



The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP
Minister for Primary Industries
Assistant Minister for Tourism and Major Events

MEDIA RELEASE

****Note: NSW Government response and 2014-15 Weeds Action Program attached****

Thursday 4 September 2014

**WAR ON WEEDS RAMPS UP: MORE FUNDING AND
RESPONSE TO NRC REVIEW ANNOUNCED**

Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, said the NSW Government has ramped up its war against weeds, today adopting the majority of recommendations in a major review of weed management and allocating \$11.3 million in new funding.

Ms Hodgkinson said the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) was commissioned to undertake the review in August 2013 and delivered its detailed report on weed management to the NSW Government in May 2014.

In response to the NRC report, the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will:

- ensure consistent and coordinated **regional planning** and **local delivery**;
- adopt a **tenure-neutral approach to integrated weed management**, requiring both public and private landholders to meet requirements and agreed obligations;
- improve accountability by introducing **more substantial penalties** for those people who do the wrong thing;
- create **11 new regional weed committees**, to underpin a new State Weed Committee, where all stakeholders can have a say in weed management;
- introduce an **online information system** to ensure greater transparency and to allow for more consistent State-wide weed mapping; and
- improve **prevention measures** and **response to incursions**.

"I am pleased to report the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will oversee the implementation of significant changes following this review, in order to advance the war on weeds in NSW," Ms Hodgkinson said.

"We will have regional planning and local delivery to ensure we have in place the right approach to tackling this scourge on our primary industries, economy and environment.

"This review was about looking holistically at the issue of weed management, an issue which costs our State some \$1.8 billion annually in control and lost production.

"The review has identified that the effectiveness of weed management in NSW is variable and that current mapping of weeds is inconsistent, making it increasingly difficult to get a complete picture of weed density, extent and impact.

"These changes will be supported and complemented by the development of the NSW Biosecurity Act, which will partially or wholly replace up to 14 existing pieces of legislation and will strengthen our ability to manage and respond to weeds."

Ms Hodgkinson said while the majority of recommendations are supported, others will be considered using alternative approaches.

“Where a recommendation has not been supported, it is because we believed it could lead to an increase in red tape and costs for our farmers,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“In particular, this includes the recommendations to require regulation of the fodder industry, the implementation of a permitted list and the introduction of mandatory weed status certificates.”

Ms Hodgkinson said the implementation of the review will be supported by the allocation of \$11.3 million in new funding for on-ground weeds projects as part of the NSW Government’s 2014-15 Weeds Action Program.

“Thirteen regional projects will share in \$10.1 million in funding to carry out weed management, while the Department of Primary Industries and other partners will lead a range of State-wide projects totalling more than \$1.2 million,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“This funding allows for research and implementation of new noxious weed control methods, including DNA barcoding to identify exotic invasive grasses and the installation of red guide posts along roadsides in high-risk areas.

“We are combining the use of these latest methods of weed surveillance with tried-and-true methods of physical inspections and distributing vital weed advisory information.”

To view the NRC report, *Weeds – Time to get serious*, visit www.nrc.nsw.gov.au/Workwedo/ReviewOfWeedManagementInNSW.aspx.

To view the full NSW Government response, visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au.