

To: [Agriculture and Environment Committee](#)
Subject: Attention: Research Director - Agriculture and Environment Committee- Noosa Shire Council submission to the inquiry into the impacts of invasive plants
Date: Monday, 16 January 2017 12:18:56 PM

Noosa Shire Council – Submission to the inquiry into the impacts of invasive plants (weeds) and their control in Queensland.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the inquiry. The following provides a brief overview of Noosa Shire Council's programs that are directed at the control of the case study weeds in the area.

Background

Noosa Council recognises invasive plants as one of the most significant threats to biodiversity in the Shire. They degrade natural ecosystems and agricultural landscapes, threaten biodiversity and interfere with human health and recreation. To guide efforts to address this threat and to meet the requirements of the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, a Noosa Local Government Area Biosecurity Plan has been developed which establishes local priorities, strategies and actions and identifies stakeholders and recognises their roles and responsibilities.

Case study weeds in the Noosa council area

Currently there are established infestations of Giant rat's tail grass (GRT) and Fireweed in the Noosa Council area. To date there has been no Prickly Acacia detected. In the development of the Noosa council Biosecurity Plan a stakeholder working group identified GRT and Fireweed in the top 10 priority species for management in the region.

Giant Rat's Tail Grass (GRT)

GRT is widely established in the Noosa Council area; however the largest infestations are located in the hinterland areas where the predominant land use is livestock grazing and horticulture. It is estimated that the overall area affected by GRT would be approximately 20,000 hectares.

GRT control programs

Public land - control of GRT infestations on council managed land consists of spot spraying all affected areas every three months using Flupropanate and Glyphosate herbicides as per an established work schedule. This work is carried out by both council staff and council engaged contractors. Council also has a current contract arrangement with the Department of Transport and Main Roads for the spraying of GRT on the State road reserve network.

Private land - council currently monitors the control of GRT on private land under an established Biosecurity Surveillance Program 2016- 2020. Property inspections are carried out by authorised council officers at identified locations quarterly, and information and advice is provided to landholders where GRT is found on their property on best practice control techniques and strategies. The control methods adopted include the application of herbicides through spot spraying, wick wiping and broadcasting of granular Flupropanate. Landholders are advised of their obligations under section 23 the Biosecurity Act in the management of GRT on their property and compliance action is taken if required to ensure that infestations are managed accordingly. The location of new infestations is mapped and recorded in a data base.

Challenges experienced

One of the major challenges in achieving effective control of GRT is preventing the plant from reaching seeding maturity due to its rapid rate of establishment. It also has the ability to produce large volumes of viable seed continually throughout the year. For this reason, herbicides need to be applied frequently which requires considerable resourcing.

Experience with GRT control in the Noosa area has shown that residual herbicides containing Flupropanate are limited in their effectiveness due to relatively high rainfall conditions, particularly during the warmer months, which leads to rapid leaching of Flupropanate through the soil profile and away from the root zone of the plant. As a result, herbicide treatment for a large portion of the year is limited to the use of Glyphosate based herbicides which are non-selective and non-residual and therefore require frequent retreatment to prevent the reestablishment of the plants.

These challenges are also exacerbated by the seed longevity of the plant and ease at which it is spread via machinery, animals and natural events.

-

Fireweed

Fireweed infestations in the Noosa council area are relatively small and isolated. It is estimated that the overall affected area is approximately 20ha. All known infestations have originated from turf that has been brought into the region contaminated with fireweed vegetative material. Infestations currently exist on council's managed land, private land and State owned land in the localities of Noosaville, Cooroy and Federal.

-

Fireweed control programs

Public land- council currently has a program in place for the control of Fireweed on council managed land and also has an arrangement with the Department of Transport and Main Roads for the control of Fireweed on the State road reserve network. Control consists of the chipping, bagging and disposal of all plants found at known locations four times per year.

Private land – as with GRT council currently monitors the control of Fireweed on private land throughout the area under a Biosecurity Surveillance Program. Property inspections are carried out by authorised council officers each quarter and information and advice is provided to landholders where Fireweed is found on their property on best practice control techniques and strategies. The control methods adopted include spot spraying with herbicides and manual removal and disposal. Landholders are advised of their obligations under section 23 of the Biosecurity Act in the management of Fireweed on their property and compliance action is taken if required to ensure that infestations are managed accordingly. The location of infestations is mapped and recorded in a data base.

-

Challenges experienced

Although much of the information available about Fireweed suggests that it is generally an annual or a short lived perennial and only flowers during the winter months, observations of the plant in the Noosa council area suggest that it is much more likely to be perennial and has the ability to flower all year round if conditions are suitable. These characteristics combined with the plant's rapid rate of establishment, makes it difficult to control due to the frequency at which sites must be retreated to prevent further recruitment.

Herbicide treatment has also not proven to be an effective method of control unless applied to

**Inquiry into the impacts of invasive plants (weeds)
and their control in Queensland**

Submission No. 030

the plant in the early growth stages which is difficult due to its rapid growth rate.

-

Program resourcing

Noosa council currently allocates an annual budget of approximately \$35,000 for the control of GRT and \$4,000 for the control of Fireweed on council managed land. An additional \$8,000 is also received from the Department of Transport and Main Roads under a contract arrangement for the control of GRT and Fireweed on the State road reserve network. This budget covers the cost of employing staff and contractor's as well as material expenses required to treat the affected areas.

-

Biosecurity surveillance program 2016- 2020

Council currently allocates an annual operating budget of approximately \$57,000 to conduct a Biosecurity Surveillance program. This budget covers the costs associated with employing an officer for approximately 3 days per week to undertake property inspections and liaise with landholders in the management of invasive plant species.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you require any further information or clarification.

Kind Regards,

Ken English

Pest and Contracts Officer | Noosa Council

