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War on weeds gets strategic

Just as modern wars are relying more on technology and tactics, the war on weeds in CQ just got more strategic.

A new Fitzroy Basin Weed Management Strategy has been developed after the region's best war minds came together to identify, assess and prioritise local weeds for annihilation.

The process of the developing the strategy was coordinated by battle veterans Trudy Baker, from the Capricorn Pest Management Group (CPMG) and Catrina Wolski from the Central Highlands Natural Resource Management Group (CHNRMG).

Ms Baker said while hand-to-hand combat (physical and chemical control) was vital, strategic and integrated management was the real key to making a long-term impact on weeds.

"If everyone is focusing on different weeds in different areas, any investment made in spraying or removing them will barely scratch the surface of the problem," she said.

"The increasing threat of weed invasion throughout the region is significant, as is the cost of their control. We need to be smart about how we spend our time and money."

She said the 639 weed species present in the Fitzroy Basin were narrowed down to the most invasive, and a triple bottom line (TBL) impact assessment was applied.

"It's all about choosing your battles. We used the TBL to look at the social, economic and environmental impacts to determine the most cost-effective approach," she said.

"If a weed is widely distributed throughout the catchment, it stands to reason that cost for control of that weed would be extremely high. A weed that is less widely distributed would cost less to control, depending on the type of plant."

Representatives from groups including the Queensland Herbarium, natural resource management groups, DPI&F, Biosecurity Queensland and the Department of Mines and Energy had input into the strategy.

The strategy provides detailed information on weeds identified as high priorities for weed control initiatives. Weeds ranked in the top five most wanted for both the Capricorn region and the Central Highlands region included Hymenachne and Bellyache Bush.

Ms Baker said the strategy would help all tiers of government, utility providers, landholders, business, industry and the broader community to manage weeds more effectively and efficiently.

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The strategic approach to the war effort was funded by the Fitzroy Basin Association Inc. (FBA), who used the results to help determine areas for on-ground work over the coming year.

The strategy also provides a benchmark that can be used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of future weed management programs and activities.

Copies of the strategy are available from CPMG by phoning (07) 4921 0962.

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