

# CNG News

Edition 5, July 2006

## Welcome

"So, how do I control Chilean needle grass?" is a question I am often asked. Of course, the response depends on a range of factors. However, the reason why so many land managers contact myself and others, is due to the lack of published, detailed information on the management of Chilean needle grass (CNG) in different Australian landscapes.

As the following story highlights, that is all about to change. A National Best Practice Management Guide for CNG is currently in development. The comprehensive guide is due to be launched in January 2007. Read on to find out more, including how you can obtain a copy of the guide, and even contribute to its contents.

Other stories in this edition of *CNG News* report on the proactive approaches of the Phillip Island Steering Committee (Victoria) and Officers of the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water (Queensland) to control the spread of CNG. You may also be interested to know of the CNG projects funded in the second round of the Australian Government's Defeating the Weed Menace Programme, when calls for subsequent rounds are expected, and what upcoming events you may like to attend.

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## CNG Best Practice Management Guide - Would you like to contribute?

A National Best Practice Management Guide is being produced for CNG, which will include up-to-date information on its biology and management. In addition, a series of case studies in the guide will demonstrate the range of management approaches to CNG in different situations.

Draft sections of the guide are currently in production, but **we need your help!**

In order to produce a relevant and practical guide, we would like to draw on the experience of individuals and organisations involved in CNG management. You can contribute by supplying details of CNG management in your areas, such as:

**What works? What doesn't? Is there a best way to combine control strategies? We are also seeking specific management strategies and control techniques that have been trialed.**

Case studies will be contained in the management guide to demonstrate the techniques that have been adopted for CNG management in different situations throughout Australia. They will include details of management activities in a particular situation, supplemented with photos and/or maps.



Photo: Jamie Davies undertaking the initial literature searches on CNG.

Please contact Jamie Davies if you would like to contribute a case study or have an interesting management strategy, photo, idea or story of CNG that may be relevant to this project.

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Ph: (03) 9785 0186. Email: [Jamie.Davies@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:Jamie.Davies@dpi.vic.gov.au) .

## Bass Coast Organisations tackle CNG

CNG was first identified on Phillip Island (Victoria) a few years ago, with little action resulting. However, recent efforts by local organisations on the Island have raised awareness of this invasive grass weed in the area.

Phillip Island is rich in biodiversity and natural assets. Many farmers are proud that their farms are free of most weeds, particularly grass weeds. So, a concerted effort is needed by all land managers on the Island to stay on top of the isolated outbreaks of CNG.

Rangers of the Phillip Island Nature Park manage 1,300 hectares of coastal and woodland reserve, coordinate tourist activities and maintain the health of the Park's assets. The Rangers identified local outbreaks of CNG as being of considerable concern to nearby reserves, as it is found on roadsides that lead to the renowned tourist destinations, 'Seal Rocks' and the 'Penguin Parade'.

Rangers from the Nature Park notified the Bass Coast Landcare Network that CNG was concerning their organisation. A meeting of representatives of these organisations, as well as the Local Shire, VicRoads, the Victorian Department of Primary Industries and a local contractor was then organised. The objective of the meeting was to discuss how to control CNG on the Island.

The local steering committee comprising members from the aforementioned organisations, will meet again in July 2006. Their objective will be to plan for works to maintain best practice control, as springtime and seeding of CNG approaches.



Photo (L to R): Matt Stephenson (Landcare Project Officer), Mike Cleeland (local contractor) and Richard Dakin (Ranger) discuss proposed management of CNG on Phillip Island.

## Queensland drivers made aware of CNG

The previous issue of *CNG News* reported on the concerted efforts of the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water (NRMW) last spring and summer to map and control all CNG infestations in Queensland. Such efforts have not lost momentum, as NRMW continues to implement a statewide strategy for CNG. Public education and awareness form a significant part of the strategy. The following is an example of one such awareness activity.

Ten road signs have recently been erected in the Shires of Warwick, Clifton and Cambooya on the Darling Downs, to enhance awareness of the Class 1 weed (according to state legislation). The signs alert motorists that CNG is a threat to agriculture and the environment, and give a State Government call centre number, where callers will be referred to NRMW Officers for more information.

The signs took six months to develop from the design phase to the final erection. Lucy Kirjan, of the NRMW, worked with MainRoads Officers to develop a sign that was effective and got the message across while motorists were driving at high speeds. The images used in the signs were taken by a local professional photographer and were selected as they clearly show the significant characteristics of the grass and give an indication of its size.

The sign, approved by MainRoads and the NRMW, will now be used for all official environmental road signs of the weed in Queensland.



Photo: Lucy Kirjan, Weed Spread Prevention Officer (NRMW) showing the newly erected CNG sign on the road to Clifton, in the Darling Downs district.

## Successful projects!

The outcomes of Round 2 of the Australian Government's Defeating the Weed Menace Programme were announced in May 2006.

Two nationally important CNG projects were funded under the Programme.

Brief descriptions of the two projects are provided below:

### **Project 1: Biodiversity impacts of CNG on Australia's indigenous grasslands.**

*Responsible organisations: Victorian Department of Primary Industries, Victoria University, Environment ACT, and the CRC for Australian Weed Management.*

The aim of this project is to assess the impacts of CNG on biodiversity in Australia, and determine what remedial actions have been most successful. This project will collect baseline information on the flora and fauna present at agricultural native grasslands and native grassland reserves.

Baseline information will then be compared to equivalent nearby locations severely infested by exotic unpalatable grasses, particularly CNG. In addition, sites containing CNG that have previously been assessed for biodiversity and weed infestation, will be reassessed to document the impacts over time; and where remediation actions have been taken, the degree of success will be assessed.

### **Project 2: CNG best practice management.**

*Responsible organisations: Victorian Department of Primary Industries, NSW Department of Primary Industries, and the CRC for Australian Weed Management.*

The project has previously established four trial sites to demonstrate regional best practice management for CNG. These sites span the range of CNG in Australia from northern NSW to southern Victoria. Initial management treatments have been applied at all sites, with on-going treatments and livestock management currently occurring. The treatments being demonstrated were selected in collaboration with local community groups and land managers, all of which have shown a keen interest in the trial sites.

Treatments at each site will monitor grazing management, chemical control strategies, and pasture competition. Results will be discussed at a series of field days where participants can engage with researchers, as well as being published in region-specific management guides.

## Upcoming Events

### ***NSW Grasslands Conference - Wagga Wagga (25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> July 2006)***

The NSW Grasslands Society is holding a conference with the theme 'Waging War on Pasture Weeds - Battle Plans and Winning Strategies', to be held at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga. Further information can be obtained from the society website [www.grassland.com.au](http://www.grassland.com.au) , alternatively contact Belinda Hackney on (02) 6938 1858.

### ***15<sup>th</sup> Australian Weeds Conference - South Australia (24<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> September 2006)***

The Weed Society of South Australia will be hosting the 15<sup>th</sup> Australian Weeds Conference at the Adelaide Convention Centre, South Australia. The theme of the conference is 'Managing weeds in a Changing Climate'. Register electronically on [www.plevin.com.au/15AWC2006](http://www.plevin.com.au/15AWC2006) .

### ***Weedbuster Week (7<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> October 2006)***

Throughout Australia, hundreds of events are held during Weedbuster Week each year by individuals, schools, community groups and local and state governments. Events range from award ceremonies, weed clean-ups, field and machinery demonstrations, and weed seminars. For more information, or to register an event go to [www.weedbusters.info/about.htm](http://www.weedbusters.info/about.htm) .

## Additional Defeating the Weed Menace Funding

The Australian Government has committed \$40 million over four years, from 2004-08, for national action on the nations most threatening weeds through the Defeating the Weed Menace Programme. The Programme will fund strategic on-ground control and eradication at the regional level, research into cost-effective management techniques and biological controls, and awareness raising campaigns.

Further calls for projects under the Programme are expected soon! Undertaking frequent checks on the following websites will ensure you don't miss out on the call - [www.daff.gov.au](http://www.daff.gov.au) , or [nht.weeds@daff.gov.au](mailto:nht.weeds@daff.gov.au) . Contact the National Chilean needle grass Coordinator (details on page 1) for further information or assistance.

## Have you missed an issue of *CNG News*?

If you have missed receiving an issue of *CNG News* and would like to see what was contained in previous editions, you can view and print them off the Weeds Australia website [www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/Chileanneedlegrass](http://www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/Chileanneedlegrass) .