

## Minutes

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

Teleconference held on Wednesday 27 June, 2012

**Attendees:** Colin Grant, DAFF (Chair); Sophie Peterson, DAFF; Chris Howard, DAFF; Louise Clarke, DAFF; Neal Hardy, DSEWPaC; Greg Fraser, PHA; Rod Turner, PHA; Jenna Taylor, PHA (Secretariat); Susanna Driessen, PHA; Brad Siebert, PHA; Mike Ashton, DAFF Queensland; Suzy Perry, DAFF Queensland; Gordon Guymer, DSITIA; Satendra Kumar, NSW DPI; Pat Sharkey, DPI Vic; Russell McMurray, DPI Vic; Hugh Bramwells, DSE; Lucy Sutherland, ASBP; Peter Grist, AFPA.

**Apologies:** Lois Ransom, DAFF; Mike Cole, DAFF; Andrew Wilson, DAFF; Leanne Herrick, DAFF; Tegan Honing-Wassenburg, DAFF; Denise Smith, DAFF; Belinda Brown, DSEWPaC; Sam Malfroy, PHA; Kareena Arthy, DAFF Queensland; Jim Thompson, DAFF Queensland; Bruce Christie, NSW DPI; Kathy Gott, NSW DPI; Graham Wilson, OEH; Hugh Millar, DPI Vic; Anne Dennis, DSE; Tuesday Phelan, DSE; Gavin Matthew, AFPA.

#### Item 1 – Welcome by the Chair

Colin Grant welcomed all Members of the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group (MRTMG), and in particular Chris Howard and Louise Clarke from DAFF, Neal Hardy from DSEWPaC, and Gordon Guymer from the Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation, and the Arts who were attending for the first time.

#### Item 2 – Endorsement of Minutes from the Previous Meeting

It was discussed that the draft minutes from Meeting Six had been circulated for comment. No comments or amendment requests had been received. As such, 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 Six. The status of each action item was discussed and amendments were made where necessary.

#### Item 4 – Report from PHA

##### Contracts

Rod Turner advised that 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 and have commenced work, but the Business Managers are concerned about IP and have requested that changes be made to PHA's standard contract.

Rod then gave a brief outline of each project:

PHA is currently negotiating with NSW DPI over milestones and milestone payments for Project 3.1.

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 was circulated to the MRTMG prior to the previous meeting.

The Orange Agricultural Institute has indicated to PHA that it is no longer interested in undertaking Project 3.3 and the outcomes are being achieved through another project.

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PHA circulated to the MRTMG prior to the previous meeting a paper outlining proposed variations to Project 3.4.

The contract for Project 3.5 has been signed.

The Business Manager for the University of Sydney Plant Breeding Institute is still holding up the signing of the contract for Project 4.1 due to concerns about the ownership of IP. Greg Fraser met with the University of Sydney last week to discuss this issue and DAFF has provided some alternative wording for the IP clause.

As with Project 4.1, the Business Manager for the University of Sydney is still holding up the signing of the contract for Project 5.1 due to concerns about the ownership of IP.

The contract for Project 6.1 has been sent to ANU for consideration. It is currently being reviewed by ANU's legal office. PHA will meet with ANU tomorrow to discuss this contract.

The contract for Project 6.2 has now been signed.

### **Item 5 – Report 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 he would forward the presentations from the National Myrtle Rust Research and Development Workshop to Jenna Taylor so that they can be made available to Members via the SharePoint site and the public via the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Program website.

Gordon Guymer advised that the functions of the former Department of Environment and Resource Management are now delivered by the following five different departments:

- Department of Energy and Water Supply
- Department of Environment and Heritage Protection
- Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
- Department of Natural Resources and Mines
- Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

Gordon represents the Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts and suggested that it might be useful to have a representative from the Department for Environment and Heritage Protection also attend future MRTMG meetings. It was agreed that Gordon would contact the Department for Environment and Heritage Protection regarding this.

### **Item 6 – Report on Myrtle Rust Activities in NSW**

Satendra Kumar gave an update on Myrtle Rust activities in NSW. The report is attached at Attachment B and also captures Office of Environment and Heritage activities that were not reported during the meeting due to Graham Wilson's absence.

### **Item 7 – Report 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.

### **Item 8 – Report on National Myrtle Rust Activities**

Neal Hardy advised that he did not have any activities to report.

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### **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.

During the previous MRTMG meeting it was decided that the ASBP would prepare a proposal for Caring for our Country funding to build a comprehensive *ex situ* collection of Myrtaceae species to support conservation. Lucy advised that building an *ex situ* collection and undertaking work on seed biology would not traditionally meet the criteria for Caring for our Country funding and asked for advice on the most appropriate way to progress this approach to the Caring for our Country Program. It was discussed that the Caring for our Country Program has recently released a Consultation Discussion Paper on *Protecting and conserving national significant species, ecosystems and biodiversity in the next phase of Caring for our Country* and that it may be appropriate for the ASBP in collaboration with PHA and the MRTMG to prepare a response to the Discussion Paper highlighting Myrtle Rust.

Hugh Bramwells suggested the Biodiversity Fund as another possible source of funding.

It was also suggested that the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Program may be able to contribute a small amount of funding also.

It was agreed that Rod Turner and Jenna Taylor will organise a meeting with Lucy and Hugh to discuss these issues while Colin Grant and Louise Clarke will look at what is currently happening within DAFF with regards to the Caring for our Country Program.

### **Item 10 – Report on Forestry Activities**

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

It was discussed that the Forestry Industry collects seed soon after harvest for regeneration and that some of this seed could be provided to the Australian Seed Bank Partnership. PHA will also invite both Peter and Gavin Matthew to their meeting with Lucy and Hugh.

### **Item 11 – Next Meeting**

Members were reminded that it was decided during the previous meeting that, following this meeting, MRTMG meetings would be held once every two months with urgent meetings being called in between if required and monthly meetings resuming as the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Program begins to draw to a close. As such, meetings will be scheduled for August, October, and December 2012, and February, April, May, and June 2013. Jenna Taylor will advise Members of the dates of these meetings.

### **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 Seven held by teleconference on Wednesday, 27 June 2012**

1. There have been ongoing detections of Myrtle Rust in Far North Queensland since the last meeting. These include new detections in the Forest Creek area north of the Daintree River, and in Tolga and Yungaburra on the Atherton Tablelands.

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

As at 22 June 2012, there were 196 known infected premises in Queensland (sites where there has been a confirmed diagnosis and a confirmed identification of host species). There were a further 618 highly suspect reports (reports that have not been diagnostically or botanically confirmed but have been verified through photographic or other evidence), and 785 suspect reports (reports which have not been verified but are in known host species in known infested areas) of Myrtle Rust in Queensland. This brings the total number of suspected cases of Myrtle Rust in Queensland to 1,599.

To date, 21 local government areas in Queensland have had confirmed cases of myrtle rust.

Based on information from overseas, with the cooler weather conditions during winter, it is anticipated that new detections of Myrtle Rust will slow over the coming months and pick up again in spring and summer. However, data from public reports received in Queensland during winter 2011 showed ongoing disease activity in the South East of the state during that period. The warmer climate in North and Far North Queensland may mean that there is little to no reduction in disease activity in these tropical parts of Queensland over winter. Weather conditions in the North of the state over the cooler, drier months of late autumn, winter and early spring may actually be more conducive to disease development and spread than the very hot and wet months experienced in the tropics over summer due to the pathogen's intolerance to temperatures above 32°C and the 'washing' effect heavy rainfall has on Myrtle Rust spores.

2. Six new species have been identified as hosts of Myrtle Rust since the last meeting. These are *Melaleuca nervosa*, *Melaleuca salicina*, *Rhodomyrtus effusa*, *Rhodomyrtus macrocarpa*, *Syzygium cormiflorum* and *Syzygium kuranda*. The total number of confirmed host species in Queensland is now 134 species from 35 genera.
3. The Queensland Myrtle Rust Program is finalising the first edition of its Myrtle Rust disease management guide. The draft guide is currently being reviewed by key stakeholders. Once comments have been received and incorporated into the draft, the guide will be submitted for final proofing, design and artwork by DAFF's publishing unit. It is expected to take at least eight weeks from submission to publication.
4. The Myrtle Rust Program recently presented information sessions on Myrtle Rust to affected stakeholders in Townsville and Cairns. The Townsville sessions were well attended with 61 people attending the two sessions. Due to the recent establishment of the disease in Far North Queensland, a second information session was presented in Cairns. This session was attended by 70 people.

These Myrtle Rust Information Sessions have been an integral part of the program with sessions delivered in Hervey Bay, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Cairns, Mackay, Gladstone and Townsville over the last eight months.

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Raising awareness of the disease has helped the Program promote public reporting of suspect detections of Myrtle Rust in regional areas and to track and monitor the disease's spread and host range in Queensland.

5. The Myrtle Rust Advisory Committee met on 17 May and 21 June 2012. The Committee was updated on the current disease situation and other developments in Queensland and other jurisdictions, and reviewed the Program's progress against its 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.
6. The Queensland Myrtle Rust Program hosted 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.

The Workshop was a follow-up to the initial Myrtle Rust Research and Development Workshop that was hosted by the Program in September 2011. The aim of the workshop was to bring all researchers working on Myrtle Rust and other interested stakeholders together to discuss and prioritise current and future Myrtle Rust R&D activities in Australia.

During the workshop, international keynote speaker, Robert Hauff, Forest Health Coordinator, Division of Forestry and Wildlife, Department of Land and Natural Resources, Hawaii, provided an excellent presentation on the impacts of *Puccinia psidii* in Hawaii; research, disease monitoring and surveillance, and biosecurity protection activities in Hawaii; proposed future work; and their international collaborations. Mr Hauff also visited key researchers working on Myrtle Rust in New South Wales and Queensland as well as field sites and areas affected by Myrtle Rust in both states.

Mr Hauff's visit was funded by the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry through the Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Program.

The Workshop was attended by more than 50 people from Australia and New Zealand.

The first day of the Workshop comprised presentations on topics such as *Puccinia psidii* overseas; the current Myrtle Rust situation in Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria; proposed and current Myrtle Rust R&D projects; and disease management, epidemiology, host specificity and impacts (economic, social and environmental).

The second day of the Workshop comprised a field trip to a lemon myrtle (*Backhousia citriodora*) field site at Beerburrum north of Brisbane. The site was established as a germplasm collection and research facility and is currently jointly owned by Queensland DAFF and CSIRO. The facility is the subject of a RIRDC-funded CSIRO R&D project to identify any inherent resistance to Myrtle Rust in this collection of *B. citriodora* seedlots and clones. The field trip was followed by a general discussion on future Myrtle Rust research and management in Australia.

7. The Cooperative Research Centre for National Plant Biosecurity (CRCNPB)-funded project *Understanding eucalyptus rust epidemiology and host specificity to determine disease impact in Australia* (CRCNPB 70186), which has been led by the Queensland Myrtle Rust Program and delivered in conjunction with Queensland DAFF's Horticulture and Forestry Science Program and New South Wales Department of Primary Industries, was successfully completed in May and the final project report has been submitted to the CRCNPB for approval.

Our thanks to the CRCNPB for the \$200K in funding that was provided to deliver this important research project.

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### Attachment B

#### **Myrtle Rust in NSW – report from NSW DPI and OEH for Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group Meeting Seven held by teleconference on Wednesday, 27 June 2012**

1. Myrtle rust is considered endemic in NSW, with a confirmed distribution in native environments from Batemans Bay to the Queensland border. However, there have been no reports of Myrtle Rust in natural vegetation to the west of the Great Dividing Range thus far.
2. The DPI Biosecurity website (<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/myrtle-rust>) is the major site for information on Myrtle Rust management and this is being updated regularly. Further information on Myrtle Rust management in natural vegetation is available from <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/pestsweeds/20110683myrtlerustmp.htm>.
3. A number of staff attended the second National Myrtle Rust Research and Development Workshop in Brisbane and found it to be very useful. This was further augmented by the visiting scientist doing a tour of sites in NSW.
4. Angus Carnegie has recently returned from 2 weeks in Brazil, Florida and Hawaii, funded by the Gottstein Trust. In Brazil Angus visited Professor Acelino Alfenas (Federal University of Viçosa) as well as eucalypt plantation companies (Veracel & Suzano) to learn more about the impact and management of Guava rust. In Florida he visited Dr Rayamajhi (USDA Invasive Plant Research Laboratory) to look at the impact on *Melaleuca quinquenervia* and observe how insect damage can exacerbate the impact of the rust. In Hawaii, he met with Dr Janice Uchida (University of Hawaii) and Robert Hauff (USDLNR Division of Forestry & Wildlife) to investigate the impact in the native environment and monitoring of the rust, as well as current and proposed legislative actions to restrict further strains entering Hawaii. The trip also established links with overseas researchers that will help with the upcoming DAFF T2M projects. Angus presented information about his trip at the National Myrtle Rust Research and Development Workshop in Brisbane and will complete a report by October 2012.
5. Monitoring the impact of Myrtle Rust on *Rhodamnia rubescens* in native environments continues with a site in Olney State Forest where half the trees have been kept free from rust using fungicides. After 10 months there is a significant improvement in foliage production in trees free of rust compared to those where rust has caused almost complete loss of foliage and resulted in mortality for some plants. Monthly monitoring at the site continues with the hope of being able to quantify the impact on flower set, fruit production, and survival of seedlings to trees. This work was partly funded by the Cooperative Research Centre for National Plant Biosecurity.
6. Data on Myrtle Rust locations collected by Forests NSW and Angus Carnegie have been supplied to OEH for inclusion in the Wildlife Atlas.
7. National Parks & Wildlife Service prepared a Myrtle Rust Management Plan in 2011, which principally focused on biosecurity measures to reduce the potential for spread and recording the distribution of infected sites. However now that the disease has become widespread and endemic, this plan requires revision, with the focus to move to management of impacts in natural bushland areas, including protection of key threatened species sites and the capacity to reduce broader impacts. In addition for highly threatened species, gene storage issues may need consideration.

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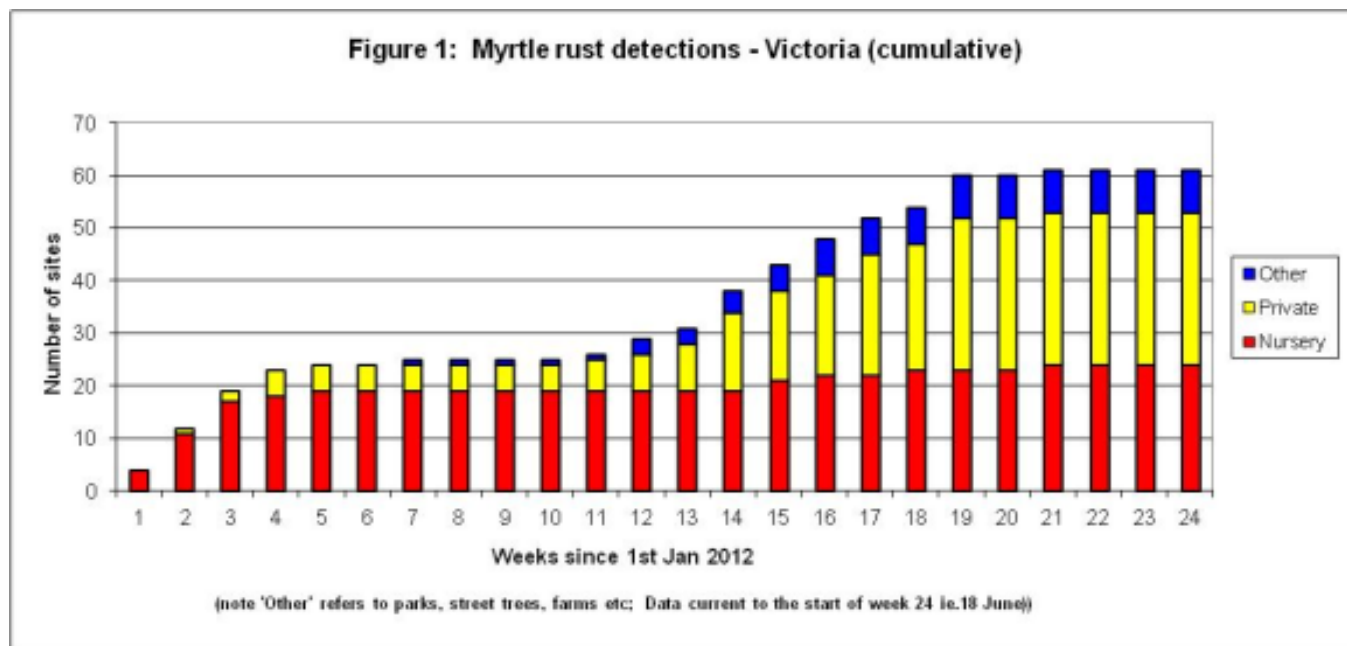
At this stage, the review is being proposed in 2012-13 in conjunction with Forests NSW, NSW DPI, the Royal Botanic Gardens, and other relevant public land managers as it may provide a cross tenure framework for Myrtle Rust management across bushland areas of NSW. This work will be done in collaboration with related work nationally and in other states.

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### Attachment C

#### Myrtle Rust in Victoria – report from DPI Vic and DSE for Myrtle Rust Transition to Management Group Meeting Seven held by teleconference on Wednesday, 27 June 2012

1. Myrtle rust has now been detected at 64 sites in Victoria. The detection rate has slowed right down with the onset of winter.



Several of the recent detections have been on much larger plants (hedges and small trees). 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 the Casey shire "hot spot" in outer Melbourne is continuing to expand. At least one council and two residences have removed or are about to remove infected Myrtaceous hosts and replant with non-susceptible hosts.

There have been no new detections of Myrtle Rust in regional Victoria since the last meeting.

Myrtle rust has not yet been detected in Victorian bushland or the natural environment.

2. 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 carminea* Red rata (Crimson rata); *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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3. 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 1500 people have attended ongoing Myrtle Rust information and ID sessions. During June, sessions have been conducted in Noojee, Bairnsdale, and Traralgon. At the Traralgon meeting the Myrtle Rust CD's and notes on Myrtle Rust were handed out, all of which were well received, and consequently additional material has been requested. We are currently out of CDs.

4. A second factsheet of Myrtle Rust symptom images has been prepared and distributed to stakeholders.

A Myrtle Rust update (16 May) has been prepared and distributed to stakeholders.

A notice has been distributed to Industry to advise that import restrictions are to be lifted.

The website has been updated as required.

Gordon Berg was interviewed about Myrtle Rust by the Shepparton News on 4 June.

4. 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.
5. There has been no need to run any ICA-42 Authorised Inspection Person training courses this month. NGIV is keeping a waiting list of interested participants, but it appears that industry needs for this course have been met at present.

The Royal Botanic Gardens in Cranbourne have requested a Myrtle Rust Identification and Sampling course (a modified version of the ICA-42 Authorised Inspection Person training course) to be held before spring. Course details and date are yet to be decided.

6. David Smith, Forestry Biosecurity Officer and Dr Jacky Edwards attended the Myrtle Rust Research and Development Workshop in Brisbane on 19 June and presented the Victorian update.
5. There has been good participation from stakeholder groups in the surveillance program.

Over 105 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.

A "very small" survey of attempted "clean ups on site" indicated a 66% success rate.

6. 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.

Yates is continuing to pursue a minor use permit for use of new product recently registered for Azalea blight against Myrtle Rust.

7. 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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8. Biosecurity Victoria, in response to requests from interstate jurisdictions, has determined that, from 30 June 2012, Myrtle Rust will be declared as an endemic disease in Victoria and the Victorian Importation Order will be rescinded. This means that Myrtle Rust host materials will be able to enter Victoria from New South Wales and Queensland without certification. It will remain illegal under Victorian plant biosecurity legislation to sell plants with visible symptoms of Myrtle Rust. In addition, adherence to the Nursery and Garden Industry Australia's Myrtle Rust management plan will help to minimise the sale of diseased plants and reduce the risk of spreading Myrtle Rust further within the State.

## 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 Seven held by teleconference on Wednesday, 27 June 2012**

1. The ASBP partners in the state jurisdictions of New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory, Queensland, Victoria, and Tasmania as well as the national jurisdiction (Australian National Botanic Gardens) have all agreed to contribute and support a national collecting programme. The ASBP has recently received a \$78,000 seed collecting grant from the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew for its 1000 Species collecting program targeting endemic, endangered and economic valuable species. Although part of this collecting programme will collect seed from Myrtaceae species, the money is to target those that do not exist in current conservation seed bank collections.

135 Myrtaceae species are being targeted as part of the 1000 Species project.

47 of these 135 are in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, and Tasmania (those remaining are in South Australia and Western Australia).

27 of these 47 are from genera reported to be susceptible to Myrtle Rust.

2. The Kew grant will only cover a small programme of work therefore additional resources need to be secured in order to build a national *ex situ* collecting program with genetic diversity.
3. During the previous MRTMG meeting it was discussed that the ASBP would prepare a Caring for our Country proposal for building a comprehensive *ex situ* collection of Myrtaceae species to support conservation. Priority would be placed on collecting threatened species and building a genetically diverse collection. The ASBP would take a national approach to safeguarding species from Myrtle Rust.

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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 Seven held by teleconference on Wednesday, 27 June 2012**

1. Companies are continuing to undertake monitoring and surveillance activities and are also training staff in the identification of Myrtle Rust.
2. Elders has committed seed and seedlings to research studies.