



Department of
Primary Industries

NSW Weeds Action Program 2015-20

Guidelines – Year 2 Version 1.0

NOTE - these revised guidelines do not require new submissions to be made for the balance of the 2017-20 period. The intent is to guide change implementation which will only require amendments to the existing submissions via the “Project Variation Request” process.



Department of Primary Industries

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More information

Invasive Plants & Animals Unit
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1. Overview

Weed management needs and processes are articulated through a number of documents which include national arrangements such as Weeds of National Significance and various state instruments. For the purposes of WAP1520 the simplified instruments pertaining to weed management in NSW is:

- NSW *Biosecurity Act 2015* (and subordinate legislation)
- NSW Biosecurity Strategy 2013-21
- NSW Invasive Species Plan 2016-23 (in process)
- State Weed Plans
- Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans
- Regional and local weed management plans

The NSW Weeds Action Program 2015-20 (WAP1520) follows from the successful implementation of the NSW Weeds Action Program 2010-15. It is a NSW Government initiative to reduce the impact of weeds through implementation of the NSW Biosecurity Strategy 2013-21 (the Biosecurity Strategy) and the NSW Invasive Species Plan 2016-23 (the ISP).

The Biosecurity Strategy outlines how government, industry and the community need to work together to identify, minimise, respond to and manage biosecurity risks, including weeds. In particular the WAP1520 embraces the vision of the Biosecurity Strategy:

“Government, Industry and the people of NSW working together to protect the economy, environment and community from the negative impacts of animal and plant pests, diseases and weeds for the benefit of all people in NSW.”

The ISP provides a state-level framework for the coordinated and cooperative management of invasive species, including weeds. It compliments other existing strategies, in particular the Biosecurity Strategy and the Australian Weeds Strategy.

WAP1520 demonstrates the Government’s commitment to the ISP through:

- developing state, regional and local processes to assist in the timely detection of and quick response to new weed incursions;
- supporting development of integrated, cooperative, cross-disciplinary, cross-jurisdictional programs;
- supporting prioritisation of weed management activities to achieve the greatest benefit;
- supporting effective and targeted on-ground risk mitigation for high priority weeds;
- developing and promoting proven strategies that foster long term behaviour change and result in increased community ownership of and involvement in effective weed management;
- supporting programs that implement integrated weed management systems;
- improving the knowledge base for weed management, in particular to influence the community, industry and other stakeholders;
- monitoring the implementation of the ISP and weed management generally; and
- promoting the use of cost-sharing arrangements to forge effective and strong partnerships.

1.1 Review of weed management in NSW

In 2013-14 the Natural Resources Commission investigated several issues of community concern as part of the review of weed management in NSW, resulting in eight key recommendations. The Government response has required changes to existing regional delivery models and the key recommendation relevant to WAP1520 is:

Recommendation 3: Ensure consistent and coordinated regional planning and local delivery

3B - Replace the existing 14 regional weed advisory committees with 11 statutory regional weed committees comprising LCAs, public and private landholders, and community members as subcommittees to LLS, and aligned with LLS borders

3C - Provide a legislative basis for tasking the regional weed committees with developing regional plans and priorities for weeds and surveillance

The NSW Government has identified WAP1520 as a key driver to deliver these changes. The establishment of these committees has been a high priority and 11 Regional Weed Committees are in place.

1.2 WAP1520 is a contract-based procurement program

The NSW Government will purchase WAP1520 outcomes from external providers using regional sub-program Delivery Contracts (contracts). External providers are primarily Local Land Services (LLS) and Local Control Authorities (LCA) although each sub-program may have other partners.

For state-wide outcomes and activities, WAP1520 will support specific state projects.

1.3 Goals and investment priorities

WAP1520 is an outcomes-based program where activities contribute to clearly defined goals and objectives under the ISP and these are also reflected in the Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans.

The two levels of WAP1520, Regional sub-programs and State projects are primarily provided to assist agencies to create an environment that promotes and facilitates voluntary compliance in weed management across the whole of the NSW Community. Long term, sustainable voluntary compliance is the main purpose.

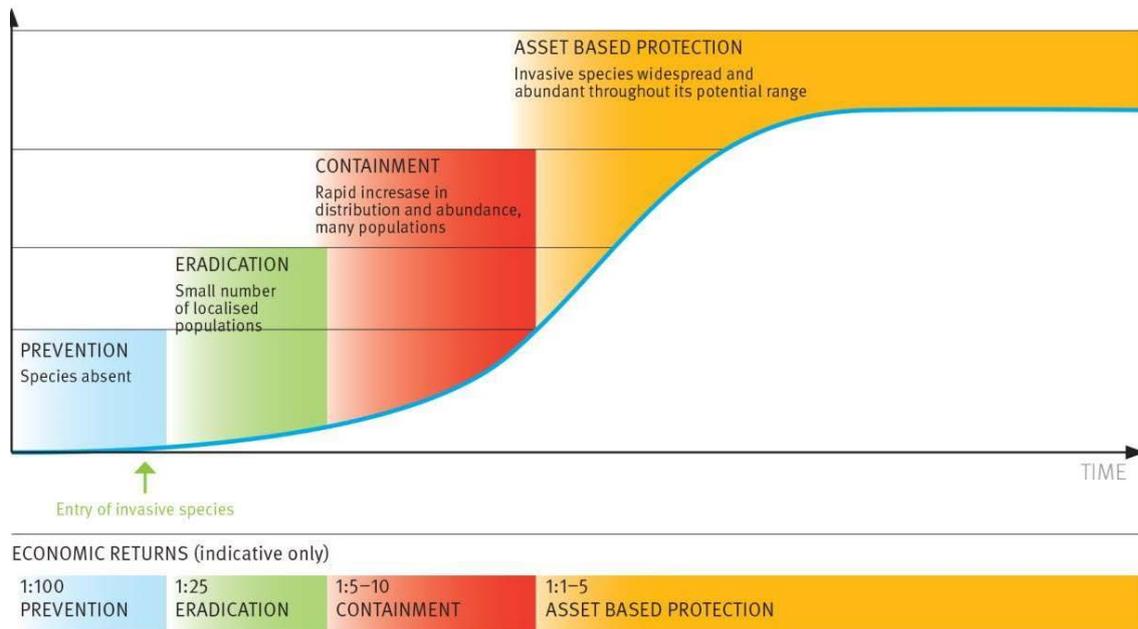
Enforcement actions in order to gain compliance, required where other means of gaining voluntary compliance fail, are linked to those for voluntary compliance but are not a major component of WAP1520.

Priorities for WAP1520 are to:

- prevent the establishment of new invasive species
- eliminate or prevent the spread of new invasive species
- reduce the impact of widespread invasive species
- ensure that NSW has the ability and commitment to manage invasive species.

The diagram below illustrates a generalised weed invasion curve and the relationship between the stages of invasion, the level of effective control that could be expected and the likely return on investment.

The NSW Government will prioritise allocation of WAP1520 funds where the return on investment is highest, that is, towards the beginning of the invasion curve.



Source: NSW Biosecurity Strategy 2013-21 (adapted from Biosecurity Victoria, Department of Primary Industries)

1.3.1 Capacity building priorities

WAP1520 supports sub-programs that result in long-term, effective behaviour change. It will generally not fund information-intensive extension projects, development of websites, apps, social media, citizen science information gathering or printed materials.

Capacity building programs may be considered where they:

- demonstrate value adding to existing information services (NSW WeedWise);
- address an existing information need; and
- value add to capacity building activities (such as providing train-the-trainer services rather than holding small field days) if they meet the Guidelines they will be considered.

Sub-programs should target priorities contained in the NSW Weeds Capacity Building and Engagement Strategy (due for completion in December 2017).

2. Regional sub-programs and state projects

There are two funding streams:

State projects— relevant to the whole of the state or have a state-wide impact and can be 1-5 years in length. State projects provide for higher level action and activities and have more complex outcomes, significant influence on state-wide weed management, have wider strategic significance and benefits and may require infrastructure development.

Regional sub-programs –previously termed Regional Projects. They involve a number of stakeholders in an LLS region working together and can be 3-5 years in length, currently 2 years have elapsed therefore amended submissions will be for, or for up to, the remaining 3 years.

All submissions must address the ISP goals and include actions that contribute to the outcomes and outputs associated with the ISP.

2.1 Regional sub-programs

NOTE - these revised guidelines do not require new submissions to be made. The intent is to guide change implementation which will only require amendments to the existing submissions via the "Project Variation Request" process.

Regional sub-programs must contribute to the ISP either directly or through a Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan (RSWMP). A RSWMP is an agreed plan that contributes to the ISP and is incorporated into an LLS Local Strategic Plan.

Regional sub-program submissions must demonstrate that the project team is using an integrated and coordinated approach across the region. Submissions need to demonstrate effective engagement with multiple stakeholders, to create productive partnerships that deal with Biosecurity Risk and Biosecurity Impact management.

Regional sub-programs should be as species and tenure-neutral as possible.

Each project will be assessed on whether it is meeting the objectives and outcomes of the ISP. With the introduction of the *NSW Weeds Metadata Standard* and NSW Biosecurity Information System (BIS) in 2014, regional sub-programs will need to address the requirement to electronically submit standard data to the BIS.

Data entry into the BIS is considered a key performance indicator for compliance management and community engagement across the State.

2.1.1 Mandatory documents for regional sub-programs

The following documents are mandatory under WAP1520 and provide the basis for weed management planning and delivery. Revisions to these were planned to be in place by the end of year two (2017) however due to ongoing changes, the due date can be extended to 30 September 2018.

It is not expected that the Mandatory Documents will be re-written from scratch. The existing work should be reviewed, taking into account the range of functional change and lessons learnt since their commencement.

Program Logic - must be used for each project. Each task or activity identified in the project must be matched to its program logic.

Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans - developed as a separate process by Local Land Services in cooperation with stakeholders.

Regional High Risk Pathways and Sites Management Plan - include the identification and nomination of high risk pathways and sites in the region and details management protocols to address these threats.

Incursion Plan for High Risk Weeds - is aligned to the ISP. It coordinates the surveillance and identification of new weeds and includes a regional list of high risk weeds. It also outlines how responses to weed incursions will be coordinated, implemented and monitored.

Rapid Response Plan - outlines the procedures and actions in place for a region's response to a new weed incursion. The Plan should contain procedures for the identification, notification, assessment of the threat and determination of the appropriate course of action to manage a new weed incursion.

Regional Inspection Program - provides a minimum standard and ensures consistent policy and procedural framework for all LCAs to follow. It contains consistent enforcement and inspection procedures under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

Communication Strategy - details how partners and relevant stakeholders in the region will communicate key messages amongst each other, to the broader community and to the NSW Government. Regional Communication Strategies should address processes and priorities contained in the NSW Weeds Capacity Building and Engagement Strategy (due for completion December 2017).

2.2 State projects

State projects have state-wide operation or state-wide outcomes. Generally these are projects that can only be realistically delivered by the State or that are clearly addressing matters of state-wide significance. Examples include the NSW New Weed Incursions Response project, the Capacity Building and Engagement of NSW Weeds Professionals project and some research projects. While it is often appropriate for these projects to be delivered by the State, other single or regional entities may make submissions.

3. Governance

This section discusses governance to be considered by lead organisations.

WAP1520 does not replace or otherwise affect an LCAs functions and obligations under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, although it may assist with meeting some of these.

WAP1520 funding is provided under agreement in a Delivery Contract between the NSW Department of Primary Industries (the Department) and the lead organisation. The contract sets out the roles, functions and obligations of the parties in relation to a specific regional sub-program or state project.

3.1 Lead organisations

Each submission will require a lead organisation to accept responsibility for the project. The lead organisation will collate and make the submission on behalf of all the partners; receive and distribute the funds; and collate and submit reports.

Local Land Services will be the lead organisation for the regional sub-programs. This does not prevent the LLS from contracting delivery of this function to a third party.

As the signatory to the agreement, the lead organisation is responsible for delivery of the sub-program in accordance with the Delivery Contract.

The Delivery Contract provides that the lead organisation may enter into an arrangement with another organisation (a participating organisation), allowing them to assist with the sub-program. The Department recommends that a participant agreement be formed in order to clearly specify each party's obligations and functions in relation to the project and to outline the consequences in the event of a participating organisation failing to meet its obligations.

However, it is the lead organisation that is ultimately responsible for the project and the distribution of funds to participating organisations, as well as ensuring that the funds are used in accordance with the requirements of the Delivery Contract.

3.1.1 Regional Weed Coordinators

Traditionally WAP projects have contributed to the employment of Project Officers to assist regions in the delivery and coordination. Under WAP 1520 this will continue to be supported however, with changed conditions.

To meet the regional planning obligations of the LLS, Regional Weed Coordinators will now be directly employed or contracted to each LLS.

Commencing 2017-18 all LLS regions will have the discretion of engaging a Regional Weed Coordinator at 1.0 FTE, however they must be engaged at a minimum of 0.5 FTE.

This does not preclude one Regional Weed Coordinator working for two LLS regions equivalent of a full FTE. The Department would encourage further contribution from the LLS or other partners to supplement this funding to expand the delivery of this role for other invasive species functions.

From 2018-19 WAP1520 it is expected regions will expand the role to 1.0 FTE. If this is not required in a region the Department is to be advised of the reasons in writing. Regions must demonstrate a return on investment for the Regional Weed Coordinator position by developing clear key performance indicators linked to a role description developed by the Regional Weed Committee.

Broad roles and functions for Regional Weed Coordinators will be:

- Function as the Executive Officer for the Regional Weed Committee.
- Coordinate implementation of the WAP 1520 Regional sub-program.
- Administer the WAP budgets and processes.
- Report to the Regional Weed Committee on weed matters within the region.
- Report to the Regional Weed Committee for the purposes of WAP1520.

- Liaise with partners and stakeholders to promote effective cross jurisdictional arrangements.

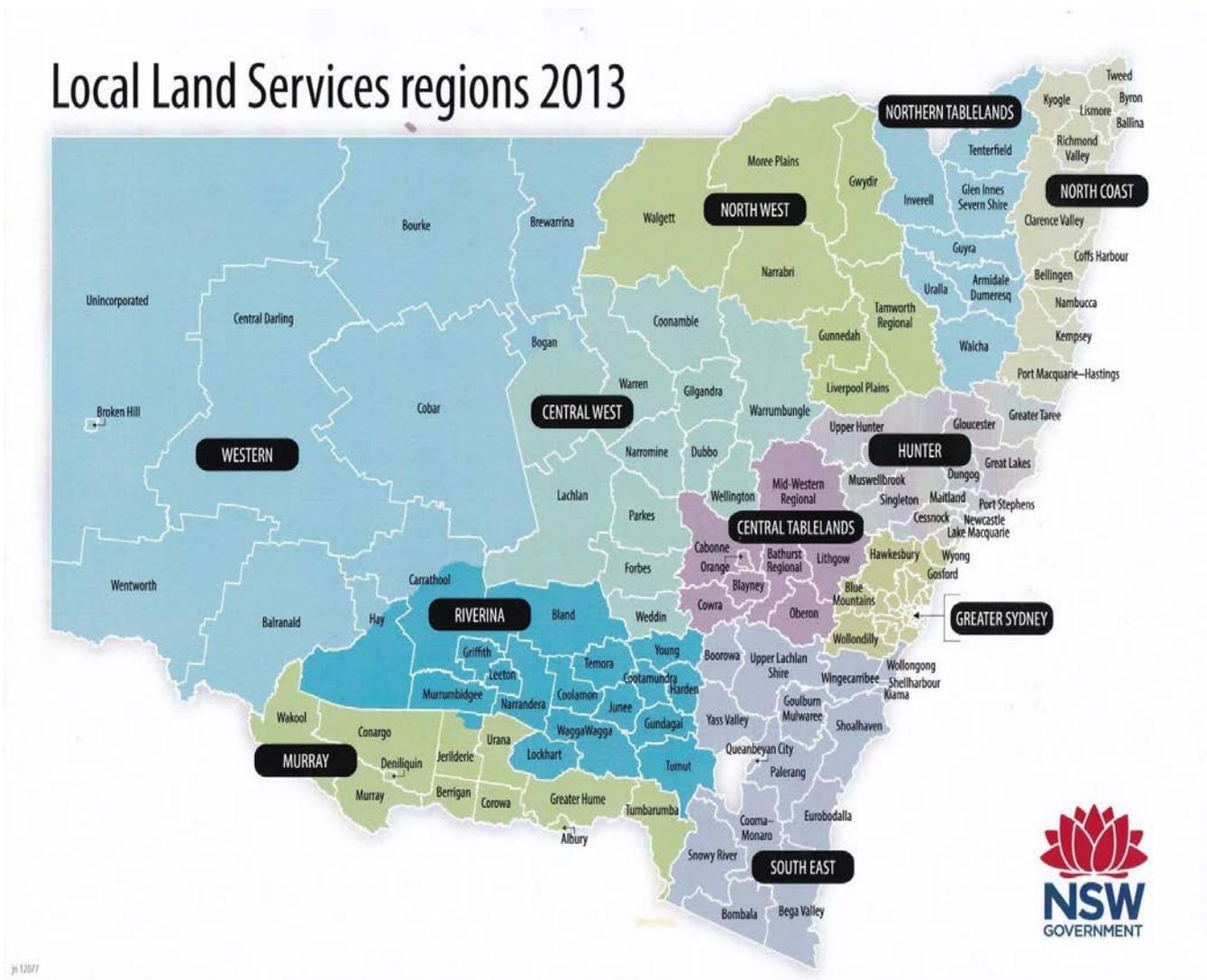
Proposals for employment of Regional Weed Coordinators, including specific roles, functions and administrative arrangements must be agreed to by the Department before funding can be made available.

3.2 Non-performance and disputes

The lead organisation is responsible for taking steps to rectify non-performance when a participating organisation fails to meet its project commitments for any reason. Appropriate action may be taken by the lead organisation pursuant to the relevant clauses within the Delivery Contract. It is at the discretion of the Department to undertake mediation on behalf of sub-program partners.

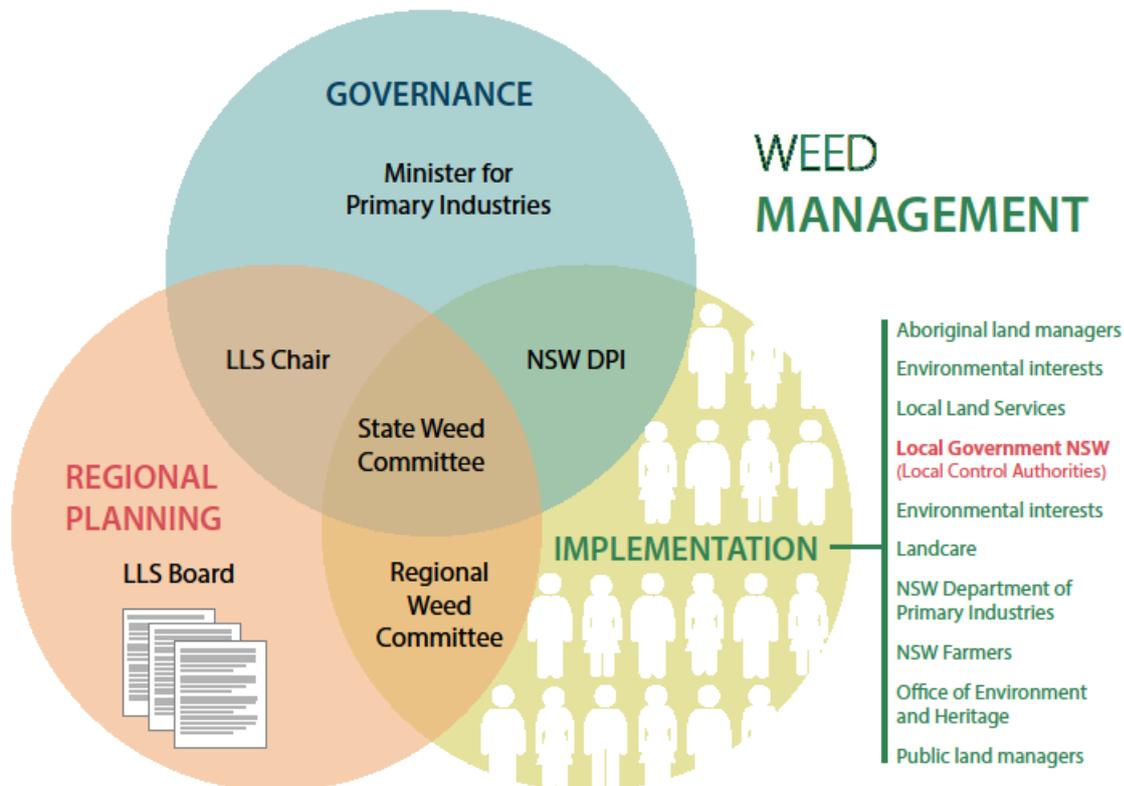
3.3 Regions defined

WAP1520 must align to LLS regions and report on outcomes specific for each region. The 11 LLS regions are shown below:



3.4 Partnerships

Partnerships needed to effectively manage weeds in any region are illustrated by the following diagram.



Partnerships that provide effective and targeted on-ground actions and encourage or use cost-sharing arrangements are a key component of WAP1520. Regional sub-program submissions that do not illustrate strong and meaningful partnerships across stakeholders will not be funded. Each Regional sub-program must, as a minimum, include a representative from each participating LCA. However, as the new legislative arrangements are tenure-neutral, each Regional sub-program must clearly show a commitment to including public land managers where practicable.

Any organisation or group that actively contributes to the project, such as industry groups, Landcare groups and educational institutions are encouraged to become partners. Participating organisations, roles and contributions must be clearly identified, measurable, contribute to one or more project outcomes and be recorded and reported in terms of inputs against outcomes.

3.5 Weed control functions under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*

Weed control functions of LCAs are prescribed by section 371 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act) and are **not** affected by WAP1520. LCAs are still required to meet their statutory obligations whether they choose to participate in WAP1520 or not. It should be noted that any person participating in the Regional sub-program will have functions and obligations under the Act. While activities undertaken through WAP1520 may include some statutory functions, compliance with a WAP1520 project or participant agreement is not a requirement under the Act.

The Department will investigate LCAs that are not meeting their statutory functions and obligations under the Act, regardless of whether or not the LCA participates in a WAP1520 project.

3.6 Regional Weed Committees

Eleven Regional Weed Committees (one per LLS Region) have been formed to facilitate coordinated weeds management across their regions.

The purpose of the Regional Weed Committees is to provide tenure-neutral strategic planning and coordination of weed management activities at the regional level. These activities play an integral part in an overall state weed management framework. The Regional Weed Committees are local community advisory groups under the provisions of Section 33 of the *Local Land Services Act 2013*.

The Regional Weed Committees are established to:

- support implementation of the weeds components and underlying principles of the NSW Biosecurity Strategy, the *NSW Biosecurity Act 2015* and the NSW Invasive Species Plan 2015-22;
- provide advice to the LLS Boards regarding delivery of weed functions consistent with the LLS Local Strategic Plans;
- develop innovative and effective Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans that consider risks, and include all land tenures and major stakeholders in the landscape; and
- provide a forum for the community and stakeholders in decision making, and develop communication, education and awareness programs based on priorities described in the NSW Weeds Capacity Building & Engagement Strategy (due for completion December 2017).

In relation to the WAP 1520 Regional sub-programs they are to:

- support the lead organisation in the development of a participant agreement and in the delivery of a project;
- support the lead agency with the distribution of any funds received in accordance with the Delivery Contract; and
- provide regional oversight and peer review of the progress of the Regional sub-program.

3.7 Funding and co-funding

This tranche of WAP1520 is calling for amendments (project variations) to existing regional projects for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2020; however funds are allocated annually by Treasury and there can be no guarantee that funding will be ongoing from year to year. Applicants and partner organisations are expected to contribute funds and/or in-kind resources in order to receive WAP1520 funding. There is no set contribution; however the priority will be given to projects where proponents demonstrate their commitment with substantial contributions by applicants and partners.

Any claim the lead organisation or partners may make in terms of contributions, expenditure or achievements must be able to be proven when the Department requests further details or when a project is audited.

WAP 1520 will provide a core allocation of \$100,000 per annum to each LLS Region to provide for a mandatory Regional Weed Coordinator of 0.5 FTE plus other administrative costs. While the Department encourages the use of this money to employ a full 1.0 FTE equivalent, this is at the discretion of each region and needs to be linked to return on investment.

It is accepted that the lead organisation may require additional funds to meet other administrative costs and coordination. Any additional amounts required for administration must be reasonable, be based on cost recovery only, be fully detailed as to purpose and be approved by the Regional Weed Committee and Department.

The remaining regional WAP allocation will be risk-based and determined by the Department's Relative Effort Calculator.

3.8 Eligible lead organisations

Lead organisations are the Local Land Services. Delivery of the lead organisations' activities may be contracted to other types of organisations, however the LLS retains the responsibility for sub-program delivery.

Only one submission will be accepted from each LLS region.

4. General conditions

The following conditions apply:

4.1 Submitting sub-program proposals

One Regional sub-program submission per LLS region will be assessed. Where more than one is received, they will be returned to the applicants for amalgamation. Once a Regional sub-program is approved for funding, WAP1520 does not require annual submissions each year. Satisfactory progress demonstrated by the annual Regional sub-program report and any informal reports or formal audits from the Department's Invasive Species Officers will be considered in evidence for providing the subsequent year's funding.

Each submission must clearly describe the objectives, actions and outcomes of the Regional sub-program and sufficient performance measures.

The Department will accept submissions in the prescribed format only, signed by the Local Land Services General Manager or other delegated person from the LLS region covered by the project. If the Minister agrees to fund a Regional sub-program submission, the applying lead organisation will need to sign a Delivery Contract.

Program funds are not available for infrastructure costs; general reserves, bushland, parks and garden management costs; capital costs; administration, management or other costs related to private works or contracting businesses. Costs of treating widespread weeds and local authority costs associated with control of weeds for road safety, fire or road maintenance are not eligible. The Department will process completed submissions received up until 5pm on the first Friday in May each year. To submit an electronic submission please send an email requesting access to the Journey app and the link will be sent by email.

Invasive Species Officer – Projects and Programs
NSW Department of Primary Industries
Email: weeds@dpi.nsw.gov.au

NOTE – New submissions for current Regional sub-programs are not required.

Project Variations must be submitted through the online Journey app (the Regional Weed Coordinator has access to the app) and need to be submitted by the last Friday in August each year or sooner.

4.2 Allowing for variation

The Department recognises that seasonal conditions, new weed outbreaks and other changes may require amendment to contracts after sub-programs commence. Deviation reporting allows for these changes, and their consideration by the Department. Under WAP1520, lead organisations may apply to vary their Regional sub-program's submission.

There are three types of project variation:

1. Where the outcomes for a specific year differ from the proposed targets – the targets proposed for the year have not been met. This result must be included in the annual report under each target and will be in a standardised format.
2. Where there needs to be a long-term change to partners or outcomes and activities for the remainder of the Regional sub-program life. For example: new partners join the Regional sub-program; or seasonal conditions require a significant change to outcomes or activities in the longer term. This is considered a minor change in the Regional sub-program submission. In this case, the Department will need to approve the change. The lead organisation will need to make a Regional sub-program project variation request detailing and justifying the changes. The State Weed Committee will be notified of these changes.
3. Where there needs to be a change to the overall aims and intent of the Regional sub-program. This is considered a major change and will require a re-submission and re-assessment of the Regional sub-program.

4.3 Proposed changes under the *NSW Biosecurity Act 2015*

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* and its subordinate legislation will be in place on 1 July 2017. The new legislation will rely on Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans (RSWMP's) to provide necessary information to enable people to effectively discharge their obligations under the Act. These plans are endorsed by each LLS Board as appropriate for regional circumstances.

WAP1520 Regional sub-programs should allow for appropriate transitional arrangements from the existing planning and compliance arrangements to the new ones under the Regional Weed Committees, RSWMP's and the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

The introduction of these new committees does not preclude the continuation of broader cross-regional weeds consultative groups and collaborations. However, the LLS-based committees have a specific function and the LLS Board is accountable for ensuring that the group is effective and has appropriate representation for their region.

4.4 Reporting and monitoring

An annual report will be required by the last Friday of August each year, or at an alternative reporting date agreed with the Department, and a final report will be required within three months of the project completion. The Department may periodically request a meeting to discuss aspects of the project with the lead organisation. The required annual progress report will be assessed, and if satisfactory, used to allocate the next year's funding.

The Biosecurity Information System (BIS) provides a data capture system for a range of actions and attributes in weed management. This will allow real time reporting and situational analysis

for matters relating to the implementation of the Biosecurity Strategy, the NSW Invasive Species Plan and WAP1520 Regional sub-programs.

Reporting into the system is now mandatory. The NSW Weeds Metadata Standard defines how matters are to be measured and reported and information can be accessed via the Weeds Extranet (subscribe or login at extranet.dpi.nsw.gov.au/weeds).

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER) must be an integral component of any weed management program. Ideally, applicants should design sub-projects using the monitoring, evaluation, reporting and continuous improvement framework.

The agreement will detail all reporting requirements and dates.

4.5 Contacts

The Department's Regional Invasive Species Officers are the first point of contact for project proponents and general enquiries about the NSW Weeds Action Program. Issues may be escalated at the request of the relevant Invasive Species Officer.

Regional contacts:

Central West / North West / Northern Tablelands LLS

Philip Blackmore

Tel: 02 6770 3134 or 0427 311 824

Email: philip.blackmore@dpi.nsw.gov.au

North Coast / Hunter / Greater Sydney LLS

Rod Ensbey

Tel: 02 6640 1648 or 0401 148 320

Email: rod.ensbey@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Riverina / Murray / South East / Western LLS

Michael Michelmore

Tel: 02 4824 3737 or 0411 139 711

Email: michael.michelmore@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Central Tablelands LLS

Robyn Henderson

Tel: 02 6391 3638 or 0418 794 756

Email: robyn.henderson@dpi.nsw.gov.au

State Coordinator

Syd Lisle

Leader Invasive Species State Programs

Tel: 02 6938 1911 or 0427 800 162

Email: sydney.lisle@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Administration

Robyn Henderson

Tel: 02 6391 3638 or 0418 794 756

Email: weeds@dpi.nsw.gov.au

4.6 Other Department Contacts

WeedWise Website

<http://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/>

NSW Department of Primary Industries

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/weeds>

Weeds Extranet

Birgitte Verbeek

Leader Invasive Species Extension

Tel: 02 6763 1247

Email: birgitte.verbeek@dpi.nsw.gov.au

<http://extranet.dpi.nsw.gov.au/weeds>

Weeds Research

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Research Leader, Weed Research Unit

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John Tracey

Manager Invasive Species Research, Vertebrate Pest and Weeds Research Units

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Email: john.tracey@dpi.nsw.gov.au

5. Definitions

Cross Disciplinary – Activities relating to or involving two or more branches of knowledge, action or expertise (disciplines) For example Agronomy and Compliance.

Cross-Jurisdictional – Activities crossing the dividing lines between respective entities legal authority, geographic authority, political influence and other spheres of authority.

Department – NSW Department of Primary Industries.

Integrated Weed Management – control of weeds by taking a long management approach using a range of techniques including physical control, chemical control, biological control and cultural control.

Local control authority – as defined section 370 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

Local Land Services – A NSW Government agency as defined by the *Local Lands Services Act 2013*.

LLS Regional Management Strategy – a regional plan developed by each LLS covering a range of management issues.

New Weed Incursion – is a completely new occurrence of a weed species in an area where it has not previously been discovered. While NWI's can occur at all geographic levels (State, regional, local, farm, paddock) Generally WAP1520 will provide for on ground response at State and regional levels only. Natural and predictable spread from known infestations within the Region should be planned for within the Regional Sub-Program as core business.

Plan – an action document. Plans may contain detailed operational procedures and actions as well as budgets and reporting processes.

Project submissions – these are the applications made for sub-program funding under WAP1520.

Regional Weeds Committees – committees formed by groups of stakeholders to facilitate coordinated weed management across an area of NSW and to provide a forum for the exchange of information.

Regional sub-program – is the funded component of the program. Regional sub-program result from the submission and recommendation process Regional sub-programs detail the objectives, actions, targets and methods of reaching the desired outcomes of the program.

Strategy – an agreed document that sets out direction for weed management in a defined area. Essentially, it is a guiding policy describing how stakeholders will approach weed management. A strategy does not contain detailed operational matters or budgets.

SWC – State Weed Committee

WAP1520 – the NSW Weeds Action Program 2015-2020.

Further definitions may be found in the NSW Invasive Species Plan and in the Service Agreement (contract).