

22nd Australasian Weeds Conference, Adelaide, South Australia, September 25 – 29, 2022.

Report on Travel Award

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I was very fortunate to recently attend the 22nd Australasian Weeds Conference in Adelaide. This was my third AWC conference and both prior conferences have proven extremely valuable for educating me more about the weed science and management occurring across Australia and NZ and for developing valuable professional networks and friendships. I was thus very keen to attend again this year, the first time since completing my PhD, to further develop these networks and present the new project my new team and I have been working on and to grow further collaborations. I am thus very grateful to CAWS in making my attendance possible with the support of this year's CAWS travel award.

This year's conference held many highlights for me. The plenary session on the first day set an exciting tone for what was to come, with the initial presentations by Jane Catford and her presentation on context dependence in plant invasions. Secondly, Rick Llewellyn drew our focus from global issues to a local perspective on agricultural weeds and Robyn Cleland opened our eyes to the future of environmental biosecurity, of which weeds play a major role.

On the Monday, after some great presentations after morning tea, some of which included management of boneseed and bitou bush and updates on the Kosciusko National Park hawkweed program, I presented my presentation on "The weed managers guide to remote detection: opportunities and limitations of remote sensing to detect weeds", which was attended by a large audience. Following my presentation, myself, along with my colleagues from NSW Department of Planning and Environment (National Parks and Wildlife Service), Northern Territory Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security, Wild Matters and the Western Australian Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attraction, ran the Weed Remote Sensing forum, of which approximately 50 people attended. The forum was also made available live online for those across the country who, as part of the Weed Remote Sensing Community of Practice, wished to join. The forum was run as an introductory session to showcase who was working on weed remote sensing, where they were working and on which weeds. There was a vast array captured from across the country with many people working in this space and wanting to know more. Break-out sessions were then held around the various areas of weed remote sensing, including data acquisition, data analysis and storage and communications, IP, and publication. In each group, robust discussions included a sharing of the work that had been done in each of these areas in the last five years, what were the barriers/ benefits and challenges faced in each of these areas and some further discussion on how the community could bring this technology to land managers into the future. There were many discussions about the issues that currently exist and how these could be mitigated with the help of the community of practice and contacts between organisations shared that could be followed up later regarding sharing of resources, beginning new project collaborations and learning more from each other. It was a most valuable and unique opportunity to bring together those working across the country in one room to discuss the way forward. I am grateful to CAWS for allowing me the opportunity to attend the conference

and run this valuable event. It has been instrumental in building this new community of practice going forward.

The remainder of the conference showcased numerous fantastic presentations that I was able to attend – a small collection of these included:

- A very interesting WeedsScan presentation by Claire Lock of NSW DPI
- A fascinating display of the use of Digital 3D models for early identification of weeds by artist Rachel Klyve
- A presentation about supporting weed management after the 2019-20 bushfires by Kate Blood
- An update on herbicide resistance status in African Lovegrass by Jo Powells

Broader forum highlights included the National Established Weed Priorities Network (NEWP), the fantastic framework that is designed to bring industry, government, and community together to target weeds and their management across Australia and to establish national priorities for weed management. The Plant Sure forum highlighted the wonderful opportunities and standards we now have to prevent garden plants escaping as weeds and I was very interested to hear about the new biosecurity commons and the modelling applications that can be used to predict weed dispersal for many species and the collaboration that is possible using these tools.

The conference dinner was also a fantastic event with a great venue, great food, and opportunities to meet in a more casual setting. During the meal we heard about fabulous partnerships between our first nations people and property owners to improve biodiversity and restore the land, learn from each other, and bring a sense of culture in using traditional methods of land management to our first nations young people. There were numerous presentations given by our first nations people who presented traditional and highly successful ways to manage land to preserve biodiversity and highlighted the fact that we should be working together to manage country.

There were also several fabulous posters that I was fortunate to be able to read during lunch sessions and I was able to share my contact details with several delegates that I intend to follow up on in relation to future research collaborations.

All in all, this conference was one of the most valuable I have ever been to in enabling me to learn from others, grow valuable networks and the provision of contacts that I know have the potential to become long lasting partnerships into the future in weed science.

I would like to personally thank Chris Brodie, President, Weed Management Society of South Australia Inc and all conference organisers for putting together such a fantastic conference. I would also like to thank Rachel Melland and the program and subprogram committees for putting together a great program and coordinating the proceedings. Finally, I would also like to extend my gratitude to and Kim Bishop (Hignell) President, and Kerry Harrington (Secretary) Council of Australasian Weed Societies Inc. for the wonderful support of this travel award that has been instrumental in allowing me to be able attend and participate in the 22nd AWC conference.