



Katrina Hodgkinson MP

Minister for Primary Industries

Minister for Small Business

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO HELP FIGHT THE WEEDS WAR

Thermal imaging, smartphone apps and DNA barcoding will join the artillery against problem weeds in NSW, Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson announced today.

“These new projects will be undertaken as part of the NSW Government’s weed innovation management fund,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“The projects aim to increase the level of effectiveness in the battle against weeds by finding new and innovative ways of tackling problem weeds and reducing the cost of weeds on our farmers’ bottom line.

“\$1.1 million is being invested into the nine new projects across the State, taking the NSW weeds management package to \$10.8 million.

“Specialised equipment will be deployed over the New England area as part of a major aerial thermal imaging and mapping pilot project.

“The thermal imaging technology will help identify areas of new invasive weed outbreaks and help farmers and weed Authorities better target control measures,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

Local member for Northern Tablelands Adam Marshall welcomed the funding for the new technology and said the development of a new smart phone app for farmers and weed managers will also be beneficial.

“The app will give people access to the popular ‘Noxious and environmental weed control handbook’ and the latest information on weed management, weed identification and herbicide resistance,” Mr Marshall said.

Ms Hodgkinson said the innovative DNA barcoding project will help researchers unpick the genetic makeup of some of our invasive weeds species and distinguish these weeds from similar native floral species.

“Correct identification is critical in the management of weeds and this project will aid the development of control measures that target weeds and avoid harming our native species.

“Through these innovative projects the NSW Government is advancing our farmers and land managers to help make this State number one again,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

Note: details about approved projects are below.

Approved projects – 2013 Weed Innovation Fund

Proponent	Funding	Project description
Northern Inland Weeds Advisory Committee - New England Weeds Authority	\$113,000	Integrated aerial surveillance, thermal imaging and mapping pilot program. The program will deploy drones in the identification of new weed incursions.
Graham Centre for Agricultural Innovation	\$140,000	DNA Barcoding of invasive grasses. The project will develop a DNA barcode diagnostic tool to identify and distinguish critical noxious weeds from similar native floral species in NSW.
Mid North Coast Weeds Coordinating Committee	\$48,750	Biological control of weeds. Biological control agents can be diverse, and weeds are commonly controlled by introducing plants, fungi and insects that inhibit their growth. The project will develop best practice techniques for the biological control of weeds, including site selection, releasing and monitoring of the relevant agents.
NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service	\$143,700	Increased detection, management and awareness of Orange Hawkweed at Kosciusko National Park.
Department of Primary Industries	\$30,000	Development of a new app to allow people to access the DPI's 'Noxious and environmental weed control handbook' through their smartphone or tablet.
Department of Primary Industries	\$127,000	Development of a new online database for new and emerging weed risk management assessments.
Greater Hume Shire Council	\$107,440	New project in partnership with Roads and Maritime Services to assist in reducing the spread of high risk species along roadsides.
Western Riverina Noxious Weeds Advisory Group	\$71,000	Targeting aquatic weeds in the Murray Darling Basin.
Far North Coast Weeds	\$318,610	Regional pilot for statewide weed technology applications – hand held technologies, cloud-based technology to better share information amongst weed managers on distribution of weeds and management activities.