



ILLAWARRA DISTRICT WEEDS AUTHORITY

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ANNUAL REPORT

2022 – 2023

Illawarra District Weeds Authority

Chairperson's Message

2022/23 marked the third year of the Weeds Action Program (WAP) - 2020-2025.

After many years of debate concerning the grant allocations provided to the IDWA, \$137,150.00 was allocated by Local Land Services to the Illawarra District Weeds Authority (IDWA) for the 2022/23 financial year. This funding allocation represented a 35% increase to the IDWA based on 21/22 allocations and was final recognition by the funding body that the IDWA was indeed a high risk weed area and needed to be funded appropriately to address the weed risk it posed to the rest of the region.

With funding allocations finally being addressed, 2022/23 proved to be a more productive year on both the weather front and with respect to easing COVID restrictions.

Specifically, over the last 12 months the IDWA inspected and controlled priority weeds along 703 km of high-risk pathways, 150 km of priority pathway and managed and protected 31 priority sites from widespread priority weeds. 128 ha of priority weeds were controlled across all inspected council reserves. 1,850 parcels of land were inspected including 931 parcels under private or State ownership and 906 under council management. 13 extension visits were made to private landowners, along with 178 high risk sites inspected and 135 compliance reinspection's undertaken.

Private works to the value of \$79,613.00 were generated along with \$69,872.00 in additional grant funds.

Reflecting the high risk weed status of the Illawarra region a total of 86 high risk weed incursions were inspected and controlled over the last 12 months. Inspections for the State listed priority weed species Frogbit, Parthenium weed, Boneseed and Alligator weed were made. Detecting these plants before they become naturalised is key to managing the biosecurity risk and impact these weeds present and preventing their further spread.

Ongoing surveillance and control have continued on the Parthenium weed outbreak in Kiama with financial assistance from both the NSW DPI and SE LLS. This was the first time this weed has been found in SE NSW and was detected by a vigilant landowner.

The IDWA has continued to adopt alternate technologies to replace aerial spraying as part of the Bitou bush program. The use of drones was continued at Bass Point in May and expanded to include Walkers Beach in Kiama. It is hoped the program will be expanded once again in 2023/24. Drones are being considered as a viable and sustainable option for Bitou bush control due to their ability to undertake targeted surveillance and control.

The IDWA continued its involvement in a remote detection technologies project that aims to evaluate the opportunities and limitations of high-resolution colour, multi spectral and hyperspectral technologies across various airborne platforms (drone, satellite etc). The project will run for 3 years and will educate and assist weed managers to use remote detection technology for a range of weeds and invaded landscapes, hopefully improving the mapping and management of weeds in both environmental and agricultural systems.

In another first for the Authority, staff were involved in the coordination and release of a biological control agent for African boxthorn. The first release in Australia of an agent on African boxthorn, it is hoped the agent's establishment will reduce the vigour of established plants and in turn the risk of further invasion of this species throughout the Illawarra.

In a positive move for the Authority the position of temporary full time weed spray operator was made permanent in February 2023 with Mr Mathew De Faveri being offered the position. The employment of a third member of staff to the IDWA's operations will be a major boost to the Authority's operational capability.

The Authority met on four occasions during 2022/23, with this period providing plenty of matters for the Authority's consideration. The committee continued to be of great assistance with both policy and technical support and I would like to thank all members for their ongoing commitment to the successful operation of the Authority.

As we commence operations for the fourth year of WAP 3 (2020-25) the IDWA will strive to deliver on key Policy and Management Plan outcomes. Ongoing implementation of the Biosecurity Act and ensuring the continued development of a meaningful and evidence based WAP 2025 will ensure the Authority is kept busy over the next 12 months.

I am pleased to have had the opportunity to Chair the IDWA over the last 12 months and I would like to express my thanks to all of those who have been involved with the Authority over this time.

Councillor Cath Blakey

Illawarra District Weeds Authority

**Weed Control Program Report 2022/23
Summary of Activities and Outcomes from
01 July 2022 – 30 June 2023**

**A Final Report for the constituent member councils of the IDWA
Wollongong City Council, Shellharbour City Council and Kiama
Municipal Council**

Covering page and General Manager Endorsement

A Final Report prepared for the constituent member councils of the IDWA on activities
completed from
July 2022- June 2023

Name of Organisation	Illawarra District Weeds Authority
Address	PO Box 148 Kiama 2533

Administrative contact (name, position, fax, phone)	<i>Mr David Pomery Chief Weeds Officer Ph 02 4233 1129 email: dpomery@isjo.nsw.gov.au</i>
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Technical contact (name, position, fax, phone)	<i>Mr David Pomery Chief Weeds Officer Ph 02 4233 1129 email: dpomery@isjo.nsw.gov.au</i>
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Total Amount of funds received (Income)	<i>Grant - \$137,150.00 Council - \$179,889.00</i>	For financial year/s	2022-2023
	TOTAL- \$317,039.00		

Funds Expended	TOTAL
Reporting / Administration	\$47,167.00
Property Inspections (Including compliance)	\$139,297.00
WAP Priorities	\$110,325.00
Widespread Weed Control	\$39,030.00
TOTAL	\$335,819.00

DECLARATION

I hereby certify that all moneys paid have been expended or incurred by way of expenditure solely on priority weed management activities as defined in the NSW Weeds Action Program policy documents and conditions.

Signature of responsible officer of organisation	
Printed name	David Pomery
Position in Organisation	Chief Weeds Officer
Contact Telephone Number	02 4233 1129
Date	14 th November 2023

Report on Weed Control Coordination Assistance 2022/2023

Outcomes and results from July 2022-June 2023
A Final Report prepared for the constituent member councils of the IDWA.

Name Of Organisation	Illawarra District Weeds Authority
Address	PO Box 148 Kiama NSW 2533
Administrative contact (name, position, fax, phone)	David Pomery Chief Weeds Officer Ph: 42 331129 Email: dpomery@isjo.nsw.gov.au
Technical contact (name, position, fax, phone)	David Pomery Chief Weeds Officer Ph: 42 331129 Email: dpomery@isjo.nsw.gov.au

FINANCIAL REPORT

Activity	Expenditure
Reporting / Administration	\$47,167.00
Property inspections – Including compliance	\$139,297.00
WAP Priorities	
Publicity	\$4,421.00
Training	\$9,154.00
High Risk Sites	\$13,637.00
High Risk Pathways	\$21,656.00
Management of Priority sites & Pathways	\$48,876.00
Management of State Priority weeds	\$10,507.00
Monitor online sales	\$2,074.00
Total	\$296,789.00*

* Includes on costs

Printed name	David Pomery
Position in Organisation	Chief Weeds Officer
Contact Telephone Number	02-42 331129
Date	14th November 2023

Report on Weed Control Operational Assistance 2022/2023

Outcomes and results from July 2022-June 2023
A Final Report prepared for the constituent member councils of the IDWA.

Name Of Organisation	Illawarra District Weeds Authority
Address	PO Box 148 Kiama NSW 2533
Administrative contact (name, position, fax, phone)	David Pomery Chief Weeds Officer Ph: 42 331129 E mail: dpomery@isjo.nsw.gov.au
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FINANCIAL REPORT

Weeds	Control of other biosecurity weeds on council roadsides (km)	Control of other biosecurity weeds on council lands (ha)
Widespread weed control	- 30km	- 128ha

Total Expenditure	\$39,030.00*
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* Includes on costs

Printed name	David Pomery
Position in Organisation	Chief Weeds Officer
Contact Telephone Number	02-42 331129
Date	14th November 2023

Other Programs Report

Vacant Crown Land Program

Income:

Vacant Crown Lands Grant -	\$58,465.00
Council contribution -	\$14,541.00

TOTAL **\$73,006.00**

Expenditure:

Contractors	\$51,865.00
IDWA staff VCL contract	\$6,600.00
IDWA staff control	\$12,708.00
IDWA administration	\$ 1,833.00

TOTAL **\$73,006.00**

Funding for Bitou Bush control was approved by the NSW Department of Industry – Lands and Forestry for Weed Control on Crown Land at the following sites in 2022/23.:

1. Perkins beach Port Kembla (\$23,100.00)
2. Bevans Island Lake Illawarra (\$11,715.00)
3. Bass Point Reserve, Shellharbour (\$23,650.00)

Under this funding the IDWA has been able to undertake additional priority weed control programs throughout the district. These programs, primarily aimed at Bitou Bush, have been essential in ensuring a co-ordinated and strategic approach to Bitou Bush within the local area is achieved. They have helped achieve the stated aims of National, State, Regional and local action plans by –

1. Supporting landholders in a collective program to contain the spread of Bitou Bush.
2. Ensuring funds are targeted to species management where it will deliver the greatest benefit (i.e., asset protection).
3. Developing and implementing programs to reduce environmental degradation and the loss of biodiversity through weed invasion (i.e., NSW Threat Abatement Plan for Key Threatening Processes).
4. Preventing the spread of Bitou Bush within the local area.
5. Reducing the area and distribution of Bitou Bush within the local area.

As with any weed control program, on-going control over several years will be required to control any regrowth or missed plants, and prevent previous time and expense being wasted.

Parthenium weed New Incursion Assistance funds.

Income:

NSW Department of Primary Industry	\$7,000.00
LLS contribution -	\$4,407.00
Council contribution	\$2,500.00

TOTAL **\$13,907.00**

Expenditure:

IDWA administration and inspection	\$5,959.00
IDWA staff control	\$2,032.00

TOTAL **\$7,991.00**

The primary purpose of the Parthenium weed New Incursion Assistance funds were to assist the Illawarra District Weeds Authority (IDWA) in the Biosecurity management of the State listed Prohibited Matter plant, Parthenium weed.

Parthenium weed was detected as a new incursion for the SE Local Land Services region in December 2020 on a rural property in Kiama. The purpose of this program was to undertake a coordinated and strategic approach to eradicating Parthenium weed from the area. The funds provided for the program were a grant to support costs associated with work to manage Parthenium weed from the area it was found. Management of Parthenium weed involved using best practice within the legislative framework of the *NSW Biosecurity Act 2015*.

Bald Hill Boneseed Program

Income:

Local Land Services - \$4,000.00

TOTAL **\$4,000.00**

Expenditure:

Contractors \$4,000.00

TOTAL **\$4,000.00**

The IDWA was provided funding of \$16,000.00 (ex GST) over three years beginning July 2020 and finishing June 2023 to assist in the eradication of the State listed Priority Control Order weed Boneseed. The funds were provided by Southeast Local Land Services (SELLS), with \$4,000.00 allocated in the 2022/23 financial year.

A significant infestation of Boneseed is located along the cliff lines on the southern boundary of the Royal National Park at Bald Hill Stanwell Tops. Previous efforts at control undertaken by NSW NPWS achieved some good initial results, however further funding was required to support these initial efforts and ensure the weed was effectively managed and eventually eradicated from this site. The funding provided will be used over a period of three years to assist in employing the services of an experienced, suitably qualified and accredited contractor capable of delivering effective weed management in cliff line situations. NSW NPWS will support the funding provided with an annual \$2,000.00 cash contribution and \$1,000.00 in kind. The IDWA will provide coordination and financial management of the program.

Boneseed control has been undertaken throughout other areas in the Illawarra and south coast, and in the Greater Sydney LLS by NPWS and other stakeholders. The Bald Hill Boneseed program aims to support these efforts and contribute to the eradication objective as required under Biosecurity (Boneseed) Control Order 2017 (Biosecurity Act 2015).

Private works

Income:	\$79,613.00
Expenditure:	
Labour:	\$ 26,367.00
Administration:	\$ 7,215.00
Material / Chemicals:	\$2,548.00
VRC:	\$ 4,269.00
TOTAL	<u>\$40,399.00</u>
PROFIT:	\$39,214.00

The IDWA has a policy to promote the use of Authority plant for contract weed control for private and government landholders. This policy allows for continuous and efficient use of resources. When demand exceeds resources, the IDWA will employ sub-contractors for either the public or private works.

Aim:

To provide an efficient and effective private works capability.

Outcomes:

The IDWA generated an annual gross income from commercial spraying operations in 2022/23 of \$79,613.00. Operating profit net of all expenses was \$39,214.00.

Local Land Services Roads and Reserve Program

Income:

Local Land Services - \$56,240.00

TOTAL **\$56,240.00**

Expenditure:

IDWA Staff control \$5,126.00
Contracts \$11,943.00

TOTAL **\$17,069.00**

\$56,240.00 was received from SELLS in April 2022 to undertake 5 projects addressing the highest priority weeds in the Illawarra.

1. **Bitou bush containment program** - Scarborough - \$27,000.00

A reasonably significant but isolated infestation of Bitou bush is found along a cliff line location at Scarborough, northern Wollongong. Access is extremely difficult and requires a combination of rope access and on ground control involving splatter gun / cut paint methods. The use of drone technology will also need to be used to target outlier plants not accessible by foot or rope. The funding provided will be used for the primary control of Bitou bush plants at the target site with the objective to fully control this infestation such that future operations will only require ongoing maintenance for regrowth/missed plants. This program is yet to commence.

2. **Giant Parramatta grass (GPG) roadside boom spraying** - \$5,000.00

The IDWA implements an annual roadside spraying program to control the regional priority weed GPG along its priority and high-risk pathways, so as to protect priority assets such as dairy farms from the invasion of this weed. Most of the work carried out involves spot spraying of infestations each autumn. Several council managed roads in the Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama LGAs have seen a marked increase in density of this weed such that they now require boom spraying to control. To support the annual spot spraying program and continue to protect priority assets which adjoin these roads, funding of \$5,000.00 has been secured to target identified roads using contractors equipped with boom spray apparatus. It is envisaged the boom spraying program will significantly reduce infestation levels such that future works will once again be incorporated into the annual spot spraying program. This program was completed 30 June 2023.

3. **Regional eradicate weeds program**- \$5,000.00.

In an effort to eradicate some of the highest risk weeds in the SE region, as detailed in the SE RSWMP, the IDWA sought funding of \$5,000.00 to undertake a thorough roadside and reserve spray control program to target known infestations of Groundsel bush, Ming asparagus, Pink Pampas grass, *Ludwigia peruviana* and *Ludwigia longifolia*. All plants are listed as regional priority weeds for eradication in the Southeast RSWMP and hence are of the highest priority to control. All plants are emerging weeds in the Illawarra and if not managed effectively could easily spread throughout the Illawarra and other parts of the SE where these weeds have not yet established. All plants are found to varying extent in the Illawarra and are normally targeted for control over the autumn months when actively growing and most visible. Funding was sought to deliver and fast track the eradication objective for these weeds. This program was completed 30 June 2023.

4. **Water hyacinth control program**. - \$7,000.00

Water hyacinth is listed as a state priority weed for containment under a Biosecurity Zone. In support of the containment approach at the State level, the IDWA has implemented its own containment/eradication strategy at the local level to prevent the weeds spread throughout the SE LLS region. By developing a strategic approach to management aimed at fully and continuously suppressing and destroying all infestations, aiming at local eradication where possible, it is hoped that prevention of spread of Water hyacinth will be achieved. In this respect funding was sought to help manage and /or eradicate two infestations of Water hyacinth found at Coomaditchie Lagoon and Jerarra dam, both listed EECs and high priority sites for weed control.

Both infestations of Water hyacinth are found in two large water bodies covering a total of 14 ha (Jerrara dam -9ha + Coomditchie Lagoon- 5 ha). Water hyacinth has been contained at Jerrara dam through an annual ongoing program of chemical control and physical removal where appropriate, however, being such a large water body access to outlier infestations has been difficult. The Coomaditchie Lagoon infestation is a new incursion and requires additional funding to effectively manage.

To ensure both infestations are effectively controlled a combination of boat access and on ground control involving high volume spraying is required. Due to limited funding, control via boat access has not been possible and hence full control of both these sites has been constrained. Additional funding was sought to undertake a boat spraying program that would see full control of remaining difficult to access plants with the objective of fully controlling both infestations so that future operations will only require ongoing maintenance for regrowth. This program was completed 30 June 2023.

5. **Alligator weed surveillance and control program**- \$12,240.00.

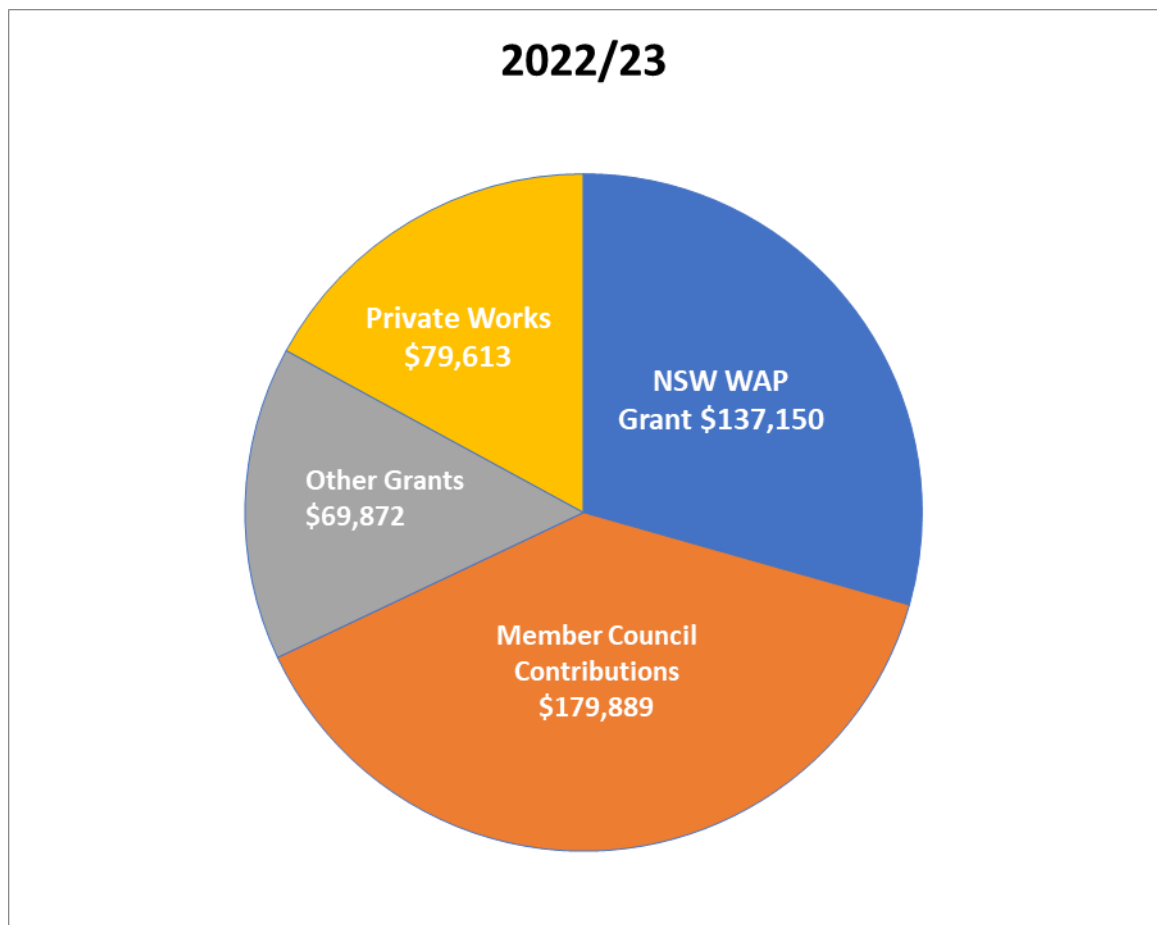
Funding for Alligator weed management was approved by SELLS to undertake surveillance and inspection activities on public and private land for the State listed aquatic weed Alligator weed. The program will focus on lands adjacent to know core infestation sites within the Dunmore wetlands where control and management programs will be put in place to suppress and limit the spread of the weed. This program is yet to commence.

IDWA SUMMARY

- Southeast Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2023-2027 updated and implemented with funding from the NSW Department of Primary Industries, constituent councils, Southeast Local Land Services and Department of Lands.
- Ongoing use and update of WeedMap Pro Summit Biosecurity mapping program to enable IDWA staff to become biosecurity information compliant and report monthly to the NSW Department of Primary Industries on inspections and control activities.
- 1,850 inspections undertaken across all lands within the three-member council areas.
931 inspections on both public (State owned) and private land.
906 inspections undertaken on council managed lands.
13 extension activities with private landholders.
- 178 High Risk sites inspected.
703 km of high-risk pathways inspected and treated for priority weeds.
336 council managed sites controlled for one or more priority weed.
150 km of priority pathways inspected and treated for priority weeds.
128 ha of priority weeds treated in council managed reserves.
31 priority sites managed and protected from widespread priority weeds.
- Eight-six (86) State priority weed incursion sites inspected and controlled for Prohibited Matter species Frogbit and Parthenium weed, Control Order plant Boneseed, and Biosecurity zone aquatic Alligator weed.
- Coordinated Parthenium weed rapid response plan. Dog detection unit employed to assist surveillance measures.
- Partner in Remote detection of weeds technology project using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV).
- Continued the use of drone technology at Bass Point reserve and Walkers Beach Gerringong, as an alternate to the aerial spraying of Bitou bush.
- Two (2) media releases issued and supporting social media articles written. Two media interviews held. Two (2) community talks given, and 13 extension visits made. "Weed Watch" articles posted online.
- Implemented annual Crown Lands weed control program.
- Coordinated and participated in an Australian first release of a biological control agent for African boxthorn.
- Constituent council contributions of \$179,889.00 received and supported with NSW Weeds Action Program Grant funding of \$137,150.00 to implement inspectorial and operational programs.
- Three full time staff employed across operational, inspectorial, and administrative roles. Casual staff employed on a .4 x FTE.
- Secured funding of an additional \$69,872.00 for the region through other grant sources.

- Annual gross income of \$79,613.00 generated from private works / commercial spraying operations.

IDWA Income 2022/23



Illawarra District Weeds Authority

**Weed Control Co-ordination and Extension Program Report 2022/23
01 July 2022 – 30 June 2023**

A Final Report prepared for the constituent member councils of the IDWA.

Executive Summary

The Illawarra District Weeds Authority (IDWA) representing the local government areas of Wollongong City, Shellharbour City and Kiama Municipal Councils, has over the past 12 months continued to develop and implement an active priority weed control program throughout each of the member council areas.

In maintaining a co-operative regional based approach to priority weed control where funding is linked to outcomes, the IDWA has consolidated the work of previous years and addressed several key issues to ensure the Authority's Aims and Objectives are achieved. These issues may be summarised as follows:

- Participated in the update of the Southeast Local Land Services Regional Weeds Management Strategy 2023-2027 and implemented the Illawarra component of the strategy.
- Identified a priority list of high-risk weeds; developed a regional inspection and control program; targeted high-risk pathways and sites.
- Secured New Weed Incursion funding of \$11,407.00 to assist in the management of Prohibited Matter- Parthenium weed. Coordinated Parthenium weed rapid response plan including the utilisation of the dog detection unit to assist surveillance measures.
- Secured an additional \$69,872.00 through other grant sources to assist in the control of State and regionally listed priority weeds.
- Regional and local weed control programs for private landholders and government agencies have continued to be given high priority with 931 parcels of private and state land inspected, including 135 compliance re- inspections.
- Improved co-operation between stakeholders is being addressed through representation on State, regional and local weeds committees.
- Two (2) media related articles were written, and two (2) interviews held. Two (2) community extension activities were undertaken. 13 extension visits were made to landholders and residents to provide weed biosecurity information.
- Staff development programs were maintained with staff attending a Biocontrol workshop and Weeds Big Day Out workshop. Training included TfNSW Worker on foot Certificate and White card- Construction Induction.
- Operational programs have continued to be maintained, expanding as time and resources permit, thereby complementing the inspectorial program and allowing the Authority to continue to lead by example. 906 parcels of council-controlled lands were inspected of which 336 were found to have an infestation of one or more priority weed. 882 km of roadsides and high-risk pathways were inspected and treated for one or more priority weeds. 128 ha of reserve lands were controlled. Thirty-one (31) priority sites have been managed and protected.
- Casual staff employed to undertake private works operational programs across the three-member council areas. Full time Weeds Operator time primarily directed to local government operational activities. Full time Weeds Inspector time directed to coordination and inspectorial activities. Chief Weeds Officer time directed to coordination, management, and administrative tasks.

Control Authority Aims

Aim:

- To provide a framework for dealing with weeds biosecurity risk in the community and ensure compliance with legislation.

Objectives:

- To develop a Biosecurity Weed Control Policy and Management Plan. This plan will provide guidance as to how each priority weed needs to be managed and the expected outcomes needed to ensure landholders meet their obligations and responsibilities under the Biosecurity Act 2015.

Goals:

- To reduce the biosecurity impact of priority weeds on the community, economy and environment of the Illawarra region by establishing mechanisms to:
 - (i) prevent the establishment of new weeds.
 - (ii) eradicate or otherwise contain the spread of emerging weeds.
 - (iii) manage the impact of existing widespread weeds.
 - (iv) ensure public awareness of the impacts of invasive weeds is enhanced and community wide capacity in sharing responsibility for managing weed biosecurity risk within the local control authority area is improved.
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Private Property Inspection Program

The IDWA private property inspection program is primarily aimed at voluntary compliance with all landholders. The IDWA is, however, legally obliged to ensure compliance with the provisions of Sections 22 - 26 of the Biosecurity Act 2015, which state that any person who deals with Biosecurity matter and who knows, or ought to reasonably know, the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed by the biosecurity matter, has a General Biosecurity Duty (GBD) to ensure that so far as practicable, the biosecurity risk is prevented, eliminated or minimised. The General Biosecurity Duty supports the principle of shared responsibility and means everyone is doing what is reasonable for them to do to prevent, eliminate or minimise biosecurity risks.

Consistent with the risk-based approach of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* the IDWA private property inspection program involves undertaking strategic property inspections that prioritise high risk sites over properties that do not require as regular an inspection regime. Inspection regimes are risk-based and reduce the need for arbitrary inspections of properties in low-risk areas. Inspection programs as such focus surveillance and inspection activities at high-risk areas using tools such as pathway analysis to determine appropriate inspection intervals.

The core **aim** of the IDWA private property inspection program is to:

1. To prevent the establishment of all Prohibited Matter as listed in Schedule 2 of the Biosecurity Act 2015.
2. Eradicate all State regulated Control Order weeds as detailed in Biosecurity (Boneseed) Control Order 2017; Biosecurity (Tropical Soda Apple) Control Order 2017, Biosecurity (Pakinsonia) Control Order 2017 and Biosecurity (Chinese Violet) Control Order 2019.
3. Eradicate or otherwise contain the spread of Biosecurity Zone weeds Alligator weed, Water hyacinth and Bitou bush.
4. Prevent, eradicate, contain, or otherwise minimise the biosecurity risk of all regional priority weeds on private lands throughout the local control authority area.
5. Undertake local weed control programs to protect local assets.
6. Locate and identify high risk New Incursions and implement appropriate management strategies based on a rigorous weed risk assessment and prioritisation process.

In undertaking its private property inspection program over the past 12 months the IDWA has endeavoured to meet its stated aims and objectives through implementing a coordinated and strategic program of risk-based inspections.

Specifically, the IDWA undertook the following actions in relation to its private property inspectorial program in 2022/23:

Summary of Achievements

Inspections conducted:

Total number inspections:	931
Compliance reinspections:	135

Specific Inspections for high-risk weeds

To assist in the early detection of high risk weeds the IDWA prioritises its inspection program on High-Risk Pathways and High-Risk Sites.

High Risk Pathways can be any linear feature in the landscape where weeds are spreading within/towards a significant asset or further along the linear feature. They are generally heavily trafficked, being main road, rail and river corridors that have a high risk of new weed incursions being introduced from external sources.

High Risk Sites are where weeds *will always have the potential to show up and the potential to spread*. High risk sites are comprised of nurseries, showgrounds, pony clubs, weekend markets, aquaria / pet shops, stock and produce outlets, waste disposal, and recycle centres, all found throughout the Illawarra region.

High risk sites can also include parcels of land where a State listed Priority weed has been found. Such sites cover private, state and local government lands and include properties with infestations of Boneseed, Alligator weed, Parthenium weed and Frogbit. These sites have a high risk of being a source for the spread and distribution of the highest risk weeds.

The frequency of inspections on specific high-risk sites or high-risk pathways is determined by a risk analysis type approach that considers a range of factors including history of prior weed incursions having been found, level of activity/use and proximity to nearby high risk weed locations. In this respect, high risk pathways and sites may be inspected annually or 2- 3 times within a twelve-month period depending on the risk /threat they pose.

And noting that the majority of high risk weed spread is a direct result of human activities the IDWA inspection program is prioritised on high-risk pathways and sites involving human activity. Being the most prolific form of weed spread it is also the one that is the most preventable and cost effective.

Summary of Achievements

Specific Inspections Conducted:

High Risk sites inspected :(No.)	178
High Risk Pathways inspected (km)	703 km
Inspections for State Priority Weeds	86

Use of Enforcement Procedures for Priority Weed Control

For the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, 1,850 inspections were conducted across all land tenures, requiring 135 compliance re-inspections. Of the 135 compliance reinspection's six (6) Individual Biosecurity Direction notices were issued. These notices were issued only after it was apparent the relevant owner/occupier/s were making no attempt/or an insufficient effort to control the designated priority weed/s as required.

One Individual Biosecurity Undertaking was offered and accepted. No Section 133 Entries were undertaken.

To date, the Constituent Councils have preferred to exercise their power under Section 133 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* and enter problem properties and undertake all necessary control works at that time, rather than implementing costly and time-consuming court procedures against the landholder.

To ensure that owners and occupiers of land carry out their obligations to control priority weeds the Constituent Councils through the IDWA prefer to achieve this objective in the first instance through a voluntary compliance approach. Failure to reach reasonable consensus however, will (and has) resulted in council exercising its legal powers to ensure compliance. Prosecution will be undertaken at this time if deemed appropriate by the full committee of the IDWA. Alternatively, a Section 133 Entry will be undertaken (as has been the case to date).

Further, the IDWA will also be implementing on-the-spot fines (SEINS) for offences under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. This action will again be undertaken only if consensus cannot be reached with the landholder to undertake control works on the identified priority weed(s).

Summary of Enforcement Actions

Parthenium weed

Number of Individual Biosecurity Directions	-
Number of Individual Biosecurity Undertakings	1
Section 133 Entry	-

Bitou bush

Number of Individual Biosecurity Direction notices:	1
Section 133 Entry	-

Mysore thorn

Number of Individual Biosecurity Direction notices:	1
Section 133 Entry	-

Gorse

Number of Individual Biosecurity Direction notices:	1
Section 133 Entry	-

Cats Claw creeper

Number of Individual Biosecurity Direction notices:	1
Section 133 Entry	-

Rhus tree

Number of Individual Biosecurity Direction notices:	2
Section 133 Entry	-

Weed Recording, Mapping and Reporting Activities

Aim:

To compile accurate and concise information on the distribution of priority weeds in the region over time, providing a benchmark for which performance can be measured and appropriate action undertaken.

Outcomes:

As part of the NSW Weeds Action Program (WAP), the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has developed a standardised mapping program for the state, known as the Biosecurity Information System (BIS). This program is designed to improve identification, diagnostics, surveillance coordination, and reporting capacity for strategic weed management. The BIS program includes the BIS Metadata Procedure which provides standards for data collection to ensure reports are consistent throughout.

Data submitted using this procedure will be used to prepare consistent reports that measure real gains in weed management for all stakeholders. These reports will ensure each stakeholder has access to coordinated data and mapping information for weed management undertaken in their region and across the state.

The BIS was rolled out state-wide in August 2016. To support this process, the IDWA purchased the Weed Map Pro Summit Biosecurity mapping system. Weed Map Pro is fully compliant with the NSW Biosecurity Act Weeds Metadata standard, WAP and BIS reporting requirements. Monthly reporting to the BIS commenced on 1 July 2017.

Despite operating and reporting under the BIS program for over 6 years, ongoing concerns by some member councils over the request for ownership data as part of the BIS program continue to persist. These concerns have unfortunately impeded the IDWA in its ability to effectively manage and record its surveillance and recording activities across its area of jurisdiction. Whilst these details are for IDWA internal use only, it has been expressed that electronic access to ownership information external to council is restricted and the IDWA is not eligible. For the IDWA to effectively carry out its functions under the Biosecurity Act 2015, on behalf of its member councils, it is imperative this data be provided. Operating under delegated authority it is essential the IDWA continue discussions with the concerned constituent member councils to work out the most appropriate method of delivery of the required data so as to ensure effective and efficient use of not only the mapping software, but also staff time and resources.

[Attachment 1](#) details reported BIS data for the IDWA for the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 covering all land tenures.

[Attachment 1b](#) details reported BIS data for the IDWA for the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 covering local government activities.

Communication, Education, Extension and Publicity Activities

Aim:

To promote public awareness about priority weeds and their control and encourage a sense of shared responsibility.

Outcomes:

In total two (2) media releases were issued, (refer Attachment 2) supported by corresponding social media articles written for member council media platforms. Topics covered the ongoing use by the IDWA of drone technology to control Bitou bush along cliff lines and other access restricted sites, and the release of a new biological control agent on African boxthorn.... the first release of its type in Australia. "Weed Watch" articles were also posted as part of a coordinated communication strategy to raise awareness of the IDWAs seasonal priority weed inspection and control program. Two (2) media interviews were held.

The Illawarra District Weeds Authority website (<https://isjo.nsw.gov.au/program/idwa/>) continued to be updated to reflect changes in the legislation (*Biosecurity Act 2015*), new priority regional and state species lists, and stakeholder obligations and responsibilities as per the General Biosecurity Duty.

Two (2) community extension activities were attended, and 13 private properties were inspected/visited as part of broader extension activities aimed at enhancing awareness of (priority) weeds and encouraging proactive behaviour in relation to weed management.

Staff Training

Aim:

To retain well motivated staff who are trained to effectively undertake the service that the Authority aims to provide.

Outcomes:

Chief Weeds Officer

Training completed 2022/2023:

Biological control workshop
Weeds Big Day Out workshop/presentation

Biosecurity Weed Inspector

Training completed 2022/2023:

Biological control workshop
Weeds Big Day Out workshop/presentation

Biosecurity Weed Control Operator

Training completed 2022/2023:

Biological control workshop
Weeds Big Day Out workshop/presentation

Casual Weed Control Operator

Training completed 2022/2023:

TfNSW Worker on Foot Certificate
White card- construction Induction

Co-operation

Aim:

To effectively and without prejudice, work with all stakeholders within the guidelines of the Biosecurity (weeds) legislation.

Outcomes:

The IDWA is responsible for priority weed control within the constituent local government areas of Wollongong City, Shellharbour City and Kiama Municipal Council. To oversee the supervision of the Authority's priority weed control program and ensure constituent councils' obligations and responsibilities are being met; the IDWA has its own Weeds Committee. The committee meets quarterly and provides guidance and support for the IDWA.

The IDWA is also actively involved with the Southeast Local Land Services Regional Weeds Committee, being represented on both the Regional Weeds committee and the associated WAP subcommittee.

IDWA staff also hold casual positions on various working groups at State, regional and local levels providing valuable input and feedback on a range of weed related issues.

The IDWA has a close working relationship with most government agencies and private landholders within the area. A prime objective of the IDWA Policy of Control is to ensure, so far as practical, that residents meet their General Biosecurity Duty obligations and responsibilities with respect to priority weeds. To this effect the IDWA is in constant liaison and consultation with a number of government agencies and private landholders with regard to priority weed management programs. This level of consultation has further been built on through the implementation of the NSW Weeds Action Program and in particular the focus on high-risk pathways and high-risk sites. Good compliance has been achieved by most government agencies and private landholders with regard to the Authority's weed control programs over the last 12 months. Most control works are implemented on a reactive basis following requests by IDWA staff, although some government authorities and private individuals have (proactively) undertaken control programs on lands under their care and control prior to inspections being undertaken.

One area of ongoing concern however is land under the management of Sydney Trains. Whilst Sydney Trains have taken a more proactive approach of late, further action may still be necessary to ensure momentum is continued. The IDWA is continuing to work with Sydney Trains staff to iron out any issues that arise from time to time.

Operational Program

The IDWA Operational Weed Control Program is primarily designed to complement the Inspectorial Program whilst ensuring the IDWA continues to lead the way by setting the example.

Aim:

To prevent, eliminate or otherwise minimise the biosecurity risk posed by priority weeds on all council-controlled lands.

Outcomes:

The main focus over the past 12 months on Council controlled lands has been to –

1. Prevent the establishment of all Prohibited matter as listed in Schedule 2 of the Biosecurity Act 2015
2. Eradicate all State regulated Control Order weeds as detailed in Biosecurity (Boneseed) Control Order 2017; Biosecurity (Tropical Soda Apple) Control Order 2017 and Biosecurity (Pakinsonia) Control Order 2017 and Biosecurity (Chinese Violet) Control Order 2019.
3. Eradicate or otherwise contain the spread of Biosecurity Zone weeds Alligator weed, Water hyacinth and Bitou bush.
4. Prevent, eradicate, contain or otherwise minimise the biosecurity risk of all regionally listed priority weeds on council-controlled lands throughout the local control authority area.
5. Undertake local weed control programs to protect local assets.

The Authority's current Operational Weed Control Program is co-ordinated in such a way as to target areas within the inspection program. Some roadside and reserve spraying is undertaken outside programmed areas following special requests by Constituent Councils / resident complaints.

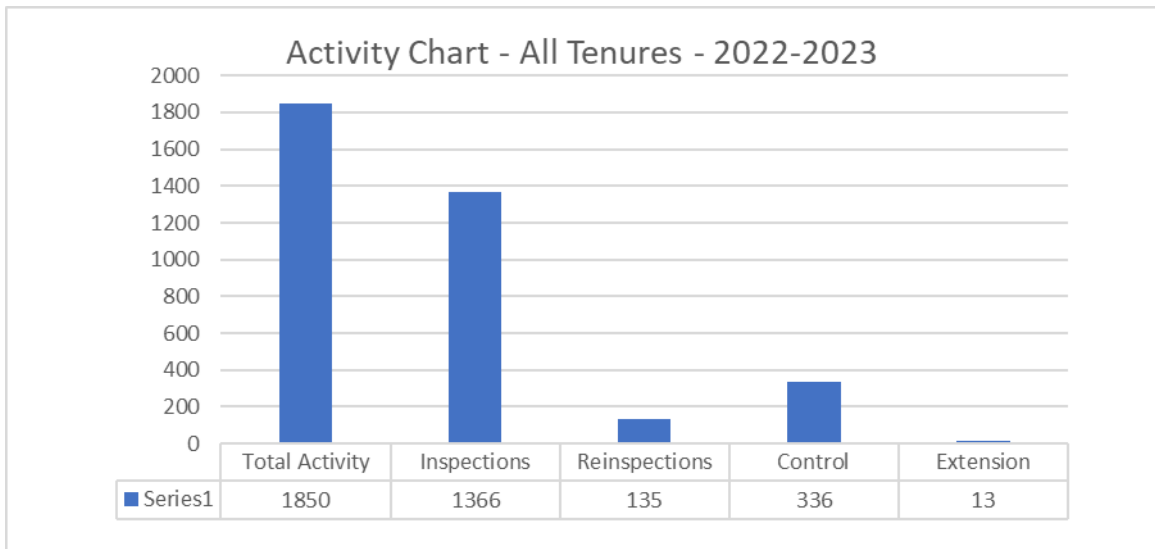
With reference to specific actions and milestones in achieving the stated Aims and Objectives of the IDWA Operational Program the following actions were achieved for the 2022-23 financial year.

Summary of Achievements

1. 906 parcels of council land inspected.
2. 336 parcels controlled for one or more priority weed.
3. 31 priority sites managed and protected from widespread priority weeds.
4. 150 km of priority pathways inspected and treated for priority weeds.
5. 128 ha of priority weeds controlled across all inspected council reserves.

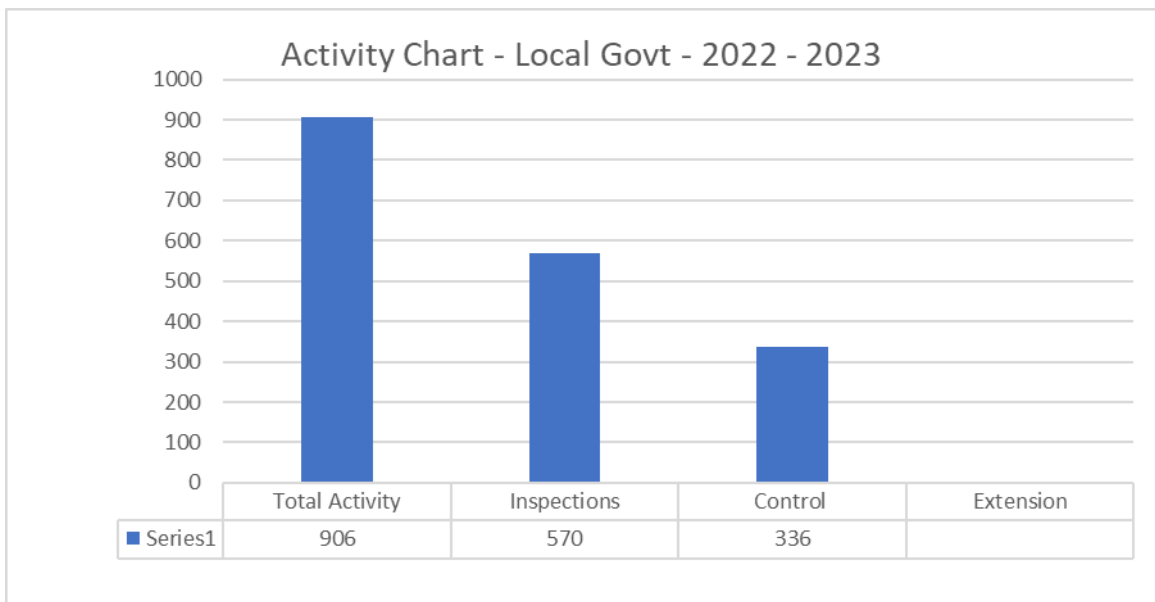
Attachment 1

All land tenures activity chart

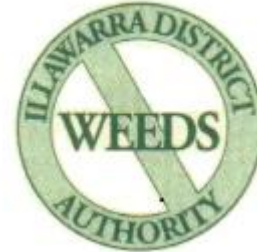


Attachment 1b

Local government activity chart



Attachment 2



MEDIA RELEASE

13 December 2022

BIOCONTROL FOR AFRICAN BOXTHORN PEST WEED RELEASED

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation (ISJO), NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the Illawarra District Weeds Authority (IDWA) are excited to be participating in an Australian first release program of a biocontrol agent to help control African boxthorn, based on research undertaken by the CSIRO.

African boxthorn is a Weed of National Significance (WoNS) and poses a serious threat to our local agriculture systems and natural environment.

It is a thorny shrub with red berries and purple flowers. Introduced to Australia from South Africa in the mid 1800's as a hedge plant it has since spread from old homesteads and urban areas. African boxthorn berries, leaves, stems, and roots are toxic to humans, whilst its large thorns can injure livestock. It can invade pastures and remnant bushland and form impenetrable thickets that block access for vehicles livestock and people. It can also harbour pest animals.

The IDWA has identified a priority infestation of African boxthorn on Minnamurra (Stack) Island, within Killalea Regional Park where the initial release will take place. This infestation is acting as a seed source for spread to surrounding areas.

The biocontrol agent, a rust fungus, has undergone stringent testing to ensure it does not pose a threat to non-target plants and will be released on Minnamurra Island by NPWS staff where it is hoped the agent will establish and reduce the risk of further invasion by this problematic weed.

The release of the African boxthorn agent follows on from another successful CSIRO biocontrol program on Wandering Trad that commenced in March 2019.

More information about CSIRO's research program can be found here:

<https://research.csiro.au/african-boxthorn/progress-rnd4p-rnd-4/>

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IDWA

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