

Minutes

Meeting Six of the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group

Teleconference held on Tuesday 15 May, 2012

Attendees: Colin Grant, DAFF (Chair); Lois Ransom, DAFF; Leanne Herrick, DAFF; Anne Ferguson, DSEWPaC; Ian Mason, DSEWPaC; Greg Fraser, PHA; Rod Turner, PHA; Jenna Taylor, PHA (Secretariat); Alison Cleary, PHA; Mike Ashton, DEEDI; Suzy Perry, DEEDI; Satendra Kumar, NSW DPI; Graham Wilson, OEH; Pat Sharkey, DPI Vic; Russell McMurray, DPI Vic; Hugh Bramwells, DSE; Lucy Sutherland, ASBP; Gavin Matthew, AFPA; Peter Grist, AFPA.

Apologies: Mike Cole, DAFF; Robyn Martin, DAFF; Tegan Honing-Wassenburg, DAFF; Belinda Brown, DSEWPaC; Sophie Peterson, PHA; Sam Malfroy, PHA; Kareena Arthy, DEEDI; Jim Thompson, DEEDI; Gordon Guymer, DERM; Bruce Christie, NSW DPI; Kathy Gott, NSW DPI; Hugh Millar, DPI Vic; Anne Dennis, DSE; Tuesday Phelan, DSE.

Item 1 – Welcome by the Chair

Colin Grant welcomed all Members of the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group (MRTMG), and in particular Ian Mason from DSEWPaC, Graham Wilson from NSW's Office of Environment and Heritage, Gavin Matthew and Peter Grist from the Australian Forest Products Association, and Lucy Sutherland from the Australian Seed Bank Partnership who were attending for the first time. It was noted that Gordon Guymer from Queensland's Department of Environment and Resource Management has accepted his invitation to participate in the MRTMG but was unable to attend this meeting.

Item 2 – Endorsement of Minutes from the Previous Meeting

It was discussed that the draft minutes from Meeting Five had been circulated for comment, comments had been received, and all amendments requested had been made. There were no further comments made or amendments requested and the minutes were endorsed. PHA will make them available on the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Program website.

Item 3 – Action Items from the Previous Meeting

Colin Grant ran through the action list from Meeting Five. The status of each action item was discussed and amendments were made where necessary.

Item 4 – Reporting from PHA

Contracts

Rod Turner advised that as PHA is dealing with a range of stakeholders and sometimes multiple stakeholders for any given project, the contracts for the Australian Government funded projects in the Plan for Transition to Management of Myrtle Rust are still in various stages of completion. In most cases, the researchers have agreed to the funding offered and the milestones but the business managers are concerned about IP and have requested that changes be made to PHA's standard contract.

PHA then gave a brief outline of each project:

PHA is currently negotiating with NSW DPI over milestones and milestone payments for Project 3.1. It was originally intended that DPI Vic would complete this work but NSW DPI was asked to provide a quote for the same work for comparison and they are able to complete this work for \$50,000 less than DPI Vic.

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Colin Grant asked if anyone would like to comment on this as he was aware that it may be a sensitive issue. Russell McMurray stated that he had no issue with the contract being given to NSW DPI but that he hoped that the documentation provided to both organisations had been the same. Rod assured him that in both cases the wording had come straight from the Plan for Transition to Management of Myrtle Rust.

The contract for Project 3.2 has been signed and the first milestone payment made to CSIRO. A progress report was received on 2 May and has been circulated to the MRTMG.

The Orange Agricultural Institute has indicated to PHA that it is no longer interested in undertaking Project 3.3.

PHA has written and circulated to the MRTMG a paper outlining proposed variations to Project 3.4 (see below).

The contract for Project 3.5 has now been signed.

The University of Sydney Plant Breeding Institute has revised its proposal for Project 4.1 to reflect a reduced timeframe. PHA has sent a contract to the University of Sydney for consideration. The business manager requested that the contract be for research rather than consultancy, their main issue being the ownership of IP. PHA has since sent a modified version of the contract to the University of Sydney for consideration but the Business manager has been holding it up. The business manager has now agreed to forward it to the legal area for their consideration.

The University of Sydney has revised its proposal for Project 5.1 and PHA has sent them a contract for consideration. As with Project 4.1, the Business manager has been holding it up. It is now with the legal area for their consideration.

The contract for Project 6.1 has been sent to ANU for consideration. It is currently being reviewed by ANU's legal office.

The contract for Project 6.2 has been sent to CSIRO for consideration. CSIRO has come back with some changes that they would like made to the contract. These changes appear to differ from those that were made to the contract for Project 3.2 prior to its approval. Mikael Hirsh has been asked to follow this up.

Proposal to Alter Projects

Rod Turner briefly summarised two papers which had been circulated to the MRTMG, the first proposing alterations to Project 3.4 and the second proposing the funding of travel costs for Dr. Robert Hauff, Forest Health Coordinator with the Division of Forestry and Wildlife at the Department of Land and Natural Resources in Hawaii, to attend and speak at the Myrtle Rust Research and Development Workshop to be held in Brisbane on 19 and 20 June. Field visits would be incorporated into this trip also.

The MRTMG endorsed both proposals and agreed that, in future, PHA was authorised to make decisions and advise the group at the next meeting.

SharePoint

Jenna Taylor advised that usernames and passwords for the SharePoint site have now been generated for all members of the MRTMG and that she would circulate these the following day with instructions on how to access the site.

Jenna also advised that the agendas, attachments, minutes, action lists, and other relevant documents from previous meetings have been uploaded to the SharePoint site. She asked members

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to log on to the site at their earliest convenience and to let her know if they have any problems so that these can be resolved prior to the next meeting.

Although usernames and passwords have been generated for members of the MRSAG also, these will not be circulated until the MRSAG is ready to meet.

Item 5 – Reporting on Myrtle Rust Activities in Queensland

Mike Ashton gave an update on Myrtle Rust activities in Queensland. The report is attached at Attachment A.

Mike also advised that the functions of the former Department of Environment and Resource Management are now delivered by five different departments. It was requested that Mike advise these departments that, if they would like to be represented on the MRTMG, they will need to make themselves known to Jenna Taylor at PHA.

Item 6 – Reporting on Myrtle Rust Activities in NSW

Satendra Kumar and Graham Wilson gave an update on Myrtle Rust activities in NSW. Their reports are attached at Attachment B.

Item 7 – Reporting on Myrtle Rust Activities in Victoria

Russell McMurray and Hugh Bramwells gave an update on Myrtle Rust activities in Victoria. Their reports are attached at Attachment C.

Lois Ransom asked if Victoria is still enforcing restrictions on the movement of Myrtaceous species from other states/territories into Victoria. Pat Sharkey advised that these restrictions would be rescinded by 30 June.

Item 8 – Update on National Myrtle Rust Activities

Anne Ferguson advised that, at the end of April, Tony Burke had listed Koala as a vulnerable species with Myrtle Rust being a potential threat to their habitat. There is information regarding this on the DSEWPaC website. It was requested that Anne forward a link to this website to Jenna Taylor and that Jenna put a link on the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Program website and the MRTMG SharePoint site.

Anne also advised that there is \$280,000 worth of Caring for our Country funding for Myrtle Rust-related activities.

Item 9 – Update on the Myrtle Rust Technical Liaison Group

Satendra Kumar advised that, during discussions with Anne Ferguson and Belinda Brown it was decided that Lucy Sutherland would be invited to attend this meeting to provide an update on Myrtle Rust-related seed bank and genetic conservation issues.

The issue of whether or not it is necessary to form a Technical Liaison Group was discussed and, as there are now representatives from environmental departments on the MRTMG, it was decided that it is not necessary.

Item 10 – Update on the Australian Seed Bank Partnership

Lucy Sutherland gave an update on the Australian Seed Bank Partnership's Myrtle Rust activities. Her report is attached at Attachment D.

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The ASBP request that the MRTMG considers endorsing a national collecting program. Such endorsement would assist in securing funding for this program. Colin Grant advised that there is Caring for our Country funding that the ASBP could tap into. He suggested that the ASBP put together a proposal.

Item 11 – Next Meeting

Members were advised that the next meeting of the MRTMG was scheduled from 3.00pm-4.00pm on Wednesday 27 June.

Members were also advised that it was decided during the Asian Honey Bee Transition to Management Group (AHBTMG) meeting that following the June meeting, AHBTMG meetings would be held once every two months with urgent meetings being called in between if required. It was discussed and agreed that the same would happen for MRTMG meetings. Monthly meetings will resume in March 2013 as both Transition to Management Programs begin to draw to a close.

Colin Grant invited Lucy Sutherland, Gavin Matthew, and Peter Grist to attend future MRTMG meetings and requested that Jenna Taylor put a link to the ASBP and AFPA websites on both the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Program website and the MRTMG SharePoint site.

Item 12 – 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 DAFF Qld for Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group Meeting Six held by teleconference on Tuesday, 15 May 2012

1. Myrtle Rust has been detected at a number of significant new sites in Queensland since the last meeting. These include in a council nursery and residential garden in Mossman, in the Mossman Gorge National Park, in Kuranda on the edge of the Barron Gorge National Park, in the Smithfield Conservation Park just north of Cairns, and in a residential garden in Mareeba.

An unconfirmed report of Myrtle Rust in the Herberton Range State Forest near Atherton on the Atherton Tablelands has been received also.

These detections confirm that Myrtle Rust is now established and widespread in Far North Queensland.

The disease has likely been present in the area for some time but long periods of wet weather over summer and autumn has probably masked the symptoms, with constant heavy rain washing the distinctive yellow spores from affected foliage. Now we have had a prolonged period of warm dry weather, the disease is becoming evident in multiple locations at the same time.

Biosecurity Queensland is working with key stakeholders in the area, including the Cairns Regional Council, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (DEHP) and Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (DNPRSR), to implement strategies to manage the impacts and minimise further spread.

A joint Queensland DAFF/DNPRSR media release was distributed on 14 May 2012 to alert the public in Far North Queensland to these detections, advise ways they can minimise the risk of spread (including into other national parks and world heritage areas) and seek their assistance to track the disease's spread, host range and impacts.

Myrtle Rust represents a significant risk to North Queensland's National Parks and World Heritage Areas, including the Wet Tropics and Islands on the Great Barrier Reef, due to the hot, humid conditions and high rainfall (which are ideal for disease development and spread) and the number of potential host species in the area.

Many rainforest species are known to be susceptible to Myrtle Rust and there is increasing concern as to the long term impacts of the disease on the values of Queensland's World Heritage Areas, including species and habitats listed under the (Commonwealth) *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Myrtle Rust also represents a significant risk to the natural regeneration of the Wet Tropics and the resilience of these vegetation communities following significant cyclonic and other environmental events. While the impacts are yet to be determined, it will be critical to track and quantify the disease's impacts on regeneration of the natural environment to the development of long term management strategies for the disease.

Myrtle Rust has also been detected in the natural environment in Mackay and on North Stradbroke Island off the south east coast of Queensland since the last meeting. These detections represent a further extension of range of the disease in South East and Central Queensland.

There have been no detections of Myrtle Rust in the environment west of the Great Dividing Range.

2. Three new species have been identified as hosts of Myrtle Rust since the last meeting. These are *Acmena smithii*, *Syzygium boonjee*, and *Corymbia ficifolia* X *C. ptychocarpa*. *Acmena smithii* and

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Syzygium boonjee have previously been recorded as hosts in Victoria and New South Wales respectively. The total number of confirmed host species in Queensland is now 128 species from 35 genera.

3. The Queensland Myrtle Rust Program is finalising the first draft of its disease management guide. The draft guide will be discussed and reviewed by key stakeholder groups to ensure that it meets their needs before being finalised and made publicly available. The guide is expected to be released before the end of the financial year.
4. The Myrtle Rust Advisory Committee meets again on 17 May 2012. The Committee will be updated on developments in Queensland and in other jurisdictions and reviewed the Program's Work Plan for 2011/12. The Queensland Myrtle Rust Program, in association with the Advisory Committee, will commence development of a work plan for 2012/13 once resourcing and management arrangements for the Program for next year are finalised.
5. Jenna Taylor, Project Officer with Plant Health Australia and secretariat for the MRTMG spent three days with the Queensland Myrtle Rust Program during April to learn more about the disease and its impacts, and how the disease is being managed in Queensland. Program staff enjoyed Jenna's visit and the opportunity to detail the work they have been doing. It is believed Jenna gained a lot from the time she spent here in Queensland.
6. The Queensland Myrtle Rust Program will be hosting the second national Myrtle Rust Research and Development Workshop in Brisbane at the Mount Coot-tha Botanical Gardens on Tuesday 19 and Wednesday 20 June 2012.

It was agreed at the previous workshop held in Brisbane in September 2011 that a follow-up workshop should be held in the first half of 2012.

The aim of the workshop is to convene a national meeting of key researchers and other stakeholders involved in Myrtle Rust research and development in order to:

- Collate current research projects being undertaken including objectives and outputs,
- Provide an update on progress against current research activities,
- Facilitate discussion and collaboration to progress priority R&D activities,
- Identify gaps in R&D activities and work areas, and
- Facilitate collaborations and linkages amongst key researchers and stakeholders nationally and internationally.

A proposal has been prepared for consideration by the MRTMG for the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Program to fund the travel costs of Dr Robert Hauff, Forest Health Coordinator, Division of Forestry and Wildlife, Department of Lands and Natural Resources in Hawaii to attend the workshop as the key note international speaker.

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Attachment B

Myrtle Rust in NSW – report from NSW DPI and OEI for Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group Meeting Six held by teleconference on Tuesday, 15 May 2012

1. As reported during the last meeting, New South Wales is well into a “management” mode for Myrtle Rust. Comprehensive information on Myrtle Rust management for all stakeholders is available from the NSW DPI website (<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/myrtle-rust>).

This information includes:

- What is Myrtle Rust?
 - Reporting
 - Host list and distribution
 - What can I do to manage Myrtle Rust
 - Myrtle rust management resources and factsheets for:
 - Home gardeners
 - Bush regenerators
 - Nursery and Garden Industry
 - The environment
 - Further information and links
2. There have been no reports of Myrtle Rust in natural vegetation to the west of the Great Dividing Range thus far.
 3. Bob Makinson from the Royal Sydney Gardens completed a series of training program on Myrtle rust management in NSW and Qld.
 4. Angus Carnegie has just returned from studying Guava rust in South America, Florida and Hawaii. Further details will be reported at the next meeting.
 5. A part of the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Program, contracts for two Myrtle Rust projects are being finalised with Plant Health Australia. Work is anticipated to commence shortly.
 6. DPI NSW with DAFF Qld have secured CRC for National Plant Biosecurity funding to study the impact of Myrtle Rust on selected Myrtaceae in natural vegetation.
 7. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) prepared a Myrtle Rust Management Plan in 2011 to guide its management of Myrtle Rust on National Parks across coastal NSW. The priority of this initial plan was to use biosecurity measures to reduce the likelihood of human-assisted spread between bushland areas. However it appears that the disease has continued to spread and is now a widespread endemic disease in bushland areas of coastal NSW. Accordingly, NPWS intends to revise this management plan in the second half of 2012. This revision will be done in consultation with other land managers and authorities with a responsibility for management of this disease in NSW, including Forests NSW, Department of Primary Industries, and Royal Botanic Gardens. The review is expected to consider:
 - Developing amended biosecurity measures which better reflect the current disease risk situation,
 - Gaining updated and ongoing information on Myrtle Rust distribution in bushland areas, particularly National Parks,
 - Assessing the impact of myrtle rust in natural areas, particularly in NPWS estate. This assessment will particularly focus on species affected, extent of infection, and

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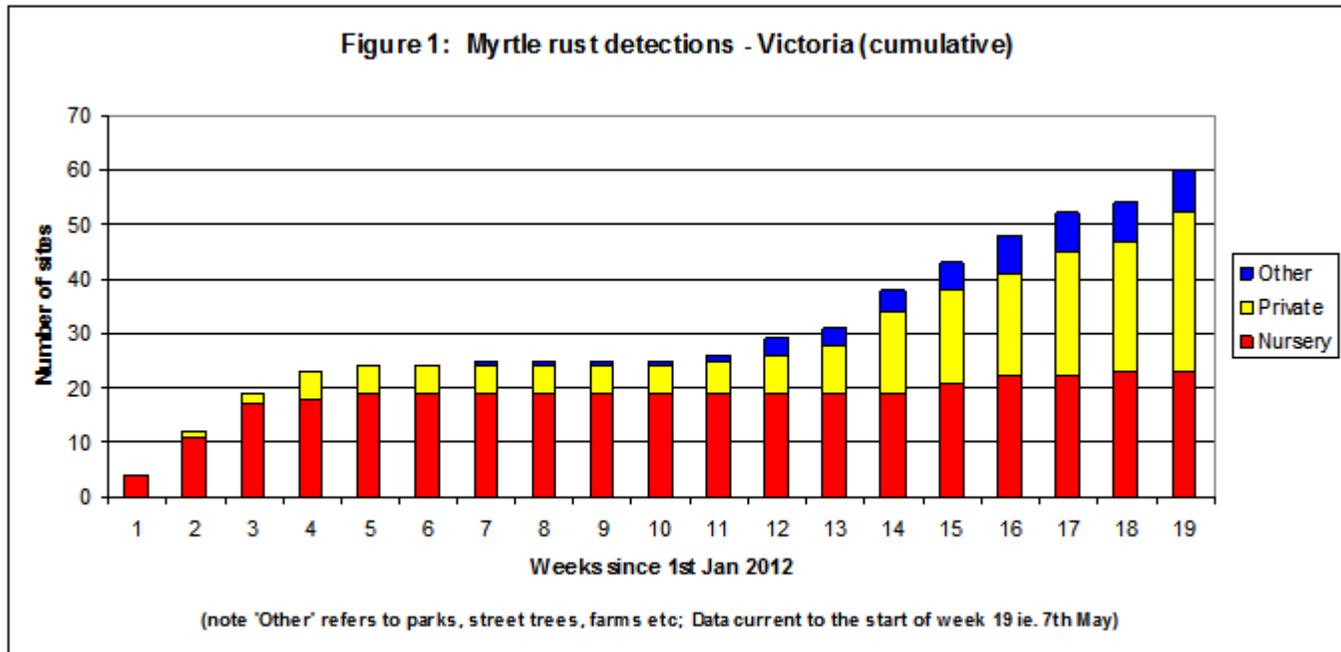
impacts on plant reproduction and survival. It will consider methodologies developed for this in other jurisdictions, and

- The need for ex situ conservation measures including seed bank initiatives.

Attachment C

Myrtle Rust in Victoria – report from DPI Vic and DSE for Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group Meeting Six held by teleconference on Tuesday, 15 May 2012

1. Myrtle rust has now been detected at 60 sites in Victoria.



Several of the recent detections have been on much larger plants (hedges and small trees). The disease has been particularly severe at several sites indicating that Myrtle Rust may have been established on the plants for some months. The size of the plants and severity of infection represents a significant management issue for home owners.

Although the majority of cases have been in nurseries and private residences within metropolitan Melbourne and the Mornington Peninsula, Myrtle Rust has also been detected in regional Victoria at Lorne, Tynong North, Ballarat, East Gippsland (near Bairnsdale) and Shepparton. With the exception of Shepparton in which six properties were affected, each of these detections was on single properties. Control activities have been conducted by the property owners and to date, appear to have been successful.

Myrtle rust has not yet been detected in Victorian bushland or the natural environment but has been detected in two public parks/gardens of significance, two council plantings (garden beds) and once in street trees in the metro area.

Myrtle Rust has currently been detected on the following hosts in Victoria:

Acmena smithii (lilly pilly); *Agonis flexuosa* (willow myrtle); *Austromyrtus dulcis* (midgen berry); *Backhousia citriodora* (lemon scented myrtle); *Callistemon harkness* (bottle brush); *Callistemon 'Kings park special'* (bottle brush); *Callistemon viminalis* (bottle brush); *Chamelaucium uncinatum* (Geraldton wax); *Eucalyptus olida* (strawberry gum); *Lophomyrtus X ralphii* (Black Stallion); *Metrosideros collina* (Fiji Christmas bush); *Metrosideros excelsa* (New Zealand Christmas bush); *Myrtus communis* (common myrtle); *Syzygium anisatum* (aniseed myrtle); *Syzygium australe* (lilly pilly/scrub cherry/Aussie southern); and *Syzygium paniculatum* (dwarf magenta cherry).

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2. The Victorian Myrtle Rust Coordination Committee consisting of DPI Vic, DSE, Parks Victoria (PV), local councils, botanic gardens, forestry, nursery and beekeeper representatives is continuing to meet on a regular basis and is actively involved in planning, monitoring, reporting and conducting industry education activities.

Over 1000 people have attended ongoing Myrtle Rust information and ID sessions. In the last month, sessions have been conducted in Monash, Bamba, Traralgon, Knox, Cardinia and Shepparton.

Two additional newspaper interviews have been conducted with Shepparton News (5th and 11th May).

3. There is a strong demand from local councils and other groups for training. Seven training sessions have been conducted by program staff in the last month.
4. There has been good participation from stakeholder groups in the surveillance program.

Over 100 sentinel sites have been established around the state (with the assistance of many stakeholder groups) to provide early warning in high risk areas and significant bushland sites. DPI is coordinating the sentinel site network but is actively monitoring only a relatively small number of these sites with much of the monitoring work being done by stakeholder groups.

Routine monitoring of the sentinel sites has led to the early detection of Myrtle Rust in a public park/garden. Park staff were able to restrict visitor access to the affected area, remove the affected plants and apply preventative chemical treatments to limit the spread of the pathogen within the park and movement from the park on visitor's clothing.

Forward tracing is being conducted to properties in regions of the State where the disease has not yet been reported.

5. The focus of recent operational activities has been the provision of advice to affected land holders to assist them to manage the disease on their land.

The cost and lack of availability of effective curative fungicides for use in the home garden is preventing many home owners from effectively controlling Myrtle Rust in their gardens. APVMA permit number PER12828 deals specifically with home garden application and lists three chemicals. These chemicals are readily available at nurseries, however, all three are protectant products with none to only limited curative activity. Products with curative activity (ie. suitable for treatment of symptomatic plants rather than protection of non-symptomatic plants) are available for use by persons generally under APVMA permit PER12156. Most of these products cannot be purchased at nurseries and must be sourced at agricultural chemical suppliers. The minimum pack size is 1L (at approximately \$200/L). The price and difficulty to obtain these products mean that most home gardeners will not use them and untreated home garden plants will become a key threat to Victorian native bushland.

Following discussions with Bayer and Yates, there is potential for this issue to be resolved by spring. These companies have recently undertaken Myrtle Rust trials using a new product, recently registered for Azalea blight and available in small dropper packaging at nurseries. Yates have indicated an interest in pursuing a minor use permit for use of this product against Myrtle Rust.

6. A revised Myrtle Rust Response Program Plan (V2) has been prepared and is currently going through the DPI Vic approvals process before it can be distributed electronically to members of the state Myrtle Rust Coordination Committee.

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7. ICA 42 training has been rolled out with the assistance of the Nursery and Garden Industry Victoria (NGIV) to enable affected nursery and cut flower growers to be accredited to trade Myrtaceae into South Australia and the Northern Territory. More than 110 people from 60 businesses have now completed this training.
8. DSE has prepared a priority list of Myrtaceae considered at risk from Myrtle Rust based on endemism, conservation status, rarity and biogeographic risk factors (based on an inferred CSIRO climatic model).
9. DSE has contracted the Royal Botanic Gardens (RBG) in Melbourne to collect seeds of 4 "priority one" Myrtaceae species (those most at risk) for *ex-situ* conservation both at the RBG and Kew in London as part of the Millennium Seed Bank Partnership. 13 of the 17 priority one taxa were already in storage.
10. DSE is seeking collaboration with other states and the Federal Government for seed collection of "priority two" species not currently safeguarded *ex-situ*. This totals approximately 30 of the 77 priority 2 taxa.

Attachment D**The Australian Seed Bank Partnership's Myrtle Rust activities – report from the Australian Seed Bank Partnership for Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group Meeting Six held by teleconference on Tuesday, 15 May 2012**

The Australian Seed Bank Partnership (ASBP) is governed by The Council of Heads of Australian Botanic Gardens Inc. (CHABG) and supported by the Director of National Parks who provides a National Coordinator and supports the secretariat. The partnership was established in 2010 as a strategic response to threats to biodiversity and builds on a legacy and \$24 million investment from 2001-2010. 1/3 of Australia's flora and 1/4 of listed species have been banked. Duplicate collections are held at the Millennium Seed Bank in the UK.

The ASBP includes Australia's nine capital city conservation seed banks (based in botanic gardens apart from DEC, WA), ANPC, GA and two universities that support the Brisbane Botanic Gardens. The partnership is a collaborative effort building a national network of native plant seed banks, developing enabling technologies (around seed biology research to support conservation and restoration) and sharing biological knowledge to ensure future access to Australia's diverse native botanical resources.

In response to the emergence and rapid spread of Myrtle Rust, the CHABG agreed that consideration be given to Myrtle Rust and the implications for conservation, seed bank collections and the ramifications for our practice. The BHABG is meeting shortly to develop national protocols.

There is a need to prioritise collecting for long term conservation (especially increasing genetic representation in *ex situ* collections). As such it is necessary to access information about which species are susceptible to or declining because of Myrtle Rust as well as which genera seem more susceptible.

Currently, there isn't a good understanding about the movement of Myrtle Rust through seed lots. While it is considered a low risk, there is potential for transmission to new areas through collecting from wild populations or loss/wastage of financial resources through failed planting in restoration activities. Therefore, the consequences of this transfer could be high.

There is also a need for communication, training and capacity building in the public domain (particularly NRM groups, Catchment Management, GA and others) as the government rolls out funding for on-ground activities (such as with the Biodiversity Fund and Caring for our Country). These activities may involve seeds collected from wild populations and possible spread of the rust to new areas or other seed lots.

1. Seed has been collected from a total of 618 Myrtaceous species and 769 accessions in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, and Tasmania and 173 species in the ACT. Each bank has prioritised banking and listed species (state-listed).
2. The NSW Seed Bank has a rainforest seed project and has placed some priority on Myrtaceae (e.g. Rhodamnia). 329 Myrtaceous species have been banked.

The NSW Seed Bank is also developing protocols for the RBGDT Living Collection; Seed Bank (how not to transfer rust into seed packets) and Field Collecting.

3. No recent collections have been made in Queensland post-MSB funding.

Queensland has applied for funding with NPWS for Myrtaceae-focussed collecting.

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Myrtle Rust is being monitored in the Garden collection in the partnership Herbarium. Taxa are being monitored also.

Griffith University is working on storage of recalcitrant species.

The University of Queensland has studies underway looking at the effect of a range of environmental conditions (temperature, salt, osmotic potential) on the germination of six selected Myrtaceae species.

4. DSE in Victoria has been approached and has agreed to fund the collection of 4 outstanding species which are regarded as a high priority in terms of Myrtle Rust (i.e. susceptible and rare).

DSE has a 3-stage process with stage 2 focusing on banking 30 species.

5. Tasmania is considering the prioritisation and targeting of work and is awaiting instructions into genetically viable collections from experts (Brett Potts) from the Uni of Tasmania.

Tasmania is also awaiting a focussed species list and will compare this with a list from Forestry so as to avoid duplicating collections.

6. The ANBG has banked seed from 173 Myrtaceous species from wild collections, 18 of which have more than one population banked. Seed has been banked from 195 Myrtaceous species from all collections.
7. The ANPC has delivered a comprehensive one-day workshop 'Myrtle Rust – a new threat to Australia's biodiversity' at 11 regional locations in NSW and one in Queensland.
8. The ASBP is developing a strategic collecting program involving the seed banks in vulnerable Myrtle Rust areas to determine what has been banked and what hasn't.

The program will also determine the number of populations banked and develop target species and target populations to be collected from. Plant geneticists suggest where possible to collect from 30 separate populations to ensure that genetic diversity is represented.

The ASBP requests that the MRTMG considers endorsing a national collecting program. Endorsement from a group of such high calibre would assist the ASBP in fundraising to build this program of work.