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New committee ready to tackle North Coast weed issues

A new regional committee established by North Coast Local Land Services to coordinate the management of weeds in the region, has met for the first time. The North Coast Regional Weed Committee, established as part of a new approach to weed management across the North Coast, came together recently for its inaugural meeting in Coffs Harbour.

Cr Robyn Hordern, a Councillor on Ballina Shire Council and Far North Coast Weeds, has been appointed as the inaugural Chair.

North Coast Regional Weed Committee Members are: Rod Ensbey, NSW Department of Primary Industries; Lisa Wellman, Office of Environment and Heritage; Phillip Courtney, Reece Luxton and Thor Aaso, local government representatives; Terry Schmitzer, Garry Dew and Des Boorma, rural landholders; Barry Powells, Landcare; Kath Robb, NSW Farmers; Darrin Heron, representing Aboriginal land managers; and representatives from the main public land managers – Tom Newby, Forestry Corp; Brad Hartley, Roads and Maritime Services; Michael Hooper, John Holland Rail; and Andrew Petroeschovsky, Department of Primary Industries-Lands. A representative of environmental interests and an additional local government representative will soon be added to the membership.

Committee Chair, Robyn Hordern, said the establishment of the new committee will result in improved weed management by coordinating the control efforts of land managers across the region and allowing for focus on issues specific to the North Coast.

“Every land manager is responsible for controlling weeds on land under their control. Coordinating all these efforts is critical to reducing the impact of weeds on productive and natural environments,” Robyn said.

“There are significant advantages for the region in closely aligning the strategies and activities of all organisations that have an interest in weed management, including improved coordination on specific weed management programs.

“Local government is a significant partner in weed management and their role in planning weed management activities and enforcing weed declarations will remain unchanged.” Robyn concluded.

The committee will take a cross tenure approach to the planning and coordination of weed management activities, which play an integral part in an overall state weed management framework.

The committee is one of 11 regional weeds committees - one in each Local Land Services region – established by the NSW Government following a major review of weed management during 2013.

The objectives of the committee are to prevent the establishment of new invasive species; eliminate, or prevent the spread of new invasive species; manage and reduce the impacts of widespread invasive species; ensure the North Coast has the ability and commitment to manage invasive species; and to promote awareness of invasive weed species within the community. Establishing regional committees is a high priority for Local Land Services to support regional planning under the Biosecurity Act.

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Photo captions: North Coast Regional Weed Committee members at the recent inaugural meeting