



# ILLAWARRA DISTRICT WEEDS AUTHORITY

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# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023 – 2024

# Illawarra District Weeds Authority

## Chief Executive Officers Message

2023/24 marked the fourth year of the Weeds Action Program (WAP) - 2020-2025.

After having received a substantial (35%) increase to its funding allocation in 2022/23 the IDWA was again able to build on that in 2023/24 with a further 18% increase to bring this year's Weeds Action Program (WAP) funding allocation to \$162,000.00, the highest allocation received by the Authority on record. With two consecutive increases in its funding allocation, it seems that there has finally been some level of 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.

In a major shift from a procurement or contract-based grant application process, 2023/24 marked the first year of the new competitive grant process where LCAs effectively compete for the grant funds available. Whilst this process may favour the IDWA to some extent, due to its high-risk status, it also runs the risk of the Authority missing out on funds in any given year if a competitive application is not submitted.

With funding allocations finally meeting some level of expectation, 2023/24 proved to be a productive year for the IDWA and its member councils.

Specifically, over the last 12 months the IDWA inspected and controlled priority weeds along 613 km of high-risk pathways, 209 km of priority pathway and managed and protected 16 priority sites from widespread priority weeds. 106 ha of priority weeds were controlled across all inspected council reserves. 2,214 parcels of land were inspected including 922 parcels under private or State ownership and 1,215 under council management. 18 extension visits were made to private landowners, along with 59 compliance reinspection's undertaken.

Private works to the value of \$77,380.00 were generated along with \$66,465.00 in additional grant funds.

Reflecting the high risk weed status of the Illawarra region a total of 80 inspections specifically targeting State priority weeds were undertaken along with 196 inspections specifically targeting regional eradicate weeds. State listed priority weed species Frogbit, Parthenium weed, Boneseed and Alligator are all found throughout member council areas and detecting these plants before they become established 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 Prohibited Matter plant Parthenium weed in Kiama with assistance from both the NSW DPI and SE LLS. A new incursion of another Prohibited Matter species, Frogbit was also found for the first time at East Corrimal in September 2023. An aggressive aquatic weed, Frogbit poses a major biosecurity risk to all freshwater ecosystems in the region. Inspection and control activities continue monthly to eradicate this weed.

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 finish in 2024 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 have been involved in the eDNA sampling of Frogbit at the East Corrimal incursion site. Sampling was undertaken by NSW DPI staff and involves investigating how the genetic material or DNA of Frogbit can be extracted from water to reveal where the plants may be hidden. By detecting the plants presence through its eDNA it allows biosecurity and weed management teams to target these unwanted weeds before they infest and take over.

The Authority's coordination and operational capacity although stretched at times due to the number of high risk weed species being found, is well supported by its three full time staff and one casual on a 0.4 full time equivalent basis.

The 2023/24 audited statements show the Authority is in good financial shape with unrestricted assets of \$512,000.00.

The Authority met on four occasions during 2023/24, 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 fifth and final 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 be a part of 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.

Roger Stephan CEO

# **Illawarra District Weeds Authority**

**Weed Control Program Report 2023/24  
Summary of Activities and Outcomes from  
01 July 2023 – 30 June 2024**

**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 Weeds Action Program activities completed from July 2023- June 2024

<b>Name of Organisation</b>	<b>Illawarra District Weeds Authority</b>
<b>Address</b>	<b>PO Box 148 Kiama 2533</b>

<b>Administrative and Technical contact</b>	<i>Mr David Pomery Chief Weeds Officer Ph 02 4233 1129 email: dpomery@isjo.nsw.gov.au</i>
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<b>Total Amount of funds received (Income)</b>	<i>Grant - \$162,000.00 Council - \$102,115.00</i>	<b>For financial year/s</b>	2023-2024
	<b>TOTAL- \$264,115.00</b>		

<b>Funds Expended</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Reporting/Administration	\$27,835.00
Property Inspections (including compliance)	\$142,336.00
WAP Priorities	\$138,509.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$308,680.00</b>

### 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 <sup>th</sup> November 2024

# Report on WAP Weed Control Coordination Assistance 2023/2024

**Outcomes and results from July 2023-June 2024**  
**A Final Report prepared for the constituent member councils of the IDWA**

<b>Name Of Organisation</b>	Illawarra District Weeds Authority
<b>Address</b>	PO Box 148 Kiama NSW 2533
<b>Administrative and Technical contact</b>	David Pomery Chief Weeds Officer Ph: 42 331129 Email: <a href="mailto:dpomery@isjo.nsw.gov.au">dpomery@isjo.nsw.gov.au</a>

## FINANCIAL REPORT

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>
Reporting / Administration	\$27,835.00
Property inspections – Including compliance	\$142,336.00
<b>WAP Priorities</b>	
Publicity	\$2,454.00
Training	\$14,674.00
High Risk Sites	\$25,636.00
High Risk Pathways	\$25,527.00
Management of Priority sites & Pathways	\$41,075.00
Management of State & Regional Priority weeds	\$13,796.00
Monitor online sales	\$2,375.00
BIS capacity	\$8,100.00
SEWAP Regional coordination	\$4,872.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$308,680.00*</b>

\* Includes on costs

Printed name	David Pomery
Position in Organisation	Chief Weeds Officer
Contact Telephone Number	02-42 331129
Date	14th November 2024

# Report on Other Weed Control Operational Programs 2023/2024

**Outcomes and results from July 2023-June 2024**  
**A Final Report prepared for the constituent member councils of the IDWA**

<b>Name Of Organisation</b>	Illawarra District Weeds Authority
<b>Address</b>	PO Box 148 Kiama NSW 2533

<b>Administrative &amp; technical contact</b>	David Pomery Chief Weeds Officer Ph: 42 331129 E mail: <a href="mailto:dpomery@isjo.nsw.gov.au">dpomery@isjo.nsw.gov.au</a>
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## FINANCIAL REPORT

<b>Total Amount of funds available (Income)</b>	<i>Grants - \$158,445.00</i> <i>Council - \$88,568.00</i>  <b>TOTAL- \$247,013.00</b>	<b>For financial year/s</b>	2023-2024
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<b>Grant</b>	<b>Funds received or carried over from previous years</b>	<b>Funds expended</b>	<b>Credit (Debit)</b>
Crown Reserves Improvement Fund	Council -\$5,100.00 Grant - \$61,465.00	Council – \$5,174.00 Grant - \$61,465.00	(\$74.00)
Bald Hill Boneseed Program	<i>Grant -\$5,000.00</i>	<i>\$5,000.00</i>	-
New Incursion Grant	Grant -\$31,769.00	\$6,907.00	\$24,862.00
LLS Roads and Reserves program	Grant - \$46,321.00	\$8,867.00	\$37,454.00
Dunmore Wetlands Program	Grant - \$13,890.00	-	\$13,890.00
Widespread Weed Control Program	Council - \$20,000.00	\$10,072.00	\$9,928.00
IDWA General Administration	Council - \$63,468.00	\$63,468.00	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$247,013.00</b>	<b>Council - \$78,714.00</b> <b>Grant - \$82,239.00</b>  <b>\$160,953.00</b>	<b>Council - \$9,854.00</b> <b>Grant - \$76,206.00</b>  <b>Council - (\$34,711.00)</b> <b>Grant - \$76,206.00</b>

## DECLARATION

Signature of responsible officer of organisation	
Printed name	David Pomery
Position in Organisation	Chief Weeds Officer
Contact Telephone Number	02 4233 1129
Date	14 <sup>th</sup> November 2024

Note council debit of \$34,711.00 includes surplus of \$9,854.00 from Other programs and overspend of \$44,565.00 in WAP

## Other Programs Report

### Vacant Crown Land Program

**Income:**

Vacant Crown Lands Grant -	\$61,465.00
Council contribution -	\$5,100.00

**TOTAL** **\$66,565.00**

**Expenditure:**

Contractors	\$61,465.00
IDWA staff control	\$3,695.00
IDWA administration	\$1,479.00

**TOTAL** **\$66,639.00**

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 2023/24:

1. Perkins beach Port Kembla (\$23,100.00)
2. Bevans Island Lake Illawarra (\$11,715.00)
3. Bass Point Reserve, Shellharbour (\$26,650.00)

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, LLS & IDWA contribution	\$31,769.00
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$31,769.00</u></b>
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**Expenditure:**

IDWA administration, inspection & control	\$6,907.00
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$6,907.00</u></b>
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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 - \$5,000.00

**TOTAL** **\$5,000.00**

### **Expenditure:**

Contractors \$5,000.00

**TOTAL** **\$5,000.00**

The IDWA was provided funding of \$5,000.00 (ex GST) for the 2023/2024 financial year to assist in the eradication of the State listed Priority Control Order weed Boneseed on State owned land at Bald Hill Stanwell Tops. The funds were provided by Southeast Local Land Services (SELLS).

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 was used to assist in employing the services of an experienced, suitably qualified and accredited contactor capable of delivering effective weed management in cliff line situations. NSW NPWS supported the funding provided with an additional \$5,000.00 cash contribution and \$1,000.00 in kind. The IDWA provided 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 supported these efforts and contributed to the eradication objective as required under Biosecurity (Boneseed) Control Order 2017 (Biosecurity Act 2015).

Future funding of this site, seen as the mother lode area for Boneseed in the Illawarra will now be tied to the NSW Weeds Action Program under Goal 1 Exclude, from the 2024/2025 financial year.

### **Private works**

<b>Income:</b>	<b>\$77,380.00</b>
<b>Expenditure:</b>	
Labour:	\$44,471 .00
Administration:	\$8,534 .00
Material / Chemicals:	\$2,016.00
VRC:	\$1,997 .00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$57,018.00</u></b>
<b>PROFIT:</b>	<b>\$20,362.00</b>

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 2023/24 of \$77,380.00. Operating profit net of all expenses was \$20,362.00.

## **Local Land Services Roads and Reserve Program**

### **Income:**

Local Land Services - \$46,321.00

**TOTAL** **\$46,321.00**

### **Expenditure:**

IDWA Staff control \$8,867.00  
Contracts

**TOTAL** **\$8,867.00**

\$46,321.00 was available in the 2023/24 LLS Roads and reserves program to undertake a bitou bush containment program at Scarborough and continue roadside and reserve control work on regionally listed eradicate weeds.

#### **1. Bitou bush containment program - Scarborough**

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 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. Regional eradicate weeds program**

In an effort to eradicate some of the highest risk weeds in the SE region, as detailed in the SE RSWMP, the IDWA expended \$8,867.00.00 in the 2023/24 year to undertake a thorough roadside and reserve spray control program to target known infestations of *Salvinia*, Groundsel bush, Ming asparagus, Cats claw creeper, *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 were targeted for control over those months when they were actively growing and most visible. This program was completed 30 June 2024.

### **Dunmore Wetlands Program**

\$13,890.00 was available to undertake an Alligator weed surveillance and control program at the Dunmore wetland site Shellharbour in the 2023/24 year.

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 was set to commence in the summer of 2023/24 however ongoing wet weather prevented an effective program being implemented. The program is expected to be continued in the summer of 2024/25 weather permitting.

### **Widespread Weeds Program**

Under the NSW WAP guidelines 2020-2025 local priority weeds – species of concern in a local area and not listed as a regional priority weed in the RSWMP will not be funded and generally should not be included in any WAP submission. In this respect when the IDWA undertakes any control work on widespread weeds that is not strategic and does not demonstrate greater benefits, effectiveness or targeted effort to reduce the impact of widespread weeds these activities must sit outside the WAP as a separate operational program.

In 2023/24 the IDWA spent \$10,072.00 on controlling widespread weeds throughout the three-member council areas. This included responding to resident complaints on Blackberry, Giant Parramatta grass and lantana, as well as general roadside and reserve maintenance work to improve amenity and safety.

#### **Expenditure:**

IDWA Staff control	\$10,072.00.00
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$10,072.00</u></b>
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## **IDWA General Administration Program**

Only 10% of total program costs can be allocated against the WAP for administration expenses. Funding cannot be sought or included in the WAP for any administration or management expenses associated with costs related to private works or contracting, time spent on other programs or capital costs.

With total administration costs amounting to \$99,837.00 in the 2023/24 year and allowing for legitimate WAP administration expenses capped at 10% of total program costs (\$27,835.00) and administration expenses allocated to other programs, (\$8,534.00), \$63,468.00 was expended as part of the 2023/24 IDWA General administration program.

### **Expenditure:**

IDWA administration expenses and overheads	\$63,468.00.00
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$63,468.00</u></b>
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## 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.
- 2,214 inspections undertaken across all land tenures within the three-member council areas. 981 inspections (including compliance) on both public (State owned) and private land. 1,215 inspections and /or control undertaken on council managed lands. 18 extension activities with private landholders.
- 387 High Risk sites inspected.  
613 km of high-risk pathways inspected and treated for priority weeds.  
179 council managed sites controlled for one or more priority weed.  
209 km of priority pathways inspected and treated for priority weeds.  
106 ha of priority weeds treated in council managed reserves.  
16 priority sites managed and protected from widespread priority weeds.
- Eighty (80) State priority weed inspections undertaken for known incursions of Prohibited Matter species Frogbit and Parthenium weed, Control Order plant Boneseed, and Biosecurity zone aquatic Alligator weed. One hundred and ninety-six (196) Regional priority weed inspections undertaken for known incursions of regional eradicate and containment (exclusion zone) species.
- Coordinated with NSW DPI Parthenium weed rapid response plan and multi-agency surveillance exercise on 5-6<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Partner in Remote detection of weeds technology project using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) and eDNA project that involves sampling of Frogbit at a new incursion site and investigating how the genetic material or DNA of Frogbit can be extracted from water to reveal where the plants may be hidden.
- Continued the use of drone technology at Bass Point reserve and adjoining quarry as an alternate to the aerial spraying of Bitou bush.
- Two (2) media releases issued and supporting social media articles written. One media interview held. Presentation talk given at the 22<sup>nd</sup> NSW Weeds conference in Dubbo. Eighteen (18) extension visits made. "Weed Watch" articles posted online.
- Implemented annual Crown Lands weed control program.
- Constituent council contributions of \$190,683.00 received and supported with NSW Weeds Action Program Grant funding of \$162,000.00 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 an additional \$66,465.00 for the region through other grant sources to bring total other grant funding available in 2023/24 to \$158,445.00. \$82,239.00 spent in the 2023/24 year.
- Annual gross income of \$77,380.00 generated from private works / commercial spraying operations.

## **IDWA Income 2023/24**

# **Illawarra District Weeds Authority**

**Weed Control Co-ordination and Extension Program Report 2023/24  
01 July 2023 – 30 June 2024**

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.
- Coordinated with NSW DPI Parthenium weed rapid response plan and multi-agency surveillance exercise over 2 days in March 2024 as part of a follow up delimitation survey to ensure Parthenium weed had not spread beyond the source property
- Secured an additional \$66,465.00 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 981 parcels of private and state land inspected, including 59 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 one (1) interview held. Presentation talk given at the 22<sup>nd</sup> NSW Weeds conference in Dubbo. Eighteen (18) extension visits were made to landholders and residents to provide weed biosecurity information.
- Staff development programs were maintained with staff attending the 22<sup>nd</sup> NSW Weeds Conference in Dubbo. Specific training included NSW Biosecurity legislation training accredited by NSW DPI by the CWO and Biosecurity Weeds Inspector. The Biosecurity Weeds Operator undertook Weeds Biosecurity Officer Induction and LCA Compliance and Regulatory Training (ACFEC).
- 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. 1,036 parcels of council-controlled lands were inspected of which 179 were found to have an infestation of one or more priority weed. 822 km of roadsides and high-risk pathways were inspected and treated for one or more priority weeds. 106 ha of reserve lands were controlled. Sixteen (16) 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 all land tenures 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 2023/24:

## Summary of Achievements

Inspections conducted:

Total number inspections:	922
Compliance reinspection's:	59

Using the risk-based approach to its private property inspection regime IDWA staff were able to locate and identify numerous Regional and State priority weed species throughout all three-member council areas over the last 12 months (refer to Specific Inspections for high-risk weeds section below for more detail) as well as identify some local priority weeds in need of management.

In doing so IDWA staff were able to prevent any new weed incursions from establishing whilst at the same time containing or otherwise eradicating existing localised high-risk species. Of note was the discovery of a new incursion of the State listed Prohibited Matter weed Frogbit in a drainage easement at East Corrimal. Frogbit is a highly invasive freshwater plant known for its rapid growth and ability to form dense mats and choke waterways. As the first incursion of its type in the Illawarra this weed posed a significant biosecurity risk not only to the region but also to NSW.

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## 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 Regional eradicate or State listed Priority weed has been found. Such sites cover private, state and local government lands and include properties with infestations of the State listed weeds Boneseed, Alligator weed, Parthenium weed and Frogbit, and all regionally listed eradicate weeds. 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.

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.):	387
High Risk Pathways inspected (km):	613 km
Specific Inspections for State priority weeds:	80
Specific inspections for Regional priority weeds:	196

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## Use of Enforcement Procedures for Priority Weed Control

For the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, 1,971 inspections were conducted across all land tenures, requiring 59 compliance re-inspections.

No Individual Biosecurity Direction notices were issued over this period. These notices are issued only after it is apparent the relevant owner/occupier/s are 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	-

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## 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 7 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 2023 to 30 June 2024 covering all land tenures.

[Attachment 1b](#) details reported BIS data for the IDWA for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 covering local government activities.

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## 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:

Two (2) media releases were issued ([refer Attachment 2](#)) in the 2023/24 year. The first covered the discovery of Frogbit, a State Prohibited Matter species found for the first time in the Illawarra at Corrimal. The second highlighted the ongoing efforts to control bitou bush using drone technology along cliff lines and other access restricted sites. These media releases were supported by corresponding social media articles written for member council media platforms as well as being posted on the IDWA website. "Weed Watch" articles were also posted on the IDWA website as part of a coordinated communication strategy to raise awareness of the IDWA's seasonal priority weed inspection and control program. One (1) media interview was held in relation to the Frogbit incursion.

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.

The Chief Weeds Officer also gave a talk at the 22<sup>nd</sup> NSW Weeds conference in Dubbo on Managing Risk on High-Risk Pathways. The talk focussed on the importance of managing both weeds along pathways such as roads whilst at the same time managing the risk to Weeds Biosecurity staff whom are vested the responsibility to schedule and conduct routine inspections and control works.

A total of 18 private properties were also inspected/visited as part of broader extension activities aimed at enhancing awareness of (priority) weeds and encouraging proactive behaviour in relation to weed management.

Numerous phone calls and email correspondence were also received and discussed / responded to with the residents concerned.

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## **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 2023/2024:**

22<sup>nd</sup> NSW Weeds Conference  
NSW Biosecurity Legislation

#### **Biosecurity Weed Inspector**

##### **Training completed 2023/2024:**

22<sup>nd</sup> NSW Weeds Conference  
NSW Biosecurity Legislation

#### **Biosecurity Weed Control Operator**

##### **Training completed 2023/2024:**

22<sup>nd</sup> NSW Weeds Conference  
Weeds Biosecurity Officer Induction  
LCA Compliance and Regulatory Training (ACFEC)

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## 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.

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## **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.

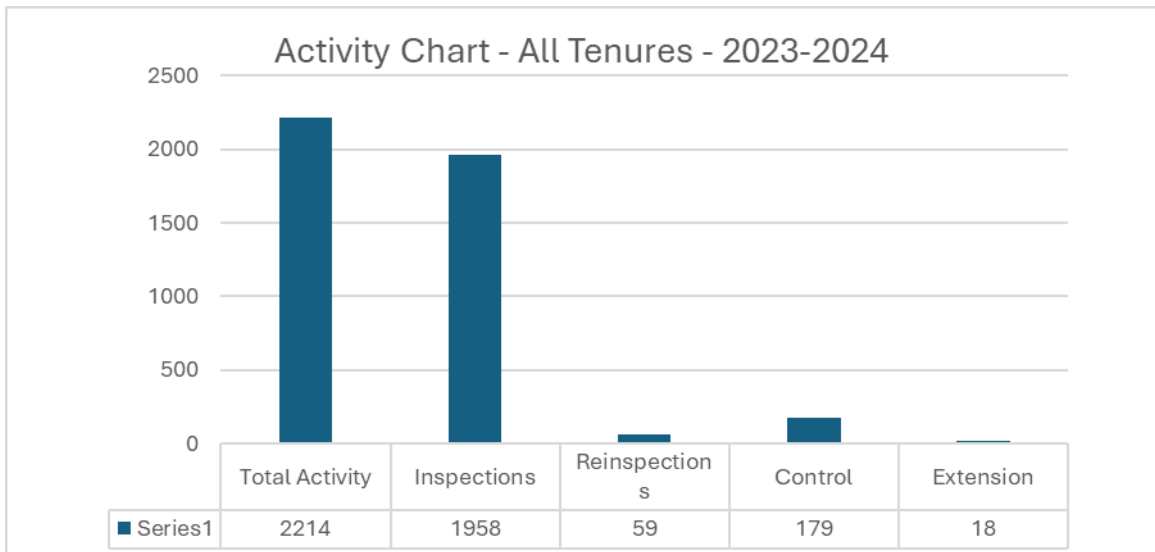
With reference to specific actions and milestones in achieving the stated Aims and Objectives of the IDWA Operational Program the following actions were achieved for the 2023-24 financial year.

### **Summary of Achievements**

1. 1036 parcels of council land inspected.
2. 179 parcels controlled for one or more priority weed.
3. 16 priority sites managed and protected from widespread priority weeds.
4. 209 km of priority pathways inspected and treated for priority weeds.
5. 106 ha of priority weeds controlled across all inspected council reserves.

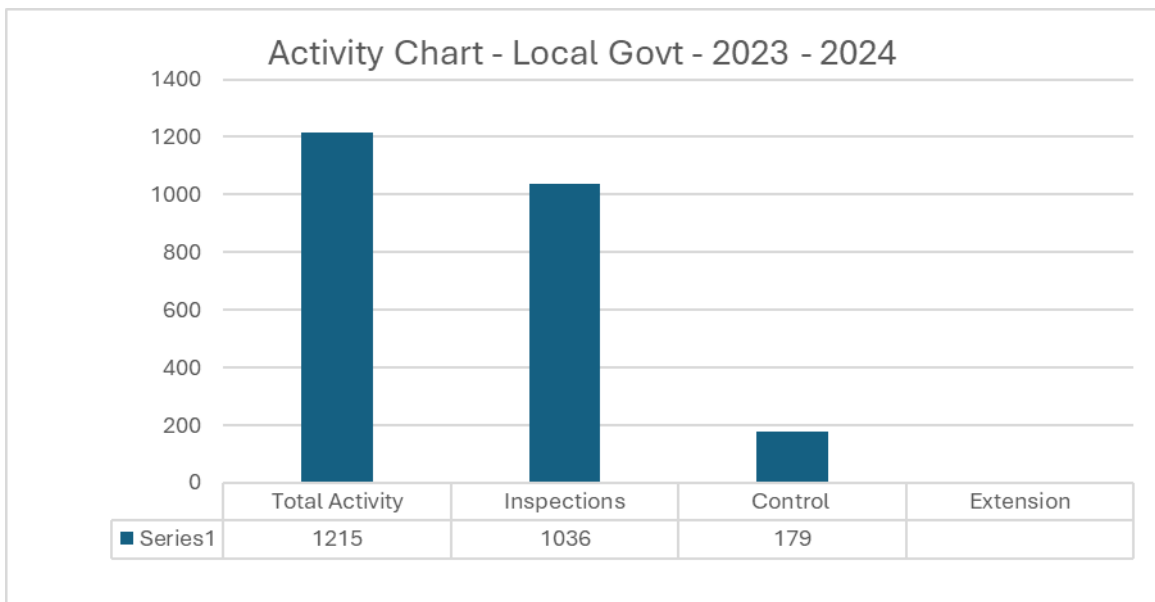
## Attachment 1

All land tenures activity chart



## Attachment 1b

Local government activity chart





## Media Release

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9 October 2023

### FROGBIT INCURSION IN THE ILLAWARRA

Residents in the Illawarra are being asked to keep an eye out for an invasive weed known as Frogbit. Frogbit (*Limnobium laevigatum*), is a highly invasive freshwater plant native to central and South America and has been detected in the Corrimal area. Known for its rapid growth and ability to form dense mats and choke waterways, Frogbit poses a significant biosecurity risk to NSW.

Chief Weeds Officer for the Illawarra District Weeds Authority David Pomery said finding frogbit in the Corrimal area highlights the risk the weed poses to the Illawarra's aquatic ecosystems. "Its aggressive growth can have a devastating impact on aquatic biodiversity as it outcompetes native water plants and reduces light, food and habitat for aquatic animals," Mr Pomery said.

"Frogbit is a popular aquarium plant and unfortunately is being unlawfully traded online. It is most likely the result of someone illegally dumping frogbit out of their aquarium or pond into the waterway." If you have frogbit at home, do not just throw it away – instead contact your local council's Biosecurity (Weeds) Officer to ensure its proper and safe disposal.

The local community has a vital role to play in protecting our waterways by helping stop the trade and spread of these plants. If you see frogbit for sale please report it and never dump unwanted water plants in or near waterways. If you suspect you have encountered frogbit in dams, creeks, or waterways, or for sale at markets, shops, or online platforms please contact your local council's Biosecurity (Weeds) Officer on 42331129 or contact the NSW DPI Biosecurity Helpline at 1800 680 244 for assistance.

Frogbit is regulated as Prohibited Matter in NSW due to the extreme risk it poses to the environment and economy. The public is reminded that possession, movement, or sale of frogbit in NSW is illegal under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

Residents and concerned individuals are urged to visit the [NSW Department of Primary Industries' WeedWise](#) website for detailed information on frogbit and its identification.



**ENDS**

**For further information please contact Tony Martin, Weed Inspector, on 0242 331129 or 0491 051 730**

