WSQ Advocacy Policy: 12 April 2013

Introduction

The Weed Society of Queensland (WSQ) has the following objectives:

1. To promote wider interest in weeds and pest animals and their management.
2. To provide opportunities for those interested in weeds and pest animals and their management to exchange information and ideas based on research and practice.
3. To encourage the investigation of all aspects of weeds and pest animals and their management.
4. To encourage the study of weed and pest animal science and the dissemination of its findings.
5. To encourage education in weed and pest animal science and management.
6. To produce and publish such material as may be considered desirable.
7. To cooperate and, where appropriate, affiliate with other organisations engaged in related activities.
8. To support and continue to foster the Council of Australasian Weed Societies.

The WSQ recognises the role advocacy can play in support of meeting a wide range of its objectives.

As a diverse volunteer organisation, it is important to ensure that advocacy activities maintain the good name of the WSQ and its members. As such it is important to the WSQ that advocacy activities are constructive, proactive and solution oriented.

This policy sets out the principles, advocacy themes and implementation rules under which members of the WSQ may undertake advocacy activities.

Policy

The WSQ will:

- Implement advocacy activities in support of its Objectives;
- Direct advocacy to governments and industry, environmental and community bodies;
- Apply the Principles of this policy to advocacy activities;

Principles

Advocacy actions by the Society will follow the principles listed below:

- Do not personalise differences;
- Treat others as we wish to be treated;
- Respect the mandates of Australian, State and Local Governments, and other bodies;
- Advocacy to governments will not involve political party issues;
- Respect the position of our members in relation to their employers;
- Seek common ground and solutions;

- Let our contacts know in advance of making a public statement, especially if the communication involves criticism;
- Celebrate joint achievements.

Themes

COMMITMENT: Invasive plant and animal investments require sustained commitment to "see the job through", from inception through to ongoing maintenance levels where impacts are deemed acceptable.

RESPONSIBILITY: Invasive plant and animal management requires individuals and groups, at all levels, to demonstrate leadership by taking ownership of their legal responsibilities.

COLLABORATION: Invasive plants and animals don't see fencelines. Management is the responsibility of all landowners. WSQ supports the strengthening of collaborative arrangements between State and Local Governments, NRM bodies, private landholders and industry.

INCLUSION: Invasive plant and animal management requires long standing and strong relationships. All stakeholders should be invited to the table.

KNOWLEDGE: Research and pilot studies are essential to continuing to understand invasive plants and animals and achieve efficient and cost effective management.

Implementation

AUTHORITIES: To maintain the reputation and credibility of the WSQ, the following authorisations will be required:

- Only individuals pre-approved by the Executive are able to make statements on behalf of the WSQ.
- All advocacy activities will be approved by the WSQ Executive prior to being undertaken.

ACTIVITIES: Activities need to consider the limitations of a voluntary membership organisation.

Campaign activities should:

- Be simple in concept and delivery;
- Target one or two issues/key messages;
- Have a defined purpose and desired outcome;
- Identify target audience/s and method/s of delivery;
- Have a start and end date;
- Be able to measure effectiveness; and
- Offer a solution or suggested path forward.

Stakeholder relationship building activities should:

- Have a defined purpose and desired outcome;
- Provide "value for time" for the relevant stakeholder.

MEDIA: When determining advocacy media, members should consider:

- The media habits of the target audience;
- Resource requirements to maintain messaging, especially for social media approaches;
- The potential 'life' of the messages within proposed media.