

# Weeds Awareness News

## Introducing the National Weeds Awareness Coordinator

Hello, I'm Andrew Clark, undertaking the role of National Weeds Awareness Coordinator.



I hope to build some of the weed awareness programs happening around Australia and letting you know what other people are doing.

If you have a campaign or activity that you're conducting to improve the awareness of weeds with a particular group, then I'd like to hear from you.

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## Government awareness strategies

The Australian Weeds Committee (AWC) has a National Weeds Awareness Action Plan, part of the Australian Weeds Strategy.

This action plan is relevant to all states, regions and agencies as the basis for nationally moving forward on weeds awareness activities, ensuring consistent messages, and increasing community understanding and commitment. This action plan should be publicly available later this year.

The role of the AWC is to provide inter-government support for the resolution of weeds issues at a national level. More about the activities of the AWC can be found at [www.weeds.org.au](http://www.weeds.org.au).

The Australian Government also has a major campaign under way to help address weeds awareness as a first step to improving actions and behaviour towards weeds by the larger community. See the article below for more details.

The objectives of this campaign are to heighten awareness about why weeds are a problem, how weeds are spread and how individuals and groups can make a difference to the weed problems here in Australia. After all the weeds are relevant to all Australians whether they lead an urban lifestyle or seek a rural livelihood.

### Did you know:

- Weeds cost Australia's agricultural industry over \$4 billion each year?
- Weedbuster has been operating nationally for 10 years now.

## The Community and Industry Engagement Plan

The Community and Industry Engagement Plan (CIEP) is due for launch in mid-September 2007. If you've never heard of it before, the Australian Government's Defeating the Weeds Menace (DWM) program has set aside about \$4 million for this public awareness and communication campaign (the CIEP).

The campaign focuses on building partnerships with key groups and raising awareness of weeds with gardeners and hobby farmers in peri-urban areas—a key area of risk for weed spread.

A major component is the advertising and editorial campaign which is set to begin in mid-September. While the majority of people targeted by the campaign will be directed to the Australian Government website to seek further information, enquiries are also likely to be received by state, regional and local governments for information about specific weeds in local and regional areas. Key stakeholders should now be

### How to contact the editor

If you have something that is happening in the weeds awareness world that you would like others to know about, please contribute your story to Andrew Clark. I'd love to hear what's happening in your area.

This Weeds Awareness newsletter is available to anyone. If you know of others that would like to be added to the distribution list, please forward their name, position and organisation with their email and phone number to Andrew Clark.

### Andrew Clark

Andrew.clark@dpi.qld.gov.au

## The Community and Industry Engagement Plan cont...

aware of the pending media and advertising campaign that is being planned by the Australian Government from September to December this year.

Because of the visual nature of weeds, the advertising will mainly be delivered through press and magazine advertising. Visual imagery will be used to ensure respondents are aware that many of the plants they have traditionally thought of as garden weeds. It's these plants, once they've escaped into bushland and farming areas, that are impacting on the economy and the environment—even people's health.

***"A key component of the campaign is the website [www.weeds.gov.au](http://www.weeds.gov.au)"***

Throughout the concept testing, results showed experienced and inexperienced gardeners alike needed much more information when it came to raising their awareness about weeds.

The campaign aims to reach 92% of its target audience, so the average person being targeted should view the advertisements several times throughout the campaign.

The Australian Government weeds website will also be a key resource in the campaign

([www.weeds.gov.au](http://www.weeds.gov.au)) and content is being uploaded now. A critical part of the website will be a weed species database that will help people identify and find information about key weeds in their area.

Local spokespeople are also desperately needed to speak on various weeds issues to support this campaign. If you're confident talking about weeds on radio and want to participate, please contact Andrew Clark.

The CIEP is being administered jointly by the Australian Government Department of Environment and Water Resources (DEW) and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF).

## Weedbuster 2007

Weedbuster 2007 is on from 6-13th October 2007 and is using the theme "Grow Me Instead". Together with the Nursery and Gardening Industry the campaign is targeting invasive garden plants in residential gardens.

More than 65% of Australia's weeds were first planted as ornamental garden plants, and many people are unaware that they may have invasive plants growing in their own gardens. Now is the time find out more about the plants they have in their gardens, identify the weedy ones and remove them to plant non-weedy species. The same can be said for managing green waste to ensure there is no illegal dumping occurring.

If we don't stop the weeds escape from gardens then future Australians will be left with a legacy of degraded landscapes and an environment devoid of Australian species.

A number of key activities will also be held throughout the week with local governments, community groups and individuals providing information and targeting weeds in local areas. If you want to get involved, check the web site

### ***Weedbusters 6-13th October 2007***

***Register your activity at***

***[www.weedbusters.info](http://www.weedbusters.info) and get a free T-shirt for your efforts.***

for activities in your area or register your own activity.

Without the support of participants running activities over the week, the campaign would flop, but it's amazing how many people are passionate about this subject and will devote their time and resources to helping remove or talk about the weeds issues in their area.

There are some great activity ideas presented in fact sheets available on the web. Every activity coordinator will receive a free T-shirt if they register their event on the web.

State Weedbuster coordinators will be able to assist local community groups with information and resources to help them get going. Contact details can be found at [www.weedbusters.info](http://www.weedbusters.info).

