

Training and nudging weed practitioners towards better on-ground results

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Summary Asking weed practitioners what they need to do their work better has influenced delivery of capability building activities for the Weeds at the Early Stage of Invasion (WESI) project in Victoria. Surveys of government staff were carried out from 2013 to 2015 using one-on-one and group interviews, and on-line surveys (Survey Monkey). Pilot training activities were undertaken and evaluation carried out. From the information received, a capability plan was completed, including training and awareness. The plan aims to build the capability of staff with responsibilities for invasive species to use the package of WESI tools.

Three priority audiences were identified:

- people authorising the work;
- people designing the work;
- people doing the work on-ground.

Competencies and risks were prioritised to determine the skills and awareness topics to focus on, including:

- invasive plants (especially their identification);
- impacts;

- hazards;
- biology and ecology;
- hygiene;
- reporting weeds;
- conducting investigations, e.g. pathway analysis;
- carrying out monitoring and evaluation; and
- survey techniques, e.g. field search and delimiting surveys.

The training plan includes session topics that meet the greatest need and address the highest risk.

The accompanying awareness plan includes the preferred topics (e.g. weed identification) and the preferred ways in which to access information: on-line; direct email; and through social media e.g. Facebook, Yammer, Twitter. The awareness plan recommends the regular nudging of staff to keep using the WESI tools via these media.

Keywords Awareness, capability building, competencies, early invaders, nudging, risk, skills, training.