

Having a “great selection of speakers and displays that were very targeted and relevant to the audience” is a big part of what made the Weed Management Demonstration Day - held on Tuesday 23rd August – so enjoyable for one satisfied attendee. These were certainly the objectives of Hawkesbury River County Council when designing the program for the event, which was delivered as part of the Greater Sydney Weeds Action Program 2015-2020 capacity building project.



Andrew Souter from Willoughby Council demonstrating the flame weeder



Jeremy Winer from Weed Technics demonstrating the steam weeder

160 people attended the event which showcased and demonstrated a variety of emerging and less often utilised tools, tricks and techniques used to detect, control and educate about weeds. Parramatta Park provided the perfect location for this type of program due its central Sydney location and position on the Parramatta River. This meant that the capabilities of a Truxor – an amphibious vehicle that harvests and removes aquatic weeds from waterways – could be readily presented to the crowd as they looked on from the riverbank. Other exhibits on the riverbank included a flame weeder (Willoughby Council), a steam weeder (Weed Technics), a spider and forest mulcher (Spider Contracting), and some tools and equipment recently released by Arborgreen. Northwest Recycling Centre had a green waste bin on site full of treated weedy waste that had been upcycled into mulch and compost products. The Yamaha R-Max unmanned aerial vehicle display by Skyline Aviation Group and the demonstration of the weed detector dogs by Hillary Cherry of OEH-NPWS were the highlights of the day.



Hillary Cherry from OEH-NPWS giving cues to Sally the botanist puppy (or weed detector dog)



Richie Benson from HRCC testing some of Arborgreen's new tools, with one of North West Recycling's green waste bins in the background

Central Coast Council was a big contributor to the event, with staff providing demonstrations on how to make and use sponge tongs and how to use a hypo-hatchet. Paul Marynissen, the council's Noxious Weeds Officer, gave a presentation about Snipper, a product that is commercially available in the United States that prevents weedy heritage trees from flowering and therefore from producing weed seed. He is hoping to secure grant funding to implement a trial around the Greater Sydney region in the coming year. There was also an indoor presentation from Den Barber, an Aboriginal cultural burning knowledge holder and practitioner with Blue Mountains, Yellomundee, Gunni Thakun and Koori Country Firesticks Community groups. He shared his experience using cultural burning practices to care for country. Jim Shields, Director of Local Environmental Solutions, shared the ins and outs of goat rental in urban and rural weed management scenarios. Karen Jenkin and Nicola Dixon from HRCC showed the group how easy it is to use Sydney WeedsAPP, the free online weed mapping application developed by Greater Sydney Local Land Services with Weeds Action Program funding.



Local council, bush regeneration contractor, NGO, Green Army and state government agency representatives listening to the indoor presentations



Karen Jenkin and Nicola Dixon presenting Sydney WeedsAPP

Hawkesbury River County Council staff were delighted to have brought together representatives from 20 different local councils, 7 bush regeneration contractors/consultants, 4 community groups, various state government agencies, the Green Army, non-government organisations and private landholders. While attendees identified with roles ranging from bush regeneration professionals to weeds/biosecurity officers to parks/garden/landscape managers to volunteers, all shared the passion of wanting to manage weeds more effectively and the event provided *"a good chance to catch up with others in the industry and to get up to date with current tools and practices"*. Participants were asked for their evaluation and the following feedback from one guest perhaps best summarises the day: *"You brought together practitioners, vendors, and service providers in a pleasant venue, with plenty of time for both presentation and mingling interactions"*.

Thanks to all of the contributors and to the NSW Department of Primary Industries Weeds Action Program for supporting the event. More information about the Weeds Action Program (Greater Sydney project) is available at <http://hrcc.nsw.gov.au/latest-newssydney-wap/> Additional training and events will be delivered as part of the program and will be promoted through that website. Please contact Nicola Dixon, Greater Sydney WAP project officer, for more information on 02 4574 9601 or at wapadmin@hrcc.nsw.gov.au