

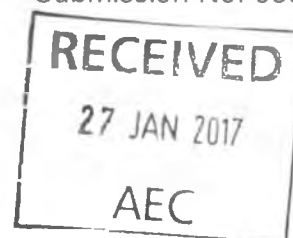
Inquiry into the impacts of invasive plants (weeds)
and their control in Queensland



Department of
Primary Industries

Office of the Director General

Submission No. 055



DGPO17/1

23 JAN 2017

Mr Rob Hansen
Research Director
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Hansen

**Queensland Parliament Agriculture and Environment Committee inquiry into
the impacts of invasive plants (weeds) and their control in Queensland**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry. Managing the impacts of invasive plants, particularly for established weeds, is a challenge for all jurisdictions due to the need for sustained and coordinated control. The NSW Natural Resources Commission (NRC) was commissioned by the NSW Government to review the management of weeds in NSW recently. The NRC report is available at <http://www.nrc.nsw.gov.au/publications>. A copy of the NSW Government response to the recommendations of the review can be found at http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/528448/nsw-government-response-nrc-report-on-weeds.pdf.

I note with optimism that both Queensland and NSW have passed new biosecurity legislation that enshrines the principle of shared responsibility for biosecurity management by creating a general biosecurity obligation (or general biosecurity duty in NSW). The benefits of this new flexible approach to biosecurity management will take some time to be realised, as sustained behavioural change by all involved (public and private landholders, industries and the community) is required. However, it is clearly evident that in an age where all levels of government are seeking to reduce the regulatory burden on industry and the community, the principle of shared responsibility will underpin the future of biosecurity management, including management of invasive plants into the future.

In relation to the specific terms of reference for the inquiry:

1. NSW DPI has no comment on whether the responsibilities of local governments in relation to the control of prohibited, restricted and invasive plants imposed under S.48 of the Qld *Biosecurity Act 2014* are reasonable or whether local governments are meeting those obligations.

2. NSW DPI has no comment on whether programs for the control of weeds on Crown land administered by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines are effective.
3. NSW DPI has a very high regard for Biosecurity Queensland's weeds programs, including biological control programs and new technologies. NSW DPI collaborates with Biosecurity Queensland on biological control programs as part of a national consortium with current funding from the Australian Government's Rural R&D for profit program. The collaborative projects are examining biological control agents for a number of species that are of particular relevance to both Queensland and NSW, including *Parkinsonia*, parthenium weed, blackberry, silverleaf nightshade, *Cylindropuntia* species, gorse, fireweed, sowthistle, mother-of-millions, giant rat's tail grass, prickly acacia, African boxthorn, *Cabomba*, and *Sagittaria*. For example, Biosecurity Queensland's work on biological control agents for *Cylindropuntia* species has already led to the release of an agent that will control coral cactus.
4. NSW DPI has no comment on environmental programs administered by the Qld Department of Environment and Heritage Protection.
5. NSW DPI believes that federal and state government weeds programs are coordinated well. The biological control research collaborations identified above, the work of the Invasive Plants and Animals Committee (a sectoral committee that reports to the National Biosecurity Committee) on revision of the Australian Weeds Strategy, and several nationally cost shared responses to incursions of exotic weeds in Queensland are good examples of this coordination. Within each state, coordination with local governments is a State responsibility, and so NSW DPI has no comment on coordination with local government in Queensland.
6. NSW DPI notes that the three weeds being examined as case studies for the inquiry (prickly acacia, giant rat's tail grass and fireweed) are all targets for biological control under the research collaboration identified above. Prickly acacia is not known to be present in NSW at this stage. Giant rat's tail grass and fireweed are present in NSW, with fireweed being particularly problematic in some areas. While other management measures such as herbicide application and pasture management will continue to be used for these species, the prospect of sustained control using biological control agents offers the most cost-effective long-term solution to their impacts.

If you require any further information on the NSW DPI submission, please contact Dr Andrew Sanger, Director Invasive Plants and Animals by phoning [REDACTED] or emailing [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



GAVIN HANLON
ACTING DIRECTOR GENERAL