

Minutes

Meeting Two of the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group

Teleconference held on Tuesday 20 December, 2011

Attendees: Colin Grant, DAFF (Chair); Lois Ransom, DAFF; Mikael Hirsch, DAFF; Greg Fraser, PHA; Rod Turner, PHA; Sophie Peterson, PHA; Jenna Taylor, PHA (Secretariat); Sam Malfroy, PHA; Kareena Arthy, DEEDI; Suzy Perry, DEEDI; Jim Thompson, DEEDI; Satendra Kumar, NSW DPI.

Apologies: Mike Ashton, DEEDI; Bruce Christie, NSW DPI.

Item 1 – Welcome by the Chair

Colin Grant welcomed the Members of the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group (MRTMG) to the teleconference and the Members introduced themselves and provided information on their role.

The Chair reinforced the need for urgency in progressing objectives of the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management (MRT2M) Program and this was noted by all Members.

Item 2 – Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference for the MRTMG were discussed and it was agreed that PHA would develop a set of Terms of Reference similar to those being developed for the Asian Honey Bee Transition to Management Group. These will be circulated for approval.

Item 3 – Governance Arrangements

Membership

The MRTMG will be comprised of the following:

Colin Grant, DAFF (Primary member)
Lois Ransom, DAFF (Secondary member)
Greg Fraser, PHA (Primary member)
Rod Turner, PHA (Secondary member)
Kareena Arthy, DEEDI (Primary member)
Mike Ashton, DEEDI (Secondary member)
Bruce Christie, NSW DPI (Primary member)
Satendra Kumar, NSW DPI (Secondary member)

It was agreed that other people would be invited to attend the meetings as appropriate.

Chair

It was confirmed that Colin Grant will be the Chair of the MRTMG.

Secretariat and Administration Support

PHA will provide the Secretariat and administration support for the program. PHA will circulate minutes and talking points for approval before making them public on the MRT2M Program website shortly after each meeting.

Roles and Responsibilities

PHA and the MRT2M Program partners will continue to work together to finalise the details of each contract and the operational plans for each of the Australian Government funded projects in the Plan for Transition to Management of Myrtle Rust.

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Item 4 – Communication

Communication Protocol

It was agreed that the media enquiries can be initially directed to the MRT2M Program website as meeting minutes and talking points will be made public on the site. It was further discussed that all Members of the MRTMG are authorised to speak directly with the media when contacted if they are comfortable doing so and the questions are of relevance to their organisation.

It was suggested, however, that any Member of the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group who has spoken directly to the media should advise the other Members of the MRMG that they have done so.

Publications

Nursery and Garden Industry Australia's (NGIA) "Australian Nursery Industry Myrtle Rust (*Uredo rangelii*) Management Plan 2011" and Forest and Wood Products Australia's (FWPA) "Myrtle Rust – Forest Industry Issues Paper" were circulated and their suitability for upload to the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Program website discussed.

DEEDI advised that the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage has published a "Management Plan for Myrtle Rust on the National Parks Estate" and that DEEDI is also developing a Myrtle Rust document.

PHA will seek permission from NGIA, FWPA, and the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage to make their respective documents available on the website.

DEEDI will make their document available once complete.

Item 5 – Operating Plan

It was discussed that PHA currently has only high level information on the projects outlined in the Plan for Transition to Management of Myrtle Rust. In order for PHA to develop and finalise contracts for these projects PHA must be provided with more detailed information such as the original project proposals including objectives, the type of work and or experiments to be completed, the scale of this work, expected outcomes, and proposed budgets as well as information on which aspects of the proposals have been agreed upon by DAFF.

DAFF agreed to provide PHA with this information.

It was also agreed that although submission of a manuscript or manuscripts to scientific journals would be desirable, it will not be stipulated in the contracts that this be a required outcome of any of the projects.

At this point the MRTMG was advised that the personnel from DAFF that have been responsible for Myrtle Rust up until now will not be working for DAFF in 2012. As such, DAFF's accountability and responsibility for Myrtle Rust will be transferred to the Chief Plant Protection Officer.

It was discussed that OCCPO will taking on the technical leadership for Project 5.1 (APVMA registration of fungicides). OCCPO will convene and provide the Secretariat for a Reference Group of technical experts from DAFF, PHA, DEEDI, NSW DPI, and NGIA. OCCPO must ensure that PHA has sufficient technical information to develop the contract for this project.

It was requested that PHA circulate the Plan for Transition to Management of Myrtle Rust to all Members of the MRTMG.

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It was also requested that PHA complete a Gap Analysis to identify other R+D being undertaken on Myrtle Rust prior to the next meeting of the MRTMG. The output will be used to determine if there is duplication or gaps in the current suite of R+D activities across a diverse range of organisations.

It was noted that Biosecurity Queensland hosted a National Myrtle Rust Research and Development Workshop in September to discuss current and proposed Myrtle Rust research opportunities. Minutes were not taken but DEEDI agreed to forward the presentations from the Workshop to PHA for use in the Gap Analysis. DEEDI agreed to forward the presentations to DAFF as well.

Item 6 – Reporting

Update from DEEDI

Suzy Perry gave an update on Myrtle Rust activities in Queensland. The DEEDI report is attached at Attachment A.

PHA agreed to provide a link to the Biosecurity Queensland Myrtle Rust website on the MRT2M Program website.

Update from NSW DPI

Satendra Kumar gave an update on Myrtle Rust activities in New South Wales. The New South Wales report is attached at Attachment B.

PHA will also provide a link to the NSW DPI Myrtle Rust website on the MRT2M Program website.

Item 7 –Future Meetings

It was agreed that the MRTMG would meet monthly via teleconference. PHA will send out proposed dates for the next six meetings (from January to June inclusive) for confirmation.

Item 8 – Close of Meeting

The Chair thanked the Members of the MRTMG for their participation in the teleconference and closed the meeting.

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Attachment A

Myrtle Rust in Queensland – report from Biosecurity Queensland for Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group Meeting 2 held by teleconference 20 December 2011

Queensland Myrtle Rust Program

Goal

Help Queenslanders adapt to living with the impacts of Myrtle Rust

Objectives

Ensure people are aware of Myrtle Rust and know what to do
Assist industry to operate and trade
Learn more about Myrtle Rust
Limit impacts on natural and built environmental assets as much as practical

Elements and sub-elements of the Queensland Myrtle Rust Program

Knowledge and Understanding

- Coordinated knowledge and information capture
- Integrated surveillance program
- Diagnostics
- Population genetics
- Disease epidemiology
- Host specificity
- Chemical control
- Resistance breeding
- Monitor impacts

Disease Management

Education and Training

Stakeholder Engagement

Adaptive Strategies

Legislation and Regulation

Market Access

Communication and Community Engagement

The Queensland Myrtle Rust Program work plan

The Myrtle Rust Program has developed a full work plan of activities, into which affected industries and other stakeholders have had significant input into the deliverables and priorities, initially through the Myrtle Rust Control Group and now through the Myrtle Rust Advisory Committee.

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Current situation

Below is an overview of the current situation in Queensland (as at 20 December 2011):

Total number of known Myrtle Rust cases in Queensland	922
Total number of known affected (host) species	113
Total number of known affected (host) genera	34
Number of Council areas with Myrtle Rust cases	18
Names of Council areas with Myrtle Rust cases	Brisbane City Bundaberg Regional Cairns Regional Fraser Coast Regional Gold Coast City Gympie Regional Ipswich City Logan City Moreton Bay Regional Redland City Scenic Rim Regional South Burnett Regional Sunshine Coast Regional Toowoomba Regional Townsville City Western Downs Regional Whitsunday Regional

**new local government area*

Recent significant detections of Myrtle Rust in Queensland

The disease is established in coastal areas of south east Queensland and the furthestmost north detection of Myrtle Rust in Queensland (established in the natural environment, rather than a detection of the disease in a nursery situation) is at Bundaberg (in the Botanic Gardens and some backyards).

Another recent detection of significance is in natural areas at Hervey Bay, which is a serious threat to the Fraser Island World Heritage Area.

Rockhampton

Myrtle Rust was identified in nursery stock in a retail nursery in Rockhampton in early December. Surveillance conducted in the area suggests that the disease has not spread to the natural environment. All plants in the infected lines have been removed from sale and destroyed and tracing investigations were conducted to determine where the infected plants came from to prevent recurrence of the incident.

Under Queensland legislation, it is an offence to sell or trade in plants that are infected with Myrtle Rust. Biosecurity Queensland is working with the affected businesses to ensure they have information on the prevention and management of the disease in nursery situations. The wholesale nursery that supplied the plants has also been provided similar information.

Increased infection in eucalypts

At the start of summer we started recording an increased incidence of Myrtle Rust on eucalypts. Significant infections have been found in the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens, south east Queensland and in northern New South Wales.

Host affected include:

Eucalyptus grandis (rose gum) trees up to two years old are showing moderate infection at this stage and will be monitored. This species is a common timber tree, extending from Newcastle, NSW to Bundaberg, Qld and is also common in the wet tropics.

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Eucalyptus tereticornis (forest red gum) saplings also have significant infections. This species, which extends over much of eastern Australia, is used extensively in revegetation sites and is an important food and habitat tree for koalas.

Eucalyptus curtisii (plunkett mallee) trees, mature, immature and coppiced, are severely infected. This species is native to Queensland.

Eucalyptus planchoniana (bastard tallow wood)

*Eucalyptus cloeziana**(Gympie messmate)

Corymbia torelliana (cadagi)

*Corymbia henryi**(large leaved spotted gum)

Corymbia citriadora ssp. *variegata**

These species are important timber species (*) and habitat trees.

Website

The Biosecurity Queensland website is being continuously updated with new information on Myrtle Rust including disease management and monitoring, legislative requirements, images of affected hosts etc.

New hosts and susceptibility rating

The Myrtle Rust Program has rated the susceptibility of all known Myrtle Rust host species in Queensland based on a four point scale from 'Extremely Susceptible' to 'Relatively Tolerant'. These ratings are based on current observations in Queensland and may be subject to change over time. These ratings have been applied to all species on the Queensland Myrtle Rust Host List.

On-line reporting system

Suspect reports are captured through the dedicated on-line reporting system. Reports are also received through the Call Centre on the 13 25 23 number.

So far Biosecurity Queensland has received 2468 calls related to Myrtle Rust.

We also have a dedicated Myrtle Rust email address for enquiries – myrtlerust@deedi.qld.gov.au

Community and stakeholder engagement

The Myrtle Rust Program has developed a suite of education and awareness materials including Myrtle Rust brochures, factsheets, posters, banners, and an information pack for stakeholders.

Communiqué

The Queensland Myrtle Rust Program issues a monthly communiqué to stakeholders and other interested parties. This communiqué includes a current situation report as well as updates on the programs activities.

Myrtle Rust training program

A pilot Myrtle Rust training session was held in Mossman last week as a first step in the development of a Queensland Myrtle Rust Training Program for 2012. Over 30 people from Cairns Regional Council and other government organisations joined in the six hour session to gain a comprehensive understanding of Myrtle Rust, including management and decontamination options.

The Myrtle Rust Training will be presented by the Australian Network for Plant Conservation Inc. in association with the Royal Botanic Gardens & Domain Trust (Sydney).

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Myrtle Rust business and community information sessions

Sessions for both community stakeholders and affected businesses are being conducted throughout regional Queensland.

The first of these information sessions was held in Hervey Bay in November and the second was held in Bundaberg last week. There has been a great turn out from a range of businesses and community and environmental organisations including nurseries, arborists, land care groups, gardening groups and Council officers.

The next Myrtle Rust Information Sessions will be held in Rockhampton in January 2012 (dates and venue TBA).

Stakeholder engagement

The Myrtle Rust Program recently held a forum of key staff from Councils that are currently managing large scale Myrtle Rust infections in their region. The objective of the forum was for staff to share their experiences and learning's in managing Myrtle Rust infections in different situations, including revegetation of natural environments, management of parklands and street trees.

The issues and information discussed will also help in the information provided to newly infected regions and in the development of the Myrtle Rust Management Guide.

Knowledge and understanding

The Knowledge and Understanding component of the Myrtle Rust Program is funded by the Queensland Government and also the CRC for National Plant Biosecurity.

Current focus is on host range and disease epidemiology so as to determine economic, environmental and social impacts of Myrtle Rust in Queensland.

E.g. Impact on Melaleuca and regeneration

Myrtle Rust Program scientists are currently assessing the impact of Myrtle Rust on *Melaleuca quinquenervia* at several regeneration sites in South East Queensland. Initial results are showing an increase in disease incidence and severity levels with 94 percent of trees displaying some level of impact.

Areas known to have natural infections of Myrtle Rust in *Melaleuca quinquenervia* include coastal heathland environments around Beerburrum and Toolara State Forest, as well as sites in Sunnybank and the Tinchy Tamba wetlands.

Melaleuca quinquenervia is now rated at the highest level of susceptibility to Myrtle Rust. *Melaleuca nodosa* and *Melaleuca saligna* have also recently been rated as being highly susceptible to Myrtle Rust.

Monitoring and assessment at key regeneration sites will continue on a monthly basis. We already have 6 months data on epidemiology and impact of th

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Attachment B

Myrtle Rust in NSW – report from NSW DPI for Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group Meeting 2 held by teleconference 20 December 2011

Following the initial detection of Myrtle Rust in NSW, response, education material and communication with broad stakeholder was prepared and rolled out during the response program.

A suite of fungicides are now available on emergency permit for all stakeholders.

NSW DPI still fields enquiries on Myrtle Rust control, especially from home gardeners

The Office of Environment & Heritage has developed a "Management Plan for Myrtle Rust on the National Parks Estate".

Updates on Myrtle Rust are sent to a wide range of stakeholders via the electronic biosecurity bulletin.

Myrtle Rust remains confined to coastal NSW with no reports from west of the Great Dividing Range.

A level of surveillance in the west of the Great Dividing Range is being conducted by Regulatory and District Horticulturists.