



# WEEDS ACTION PROGRAM

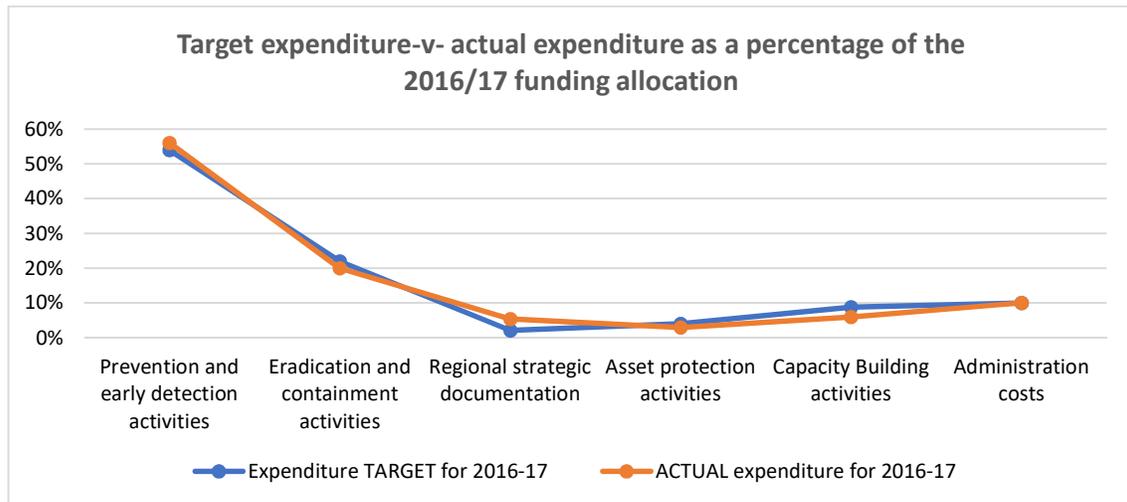
## WAP1520 - Greater Sydney subprogram summary for 2016-17

The NSW Weeds Action Program 2015-2020 (WAP1520) is a NSW Government initiative to reduce the adverse impact of weeds on the environment, economy and community. The WAP1520 focuses on delivering key outcomes of the NSW Invasive Species Plan by assisting agencies to:

- prevent new invasive weed species from establishing
- eliminate or contain small populations of new invasive weed species before they can spread further
- reduce the impact of widespread invasive weed species on priority assets
- develop the skills and knowledge of people in NSW so that they have the ability and commitment to manage invasive weed species.

13 local councils, Greater Sydney Local Land Services and the National Parks & Wildlife Service were partners to the WAP1520 Greater Sydney subprogram in 2016-17, which was administered by Hawkesbury River County Council. Partners spent more than \$2.7 million identifying, minimising, responding to and managing weed risk across the region. This was comprised of \$925K in NSW Government grant funds and \$1.84m of in-kind contributions. Eleven full-time equivalent weed management professionals were employed through WAP funding in 2016-17.

The Greater Sydney subprogram met or exceeded most activity targets in 2016-17, with funds being spent as described in the original project application to DPI.



Project partners fostered relationships with more than 40 key land managers, committees and community groups responsible for weed control, particularly Crown Lands, Sydney Water, Sydney Trains and Roads and Maritime Service to ensure the necessary tenure-neutral, collaborative effort required to effectively address weeds.

## **Subprogram highlights in 2016-17 include:**

### *Regional Coordination*

- The Greater Sydney Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan was successfully completed by the Greater Sydney Regional Weed Committee with significant input from the subregional weed committees. It was endorsed by the Minister for Primary Industries in June 2017.

### *Prevention and early detection activities*

- Partners collectively inspected 13,827 private properties (57% greater than original project target of 8,781), with Blue Mountains City Council, Hawkesbury River County Council and Sutherland Shire Council conducting 82% of the inspections.
- Voluntary compliance (i.e. the rate by which landholders respond to inspection outcomes prior to a legal notice being issued) was as high as 98% in some parts of the region.
- Partners collectively inspected 5,544 km of high risk pathways for high risk weeds, including the Nepean, Hacking and Hawkesbury rivers and tributaries, the Old Hume, Pacific, Princes, Central Coast and Great Western Highways, the South coast, southern Highlands, Blue Mountains and Central coast railway lines, the F3 Freeway, Mona Vale Rd and the M2, M7, M4 and M5 motorways (29% greater than original project target of 4,309km and up by 29% on 2015-16).
- Partners collectively inspected 1,263 high risk sites such as nurseries, waste facilities, florists, landscaping suppliers, car parks, boat ramps and aquariums for high risk weeds. *Salvinia* was removed from a produce outlet and tiger pear was removed from a backyard nursery.
- Inspections were conducted by boat, train, helicopter and on foot, ensuring thorough coverage of the region.
- 14 new high risk weed incursions were identified as a result of inspections e.g. blue water speedwell, senegal tea and drooping tree pear in the Central Coast LGA.
- The quantity of invasive species being sold at Sydney Flower Market markets has declined substantially as a result of the ongoing presence of Strathfield Municipal Council staff. Stall holders now approach council regarding species proposed for sale and for correct identification of species. This information has filtered into the florist community and is promoting healthy change in the industry. Native species are increasingly being displayed and sold as alternatives to weedy species.
- 6 different online traders selling noxious weeds through ebay and gumtree were detected by Hawkesbury River County Council and required to remove the ads and destroy the plants.

### *Eradication and containment activities*

- Partners collectively controlled high risk aquatic weeds over 506.5 kilometres and 82.5 hectares of waterways such as the Hacking River and Hawkesbury-Nepean River and their tributaries.
- Central Coast Council has successfully eradicated *Hygrophila* from two retention basins in Fountaindale following four years of WAP-funded treatment.



- Neither senegal tea nor salvinia has been found in Vineyard Creek for two years and is considered eradicated from this system and the entire LGA by City of Parramatta as a result of WAP funding.
- Although *Cambomba caroliniana* was again observed in Glenbrook Lagoon in the Blue Mountains, divers were immediately engaged to map and control the regrowth and found it in only 5% of the lagoon - an impressive result given the weed infested almost 100 per cent of the lagoon in 2012.
- The Nepean River Aquatic Weed Program, a partnership between Wollondilly, Camden and Campbelltown councils to treat alligator weed and other aquatic weeds along the Upper Nepean and its tributaries, has continued to successfully reduce the biomass available for fragmentation and reinfestation downstream and across the floodplain.
- Partners collectively controlled 66 kilometres and 2,737 hectares of high risk terrestrial weeds along high risk pathways and along the perimeter of significant natural assets.
- WAP-funded treatment of kei apple site in Wollondilly has been successful with no additional plants found in 2016-17.
- Detection, control and mapping of boneseed continues to be a regional priority, with abseiling ropes used in Northern Beaches LGA to control plants growing in otherwise inaccessible locations.

#### *Asset protection*

- Close to 100 hectares of aquatic weed control was conducted along the Hawkesbury-Nepean river system to maintain user accessibility, including harvesting of *Egeria densa* at Tench reserve, salvinia biocontrol (whole of river) and spot spraying of all aquatic weed infestations on the riverfront reserve between Wallacia and Lower Portland.
- The area of water primrose (*Ludwigia peruviana*) impacting St Matthews Farm wetland was substantially reduced in Northern Beaches LGA.

#### *Education & capacity building*

- 11,700 community members engaged with 67 educational weed information displays across the region that raised weed awareness, including a two-week display at the Sydney Royal Easter Show that was staffed by weed officers from across the region. The primary points of discussion with landholders at these stalls related to safe application of herbicide, timing of weed control and weed identification.
- 372 private landholders received one-on-one mentoring and were provided with site-specific, long-term strategies to help them achieve efficient, effective weed management on their properties.
- 386 weed management professionals and volunteers received training that developed their capacity to identify and control weeds and to engage the community in weed management.
- More than 100 florists were engaged during Valentine's Day week as part of a regional engagement initiative to build professional and technical relationships with the industry.
- The weekly #WeedsWednesday post on Central Coast Council's Facebook page continued to attract a weekly viewing of between 3,500 to 7,000 people and this hashtag is increasingly being taken up by other weeds related posts around the state.
- Weed officers were contacted by various garden clubs and invited to talk about weeds and the changes to weed management legislation and priorities.
- 160 people representing local and state government, bush regeneration contractors, community groups, the Green Army, NGOs and private landholders attended a Weed Management Demonstration Day event that showcased and demonstrated a variety of emerging and less often utilised tools, tricks and techniques used to detect, control and educate about weeds. One year later, 50% of attendees had used or further enquired about at least one of the practices presented.