

CAWS President Update – January 2008

The Council of Australasian Weed Societies (Inc.) formed in 1976 and now has membership from Australia's six state weed societies and the New Zealand Plant Protection Society. CAWS has recently revised its strategic plan, a draft of which is posted on our website under the "Objectives" link [<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~weedss/>]. We welcome comments on the plan, due to myself or via your member Society's CAWS delegate by 27 March 2008.

One of the actions in our new strategic plan is for the CAWS President to provide a quarterly update for the membership of our member Societies. So welcome to the first update, in which I will give a quick overview on how CAWS operates and our key activities at present.

CAWS essentially belongs to the member Societies, providing a forum in which joint initiatives can be taken to advance weed management throughout Australian and New Zealand. The Council consists of a President (myself) and Vice-President (currently Sandy Lloyd), each elected annually, an appointed Secretary/Treasurer (currently Dennis Gannaway) and two delegates from each member Society. Meetings are by teleconferences held quarterly, with a face-to-face meeting at the biennial Australian (soon to be Australasian) Weed Conference. The President has a maximum of two terms, and has traditionally been rotated amongst member Societies.

The object of CAWS is to encourage and foster the study and promotion of weed science and technology in Australia and New Zealand, and in particular to:

- Provide independent, representative leadership for weed management in Australia and New Zealand, including weed science, policy, planning and operations;
- Initiate and maintain activities of national significance to meet Australian and/or New Zealand member's interests;
- Maintain the Australasian Weeds Conference and provide other activities for information exchange, networking and debate;
- Provide national and international policy positions, promote weed awareness and provide a capacity to respond to weed issues;
- Support national and international weed publications; and
- Provide national and international level services, products and engagement opportunities to individual members of member Societies

The key activity overseen by CAWS, and its primary source of income, is the Australian Weeds Conference (AWC). This ofcourse is not to downplay the major role that the host member Society has in convening the conference on behalf of CAWS – with the Weed Society of Queensland busily preparing for what will inevitably be a very successful 16th AWC this coming May in Cairns. As members of CAWS, the convening Society and all other member Societies benefit from subsequent national activities arising out of the CAWS profit share from the AWC.

Another major role of CAWS is the provision of various awards. There is the prestigious CAWS Medal for Leadership, which recognises outstanding national contributions to weed

management. There are two annual travel awards available, one for students and one for early career weed scientists at \$3,000 and \$2,000 respectively (with applications due on 30 May 2008). The 2007 CAWS Most Weed Wise Nursery national award winners were Bulleen Art & Garden (Melbourne) in Australia and Kerikeri Plant Production (Northland region) in New Zealand.

CAWS has financially supported the Weeds CRC's Lord of the Weeds schools competition. It is also increasing national advocacy for weed management, with letters written to Federal Parliamentarians about future successors for the Weeds CRC and the Defeating the Weeds Menace programme.

Looking ahead to 2008 our main new investment will be a revamp of the CAWS website. We are currently having the proceedings of all Australian Weed Conferences since 1976 converted to pdfs, which will provide the basis of a much expanded, informative and dynamic website.

John Virtue, CAWS President