

Developing a one-stop shop for the biological control of Paterson's curse in Australia

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Summary Primary producers, agronomists and weed extension officers require easy access to information to facilitate the ongoing biological control of Paterson's curse. An interactive guide, in the form of a CD, has been developed to provide a comprehensive biological control of Paterson's curse resource. The CD is expected to be published and distributed in 2008. The CD incorporates data and expertise from researchers and end-users in all States and territories involved in the national biological control program, ensuring it will become a unique national resource.

Structurally, the CD comprises a multi-level cascade that can be navigated spatially (clickable maps) or through standard dynamic menus and/or static links. Information on the CD is categorised by user type (e.g. farmer, weed officer) enabling its users to quickly navigate to information relevant to their needs. Users are able to drill down to regional scales to discover, for example, maps of biological control release site locations for redistribution purposes, or to find specific information about biological control agents. A section is dedicated to the integration of biological control with other farm management practices, including a visual 'calendar of activity'. This section contains a series of case studies highlighting real farmer experiences living with biological control. The CD will be especially useful to landholders and Landcare groups by detailing opportunities for biological control including:

- how to identify sites suitable for biological control,
- information on how to source, collect and redistribute biological control agents,
- how to maintain biological control sites, including managing agent populations through wet and dry periods,

- guidelines on how to monitor biological control agent progress, and
- information on Paterson's curse, the general principles of biological control and integrated weed management, and relevant brochures and publications relating to the weed and agents.

Included in the CD are links to further information about weeds and biological control, including the legal responsibilities of land managers to manage weeds.

A distribution strategy has been developed that will make the CD available primarily from State and local government weed extension officers, Catchment Management Authorities and their equivalents, and from Meat and Livestock Australia. These agencies will utilise their existing extension networks to ensure the CD is publicised when it's available, and is distributed to end-users. As the CD is distributed and utilised however, an evaluation of the interactive guide will be necessary to maximise the benefits of this and similar future products.

Keywords Paterson's curse, biological control.

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