

Jack Crow – first Kiwi recipient of the CAWS medal

Jack Crow received the CAWS medal at the 17th Australasian Weeds Conference, held in Christchurch soon after the September 4 earthquake hit the city. Jack was the first Kiwi to receive this award, and this was the first time this conference had been held on this side of the Tasman.

This prestigious award recognises a contribution to the science, technology and practice of weed management through research, teaching, administration, extension and implementation of programs. The contribution has to be recognised by peers as outstanding in substance, objectives, methods and results. It must also be influential on the work of others, sustained over a long time, and national in its impact.

Jack's contributions to the science, technology and practice of weed management has been outstanding, both in Australia and, more markedly, in New Zealand. In his role as Biosecurity Manager for Auckland Regional Council, and now of Auckland City (described by botanist Alan Esler as the 'World's Weediest City'), Jack has often commissioned appropriate research in areas relevant to the region's needs for pest control. He has also recruited competent scientists to explore the reasons behind and preventive measures for new problem weeds and other pests.

Jack has built up, maintained, trained, led and inspired an outstanding and enthusiastic team of passionate biosecurity managers and workers. Jack has also taught and encouraged many others, including government and NGO staff to understand and take action over the adverse effects that invasive alien species are having on New Zealand's unique natural environment. He is widely recognized as a national leader in biosecurity circles, especially those concerning weeds.

As Auckland's Biosecurity supremo, Jack and his team are required to produce a Pest Management Strategy that defines how pests are going to be managed for the next 5 years. Auckland's pest strategies have led the way in preventing threats from newly naturalized and potentially dangerous species of garden plants. Some of the plants currently included in this strategy have led to Jack being personally threatened by irate owners of plant nurseries who see their livelihoods threatened by these actions.

Jack has been instrumental in the production and distribution of 'Plant-me-instead' booklets, which promote the planting of relatively harmless garden plants rather than potentially invasive ones. Another initiative was the Forest Friendly Awards, presented to garden centres which did not sell potentially invasive plant species, scheme later adopted by the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society.

On a national scale, Jack was largely responsible for initiating discussions between the New Zealand Nursery and Garden Industry Association (NGIA) and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's Biosecurity section (MAFBNZ). These discussions led to the widely acclaimed National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA), by which the sale, distribution and display of proscribed garden plants is prohibited. He has also been a strong supporter of the Weedbusters movement in New Zealand, and serves on its national committee. He has been a firm advocate for and supporter of the NZ Biosecurity Institute, which arose from the ashes of the old Noxious Plants Officers Institute.

Prior to joining the Auckland Regional Council he was nationally and internationally recognized for his work of assessing and removing ornamental weedy plants from the nursery trade and because of this led a national programme through the Cooperative Research Centre for Weed Management Systems. As part of the Weeds CRC within Australia he ensured that the program on assessing ornamental plants for weediness was adopted by a number of Australian States. That work continues today at state and Commonwealth level

Jack Crow has worked as Biosecurity Manager in Auckland since leaving the Keith Turnbull Research Institute, Victoria, in February 2003. Before moving to Victoria he led the biosecurity efforts of the Northland Regional Council.

He is a legend in weed management in New Zealand and we are very proud of him and his efforts.



Image: Jack Crow receives the CAWS medal from President Sandy Lloyd at the 17th Australasian Weeds Conference in Christchurch.