

# Arming weeds advisors with knowledge.

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## Introduction

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) has a strong weed information management role in NSW and a goal to service the needs of our clients. NSW DPI also play a dual role in NSW, being the lead agency in both agricultural weeds and noxious weed management with a commitment to achieving positive outcomes in both. Doing this is dependent on land managers and advisors having timely access to relevant information resources to enhance their capacity to achieve effective weed management outcomes.

When asked, our clients indicated that their knowledge of current weeds information and available resources was limited by a lack of promotion (McCaffery and Naughton 2005). To address this issue NSW DPI has initiated several communication activities to improve the knowledge that weeds advisors have regarding the large range of resources available to them.

## Key client groups being targeted

Effectively targeting all client groups is a difficult job. A survey conducted in 2004 indicated that over thirty different client groups are currently using NSW DPI weeds information and that they all require something different (McCaffery and Naughton 2005).

To overcome this, the new NSW DPI communication activities will concentrate on servicing:

- NSW DPI extension staff such as District Agronomists;
- Local government weeds officers; and
- Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs).

Targeting these groups provides efficiencies in our communication efforts because they all provide information and advice to other client groups such as agribusiness advisors, primary producers and community groups. By default other groups will become better informed on weeds and aware of the weeds information available from DPI leading to improved weed management outcomes.

## Communication initiatives to support weed advisors

Many of the components of the overall NSW DPI weeds communication strategy address institutional

arrangements (McCaffery 2006). They are not communication activities themselves but support the effective management of specific communication activities. These components include a central repository and dispatch centre for all NSW DPI weeds resources, a stock monitoring system and a quality management system for identifying needs and producing appropriate priority resources.

The following communication activities have been initiated during 2006 to better promote NSW DPI resources to weeds advisors.

### 1. Weed resource update bulletin – NSW DPI staff

NSW DPI extension staff are considered primary users of weeds information. However, they indicated that finding the appropriate information they need is often very time consuming and difficult to do (McCaffery and Naughton 2005). To respond to this issue a regular email bulletin from the weeds unit now alerts NSW DPI extension staff to new weed resources. It also provides a simplified system for acquiring printed copies in a time efficient way allowing staff to service the needs of their clients more efficiently.

### 2. Weed resource update bulletin – external clients

Local government weeds officers and CMA staff are also primary users of weeds information and service a large number of land managers. They also indicated a lack of knowledge of available resources and the process of accessing it (McCaffery and Naughton 2005).

The external weed resource update bulletin has been initiated to improve this situation ensuring NSW DPI resources are being delivered to the intended audiences. Although the update service has initially been offered to local government and CMA staff it is however, suitable for all clients of NSW DPI who have an interest in weeds information.

The service can be received by email or post and provides a brief update of new or revised resources as they become available. Each bulletin will also contain an order form which is a complete catalogue of all weed resources available from NSW DPI.

Depending on the format received, it provides a live link or web address where the resource can be viewed.

Subscribers can either print a copy of the publication from here or review the information for relevancy to their needs or location. It also provides a simple process for ordering printed copies in a time efficient way.

The bulletin will also allow subscribers to provide input into the development of future resources by providing feedback on their information needs. This will help to ensure NSW DPI continues to produce relevant weed resources that meet the needs of its clients.

Weed advisors and managers can subscribe to the service by emailing:

[weed.resource@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:weed.resource@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

or by contacting the bulletin coordinator on telephone (02) 6391 3820.

## References

McCaffery, A.C. and Naughton, M. (2005). Client needs analysis for NSW DPI weeds information. Final Report. NSW Department of Primary Industries, Orange.

McCaffery, A.C. (2006). NSW DPI Weeds unit communication strategy 2006. NSW Department of Primary Industries, Orange. 