

## **Councils take far north's war on weeds to the home front**

Far north residents can now step up the war on weeds in their own backyard thanks to a new interactive weed CD created by the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (FNQ ROC), the University of Queensland and FNQ NRM Ltd.

According to FNQ ROC's Executive Officer Darlene Irvine the CD will help people easily identify the top 100 weeds that have invaded the far north and the most effective ways to kill them.

"Weeds cost the far north rate payers millions of dollars each year, from lost agricultural dollars to the money spent by councils, community organisations and government departments in their removal," Ms Irvine said.

"Weeds are often a lush green and many have an attractive flower which means residence inadvertently plant them into their backyards," she said.

"An example can be seen with Water Hyacinth... I've lost count the number of times I've seen this weed growing in garden ponds.

"It is a free-floating plant with lilac-blue flowers that might look very pretty but it's a major pest in waterways worldwide, reducing fish numbers and food for water birds and providing shelter for mosquitoes and other disease spreading organisms.

"We know the tough slog our farmers endure each year trying to reclaim their land back from weeds and now it's time for our urban residents and small property owners to do their bit," Ms Irvine said.

The weeds identified on the CD are the 100 weed species the eleven councils that form FNQ ROC have classified as either significant, emerging or potential weeds in the far north.

FNQ NRM Ltd funded the project and CEO Dr Allan Dale said it was encouraging to see the united front presented by the eleven councils to control the spread of weeds.

"We all came together to see this project through because we understand weeds need to be on the agenda and their eradication resourced," Dr Dale said.

The CD is available to from your Local Government Pest Management Officer

The shires of Atherton, Cairns, Cardwell, Cook, Douglas, Eacham, Herberton, Hinchinbrook, Johnstone, Mareeba, and Yarrabah form the membership of FNQROC.

### **ENDS**

For further information contact Kate Hensler FNQ NRM Ltd Communications Coordinator 4043 8023 or 0407 166 234

Photo op – a photo opportunity can be arranged showcasing use of CD on laptop (presented by FNQ ROC pest officer) in local resident's backyard.