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Mr Will Zacharin
Chair, Invasive Plants and Animals Committee
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C/O Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
18 Marcus Clarke St
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Zacharin

Re: Revision of the Australian Weeds Strategy

The Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the revision of the Australian Weeds Strategy (AWS). Since 2007, the AWS has guided coordinated approaches across the nation, with highlights that include: management plans, prioritisation tools and best practice management guides for Weeds of National Significance (WoNS); potential distribution mapping for high risk weeds; a renewed focus on preventing the spread of Alert weeds; and investment partnerships for managing established weeds.

From 2017 to 2027 there will be different challenges for weed management, some predictable and others less so. The following comments are intended to assist with developing an effective and strategic AWS for the next 10 years, which will build on existing successful weed management programs and ensure Australia is well-placed to tackle new issues and problems.

Biological control research

While there is a statement in the revised AWS (on page 23) regarding 'nationally coordinated approaches to selecting new biological control agents for priority weeds' there is no mention of the need for Australian research organisations to work in partnership with other countries to undertake research, and to collaborate for the collection and testing of biological control agents. It is critical that the AWS guides international research partnerships and provides strategic direction to meet Australia's biological control needs for managing weeds.

The potential for weed distributions and pathways of spread to change with a changing climate

The AWS must provide strategic direction for adapting to climate change over the next 10 years, and beyond. Some key messages include: weeds will generally extend southwards and to higher altitudes as a result of warming trends; increased surveillance is crucial to prevention and management; weeds with efficient seed dispersal systems (e.g. wind, water and birds) will invade faster than weeds that rely on vegetative dispersal; disturbed habitats may be more easily colonised by weeds (for example, after a drought); and weed managers will need to adjust the timing of control activities as life cycles respond to climate change.

Australia's biosecurity culture

It is expected that high-risk pathways for the spread of weeds by humans will rapidly expand over the next 10 years. This poses a significant challenge for all stakeholders with a role in implementing the AWS.

Australia must improve its biosecurity culture. Innovative ways of engaging with importers, international tourists, Australian travellers, Australians making internet purchases, plant wholesalers, and plant retailers are required to reduce unintentional spread of weeds. Recent incidences of 'mislabelling retail plants',

weeds spreading via camping/hiking equipment and weed seeds arriving via mail from overseas as 'free gifts' with other purchases highlight multiple problems that need to be addressed.

Under Goal 1 of the AWS, high-risk pathways should be described. The AWS should clearly articulate which high-risk pathways will expand over the next 10 years and measures that are required to address this increasing problem.

Reporting new incursions

The AWS is a communication tool and should encourage the reporting of new weed incursions, particularly for plants on the National Environmental Alert List and other Alert Weeds listed by states and territories. The National Pest Alert hotline number (1800 084 881) should be included in the AWS.

Context for the AWS (Figure 2, page 11)

Increasingly Farm Biosecurity Plans are being developed and implemented, with primary producers reaping the rewards of increased weed hygiene practices amongst other biosecurity measures. Farm Biosecurity Plans should be added to Figure 2 on page 11.

The Australian Government is now using Threat Abatement Plans and Threat Abatement Advice to help reduce the impact of key threatening processes on native species and ecological communities. Threat Abatement Advice documents should be added to Figure 2 on page 11.

Clarifying roles and responsibilities

'Research organisations' are not included in the list of stakeholders with roles and responsibilities (pages 13 to 16). It is highly recommended that research organisations be included and consulted with regarding the implementation of the AWS.

Preventing weed spread through weed hygiene practices should be included as a role for landholders (page 13).

Regional NRM groups have an important role as knowledge brokers and in translating science into practical, on-ground management options. This role should be included on page 16.

Clarity on weed data collection, collation, management and information sharing

The roles and responsibilities section does not provide information on which organisation/s have primary responsibility for managing weed data and using the 'National Data Standard for Invasive Plants and Animals'. All the organisations listed have a supporting or assisting role: "support the collection and collation of national weed data and information (Australian Government)", "support the collection of weed data and information that can be collated nationally (states and territories)", and "assist with data collection and information exchange (local government, industry and community groups, regional NRM groups)". Which organisation/s take the lead and have responsibility for managing datasets?

Should you require further information on this matter please contact James Donnelly, A/Regional Coordinator Animal & Plant Control on telephone (08) 8389 5900.

Yours sincerely



Chris Daniels
PRESIDING MEMBER

Date: 27 / 10 / 18