

A community approach to tackling Hudson pear

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Summary Hudson pear is an invasive cactus in Australia and is one of eight species in the genus listed as Weeds of National Significance (WONS). Various agencies are currently working together to implement an integrated management strategy to tackle this menace, including Northern Slopes Landcare Association NW Cacti Control Co-ordinator (CCC), North West Local Land Services (NW LLS), Castlereagh Macquarie County Council (CMCC) and NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI). The strategy seeks to reduce the distribution and density of Hudson pear using chemical (herbicides) and biological (biocontrol) approaches, which in turn will benefit the environment, agriculture, mining and tourism industries. One of the challenges with implementing the strategy was the diverse community which is affected by Hudson pear. Before formal community consultation began, the biggest barrier faced was the 'blame game' and the feeling of hopelessness considering the scale of the Hudson pear incursion. The perceptions and concerns of the community needed to be explored in order to bring about the

behaviour change required to give them ownership of the solutions to the problem. To achieve this, workshops and surveys were deployed to help guide community engagement with biocontrol and chemical control for Hudson pear. A total of 48 people from the affected areas attended the workshops and 38 completed the survey. Respondents included active Landholders, land managers, small business owners, miners and others who manage Hudson pear. Identified behaviours included: mapping, reporting, spraying, releasing biocontrol agents, and monitoring. Surveys included questions about barriers for each individual behaviour. Barriers identified in the surveys were addressed by education and awareness programs (including facilitation around issues or concerns, providing support with control and overall best practice management) to great success. The community as a result has taken ownership and is on board with the plan to tackle Hudson pear.

Keywords Hudson pear, community engagement, community, biocontrol