

Annual Report 2012-13

The last year saw significant growth in the influence of the Invasive Species Council and modest successes, while transitioning to a new CEO.

Firstly we farewelled departing CEO, John de Jose, after two year's service. John left ISC at the end of 2012 following extended sick leave. We wish him and his wife good health. In May 2013 Andrew Cox stepped down as President to take on the CEO role. Andrew brings to the position his passion for tackling invasive species, extensive experience in managing community organisations, and strong advocacy and networking skills. Carol Booth, John Sampson and Tim Low continue to support ISC with their high quality research, writing and publishing skills.

Most of our advocacy effort during the period concentrated on the landmark Biosecurity Bill, released initially as draft legislation, then tabled in the Senate as a Bill before being referred to a Senate Committee. The Labor Government dismissed all viewpoints, including the ISC-coordinated submission representing close to 20 environment groups, and from industry. This led to an informal collaboration between ISC and industry stakeholders calling for changes to the Biosecurity Bill. As a result, the government delayed the parliamentary inquiry, now set to report in late November 2013.

ISC continued to promote its proposal for Environment Health Australia, a new institution dedicated to preparing for new invasive species impacting on the environment. While the concept was widely praised, government was reluctant to make the small investment needed to implement it. We will continue to argue this case.

Over the year we strengthened relationships with the Federal Government, most state governments and key conservation and industry organisations with an interest in reducing the impact of invasive species. In particular we have met with the Secretary for the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and are represented on the Stakeholder Engagement Consultative Group of the National Biosecurity Committee.

Throughout the year ISC played an important role in the passionate community campaign aimed at keeping recreational hunters out of NSW parks by critiquing the effectiveness of so called 'conservation hunting'. In a major win just after the financial year ended, in July 2013 the NSW Government abolished Game Council NSW and significantly improved its proposal for recreational hunting in NSW national parks. Another important advance was the Victorian Government's decision to allow landholders to control deer on their properties, an issue ISC has highlighted for many years.

Detailed submissions were made to NSW and Victorian proposals for new laws and policies on invasive species, along with a submission to a Senate inquiry into threatened species. The final report of this inquiry included several recommendations on invasive species, extensively citing our evidence. ISC participated in a Pest Seminar in Adelaide, SA, a Feral Animal Summit in Toowoomba, Qld, a meeting of environment groups to discuss threats to northern Australia, and the Australasian Weeds Conference. We also highlighted the Queensland Government's withdrawal of funds to eradicate a new outbreak of Yellow Crazy Ants in the Townsville and Wet Tropics area.

A grant from the Ian Potter Foundation allowed us to survey more than 800 organisations across Australia tackling invasive species. This has helped us better understand their work, create stronger networks and reach a larger audience.

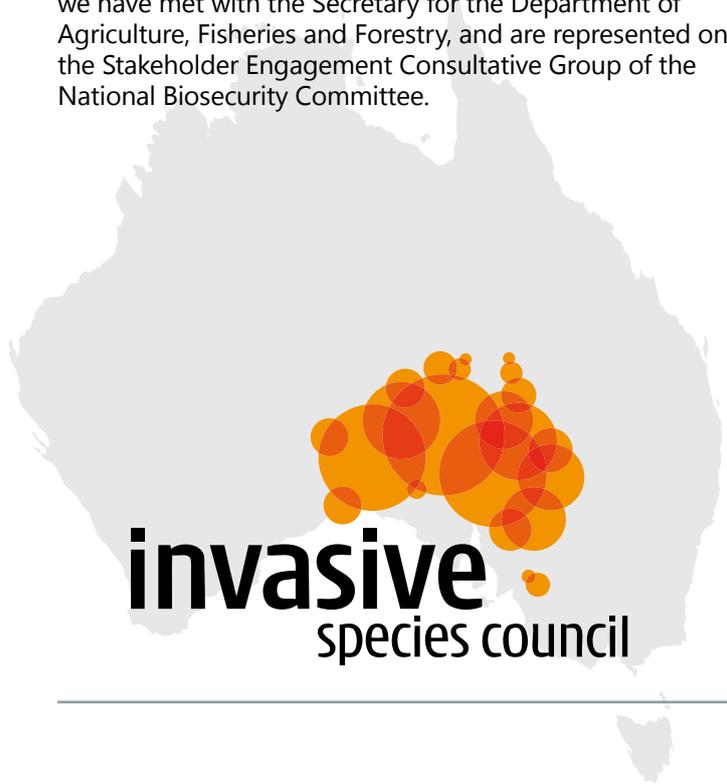
At the end of the 2012-13 year we began preparing for the September 2013 federal election by promoting our national reform agenda and developed a survey of the main political parties to seek their support. The incoming Federal Government has much work to do to prevent the growth of our invasive species problems.

Our flagship publication, Feral Herald, moved to a digital blog format, allowing more frequent production and dissemination to a wider audience. Our supporter base continues to grow.

We finally conclude with heartfelt thanks to our donors and supporters. Being entirely dependent on donations, we appreciate your generosity and your commitment to our important work. We are especially grateful for support from the Ian Potter Foundation and for long-term commitments from the Mullum Trust, Ecology Australia and Curlew Fund (a sub-fund of Australian Communities Foundation).

As incoming chair I thank the Board for their support upon starting the role and for their steady governing throughout the year.

Esther Abram
President



invasive
species council