

**Business Paper of a duly convened Ordinary Meeting of the  
Hawkesbury River County Council to be held at 6 Walker St, South Windsor on  
Thursday, 9 April 2015 commencing at 6.00pm**



**1. LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**2. APOLOGIES**

**3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Thursday, **12 February 2015** to be confirmed or altered.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

## 5. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL'S OFFICERS:

### a) From the General Manager

To the Chairperson and Council Members

I submit these Reports for Council's consideration:

#### **ITEM GM 1. REPORT ON MONIES INVESTED**

##### ***Reason for Report: Statutory***

The report presented to the last Ordinary Meeting, displayed the total amounts recorded on 5 February 2015 : investment accounts \$1,720,000, on-call account \$36,241.09 and transaction account \$9,416.00.

Since that report, the following investment decisions have been made:

On 20 February 2015 a term deposit of \$120,000 invested with Bank of Sydney Ltd. was redeemed at maturity.

On 10 March 2015 a term deposit of \$500,000 with ME Bank was redeemed at maturity.

On 11 March 2015 a term deposit of **\$250,000** was invested with Bank of Sydney Ltd. for a period of 91 days at 3.15%, maturing on 10 June 2015.

On 11 March 2015 a term deposit of **\$150,000** was invested with Maitland Mutual Building Society for a period of 91 days at 3.1%, maturing on 10 June 2015.

A term deposit of **\$300,000** remains invested with ME Bank for a period of 182 days at 3.45%, maturing on 8 April 2015.

A term deposit of **\$200,000** remains invested with WAW Credit Union for a period of 272 days, at 3.6%, maturing on 13 May 2015.

A term deposit of **\$600,000** remains invested with AMP for a period of 279 days at 3.5%, maturing on 24 June 2015.

**On 2 April 2015;**

The total amount invested is **\$1,500,000\***.

The total amount invested in the on-call account (at 2.8%) is **\$72,466.15**

The total amount in our transaction account (at 0%) is **\$5,577.02**

The RBA Cash Rate was 2.25%.

*\*This includes Sydney NSW Weeds Action Program funding (\$61,397.13 at 28/2/2015) as per our role as "Lead Agency" for the Sydney Application to Department of Primary Industries. This funding is quarantined against any HRCC operational or capital expenditure, and is specifically for the purposes of the NSW Weeds Action Program as per guidelines established by agreement with the Department of Primary Industries.*

**Recommendation:**

1. That the report is received and information noted.

**ITEM GM 2. HRCC DRAFT OPERATIONAL PLAN 2015-16**

**Reason for Report: Statutory**

**Background**

The main strategic direction for HRCC is provided through the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) framework. It is a requirement of a County Council to review their Business Activity Strategic Plan and Delivery Program following the *Local Government Regulations*, Div 8 guidelines.

On 13 June 2013, HRCC adopted the following documents:

- HRCC Business Activity Strategic Plan (BASP) 2013-2023
- HRCC Delivery Program 2013-2017

On 29 May 2014, HRCC adopted the following document:

- HRCC Operational Plan 2014-2015

As the BASP and Delivery Program are still current, and HRCC is still in the process of implementing its guidance, only the Operational Plan is required to be updated for this year.

**Operational Budgeting**

**The Bottom Line**

HRCC budget is set to aim for a balanced budget in 2015/16 (+\$2,785). This is comparable to the previous year target, and keeps our organisation in a sustainable fiscal position. It also means that we are delivering the maximum service outcome and value for money back to the community in relation to our resources.

**Income**

The income for HRCC is based on a combination of Council Contributions (50%) and operating grants from external authorities (35%). These grants have existing contract arrangements with the Department of Primary Industries. The remaining 15% is as a result of HRCC's own income generation for external services.

**Expenditure**

HRCC's biggest expenditure item is staff. The organisation will move into the new FY with 13 positions, same as the previous year, representing 68% of our costs. The

remaining 32%, in declining order is composed of; depreciation, plant running, administration, governance, depot and office maintenance.

This expenditure plan is designed to reflect our increasing role in landscape surveillance, inspection and strategic pest plant control, as guided by the HRCC Delivery Program 2013-2017. This requires higher labour inputs and less capital inputs. The high rainfall in the previous few seasons also means that weed growth has declined in aquatic environments, but increased in terrestrial landscapes.

### **Capital Budgeting**

HRCC Capital disposal and purchases are made to directly assist with the delivery of operational result targets as they relate to our Delivery and Operational Plans. They have been made against the background of two continuing trends:

***Climatic*** – Our region is experiencing a period of adequate rainfall and flooding. This means we are doing less control of floating aquatic weeds, but more control of weeds on the river banks and broader landscape. This has the effect of reducing our capital requirements but increasing our labour requirements.

***Policy Guidelines*** – NSW Government policy in relation to weed management increasingly focuses on weed detection, eradication and education.

***Funding Sources*** – As a result of policy trends funding priorities have been increasingly focused on surveillance, new weed incursions and upper catchment activities. Whilst this requires less use of heavy plant, it requires higher staff levels, GIS computer mapping capabilities, and mobility to move around the landscape.

#### ***Asset Purchases 2015-16***

- Toyota Hilux dual cab 1 - \$40,000
- Toyota Hilux dual cab 2 - \$40,000
- Toyota Kluger - \$50,000
- Weed Mapping Hardware - \$5000
- Computer and IT upgrades - \$10,000
- Photocopier / Printer - \$15,000
- Eye/Face Wash Shower - \$4000
- Wood Chipper - \$10,000
- Herbicide Spray Unit - \$5000

**TOTAL CAPITAL PURCHASES = \$179,000**

#### ***Asset Disposals 2015-16***

- Photocopier / Printer - \$2,000
- Toyota Hilux dual cab 1 - \$25,000
- Toyota Hilux dual cab 2 - \$25,000
- Toyota Kulger - \$30,000
- Wood Chipper - \$5000

**TOTAL ASSET DISPOSALS = \$87,000**

## **Operational Delivery**

The operations of HRCC are the activities of weed control, weed inspection and surveillance, capacity building and governance. The HRCC Business Activity Statement 2013-2023 sets the guiding strategic principles of the activities undertaken by our staff. These are:

### **Strategic Objective 1**

Prevent the establishment of new weed species within our County – Exclude

### **Strategic Objective 2**

Eliminate the spread of new and existing weed species within our County – Eradicate or Contain

### **Strategic Objective 3**

Reduce the impact of widespread weeds on key assets – Effectively Manage

### **Strategic Objective 4**

Ensure the community, industry and government stakeholders have the ability and long-term commitment to manage weeds – Build Capacity

These strategies are then used to set measurable targets for each of our activities.

In summary, for works 2015/16, the following targets have been set:

	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
<b>Total Weed Control</b>	164HA	105HA	90HA
<b>Total Private Property Inspections</b>	2157	1300	1300
<b>Total Commercial Inspections</b>	255	250	250
<b>Weed Mapping</b>	100HA	100HA	300HA
<b>Field Days</b>	14	12	6
<b>Property Weed Mgt. Plans</b>	15	15	15

ENCLOSURE	HRCC Draft Operational Plan 2015-2016
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### ***Recommendations:***

- 1. That the General Manager's report on HRCC DRAFT OPERATIONAL PLAN 2015-16 is received and noted.*
- 2. That the General Manager communicates to each constituent Council manager the cost of HRCC Membership contribution is \$165,994 +GST for 2015/16.*
- 3. That the General Manager consults directly with our member Councils via the HRCC Management Network.*
- 4. That the Council places on public exhibition for a period of 28 days the Draft HRCC Operational Plan 2015-2016, and the General Manager reports back to the next ordinary meeting on any submissions received and changes made.*
- 5. That the Council intends to adopt the plans, with any changes, at the next Ordinary Meeting on 11 June 2015.*

## **ITEM GM 3. HRCC HIGH RISK WEEDS POLICY**

### ***Reason for Report: Decision Required***

#### **Background**

HRCC has been evolving the strategy used for both weed control and inspection over the past three years. This has been in response to changes in legislation (NSW Noxious Weeds 1993) and NSW Government Policy (NSW Invasive Species Plan). Essentially the change could be described as moving away from reactive responses to widespread weeds (such as blackberry and lantana) to focusing on eradicating weeds that are new incursions. This is due to the much increased return on investment on the new approach.

Additionally, HRCC Weed Inspectors are being called to inspect properties for weeds on an adjoining neighbors land. It often becomes quickly evident that a dispute between the neighbors is underway, and they are seeking the County Council to force an action from their neighbor. On occasions there is a valid reason for the complaint, such as public safety or human health impacts caused by the weed. However, most often the weed in question is very low priority and causing no community or environmental impact. These processes can absorb significant time and resources of the County Council which could be much better directed to higher priorities. It is therefore felt worthwhile to develop a policy that supports the credible use of Council resources and the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993*.

This policy was first put to Council in draft format on 12 February 2015 as the "Draft Weeds on Private Property Boundaries Policy". During the consultation phase it was decided to change the name and increase the scope of the policy to the "High Risk Weeds Policy" as it more accurately reflects the action the policy is seeking.

#### **Public Submission Process**

At the Ordinary Meeting of 12 February 2015, the Council resolved to place on exhibition the policy for 28 days.

The General Manager placed the policy on the Council website and directly emailed the HRCC Management Network delegates. The exhibition period was from 16 February 2015 to 19 March 2015 (31 days)

Council received one submission from Blacktown City Council (Ms Justine Clark). The submission and HRCC response is enclosed with this report.

#### **Document Changes**

There were a number of changes made to the document, which had the effect of shifting the focus away from private property boundaries to high risk weeds generally. These changes were made as we felt it would support HRCC more strongly in terms of maintaining focus on our operational strategies, but still allow the flexibility to address widespread weeds as appropriate,

## **Financial Implications**

This policy will have a positive impact on Council as any costs of policy implementation will be offset by reduced officer involvement in civil disputes.

ENCLOSURE_GM3:	HRCC High Risk Weeds Policy 2015
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### ***Recommendations:***

- 1. That the report is received and noted.*
- 2. That Council adopts the HRCC High Risk Weeds Policy.*

## **ITEM GM 4. HRCC POLICY REVIEW – HRCC ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

### ***Reason for Report: Statutory***

The HRCC Workplace Bullying Policy was last reviewed by Council in June 2013. It has been written to protect both staff workplace bullying, and management from vexatious claims made against them. There has only been occasional claims of bullying since this policy was introduced (2011) and the policy guidelines were employed to resolve the incident in all cases.

This policy review therefore only presents minor updates and changes.

HRCC staff have recently been consulted about this policy by the General Manager, and all staff are given time to make a submission in line with this review.

ENCLOSURE_GM4:	HRCC Workplace Bullying Policy April 2015
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### ***Recommendations:***

- 1. That the report is received and noted.*
- 2. That the Council places on public exhibition the HRCC Anti-Bullying Policy Review for a period of 28 days.*
- 3. The General Manager reports back to Council at the next Ordinary Meeting on any submissions received.*



## **ITEM GM 5. DRAFT SUBMISSION TO PENRITH LAKES PARKLAND VISION**

### ***Reason for Report: Informative***

### **Background**

Penrith Lakes is a 1,940HA site on the eastern side of the Nepean River, within 2km of the Penrith City CBD. Since the 1980's, Penrith Lakes Development Corporation (PLDC) has operated a sand and gravel quarry on the site. In 1987 a Deed of Agreement between PLDC and the NSW Government allows for the transfer of land back to the State Government once mining operations close. The site currently hosts the Sydney International Rowing Centre and the Penrith Whitewater Stadium. The mining has approximately 5 months extractive life remaining.

In 2011, the NSW Government established the Office of Penrith Lakes, within the NSW Office of Sport. They have recently released a Draft Vision Plan for Penrith Lakes Parkland.

### **Draft Plan Overview**

The draft plan breaks the site into seven precincts with different management goals. These include areas focussing on sport, leisure and passive recreation, urbanisation and wildlife and heritage protection. Each precinct is considered in detail and has proposed a character, objectives and potential future use.

The plan makes clear that the public open space, including the lake system, will be managed by the NSW Government as a Sydney's fourth regional park – Penrith Lakes Parkland. The others are Centennial Parklands, Sydney Olympic Park and Western Sydney Parklands.

### **Draft Submission**

It was resolved (#1759-2) at the Ordinary Meeting of 12 February 2015 that the General Manager prepares a draft submission for the next meeting. This has been included as an attachment to this report. The focus of the submission has been on the long terms weed management requirements of the Penrith Parklands Plan.

### **Recommendations:**

3. *That the report is received and noted.*
4. *The General Manager lodge the submission with the NSW Office of Penrith Lakes by 30 April 2015.*

## **ITEM GM 5. DRAFT SUBMISSION TO PENRITH LAKES PARKLAND VISION ATTACHMENT 1**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Penrith Lakes Parkland Draft Vision Plan. Hawkesbury River County Council is the local weed control authority for Penrith, Blacktown, Hawkesbury and The Hills Shire local government areas. Therefore, the area covered by our plan is in the jurisdiction of our authority.

HRCC has been operating since 1948 and has built up extensive local knowledge in the areas of weed management and their associated cost impacts. We are happy to work with the NSW Government to share this knowledge during the consultation process to ensure significant cost burden of weed control is not transferred to the community during the transition to Penrith Lakes Parkland.

### **Potential Weed Issues within the Parklands**

The plan highlights that the completed project will include up to 640HA of open fresh water. This water will not be part of the main river system, and therefore subject to very low flow rates and variable water depth. These are three very strong environmental conditions that favour the growth of aquatic weeds.

Additionally, it will be fed primarily from stormwater (treated by 11 “remedial ponds”) and topped up from the main river system. It is unlikely that these lakes will remain free from existing widespread weeds such as salvinia, water hyacinth and Egeria even if they are at the time of transition.

In relation to terrestrial weeds the site is likely to have up to 830HA of “parkland”. These will be areas of open space, currently either under extractive processing or primary rehabilitation. It takes a period of five to ten years before a site is often established well enough to enforce defence against weed invasion. In the transition between PLDC and NSW Govt. this needs to be well managed to ensure the community is not lumbered with the double cost of rehabilitation and weed control.

It should be noted, that HRCC will not be legally responsible for the control of weeds under this draft plan. The public land is earmarked to return to the NSW Government and not Penrith City Council. However, HRCC will remain the Local Control Authority for purposes of surveillance and inspection.

### **Potential Weeds Issues impacted by Parklands.**

The lakes scheme has indicated that it is likely to use water from the main river system. This will be required to counter the effects of evaporation from 640HA of open water. This will cause reduced flow levels, especially during drought conditions when 80% of water flows are already from treated sewerage. Reduced flow levels will lead to a shallower, warm river which advantages aquatic weed growth between Penrith Weir and Windsor bridge. This stretch of river is currently the most susceptible to aquatic weed invasion.

### **Recommendations**

- A comprehensive weed survey be completed of the lakes site and surrounding catchment
- To ensure long term viability of the lake system, a programmed maintenance regime, similar to the one HRCC currently has on the open river system is implemented at the transition point of NSW Government management of the lakes.

## **ITEM GM 6. LANTANA CONTROL IN THE HAWKESBURY LGA**

### ***Reason for Report: Decision Required***

On 11 March 2015, the General Manager received a letter from Hawkesbury City Council relating to a resolution of their 24 February 2015 Ordinary Meeting. The resolution requested that HRCC seek to upgrade the noxious weed of Lantana to Class 1 or 2 (it is currently Class 4 which does not require compulsory eradication from land).

In preparation for the 24/2/15 meeting at the request of Clr. Warwick Mackay OAM, the General Manager prepared an information brief on the status of Lananta control in the Hawkesbury LGA, and this has been attached to this report.

The report acknowledges that Lantana is a problematic and widespread weed in the Hawkesbury LGA, and highlights that extensive control is underway. However, in line with the current State Government policy on noxious weeds declaration (the ultimate approval authority) it is unlikely to be given a class upgrade for the following reasons:

- It is so widespread that effective landscape control is not feasible
- It would require substantial increases in funding and resources to meet requirements on public land.

### **Recommendations:**

1. *That the report is received and noted.*
2. *That Council does not support an application to upgrade Lantana to Class 1 or 2.*

## **ITEM GM 6 - INFORMATION BRIEF FOR HAWKESBURY CITY COUNCIL ATTACHMENT 2**

### **Lantana Control in the Hawkesbury LGA**

Prepared by Chris Dewhurst, GM, HRCC. 24 Feb 2015.



**Figure 1: *Lantana camara* - the most widespread weed in the Hawkesbury.**

#### **Background**

Lantana (*Lantana camara*) and creeping lantana (*Lantana montevidensis*) are shrubs that have been grown as ornamentals and are now major weeds. Lantana is one of Australia's most debilitating invasive weeds. It is recognised as a Weed of National Significance because of its impacts on primary industries, conservation and biodiversity, and the extent of its distribution (Ensbey 2008). It is a shrub which forms dense thickets ranging from 2-4m. Lantana currently infests more than four million hectares of land across Australia, mainly east of the dividing range, from north Queensland to southern NSW (Ensbey 2008). Lantana is widespread in the Hawkesbury district favouring roadsides and neglected pasture areas.

The *Noxious Weeds Act 1993* (the Act) is regulated in the Hawkesbury LGA by Hawkesbury River County Council. Under this legislation Lantana is listed as Class 4 noxious. This means the plant must be "managed in a manner that continually inhibits the ability of the plant to spread" ('Weed Control Order 30' 2014). This somewhat ambiguous aim means Lantana cannot be sold, propagated or knowingly spread, but does not allow HRCC to enforce eradication. This would require it to be listed as a Class 1 or Class 2 noxious weed.

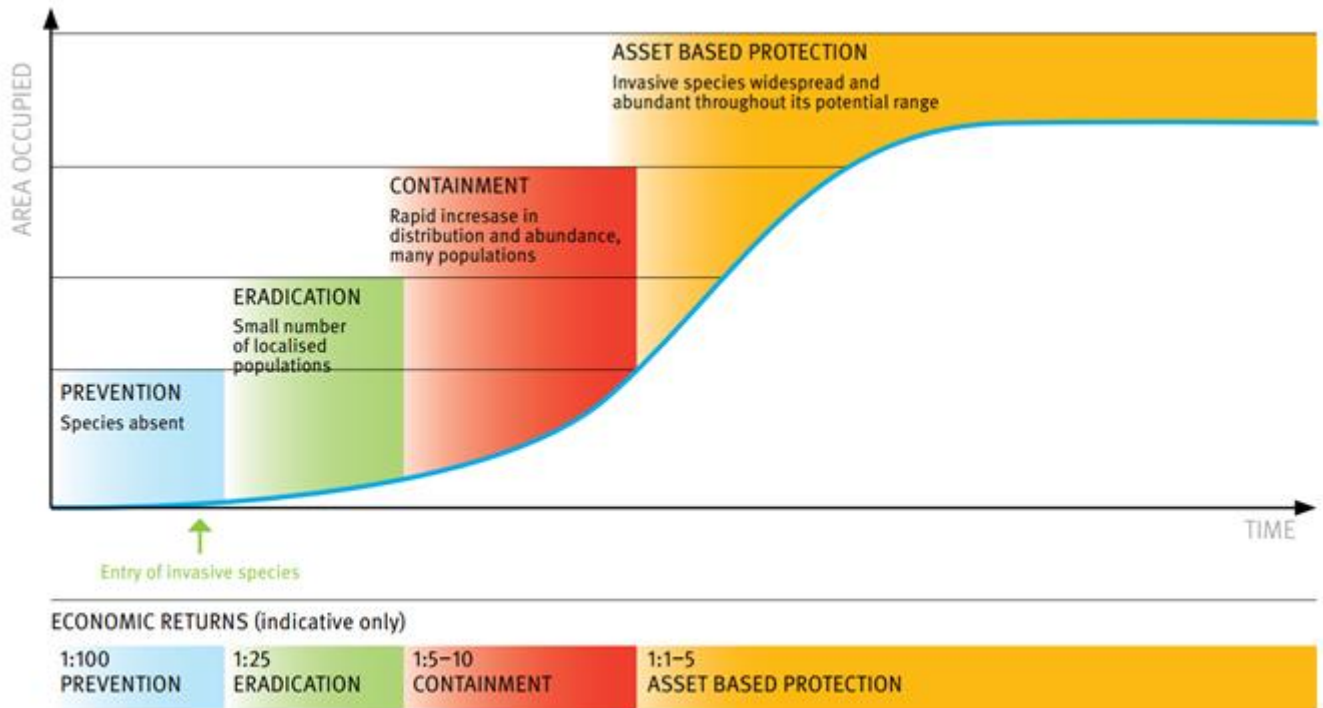
#### **Noxious Weeds Process**

The listing of a plant as noxious, or changing its class can only be done under the Act by the Minister for Primary Industries. The process is that an application is made by the local control authority (HRCC) by 30 June, for consideration the following year. The application is considered by the Noxious Weeds Advisory Committee and recommendations are made to the Minister. (*Policy - Declaration of noxious weeds 2009*)

#### **NSW Weed Declaration Strategy**

Declaring a weed noxious does not, in itself, control a weed or provide benefits to the community (NWAC 2009). The benefits of declaring a plant noxious *must* outweigh the costs of doing so, and control must be a *feasible* option. The NSW Government has adopted the NSW Biosecurity Strategy which prioritises the declaration of noxious weeds and the resourcing of control programs to focus on the new or emerging weeds. This is because the return on investment of such strategies is shown to be 100 times greater than attempting to

control widespread weeds. (See Figure 1). In this state-wide context Lantana is given a very low priority as it is “abundant throughout its potential range”.



**Figure 2: The Weed Invasion Curve (Source: NSW Biosecurity Strategy 2015-2020)**

### Local Weed Strategy

Lantana control is still undertaken extensively in the Hawkesbury area by both the Hawkesbury City Council and the Hawkesbury River County Council. Specific sites are selected for “asset protection” and placed on a program that also captures other widespread weeds such as Blackberry and Privet. These sites are selected public land conservation areas, high in biodiversity or they may have amenity value to the community. HRCC also responds to community requests and undertakes appropriate control as required. HRCC does not enforce Lantana control on private land due to the restrictions of its declared Class (ie Class 4).

### Conclusion

Whilst it is generally acknowledged that Lantana has become a species which has escaped beyond feasible control in a landscape context, effective, site-based control programs do exist in the Hawkesbury LGA. A successful example of this can be found along Redbank Ck in Peel Park (North Richmond. However this has taken years of sustained effort by the council and community. As it is still technically a noxious weed, proposal for specific Lantana control sites should be addressed to the Hawkesbury River County Council via the General Manager, Chris Dewhurst ([gm@hrcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gm@hrcc.nsw.gov.au)) .

### References

- Ensby, R. 2008, 'Lantana', *Primefacts*, no. 673, pp. 1-8.
- Noxious Weeds Advisory Committee, N.W.A.C. 2009, *Noxious Weeds Handbook for Councils and Councillors*, <[http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/312288/Noxious-Weeds-Handbook-for-Councils--and--Councillors-complete.pdf](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/312288/Noxious-Weeds-Handbook-for-Councils--and--Councillors-complete.pdf)>.
- Policy - Declaration of noxious weeds* 2009, <[http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/287915/o067-declaration-nox-weeds.pdf](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/287915/o067-declaration-nox-weeds.pdf)>.
- 'Weed Control Order 30' 2014, in N.D.o.P. Industries (ed.)NSW Government Gazette. NSW Department of Primary Industries, 2015, NSW Biosecurity Strategy 2015-2020

## **ITEM GM 7. STAFFING**

### ***Reason for Report: Informative***

Since the last Council meeting held on 12 February 2015 Council has employed a casual Administration Officer, Ms Sue Holz.

HRCC currently employs a total of 14 people (at FTE of 13.9).

### ***Recommendation:***

- 1. That the report is received and noted.*

## 5. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL'S OFFICERS:

### (b) Operations Manager

To the Chairperson and Council Members,

I submit the following for your consideration:

#### **ITEM OM1. OPERATIONAL REPORT**

##### ***Reason for Report: Statutory***

Weather patterns have stabilized substantially over the last couple of months, allowing work teams to hit noxious weeds hard in reserves and along roadsides. Summer weather conditions had encouraged massive growth of weeds across the county and work teams are pressing hard to treat as much as possible before cooler weather sets in.

##### **Hawkesbury LGA**

Aquatic weed control has continued to be the focus of activities this reporting period in the Hawkesbury LGA. Senegal tea plant has been treated in the Hawkesbury River, as well as Alligator weed, Salvinia, Primrose Willow and Water Hyacinth.

An extensive herbicide application has been carried upon the Hawkesbury River from Yarramundi downstream to Lower Portland. The primary target of this spray program is Senegal tea plant that is proving to be a persistent weed species. Senegal tea plant is a class 1 weed within our county, a high priority. Although this weed's distribution is not extending greatly, it is recovering from herbicide treatment. A three herbicide application per year similar to Alligator weed is being implemented this year in an effort to rein in this weed species.

Council waterfront parks and reserves have been treated for Alligator weed. This species is most commonly found at Yarramundi reserve, Navua reserve, North Richmond Park and Little Manly. Brush off herbicide has been used to treat these infestations and the Alligator weed flea beetle has been very active during late December 2014 and January 2015.

Salvinia that had entered the river from Yarramundi lake, is currently being decimated by the biological control – Cyrtobagous weevil. Sink tests, conducted by HRCC inspectors has revealed dense populations of weevil in Salvinia from Yarramundi, downstream to Windsor. These weevil populations will stay active whilst there is Salvinia in the river for them to consume.

Redbank creek at North Richmond has been treated for Senegal Tea plant. Local residents frequently report the status of this class 1 menace, so that HRCC staff can treat this weed at the optimum time.

Whilst preparing to control Senegal tea plant, inspectors found a growing population of *Salvinia* in the lower two thirds of the creek. This infestation has now been inoculated with *Cyrtobagous* weevil, which is expected to destroy 90% of the weed population. Herbicide application will be used to address the residual plants.

HRCC inspectors conducted surveillance on the Redbank creek catchment to locate the source of the *Salvinia*, no upstream infestations were located, leading to the probable cause being direct introduction of *Salvinia* to Redbank creek from one of the council reserves.

## **Penrith LGA**

Weed control activity in the Penrith LGA continues treating both terrestrial and aquatic weed infestations across reserves, roadsides, parks and water ways.

Work crews have been treating Green cestrum, Blackberry, African olive and Mother of Millions.

Green cestrum has been treated at Tench reserve, Regentville, Llandilo and Werrington. African olive has been treated at Mulgoa, Wallacia, Luddenham and Cranebrook.

Blackberry spraying and re-treatment continues along roadsides with extensive works being conducted on Mamre road, Luddenham road and Erskine Park road.

Mother of Millions is showing indications of having massive growth this season, weed control teams have already started control on this species in the Mulgoa area, where Mother of Millions is in the highest densities.

Aquatic weed control in the Penrith LGA has focused on *Salvinia*, Alligator weed and *Ludwigia peruviana*. Alligator weed control continues along council reserves and in affected stormwater infrastructure. Herbicide application combined with the action from the flea beetle bio-control is keeping Alligator weed infestations in check, cooler weather in the region will see plant activity reduce quickly.

*Salvinia* in the Nepean River is suffering from *Cyrtobagous* weevil damage. The biocontrol agent quickly colonised the riverborne *Salvinia* infestations and has successfully controlled 80% of the *Salvinia* at the time of reporting.

*Ludwigia peruviana* is a problematic aquatic weed species inhabiting the riparian zones along the Nepean River. Weed control teams have conducted a control program below the Penrith weir, cutting and painting this species and placing the cut material high on the river bank so that germination and regrowth from the *Ludwigia* is not a threat. This program finished at Cassolla Place, North Penrith. A further control program starting North Penrith and heading downstream is scheduled for late April 2015.

## **The Hills Shire LGA**

Weed control in the Hills Shire has focused on terrestrial weeds such as Green cestrum, Blackberry, Boneseed and Mother of Millions, aquatic weeds that have been treated include Senegal tea plant, Alligator weed, *Saggitaria*, Peruvian *Ludwigia* and Willow leaf primrose.



Terrestrial weed control has been conducted intensively on the Withers road corridor that runs along Smalls creek. Green cestrum, Blackberry, Mother of millions and Privet have been treated in this high value EEC corridor.

Glenhaven road has been treated for African olive, Green cestrum and Mother of millions. Green cestrum in particular has expanded its distribution since the last sweep of this road had been conducted.

Boneseed germination remains high in the core infestation. Weed control teams have been concentrating their efforts on Bella Vista, Norwest, Castle Hill and Maraylya in the north west of the LGA.

Aquatic weed control has again taken a substantial amount of resources. Senegal tea plant, Ludwigia, Alligator weed and Saggitaria continue to grow at a steady pace. Weed control teams are successfully reducing aquatic weed numbers and vigour.

Aquatic weed control within the LGA is expected to continue at current levels until the end of April. Areas treated include Kyle avenue – Glenhaven, Darling Mills creek, Cattai creek, O'haras creek, Smalls creek and Excelsior creek.

## **Blacktown LGA**

Work teams have been busy in the Blacktown LGA over the last two months. Both terrestrial and aquatic weed species have been targeted within council's reserves and along roadsides. Reserve sites that have been treated for noxious weeds include: Knudsen reserve, Nurragingy reserve, RAAF Park, Timbertop reserve, Banks reserve, Bungarabee reserve and council managed lands around Prospect, Seven Hills and Doonside. The primary target weeds were: African boxthorn, Green cestrum, Privet, Blackberry, Boneseed and Smooth tree pear.

Aquatic weed control over the last two months has seen crews targeting Alligator weed and Ludwigia in Bungarabee creek, Eastern creek, Bells creek and Plumpton wetlands, Joseph Franks Park and storm water infrastructure within the area. Bungarabee and Eastern creeks were also treated for Ludwigia, treatment for this species will need to be ongoing as Ludwigia is notoriously persistent.

Blacktown council staff had informed HRCC of Salvinia that had released into Woodcraft Lake. Work teams have spent two days removing this Salvinia by hand amongst the native reed beds, at the time of reporting the Salvinia requires a further day to have it completely removed from the lake.

The noxious weed inspection program continues to build on previous achievements. The new county noxious weeds list is now in force and a prominent inclusion amongst the new weeds is the Amazon frogbit - an aquatic weed that has been increasingly sold by aquariums and has been extremely popular amongst fish keepers. This plant is now a Class 1 noxious weed within NSW.

Both in store and online inspections have been fruitful, an aquarium shop in St. Marys collected frogbit from a prospective seller and kept the plants so council staff could dispose of the weed.

***Recommendation:***

1. *That the report is received and noted.*

**ITEM OM1. AQUATIC WEED REPORT*****Reason for Report: Statutory***

It has been a busy period of time for aquatic weed activity on the river over the last couple of months. Favorable weather conditions have kept aquatic weed activity high, which has aided weed control efforts.

Senegal tea plant has again figured prominently in control activities, shallow tidal flats above Windsor have now been fully treated thanks to a perfect combination of weather and morning high tides, allowing deep access into these challenging areas. Senegal tea plant has also been treated in the middle stretches of the river and the entrance of Cattai creek after some dislodged weed mats had anchored themselves along the sandy foreshore around Ebenezer.

Salvinia, throughout the river from Castlereagh through to Pitt town is fast disappearing as Cyrtobagous weevil bio-control builds to peak levels. Council inspectors have been excited about the quantities of weevils they have been finding, when sampling Salvinia at various locations along the river. Sink testing of Salvinia has seen fist sized Salvinia plants crawling with dozens of weevil, this result has been experienced from all river based Salvinia infestations.

Liverpool City Council weed control staff have requested some of the locally bred weevils to introduce into Salvinia infestations above the South creek catchment, this action will also benefit weed control in our county, as Salvinia does move into our county via South creek.

Inspection of the weed containment booms within the river has not yielded any surprises – some residual Salvinia, the odd piece of Water hyacinth and general river debris have turned up at all booms, staff have released natural woody debris where possible to allow habitat recruitment processes to flow as naturally as possible. Alligator weed densities are now largely in check, all waterfront parks and reserves have been treated a number of times, and the Flea beetle bio-control agent has returned a good control result in harder to treat locations.

Egaria densa is currently behaving itself, although inspections have revealed steady growth of Egaria continuing near the rail bridge at Penrith. This infestation will be monitored closely and the harvester deployed in Mid-October 2015 if the growth of this weed starts to gather momentum.

There is some troubling news to report though, whilst preparations were being made for Senegal tea plant treatment on Redbank creek at North Richmond, a large infestation of Salvinia was found residing in two thirds of the creek. Council inspectors surveilled the catchment upstream, however no Salvinia was found. This leads to the

assumption that the Salvinia was introduced into the creek from one of the residences or public reserves affronting the creek.

Cyrtobagous weevils have been introduced into this infestation and are expected to control around 90% of the Salvinia. Residual Salvinia will be treated with herbicide. Senegal tea plant in Redbank creek has been successfully treated with Metsulfuron methyl herbicide. Weed control teams have used canoes and waders to treat this creekline.

As we head into the cooler months the Hawkesbury/Nepean River is in good shape for all activities, weed growth will slow substantially as day lengths shorten and the temperature cools.

***Recommendation:***

- 1. That the report is received and noted.*

## 6. COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

From the Office of the General Manager, to the Chairperson and Members, I submit the following report on, correspondence of note, which has been received and sent by Council since the last Ordinary meeting:

1. **SENT – 24 February 2015** – Letter to Mr Graham Wilson, Manager Biosecurity, GS Local Land Services. Re: NSW Weeds Action Program 2015-2020
2. **RECEIVED – 5 March 2015** – Submission from Ms Justine Clarke, Blacktown City Council on Draft HRCC Widespread Weeds Policy
3. **RECEIVED – 11 March 2015** – Letter from Mr Peter Jackson, General Manager, Hawkesbury City Council. Re: Lantana control in the Hawkesbury LGA
4. **SENT – 18 March 2015** – Letter to NSW Local Government. Re: HRCC contact details
5. **RECEIVED – 19 March 2015** – Letter from Mr Terry Bailey, Director, Office of Environment and Heritage, Re: Sydney Weeds Committee Inc

### ***Recommendation:***

1. *That the report on Correspondences is received and information noted.*

## 7. GENERAL BUSINESS / QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

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