

FILE NO: PSC2013- 00406

TITLE: LOCAL WEED PRIORITISATION POLICY

POLICY OWNER: STRATEGY & ENVIRONMENT SECTION MANAGER

PURPOSE:

This Policy provides direction for Council's approach to exercising its regulatory functions under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, specifically by ensuring that priority invasive species are specific to the Port Stephens Local Government Area.

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Council is to function as a Local Control Authority under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (The Act). The Act prescribes the functions of Authorised Officers in relation to control of priority weeds as the Local Control Authority.

The Act requires all landowners in NSW to manage and mitigate Biosecurity risks (General Biosecurity Duty) on their land. In order to determine the level of risk, a regional weed prioritisation process was undertaken using the NSW Weed Risk Management (WRM) system (a standard, nationally accepted and transparent process). The Hunter Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan (HRSWMP) outlines these regional priorities in detail.

Given the locally specific nature of weeds in Port Stephens, it is important that Council and the community are able to effectively manage the most important weeds to Port Stephens, not just those that are important regionally.

A specific assessment of risks posed by weed species to Port Stephens will allow for these the right species to be targeted, managed and controlled more effectively in the local context.

This Policy outlines the approach Council will take to ensure that priority weed species are locally specific and will do so consistent with the standard, nationally accepted and transparent process used at the regional level.

SCOPE:

This Policy applies only to Council's role as a Local Control Authority under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

DEFINITIONS:

Authorised Officer	As described in Section 7 of general definitions of the <i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i> referring to the Invasive Species Officers (for the purposes of this Policy).
Biosecurity Matter	Anything posing a Biosecurity Risk as defined in Section 10 of the <i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i> .
EMS	Council's Environmental Management System.
General Biosecurity Duty	Any person who deals with biosecurity matters has a biosecurity duty to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the biosecurity risk is prevented, eliminated or minimised (<i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i>).
Invasive Species	Animals and plants introduced into Australia that have negative effects on Agriculture, Environment, Economic or Social values.
Local Control Authority	Meaning Council as described in Section 370 of the <i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i> .

POLICY STATEMENT:

Council will:

- Ensure processes and structures are in place that enable Council to effectively function as the Local Control Authority under the Act;
- Apply the NSW Weed Risk Management System process to the Port Stephens local government area to determine local priority weeds;
- Maintain and publish, annually or more frequently as required, a list of local priority weed species;
- Undertake compliance and enforcement activity as a Local Control Authority under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* using the list of local priority weed species;
- Undertake compliance action in accordance with Council's Compliance Policy and the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

POLICY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 1) Strategy and Environment Section is responsible for monitoring, reviewing and providing advice on the Policy;
- 2) Strategy and Environment Section is responsible for undertaking Council's role as a Local Control Authority under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

- 1) Port Stephens Council:
 - a. Community Strategic Plan 2013-2025;
 - b. Compliance Policy;
 - c. Environment Policy;
 - d. Legislative Compliance Policy;
 - e. Environmental Risk Management Directive;
 - 2) Hunter Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2017 – 2022 (HRSWMP);
 - 3) NSW Invasive Species Plan 2008-2015;
 - 4) *Biosecurity Act 2015*;
 - 5) *Local Government Act 1993*.
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CONTROLLED DOCUMENT INFORMATION:

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RM8 container No	PSC2013 - 00406	RM8 record No	
Audience	Councillors, Council Staff and Community Members		
Process owner	Strategy and Environment Section Manager		
Author	Bushland Management Officer / Environmental Strategist		

Review timeframe	Two years	Next review date	March 2020
Adoption date	27 March 2018		

VERSION HISTORY:

Version	Date	Author	Details	Minute No.
1.0	27/3/2018	Bushland Management Officer / Environmental Strategist	New Policy adopted.	062