



wheatbelt
natural resource
management



Project Dieback is a cross regional initiative delivered by South Coast Region NRM Inc., funded by the Government of Western Australia.

Media Release

Monday 12 September 2011

Web weapon to fight deadly disease

Project Dieback will launch its new online weapon today against the pathogenic predator of our plants and ecosystems – *Phytophthora cinnamomi*.

It may have a funny name but DIDMS (Dieback Information Delivery and Management System) has a very serious purpose in protecting vulnerable areas of Western Australia from this soil and water-borne plant disease.

A one-stop-shop for environmental managers, DIDMS is a web-based intelligence system designed to guide government, industry and community in their decision making and provide an effective tool to pool dieback information.

For years, land managers had independently collected fragments of dieback evidence and neighbours had been largely unaware of what was going on over the fence.

Dieback knows no boundaries – damaging ecosystems of national parks, reserves, forests, farms and mining areas. The cross regional Project Dieback initiative (established in 2005) set the first benchmark in mapping dieback across all land tenures and NRM regions.

Project Dieback Leader Annabelle Bushell said it soon became obvious dieback was a much bigger problem than anyone expected, covering over one million hectares in south west Australia alone and affecting thousands of plants species and the communities they supported.

“We urgently needed a system that could collate and manage the new and expanding dieback information into the future. DIDMS will help industry partners to share resources and reduce costs for infrastructure such as washdown points and dieback signage,” Ms Bushell said.

“This is just the start. Our vision is to capture much more information including those healthy areas that communities nominate and want to protect from dieback.”

The next stage will be to roll out DIDMS to targeted stakeholder groups to maximise its functionality. This will be the focus of planning in the next round of State NRM funding.

DIDMS was developed by environmental technology consultants Gaia Resources and funded through the State NRM Program in partnership with the Department of Environment and Conservation.

Visit <http://didms.gaiaresources.com.au/>

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About Dieback

Phytophthora Dieback is a microbe of the soil which kills plants by destroying their root system. This “biological bulldozer” has infested over one million hectares of the South West leaving few precious large tracts of natural bushland areas disease-free.

Project Dieback is a Natural Resource Management (NRM) initiative to protect environmental, social and economic values from the introduced plant pathogen Phytophthora Dieback. Its main objectives are to;

- increase awareness of its impact and future threat
- identify and protect biodiversity, with government, community and industry, high-value areas of significance
- build regional and community capacity to manage the pathogen

Invite

Members of the media are welcome to attend the launch of DIDMS at the Albany Entertainment Centre from 4.45pm on Monday 12 September 2011. Special guests include Prof. Lyn Beazley, WA Chief Scientist. Please RSVP to Jenelle Bowles.

Jenelle Bowles

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