

1. POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 To outline Council's weed management responsibilities and obligations under the *NSW Biosecurity Act 2015* (hereafter referred to as The Act). Weeds are a major threat to our natural environment, threatening the survival of hundreds of native plants and animals in New South Wales (NSW). They also impact on the production of food, human health through allergies and asthma, disrupt and curtail recreational activities and add substantial costs within our economy.
- 1.2 To establish a framework for the management of weeds that will achieve the greatest outcomes in terms of preventing weeds from establishing, eradicating new weeds and minimising the impact of established weeds. This is to be done within the context of shared responsibility, sustainable landscapes, collaboration and innovation. Shared responsibility means that every person and organisation has a general obligation to minimise the risks of weed invasion.

2. BACKGROUND

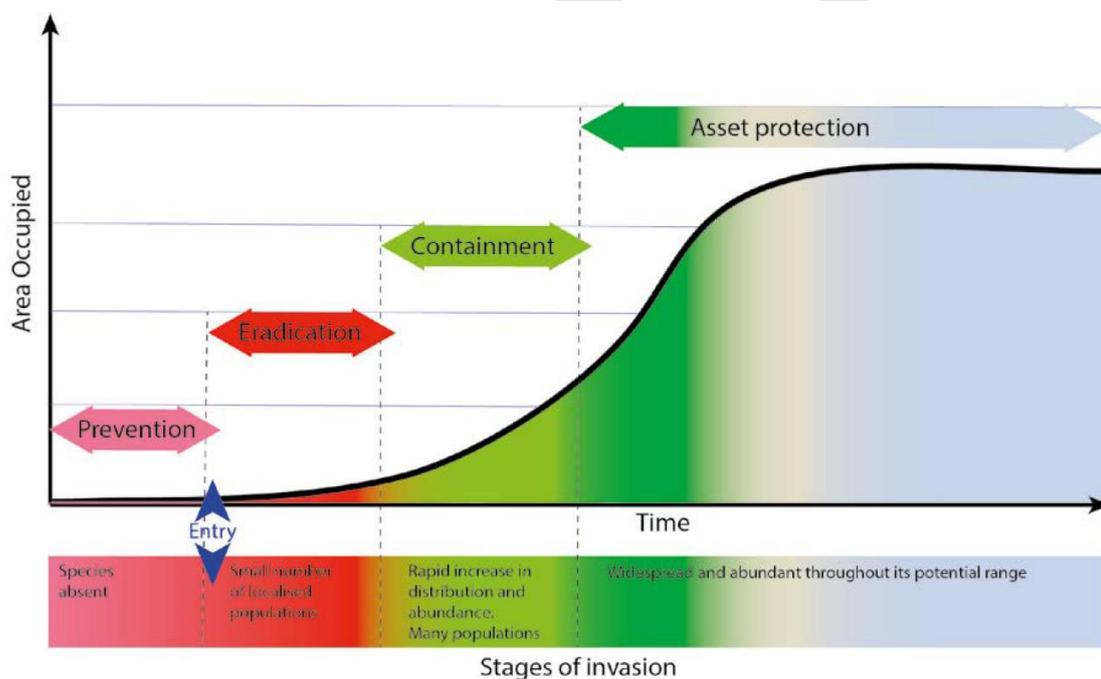
- 2.1 This policy supports the Community Strategic Plan's aspirations to protect the Shire's environment and agricultural land.
- 2.2 This policy covers all land within the Local Government Area under Council's control. Council is a Local Control Authority (weeds only) under The Act.

In accordance with Section 371 of The Act, Council has the "following functions over the land in which it operates:

- (a) the prevention, elimination, minimisation and management of the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed by weeds
 - (b) to develop, implement, co-ordinate and review weed control programs
 - (c) to inspect land in connection with its weed control functions
 - (d) to keep records about the exercise of the local control authority's functions under this Act
 - (e) to report to the Secretary about the exercise of the local control authority's functions under this Act".
- 2.3 The Act is tenure neutral, it applies equally to all land in the Wollondilly Local Government Area (LGA), regardless of whether it is publicly or privately owned and is premised on the concept of risk, so that weed management investment and response is appropriate to the risk.
 - 2.4 The Act, Part 3, Section 22, contains the 'General Biosecurity Duty'. This is a general obligation on people to be aware of their surroundings and take action to prevent the introduction and spread of pests, diseases, weeds and contaminants. In relation to weeds, this duty means that all private and public land managers (or anyone who deals with weeds) must prevent, eliminate or minimise the risk weeds present.

- 2.5 Under The Act the term ‘noxious weed’ is no longer used and the previous noxious weed classes have been abolished. These have been replaced with the new term of “priority weeds”. Unlike the previous Noxious Weeds Act 1993, there is no scheduled ‘list’ of weeds. As such all weeds need to be categorised by the risk they pose in relation to human health and public amenity, the natural environment and/or agricultural production.
- 2.6 In implementing this policy the LCA will be guided by the ‘Invasion Curve - Stages of Invasion’ concept (Figure 1). This curve illustrates the relationship between the stages of weed invasion, the level of effective control that could be expected and the likely return. Council resources will be prioritised towards weed management activities where the return on investment is highest; that is at the beginning of the invasion curve before weeds dominate the landscape. Managing weeds earlier rather than later is more cost effective.

Figure 1:



- 2.7 In addition to the Invasion Curve, weeds will be prioritised utilising a consistent, robust and systematic process to achieve the greatest benefit of risk management. Council will adopt the approaches recommended by:
- the NSW Department of Primary Industries’ Weed Risk Management System, plans, policies, procedures, handbooks and programs; and
 - the Greater Sydney Local Land Services ‘Greater Sydney Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan’.

As the LCA, Council will be guided by the lists of priority weeds provided by Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and/or the Greater Sydney Local Land Services (LLS) and listed in the Wollondilly Weed Management Strategy.

3. APPLICABILITY

- 3.1 The Act applies equally to all land in NSW, regardless of whether it is publically or privately owned and is premised on the concept of risk, so that weed management investment and response is appropriate to the risk.
- 3.2 This policy applies to all Council representatives.

4. GUIDELINES

- 4.1 As the Local Control Authority (LCA) Council has the legal obligation to manage the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed to human health, the economy, the community and the environment by priority weeds.

Council will meet these obligations by:

- controlling priority weeds on Council managed land where feasible;
- working with private landowners and occupiers, and other public utility land owners and occupiers to ensure they too carry out their individual obligations as legislated under The Act to prevent, eliminate or minimise the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed by priority weeds; and
- appointing suitably qualified officers in the role of “Authorised Officers” as defined by The Act.

- 4.2 As the LCA Council will ensure compliance with The Act for State and/or Regional priority weeds where feasible in the following ways:

- a) Prevent, eliminate or contain priority weeds by direct management on Council owned land.
- b) Develop, coordinate and measure the success of weed management programs by creating and maintaining policy, processes, operational plans and regular reporting.
- c) Maintain records on control, education and inspection functions and make these available to DPI and LLS as required.

- 4.3 In addition, Council will control local priority weeds on Council land and land it controls in accordance with the weed management priorities listed below where feasible:

- 4.3.1 In natural areas in accordance with the following priorities where weeds impact on:

- threatened species and communities;
- management burn areas (pre and post – fire weeding);
- bushland areas in good condition;
- local bushland areas maintained by volunteers;
- the health and safety of recreational users; and/or
- aesthetic values.

4.3.2 In parks and sportsgrounds in accordance with the following priorities; were weeds impact on:

- the health and safety of recreational users;
- use and enjoyment of recreational users;
- native vegetation or natural areas;
- areas maintained by volunteers; and/or
- aesthetic values.

4.3.3 In road reserves, car parks, pathways, business centres in accordance with the following priorities; were weeds impact on:

- driver visibility and safety;
- the health and safety of pedestrian and cycle users;
- native vegetation or natural areas; and/or
- aesthetic values.

4.4 Council will also:

- Ensure weed removal and control is an integral part of new land/property development and the establishment and maintenance stages of new public and private capital and project works where feasible;
- Undertake weed eradication in conjunction with planned refurbishment within parks, sportsgrounds, road reserves, rail corridors, business centres, car parks, cycle and pathways where feasible;
- Participate in relevant catchment and regional weed forums, plans and projects;
- Provide an annual program of education in the identification and management of weeds to increase awareness, knowledge and skills in relation to weed management issues and techniques amongst owner/occupiers on private land, contractors working private and public land, Council staff and volunteers and community groups promoting land care.
- Provide ongoing advice to residents on weed management best practice on their land; and
- Establish collaborative and cooperative partnerships with other LCAs, government agencies and land owners in support of a regional approach to weed control.

4.5 Authorised Officers will inspect premises or land likely to be hosting priority weeds, especially key high risk locations for weed spread, to ensure that owners or land managers carry out their biosecurity risk obligations to control priority weeds.

4.6 Authorised Officers will also, from time-to-time, inspect premises or land that may share a common border with a threatened community or other valued natural area to help ensure they are protected.

4.7 Should an Authorised Officer inspect a private or public property (not owned or controlled by Council) that includes a priority weed, then a property record will be generated for the premises. If the weed species is high risk, then education, followed by enforcement of the regulatory provisions of The Act will proceed.

- 4.8 If a weed is not listed in The Act or related weed management plan, it will not be considered to warrant the priority attention and resources of Council. However, it may still be deemed a biosecurity risk by an Authorised Officer and control, education or enforcement action may be taken.

5. RESPONSIBILITY/ACCOUNTABILITY

For the purposes of this policy, the term “Council representatives” refers to the Councillors, Chief Executive Officer, Directors, senior staff of the Council, staff members, volunteers, casual workers, trainees, committee representatives, consultants or contractors conducting business on behalf of Council.

- 5.1 **Councillors** shall;

Assess and consider recommendations put to them in Council reports and other decisions that they make on behalf of Council for the potential impacts on the environment and the community both now and into the future.

- 5.2 **The Chief Executive Officer** shall;

Ensure that all employees, volunteers and contractors undertake their duties in compliance with The Act and this policy.

- 5.3 **Directors, Managers and Supervisors** shall;

5.3.1 Ensure that this policy is adhered to and that sufficient resources are provided to ensure compliance with the objectives of this policy.

5.3.2 Keep under review all actions taken in their area that may either directly or indirectly have positive and negative impacts on the implementation of the policy.

- 5.4 **Employees** must, while at work;

Perform their duties in compliance with this policy and the General Biosecurity Duty.

6. RELATED POLICIES/PROTOCOLS

- 6.1 Nil

7. RELATED PROCEDURES

- 7.1 Nil

8. RELATED LEGISLATION

- 8.1 Biosecurity Act 2015

- 8.2 Biodiversity Conversation Act 2016

9. ATTACHMENTS

9.1 Nil

10. RESOURCES

10.1 Wollondilly Weed Management Strategy 2020-2025

10.2 Greater Sydney Regional Weed Management Plan 2017-2022

10.3 NSW Invasive Species Plan 2018-2021

11. IMPLEMENTATION STATEMENT

11.1 To ensure this policy is implemented effectively, Council will employ a variety of strategies involving awareness, education and training. These strategies will be aimed at all council representatives.

12. POLICY HISTORY

12.1 Date First Adopted	## / ## / 2020
12.2 Most Recent Adoption	## / ## / 2020
12.3 Next Review Date	## / ## / ##
12.4 Responsible Officer	Manager Environmental Outcomes