

Minutes

Meeting Ten of the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group

Teleconference held on Tuesday 11 December, 2012

Attendees: Colin Grant, DAFF (Chair); Rose Hockham, DAFF; David Forsyth, DSEWPaC; Alex Blanden, DSEWPaC; Jenna Taylor, PHA (Secretariat); Satendra Kumar, NSW DPI; Russell McMurray, DPI Vic; Hugh Bramwells, DSE; Lucy Sutherland, ASBP; Gavin Matthew, AFPA.

Apologies: Vanessa Findlay, DAFF; Andrew Wilson, DAFF; Louise Clarke, DAFF; Tegan Honing-Wassenburg, DAFF; Belinda Brown, DEWHA; Greg Fraser, PHA; Rod Turner, PHA; Suzy Perry, DAFF Queensland; Jim Thompson, DAFF Queensland; Mark Panitz, DAFF Queensland; Gordon Guymer, DSITIA; Bruce Christie, NSW DPI; Kathy Gott, NSW DPI; Graham Wilson, OEH; Pat Sharkey, DPI Vic; Anne Dennis, DSE; Andrew Greenwood, DSE; Shaun Sutor, DSE; Peter Grist, AFPA.

Item 1 – Welcome by the Chair

Colin Grant welcomed all Members of the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group (MRTMG).

Item 2 – Endorsement of Minutes from the Previous Meeting

It was discussed that the draft minutes from Meeting Nine had been circulated for comment out of session. Members were given a final opportunity to comment or request that an amendment be made. There were no further comments or amendment requests and the minutes were taken to be 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 Nine. The status of each action item was discussed and amendments were made where necessary.

Item 4 – Report from PHA

Contracts

Jenna Taylor advised that all but one of the contracts for the Australian Government funded projects in the Plan for Transition to Management of Myrtle Rust have now been signed and these projects are all underway.

Since the last meeting, PHA has received two progress reports and a final report from researchers. These have been circulated to the MRTMG for their information. They have also been circulated to the members of the Myrtle Rust Scientific Advisory Group (MRSAG) who have been invited to provide comment on the reports if they wish to.

There are three further progress reports due at the end of December and another at the end of January. Jenna will circulate these to both the MRTMG and the MRSAG prior to the next meeting.

With regards to the remaining contract, as was advised at the last meeting, one of the Australian researchers in Acelino Alfenas' collaborative group of international researchers working on *P. psidii* was to contact Acelino then develop and provide to PHA a proposal for Acelino to make collections of *P. psidii* in South America and bring them to Australia for use in research. PHA is yet to receive this proposal. Rod Turner is chasing this. Colin Grant stressed that this was a matter of priority.

Item 5 – Report on Myrtle Rust Activities in Queensland

There was no representative from Queensland in attendance. As such, no update was given on Myrtle Rust activities in Queensland.

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Item 6 – Report on Myrtle Rust Activities in NSW

Satendra Kumar gave an update on Myrtle Rust activities in NSW. His report is attached at Attachment A.

Item 7 – Report on Myrtle Rust Activities in Victoria

Russell McMurray gave an update on Myrtle Rust activities in Victoria. His report is attached at Attachment B.

Item 8 – Report on National Myrtle Rust Activities

David Forsyth gave an update on national Myrtle Rust activities. His report is attached at Attachment C.

Item 9 – Report 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.

Item 10 – Report on Forestry Activities

Gavin Matthew gave an update on the Forestry industry's Myrtle Rust activities. His report is attached at Attachment E.

Item 11 – Next Meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting was scheduled for 3.00-4.00pm AEDST on Tuesday 19th February 2013 and were asked to add this time and date to their diaries.

Item 12 – Close of Meeting

The Chair thanked the Members of the MRTMG for their participation in the teleconference and, in closing the meeting, reminded the Members that the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Program would conclude at the end of June 2013 and advised that he had asked Jenna Taylor to draft a Cessation Strategy for the Program which will be similar to the Cessation Strategy that was written by DAFF Queensland for the Asian Honey Bee Transition to Management Program. Jenna will circulate a draft Cessation Strategy to the MRTMG prior to the next meeting.

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Attachment A

Myrtle Rust in NSW – report from NSW DPI for Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group Meeting Ten held by teleconference on Tuesday 11 December, 2012

Geographic Range

There have been no new detections of Myrtle Rust in NSW since October. Despite Myrtle Rust being considered endemic in NSW, the disease is yet to be reported in natural vegetation in the west of the Great Dividing Range.

Communication

The NSW DPI Biosecurity website (<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/myrtle-rust>) is being updated regularly and remains the major site for information on Myrtle Rust management in NSW. Further information on Myrtle Rust management in natural vegetation is available from <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/pestsweeds/20110683myrtlerustmp.htm>.

Research and Development

Progress on a number of projects under the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Program will be presented at the “Myrtle Rust in natural ecosystems” National Workshop organised by DSEWPaC tomorrow.

Management

Myrtle rust is being managed as an established plant disease in New South Wales.

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Attachment B

Myrtle Rust in Victoria – report from DPI Vic for Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group Meeting Ten held by teleconference on Tuesday 11 December, 2012

Geographic Range

There have been no new detections of Myrtle Rust in Victoria since October. The total number of infected premises stands at 71 infected premises mainly across Melbourne with outliers in Shepparton, Lorne, Bairnsdale and Ballarat.

At least one infected premises is actively sporulating.

Myrtle Rust has still not been detected in the natural bush.

Temperatures rise in late spring have largely not eventuated but when they occur in summer there is expected to be a marked increase in Myrtle Rust detections.

Training and Communication

Over 200 people have attended Myrtle Rust information and ID sessions since October.

There is still a strong demand from local councils and other land management groups for training.

Five information sessions have been held since October and more are planned for the New Year.

There has been no need to run any ICA-42 Authorised Inspection Person training courses over winter.

Version 2 of the CD-ROM of training resources, including more images of symptoms found in Victoria, was produced and made available after stocks of the previous version (350) were exhausted.

An October Myrtle Rust update was produced and distributed to the contact list.

The DPI website was maintained and updated as required, including dates of upcoming information sessions. Around 540 visits to the Myrtle Rust landing page were made during November, plus many further visits to linked pages.

In response to requests from external agencies, information and/or images were provided for four events (field days, festivals etc.), a council newsletter, and a 4-wheel drive magazine.

15 public enquiries regarding Myrtle Rust have been recorded over the last 2 months.

Surveillance and Tracing

There has been good participation from stakeholder groups in the surveillance program.

Over 120 sentinel sites, east and west of Melbourne and largely south of the divide and mainly in forested areas, have been established and data from these sites is being provided by land managers for collation by DPI. These sites provide early warning in high risk areas and significant bushland sites. DPI is coordinating the sentinel site network but is actively monitoring only a small number of these sites with much of the monitoring work being done by stakeholder groups.

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Market Access and Compliance

From 30 June 2012, Myrtle Rust has been declared as an endemic disease in Victoria and the Victorian Importation Order has been rescinded. This means that Myrtle Rust host materials are able to enter Victoria from disease-affected states without certification. It remains illegal under Victorian plant biosecurity legislation to sell plants with visible symptoms of Myrtle Rust. In addition, businesses are encouraged to adhere to the Nursery and Garden Industry Australia's Myrtle Rust management plan to minimise the risk of spreading Myrtle Rust further within the State.

Management

Phase 3 – Monitoring Plan for Myrtle Rust is still active. The Plan focuses on providing training and technical advice to land managers, following up detections in new hosts and high risk areas of plantation and natural bush and collecting surveillance and impact data.

Yates has submitted an application to the APVMA for a change of label for Zaleton fungicide for use against Myrtle rust. The application is expected to take six months to process.

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Attachment C

National Myrtle Rust activities – report from DSEWPaC for Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group Meeting Ten held by teleconference on Tuesday 11 December, 2012

Situation Update

DSEWPaC is holding its “Myrtle Rust in natural ecosystems” National Workshop tomorrow in Canberra. There are 52 confirmed attendees including representatives from non-affected states and territories. There will be presentations on each of the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Program research projects as well as presentations from NSW, Queensland, and Victoria. At the end of the Workshop there will be an open discussion to identify gaps in the current research which should be taken into consideration when planning future Myrtle Rust research.

A report on the Workshop will be circulated early in the New Year.

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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 Ten held by teleconference on Tuesday 11 December, 2012

Caring for our Country Update

The Australian Government put a strategy document on the Caring for our Country website yesterday and it appears that they will be calling for proposals to be submitted shortly.

Fundraising

The ASBP submitted a grant proposal to a Trust for seed collections of species susceptible to Myrtle Rust in September 2012 and were notified in October 2012 that it was unsuccessful. Although the Trust was interested in the project, rather than supporting the building of ex situ collections with genetic diversity, the Board would prefer to support new species collections to Australia's conservation seed banks. The ASBP was encouraged to revise the proposal and resubmit in the next round in March 2013.

Participation

The ASBP will be represented at the "Myrtle Rust in natural ecosystems" National Workshop tomorrow.

Updates from Select Individual Partners

Victoria

The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne are collecting seed from species that have been identified as susceptible based on the DSE list of primary, secondary, and lower risk taxa. The seed bank team have collected all but one (16/17) of the primary species both through existing and recent targeted collection, and they are collecting species from the secondary list with around 18 of the 27 taxa having been collected. They received a small amount of funding for the primary species but the remainder has been unfunded and is being done opportunistically during field trips which are funded through other resources.

Tasmania

The Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens is a member of the Tasmanian Myrtle Rust group. This group has been invited to send material to a mainland testing facility for susceptibility testing. They are presently drawing collections together for this screening and the seed bank will be making additional provenance collections for *Melaleuca pustulata*, *Melaleuca virens*, and *Leptospermum grandiflorum* for this program.

Attempts are being made to engage and encourage local groups to collect seeds of *Melaleuca* and other Myrtaceae for banking, but this hasn't drawn much response as yet.

Queensland

The Brisbane Botanic Gardens seed bank has been making seed collections targeting Myrtaceae in South East Queensland. Collections have been made on *Eucalyptus planchoniana* in the Helidon Hills and *Eucalyptus tindaliae* on South Stradbroke Island. *Eucalyptus curtisii* has been collected from two separate populations in Moggill and *Eucalyptus cloeziana* from near Gympie. Additionally, a collection of *Xanthostemon oppositifolius* has been made at KinKin, and also a collection of *Austromyrtus glabra*. This has been done essentially to increase the genetic diversity of the collections.

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New South Wales

Plantbank (Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust) has funding for one collector position for their Rainforest Seed Conservation Program plus two more externally funded science positions to work on rainforest seeds commencing in the New Year. Species that susceptible to Myrtle Rust are a focus for the program.

Staff are currently collecting from rainforest habitats, especially the north coast of NSW, and expect to be making some Myrtaceae collections in the New Year. There was a recent collecting trip to the NSW coast, however, did not make any Myrtaceae collections (fruiting occurs in late summer generally). Field observations indicate that the current dry spell has resulted in less prevalent (more patchy) Myrtle Rust outbreaks in comparison to the previous wet summer seasons.

The following are some points on their observations regarding Myrtle Rust:

Generally, through observations and through discussions with local botanical consultants, Myrtle Rust appears to be less active during the current period but was still observed on a number of specimens. Some previously affected plants show no active Myrtle Rust and have unaffected new growth. The level of infection between and within species is variable. During the most recent collecting trip to the north coast, there was much less active Myrtle Rust observed than during the trips earlier this year and late last year.

More specifically,

Bellinger Valley

- While Myrtle Rust was very active and many specimens of *Rhodamnia rubescens* were suffering severe defoliation during previous trips, last month many of the previously damaged plants had no observable sporulation and there was significant new growth.
- Active Myrtle Rust was collected from an *Anetholea anistata* during April 2012 but last month there was no active Myrtle Rust present.

Burringbar area

- A couple of specimens of *Rhodomyrtus psidioides* that have been killed through defoliation due to Myrtle Rust have been identified as have a couple of other specimens with minor damage. Samples have been sent to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney.
- While there is evidence of previous damage to specimens of *Rhodamnia maideniana*, there is no observable active Myrtle Rust. Samples have been sent to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney. A nearby specimen of *Rhodamnia maideniana* appeared to have no previous or current damage.
- Regrowth (30cm) on specimens of *Rhodomyrtus psidioides* that had been cut to ground level under power lines had considerable active sporulation. A sample has been sent to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney.

Mullumbimby

- Leaf damage has been observed on specimens of *Rhodamnia rubescens* and *Choricarpia subargentea* but there was no active sporulation and it may not have been Myrtle Rust. Samples have been sent to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney.
- Leaf damage has also been observed on *Rhodamnia argentea* but it may have been from previous Myrtle Rust infection. There was no observable sporulation. Again, samples have been sent to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney.

Bulli

- While specimens of *Rhodamnia rubescens* were suffering severe defoliation during 2011 and 2012, over the past couple of months there has been considerably less sporulation and a lot of unaffected new growth.

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Given the most current observations and continuing favourable conditions, there will be an increased chance of making seed collections from species such as *Rhodamnia* that have been shown to be highly susceptible to Myrtle Rust. The collection of seed from these species remains a priority for the Rainforest Seed Conservation Program.

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Attachment E

The Forestry Industry's Myrtle Rust activities – report from the Australian Forest Products Association for Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group Meeting Ten held by teleconference on Tuesday 11 December, 2012

Situation Update

AFPA has finished reviewing the forestry industry's Industry Biosecurity Plan and this document is now back with PHA for finalisation.

Additionally, AFPA has now signed the EPPRD.

Participation

Peter Grist will represent AFPA at the "Myrtle Rust in natural ecosystems" National Workshop tomorrow.