

## Minutes

### Meeting Four of the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group

Teleconference held on Wednesday 29 February, 2012

**Attendees:** Colin Grant, DAFF (Chair); Mike Cole, DAFF; Tegan Honing-Wassenburg, DAFF; Greg Fraser, PHA; Rod Turner, PHA; Sam Malfroy, PHA; Amy Forbes, PHA; Mike Ashton, DEEDI; Suzy Perry, DEEDI; Satendra Kumar, NSW DPI; Hugh Millar, DPI Vic; Pat Sharkey, DPI Vic; Russell McMurray, DPI Vic.

**Apologies:** Lois Ransom, DAFF; Sophie Peterson, PHA; Jenna Taylor, PHA (Secretariat); Kareena Arthy, DEEDI; Jim Thompson, DEEDI; Bruce Christie, NSW DPI; Kathy Gott, NSW DPI.

#### Item 1 – Welcome by the Chair

Colin Grant welcomed all Members of the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group (MRTMG), and in particular Hugh Millar, Pat Sharkey, and Russell McMurray from DPI Vic who were attending an MRTMG meeting for the first time.

#### Item 2 – Action Items from the Previous Meeting

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

#### Item 3 – Reporting from PHA

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. The contract for Project 3.2 has been signed. The remaining contracts, with the exception of that for Project 3.4, are in the final stages and have been sent to the researchers for final approval.

PHA presented a paper to the MRTMG proposing that the MRTMG endorse a course of action that deviates from the method understood and described in the Plan for Transition to Management of Myrtle Rust but achieves the same, if not improved, outcomes.

It was discussed that Angus Carnegie has been offered a fellowship and will travel to Hawaii and South America. It was agreed that PHA should approach Angus regarding the possibility of linking his overseas activities to Project 3.4.

It was also discussed that Project 3.4 could be completed overseas and that a component of this work may have already been completed overseas. It was agreed that PHA would consult with Suzy Perry out of session and rewrite their proposal to reflect Suzy's knowledge of overseas activities.

#### Item 4 – Scientific Advisory Group

Rod Turner advised that a Myrtle Rust Scientific Advisory Group (MRSAG) has been formed and is comprised of the following members:

Member	Organisation
Rod Turner	PHA (Chair)
Mike Cole	DAFF

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Alison Saunders	RIRDC
Angus Carnegie	NSW DPI
Jonathan Lidbetter	NSW DPI
Bill Foley	ANU
Bob Makinson	Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney
Caroline Mohammed	University of Tasmania
David Smith	Biosecurity Victoria
Geoff Pegg	DEEDI
Suzy Perry	DEEDI
Louise Morin	CSIRO
Peter Entwistle	Tea Tree Industry
Robert Park	The University of Sydney, Plant Breeding Institute

Mike Cole was thanked for his work in establishing the MRSAG. Mike advised the MRTMG that, although the MRSAG is yet to meet, there is a desire to develop a national list of Myrtle Rust host species that have been identified using a standardised susceptibility rating system.

### **Item 5 – SharePoint**

It was discussed PHA has developed a SharePoint site for the sharing of MRTMG and MRSAG documents. The SharePoint site will be used as a means of distributing the agenda and any other documents prior to MRTMG and MRSAG teleconferences and as a repository for finalised minutes and action lists. The editing of documents, however, will continue to be done by emailing the MRTMG secretariat.

It was agreed that members of the MRTMG will have access to both MRTMG and MRSAG documents while members of the MRSAG will have access to MRSAG documents only.

It was also agreed that PHA would circulate instructions regarding accessing the SharePoint site.

### **Item 6 – Reporting from DEEDI**

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

### **Item 7 – Reporting from NSW DPI**

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

### **Item 8 – Reporting from DPI Vic**

Hugh Millar gave an update on Myrtle Rust activities in Victoria. The report is attached at Attachment C.

Satendra Kumar offered to make NSW's resources available to Victoria if Victoria has a need for them.

### **Item 9 – Myrtle Rust Technical Liaison**

Pat Sharkey advised that the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) would like to learn more about the ecological impacts of Myrtle Rust that have been observed interstate and the scope for management of these impacts.

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It was discussed and agreed that representatives from environmental departments will be invited to the next meeting of the MRTMG with a view to them forming a network for information sharing. Colin Grant will write to a senior official at DSEWPAC formally inviting them to participate. This letter will then be circulated to Mike Ashton, Satendra Kumar, and Hugh Millar who will use it as a template when writing to senior officials at the environmental departments in their respective jurisdictions.

It was also discussed and agreed that links to websites which may be of use to DSE should be posted on the SharePoint site. Mike Cole will forward a list of such websites to PHA for this purpose.

### **Item 10 – Next Meeting**

Members were advised that it was decided during the Asian Honey Bee Transition to Management Group (AHBTMG) meeting that the newly adopted 30 minute duration was not long enough and that future AHBTMG meetings would be 1 hour in duration as was originally agreed. It was agreed that this will be adopted for the MRTMG meetings also. The MRTMG will next meet via teleconference from 3.00pm-4.00pm on Tuesday 27 March. This meeting will be held directly after the Asian Honey Bee meeting.

### **Item 11 – 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 Four held by teleconference on Wednesday, 29 February 2012**

1. The geographic range of Myrtle rust in Queensland remains restricted to South East and Central Queensland from the New South Wales border to Yeppoon and west to Toowoomba. There has been no recorded extension of range since the previous MRTMG meeting in January. While this is good news, it is not expected to last with the disease expected to continue to spread north along the east coast of Queensland over the coming months.
2. Six new species have been confirmed as hosts of Myrtle rust in Queensland since the January MRTMG meeting. The total number of confirmed host species in Queensland is now 125. One of these new host species, *Mitrantia bilocularis*, is from a new genus bringing the total number of genera from which host species have been confirmed in Queensland to 35.
3. Queensland nursery businesses can now be accredited under the Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA) Scheme to certify consignments of myrtaceous plants as meeting interstate quarantine entry requirements for Myrtle rust. Accreditation under the ICA Scheme is an alternative to certification by Biosecurity Queensland inspectors and will help nursery businesses save both time and money. A new ICA Operational Procedure, *Nursery Freedom, Treatment and Inspection for Myrtle Rust (ICA-42)*, has recently been endorsed which allows businesses to become accredited to issue Plant Health Assurance Certificates for consignments of nursery stock of the Myrtaceae family to verify they meet the quarantine entry requirements of the Northern Territory, Victoria and South Australia.
4. Myrtle Rust Information Sessions were held in Mackay on 14 February 2012 and Cairns on 29 February 2012. Further Information Sessions are scheduled for Gladstone and Townsville during March. Planning is underway for similar sessions in South East Queensland over the coming months. Feedback continues to be supportive of the sessions and the need for more information on management options, identification materials and ongoing research on different aspects of the disease.

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### Attachment B

#### **Myrtle rust in NSW – report from NSW DPI for Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group Meeting Four held by teleconference on Wednesday, 29 February 2012**

1. New South Wales in well into a “management” mode for Myrtle rust. Comprehensive information on Myrtle rust management for all stakeholders is available at DPI website (<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/myrtle-rust>). This 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: -
  - a. Home gardeners
  - b. Bush regenerators
  - c. Nursery and Garden Industry
  - d. The environment
- Further information and links

2. Myrtle rust remains restricted to coastal New South Wales. Despite no movement restrictions since the stand-down of the eradication response program, Myrtle rust has not been detected in natural vegetation in the west of the Great Dividing Range. Commercial nurseries and high risk sites in western New South Wales are being monitored via active and passive surveillance by DPI Extension and Agriculture Compliance staff.

3. New South Wales nursery businesses can now be accredited under the Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA-42) scheme to certify consignments of myrtaceous plants as meeting interstate quarantine entry requirements for Myrtle rust. Accreditation under the ICA Scheme is an alternative to certification by Agriculture Compliance staff and will help to reduce the regulatory burden on both industries and the Government. ICA-42 has been endorsed by Northern Territory, Victoria and South Australia.

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### Attachment C

#### **Myrtle rust in Victoria – report from DPI Vic for Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group Meeting Four held by teleconference on Wednesday, 29 February 2012**

1. DPI has detected Myrtle rust at 25 sites in the greater metro area, although the rate of detection has slowed recently. The majority of these sites are wholesale and retail nurseries from which infected plants have been removed and destroyed or treated, reinspected and released when no signs of disease are in evidence. These sites are being monitored.
2. The disease has established to various levels in the grounds of nurseries and private properties (3 in all), where it is being controlled but eradicated by plant removal, pruning and chemical means.
3. Myrtle Rust was detected in a botanic park site (17 Feb) in the south east of the city. The botanic park staff, with advice from DPI, are pruning the infected plants and applying chemical treatments to control the spread of disease.
4. A state Myrtle Rust Coordinating Committee of state and local government agencies and private industry stakeholders has been established to help manage the response and assist with surveillance, reporting, tracing and providing information on control.
5. BV staff have delivered 15 training sessions on Myrtle Rust to over 600 personnel from nurseries, DSE, Parks Victoria, local councils, interest groups and beekeepers.
6. BV is receiving about 20 calls a week to the Customer Service Centre about suspect disease and related issues.
7. BV is in the process of transitioning from emergency response mode to a management program. A project manager is being appointed to oversee staff, who will be involved with:
  - provision of training and information packages for businesses and land managers;
  - coordination of a passive surveillance and reporting program for stakeholder groups;
  - monitoring effectiveness of the Australian Nursery Industry Myrtle Rust Management Plan;
  - undertaking disease identification and diagnostics;
  - providing advice to agencies and stakeholders particularly in relation to detections in new species, plantations and native forests; and
  - recording and mapping outbreaks, assisting with impact assessment on species and ecosystems and fulfilling national reporting obligations. which will involve activities aimed at assisting public and private land managers identify and slow the spread of disease.