

**20<sup>th</sup> Australasian Weeds Conference,  
Perth, Western Australia, September 11-14.**  
Report on Travel Award – Adam Muyt, City of Hobart.

I recently attended the 20<sup>th</sup> Australasian Weeds Conference in Perth. This was my second AWC, having attended the 19<sup>th</sup> AWC in Hobart in 2014. That conference left an indelible impression on me and I was keen to also attend the Perth conference. This was made possible through the generous assistance of CAWS and their travel award.

I presented a paper on a weed surveying and mapping project in the City of Hobart that was conducted over 2012 - 2015. The presentation was attended by 30-40 people as part of the *Weed Potential and Assessment* session: other speakers discussed Chilean needle grass (*Nassella neesiana*) and Mexican feather grass (*Nassella tenuissima*) mapping and control in the ACT, and work on hybridisation between invasive and native *Carpobrotus* spp. I hope that my presentation and paper offered useful insights into weed surveying, particularly in urban and peri-urban settings, and in rough and difficult terrain.

I have a professional and personal interest in environmental weeds, weed ecology, technological innovations and community engagement so I had a bias towards attending sessions focused on these topics. There were many excellent and stimulating presentations - highlights included:

- Nick Gill's two presentations, one on the social aspects of weed hygiene, the other on engaging with rural 'life-stylers' on weed management;
- Trevor James' look at the source of many of New Zealand's new weed incursions;
- Melinda Laidlaw's work on the role of citizen 'scientists' in weed identification and surveillance;
- Ben Gooden's fascinating talk on the range and extent of sea spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*) in NSW;
- Kate Blood and Bec James' detailed explanation of the WESI program in Victoria (that's *Weeds at Early Stage of Invasion*);
- Paul Downey's analysis of the links between weed invasion and local plant extinctions;
- Torsten Merz's great talk on the use of robotic helicopters for weed surveys in the Wet Tropics of Queensland;
- Robert Cirocco's interesting research into the potential use of dodder laurel (*Cassytha pubescens*), a parasitic native, to control gorse (*Ulex europaeus*).

And I must mention Sue Bowers insightful and amusing keynote address, 'Breaking Bad', detailing the weed eradication program underway on Lord Howe Island. Ten

years in, twenty to go: Lord Howe's weeds are being steadily eradicated via a well-planned, concerted commitment involving professionals and the local community.

I also attended a couple of workshops that were well worth it. Kate Blood ran a great workshop on the use of social media. Another workshop focused on the proposed delisting of WONS species.

Of course, at conferences it's not just about the presentations – in Perth the corridors, shared tables and nooks and crannies provided suitable settings to catch up with familiar faces, and meet new people, each keen to share insights into weeds and their management.

Field trips are usually a good way to round-out a conference and this was certainly the case with the one I chose, which was focused on environmental weed management in the region to the south and east of Perth. Thoroughly enjoyable, with a well-balanced mix of beautiful scenery, interesting places, great company and inspiring stories of weed management across the region. Places visited included Lake Clifton and its thrombolites (located south of Mandurah), Waroona, Serpentine Falls National Park and Jarradale in the Darling Ranges. One memorable sight was seeing golden wreath wattle (*Acacia saligna*) frequently in its natural habitats, a much more preferable experience than the usual one back in south-east Australia. Also memorable, but for all the wrong reasons, were the extensive populations of freesia (*Freesia hybrid*) and arum lily (*Zantedeschia aethiopica*) across the region. As was the extent to which early black wattle (*Acacia decurrens*) can dominate an area - in this case, around the small, historic town of Jarradale. A lesson for us back east in not letting small and scattered infestations of these species expand any further.

The Pan Pacific Hotel was a very good choice of venue and easy to get to as it was centrally located in Perth's CBD. From my perspective, the organisational aspects of the Conference were excellent. This included all four of the presentation rooms, the display and sound systems, the trade and poster display areas and the food and beverages on offer. Big thanks to the Conference organisers and the Pan Pacific Hotel staff and management for making sure everything went smoothly (it appeared to, anyway. Maybe behind the scenes it was different?!)

Thank you CAWS for making it possible to attend the 20<sup>th</sup> AWC.