



Department of
Primary Industries

No Space for Weeds

New South Wales Weeds Action Program Guidelines 2020-2025

NEW SOUTH WALES
WEEDS ACTION PROGRAM

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/weeds

Published by the NSW Department of Primary Industries
New South Wales Weeds Action Program
Guidelines 2020-2025

December 2019

More information

Invasive Species Biosecurity
www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/weeds

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PUB19/652

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1. Overview

These guidelines provide information about the New South Wales Weeds Action Program, its investment priorities, eligibility requirements and submission process.

The New South Wales (NSW) Weeds Action Program (the program) is a NSW Government initiative to reduce the impact of weeds through implementation of the [NSW Invasive Species Plan](#) and the [NSW Biosecurity Strategy](#).

The NSW Invasive Species Plan provides a framework for coordinated management of invasive species, including weeds, and complements the NSW Biosecurity Strategy. The NSW Biosecurity Strategy outlines how to identify, minimise, respond to and manage biosecurity risks, including weeds, and the program realises the strategy's vision of:

"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 program demonstrates the NSW Government's commitment to both by supporting:

- state, regional and local processes to detect and respond to new weed incursions
- integrated, cooperative, cross-disciplinary and cross-jurisdictional weed management systems
- prioritisation of weed management activities to achieve the greatest benefit
- effective and targeted on-ground risk mitigation for high priority weeds
- behaviour change strategies that increase community ownership and involvement in effective weed management
- the knowledge base for weed management and its influence on community, industry and other stakeholders
- cost-sharing arrangements for effective and strong partnerships.

The program has delivered successful outcomes since 2010, and supports the NSW Government's response to the Natural Resources Commission review of weed management in NSW, by ensuring consistent and coordinated regional planning and local delivery.

1.1 The program is contract-based

The NSW Government purchases outcomes through the program from lead agencies and their participants who make appropriate submissions. Delivery Contracts are developed with the lead organisation for each successful submission.

1.2 Funding streams

There are three funding streams for submissions:

State sub-programs – are relevant to the whole of NSW or have state-wide outcomes. They:

- can be 1-5 years in length
- provide for state level activities
- have state-level strategic significance and benefits
- may require infrastructure or system development.

Regional sub-programs – involve a number of stakeholders in a Local Land Services region working together. They can be 3-5 years in length.

Innovative sub-programs – an occasional competitive funding stream opened by announcement.

1.3 Program rounds

The program is run in five-year rounds, its third round being July 2020-June 2025.

Program administration and funding allocation is managed on an annual basis for each financial year of the program round (referred to as Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 within each round).

Funds are allocated annually by NSW Treasury and the total amount of funding administered by the program each year may vary. There is no guarantee that funding will be ongoing from year to year within a program round.

1.4 Weed control functions under the Biosecurity Act

Weed control functions of local control authorities are prescribed by section 371 of the [Biosecurity Act 2015](#) and are not replaced, affected or prescribed by the program, although program funding may assist with delivering them. Local control authorities are required to meet their statutory obligations regardless of whether they participate in the program, and participation in the program is not a requirement under the Act for any person or organisation.

The Department will audit local control authorities against the [NSW Standard for Weed Management Capacity](#) to ensure they can meet their statutory functions and obligations under the Act, regardless of whether or not a local control authority participates in the program.

2. Investment priorities

The program’s investment priorities align to the goals of the NSW Invasive Species Plan:

Goal 1 - Exclude

Prevent the establishment of new invasive species

1.1 Improved identification and management of high risk species and pathways

1.2 Improved early detection capabilities

Goal 2 - Eradicate or contain

Eliminate or prevent the spread of new invasive species

2.1 Improved rapid response capabilities to eradicate or contain new incursions

Goal 3 - Effectively manage

Reduce the impacts of widespread invasive species

3.1 Management programs prioritised to targeted effort and greater benefit

3.2 Improved management effectiveness

Goal 4 - Capacity building

Ensure NSW has the ability and commitment to manage invasive species

4.1 Roles and responsibilities are clear for invasive species management

4.2 Private landholders and the general community are motivated to support

Biosecurity at all stages of invasion curve

4.3 Skilled workforce implementing invasive species management

4.4 Improved tools to monitor and manage invasive species

4.5 Legislation and policy supports effective action at all stages of invasion curve

4.6 Commitment to implement and monitor progress of the Invasive Species Plan

These goals are relevant to the stages of invasion on a generalised invasion curve.

Figure 1 highlights the relationship between the stages of invasion, the level of effective control that can be expected and the likely return on investment.

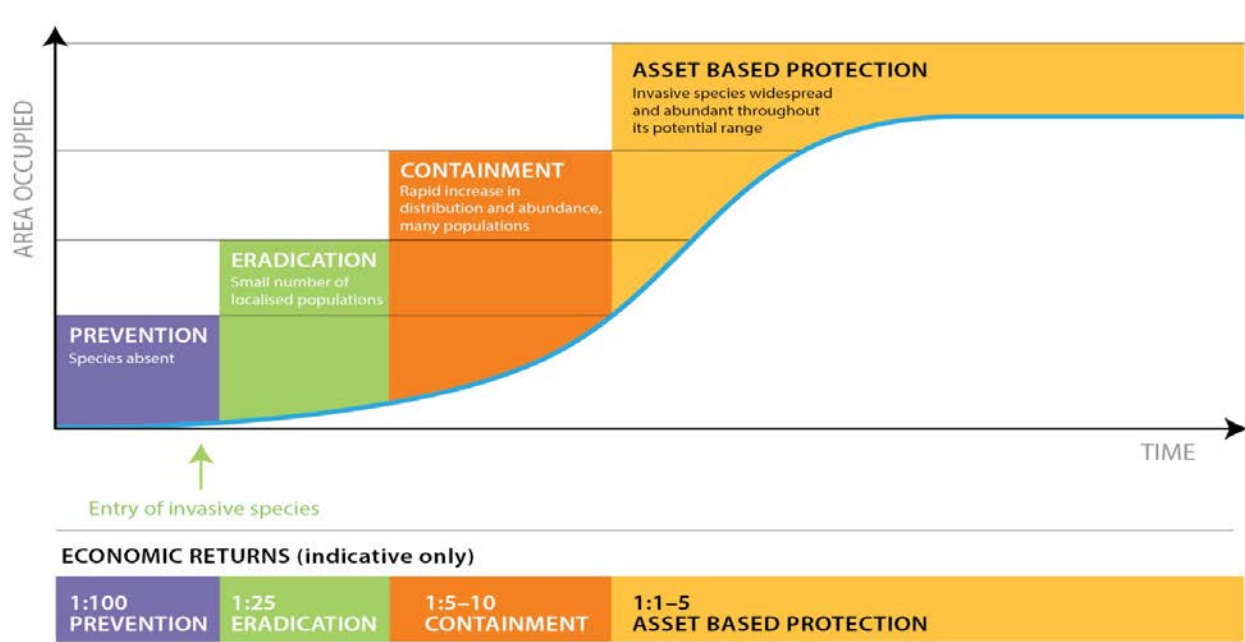


Figure 1. Generalised invasion curve (adapted from Biosecurity Victoria).

Submissions are assessed on whether their proposed activities:

- align with the goals of the NSW Invasive Species Plan
- prioritise effort towards the beginning of the invasion curve where return on investment is highest and associated with Goals 1 and 2 of the NSW Invasive Species Plan
- strongly support Goal 4 of the NSW Invasive Species Plan (submissions should align Goal 4.2 and 4.3 activities with those described in the NSW Weeds Capacity Building & Engagement Priorities)
- implement their Regional Strategic Weeds Management Plan and Regional Inspection Plan (for regional sub-programs) (see section 4.5 Essential planning documents).

Activities associated with Goal 3 are not a priority for the program, and if they are included the submission should specify how they provide greater benefits, effectiveness or targeted effort to reducing the impact of widespread weeds. Activities against Goal 3 will not be funded where Goals 1, 2 and 4 have not been adequately supported in a submission.

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 controlling or treating weeds (other than with biological control agents) that are:
 - widespread
 - managed under asset protection objectives in Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans (coordination or capacity building activities for asset protection are acceptable use of funds)
 - local priority weeds – species of concern in a local area but not listed as regional priority weeds in Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans
 - managed by local control authorities for road safety, fire or road maintenance.

3. State sub-programs

State sub-programs have state-wide operation, significance or outcomes and are generally delivered by a state government agency. Examples include the NSW New Weed Incursions Response sub-program, the Capacity Building and Engagement of NSW Weeds Professionals sub-program and some research sub-programs. While these sub-programs are usually delivered by a state government agency, other entities may make submissions.

4. Regional sub-programs

Regional sub-programs must focus on implementing the prevention, eradication, and containment priorities described in their Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan.

Submissions should demonstrate:

- an integrated and coordinated approach across a region
- effective engagement with multiple stakeholders
- productive partnerships that manage biosecurity risks and biosecurity impacts created by weeds.

Regional sub-programs should prioritise activities on risk-based assessment and return on investment.

Only one regional sub-program submission per Local Land Services region will be assessed. Where more than one is received, they will be returned to the applicants for amalgamation.

Each Local Land Services will be the lead organisation for that region's sub-program.

An allocation of program funds is made to each Local Land Services region annually, depending on the relative effort of managing weeds in each region (based on a range of variables including terrain, property size, weed load and property use) and the total amount of program funding provided by NSW Treasury. Lead organisations may need to adjust successful submissions to reflect variations to annual allocations.

4.1 Regions defined

The program aligns to the Local Land Services regions shown in Figure 2.

4.2 Regional Weed Committees

Each of the eleven regions has a Regional Weed Committee formed under Section 33 of the *Local Land Services Act 2013*.

Each Local Land Services board is accountable for ensuring its Regional Weed Committee is effective and has appropriate representation, particularly from local control authorities. A model Terms of Reference is provided on the [Weeds Extranet](#).

Committees comprise local control authorities, public land managers and community members. They:

- coordinate weed management activities at a regional level and provide a forum for stakeholders to be involved in decision making
- develop and review tenure-neutral, risk-based Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans
- support implementation of the weeds components of the Act, the NSW Biosecurity Strategy and the NSW Invasive Species Plan;
- provide advice to the Local Land Services boards regarding delivery of weeds functions consistent with the Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans.



Figure 2. Map of Local Land Services regions in NSW

In relation to the regional sub-programs, committees:

- support the lead organisation in the development of a Participant Agreement (see below) and in the delivery of a sub-program;
- support the lead organisation with the distribution of funds to participants in accordance with the Delivery Contract, and in a manner that ensures the most effective outcomes against the investment priorities; and
- provide regional oversight and peer review of the progress of the regional sub-program.

Participant Agreement

Local Land Services can provide a *pro forma* Participant Agreement for regional sub-programs to develop with their participants.

4.3 Regional Weed Coordinators

Local Land Services are responsible for employing a Regional Weeds Coordinator in each region. The program contributes \$100,000 per year per region to support these roles, and this amount must go towards coordination of each sub-program at a minimum 0.5 full-time equivalency.

Regional Weed Coordinators must:

- function as the Executive Officer for the Regional Weed Committee
- coordinate implementation of their regional sub-program
- administer the program budgets and processes
- report to the Regional Weed Committee on weed matters within the region

- report to the Regional Weed Committee and the Department for the purposes of the program
- liaise with participants and stakeholders to promote effective cross jurisdictional arrangements
- facilitate the development of management plans for regional priority weeds.

The Department encourages further contribution from Local Land Services and other participants to supplement and expand the delivery of these roles to 1.0 full-time equivalent.

Proposals for employment of Regional Weed Coordinators, including specific roles, functions and administrative arrangements must be agreed to by the Department at the beginning of each program round before funding can be made available. Agreed arrangements may be carried across changes in personnel, as long as the role, function and administrative arrangements have not changed.

4.4 Partnerships

Partnerships that provide effective and targeted on-ground actions and encourage or use cost-sharing arrangements are a key component of the program. Submissions without evidence of effective partnerships will not be funded. Each regional sub-program must include participants from local control authorities and any relevant public land management authority.

Any organisation or group that contributes to a sub-program, such as industry groups, Landcare groups and educational institutions is encouraged to become a participant. Participants and their roles and contributions must be clearly identified, measurable, contribute to one or more sub-program outcomes and be recorded and reported in terms of inputs against outcomes.

4.5 Essential planning documents

The following planning documents must accompany each regional sub-program submission:

Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan

These plans are developed as a separate process by Local Land Services in cooperation with stakeholders and Regional Weeds Committees. The plans list weeds of regional priority, and the management objective for those weeds.

Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement (MERI) framework

Each sub-program must have a tool for evaluating its effectiveness. This can be in the form of a MERI framework, program logic, key evaluation questions or key performance indicators.

Each Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan must have a MERI framework, and a Regional Weed Committee can develop their own, or use the [Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement \(MERI\) framework for Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans](#) developed by the Department. A regional sub-program can choose to adopt the same MERI framework for the activities within the sub-

program, but this must be documented. Demonstrated use of an evaluation framework may be requested by the Department.

Regional Inspection Plan

This document must detail an agreed regional approach to systematic inspections of properties, and outline compliance procedures under the Act. It must specifically address the following:

— **High risk pathways and sites for new weed incursions**

The high risk pathways and sites that could allow new weeds into a region must be identified, mapped and regularly inspected. A coordinated approach to the surveillance of these pathways and sites should be outlined.

— **Rapid response procedures for new weed incursions**

An outline of the following must be included:

- identification procedures for new weed incursions
- notification procedures once identification has been confirmed
- weed risk assessment methods
- determination of the appropriate course of response
- coordination tactics
- implementation and monitoring methods

Communication Strategy

This document must detail how participants and stakeholders in the region will communicate key messages to each other, the broader community and the NSW Government. Regional Communication Strategies should address the contained in the [NSW Weeds Capacity Building & Engagement Priorities](#).

5. Governance

Funding is provided under agreement in a Delivery Contract between the Department and a lead organisation (see below). The Delivery Contract sets out the roles, functions and obligations of the parties in relation to the sub-program. For regional sub-programs, a single Delivery Contract is developed between the Department and Local Land Services.

5.1 Lead organisations

Each submission requires a lead organisation to accept responsibility for the sub-program. The lead organisation will make the submission on behalf of all the participants; receive and distribute the funds; and collate and submit reports. As signatory to the Delivery Contract, the lead organisation is responsible for delivery of the sub-program.

6. Co-funding

Participant organisations are expected to contribute cash funds and/or in-kind resources to their sub-program. There is no set contribution, however priority will be given where submissions demonstrate substantial contributions.

Any claim the lead organisation or participants make in terms of contributions, expenditure or achievements must be able to be proven when the Department requests further details or when a sub-program is audited. In-kind contributions are reported as dollar values.

7. Allowing for variation

The Department recognises that seasonal conditions, new weed outbreaks and other changes may require variations to sub-programs. Lead organisations can apply to vary their sub-program. Applications can be made by email to weeds@dpi.nsw.gov.au and should state the change, why it is necessary and how it will affect the meeting of targets and the timing of the sub-program.

Minor variations

Minor variations include changes to participants, outcomes or activities for the remainder of a sub-program and require Departmental approval.

Annual activity targets that have not been met and need to be carried forward to the next year of a sub-program (within a 5 year round) will be reflected in administration and reporting. The Department may request details and justification for any unmet activity targets that constitute minor variations.

Major variations

Major variations include changes to the overall aims and intent of the sub-program. They requiring re-submission to the Department, and the Department will notify the State Weed Committee of approved major variations.

8. Non-performance and disputes

The lead organisation is responsible for taking steps to rectify non-performance when a partner fails to meet its sub-program 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 participants.

9. Reporting

An annual report will be required by the last Friday of August each year, or at an alternative date agreed with the Department, and a final report will be required within three months of the completion of the program round.

The Department may periodically request a meeting to discuss aspects of the sub-program with the lead organisation, or may request informal reports or formal audits at any time. The required annual progress report will be assessed, and if satisfactory, used to guide allocation of the next year's funding.

The Delivery Contract details all reporting requirements and dates.

9.1 Biosecurity Information System - Weeds

The Biosecurity Information System - Weeds (BIS Weeds) is a standardised data capture system for local and regional weed management activities, allowing real time reporting and analysis of consolidated information at a state level.

BIS Weeds is a subsystem of WIDX (see section 11. Making a submission) and allows each local control authority to electronically submit standard data to the Department.

Data submission to BIS Weeds is mandatory for local control authorities under the Act (through delegation of the Secretary), regardless of whether they participate in the program. Regional sub-programs in regions where local control authorities are failing to submit data may not be eligible for program funding.

10. Timing

The Department will process submissions received by 5 pm on the first Friday in May each year. Submissions received after this time will not be considered.

The Department aims to contract sub-programs and distribute funds by July each year, however this is subject to government budgeting processes.

11. Making a submission

Submissions are made in the WIDX secure website. Go to widx.dpi.nsw.gov.au and click the *Request* button to apply for a user account. Specify that you would like access to the NSW Weeds Action Program subsystem. Links and user guides are available on the [Weeds Extranet](#), or email weeds@dpi.nsw.gov.au for assistance.

Once you have a WIDX account, open the NSW Weeds Action Program subsystem, and click on *Request a new WAP sub-program*. You will then be contacted and advised on the next steps.

12. Contacts and links

State Coordinator: Weeds Systems and Programs
Tel: 02 6391 3638 or 0418 794 756
Email: weeds@dpi.nsw.gov.au

NSW WeedWise
weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au

NSW Department of Primary Industries weeds web pages
www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/weeds

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

Definitions

Cross disciplinary – activities relating to 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.

In-kind contributions – contributions other than dollar funds, including labour, administration, office support, services, accommodation, materials and equipment.

Integrated weed management – control of weeds under a long-term management approach using a range of techniques including physical control, chemical control, biological control and cultural control.

Local control authority – as defined under section 370 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, usually a local council or local government entity.

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

Local Land Services board – each region is governed by a board. Members are a mix of Ministerially-appointed and elected members.

New weed incursion – a completely new occurrence of a weed species in an area (state, regional, local, property, paddock) where it has not previously been discovered.

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

Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan (RSWMP) - five-year plans that review and prioritise weeds in each Local Land Services region based on risk, and articulate how communities and stakeholders work together to identify, minimise, respond to and manage the identified high-risk weeds.

Strategy – an agreed document that sets out direction for weed management in a defined area and guides how stakeholders approach weed management. A strategy does not contain detailed operational matters or budgets.

Submission – an application made for program funding.

Sub-program – a project receiving funding under the NSW Weeds Action Program.

State Weed Committee – the Ministerially-appointed committee of representatives from key organisations who provide transparent leadership, coordination and accountability for weed management in NSW generally, and for the NSW Weeds Action Program.

WAP2025 – the third round of the NSW Weeds Action Program (2020-2025).



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