Committee for 2005

President

Daniel Joubert, Department of Primary Industries, Catchment and Agricultural Services [CAWS Rep]

Past President

Richard Denver, Viperware

Vice-President

David McLaren, Department of Primary Industries

Secretary

Ros Shepherd

Treasurer

Norm Stone, Bayer CropScience

Newsletter Editor

John Ashby, Bayer CropScience

Committee

Greg Wells, Dow AgroSciences; *Michael Hansford*, Department of Primary Industries; *Ian Faithfull*, Department of Primary Industries, Catchment and Agricultural Services; *Kelly Raymond*, Parks Victoria [CAWS Rep]

Co-opted members

Chris Knight, Land Management Systems; *Kate McArthur*, Department of Sustainability and Environment

Country Representatives

Les Mitchell, Agrisearch P/L; *Ron Davies*

Second Victorian Weed Conference

Smart weed control, managing for success

17–18 August 2005

The aim of this series of conferences is to provide information on the latest weed issues relevant to Victoria, particularly for those people unable to attend the Australian Weeds Conference.

This conference will be divided into four topics:

- **Early detection and response.** How can we prevent new weed problems, especially those arising from gardeners and their desire for that different plant?
- **Integrated weed management.** Includes a look at the Australian situation and its relevance.
- **Successful monitoring.** We need to know whether our control measures are successful or not.
- **Getting technical.** What is new and successful in the weed control field.

A number of interesting speakers have been invited to present papers on chosen topics relating to the above session topics and the afternoon sessions have been reserved for attendees to present their own work, either as papers or as posters.

We are inviting you to participate and present at the conference.

Application to present a paper or poster

If you are interested in presenting a paper or poster related to any of the four sessions above please send:-

Name, Organisation, Address, Postcode, Email and paper/poster title plus a 10 line summary, highlighting the significance of the information to the address below. Oral presentations are limited to 15 minutes each, plus 5 minutes question time. As space in the program is limited you may be asked to present a poster instead. All papers and posters will be published in the Proceedings. Information to be with the Secretary no later than 31st March 2005.

Send to the Secretary, Weed Society of Victoria, PO Box 987, Frankston 3199 or email this information to secwssv@surf.net.au no later than 31 March 2005.

Further information and brochures about the conference can also be obtained from the Secretary or the website.

Change to the WSV Constitution

The Constitution was changed at the last AGM. All were in agreement that the date for the AGM be changed to avoid problems encountered organizing and advertising the AGM and associated seminars so close to the January holidays. Section 6. MEETINGS of the Constitution will now read:

'The Executive Committee will convene and hold an Annual General Meeting not later than the last day of April each year and such other meetings as it may consider necessary.'

CAWS Travel Awards

The Council of Australian Weed Societies is seeking nominations for the Annual Young Weed Scientist Travel Award. Details and nomination forms can be found on the CAWS web site. <http://home.vic-net.net.au/~weedss/>

WSV Website Change

The WSV website is in the final stages of testing and will be up and running soon. The Society also now has its own domain name. The new URL is www.wsvic.org.au.

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ANNUAL REPORT 2004–2005

Presented at the 39th Annual General Meeting of The Weed Society of Victoria Inc. 17th February 2005

This year the Weed Society of Victoria has gained 22 new members primarily as a result of the successful seminar held in October with the Melton Shire Council – *Urban Grasslands their management and restoration* and the AGM seminar *Policies for Management – who has responsibility for weed management*. An attempt has been made to encourage 'lapsed members' to rejoin, however unfinancial members have been dropped after three letters in an attempt to keep costs of the Society to a minimum, and so that fees do not need to increase.

Last year's AGM seminar, *What is new in the cropping world?* attracted fewer people than anticipated, but was attended by a number of country members who are not able to attend the usual city-based seminars. At the following AGM the Secretary, Ros Shepherd, was made a life member of the Society.

At the last AGM Rob Richardson resigned from the Executive after 20 years on the committee. He was President for two years and Newsletter Editor from 1993 to 2004. Since resigning Rob has continued to compile the newsletter, *Weedscene*, with John Ashby being the Newsletter Editor. A Certificate of Appreciation was sent to Rob for his years of service to the Society, as was a certificate the previous year to Norm Stone for 20 year's service to the Society, mainly as Treasurer.

The *Urban Grasslands their management and restoration* seminar was very successful, with 136 attendees. We would like to thank the Melton Shire Council for their invaluable help in running and organizing the seminar, especially Bram Mason and Alan Brennan. The field trip after the seminar showed how grasslands can be successfully managed and the undesirable species controlled.

Organisation is well advanced for the Society's 2nd Biennial Victorian Weeds Conference, to be held in Bendigo on 17-18 August. The theme of the conference is *Smart weed control, managing for success*.

Six prizes were sent to students from the country campuses of the Institute of Land and Food Resources, University of Melbourne, consisting of two books and a certificate per student. These prizes are given annually by the Society to students who put together the best weed collection or weed related project for the year. Unfortunately no one was able to attend the ceremonies this year. A travel award of \$1000 was granted to Shiv Gaur of the Depart-

ment of Primary Industries, Frankston, to attend the 14th Australian Weeds Conference at Wagga Wagga where he presented a poster entitled 'Spray-topping as a management tool to reduce seed production of Chilean needle grass infestations'.

This year the Society has committed funds for the preparation of its own website. The address of the site will be www.wsvic.org.au and has been put together by Wendy Tyler of Rood. It should be functional in the very near future. We would like to thank Rob Richardson for looking after the old site over recent years. Up to date information on the Society's activities should soon be available here, with details about seminars and other events.

Some members of the Committee attended the 14th Australian Weeds Conference at Wagga and while there Daniel Joubert and Kelly Raymond attended the Council of Australian Weed Societies (CAWS) meeting. The meeting agreed that the 15th Australian Weeds Conference would be held in 2006 in Adelaide, in 2008 it would be the turn of Queensland to hold the Conference and that it would be held in Victoria in 2010. Four of the present WSV Executive Committee were on the organising committee for the 11th AWC held in Melbourne in 1996. New committee members, particularly young people, would be beneficial for the organization of the 17th Conference.

As a result of the CAWS meeting the Society has approached Sainty and Associates with the offer of a loan of \$5000 to help publish their weed book being compiled by John Hosking and Geoff Sainty. This is a huge undertaking in which they hope to produce the definitive volume on weeds, and will cover all naturalized alien plants and some Australian plants that have become problems outside of their natural environment.

The CAWS executive has now changed. The change over for the CAWS Presidency will now be every two years, after the biennial Australian Weeds Conference. The current President is Andrew Bishop of Hobart with Helen Sims Secretary/Treasurer and Vice President John Virtue of Adelaide.

The WSV Executive Committee has requested a change to the Constitution in regard to the timing of the AGM. This

needs to be ratified by the members attending this meeting. At present the AGM has to be held by the end of February. The Society usually holds a seminar to coincide with the AGM, however organising this seminar can be difficult during the summer holidays. The motion has been put – 'That the constitution be changed to read that the AGM must be held not later than the last day of April each year, rather than February' proposed by Norm Stone, seconded by Greg Wells.

This year our newsletter *Weedscene* has been sponsored by Dow AgroSciences and Eureka! Werribee. We would like to thank them for their continued support of the Society. We would also like to thank Bayer CropScience for hosting our committee meetings.

We would like to thank the executive committee for their work this year in helping to keep the Society functioning and for attending the six committee meetings held over this period.

Daniel Joubert
Ros Shepherd

Grassland Society Annual Conference

From 15–17 June 2005 the Grassland Society of Southern Australia Inc will be holding the Annual Conference, Poster and Trade Display at the University of Ballarat, Victoria. For more information visit www.grasslands.org.au.

Weed Society of Victoria Inc.



MEMBERSHIP RATES

Students	\$20.00
Ordinary	\$40.00
Corporate	\$100.00



Australia's Landscape 'Under Siege'

Australians touring their native land this holiday season may be seeing parts of it for the last time. The native Australian bush, including many National Parks and nature reserves, is being slowly engulfed by an army of alien plants that are wiping out vast tracts of native landscape, along with their plants and animals.

'Few people seem to realise that the rate of landscape loss to introduced plants is accelerating,' warns Dr Rachel McFadyen, Chief Executive Officer of the Co-operative Research Centre for Australian Weed Management.

'Already more than 27 million hectares have been swamped by over 2500 foreign invasive plants, and new threats are emerging constantly as plant imports continue to rise.

'Besides the damage to native landscapes, weeds inflict a \$4-5 billion loss on the economy, mainly through agriculture, and a growing toll of ill-health among people who suffer allergies, lung problems or poisoning,' she says.

'One way to look at this is that it takes almost the entire earnings of the gold industry just to pay for the harm done to our economy by weeds. And that takes no account of the harm done to the environment.'

Dr McFadyen says that Australians are failing to recognise the scale of the current exotic plants menace to the continent. 'Salinity has so far devoured 2.2 million hectares (m ha) of the landscape, and we recognise that as a real problem – whereas weeds dominate 27 million hectares and people hardly seem aware.' Blackberry alone now infests about 8m ha of Australia, while prickly acacia covers 6.6m ha and lantana another 4m ha. Despite the scale and urgency of the problem, total spending by all governments on control of weeds in conservation areas is about \$20 million a year – whereas the National Salinity Plan has a budget of \$1.4 billion.

'As Australians take time off to look at their country over the break, I'd urge everyone to try to be more aware of what they're looking at.

'The 'pretty plants' you see are often weeds, introduced for aesthetic reasons, but now playing havoc with our landscape.

'Take action by talking to politicians at every level – local, state and federal – and encouraging them to take further action on this immense problem.

'And become educated about what you plant in your own garden, remembering that it can escape into the landscape and contribute to its destruction.'

Dr McFadyen says that in the last 200 years Australia has imported some 28,000 species of plants – compared with the 25,000 native species already here – and the rate is increasing, as more and more exotics come in. On past experience, about one in every ten imported plants will become naturalized here and of these, one or two will become a serious weed.

'Plants like bridal creeper or rubber vine can completely smother the landscape and eliminate all native plants and animals. Fortunately we are now having some success in controlling these with an introduced fungus – but with the rate of imports there is always another new weed waiting to establish itself.'

Dr McFadyen says Australia has demonstrated several times in the past century that it is possible to control a major weed – but it requires both willpower and sufficient resources to do so successfully. She says there is a need for a national strategy for dealing with exotic plants:

- a co-ordinated approach to rapid detection and eradication (or containment) of new plant invasions
- improved management of existing weeds using biocontrol and integrated control tactics
- an additional \$20m a year to deal with new invaders before they become a real menace
- a more selective approach to keeping weeds out of Australia.

'It's high time Australians woke up to weeds. They are not some minor nuisance in our backyards. They are wholesale destroyers of our countryside, our health and our prosperity.'

For more information contact:

Dr Rachel McFadyen, Weeds CRC, 07 3362 9388 or 0409 263 817

Peter Martin, Weeds CRC, 08 8303 6693 or 0429 830 366.

WSV DIRECTORY

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