

## Biosecurity – Weeds Biosecurity

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### 1. Policy Statement

This policy describes how the NSW Department of Primary Industries manages the biosecurity risks and impacts posed by weeds to the economy, environment and community of NSW.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to the staff of the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) an office within the Department of Regional NSW.

### 3. Outcomes:

#### 3.1 Rapid and/or strategic responses to weeds listed as Prohibited Matter, within Control Orders or within Biosecurity Zones

- Operational response plans developed, which strengthen the capability to respond to emergency weeds
- Productive partnerships in place with other agencies, community, the tertiary sector and industry to support surveillance and early detection practices
- Trained critical workforce (internal and external) maintained with access to technical resources and infrastructure
- Expert advice provided, informed by research and investigation, on best practice responses to biosecurity outbreaks
- Priority actions for surveillance, monitoring and traceability developed
- Stakeholder adoption of biosecurity measures that enable rapid and efficient containment of biosecurity threats
- Preparedness, planning and prioritisation frameworks are in place to support strategic investment in biosecurity continuum

#### Activities

- coordinate multi-agency responses to prohibited matter events using the Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System
- coordinate taskforce and incident management teams for state priority weeds as required
- conduct investigations and compliance for prohibited matter events in NSW
- develop, implement, review and update species-specific strategic plans for state priority weeds
- review and provide support to national weed eradication programs that NSW provides

- financial support under national cost-share arrangements
- provide compliance education and training for partners, industry and stakeholders

### 3.2 Governance occurs through strategic partnerships

- a) the State Weeds Committee is appointed by the Minister to determine matters of state significance. It has an independent Chair with membership from:
  - NSW Farmers
  - Local Government NSW
  - Nature Conservation Council of NSW
  - Nursery & Garden Industry NSW & ACT
  - DPE National Parks & Wildlife Service
  - NSW Weeds Officers' Association
  - Local Land Services
  - Department of Primary Industries
- b) partnerships are maintained between DPI, Local Land Services (LLS) and local control authorities (councils and county councils in local government):
  - DPI is the lead agency for weeds biosecurity in NSW on behalf of the Minister for Agriculture and Western NSW
  - LLS provides regional planning, coordination and customer service
  - Local control authorities perform inspectorial, extension and regulatory functions, including reporting to DPI under the Biosecurity Information System
- c) Industry, community and local control authority representation occurs through a Regional Weeds Committee in each LLS region
- d) Regional Weeds Committees are supported by a Regional Weeds Coordinator in each LLS region

#### Activities

- determine the roles, functions and obligations of parties within NSW who are responsible for weed management under a shared policy framework
- support Regional Weeds Coordinators with policy, procedures and systems
- disseminate information to partners
- provide a sitting member, executive support and technical advice to the State Weeds Committee
- provide policy and technical advice to each Regional Weeds Committee
- provide sitting members to national groups and committees including:
  - the National Biosecurity Committee and its subsidiary Environment and Invasives Committee (EIC) and the EIC Weeds Working Group
  - the National Biosecurity Management Group
  - the National Biosecurity Management Consultative Committee and its subsidiary committees and programs
  - the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions
  - National Taskforces undertaking national cost-share responses to eradicate State priority weeds

### 3.3 Effective regulation occurs under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act)

- a) The Act provides a regulatory framework for the prevention, elimination or minimisation of risks and impacts caused by biosecurity matter
- b) Biosecurity matter includes pests, and pests include plants that have or are suspected to have an adverse effect on the environment, the economy or the community because they have the potential to:
  - out-compete other organisms for resources, including food, water, nutrients, habitat and sunlight,

- reduce the productivity of agricultural systems or the value of agricultural products
  - damage infrastructure
  - reduce the amenity or aesthetic value of premises
  - harm or reduce biodiversity
- c) A biosecurity risk includes the risk of an adverse effect on the economy, the environment or the community that arises from the introduction, presence, spread or increase of a pest into or within the State
  - d) Any person who deals with any plant, who knows (or ought to know) of any biosecurity risk, has a duty to ensure the risk is prevented, eliminated, or minimised, so far as is reasonably practicable
  - e) The general biosecurity duty applies to pest plants (any member of the Plantae, Fungi and Protista kingdoms, whole or in part, alive or dead) and all people
  - f) State priority weeds are regulated as prohibited matter, under control orders and through mandatory measures and biosecurity zones, as described in the Act and its supporting instruments
  - g) Regional priority weeds are regulated through the general biosecurity duty and described in Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans in each LLS region

#### **Activities**

- appoint staff as authorised officers under the Act
- update and amend the Act, the *Biosecurity Regulation 2017* and other legislative instruments as they apply to weeds
- support and guide local control authorities in their functions under the Act through the provision of training and information
- provide an information system for local control authorities to report to DPI on their activities and the compliance level of land managers (Biosecurity Information System – Weeds)
- conduct operational and administrative audits of local control authorities to determine levels of capacity for meeting their prescribed functions under the Act
- investigate reports or complaints of local control authorities and Government Agencies who have not met their statutory functions and obligations under the Act
- conduct inspections if a local control authority has failed to meet their weed control functions, or if the local control authorities' weed officer is unavailable and the matter is urgent
- determine criteria for and listings of weeds as prohibited matter in the State or in part of the State
- determine the appropriate level of regulation for state priority weeds managed through control orders, biosecurity zones and mandatory measures

### **3.4 Action is guided through strategic plans**

- a) The NSW Invasive Species Plan identifies key deliverables to help prevent new incursions, eliminate or contain existing populations and effectively manage already widespread invasive species including weeds
- b) Each LLS region has a Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan that identifies management objectives and regional recommended measures for regional priority weeds based on risk
- c) State priority weeds have species-specific strategic plans that guide actions of stakeholders

#### **Activities**

- develop, implement, review and update the NSW Invasive Species Plan
- seek consistency in the development, implementation, and review of Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans, which incorporate State priority weeds
- weed risk assessments are provided by LLS to DPI (within the Weed Information Database), that are then reviewed and approved before being included as a Regional Priority weed
- Biosecurity duty to be published on NSW WeedWise (for information purposes only)

### 3.5 Risks and impacts are prevented, eliminated or minimised

- a) Government intervention only occurs when:
  - the biosecurity risk or impact significantly affects those who are not risk creators
  - the private sector would fail to address a biosecurity risk or impact; or
  - there is imbalance of power between parties
- b) Owners and occupiers are responsible for controlling weeds on private land and public land management agencies are responsible for controlling weeds on lands they manage
- c) Weeds at the early stages of invasion are prioritised for intervention through prevention, exclusion, eradication, and containment objectives
- d) Best practice is supported and adopted in all areas of weed management

#### Activities

- maintain information and resources to inform owners and occupiers of:
  - their duty to notify the presence or suspected presence of high-risk weeds
  - the biosecurity duties pertaining to weeds
  - the measures to prevent, eliminate or minimise the risk and impacts weeds cause
  - the potential vectors and pathways for new invasive weeds that can impact their industries
- provide training to facilitate early detection of new weeds
- deliver sub-programs that have state-wide operation, significance or outcomes
- provide awareness campaigns to build shared responsibility for and recognition of weeds biosecurity
- undertake research to develop and maintain manage tools and strategies, and provide these to land managers through training and/or information
- seek funding and partners to conduct joint research to establish or improve best practice or innovative management of weeds

### 3.6 Weed risk is assessed scientifically

- a) The NSW Weed Risk Management system provides a nationally adopted methodology for assessing risks posed by weeds at various scales and land use contexts. It is based on and complies with the Australian and New Zealand Standard that is the National Post-Border Weed Risk Management Protocol
- b) Risk determinations and corresponding management and regulatory objectives are based on the comparison of scores for invasiveness, impacts, potential distribution, control costs, persistence, current distribution, and other influencing factors
- c) Weeds that create the highest level of risk and have the feasibility of being controlled are called priority weeds
- d) Consideration must be given to three key guiding principles:
  1. Consistency with the NSW Weed Risk Management System – based on a nationally adopted standard of risk assessment
  2. Testing against the Biosecurity Threat Decision Tree – an externality test to determine if the weed warrants government intervention under normal circumstances and the appropriate allocation of costs
  3. The Program Rationale – this should demonstrate the link to other planning documents and instruments, resourcing capacity and other investment preferences in the region and, existing management programs

#### Activities

- use the NSW Weed Risk Management system to determine management objectives for weeds that are:

- targets for prevention of entry into NSW
- targets for eradication from NSW
- requiring a broad containment (biosecurity) zone within the state
- under a national management agreement
- new, or not previously known or recorded, in the state
- ensure State priority weeds have been assessed and determined; being those posing a high biosecurity risk to the entire state of NSW
- ensure Regional priority weeds have been assessed by regional weed committees; being those posing a high risk to specific regions of NSW
- ensure management action, investment and compliance effort are directed toward priority weeds
- ensure all priority weeds which are regulated under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* have an up-to-date, peer-reviewed weed risk assessment in the NSW Weed Risk Management system
- maintain an online system where partners can create, share and access weed risk assessments
- provide technical review of regional weed risk assessments

### **3.7 Weed occurrence is monitored**

- a) Land is inspected for weeds by local control authorities
- b) High risk sites and pathways are prioritised for inspection by local control authorities
- c) Local control authorities record the occurrence of weeds on land and provide data to DPI according to a data standard
- d) DPI collates weed records from its partners for State Priority weeds, to assess progress towards eradication or containment
- e) Stakeholders can access data to reduce the biosecurity risk and impact of weeds and inform and evaluate management programs

#### **Activities**

- provide an online system for the collection of weed occurrence data for state and regional priority weeds
- provide a data standard and procedure for the provision of data to DPI
- analyse the data to monitor weed presence over time
- make the data available to stakeholders
- manage data integrity and ensure data collection is consistent

### **3.8 Funding allocation is strategic and targets areas with the greatest return on investment**

- a) The NSW Weeds Action Program is a NSW Government initiative to reduce the impact of weeds through the implementation of the NSW Invasive Species Plan and the NSW Biosecurity Strategy
- b) The Program provides a framework for coordinated management of high-priority weeds
- c) DPI administers the Program and undertakes reviews to ensure outcomes are achieved for NSW

#### **Activities**

- administer the Program through the provision of guidelines and review of submissions and allocation of funds
- guidelines are to direct funds to the highest priority weeds at the early stages of invasion where eradication or containment (at a state level) may be possible
- ensure funds aim to maintain a level of compliance action by all land managers, through support of local control authorities' actions for State priority weeds, including inspections, compliance and reporting activities under the Act
- allocate remaining annual funds for research and capacity building activities as well as to

sub-programs based on a regional coordination model that includes evaluation of risk and the relative effort of preventing, eliminating or minimising the risk and impact of weeds in different regions

- provide an online platform for Program partners to submit and report on activities funded by the Program, which are then reviewed annually by DPI
- provide a five-yearly report on Program investment and activities

#### 4. Shared policy framework

The shared policy framework is provided through the following documents and instruments:

- *Biosecurity Act 2015*
- Biosecurity Regulations 2017
- [NSW Biosecurity Strategy](#)
- [NSW Invasive Species Plan](#)
- Weeds management reform in New South Wales – Implementing the Government’s response to the Natural Resources Commission’s recommendations for weeds management in New South Wales
- [Standard for Weed Management Capacity in New South Wales](#)
- [NSW Weeds Action Program Guidelines](#)
- [NSW DPI Weeds Research, Development and Extension Strategy](#)
- NSW Weeds Metadata Framework
- [Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans](#)
- Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement (MERI) framework for Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans
- Memorandum of Understanding between NSW DPI and LLS – Schedule 4 – Invasive Species (Pest Animals and Weeds)
- [Weeds and the Biosecurity Act - A handbook for local councils and councillors](#)

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#### Definitions and acronyms:

- **DPI:** Department of Primary Industries
- **LCA:** Local control authority
- **LLS:** Local Land Services

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#### Legislation

*Biosecurity Act 2015*

*Biosecurity Regulation 2017 - Biosecurity Amendment (Miscellaneous) Regulation 2019*

*Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*

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#### Other related documents

- Policy - Biosecurity Collection, use and disclosure of information
- Policy - Records Management (IND-I-177)
- Policy - Information Security (IND-I-197)
- Policy - Classified Information (IND-I-196)
- Policy - Government Information (Public Access) (IND-I-178)

Version	Date issued	Notes	By
1.0	01/07/2017	New policy developed in response to the <i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i> .	Manager Invasive Species Program
1.1	19/06/2017	Amendments to include requirements subject to Section 387 of the Act, the collection, use and disclosure of information. Amendment to authorisation date	Senior Policy Officer Policy Legislation Performance & Consultation
1.2	04/11/2022	Amendments to specify and locate DPI's activities within the shared policy framework to weed management reform in NSW.	Manager Weeds Biosecurity

### Contact

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