



CORPORATE POLICY STATEMENT NO. 14

WEEDS MANAGEMENT

May 2022

1. OBJECTIVE

To provide direction and guidance for the management of weeds on lands managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA or the department).

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to weed management programs undertaken on land managed under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act), *Swan and Canning River Management Act 2006* (SCRM Act) and the *Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority Act 1998* (BGPA Act). It also applies to unallocated Crown land (UCL) and unmanaged reserves (UMR) outside the Metropolitan area, regional centres and townsites on which the department manages weeds under a 2004 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH), where resources are available and subject to native title considerations.

Application of this policy is the responsibility of staff engaged in planning, implementing, supervising, monitoring, or reviewing weed management activities, as well as contractors and volunteers.

3. CONTEXT

The department coordinates and implements weed management on department-managed lands for a range of reasons including:

- to protect and maintain key environmental and other assets/values;
- as a good neighbour to adjoining landholders;
- to comply with legislation and codes;
- to reduce the economic impacts of weeds; and
- to reduce the impact weeds have or might have on public use and enjoyment of land.

Weeds pose a serious threat to natural ecosystems and the native species they support. The presence of weeds may drive the loss of biodiversity through species competition and/or disruption to ecosystem processes. This is particularly relevant where the presence of weeds alters fire periodicity or intensity outside the natural limits of particular species. The presence of weeds may also impact on cultural, social, economic, scientific and aesthetic assets/values.

Management of weeds on CALM Act, SCRM Act and BGPA Act lands and the aforementioned UCL and UMR focuses on reducing the impacts of existing weed populations on key assets and values. Where key assets are potentially threatened by new incursions, the department will seek to eradicate these (for example, on island reserves free of weeds) as cost-effectively as possible, and in partnership with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), where relevant.

There are several pathways for weed spread into and within Western Australia. These include planned and unplanned human activities, and by means such as water, wind, and native and feral animals. Some of these pathways are more amenable to management intervention than others. Management measures may differ for different areas, circumstances and weed species, depending upon the potential impacts and feasibility of controlling introduction and spread. The department will prioritise its management efforts based primarily on species-led and asset-protection-led management programs to maximise effective use of available resources. In addition, priorities may also be determined as a response to community issues and legislative requirements.

This policy is consistent with Western Australia's State Weed Plan and the Australian Weeds Strategy 2017-2027.

Further background information and management principles that inform and support this policy are outlined in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 defines key terms.

4. LEGISLATION

The department has responsibilities for the conservation and protection of biodiversity and biodiversity components under the provisions of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* and the requirement to manage weeds via the functions of the CEO under section 33(1)(d) of the CALM Act. For land managed under the CALM Act, these responsibilities are typically integrated into departmental activities through the management objectives specified in area management plans relating to the purpose(s) of the land (refer to sections 33(3)(a) and 56 of the CALM Act). Where there is no such management plan, operations may be undertaken under section 33(3)(b), or as otherwise provided for in section 56(1) depending on tenure.

The Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority (BGPA) is constituted under the BGPA Act for the care, control and management of Kings Park and Botanic Garden (reserve A1720 except Perth lots 64 and 65) and Bold Park (reserve A45409), in accordance with publicly endorsed management plans, and is responsible for administering the Botanic Gardens and Parks Regulations 1999.

The BGPA Act identifies functions and powers that underpin the management of Bold Park and Kings Park including the State's Botanic Garden, including to conserve and enhance the native biological diversity of the designated lands.

DPIRD is responsible for administering the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act) and regulations. The object of the BAM Act is to control the entry, establishment, spread and impact of organisms that have or may have an adverse effect on other organisms, human beings, the environment, agricultural activities, fishing or pearling activities, or related commercial activities. Under the BAM Act, the Minister for Agriculture and Food may declare such organisms as declared pests.

Plants can be declared as *declared pests* under section 22 of the BAM Act¹, which binds the Crown and requires consultation between DPIRD and respective departments. DBCA acknowledges its responsibilities under the BAM Act and seeks to achieve weed management objectives within its available resources. The department also acknowledges that it is unrealistic to expect all weeds to be fully controlled on, or eradicated from, CALM Act lands, the aforementioned UCL and UMR, SCRM Act lands and BGPA Act lands.

The Department of Health is responsible for administering the Health (Pesticides) Regulations 2011 (H(P) Regulations). These regulations outline the requirements for managing public health risks associated with the use of pesticides in Western Australia including training, signage and reporting requirements.

The Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety is responsible for administering the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* (WHS Act) and the *Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022* (WHS Regulations). The WHS Act and Regulations place certain duties of care for safety and health at the workplace on employers and employees. It also places emphasis on the duties of care for the prevention of accidents and injury or harm.

DBCA acknowledges its responsibilities under the H(P)Regulations, WHS Act and regulations, and will deliver the department's weed management activities in accordance with these requirements.

5. POLICY

Consistent with broader departmental objectives and priorities, and within the resources available to it, the department will:

- 5.1 identify priority weeds for management action;
- 5.2 minimise the impact of priority weeds on key environmental assets and values;
- 5.3 minimise the risk of priority weed spread via high-risk pathways, including roads and infrastructure corridors, and seek to identify and protect those areas currently free of priority and alert weeds;
- 5.4 minimise the influence of weeds on bushfire risk and the alteration of fire regimes, through hazard mitigation strategies;
- 5.5 evaluate and act on opportunities to undertake post-fire weed control to facilitate native species regeneration in key areas;
- 5.6 act in accordance with the department's Good Neighbour Policy and Guideline;
- 5.7 build capacity for effective management of priority weeds by integrating and coordinating control activities, and develop partnerships with other agencies, landholders and key stakeholders where there are mutual benefits;
- 5.8 monitor, review and continuously improve the effectiveness of weed management programs;
- 5.9 contribute to raising community and stakeholder awareness of the threat posed by weeds, and appropriate risk management strategies; and
- 5.10** incorporate and promote new research findings and treatment technologies for weeds, where appropriate.

¹ refer to the Western Australian Organism List maintained by DPIRD - www.agric.wa.gov.au/organisms

6. STANDARDS

This policy will be supported by a range of subsidiary and other documents (some to be developed and/or revised) and existing systems and programmes including:

- management guidelines;
- standard operating procedures;
- relevant planning checklists, including the Disturbance Assessment System (DAS);
- management plans;
- biodiversity management programs;
- threatened species recovery plans; and
- monitoring protocols.

Appendix 3 lists other relevant policies and guidelines the department will have regard for when undertaking weed management activities.

7. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

To implement this policy the department will endeavour to:

7.1 Identify priority weed species and key assets/values at risk

- Apply, maintain and review a prioritisation process that identifies and rates weed species based on potential impacts and invasiveness, and that considers legislative obligations, key environmental and other assets/values at risk, including threatened species and recovery programs, and feasibility of achieving eradication or control.
- Apply, maintain and review surveillance and mapping/recording systems for monitoring priority weed status and management activities, within available resources.
- Identify, and where possible monitor, other weed species present in Western Australia that have the potential for undesirable impacts (alert and sleeper species).

7.2 Weed management

- Develop and maintain plans, guidelines, standard operating procedures and protocols, informed by operational and research knowledge, to guide staff in prioritising the allocation of available resources.
- As appropriate, place conditions on approvals for planned disturbance operations to: i) minimise the impacts of existing weed populations on key assets and values; ii) minimise the risk of introduction and spread of weeds; and if required, to iii) undertake weed management activities.
- Develop and review information on priority weeds including the identification, distribution, preventative hygiene and control methods, and as appropriate, make this available to relevant staff, contractors and stakeholders.

7.3 Training and certification

- Ensure relevant staff undertake the department's mandatory Weed Management course which provides them with the necessary knowledge and skills to plan and undertake safe, effective and coordinated management of priority weeds.
- Ensure relevant staff undertake the department's mandatory Weed Management Basics course which provides them with the necessary knowledge and skills to undertake safe, effective and coordinated management of priority weeds.
- Ensure contractors, volunteers and partner organisations have the necessary knowledge, skills and, as required, certification to develop plans and undertake safe, effective and coordinated management of priority weeds on department-managed lands.

7.4 Expertise and research

- Undertake and promote research into the identification, distribution, biology, ecology, impact and control of priority weeds.

7.5 Capacity building and consultation

- Build capacity for effective management of priority weeds by integrating and coordinating planning and control activities, and partner with other landholders and organisations where combined efforts will have the greatest public benefit and continue to develop partnerships in this regard.
- Cooperate with other relevant agencies to ensure requirements for notification of weed species are met, and as appropriate, participate in biosecurity and containment efforts.
- Liaise with relevant agencies and stakeholders to facilitate knowledge transfer, awareness raising and capacity building, for managing the spread of priority weeds.
- As appropriate, represent Western Australian weed issues to Commonwealth Government bodies such as the Environment and Invasive Committee and the associated Weeds Working Group.

7.6 Improving performance

- Monitor, review and continuously improve the effectiveness and applicability of weed management techniques and strategies and implement adaptive management as required.

8. CUSTODIAN

The Executive Director Conservation and Ecosystem Management (CEM) is accountable for the dissemination and review of this policy statement.

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy across regional operations rests with the Executive Director Regional and Fire Management Services (RFMS).

The Executive Director Botanic Parks and Gardens is responsible for implementing the policy at Kings Park and Bold Park.

Responsibility for priority weed awareness-raising, training and the preparation of manuals and guidance notes rests with the Executive Director CEM, with assistance from Corporate and Business Services and RFMS.

The Executive Director Biodiversity and Conservation Science is responsible for ensuring relevant research is conducted and the results made available to inform weed management.

The Executive Director CEM, may establish groups involving representatives from relevant departmental divisions and others as required, to coordinate related activities, including implementation and review of this policy and related guidelines.

9. PUBLICATION

This policy will be made available on the department's website and intranet.

10. KEY WORDS

Weed, prioritisation, management, control, declared pest.

11. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed no later than December 2026.

12. APPROVAL

Approved by



Mark Webb
DIRECTOR GENERAL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Date: 12 May 2022

POLICY BACKGROUND

1. BACKGROUND

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA or the department) has statutory responsibility under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act) s33 (1)(d) to promote, encourage and facilitate the conservation, protection and management of biodiversity and biodiversity components in the State. The requirement to manage weeds in the State's national parks and other reserves, which cover a total area of around 27 million hectares. The department is also responsible, under a Memorandum Of Understanding (2004) with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, for the management of weeds on a further 91 million hectares of unallocated Crown land and unmanaged reserves outside the metropolitan area, regional centres and townsites, where resources are available and subject to native title considerations.

The number of known weed species in Western Australia has been steadily increasing since European colonisation, with over 1360 weed (alien) taxa (over 1330 alien species) currently recorded. Without active management of known spread pathways, this list will likely continue to grow and if key assets/values are not protected from priority weed threats, there is an increased risk of species extinction, disruption to ecosystem processes and adverse impacts on the unique character of many places treasured by the community.

2. MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING PRINCIPLES

In managing the threat of weeds to the State's biodiversity and other key assets/values, the department considers the following principles:

- Weed management should be considered as an integral part of all land management.
- Prevention, early detection and eradication of new weeds are the most efficient and cost-effective means of minimising their impacts.
- Investment in weed control should be prioritised on key assets/values at risk and consider the degree to which management can improve the condition of an asset/value and be successful in the longer-term, given the likely cost and techniques/resources available.
- Priorities for control rely on the provision of a clear definition of the outcomes sought, i.e. specific impacts need to be identified so that the purpose of weed control is clear, and it is possible to evaluate success.
- The application of integrated weed management (where more than one control technique is used) may improve overall cost-effectiveness, and the likelihood that management will be successful.
- Decision making should be informed by operational and scientific knowledge, and control programs should be based on an adaptive management approach to ensure continuous development and improvement, based on a framework incorporating monitoring, evaluation, feedback and, as appropriate, change.
- Successful weed management requires a sustained, long-term commitment.
- Coordination between government agencies, industries, landholders and other stakeholders is necessary to establish the requisite research, educational and legislative framework, and typically, cooperative arrangements for cross-tenure control programs are required for successful weed management.

GLOSSARY

In this policy:

Alert species means: a weed species that potentially has significant impacts and is:

- not found in Western Australia; or
- not found in a Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) administrative region but is known to exist in an adjacent region; or
- found in the region but not on land or waters managed by the department.

Asset means: an item of environmental, social, cultural or economic value to the community. Examples include:

- Environmental – flora, fauna, ecological communities;
- Social/Cultural – cultural heritage, recreational use of bushland, aesthetic beauty; and
- Economic – agricultural, horticultural and forest products.

Priority weed species means: weeds considered by the department to have the greatest impact on key assets/values, where management is feasible.

Sleeper species means: plants that have currently established only small, localised populations, but have the potential to spread widely and affect agricultural or natural environments. Environmental damage and control costs can be minimised if these weeds are eradicated, where feasible, or contained before they become widespread.

Weeds are plants (not necessarily non-native) that grow in sites where they are not wanted and which have undesirable environmental or economic impacts, or both. Weeds can reduce biodiversity, or adversely affect the integrity, conservation value and processes of ecosystems. They do this by, among other things:

- successfully out-competing native species for available nutrients, water, space and/or sunlight;
- replacing the native plants that animals use for shelter, food and/or nesting;
- impacting on native plants or animals due to toxins or excluding animals from usual habitats because of thorns or other adverse habit;
- providing habitat for introduced animal pests; and
- altering fire regimes, potentially causing a change in fire intensities, and possibly altering their seasonality and frequency.

As defined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU 2004) between the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage and DBCA, the following definitions apply in relation to the unallocated Crown land and unmanaged reserves where DBCA has responsibilities to implement weed management programs (where resources permit).

Metropolitan area: means the Perth metropolitan region, as defined by section 6 of the *Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act 1959*.

Townsite: means townsites (within the meaning given by section 26 of the *Land Administration Act 1997*), outside of the metropolitan area and regional centres.

Regional centre: means cities (within the meaning given by section 2.4 of the *Local Government Act 1995*) outside of the metropolitan area.

RELATED POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

The department will have regard for the following in conducting weed management programs:

RELATED CORPORATE POLICIES

- Policy 3 Management of *Phytophthora* disease
- Policy 4 Environmental Offsets
- Policy 15 Volunteers and community involvement
- Policy 18 Recreation, tourism and visitor services
- Policy 19 Fire management
- Policy 28 Science
- Policy 35 Conserving threatened species and ecological communities
- Policy 56 Risk management
- Policy 60 Health, safety and wellbeing
- Policy 62 Identification and management of wilderness and surrounding areas
- Policy 65 Good Neighbour policy (and Good Neighbour guidelines)
- Policy 88 Prescribed burning

Other relevant documents²

- *Guidelines for the safe use of pesticides in non-agricultural workplaces*, 2007 (Department of Health)
- Public Sector Circular (PSC) 88 *Use of herbicides in water catchment areas*, 2007 (Department of Health)
- DPLH – DBCA Memorandum of understanding for the management of UCL and UMR (DBCA)

² text in parentheses is the agency with primary responsibility for administering the document