

# National Myrtle Rust Working Group

## Communiqué

Meeting 3 – 20 June 2023



Image courtesy of Geoff Pegg

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### About the working group

The National Myrtle Rust Working Group is an advisory and coordinating group with a focus on supporting best practice myrtle rust control and management across Australia. It provides information and support to the Commonwealth, state and territory governments and other members. Established in 2022, the Working Group's membership comprises experts in myrtle rust research and management from across Australia, including representatives from New Zealand.

### Myrtle rust communication and engagement strategy

The Working Group progressed development of a national myrtle rust communications strategy. The strategy will identify key messages and activities to both increase public awareness of myrtle rust, its impact and the mechanisms through which it is spread, and to encourage greater collaboration and investment by governments, industries and communities in managing myrtle rust. Working Group members provided their input on the communications goals, target audiences, key messages and communication methods for the strategy.

### National Myrtle Rust Action Plan amendments

The National Action Plan for myrtle rust was completed in 2020. It provides a foundation for a coordinated national environmental response to myrtle rust research and on-ground actions. Its goals are to minimise declines and extinctions of native species due to myrtle rust and to mitigate the decline in the integrity and function of their host ecosystems.

The Working Group is overseeing amendments to the existing Action Plan with a focus on implementation pathways and adding characteristics consistent with the requirements of a threat abatement plan. This will include performance measures and evaluation as well as a consideration of the costs of abatement activities. In making these amendments, the Working Group notes current work by the Australian Government to reform the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and that the Government's Nature Positive Plan flags an improved national conservation planning framework, of which threat abatement is a part.

### Update on the response to myrtle rust detection in the Kimberley

The Working Group received an update from the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions on the myrtle rust surveillance work being undertaken in Western Australia.

## Updates from members

Members provided updates to the Working Group on key issues and projects underway within their jurisdictions or organisations. Updates included outlines of communications activities, new collaborations, research projects, and data and information developments.

The Working Group agreed to hold its next meeting in November 2023 and will consider the draft communications and engagement strategy and drafted amendments to the National Action Plan.

## Australasian Myrtle Rust Conference

The Working Group meeting was held to coincide with the Australasian Myrtle Rust Conference (21-23 June 2023). The conference drew over 90 attendees from across the Australasian region and offered a unique opportunity for Working Group members to discuss emerging research, tools and technologies with a wide variety of experts including from the United States and New Zealand. The [conference website](#) provides further information on the topics explored through the conference.

The Working Group will further consider the outcomes of the conference at its November meeting, including the new and emerging priority research, tools, technologies and management approaches explored, and how these might inform amendments to the National Action Plan.

## Note

This communiqué presents a precis of the meeting and should not be taken to represent the position of any individual National Myrtle Rust Working Group member.

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.