



Southern Gulf
NRM

MEDIA RELEASE

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North West Queensland Weed Control Innovation Forum & Field day

North West innovators took centre stage at the Weed Control Innovation Forum and Field Day held in Richmond on 27th April.

While weeds are a major problem in the region, the event showcased how community and industry innovation is helping to reduce weed impacts and provide more effective and efficient weed control outcomes.

The event, coordinated by Southern Gulf NRM and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, attracted over 80 participants from as far afield as Burketown, Barcaldine and Charters Towers. This included graziers, local government officers, and Indigenous rangers.

The day began with a forum where a range of speakers provided project updates, weed control case studies and the latest in weed research. The highlights of the morning session included:

- Overview of the priority weeds in our region and key features to identify them from Nathan Morgan (DAF).
- Dr Wayne Vogler (Tropical Weeds Research Centre) gave some timely advice on how to 'shut the gate on weeds' to reduce seed spread as well as the latest information on biological control studies.
- Kevin Anderson and Billy Jackson from Carpentaria Land Aboriginal Council gave the crowd a presentation on how the rangers are controlling rubber vine, bellyache bush and parkinsonian in the gulf by using aerial and on-ground burning to on-ground weed control treatment on bellyache bush and neem trees.
- Nathan March (DAF) gave an update on the War on Western Weeds initiative and then with Robyn Young (Flinders Shire Council), spoke on the success of the Flinders Shire Good Neighbour Program as a new approach to reducing weed spread between properties.
- Recent project achievements by Southern Gulf NRM were highlighted by Charles Curry.
- David Phelps (DAF) was there to give the crowd advice on the latest research findings for managing Mitchell grass pastures. David also provided new information for graziers on how they can increase their Mitchell grass pastures in the future. Essential advice for both those in drought, as well as those watching their pastures regenerate after drought.

The morning session was capped off by the launch of the 'Priority weeds of the Southern Gulf Region' guide by Pru Wharton.

As informative as the morning session was, the crowd was transfixed by the hands-on demonstrations of the afternoon field program. First-off was a visit to a rubber vine infestation on the Flinders River where a splatter gun demonstration was provided by the Tropical Weeds Research Centre team. Next the crowd saw the speed and effectiveness of Fox Helicopters undertaking aerial ignition for rubber vine burning.

Moving on to a prickly acacia infestation site, participants witnessed an array of new control tools in action to increase the speed of tebuthiuron pellet application – including the Epple Skattergun, Cloncurry Mustering

Company's 'Weed Sniper', Harrington Systems Electronics' NN Applicator and then a talk on Fox Helicopters' strategic control including fence-line treatment.

Some of the old 'tried and true' control methods were not forgotten with Ken Springall (Dow AgroSciences) and Nathan Morgan (DAF) taking us through the finer points of basal bark spraying, foliar spraying and soil applied herbicide options.

Dr Wayne Vogler then showed how to get the best results from misting prickly acacia before Kevin Bawden took to his dozer and pushed a few trees as an example of one of the mechanical options.

The event provided attendees with a unique opportunity to see control demonstrations firsthand and speak with inventors and scientists about new tools and improved approaches for weed management.

Weed control in the region has long been a priority for Southern Gulf NRM and these new control tools and innovative approaches will improve not only the organisation's project success, but potentially those of all land managers throughout the region.

Quotes on the Day

David Fox - Fox Helicopters Richmond

'Southern Gulf NRM has always been supportive of innovation in the field for weed control and this encourages more thinking on new methods to combat our ongoing weed problems. The recent field day in Richmond showcased these innovative ideas and their application in the working environment'

Nathan March – Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

'Local innovators have looked at local weed problems and developed local solutions – the result is a new toolbox of options for land managers and graziers to draw from'

Ray Campbell – Grazier Cairo Station McKinlay

'I really enjoyed the day, there was some great information by the speakers at the forum, especially on the biological research, it is great to see progress being made. The aerial ignition of the rubber vine is a great initiative along with follow up spraying will be a big help in controlling this problem. The various methods of control and eradicating of prickly acacia as well as parkinsonia and mesquite are great to see. These methods I am sure will be of great use to landholders in there weed programmes. Everybody that I spoke with gained a lot of benefit from the day.'

Ken Springall – DOW AGROSCIENCES

'The forum and field day showcased the innovations and new techniques available to land managers continuing the battle about prickly acacia. Innovations in herbicide application techniques and data relating to actual costs of control were a highlight of the day. Congratulations to the team at Southern Gulf NRM for holding an excellent event.'

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