

Weed Management Plan



Document history

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Prepared by:	Shana Read, Sandra Madeley and Kirra Tammjarv
Reviewed by:	Ruth Williams, Kristan Coady, Danielle Molkentin, Charlie Taylor, Tijmen Klootwijk, Ivan Gorman, Graeme Sonter
Endorsed by:	Ross Dickson, General Manager of Governance and Assurance
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Hardwood Forests Division and Softwood Plantations Division are both certified to the Responsible Wood Sustainable Forest Management Standard AS4708: 2021, providing the organisation with a range of environmental, economic, social, and cultural forest management criteria, and a need to manage these in a systematic manner.

This Plan, in conjunction with the Forest Management Policy, Risk Registers, [Legal and Other Compliance Obligations Register](#), and Forest Management plan, forms part of the forest management system.

Acknowledgement of Country

Forestry Corporation of NSW acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we live and work, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

We recognise the connection to their land, their waters and surrounding communities and acknowledge their history here on this land.

We also acknowledge our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees who are an integral part of our diverse workforce and recognise the knowledge embedded forever in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custodianship of Country and culture.

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1 Introduction

As NSW's most significant supplier of renewable timber, and one of the state's largest public land managers, Forestry Corporation's objective is to manage forests that deliver economic, environmental and community value while producing a continual supply of wood products.

As a land manager, Forestry Corporation is responsible for managing weeds across its estate. This plan applies to:

- Established weeds
- Emerging threats
- Priority weed species identified in Regional Strategic Pest Management Plans

2 Scope

This Plan applies to land owned or managed by Forestry Corporation.

It does not apply to weed management at offices, depots or Forestry Corporation's nurseries, or the treatment of competing vegetation in plantation establishment.

3 Objectives

Forestry Corporation adopts the four key objectives from the NSW Invasive Species Plan 2023-2028

- prevent the establishment of new invasive species
- preparedness and early response: detect and rapidly respond to new incursions
- effective management: reduce the impacts of established pest species using integrated pest management
- collaborate with stakeholders

To achieve these objectives Forestry Corporation will

- Implement a coordinated and cooperative approach to weed management
- Develop an annual weed management schedule to reflect local priority species and organisational priorities
- Monitor and report sightings of any new species detected in local areas.
- Implement washdown procedures with staff and contractors.
- Maintain weed management capability within the organisation.

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4 Legislative and policy framework

Forestry Corporation's legal and other obligations are outlined in the [Legal and Other Compliance Obligations Register](#).

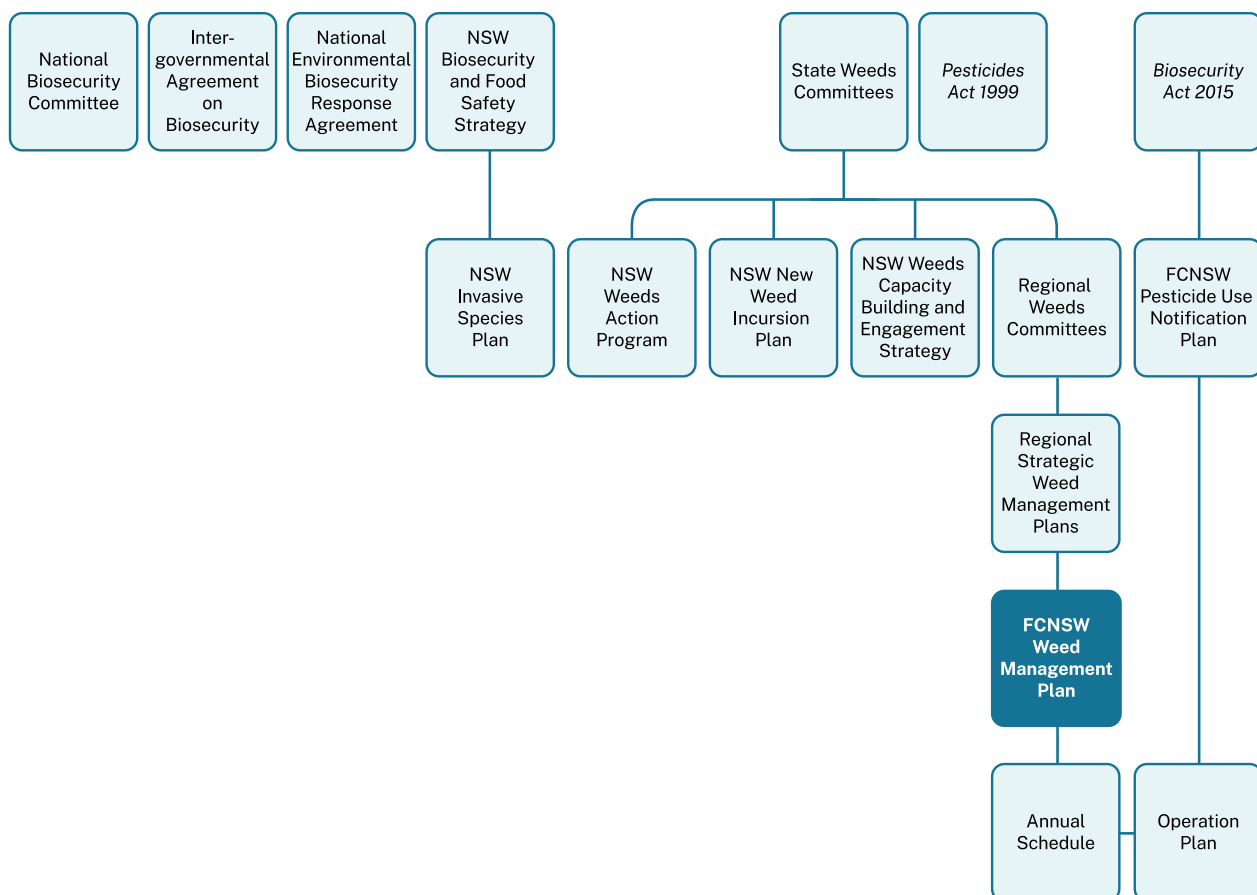


Figure 1: Forestry Corporation's weed management framework

This plan complies with the following legislative and regulatory frameworks:

- **Biosecurity Act 2015** (NSW): Establishes the “general biosecurity duty” to manage weed risks.
- **NSW Biosecurity and Food Safety Strategy 2022-2030**: Provides overarching principles for biosecurity risk management.
- **NSW EPA Pesticide Control Orders**: Regulates the safe use of pesticides for pest animal and weed management.
- **NSW various weed strategic plans**: Provides specific guidance on managing weed populations.

Further information and tools are available through:

- [NSW DPI Biosecurity](#)
- [NSW WeedWise](#)
- [NSW DPI Weeds](#)

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Table 1: Implications of NSW Strategies for FCNSW

Policy/ Strategy Source	Strategic Goal	Intended Outcome	Implication for FCNSW
NSW Biosecurity and Food Safety Strategy 2022-2030	Goals 1, 2 & 3: Prepare and prevent. Timely and proportionate response. Rapid and efficient containment.	Improve identification and reporting.	Detect and report new pest plant occurrences.
	Goals 1, 2 & 3: Prepare and prevent. Timely and proportionate response. Rapid and efficient containment.	Improved response to emergencies.	Biosecurity prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.
	Goal 4: Partnerships.	Reduce the impacts from established pests.	Control and manage established pest plants to mitigate impacts on assets or as required by legislation.
		Strengthen the science.	Strengthen research partnerships.
		Increase the number of well-trained people.	Minimise the impact of established pest plants through coordinated stakeholder engagement. ■ Participate in industry and community-led pest management initiatives. ■ Collaborate with neighbours for a landscape-scale management approach. ■ Implement diverse control methods to prevent resistance. ■ Monitor and adopt emerging pest management technologies.
Invasive Species Plan 2023-2028	1. Exclude	Improve ID and management of high-risk species and pathways.	Participate in regional groups. Continue liaison with neighbours.
	2. Eradicate or contain.	Improve early detection capability.	Keep staff trained and aware.
		Improve rapid response.	Be involved in rapid incursion plans.
	3. Effectively manage.	Prioritise management programs.	Publish management plans.
	4. Build capacity and capability.	Improve management effectiveness.	Use templates/standard operating procedures for pest plant management.
Invasive Species Plan 2023-2028	4. Build capacity and capability	Ensure roles and responsibilities are clear.	Ensure staff understand their roles and responsibilities in pest plant management.
		Skilled workforce.	Ensure staff receive appropriate training. Provide access to the intranet for weed management professionals.

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5 Forestry Corporation's Weed Management Principles

Forestry Corporation will implement a strategic and integrated approach to weed management, ensuring its actions align with legislative requirements, best practices, and environmental sustainability. This approach includes identifying regional priorities for weed management to ensure targeted, effective, and resource-efficient control efforts.

Forestry Corporation prescribes to the following principles of weed management¹:

- **Coordination and Collaboration:** Effective weed management requires cooperation across land tenures, engaging landholders, government agencies, industry, and local communities to deliver coordinated control programs.
- **Integrated Weed Management:** A combination of chemical, mechanical & biological methods ensure effective suppression and long-term resilience against invasive weeds.
- **Risk-Based Prevention and Early Intervention:** Addressing weed threats before they establish or spread reduces long-term control costs and environmental impacts.
- **Adaptive Management:** Continual monitoring, evaluation, and refinement of control techniques ensure the effectiveness of weed management efforts.
- **Evidence-Based Decision Making:** Should underpin management approaches.
- **Weed Hygiene:** Implementing biosecurity hygiene protocols, such as vehicle and equipment washdowns.
- **Herbicide Resistance Management:** rotating of chemicals, integrating non-chemical control methods, and monitoring weed populations mitigate the risks of herbicide resistance.
- **Compliance with Biosecurity Obligations:** Adhering to the *Biosecurity Act 2015* and other regulatory frameworks to prevent, contain, or eradicate priority weeds.

Table 2: FCNSW strategic goals

Strategic Objective	Desired Outcome	Implementation Strategy
Manage weed infestations to minimise adverse impacts	Prevent establishment of new weed species.	■ Maintain relationships with DPIRD Forest Science Unit and nursery industry groups. ■ Conduct annual health surveys within plantations. ■ Inform staff of new threats using appropriate communication tools. ■ Train staff to report potential new sightings. ■ Participate in prevention and eradication work.

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Strategic Objective	Desired Outcome	Implementation Strategy
Ensure resources are available for monitoring and control	Develop tools (MapApp – Weeds Module).	Manage data associated with identification and treatment.
Maintain the productive capacity of forest areas	Implement an Annual Weed Management Schedule.	Consider economic, social, and environmental impact of weeds.
Effectively liaise with stakeholders	Cooperate with stakeholders on weed issues.	Engage in relevant working groups and coordinated programs.
Ensure safety and awareness	Follow Pesticide Use Notification Plan.	Train staff and ensure compliance with legal and best practice requirements.
Minimise environmental impact	Maintain biodiversity values.	Implement integrated weed management using multiple control methods.

5.1 Integrated Weed Management and Biosecurity Hygiene

Forestry Corporation applies an integrated weed management approach, combining chemical, mechanical, biological, and cultural techniques to enhance weed control and long-term resilience. Effective management requires collaboration with landholders, industry, and government agencies. A single control method is often insufficient; instead, a coordinated, multi-method program ensures greater success over broader areas.

The [NSW Weed Control Handbook](#) – A guide to weed control in non-crop, aquatic and bushland situations (2018) is a useful resource from NSW Department of Primary Industries that considers the impacts on the environment of different weed control techniques and prescribes chemical and non-herbicide control techniques for specific weeds.

To minimise the spread of weeds, Forestry Corporation will adhere to biosecurity hygiene measures, by:

- **Regular training** to equip staff with knowledge of best practices in weed management.
- **Targeted control efforts** that focus on treating outlying infestations first and working towards the core infestation.
- **Use of monitoring tools**, such as SESI (SPD) and MapApp, to track weed infestations and assess the effectiveness of control efforts.
- **Prioritising control** of outlying infestations before addressing the core
- **Biosecurity hygiene measures**, such as vehicle and equipment washdowns, to prevent the spread of invasive species between operational sites.

5.2 Herbicide Resistance and Sustainable Weed Control

Forestry Corporation acknowledges the risks of herbicide resistance and promotes sustainable weed control by implementing best practice strategies, including:

- **Monitoring weed populations** for signs of resistance and adapting treatment plans accordingly.
- **Integrating non-chemical control methods**, such as mechanical removal, biological control, and cultural practices, to support long-term weed suppression.

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- **Rotating herbicide groups** to prevent the buildup of resistance and reduce reliance on any single chemical.
- **Testing for herbicide resistance** on suspect plants that survive treatments to guide future management decisions.

5.3 Weed Hygiene & Biosecurity

As part of Forestry Corporation's biosecurity efforts, hygiene protocols are essential in preventing the spread of weeds across the estate. These measures include:

- **Vehicle and equipment washdowns** when operating in weed-infested areas or moving between sites.
- **Containment measures** when transporting soil, plant material, or other high-risk materials that may carry weed propagules.
- **Checking clothing, tools, and equipment** for weed seeds or plant fragments before entering and leaving operational areas.
- **Using designated washdown stations**, with locations identified in operational plans and MapApp.

Forestry Corporation staff and contractors must comply with the Weed Washdown Procedure, ensuring adherence to best biosecurity practices. Additional guidance is available in the [Stop Weeds at the Gate Factsheet](#) –Local Land Services

5.4 When Hygiene Protocols Apply

Hygiene measures are necessary when:

- **Operating in areas affected** by a weed or disease under containment.
- **Transporting weeds or soil** is known to be infected with weed seed or a plant pathogen.
- **Moving from infested to clean areas** where control measures are required.

SESI (SPD) identifies these requirements, ensuring due diligence for all operations. Prescribed controls are included in operational plans, with washdown area locations available in MapApp.

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6 Weeds on Forestry Corporation managed land

Weeds reproduce and spread by many methods including seeds, spores, runners and vegetatively by root or clade fragments (propagules). Natural spread occurs through wind, water and animals such as birds feeding on fruits, or seeds carried in the fur of mammals. Boundaries of State forests adjacent to land with untreated incursions are at high risk of weed introduction through natural dispersal. Waterways and drainage feature downstream of weed incursions are also at risk.

A large number of weed incursions result from human activity. In State forests, this may include recreation activities such as hiking, horse or bike riding or camping. Vehicles and machinery can transport weeds in tyres or introduce seeds in road materials, soil or waste brought from outside the forest. Seeds may be carried on clothes, shoes, tools or equipment, and in the fur or faeces or pets or livestock. Road corridors, recreation sites, apiary or grazing areas, log dumps and haulage routes, illegal rubbish dumps and recently disturbed areas are at highest risk of weed incursion. It should be noted that weed infestations within State forests are longstanding in many cases, for example blackberry and gorse, dating back to European settlement.

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7 Key Stakeholders

Individual control programs have little impact unless actions are well planned and coordinated across a broad area. Effective weed management relies on cooperation between stakeholders, using a variety of methods. Removing land tenure issues from the planning stage, allowing a focus on the problem, rather than on land ownership. As a result, weed management becomes about:

- identifying the problem
- defining the proposed control actions
- implementing the control actions across the affected part of the landscape

For Forestry Corporation, this means identifying stakeholders, understanding their needs and expectations and acknowledging the impact of weeds on them. A summary of the key groups of stakeholders and their needs and expectations is described in Table 3. For more detail, refer to the Regional Stakeholder lists.

Table 3: Forestry Corporation's key stakeholders

Stakeholders		Stakeholder needs and expectations of FCNSW
External	Local Land Services (LLS)	Implement the obligations under the LLS Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	Local Control Authorities	Meet obligations of local management programs
	Crown lessees and permittees on State Forest	Clear communication of weed control obligations in permit conditions
	Other government departments	Meet whole-of-government commitments
	Neighbours	Acknowledge the impact weeds can have, including damage to crops, pasture competition, and environmental degradation
		Implement obligations under LLS Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan and local management programs
		Participation in coordinated control programs
DPIRD Hunting	Communication of weed management activities that may impact on recreational hunting	
Native title holders	Forestry Corporation acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to hold rights and interests in land and water.	
Internal		Participation in coordinated control programs

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7.1 Local Land Services

Local Land Services (LLS) plays a pivotal role in coordinating and implementing effective weed management strategies across the state. LLS has established 11 Regional Weed Committees, each responsible for creating a five-year RSWMP tailored to their specific areas. These plans define the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in weed management, including Forestry Corporation. (refer table 4)

The RSWMPs also prioritise weed management activities (refer section on risk management) and ensure the alignment of weed control activities across stakeholders.

7.1.1 Regional Strategic Weed Management Committees

Regional Strategic Weed Management Committees have been established by Local Land Services NSW, and aim to provide 'tenure neutral' strategic planning and coordination of weed management activities at the regional level. These activities play an integral part in an overall state weed management framework.

The committees are established to:

- Support implementation of the weeds components and underlining principles of the NSW Biosecurity Strategy, NSW Biosecurity Act and the NSW Invasive Species Plan
- Provide advice to the Board regarding delivery weed functions for the Local Land Services consistent with the Local Strategic Plan
 - » Develop innovative and effective regional weed management strategic plans that consider risks, include all land tenure, and major stakeholders in the landscape
- Provide a forum for the community and stakeholders in decision making and develop communication education and awareness programs based on local and/or regional priority weeds and issues.

Forestry Corporation aims to be represented on each of these committees where land is managed within the LLS region.

7.2 Local control authority

Local control authorities have weed control functions under the Biosecurity Act²

- prevent, eliminate, minimise, and manage the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed by weeds on their lands
- develop, implement, coordinate and review weed control programs
- inspect land in connection with their functions under the Act
- keep records about the exercise of their functions under the Act
- report to the Secretary about the exercise of their functions under the Act.

The council of a local government area is the local control authority for land within that local government area unless the weed control functions for that area have been conferred on a county council or joint organisation (within the meaning of the *Local Government Act 1993*) under any other Act. If the weed control functions for an area have been conferred on a county council or joint organisation, the county council or joint organisation is the local control authority for that area. Table 4 lists the relevant local control authority for each Forestry Corporation area.

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Table 4: Local Land Services Region relevant to each Region

FCNSW Region	Management Area	LLS Region	Local Control Authority (Refer to Regional Plan)
Northern Softwoods	Grafton	North Coast	North Coast Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	Walcha	Northern Tablelands	Northern Tablelands Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
Bathurst	Bathurst	Central Tablelands	Central Tablelands Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
Tumut	Tumut	Murray	Murray Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	Tumut	Riverina	Riverina Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	Moss Vale	South East	South East Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
Bombala	Bombala	South East	South East Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
Northern Hardwoods	Upper North Grafton	Northern Tablelands	Northern Tablelands Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	Coffs Harbour Casino	North Coast	North Coast Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	Mid North Coast	North Coast	North Coast Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	Lower North	Northern Tablelands	Northern Tablelands Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	Wauchope		Northern Tablelands Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	Taree	Hunter	Hunter Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2023-2027
	Dungog	Greater Sydney	Greater Sydney Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	Maitland		Greater Sydney Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
Sydney	Mandalong	Hunter	Hunter Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2023-2027
	Bulahdelah		Hunter Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2023-2027
Sydney	Cumberland State Forest	Greater Sydney	Greater Sydney Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
South Coast	Eden	South East	South East Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	Batemans Bay Tumbarumba	Riverina	Riverina Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	Narooma	Murray	Murray Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan

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FCNSW Region	Management Area	LLS Region	Local Control Authority (Refer to Regional Plan)
Western	Northern Cypress	North West	North West Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	Narrabri		
	Baradine	Central West	Central West Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	Dubbo		
	Inverell		
		Central Tablelands	Central Tablelands Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	Southern Cypress	Western	Western Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2023-2027
	Condobolin		
	Forbes	Central West	Central West Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	Narrandera	Murray	Murray Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	Mudgee		
		Riverina	Riverina Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	River Red Gum	West	Murray Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	Deniliquin	Riverina	Riverina Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
	Barham	Murray	Western Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2023-2027

7.3 Permittees on State forests

Holders of Crown Leases over which State forest has been dedicated and the holders of Permits in State forests have the same obligations and responsibilities of the Biosecurity Act 2015 as any landowner.

Forestry Corporation liaise with lease and permit holders to ensure they are aware of their obligations. Where it is necessary for Forestry Corporation to develop a weed management program over an area covered by a Crown land tenure (lease) or permit, Forestry Corporation will liaise with lessees and permittees to achieve the weed management objectives.

7.4 NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is a key stakeholder and land management partner. NPWS manage several State forest Flora Reserves and works collaboratively with Forestry Corporation to manage conservation areas and biodiversity across the landscape.

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8 Risk management

8.1 Risks weeds pose to Forestry Corporation

Weeds pose the following risks to our forest estate and business.

8.1.1 Environmental risk

- **Competition with native vegetation** –weeds outcompete native plants, including trees, reducing biodiversity and tree regeneration.
- **Altered ecosystems** –weeds may alter soil composition, water availability or fire regimes, impacting overall forest health
- **Habitat disruption** –weeds can degrade habitat for native wildlife, affecting species dependant on specific forest conditions
- **Increased erosion** –some invasive weeds can destabilise the soil, leading to higher erosion and sediment run off into waterways
- **Spread of non-native species** –some plantation species can become invasive, spreading beyond their intended areas and outcompeting native vegetation. In addition, hardwood plantation species have the potential to cross breed or seed and invade the surrounding native forest adversely affecting sensitive ecosystems and compromising sensitive ecosystems
- **Reduced water availability** –some weeds, like willow, can use significant amounts of water, impacting on availability

8.1.2 Economic and operational risk

- **Reduced timber growth and yield** –weeds compete with plantation trees for nutrients, water and sunlight, slowing tree growth and reducing timber quality
- **Increased management costs** –weed control requires ongoing investment in labour and resources. This is particularly evident for successful plantation establishment
- **Restricted access and safety issues** –dense weed infestations can hinder access for forestry operations, fire management and recreational use

8.1.3 Fire risk

- **Increased fuel load** –some weeds (e.g. lantana, blackberry) contribute to higher fuel loads, increasing bushfire intensity and frequency
- **Altered fire behaviour** –weeds can change fire spread patterns, posing challenges to communities and the forest asset

8.1.4 Compliance risk

- **Breach of biosecurity laws** –the *Biosecurity Act 2015* requires land managers to control priority weeds. Non compliance could lead to penalties as well as impacting the organisation's reputational risk

8.1.5 Reputational Risk

- **Community opposition** –local communities, particularly our neighbours, may perceive Forestry Corporation to be a poor land manager
- **Negative media** –inadequate weed control can attract adverse media coverage

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8.2 Risk based decision making

It is unfeasible to manage all weeds across the forest estate at the same time. Because of this, Forestry Corporation use risk management principles as a tool to prioritise the high-risk areas.

This approach reflects that in Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans, which identify priority weeds at both a state and regional level. Priority weeds.

- Regions will consider the Priority Weeds listed in the relevant Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans in the development of their Annual Weed Strategies

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9 Developing priorities for control of weeds on State forests

Developing priorities for the Forestry Corporation estate involves incorporating the requirements of the Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans relevant to each area.

9.1 State priority weeds

State priority weeds have been assessed as posing a high to medium biosecurity risk to the entire state of NSW. State priority weeds are regulated through the following tools

- prohibited matter
- control orders
- biosecurity zones
- mandatory measures.

9.2 Priority weeds in each LLS Region

Each Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan identifies regional priority weeds, along with the regional management category. Management categories are summarised in Table 5.

There are weeds assessed as having a high or very high weed risk but the feasibility of coordinated control is considered negligible or low. It is recognised that these are weeds of continued community interest and concern given their level of invasiveness, impacts and potential distribution.

Forestry Corporation is required to discharge their biosecurity duty for that weed.

Table 5: Regional weed management categories

Category	Objective	Characteristics of weeds in this category
Prevention	To prevent the weed species arriving and establishing in the Region.	These species are not known to be present in the region. They have a high to very high weed risk (highly invasive and high threat) and have a high likelihood of arriving in the region due to potential distribution and/ or an existing high-risk pathway.
Eradication	To permanently remove the species and its propagules from the Region, OR to destroy infestations to reduce the extent of the weed in the region with the aim of local eradication	These species are present in the region to a limited extent only and the risk of re-invasion is either minimal or can be easily managed. They have a high to very high weed risk and high feasibility of coordinated control.

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Category	Objective	Characteristics of weeds in this category
Containment	To prevent the ongoing spread of the species in all or part of the Region.	These species are potentially widespread, but currently occurring within a defined core area. Regional containment strategies aim to prevent spread of the weed from an invaded part of the region (core infestation), and/or exclude the weed from an uninvaded part of the region (exclusion zone)
Asset Protection	To prevent the spread of weeds to key sites/assets of high economic, environmental and social value, or to reduce their impact on these sites if spread has already occurred.	These weed species are widespread and unlikely to be eradicated or contained within the wider regional context. Effort is focussed on reducing weed threats to protect priority high value assets.

9.3 Identifying the presence of weeds

Identification of a weed in an early stage of infestation allows for greater likelihood of control. Forestry Corporation uses the following processes to identify where weed infestations are:

- Reports from stakeholders, including neighbours, other agencies including Local Land Services, Local Control Authorities, local National Parks and Wildlife Service and weed working groups
- Staff reports
- Use of data in SESI(SPD), NSW WeedWise, CSIRO Weed Scan and the MapApp weeds module
- Monitoring data available from previous programs

NSW Weed Wise

A mobile app 'NSW Weed Wise' for the identification of weeds in the field. It is maintained by DPIRD.

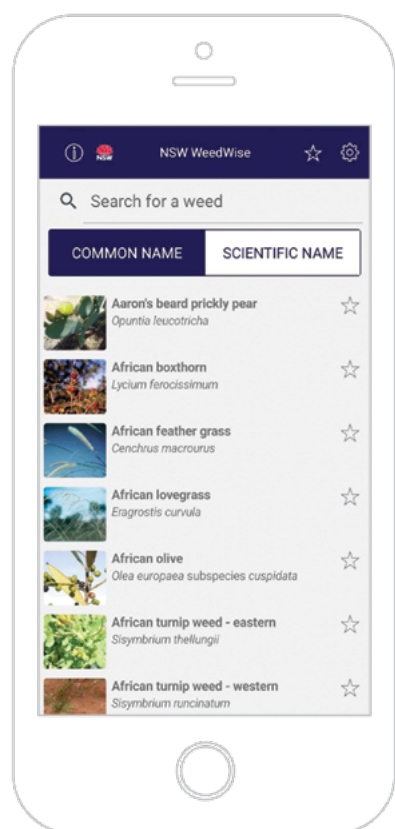


Figure 2 The WeedWise app

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9.4 The Annual weed management schedule

Each region is to produce an annual weed management schedule for each financial year. The annual schedule is developed using the following:

- Principles of weed management
- Categories within the Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan and
- Prioritisation framework refer to table 6.
- Outputs of monitoring of effectiveness

Each Schedule should include:

- priority for each weed program
- location
- weed control method to be used
- anything else considered relevant to the implementation of the plan (e.g. timing requirements)

Areas used as washdown bays should be considered for inclusion.

The annual schedule may be amended due to:

- emerging and changing regional weed priorities
- plantation protection requirements
- operational efficiencies
- proximity to other operations (in particular, a consideration of safety aspects) and neighbours
- additional funding (e.g. funding for research)
- additional requirements for participation in any local weed management plans

Table 6: Prioritisation framework

Priority	Action	Aim
1	Prevention	Management is consistent with State and Regional Priority weeds
2	Plantation protection	Ensure adequate tree survival in newly planted areas by controlling weeds
3	Participation in local weed management plan	Meet mandatory measures for state priority weeds
4	Neighbours and specific neighbour/ public safety impacts	Minimise impact on agricultural activities. Generally, weed programs will be part of a 'nil tenure' approach and part of a cooperative and coordinated control program developed in conjunction with other stakeholders.
5	Threat abatement	Meet Forestry Corporation's commitments within Threat Abatement Plans
6	Research	Participate in research programs that meet Forestry Corporation's environmental objectives ³ .
7	Natural environment protection	Focus will be on areas where control is both achievable and likely to have the greatest benefit to native biodiversity. Such a site-led approach ensures the best possible outcome from the limited resources available for managing widespread weeds

3 As outlined in the [Forest Management Policy](#)

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9.4.1 Responsibility

Development of the Annual Schedule is the responsibility of the Fire & Stewardship Manager (SPD) and Fire & Operations Manager/ Senior Manager (HFD). It is approved by the Regional Manager.

9.4 Operational plan

Prior to any weed control activities, and based on scale of operation, a site-based plan must be developed and approved. For example, a site may be a single compartment, up to a State forest level. Where a larger area is covered by a single plan, it must consider the risk of operating from a plan of larger scale. For roadside spraying, this may be appropriate where hazard and environmental features requiring protection or awareness are still able to be identified and prescriptions known. Refer to the intranet site [\(Softwoods\)](#) and [\(Hardwoods\)](#) for templates.

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10 Choosing the appropriate control technique

Control techniques used in Forestry Corporation include the following;

Plantation establishment

Plantation establishment, involving appropriate cultivation and tree planting can be a useful method of controlling some weeds. It is a long-term method, and suitable for large areas of land. Its effectiveness depends on the tolerance of the weed species to shading, the added competition and forest management. The abundance of weeds may increase following thinning or clear-fell.

Biological control

Biological control is the introduction of an insect or pathogen that attacks the weed. Biological controls are best accompanied by other means of control. Biological control is not an attempt at eradication. In situations where chemical, mechanical or physical control is too costly or environmentally inappropriate, biological control may be the only realistic control option.

Within Forestry Corporation, options for biological controls are led by Local Land Services. Biological controls are currently available for;

- Blackberry –rust releases have been partially effective
- Patterson’s curse –flea beetle (*Longitarsus echii*)
- Prickly pear, tiger pear and tree pear -species specific cochineal and cactoblastis
- African boxthorn -Boxthorn Rust
- Broom –Gall mite
- Gorse –Gorse spider mite, seed weevil, soft shoot moth
- Lantana –19 biological control agents established since 1914, mixed success, help to reduce lantana in some areas.

Mechanical

Mechanical weed control, including cultivation, slope mowing, tractor slashing, and manual brushing, and is useful for temporarily controlling weeds until they re-shoot. It is cheaper than cultivation and preserves groundcover, therefore reducing the possibility of soil erosion. Slashing will not eradicate a weed but may provide a level of control.

Physical

The physical removal of weeds, sometimes combined with chemical control of cut stumps and regeneration activities, may provide effective control in sensitive areas (e.g. near threatened plants) or in small infestations.

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Chemical

Pesticides are an efficient and locally effective means of weed control, including suppression of seed development, but do have potential to impact on other environmental values. Use is regulated under the Pesticides Act 1999. Only a registered chemical can be used for the control of weeds, and pesticides must be used in accordance with the label. Pesticide use on State forests is guided by Forestry Corporation's [Manual for the Use of Chemicals](#).

Fire

Fire can be effective for the primary treatment of weeds. Depending on the intensity, fire can often kill the parent plant and either destroy or promote the germination of weed stored seed. Hazard reduction burning may be used to restrict the distribution of pine wildings. As with other control techniques, appropriate follow up is required. Fire disturbance also increases light penetration into an area, creating conditions which some weed species are well adapted to capitalise.

Fire, as a method of control, is most effective when accompanied by other forms of control.

Strategic grazing

The use of grazing may be effective in controlling certain weeds and minimising their spread into adjoining areas. The ability of goats to control weeds such as blackberry, has been well documented⁴.

Livestock may also act as a spread mechanism for some species, either through droppings or having seed stick to the skin.

Washdown Procedures

To control weed spread, Forestry Corporation implements washdown procedures for vehicles, machinery, and equipment when operating in infested areas, transporting soil or plant material, or moving between contaminated and clean sites.

10.1 Process of choosing

In selecting appropriate weed control techniques. Forestry Corporation give due consideration to

10.1.1 Worker safety

A risk assessment of any alternative techniques must be carried out.

For pesticides used by Forestry Corporation, an Environment and Social Risk Assessment has been carried out. This process predicts, assesses and reviews the likely or actual environmental and social effects of a well-defined action, evaluates alternatives, and designs appropriate mitigation, management and monitoring measures.⁷

An ESRA contains these main steps:

- Identify the lowest risk option to control a pest, weed or disease, the conditions for its use and the generic mitigation and monitoring measures to minimise the risks
- Consider the approved list of hazards, exposure elements and exposure variables
- Select the option that demonstrates the least social and environmental damages, more effectiveness and equal or greater social and environmental benefits
- Before applying any chemical pesticide, incorporate the results of the ESRA to site operational plans, to identify site-specific risks
- Use of hazardous pesticides according to approved methods

4 Report "Final Report on Goat Grazing Trial for Blackberry Control within Softwood Plantations" is available via TRIM D00251950

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10.1.2 Efficacy of available techniques

Consider proven ability of available techniques

10.1.3 Impact on the environment of different weed control techniques

Select techniques with minimal environmental impacts, consistent with weed control objectives⁵

Use of methods other than application of herbicide, such as biological, mechanical and physical methods, where the use of these alternative methods has less adverse impacts on the environment, while still meeting efficacy requirements.

Consider cost, effectiveness and achievement of control.

10.1.4 Site variations

Site specific issues of slope, soil type, access, presence of threatened species, available resources etc may impact on available control techniques.

10.2 Timing

Timing of weed control programs to recognise reproductive mechanisms and flowering season is critical. Optimal periods for treatment of significant weeds in each Region is outlined in the Annual Schedules.

10.3 Follow up

Weed control requires on-going effort as one-off control is ineffective. Treated areas are monitored to determine the efficacy of treatment –weed control and non-target effects.

Continuing active control is almost always required to maintain the benefits of past control operations and achieve long term results.

Areas will be retreated as priority when planning the annual schedule, before starting treatment on new areas. Depending on the weed, its significance and its ecological make up, annual treatment may be required for many years (e.g. 10 years for gorse).

5

There are several resources to help with in making this assessment, including the Noxious and Environmental Weed Control Handbook, the Forestry Corporation SPD Silvicultural Manual etc, expert advice

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11 Available resources, training and accreditation

11.1 Funding

Control activities must be effectively targeted, with appropriate priorities determined to ensure maximum control effort within available resources. Weed management budgets are included within regional budgets where control is required. Other programs are funded from revenue and grants from treasury as part of Forestry Corporation's community service obligations. Additionally, Forestry Corporation will participate in applications for external funding where appropriate and when aligned with its values, supporting enhanced weed management initiatives.

11.2 Training

Operator training and accreditation are essential for implementing this plan. Training programs ensure that staff and contractors are equipped with the necessary knowledge to apply best practices in weed management.

Refer to the [Manual for the use of chemicals](#) requirements related to pesticide application.

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12 Data capture, monitoring and reporting

Monitoring the implementation and effects of weed control programs is essential. Monitoring requirements are summarised in Table 7.

- Operational monitoring is where information is collected about what was done, when and at what cost
- Each area treated should be recorded on a map (GIS)

Table 7: Elements of monitoring and reporting

Monitoring and reporting element	Purpose	Feedback to planning process
Pest plant abundance	Assist in developing annual programs	Contribute to stakeholder conversations
Weed impacts Discussion with stakeholders, particularly neighbours and LLS	Assess the impacts of weeds to ■ Identify the need for control programs ■ Determine priorities	Identify the type, location and extent of pest plant control programs. Feedback to annual planning
Annual expenditure	Assess expenditure adequacy trends	Identify FCNSW's ability to meet high priority control programs within available budget Pursue opportunities for external funding
Compliance FCNSW monitor &/ or audit weed control planning and operations	Ensures ■ Planning is in accordance with this Plan ■ Operations are implemented in an effective and safe manner	Allows for ■ continuous improvement in annual scheduling and operational planning ■ identification and addressing of non-conformances Ensures operations meet legal and social objectives
Effectiveness of control	To determine the efficacy of the treatment	allows for a change in program if not effective or efficient
New developments Maintain awareness of pest plant species and best practice control techniques	Ensure that cumulative corporate knowledge regarding pest plant management is current	Modification of this plan Include new techniques in annual schedules
Review of this plan	Ensures ■ Objectives and strategy remain appropriate ■ Planning and treatment continually improve	Amend the strategic plan

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13 Key legislation

- *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999*
- *Biosecurity Act 2015*
- *Local Land Services Act 2013*
- *Forestry Act, 2012 and Regulation 2022*
- *Pesticide Act 1999 and Regulation 2017*
- *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974*
- *Protection of the Environment Operations Act, 1997*

14 Related documents

- Forest management policy
- Compliance Policy
- Planning framework
- [National Forest Policy Statement](#)
- [Australian Weed Strategy 2017-2027](#)
- Threat abatement plans
- Regional Strategic Weed Management plans
 - » [Hunter Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2023–2027](#)
 - » [Murray Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2023–2027](#)
 - » [North West Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2023-2027](#)
 - » [Central West Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2023–2027](#)
 - » [Central Tablelands Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2023-2027](#)
 - » [South East Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2023–2027](#)
 - » [Riverina Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2023-2027](#)
 - » [Western Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2023–2027](#)
 - » [North Coast Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2023-2027](#)
- Manual for the Use of Chemicals.
- [Flora Reserve Working Management Plans](#)
- [Western grazing management plan FCNSW](#)
- [NSW Biosecurity Strategy 2022-2030](#)
- NSW Invasive Species Plan 2023-28
- FCNSW Pesticide Use Notification Plan
- Pesticide Plan Manual (SPD)
- Ground based pesticide use due diligence template (SPD)
- Ground based pesticide use operations plan template (SPD)/ Broad area weed spraying operational plan template (HFD)
- [Broad Area Weed Spraying Planner Checklist](#)
- [DPRID Weed control handbook](#)
- [ChemAlert](#)

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