

## CAWS medal winner calls for more federal government funding for control of established weeds

Tas Country Hour

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### As the recipient of the Australasian Weed Society's highest honour in 2014, John Thorp says he's always put people first.

But Mr Thorpe says he was surprised that his weeds work with a focus on people and a national strategy, brought the prestigious Council of Australasian Weed Societies (CAWS) medal this year.

The CAWS medal recognises outstanding contributions to weed management through research, teaching, administration, extension and implementation of programs.

"My real burden is to help people on the land manage their weed problems, with the best knowledge and technology we can provide to them," he said.

"I think those WONS [Weeds of National Significance] manuals are one of our great achievements.

"When the WONS weeds were first announced we had to work out those strategies and we had to do it with the people on the land.

"So it had to be a bottom up drive, and I think that's one of the great successes of it.

"That it is always thought about the people who are managing the problem, what the problem is, the ecology and so on and how is it done best.

"But it has to be done in a planned way, and people have thought about where these weeds are and where they aren't."

As project manager to the National Weeds Strategy executive, Mr Thorp drafted policy to tackle the continent's worst weeds.

Under his watch, the Weeds of National Significance program was executed and best practice manuals and tools developed for 32 different weeds.

But Mr Thorp says government funding cuts risk reversing some of the progress that's been made.

"There isn't as much money around, particularly for government programs which are essential if you are going to have really strong weed management programs," he said.

"With that reduction in funding the managers of the overall programs have said we have to spend our money in the place we get best value.

"That tends to be on new incursions before they spread widely.

"What this really means to the community, of those plants [established weeds] if they are in the agricultural situation they are going to affect the cost of production.

"And if we can't manage those weeds really efficiently, the cost gets passed on into the supermarket.

"You and I are going to pay for them.

"So there is a great lot of merit in managing those species and trying to reduce the impact on our food security.



**PHOTO:** John Thorpe has been awarded the Council of Australasian Weed Societies CAWS medal for leadership (Rose Grant)

**MAP:** Launceston 7250

**AUDIO:** John Thorp, the 2014 Australian Weed Society's prestigious CAWS medal winner (ABC Rural)

"It's much harder tho value what it means to the environment."

**Topics:** weeds, awards-and-prizes, launceston-7250

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