



Indigenous Engagement Strategy 2014 – 2018 Weed Outlier Program



Introduction

Desert Channels Queensland (DCQ) is a community organisation working to improve the management of natural resources in its region - the Queensland section of the Lake Eyre Basin.

Since its formation in 2002 DCQ has developed strong and enduring relationships with indigenous groups and individuals across the region, in particular by supporting the development of the Georgina Diamantina Coopers Aboriginal Group (GDCAG) which represents the major language groups of the region.

The DCQ program of work as approved by the Federal Government in the environmental stream for the next five years will largely be focussed on reducing threats to the environment through weed and feral animal control works.

This indigenous engagement strategy outlines the principles which DCQ will adopt to promote indigenous engagement throughout the region with the aim of increasing indigenous grass roots and volunteer participation in natural resource management activities.

Desert Channels Queensland will continue to work with the Traditional Owners and the indigenous community of our region for successful outcomes in natural resource management within the new funding models offered by current governments.

This strategy links to DCQ's strategic plan, NRM plan and our current contract and work plan for the Weed Outlier program with the Australian government.

Weed Outlier Program 2013 - 2018

The Weed Outlier program focuses on protecting natural assets such as the protected area estates which have EPBC listed species or communities in the Lake Eyre catchments of Queensland. This will primarily be done through the eradication and active management of WoNs outliers, specifically prickly acacia and parkinsonia.

A known major source of weed transport is via rivers and waterways and this project aims to eradicate outlier populations, implement better weed hygiene on the properties involved and increase the resilience of the riparian zones. Control of these weed species will complement the national strategies for these WoNs.

Weed Outlier is a program funded by the Australian Government. The on ground activities being rolled out under the current funding rounds are priorities from previous plans and are fixed, subject to contracts with the Federal Government. On ground investment focus is aimed at reducing the key threatening processes of weed and pest animals, with the dual aim of building of the major ecological transport zone, the riparian habitat, for example in the Aramac area the project focuses on riparian resilience and also Dunnart habitat improvement while reducing the threat to conservation estates downstream.

Weed Outlier is one of three projects within the environment stream being implemented to tackle serious issues in the region. The other two program's DCQ is rolling out under the environment stream are a feral pig control program and a high-value area targeted investment program. All three projects are required to have strong links.

The Current Program

Sub-program 1 - Conserving and protecting species and ecosystems through weed control

GIS data will be used to identify strategic sites and will then be validated on ground. The appropriate control measures to control and eradicate weed outlier concentrations will then be identified. Integrated weed control and land management measures will be implemented over 7090 hectares of land and 64 kilometres of high value riparian vegetation by 2018. Sites that are chosen for this program are in the Aramac Creek, Upper Barcoo River and Georgina River zones and have the criteria of being clearly weed outliers, controllable and have associated clear public benefit for example, areas associated with riparian zones which are acting as transport mechanisms between properties, sites associated with public land and sites that are seed sources for adjoining land. The sites will be monitored through bio-condition assessments and photo monitoring points over the course of the project. The project will work with land managers to improve bio-condition of the landscape to ensure a reduction in further threat to the species or communities listed under the EPBC.

Sub-program 2 - Improved skills and Knowledge

Desert Channels Queensland will coordinate and support stakeholders in mapping, raising awareness, skills development and education about control of strategic infestations of these woody weeds. Skills development and education will aim to protect and enhance landscape values, increase participation and ensure the appropriate control techniques are used to prevent spread further south-west in the Lake Eyre Basin. This will be undertaken through activities such as workshops and electronic media publications.

Sub-program 3 - Enhancing Indigenous people's capacity for natural resource management

Workshops will be held with the aim of improving general knowledge about land management, and EPBC species and recovery plans. The workshops will bring together relevant experts in habitat identification, identification of EPBC species and knowledge of and access to recovery plans, plus experts in planning, management and on-ground activities associated with eradication and control of weed populations. Communication activities will also occur through electronic media publications to improve knowledge and skills of general land management practices highlighting the importance of eradicating strategic weed infestation populations with the best methodologies.

Strategies for engagement

Through the Weed Outlier program and following consultation with Georgina Diamantina Coopers Aboriginal Group (GDCAG), the following three strategies will be implemented:

- Support for landcare groups which, through their activities, increase indigenous participation in high value NRM projects
- Tailored communication products outlining upcoming community activities
- Skills development for participants engaged in high value NRM projects

DCQ, through the strategy, has committed to ongoing communication with the indigenous community and has developed goals aimed at strengthening indigenous engagement and participation in high value NRM activities at the voluntary and grass roots level.

Monitoring of engagement activities

The workshops and training days will be monitored through event survey and feedback forms to determine the effectiveness of the events.

Distribution of newsletters and other information will be monitored through the DCQ mailing list and general post to indigenous community members. Feedback on communication products will be encouraged.

Future engagement opportunities

There may be opportunity to undertake further indigenous project works and activities if additional funding streams and resources can be sourced. Desert Channels Queensland will continue to work with the Traditional Owners and the indigenous community in the region to pursue these opportunities.