



# AABR NEWS

Australian Association of Bush Regenerators NSW

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When watching native bees around Sydney, it's easy to get the impression they are outnumbered and outgunned by European honeybees. Competition from feral honeybees is a key threatening process under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* [NSW]. They compete for nest hollows, nectar and pollen. They have been found to often remove 80% or more of the floral resources.

This tiny resin bee (middle photo) seemed to find something worthwhile in a *Bossiaea obcordata* even after the much larger honeybees had visited.

Sometimes honeybees provide food for locals such as this giant bull ant *Myrmecia gulosa*.

Virginia Bear

# President's Perspective

Hi Folks

Around my part of the world we've seen some good rainfall over the last few months which has brought on a spectacularly abundant flowering season for late winter and early spring. This will hopefully pay off in a few months with some good seed collecting opportunities but at the moment it's been a great time to enjoy the beauty of the bush in all its diversity. Of course it's nothing like as dramatic as the changes from the big wet out west of the divide, and I've been particularly envious of those who have been able to get out to places like Lake Eyre for what seems to be a once in a lifetime chance to see a very wet landscape. No doubt the land will reply in kind with a massive flowering season of its own.

The recent long term weather forecasts for this summer have a La Nina cycle setting in to keep the rainfall higher than average over the next few months or so. Hopefully this will keep the fire risk down and give the fire fighters a bit of a rest for the season. While agencies will be trying to get through hazard reduction burns, a wet season will severely restrict that, so it would possibly be a good time to look at pile burns. Talk to your local land managers and fire authorities about how you would go about getting these done if you are interested for your sites, as I would anticipate they'd be keen to get any sort of burning done if the hazard reduction program is stalled by wet weather. It's much easier to get pile burns done around rainy periods than to do broader and more involved hazard reduction burns so now's a good opportunity to get that happening.

I had the pleasure of joining Rob Stevenson from Canada Bay Council on the recent AABR walk through the remnant Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest endangered ecological community at Yaralla in Concord West. There's less than 4% of this community left and what there is requires some fairly intensive management. Fortunately this community does regenerate well where there has been little disturbance to the soil profile and the project at Yaralla demonstrates this well. Of particular interest to this project is the way that Rob has been able to wade through a bureaucracy involving 4 government agencies and it's only through their combined support that such an outcome has been achieved. There's still a great deal of work to be done on the site and the prospects are quite exciting. Hopefully we'll get to revisit the site in the next year or two to see the progress from the various treatment methods applied there.

By the time you're reading this I'll be on Lord Howe Island helping with the bush regeneration program over there. Looking forward to that and I'm sure I'll give you a rundown in the next newsletter. In the meantime, happy reading and I hope you enjoy another edition of AABR News. Now to go find out about this Cherry Guava stuff...

Cheers

Matt

**Matt Springall**  
President AABR NSW

## welcome new members

Neridah Davies, Christopher Banks, Ralph Dixon, Rachael Yeomans

### Do you need to tell us about your new email address?

Many members receive information from AABR and the Newsletter by email to be able to see everything in glorious colour. However at each mail out some bounce back as people change their email addresses.

Please email [membership@aabr.org.au](mailto:membership@aabr.org.au) with any updates of email addresses and also confirm that you are happy to get the newsletter by email.

## Eucalypt workshop July 2010

Over the weekend of July 10th & 11th AABR hosted another of Van Klaphake's workshops on his *Guide to the Eucalypts of the Sydney Region*.

Over the 2 days the participants in the sold-out event were introduced to the guide, practiced their skills and spent time in the field using their new knowledge.

AABR will host workshops again next year if there is sufficient interest.

The possibilities are Grasses of the Sydney Region, Sedges & Rushes of the Sydney Region or Eucalypts of the Sydney Region.

If you think that you might like to attend one or all of the above please contact us via [enquiries@aabr.org.au](mailto:enquiries@aabr.org.au).

**Paul Ibbetson**



# Something to think about: a proposal for separating AABR accreditation from membership

Tein McDonald and Jane Gye

Over recent years, some of us in AABR have been reflecting on the possibility that the membership structure that we had at AABR's inception—i.e. that all members need to be accredited bush regeneration practitioners—might have some disadvantages.

So is it time for a rethink? What advantages or disadvantages might occur if AABR opened up membership to anyone interested in bush regeneration, or indeed the broader practice of ecological restoration—and yet maintained a separate accreditation system for bush regenerators?

Currently, to become a member of AABR, applicants need to have completed an approved course in bush regeneration and to have had 500 hours of supervised bush regeneration practice, gained over a two year period. If this is not possible, they can undergo an assessment of whether they have acquired, through other pathways, the 12 competencies of bush regeneration practice. Membership is therefore, for all intents and purposes, an 'accreditation' system. Yet if the membership chose, this could be separated from membership; thus opening up membership to a wider group of supporters.

So what are the main advantages and disadvantages of keeping membership and accreditation blended? And are there additional benefits of separating them that should be factored into our thinking on this?

The main advantages of blending membership and accreditation for AABR, in our view, is that the organisation's activities, including its accreditation standards, are safely in the hands of experienced regenerators. Disputes are minimized and agreement optimized because (a) there is a bonding that shared experiences brings and (b) we can assume all members understand the needs and rigours of regeneration practice.

Conversely, the main disadvantage is that there is at least a perception of less exposure to new ideas coming from newcomers or other fields of restoration practice that could enhance and refine our own field of practice. People not eligible for membership can become 'subscribers' but, as this does not include voting rights, this still means that AABR has been seen—and still is by many—as an 'exclusive club'. Other

disadvantages flow from this perception, whether it is correct or incorrect. That is, this perception has restricted membership (even of practicing bush regenerators) in ways that mean that AABR has fewer people to undertake the number of projects it would like to undertake and fewer people to help on the committee. It has also made AABR somewhat less appealing to subsequent generations of potential members who are needed to guide AABR in coming decades. Another disadvantage this brings is the perception that assisted regeneration is a sideline of ecological restoration, rather than being part of the mainstream.

Separating accreditation from membership may well offer AABR the opportunity to open up membership to others who are supportive of the important place of assisted natural regeneration in restoration but are not directly involved in bush regeneration practice. This means that AABR could welcome nursery people, planners, administrators and academics into the group, infusing the organization with new ideas and new energy and optimizing opportunities to ensure assisted regeneration is considered an important part of restoration practice.

It may also offer AABR an opportunity to develop further levels of accreditation, as well as the current 'industry entrance' level of bush regeneration practitioner. That is, AABR could implement accreditation for such levels of practice as *supervisor, planner, seed collector or propagator* etc. This would allow AABR to position itself more centrally in the emerging ecological restoration industry, ensuring that assisted regeneration is not seen as a sideline but as a core part of mainstream practice.

## How might such a system be managed?

When this idea has been mooted in the past, we have asked ourselves **how can we protect our already high standards of 'accreditation' from being diluted by members who are not accredited?** This is a serious question that needs some careful thought as AABR's current 'accreditation' is well regarded by those engaging contractors and this is to be protected. A potential solution to this may be that AABR establishes an AABR Accreditation Sub-committee made up of AABR accredited members only. The Rules of AABR could then be amended to ensure that the rules of accreditation can only be established and further changed by members in ways recommended by this sub-committee after consultation with the members.

Another valid question is **would this increase the work load of the already-stretched AABR committee?** The way we see it is that it might take some time initially to set up, but the task of assessing standard and non-standard applications should remain about the same size as at present, whether this work is done by the existing committee or a sub-committee. This is because separating off accreditation would not change eligibility for accreditation, and so the same rate of applications are likely unless the publicity around the change encourages a flush of 'catch up' applications. Membership, however, will hopefully increase. If that occurs, there would be a higher work

load for the membership officer, but increasing membership numbers may mean an increasing income for AABR, which may allow the Membership officer's time to be remunerated—or it may mean a few more people willing to work on the committee.

To take this to the next stage, we are putting the topic of 'considering separating AABR accreditation from membership' to the next AABR AGM. We would like to propose at the meeting that AABR set up a small committee of anyone interested, to go away and consider the pros and cons of separating membership from accreditation and then report back to the main committee.

The main committee could then circulate the results to the members and would probably seek feedback over a period of many months before putting any concrete proposal to a well-advertised general meeting.

In the meantime, we invite discussion on this topic among the membership and welcome any feedback to the newsletter and the AABR committee.

It's also on the agenda for the AGM on Dec 5, so we hope to see many of you there.

# Erica lusitanica—a most persistent weed

Jean Taylor  
Friends of Coningham Nature Recreation Area

Control of Spanish heath in Coningham Nature Recreation Area and observations on the effect of environmental factors on this control

*Erica lusitanica* (Spanish heath) is an erect woody shrub. A native of south west Europe, it was introduced into Tasmania for use in horticulture and the floral trade and naturalised in southern Tasmania many years ago, thriving in the acid soils. It produces copious seeds which are spread by water, attachment to animal fur and human clothing, and mechanically by slashers and earth moving equipment.

Coningham Nature Recreation Area (CNRA) is a 490 ha reserve 25 km south of Hobart. From the early days of settlement until the 1970s it was a Crown Land block intermittently used for sheep grazing and timber cutting. It became a Regional Park in 1975 and a Nature Recreation Area in 1999. The reserve supports threatened vegetation communities and a number of threatened plant and animal species<sup>1</sup>.

## Weed Management

*E. lusitanica* has been present in the reserve for many years, probably introduced from nearby gardens and by heavy equipment used in roading and dam construction. A weed management strategy produced in 2002 identified *E. lusitanica* as the principal weed threat to the values of CNRA<sup>2</sup>.

The Friends of Coningham Nature Recreation Area (FCNRA) began primary weed control in 2002. Techniques used are hand pulling, cut and paint using glyphosate and spraying dense infestations using Garlon, a selective herbicide which has little effect on the predominately grassy/sedgy understorey. Monitoring is an important component of weed control and each year areas previously weeded or sprayed are checked. Up until 2009 little significant regrowth was recorded at any treated site.

## Fire

Fires are a regular feature of the CNRA ecology. Major wildfires occurred in 1987<sup>3</sup> and 2008. Both fires denuded the landscape leaving large areas of bare ground. Observations post the 1987 fire commenced in the 1990s when *E. lusitanica* was noted growing vigorously along tracks and old roads. By 2008 a significant area of the reserve had been colonised although the growth was patchy.

After the 2008 fire regrowth from incompletely burnt root stock was noted and very occasionally flowering plants were discovered. All surviving plants were destroyed. While plants in areas exposed to the full brunt of the wildfire appeared more likely to be completely destroyed than those exposed to back burning, it was noted that plants able to take advantage of shelter or small depressions survived. This was particularly noticeable along tracks and roads and probably explains the growth noted in these areas after the 1987 fire.

## Drought

After the January 2008 fire it was expected that a massive and immediate germination of *E. lusitanica* seedlings from the soil seed bank would occur. However, the remainder of 2008 and early 2009 were drought years and seed germination was delayed.

## Rainfall

In contrast to the drought of 2008, rainfall in 2009 was 862 mm, about 30% above average<sup>4</sup>. This abundant rainfall stimulated germination in the soil seed bank and resulted in a flush of seedlings across the reserve in both burnt and unburnt areas. The heaviest areas of seedling regrowth were in back burned areas not previously weeded.

## Monitoring 2010

**Unburnt areas** In treated areas cut and paint patches appear to have more seedling regrowth than the sprayed areas—several patches show masses of tiny seedlings, invariably where there had been very heavy weed growth. Most of the sprayed areas show very little regrowth. Random plants are growing in small numbers throughout the reserve in untreated areas. Some of these must have been missed during previous surveys but some have obviously germinated after the rains.

**Burnt areas** These have given some surprises. For instance, an area which was hand pulled in 2002 and monitored yearly since had yielded only a small number of plants over this time, however in 2010 many tiny seedlings were discovered here, located in a patch with little canopy but reasonable understorey regrowth. Areas sprayed in 2004 and 2007 show similar results in similar locales.

The recovery of *E. lusitanica* in the burnt areas untreated prior to the 2008 fire appears to be affected by both topography and fire intensity. In the areas where the fire was fiercest most mature *E. lusitanica* appears to have been completely destroyed unless the plants were able to obtain some shelter behind large trees or rocks or in depressions. In areas where heavy infestations of *E. lusitanica* were exposed to less intense fire, seedling germination was noted in late 2009. This has now become rampant growth.

## Conclusions

*E. lusitanica* naturalised in the area south of Hobart many years ago. Anecdotally, during the 1930s depression the only source of income for families living in Poverty Gully in nearby Margate were these winter blooming flowers gathered for the floral trade (5). This weed is therefore well established and will take some time and effort to control. Primary weed treatment using herbicides was achieving excellent results and it was expected that with secondary treatment long term maintenance would only require low level follow up. Unfortunately, environmental factors—fire, drought and rain—have affected this weed control.

The 2008 fire in CNRA destroyed large areas of very dense weeds but stimulated germination from the soil seed bank. The large volumes of weed regrowth throughout the reserve following the fire and subsequent drought breaking rains are remarkable.

Similar post rain weed flushes have been noted at other bush regeneration sites<sup>6</sup>. It is obvious that this possibility must be taken into account when weed control is being planned.

Post fire funding for control of *E. lusitanica* was obtained from the Federal Government Caring for our Country grant program in late 2008. Fortunately, the life of this grant was two years as a lesser period would have missed the flush of growth following the drought-breaking rain. *E. lusitanica* is a very persistent weed because of very effective survival strategies – ability to cope with fires, copious seed production and a long life in the soil seed bank. It is apparent that if control of this and similar well-endowed weeds is the aim, attention must be paid to both environmental conditions which can disrupt planned weeding and to adequate follow-up weeding and these must be addressed in the provision of grant funding.

Unfortunately, grant monies must often be spent within a specified, often short, time with no consideration of the environmental conditions affecting the site. Also of concern, money is usually granted for primary weeding and the importance of secondary control is not recognised. Primary weeding will never achieve control/containment and the importance of long-term follow-up weeding needs to be factored into funding opportunities.

<sup>1</sup> Coningham Nature Recreation Area Management Statement 2009 DPIPW

<sup>2</sup> Friends of Coningham, Oyster Cove and Lower Snug (FOCOCLS) 2002 *Weed Management Strategy*

<sup>3</sup> *An Archaeological Survey of Coningham State Recreation Area* Ian Thomas and Debbie Maynard, June 1988

<sup>4</sup> Bureau of Meteorology Website – station at Snug, the nearest town

<sup>5</sup> Personal communication 2004 Bev Benseman

<sup>6</sup> *A comment on frequency of follow up treatments required at bush regeneration sites* Tein McDonald, AABR NSW Newsletter 105, May 2010

*Numerous tiny seedlings, the result of fire, drought and (almost) flooding rain.*



# Bush regeneration and the new federal award system

From 1 January 2010, 122 'Modern Awards' replace over 1700 federal and state based awards. They operate with the National Employment Standards and regulate minimum terms for a specific industry or occupation. They cover most businesses in the national workplace relations system.

Our advice from the office of the Fair Work Ombudsman is that the bush regeneration industry is included under The Gardening and Landscape Services Award 2010. Section 4.2 (d) states that those in "landscape and environmental rehabilitation and restoration works on private or public lands" are covered by the award.

The award commences on 1st July 2010 with some transitional stages between then and July 2014.

Modern awards can contain terms relating to:

- minimum wages, including piecework rates
- types of employment (eg. full-time, part-time, casual)
- overtime and penalty rates
- work arrangements (eg. rosters, variations to working hours)
- annualised wage or salary arrangements

- allowances (eg. travel allowances)
- leave, leave loading and taking leave
- superannuation
- procedures for consultation, representation and dispute settlement
- employing outworkers and the work they perform
- an industry-specific redundancy scheme.

In addition, they must also have a flexibility term, which means employers and employees are able to negotiate changes to meet their individual needs relating to issues specified in the clause.

For more information about how this may affect you contact the office of the Fair Work Ombudsman.

The website is through Fair Work Online at [www.fwo.gov.au](http://www.fwo.gov.au). You can get advice online with a Live Help adviser, or through the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94.

**Paul Ibbetson**

## Possibilities of modern awards - a contractors view

The Bush Regeneration industry has long had poor conditions and standards in comparison to many other professions. There have been a few efforts at investigating a bush regenerators award (eg The National Trust Award), but there has not been an industry wide acceptance of agreed standards and conditions.

Recent changes to industrial relations laws by the Federal Government have attempted to streamline the number of awards and move to more general awards that are applicable to a wider cross section of industries. I'm not an industrial relations lawyer but my interpretation of this whilst looking at the wages and conditions of our own staff, is that the Gardening and Landscaping Services Award 2010 is one that might have some application. Despite the unfortunate title, this award makes specific reference to "landscape and environmental rehabilitation and restoration works on private or public lands" in its definition of the industry to which this award applies. I've had a good look at the wage bandings and other conditions, and I think it comes reasonably close to the conditions being offered by the better contract employers in the industry. We at Hills will be seriously looking at adopting it as our award, or at the least copying the majority of the provisions and standards into an employment contract.

The benefits of promoting this new modern award as one for the NRM field based practitioners are as follows:

- More transparent conditions for field staff – i.e. contracting organisations will know the employment standards of any sub contractors
- Better recognition of the value of the industry

- Better retention of staff
- Improved conditions for workers
- Better on ground outcomes due to better quality staff

The more progressive land managers may even think about including alignment with the award as a desirable criteria in their assessment of tender submissions.

Those contractors who commit to meeting the award or equivalent standards may cost marginally more than some others, but agencies will be assured that they are getting skilled and motivated staff, not backpackers looking to pay for their next drink at Bondi.

Of course the whole "Fair Work" thing is a politically driven policy with all of the associated cynical elements, and in many places the National Employment Standards are contradictory to what the awards actually say, especially for casual workers. But the new award might be an opportunity to finally have an award that fits the bill. Some food for thought.

PS – the author has no claimed expertise in the area of industrial relations and the comments above are speculative opinion only. Please make your own enquiries as to the pros and cons of the suggestions above.

**Frank Gasparre**  
**Hills Bushcare**

# HAVE YOU AN INTERESTING BUSH REGEN STORY TO TELL?

## WHY DO WE ASK?

AABR\* is seeking 8 of the most interesting stories about regen projects in the Northern NSW – SE Qld region for showcasing at Pottsville Environment Park

**Sun 17<sup>th</sup> October 2010** (10.15 am  
BYO LUNCH).



\*Australian Association of Bush Regenerators

Email your short proposal to  
[teinm@ozemail.com.au](mailto:teinm@ozemail.com.au)  
by Oct 1<sup>st</sup> 2010  
Enquiries welcome.

## Call for 'stories' of northern region bush regeneration Projects

The Northern NSW/ SEQ regional group of AABR will be holding an event with a difference this year. On Sunday 17th October it will host a two-hour showcase of 8 (10 minute) Powerpoint presentations of some of the many exciting bush regeneration projects being carried out in the region – for the interest of all managers and restorationists.

The day will start at 10.am with a cuppa, with the presentations starting at 10.30 sharp. Please BYO lunch (preferably something to share), after which there will be a short guided walk around the venue, the Pottsville Environment Park.

At the time this newsletter is distributed there will still be time to submit proposals of interesting bush regeneration stories that might be selected by the panel (The closing date has now been extended till Oct 1st.) We are hoping to represent a wide variety in the final selection, including community or government-run, coast or inland, and projects from both NSW and south-east Queensland. These proposals should just be an outline (no larger than 2 pages or 2 meg file size) and should include a summary of the project, plus reference to prior condition, causal

problems, treatments and results. (Also please include at least one low-file size set of 'before & after' photos.) Although the final presentations needs to be in Powerpoint, the outline can be in any convenient electronic format.

The final selection will include projects that:

- provide a very interesting example of bush regeneration (i.e. either outstanding results or an unusual case which has implications for regen in the region)
- have good 'before and after' photos and other records of positive changes on the site since treatment
- are based on ecologically sound bush regen approaches.
- can be converted into good Powerpoint presentations. (If you are unsure, we can help with this.)

Outlines should be emailed to [teinm@ozemail.com.au](mailto:teinm@ozemail.com.au) by extended date of Oct 1.

# Watch out for myrtle rust

## What is myrtle rust?

Myrtle Rust (*Uredo rangelii*) is a newly described fungus that is closely related to the Eucalyptus/Guava rusts. These rusts are serious pathogens which affect plants belonging to the family Myrtaceae.

Myrtle Rust infects leaves of susceptible plants producing spore-filled lesions on young actively growing leaves and shoots, as well as fruits and sepals. Leaves may become buckled or twisted as a result of infection. On turpentine and callistemon rust lesions are purple in colour, with masses of bright yellow or orange-yellow spores. Older lesions may contain dark brown spores. Severe rust disease in young trees may kill shoot tips, causing loss of leaders and a bushy habit.

Rust spores travel very long distances on the wind and may infect stands of susceptible plants many kilometres from the original infestation. Rust spores are also gathered and spread by bees. These are natural means of spread that are difficult to control. Humans can also easily spread Myrtle Rust in infested plant material including cut flowers and nursery stock, on clothing and dirty equipment including containers and pruning shears, and on contaminated timber products. Always practise good hygiene when working with native plants and general nursery stock.

## Current situation summary

- Myrtle Rust has been found on the NSW Central Coast. It affects plants of the Myrtaceae family
- The state has put in place measures to contain and eventually eradicate the fungus.
- The Gosford and Wyong Local Government Areas (LGAs) have been declared a Quarantine Area, restricting the movement of susceptible plants and related material out of the area.
- Industry and the public are asked to learn how to recognise the fungus and report any suspected cases early, as well as practise good hygiene methods to restrict the spread of the fungus.

## Quarantine area

NSW has declared a Quarantine Area on the Gosford and Wyong Local Government Areas (LGAs) effective Friday 23 July 2010 on account of the presence of Myrtle Rust within these LGAs.

As a result, the movement of:

1. any host plant material, and
2. any covering, packaging, machinery, or thing which is carrying Myrtle Rust and which has been used in the culture, harvesting, or packing of host plant material, out of the Quarantine Area is prohibited subject to the consignment meeting the required movement conditions as stipulated in the notification.

## What can I do?

You can help stop the spread of Myrtle Rust:

- Report any suspected detection to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline 1800 084 881.
- Never move suspected contaminated or infested material unless directed by an officer of the NSW Government.
- Always practise good hygiene when working with native plants and general nursery stock. Clean equipment like containers and secateurs after use.

from [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/myrtle-rust](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/myrtle-rust)

## National Management Group intensifies response

The Myrtle rust National Management Group (NMG) met on 17 August 2010 to consider intensified surveillance and containment actions for Myrtle rust (*Uredo rangelii*).

Myrtle rust was first detected in Australia in April at a cut flower growing facility in the central coast of New South Wales.

To date, there has been no detection of the disease on Eucalyptus and other species of Myrtaceae in surrounding native forests.

An interim response plan was implemented by the NMG on 2 July 2010, to suppress Myrtle rust with a long-term view to the eradication of the disease, while additional data was obtained.

Actions in the interim response plan included:

- host testing under controlled circumstances
- DNA analysis
- surveillance of known infected properties and the natural environment
- destruction of host material
- ongoing suppression activities, including the application of fungicides, at known infected properties.

Myrtle rust has now been detected on six sites in the NSW central coast. New South Wales authorities have established a quarantine area for the Wyong and Gosford Local Government Areas, covering the six infected properties detected to date.

Survey and surveillance work has so far found evidence of eight species of plants in the plant family Myrtaceae currently affected by Myrtle rust:

- willow myrtle (*Agonis flexuosa*)
- turpentine (*Syncarpia glomulifera*)
- bottlebrush (*Callistemon viminalis*)
- round-leaved tea tree (*Leptospermum rotundifolium*)
- water gum (*Tristania neriifolia*)
- Tahiti (*Metrosideros collina* "dwarf")
- thready-barked myrtle, aurora and blushing beauty (*Austromyrtus inophloia* – renamed *Gossia inophloia*)
- a cultivated hybrid of lilly pilly (*Syzygium leumannii* x *Syzygium wilsonii*).

New measures agreed by the Myrtle rust NMG are additional to those contained in the interim response plan. These actions will continue to suppress the disease and assist in its delimitation.

### The new measures include:

- the destruction and disposal of all commercial Myrtaceae plants on the two properties most severely infected
- increased spraying and fungicide application on all known infected properties including spraying a buffer zone around each property
- the application of fungicide to a 30m wide strip of bushland where it adjoins known infected properties
- surveillance in a buffer area around each of the known infected properties with a particular focus on susceptible hosts
- increased surveillance of all commercial nurseries with Myrtaceae within the quarantine area established by NSW authorities
- inspection of Myrtaceae on approximately 310 domestic premises in the quarantine area
- targeted communication activities in NSW including the distribution of educational materials to commercial nurseries, information to local residents, meetings with stakeholders and road signage in the quarantine area.

While every effort is being made to suppress the disease with the aim of eradication, the NMG recognises that eradication may not be possible. Rust spores are highly transportable and can be spread via contaminated clothing, insect movement and wind dispersal. Warmer spring weather conditions and actively growing host plants will also develop in the next few weeks and will be key factors in determining whether the fungus is suppressed and if it can be effectively contained and eradicated.

Activities to manage Myrtle rust is being implemented under the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD) - a legally binding agreement between the Australian Government, all state and territory governments, national plant industry body signatories and Plant Health Australia.

The Myrtle Rust NMG is comprised of the chief executive officers of the national and state/territory departments of agriculture and primary industries across Australia, representatives of peak industry bodies and Plant Health Australia. The group is chaired by the Secretary of the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Dr Conall O'Connell.

From [www.daff.gov.au/aqis/quarantine/pests-diseases/myrtle-rust](http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/quarantine/pests-diseases/myrtle-rust)  
20 August 2010

A,B,C Myrtle rust on turpentine, D on *Agonis flexuosa* c.v. Afterdark Photo: Dr Angus Carnegie © I&I NSW



# Call for weed reform in NSW

Louise Brodie

A report prepared by the Invasive Species Council outlines weed reforms needed for NSW. *Stopping NSW's creeping peril: a community call for action on weeds* has been prepared with the help of weed experts, and by reviewing the scientific literature, current NSW laws, policies and funding.

AABR is one of the 30 organisations to have endorsed the report. The endorsements are from groups that represent weed experts, bush regenerators, land managers, volunteer weed groups and national, state and local conservation groups.

The report calls for concerted action, largely from the NSW Government, to address the state's growing weed problem. The suggested recommendations can be adopted as part of the NSW *Noxious Weeds Act*.

## Recommended actions

The reforms put forward comprise 10 recommendations:

- restrict new plant introductions to those assessed as low risk
- eradicate new invaders where feasible and prevent the spread of others into new areas
- control weeds in a prioritised way to protect the environment and the economy
- require a duty of care and implement the 'polluter pays' principle
- use federal laws to address nationally significant threats
- address weeds as a priority measure for climate change adaptation
- develop governance arrangements that reflect the priority of weed threats for both the environment and agriculture, and provide for regional authorities to implement weed plans
- provide resources sufficient to achieve priority outcomes
- support research into weed ecology and management
- develop educational programs that provide land managers with information to make weed-wise decisions.

## Why do we need these actions?

The report gives background information on the costs of weeds both in terms of their effect on our environment, and on the economic costs to agriculture and the environment.

More than \$50 million of public money is spent on weed management in NSW each year (about half from state government). This is supplemented by a large voluntary expenditure and effort.

However, effects on the environment and biodiversity are significant. 'Wicked weed stats for NSW' includes the following scary information:

- weeds imperil more than 40% of NSW threatened species (mostly plants) and about 90% of endangered ecological communities
- 340 environmental weeds are recognised in NSW—most were deliberately introduced as garden and pasture plants

## More about the Invasive Species Council

The Invasive Species Council was formed in 2002 by a number of committed environmentalists. This group was formed to deal with invasive species based on the realisation that invasive species are all too often neglected as a conservation issue even though they are one of the top three threats facing Australia's natural environment.

Founding members include research zoologist Dr Barry Traill and biologist and writer Tim Low, who still works for the Invasive Species Council as a project officer. The council was the first environment group in the world to focus solely on invasive species. With introduced pests one of the top and growing threats to native species and ecosystems, involving complex biological and social interactions, this specialist focus is needed.

Its purpose is to campaign for better laws and policies to protect the Australian environment from weeds, feral animals and exotic pathogens. It is a non-profit organisation, which works with other groups on policy and legal reform, campaigning for action on high priority pests such as gamba grass, an African pasture grass that could turn Australia's northern woodlands into vast grass monocultures.

The aims of the council are to:

- **increase understanding** by building government, industry and public awareness about the threats of invasive species to Australia's native biodiversity
- **protect Australia** from the most dangerous invasive species by advocating for prohibitions, declarations, and control of particular species
- **reform laws, policies and practices** to increase the nation's capacity to prevent the importation of more invasive species and to limit the establishment and spread of weeds and pests in Australia
- **build a community of invasive species advocates** by working with our members, other environment and community groups, experts and decision-makers to build the momentum for reform
- **work at the cutting edge** by identifying and raising awareness of emerging issues and keeping up with the latest science.

Find the The Invasive Species Council at [www.invasives.org.au](http://www.invasives.org.au)

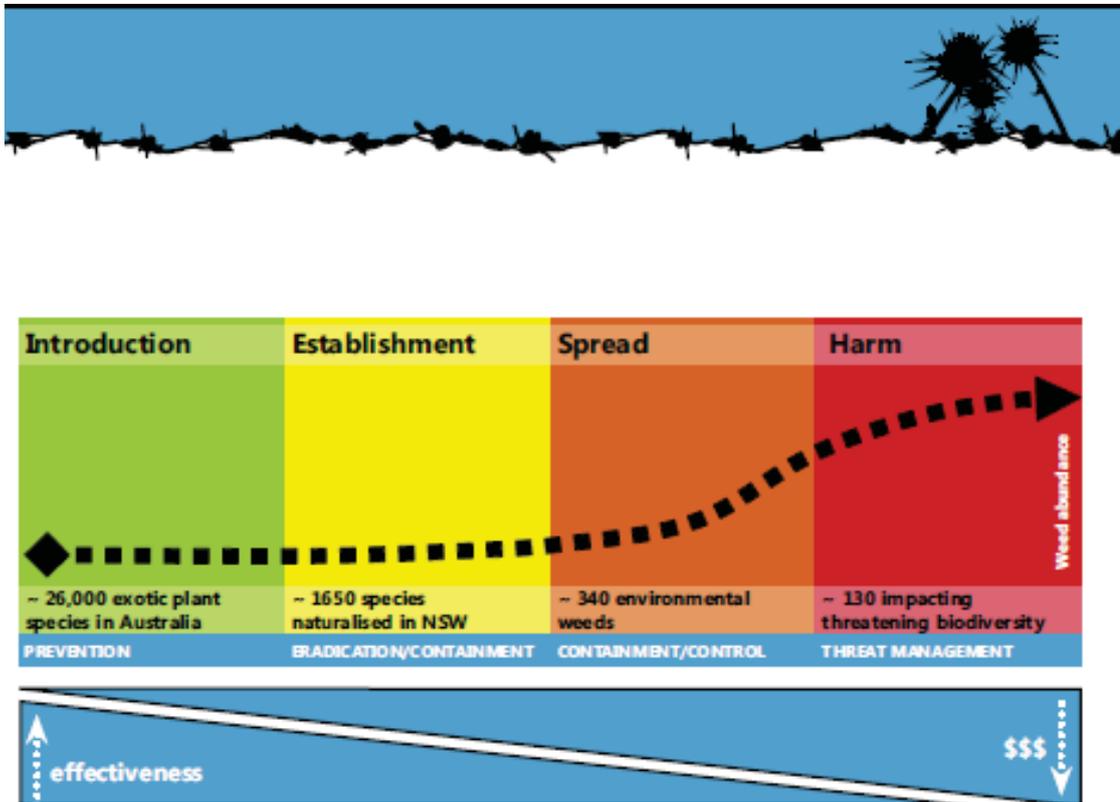
Find out how to receive the newsletter *Feral Herald* which is free to members.

There is also ebulletin *Double Trouble*, which highlights the combined dangers of climate change and invasive species, many of which are expected to thrive in the extreme weather events already taking place around the world.

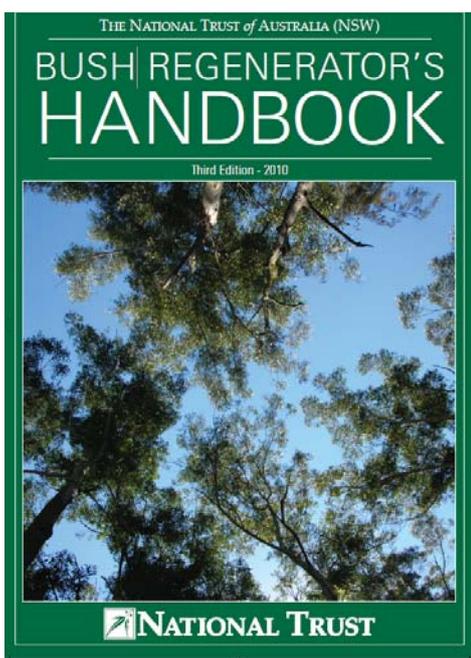
- there are already more than 30,000 exotic plant species in Australia (mostly cultivated), and more than 99% can be freely sold and planted in NSW— this includes many thousands of new potential weeds that can be introduced into NSW without risk assessment
- an average of 7.5 exotic plant species have established in the wild in NSW each year since colonisation, with the total now at 1665—that rate has increased in recent decades
- many of these new weeds will become the cane toads of the future as they spread into new areas.

Taking action on weeds creates substantial environmental, social and economic advantages. Weed management is one of the biggest gaps in NSW environmental laws and policies and this report goes part of the way to reduce this gap.

The report is available on the Invasive Species Council website, and can be downloaded at [www.invasives.org.au/page.php?name=Identifier=stoppingnswweedcrisis](http://www.invasives.org.au/page.php?name=Identifier=stoppingnswweedcrisis)



*The report is full of important—often alarming—information, but it is interesting, presented in a creative and attractive way, and is very readable. Hopefully it will find the wide audience it deserves.*



## Bush Regenerator's Handbook updated

Many of you will be familiar with the Bush Regenerator's Handbook, which has been put out by the National Trust of Australia (NSW), since 1991. Always a book with simple clear guidelines and illustrations about how to carry out bush regeneration, the third edition (2010) of this Handbook has just been released.

As this work has grown and matured, it was identified that more information about the responsibilities of bush regenerators with regard to occupational health and safety and environmental legislative requirements was needed. This third edition includes a section on workplace safety and covers working with listed threatened species. Another new topic covered is weeds of national significance.

The practical information from previous editions is retained such as all the drawings of weed control methods that are sought after by so many practitioners, particularly volunteer groups.

The Handbook is printed on recycled paper, with a special wipe down cover which makes it handy for taking into the bush. The new layout is now enhanced with colour photographs.

The printing of the handbook has been supported by Canon Australia.

# What's happening

## September 26-30

17th Australasian Weeds Conference

New Frontiers in New Zealand

**Where** Christchurch, New Zealand

**Organiser** The New Zealand Plant Protection Society Inc. and The Council of Australasian Weed Societies Inc. [www.17awc.org](http://www.17awc.org)

## September 28- October 1

ANPC 8th National Conference

Planning conservation to achieving restoration: A conference for everyone involved in conserving Australia's unique flora and native vegetation.

**Where** Perth

[anpc@anpc.asn.au](mailto:anpc@anpc.asn.au) 02 6250 9509

## September 29

Save the Koala Day

**Organiser** Australian Koala Foundation

## December 5 2:00pm

AABR AGM

With Christmas drinks and nibbles afterwards.

**Where** National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill, Sydney. Free parking available. A 15 minute walk from Wynyard Station.

## December 6-12

Annual Conference of the Ecological Society of Australia. 'Sustaining biodiversity—the next 50 years'.

We will take a long term perspective of ecology in Australia and engender a sense of urgency to consider how ecologists can provide solutions to those problems with which we are now familiar, and those on the horizon.

The conference aims to challenge and inspire ecologists.

**Who Should Attend** in recent years ESA conferences have had up to 600 delegates from a range of backgrounds including:

- Biogeographers
- Land managers
- Marine area managers
- Aquatic systems managers
- Conservation biologists
- Environmental consultants
- Research ecologists
- Ecology students
- Government policy-makers
- Restoration practitioners

The Society's annual conference provides a regular forum for national and international ecologists and practitioners to gather and communicate advances in the ecological sciences and practice. Eminent scientists have organised stimulating plenary sessions and symposia and will join conference delegates in open forums to discuss a wide range of ecological issues.

**Where** Manning Clark Centre, ANU, Canberra

**Organiser** [www.esa2010.org.au](http://www.esa2010.org.au)

## December 6-12

Coast Care Week "Summer by the Sea"

**Organiser** Landcare Australia

### Do you have any news to share?

We are sure many of you are involved in projects that others would like to hear about. We are interested in anything from finished articles to notes or ideas that we could develop in consultation with you.

We are interested to hear from anyone—not just those connected with AABR. The important thing is that the content is about, or applicable to, ecological restoration practice, or the industry.

Feel free to contact me to chat about your idea.

Virginia

[newsletter@aabr.org.au](mailto:newsletter@aabr.org.au) 0408 468 442

### New Bush Regenerator's Handbook available

An excellent companion is the new, third, edition of The National Trust of Australia (NSW) Bush Regenerators Handbook. This edition includes updated details on environmental legislative requirements and a new section on OH&S. Printed on recycled paper, it contains all the drawings of weed control methods included in the previous edition, enhanced with colour photographs. The handbook also includes information on weeds of national significance.

The Handbook is \$30 + GST per copy (+postage).

For enquiries contact 02 9258 0176 or [bms@nationaltrust.com.au](mailto:bms@nationaltrust.com.au)

Email or mail purchase orders to National Trust of Australia (NSW) GPO Box 518, Sydney 2001.

Handbooks may also be purchased online [www.nationaltrust.com.au](http://www.nationaltrust.com.au).

Advertisement

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AABR News is the newsletter of the Australian Association of Bush Regenerators (NSW) AABR Inc.

AABR NSW was established in 1986 out of concern for the continuing survival and integrity of bushland and its dependent fauna in or near bushland areas, and seeks new members and friends for promoting good work practices in natural areas. The Association's aim is to foster and encourage sound ecological practices of bushland management by qualified people.

AABR NSW has regional committees in northeast NSW/Southeast Queensland and the Hunter, and a sister organisation in Western Australia: AABR WA.

**AABR C/O Total Environment Centre PO Box A176 Sydney South NSW 1235  
0407 002 921**

**[www.aabr.org.au](http://www.aabr.org.au)  
[enquiries@aabr.org.au](mailto:enquiries@aabr.org.au)**

**ABN: 33 053 528 029 ARBN: 059 120 802**

To keep in touch and be notified about events, subscribe to Bush Regeneration or Bushcare list servers and check out Solutions, the Bush Regeneration Bulletin Board—see website for detail.

\$20:00	p.a	AABR Newsletter Subscription	(all interested people)
\$10:00	p.a	AABR Newsletter Subscription	(email for 1 year for students of Certificate III CLM-Natural Area Restoration)
\$25:00	p.a	AABR Membership	(appropriately qualified & experienced bush regenerators)
\$50-400	p.a	AABR Contractors & Consultants List	(appropriately qualified & experienced bush regenerators)

### Newsletter contributions and comments are welcome

Contact Virginia Bear [newsletter@aabr.org.au](mailto:newsletter@aabr.org.au) 0408 468 442

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of AABR NSW