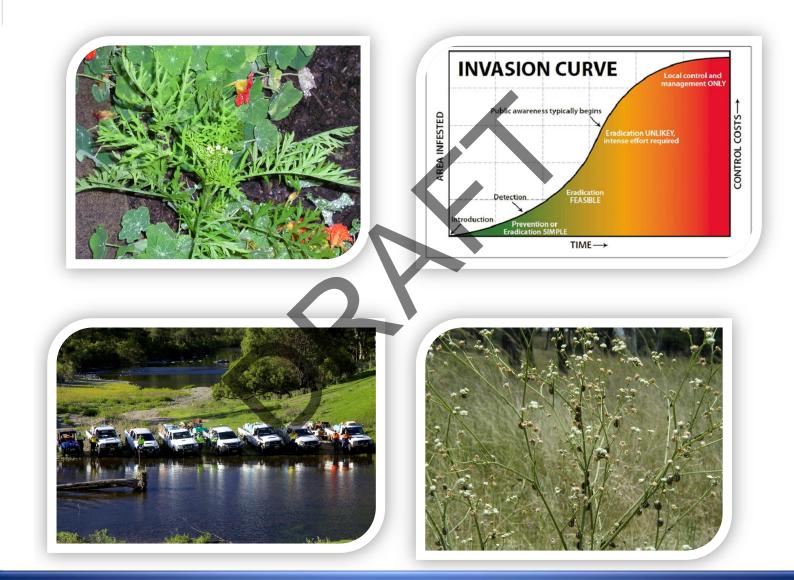
Northern Tablelands Regional Weed Committee Regional Inspection Program 2017 - 2022



Local Land

Northern Tablelands

Services

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ABBREVIATIONS

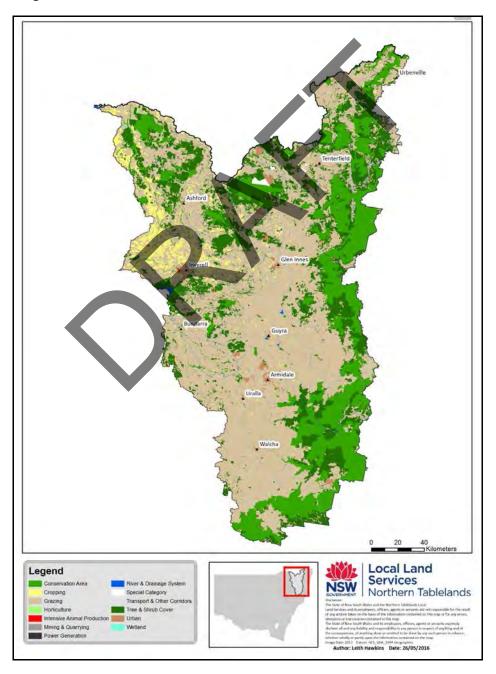
AIIMS	Australian Inter-service Incident Management System
AUSBIOSEC	Australian Biosecurity System for Primary Production and the Environment
BIS	Biosecurity Information System
во	Biosecurity Officer
LCA	Local Control Authority
NT	Northern Tablelands
NTRWC	Northern Tablelands Regional Weed Committee
NTRWC WIP	NTRWC Incursion Plan 2017 - 2022
NTRWC RRP	NTRWC Rapid Response Plan 2017 - 2022
NTRSWMP	NT Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2017 - 2022
NTRWC WAP	NTRWC Weeds Action Program 2015 - 2020
NTRWC WIT	NTRWC Weed Incursion Team
NSW DPI	NSW Department of Primary Industries
NSW ISP	NSW Invasive Species Plan 2017 - 2022
NWIP	National Weed Incursion Plan 2008 - 2015
RISO	Regional Invasive Species Officer
SWC	State Weed Committee
WMP	Weed Management Plan
WRA	Weed Risk Assessment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Northern Tablelands region is situated in northern inland New South Wales and includes the Local Government Areas of Tenterfield, Glen Innes Severn, Armidale Regional, Uralla, Walcha and Inverell covering an area of approximately 40,000 km² with a population of around 72,000.

The region has a diverse climate, ranging from temperate to sub-tropical, with considerable differences in climate between the east and the west, and great variety in its landforms, hydrology, vegetation, and soils. Natural resources and land use in the region reflect climatic and geographic influences. Grazing predominates as the agricultural land use, with cropping occurring in the north- west of the region. Mixed farming, horticulture, viticulture and other agricultural enterprises add to the regional diversity.

The region has the highest carrying capacity in NSW, with the most cattle and the fourth highest number of sheep of any LLS region of NSW.



Map 1: Land use patterns in the NT LLS area.

The Northern Tablelands Regional Weed Committee Regional Inspection Program 2017-2022 (NTRWC RIP) is an operational plan and guideline for the inspection of private and public land in the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services region of NSW under the New South Wales Invasive Species Plan 2015 – 2022, the Northern Tablelands Regional Weed Committee (NTRWC) Weeds Action Business Plan 2015 – 2020 and the Biosecurity Act 2015.

The Biosecurity Act 2015 repeals the Noxious Weeds Act 1993, which previously provided regulatory controls and powers to manage noxious weeds in NSW. The Biosecurity Act 2015 provides the opportunity to streamline and modernise the way weeds are managed in NSW as it:

- Embeds the principle of shared responsibility for biosecurity risks (including weeds) across government, community and industry.
- Is tenure neutral, meaning that the act will apply equally to all land in the state, regardless of whether it is publically or privately owned.
- Supports regional planning and management for weeds, as recommended by the Review of Weeds Management in NSW.

Under the Noxious Weeds Act 1993 (repealed) private landholders had different weed control obligations than public land managers. The tenure neutral approach recommended in the Review of Weeds Management and adopted under the Biosecurity Act 2015 is consistent with the principle that biosecurity is everyone's responsibility.

The NTRWC Regional Inspection Program provides a coordinated approach to ensure that these objectives are achieved over a five year period and is an integral part of the outcomes to be realised under the NTRWC Weeds Action Business Plan 2015 – 2020 and meet the requirements of the Biosecurity Act 2015.

The Regional Inspection Program provides the mechanism for the NTRWC and the constituent member LCAs to respond to and effectively manage existing weed species through targeted inspectorial processes and the prevention of new weed incursions. It identifies inspection protocols for both private and public land over a wide range of land use activities within the region.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Weeds pose a serious threat to human and animal health, to primary production and our natural environment. They reduce farm productivity, displace native species and contribute to ongoing land degradation and reduced land values.

The implementation of priority weed management has been the responsibility of local government in NSW since 1906, providing continuity in weed management through the Noxious Weeds Act (repealed) and more recently the Biosecurity Act 2015

Councils (LCAs) through the Northern Tablelands regional weed Committee (NTRWC) are co-operating with each other to produce regional strategic weed management plans to maximise co-ordination for the benefit of all concerned.

Council's weeds staff are the first line of defense against regional priority and environmental weeds in the region.

WAP 1520 will target funds to ensure that local weed control authorities and other key stakeholders meet the Invasive Species Plan (ISP) targets for weed management and comply with the provisions of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, and previous *Noxious Weeds Act 1993*.

In accordance with the NSW Weeds Action program 2015- 2020, the NTRWC has developed the NTRWC Weeds Action Business Plan 2015 – 2020 to meet the objectives of the NSW WAP and NSW ISP.

The NTRWC Regional Inspection Plan is a mandatory measurable outcome of the WAP 1520.

- *ISP Objective 1.2 Develop and implement early detection capabilities development of regional inspection program.*
- *ISP Objective 2.1 Timely detection of new weed incursions implementation of regional inspection program.*

and is closely aligned to the following documentation:

- NTRWC Weed Incursion Plan 2017 2022
- NTRWC Rapid Response Plan 2017 2022 and
- NTRWC High Risk Pathways and Sites Management Plan 2017 2022

1.2 Purpose of the Regional Inspection Program

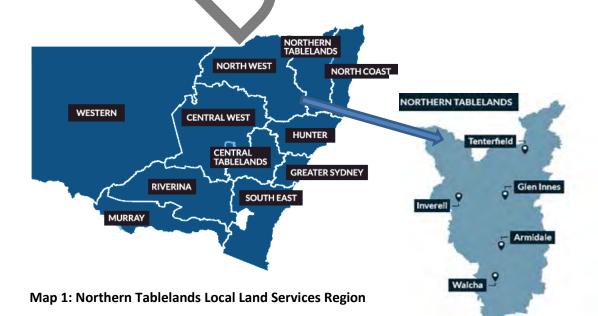
The NTRWC Regional Inspection Program (Program) is an operational plan and guideline for the inspection of private and public land (including aerial inspections) in the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services region of NSW for the purpose of;

- providing the operational framework for a consistent inspection program for the region over a diverse range of land use activities;
- preventing the establishment of new invasive weed species before they become widely established through comprehensive inspection processes;
- reducing the impacts of widespread invasive weed species by uniform inspection processes;
- identifying areas within the region that require attention and may attract funding through outside resources;
- raising community awareness and understanding of regional and local weed issues;
- identifying where resources may need to be allocated at a local level to reduce the impacts of invasive weed species.

The Program outlines the essential steps required to execute a regional inspection program for the 6 Local Control Authorities (LCAs), and other stakeholders within the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services region;

LCAs

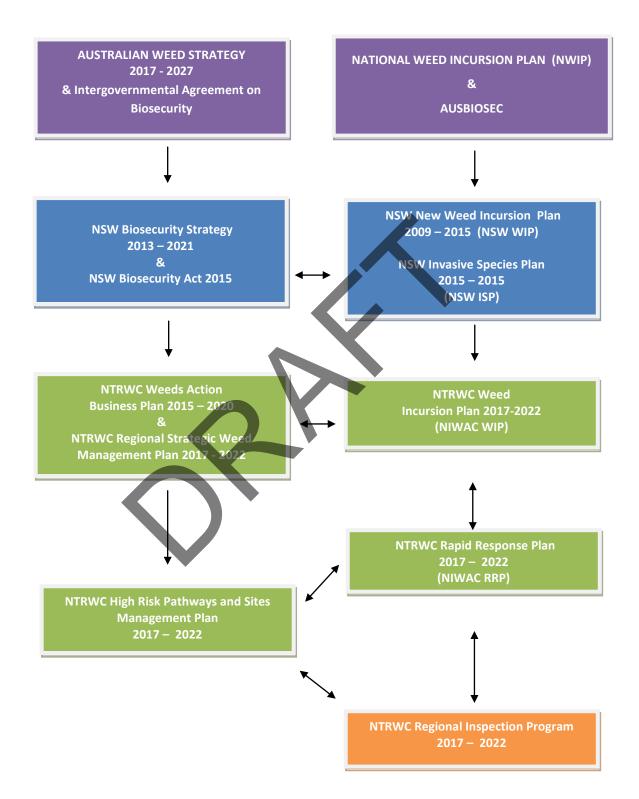
- Tenterfield Shire Council
- Glen Innes Severn Council
- Inverell Shire Council
- New England Weeds Authority (Armidale Regional, Uralla & Walcha Councils)



1.3 Legislation and Policy framework

The NTRWC RIP fits into a hierarchy of frameworks, strategies, and legislation within the region, the state and nationally as summarized in Chart 1.

Chart 1: NTRWC Regional Inspection Plan 2017 - 2022 Policy Framework



2. THE BIOSECURITY ACT 2015

Some serious weeds are required by law to be controlled by all landholders in an area. These were previously known as noxious weeds and the law that controlled them was the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993*.

A key recommendation by the NRC (NRC 2014) and supported by the NSW Government was to replace the weed classes under the Noxious Weed Act 1993 with three outcomes-focused weed categories listed in the Biosecurity Act are listed below:⁶

Outcome Category	Biosecurity Toolset			
Weeds excluded from entering the state	Prohibited Matter: Declaration and management of significant weeds not present in NSW, or part of NSW.			
Weeds to be eradicated	Control Order: Management of weeds that are the targets of approved eradication programs. Although a Control Order is for a five year period, this can be renewed for longer term eradication programs.			
Weeds to be effectively managed to reduce spread on a regional basis	Biosecurity Zone: Weeds subject to ongoing "strategic" regional management.			
All weeds	General Biosecurity Duty: Requires any person dealing with biosecurity matter or a carrier of biosecurity matter and who knows or ought to know of the biosecurity risks association with that activity to take measures to <u>prevent, minimise or eliminate</u> the risk as far as is reasonably practicable. Specific measures to reduce the risk will be detailed in regional weed plans for priority weeds. Note, however that the General Biosecurity Duty exists for all weeds that present a biosecurity risk.			
	Mandatory Measures Regulation: May require persons to take specific actions with respect to weeds or carriers of weeds.			
Other Biosecurity tools	Emergency Order: To respond to a current or imminent biosecurity risk that may have a significant impact.			
	 Biosecurity Direction: An enforceable instruction to a person or class of persons to take action to: Prevent, eliminate, minimise a biosecurity risk, Prevent, manage or control a biosecurity impact, Enforce any instrument under this Act. 			
	Biosecurity Undertaking: An authorised officer may accept in writing an undertaking given by a person that sets out the measures a person has agreed to implement to remedy a contravention, a likely contravention, or suspected contravention of the Act.			

3. THE NORTHERN TABLELANDS REGIONAL INSPECTION PROGRAM

The main intent of the Biosecurity Act and the Weeds Action Program is to prevent the establishment of significant new weeds, restrict the spread of serious weeds and protect other landholders from new weed incursions.

There is no point in declaring a weed a priority weed with mandatory control duties unless there is a firm intention that is supported by the appropriate resources to implement a practical, planned inspection and management program.

Public Authorities are government agencies, Statutory Bodies, and Trustees of land reserved for public purposes.

Public Authorities must control scheduled priority weeds on land under their control to the extent required under the Biosecurity Act 2015.

Private land holders or occupiers are required to control scheduled priority weeds according to their control category for their area. It is their responsibility to be aware of the scheduled priority weeds in the area and take the appropriate action to notify, control and prevent their spread.

3.1 Enforcing the Biosecurity Act

NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) administers the Biosecurity Act and determines the weed species covered by regulatory tools such as Prohibited Matter, Control Orders and Biosecurity Zones.

Local Control Authorities (Local Councils and County Councils) are responsible for enforcing weed legislation. This includes such activities as:

- conducting weed inspections on public and private property
- inspecting and controlling weeds in high risk pathways and sites
- providing education, training and resources for both the public and staff in relation to weed management
- administering and ensuring compliance with any of the above regulatory tools
- responding to breaches of the Act, and
- notifying and reporting on weed activities to the Biosecurity Information System (BIS).

Authorised officers under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* are able to exercise all the functions specified in the Act to enforce the act and its regulations, including the regulatory tools covered in Table 2.1. Authorised officers are appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Industry or their delegate. Local Control Authority Weed Officers will be appointed as Authorised Officers under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* by their Local Control Authority. That appointment will allow the officers to exercise the functions of an authorised officer for weeds within the area of operation of their Local Control Authority.

The primary focus of this plan is to encourage and work with the community and landholders to achieve weed management objectives. Education, extension and use of biosecurity undertakings reinforce the concept of the General Biosecurity Duty and establish a cooperative approach to local and regional weed management.

Monitoring and compliance for weed management in the region will focus primarily on weeds listed in Appendix 1 to this plan. For these high risk weeds, prompt and responsible action is essential to avoid significant impacts on other landholders, industry and the environment.

3.2 Responsibilities of Local Control Authorities (Councils)

Concurrent with LCA obligations and in accordance with the funding provided by NSW DPI through the NSW Weeds Action Program as detailed in the NTRWC Weed Action Business Plan 2015 -2020, these duties have been extended within the region to build a capacity to:

- identify and manage high risk weed species and entry pathways;
- develop and implement early weed detection capabilities;
- assist in the timely detection of new weed incursions;
- affect a quick response to eradicate or contain new weeds;
- identify and prioritise weed management programs to where benefits are greatest;
- provide effective and targeted on-ground weed control;
- increase community acceptance of, and involvement in, effective weed management;
- integrate weed management into education programs;
- improve the knowledge base for weed management by providing current educational material and opportunities and be setting a public example.
- monitor progress of the NSW Invasive Species Plan's implementation; and
- encourage the use of cost-sharing arrangements

Central to meeting the abovementioned duties and responsibilities is the implementation of a consistent, coordinated and cooperative approach to a regional weed inspection program.

3.3 Biosecurity Officer Roles

On behalf of their respective Council's or County Council, Biosecurity Officers (formerly Weed Officers under the Noxious Weeds Act 1993) are responsible for enforcing the Biosecurity Act 2015 and implementing the objectives and activities of the NTRWC Weed Action Business Plan 2015 -2020.

A key role for Biosecurity Officers is the inspection of private and public land with the aim to reduce the impacts of weeds on the environment, economy and for the community's social well being. The inspections include private property that is owned or leased, Crown lands either vacant or occupied, including Travelling stock reserves (TSRs), council controlled lands, State Forests and National Parks.

These Officers play a diverse role in the community and are responsible for a wide range of functions for implementing councils' policies, strategies and noxious weed control program.

Their main activities include but are not restricted to;

- Conducting property inspections within their respective areas
- Enforcing the Biosecurity Act 2015 as required
- Surveying and mapping of weed infestations
- Reporting on scheduled priority weed distribution and abundance
- Implementing and coordinating weed control programs
- Conducting community extension programs
- Maintaining accurate records
- Liaising with other Authority's and other Local Control Authority's
- Contributing to regional weed management and other resource management activities.
- Attending Regional Weed Committee Meetings and contributing toward the developing and funding
 of their coordinated activities.

4. THE STANDARD FOR WEED MANAGEMENT COMPLIANCE

The Standard for Weed Management Compliance (NSW DPI) includes three requires outcomes relating to the

regional inspection program;

4.1 Assessment, Monitoring and Recording.

<u>REQUIRED OUTCOME 1</u>: Lands inspected (monitored) strategically; information collected, evaluated, recorded in a consistent and repeatable manner.

Correct identification of the scale and complexity of the weed issue is essential for sound decision making. Knowledge of the extent, density and impacts allows for prioritisation of effort, tool selection and efficient use of limited resources.

Sound knowledge and good records identify optimal scale for management effort against risk. It also facilitates community and industry engagement at scales at which they are concerned and active. This will have implications for the type of knowledge required, the nature of collaborative arrangements and the community engagement necessary to achieve outcomes. These scales do not always align with organisational boundaries and often require cross jurisdictional partnerships to effect change.

The core of effective property assessment is a well-planned and resourced program that allows for early detection of new weeds, frequent monitoring of eradication and containment targets and engagement with as many landholders as possible. In particular, programs that consider high risk pathways and sites and then prioritise others according to the level of impact will meet compliance needs.

Possible steps to achieve this outcome include:

- Assess the scale of each weed prioritisation category under the legislation. Orders and Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan.
- Assess the potential high risk species to invade or spread.
- Identify the scale of the task number of properties to be inspected and frequency.
- Maximise benefits by developing an adaptable program that efficiently uses resources available.
- Maintain accurate records of each inspection and the results.
- Have regard to risk management strategies when considering impacts on stakeholders.
- Ensure records are compliant with State, regional and local requirements and standards.
- Use of efficient methodology to assess large scale, public lands or low risk enterprises.
- Regularly review records to measure and evaluate success.
- •

Evidence requirements:

- Evidence of research and analysis of information relevant to determining appropriate scale, risk and frequency of weed management issues.
- Agreed regional strategies for systematic inspection, high risk pathways and site identification and rapid response plans.
- Entity agreement to adequately resource and support programs.
- Documented policy and procedure for inspection frequency, record keeping and reporting.
- Documented policy and procedure for high risk monitoring and rapid response.

- Inspectorial reporting is linked to an enforcement procedure to ensure effective response.
- Evidence of sound and accurate record keeping for each inspection and site meeting Regional and State standards (including the NSW Weed Metadata Standard and WAP reporting requirements).
- Documented evidence of risk identification, evaluation and management arising from the identified scale for management.
- Evidence of a pro-active process for regularly reviewing information to assess achievements

4.2 Effective and professional use of Regulation

<u>REQUIRED OUTCOME 2 :</u> The Biosecurity Act 2015 applied systematically in an objective, repeatable manner using a risk based methodology. Enforcement used fairly and equitably and in a manner appropriate to the risk identified.

In some cases voluntary compliance is not achievable or rapid action is required. In these cases enforcement is necessary. The Act offers a number of tools that can be used according to the situation.

Forced compliance is a time consuming process and can be costly. Complete attention to detail, due process and a thorough knowledge of the legislation are essential (see 3.2 above). The process of enforcement should always be available but is best used where voluntary compliance cannot be obtained and there is a reasonable threat to the positive achievements and outcomes of the program.

Enforcement needs to be fair and reasonable. Agencies need to ensure that actions are consistent across their jurisdiction and with regional processes, using the full spectrum of available tools, include due process and are supported by sound internal governance.

Possible steps to achieve this outcome include:

- Assess the risks of non-compliance in each case.
- Commencing with initial contact with the client maintain complete records of the situation.
- Evaluate the potential for delivery of multiple benefits to the community from enforcement.
- Assess the potential positive and negative impacts on resources and stakeholders at different scales.
- Ensure the enforcement policy and procedures are well documented, understood by all staff and delivered at appropriate levels.
- Ensure staff are fully trained and properly authorised to take the required action.

Evidence requirements:

- Documented and agreed enforcement policy and procedures.
- Documented evidence showing levels of training and authorisation within the organisation.
- All interactions with clients at all stages and levels are recorded.
- Evidence to demonstrate fair and equitable dealings and due process.

4.3 **Reporting and Analysis**

REQUIRED OUTCOME: Actions, activities regularly reported at organisational, regional and state scale using required standards and formats.

Improved weed management can only be gained and measured by regular reporting at a range of levels. This is the key process for informing all stakeholders at State, Ministerial, regional and local levels through regular reporting.

Although most reporting is seen to be data based (quantitative), organisations should also record non-data measures such as good news reports, "snapshots " of projects and events and other success stories (qualitative) as measures.

Consistency in how data is collected, stored and reported is important as reports are escalated upwards. It is essential that different organisations and regions are reporting upwards in the same formats so that comparative information can be gathered at the broader scales. For this reason DPI has implemented the Biosecurity Information System (BIS).

Possible steps to achieve this outcome include:

- Ensure all involved staff are collecting sound and accurate information at each stage of activity.
- Put in place internal reporting mechanisms that can feed back to stakeholders.
- Ensure that at least core data is BIS compliant.
- Relevant reports and mapping are provided for regional and State partners.
- Learn from and/or build on information collected.

Evidence requirements:

- Documented reporting policy and procedures.
- Relevant reports and / or maps.
- BIS compliant records consistency, compliance and frequency.
- Qualitative as well as quantitative record keeping.
- Demonstrated use of the Regional MERI Plan.

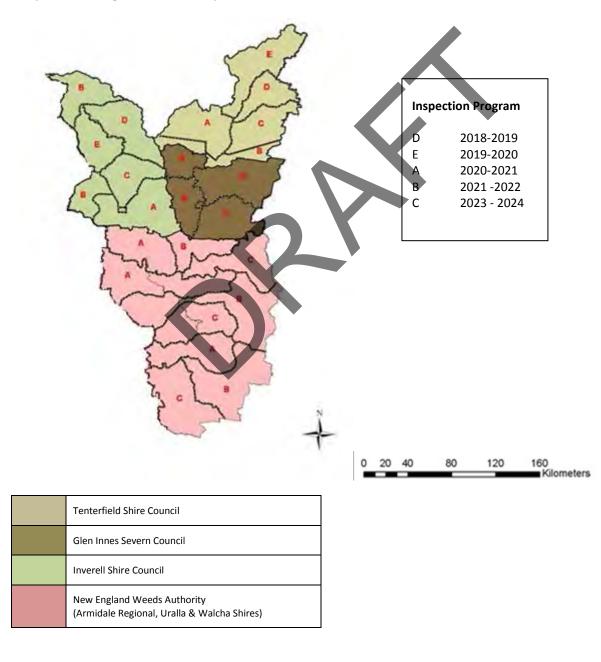
5. THE NORTHERN TABLELANDS REGIONAL INSPECTION PROGRAM

Due to the diverse range of geographical areas and land use activities within the region the inspection program is divided into individual LCA areas then further split into divisional areas to be inspected within the 2017-2022 time frame, in line with the NTRWC Weeds Action Business Plan 2015 – 2020.

Each LCA has a localised inspection program that aims to inspect all private and public lands under their control within the five year period

Other priority sites that pose a higher risk of invasion within the region have been identified through regional workshops and also form part of the regional and local inspection programs.

The following sections delineate each of the LCA areas which are further dissected into divisional areas providing details of their 3-5 year inspection program together with the number of properties that will be inspected during the nominated period.



The following table summarises the inspectorial targets contained within:

- ISP Objective 1.2 Develop and implement early detection capabilities development of regional inspection program.
- ISP Objective 2.1 Timely detection of new weed incursions implementation of regional inspection program.

of the NTRWC Weed Action Business Plan 2015 – 2020 and related to the measurable outcomes of the Plan.

TABLE 1: Summary of Inspection & treatment targets – NTRWC WAP

Inspection and control details (these are taken from the Key Objectives & Target page)

Activity type		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Totals
Likele viele elte e Zervel	Targets	439	439	439	439	439	2195
High risk sites (num)	Funds	\$233,799	\$233,736	\$238,670	\$238,604	\$238,536	\$1,183,345
High risk pathways	Targets	9077	9005	9077	9077	9077	45313
(kim)	Funds	\$100,000	\$80,000	\$110,000	\$110,000	\$110,000	\$510,000
Priority sites (num)	Targets	525	445	525	525	525	2545
	Funds	\$173,500	\$157,000	\$178,500	\$178,500	\$178,500	\$866,000
Private property inspections (num)	Targets	2790	2790	2790	2790	2790	13950
	Funds	\$276,988	\$303,294	\$327,152	\$353,805	\$350,405	\$1,611,644



5.1 New England Weeds Authority

Authority Population: 38,305

Authority Area:18,223 km²

Length of Roads: 4,129 km²

Rural Properties/farmland (> 40ha) : 4165

Peri-urban/lifestyle properties (2 – 40ha):

Residential/Urban properties:

Climate

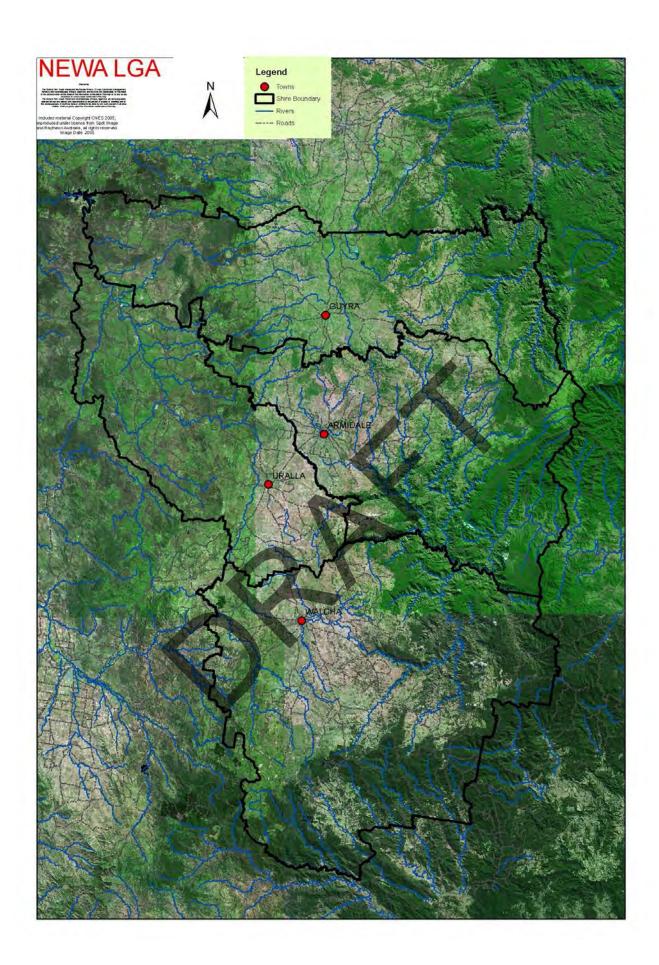
Climatic conditions in the area are generally affected by high altitudes of over 1000 metres.

Rainfall is predominately summer.

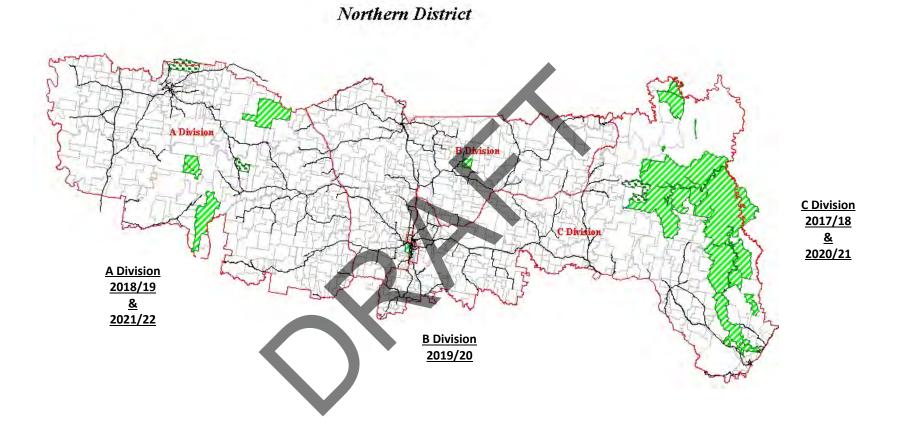
NEWA aims to inspect all properties within their LCA in a three year rotational program over a five year period to align it with the NTRWC Weed Action Business Plan 2015 - 2020 as follows:

Division	Year Inspected		No of Properties
A Division	1	2018/2019	1200
B Division	2	2019/2020	1700
C Division	3	2020/2021	1350
A Division	4	2021/2022	1200
C Division	5	2017/2018	1350



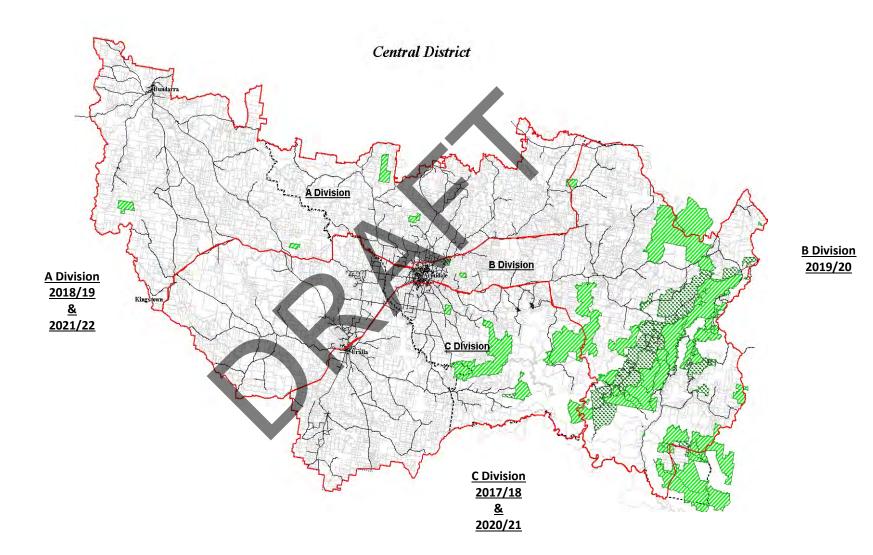


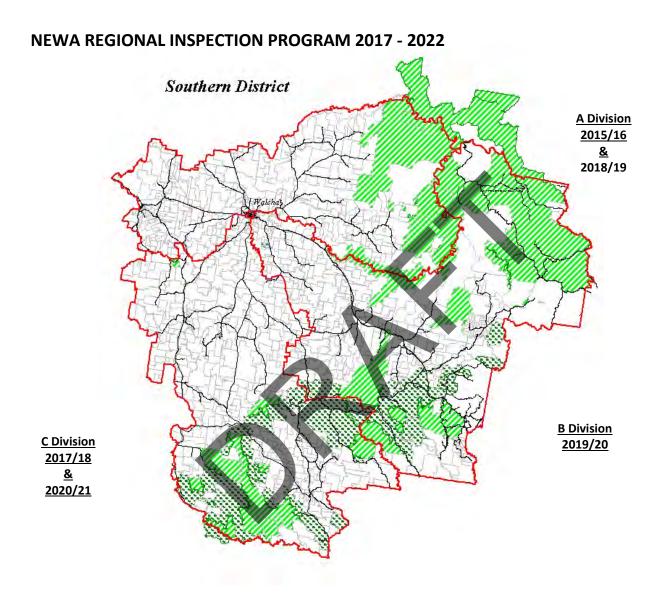
NEWA REGIONAL INSPECTION PROGRAM 2017 - 2022 NORTHERN (GUYRA)



NEWA REGIONAL INSPECTION PROGRAM 2017 – 2022

CENTRAL (ARMIDALE, URALLA)









The Glen Innes district is located centrally on the New England Tablelands of NSW. The high plains and mountain ranges of the region lie about 660km north of Sydney and 370km south of Brisbane.

Glen Innes is 1062m above sea level with nearby hills rising to 1,500m at Ben Lomond in the south, and Deepwater to the north.

At present over 7,000 cars pass through Glen Innes a day

Authority Area: 5,896km²

Length of Roads: 1,156km

Number of Rural Properties: 1,309 farmland holdings 429 rural residential holdings

Number of Urban Properties: 2,000 urban holdings 488 residential village holdings

Authority Population: 9,000

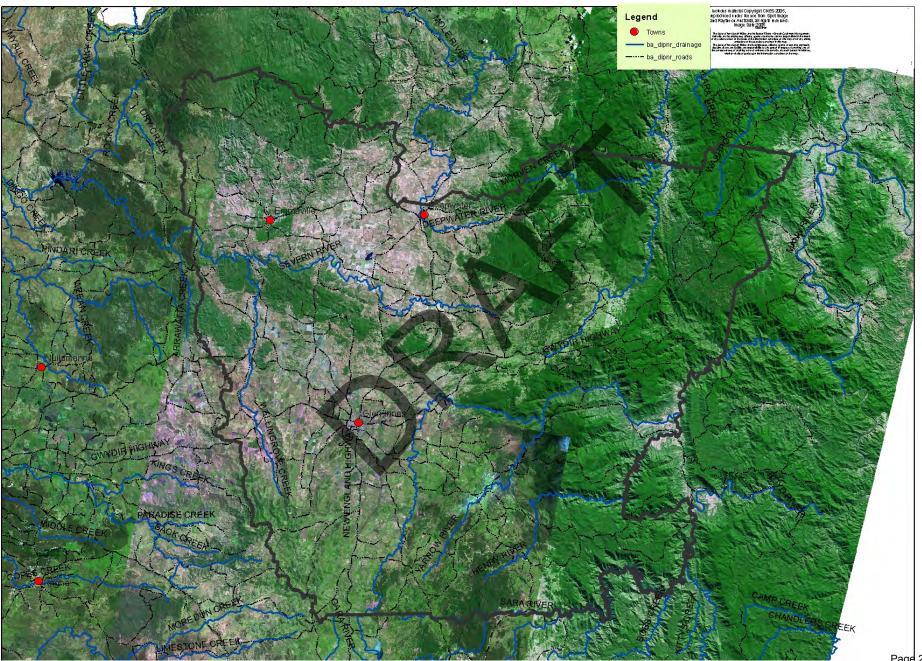
Climate: Temp: Summer - min 12.5c max 26c Winter – min 1c max 13.5c Annual rainfall – 750 – 850mm



Glen Innes Severn LGA

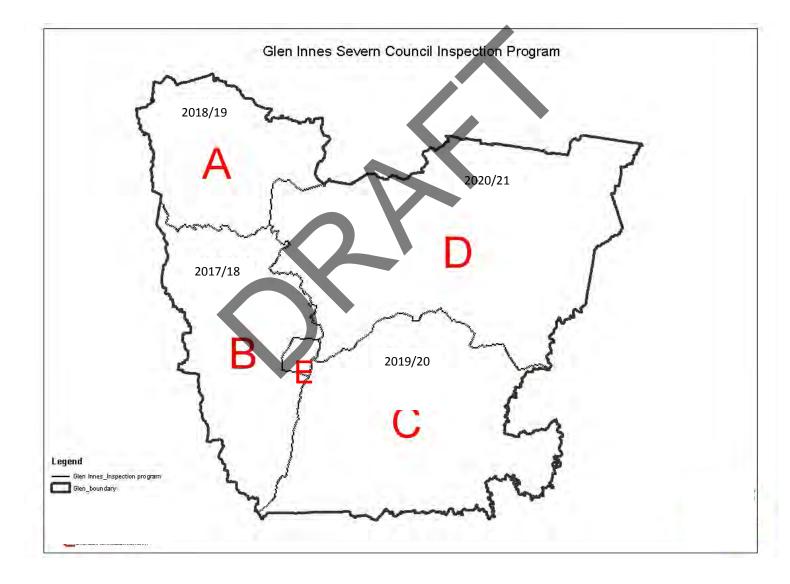
Landuse Pattern:

Glen Innes is a rich fattening and breeding area for fine wool, prime lambs and cattle. Until recent years the district produced more than half of the world's supply of sapphires including the famous Reddestone blues. Fossicking for sapphires and other minerals remains a popular pastime for locals and thousands of visitors alike.



Glen Innes Severn Council aims to inspect all properties within their LCA in a four year rotational program as follows:

Division	Year Inspected		No of Properties	Total Area (ha)
A Division	2	2018/2019	401	64,900
E Division			1,104 Dwellings	
C Division	3	2019/2020	506	165,400
E Division			50 Dwellings	
D Division	4	2020/2021	497	208,900
E Division			140 Dwellings	
B Division	1	2021/2022	396	101,800
E Division			1,111 Dwellings	

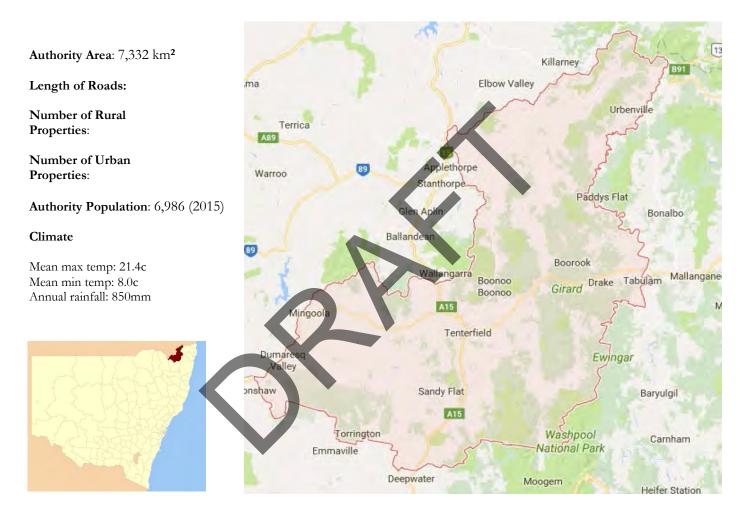


5.3 Tenterfield Shire Council

The Tenterfield Local Government Area straddles the Great Dividing Range in the north of New South Wales, with

approximately half the Shire entering the Clarence Catchment on the east and half entering west into the upper Murray-Darling Basin. The Shire generally consists of undulating to hilly landscape and ranges from approximately 150m to 1500m above sea level

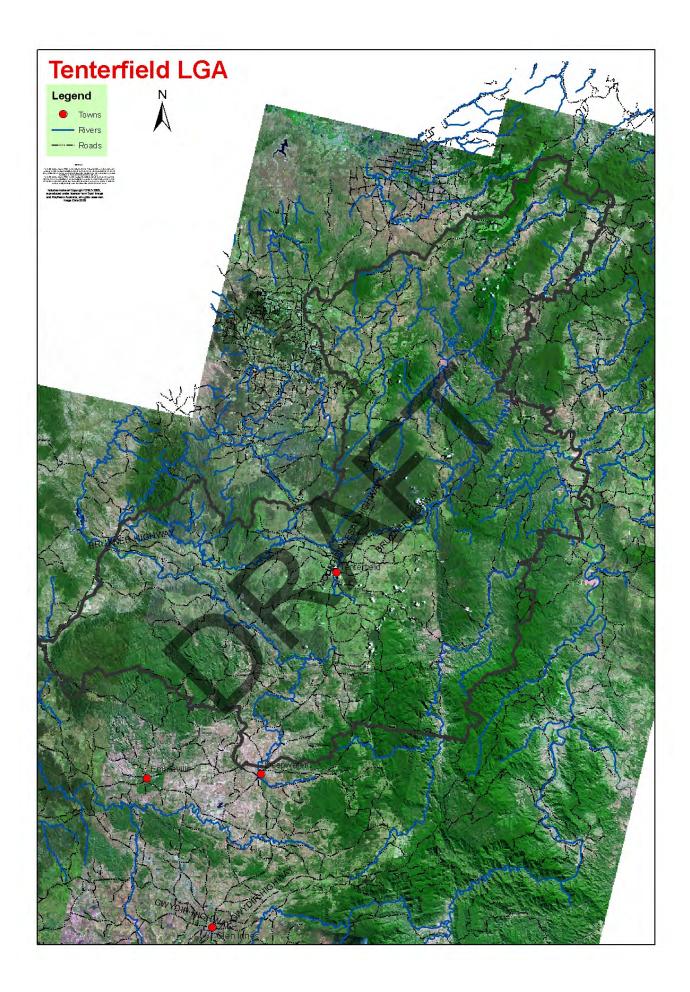
A large proportion of land in the Tenterfield Local Government Area is used for pasture, horticulture and viticulture. Mining for gold, silver and tin were previously major industries in Tenterfield with many villages in the area establishing because of mining operations (such as Liston and Torrington)



Landuse Pattern

Tenterfield has developed from a strong agricultural background consisting mainly of cattle grazing, associated activities and service industries (such as the operations of saleyards). During the last decade, the number of vineyards in the region has grown with approximately 200 hectares of vineyards located in the area. The increase in wineries in the area (including the broader regional areas of the New England and around Stanthorpe) has resulted in an increase in cellar door visitation and farm stays.

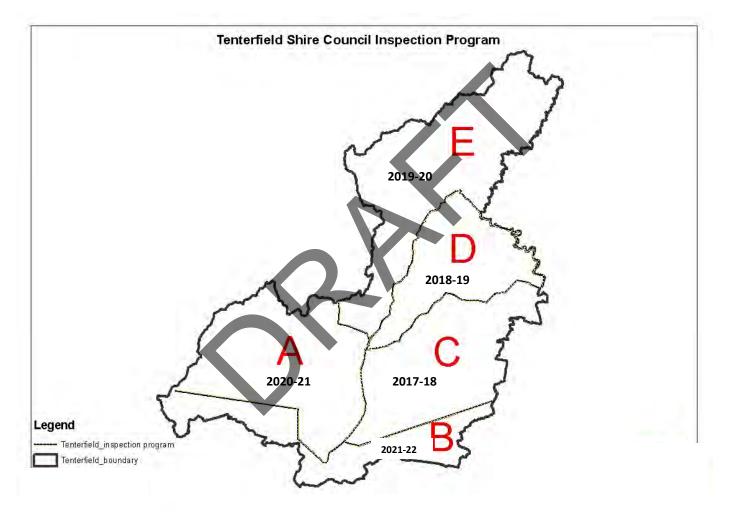
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Tenterfield Shire Council 5 Year Inspection Program

Tenterfield Shire Council aims to inspect all properties within their LCA in a five year rotational program as follows:

Division	Year Inspected		No of Properties
D Division	1	2018/2019	
E Division	2	2019/2020	
A Division	3	2020/2021	
B Division	4	2021/2022	
C Division	5	2017/2018	





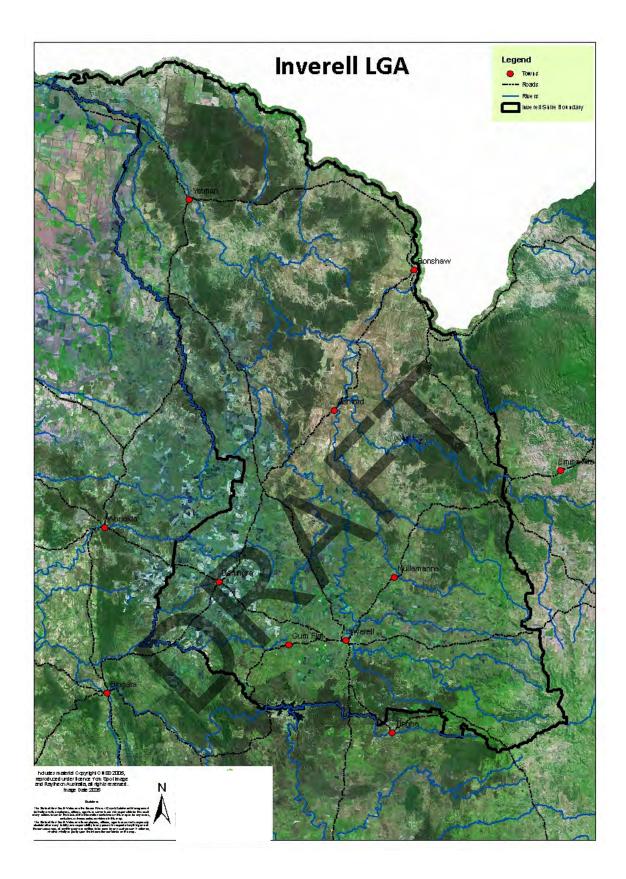
Inverell Shire is situated in the New England North West region of NSW. It is bounded on the north by the state border with Queensland, on the east with the Shires of Tenterfield, Glen Innes Severn, on the south by Guyra and the west by Gwydir.

The Inverell Shire has a unique natural environment consisting of two major river systems, two major water storage dams, Copeton and Pindari, two National Parks (Kwiambal and Kings Plains), 10 State Forests, as well as wilderness areas.

The Shire of Inverell covers an area of 8,661 square kilometres, with terrain ranging from the mountainous country of the New England tablelands in the east, to the typically dry, flat country of the western plains.



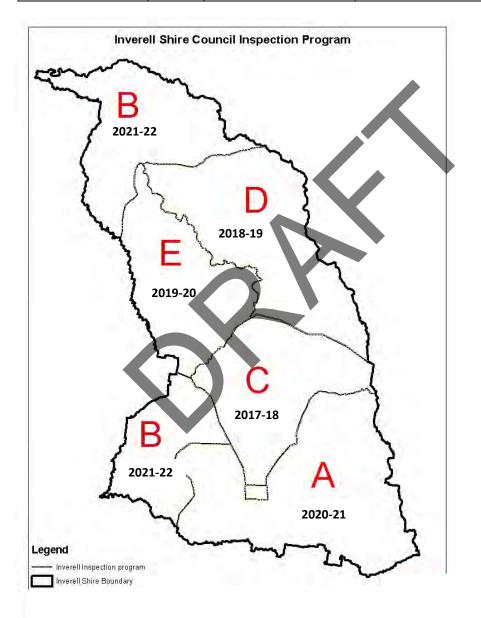
with the Northwest Slopes and plains. The picturesque random of the shire has variations from undulating hilly areas to the east, to the rich flat alluvial plains to the west of the shire. The 8,623 square kilometres that makes up the Inverell Shire has two major river systems, two major water storage dams, 6 National Parks, 7 State Forests, 4 Nature Reserves and 1 State Conservation Area comprising of a total of 41 194 hectares.



Inverell Shire Council 5 Year Inspection Program

Inverell Shire Council aims to inspect all properties within their LCA in a five year rotational program as follows:

Division	Year Inspected		No of Properties
D Division	1	2018/2019	310
E Division	2	2019/2020	370
A Division	3	2020/2021	1833
B Division	4	2021/2022	759
C Division	1	2017/2018	958
Inverell town	1-5	2017/2018	4,000



6. LOCAL LAND SERVICES

Local Land Services (LLS) manage the Travelling Stock Reserve (TSR) network throughout NSW.

TSRs are parcels of crown land reserved under legislation for use by travelling stock.

Local Land Services manage over 500 000 hectares of TSRs in NSW.

Local Land Services manage the land to strike a balance between the needs of travelling or grazing stock and the conservation of native species.

LLLS management of TSRs includes:

- authorising and monitoring stock, recreation and apiary site use
- controlling priority weeds
- controlling pest animals and insects
- provision and maintenance of fencing, watering points and holding yards
- consideration of land management and animal health legislation

Map 6: LLS Boundaries within NSW



Number of TSRs: 547 Number of Annual Inspections: 2188 (3 monthly inspections)



Map 7: Travelling stock routes in NTLLS region.

7. MONITORING

The NT LLS Regional Inspection Program will be monitored on a quarterly basis through reports to the NTRW Committee, leading to an annual review of the program in accordance with the principles of the NTRWC Weeds Action Business Plan 2015 – 2020 and NSW DPI Standard for Weed Management Compliance

Data captured through the NSW DPI Biosecurity Information System (BIS) will provide baseline information by which to assess and measure changes in order to address identified inconsistencies and improvements to the inspection program.

Monitoring of on-ground outcomes against baseline data have also helped demonstrate the extent of change and impact the Regional Inspection Program has on existing noxious weeds and responses.

The principle methods for collecting this data include:

- NSW DPI Biosecurity Information System
- Quantitative annual reporting systems to meet the objectives of the NTRWC Weed Action Business Plan 2015 - 2020

8. EVALUATION

The NTRWC will carry out an annual review of the appropriateness of the Regional Inspection Program that will include evaluation processes to help improve efficiency, effectiveness, and fulfil the accountability requirements of the NTRWC Weed Action Business Plan 2015 – 2020 and NSW DPI.



1. Inspection Protocols

Enforcement of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* involves inspection of land and assessment of scheduled priority weed infestations for the purposes of determining what action, if any is required to control them. This land may be privately owned, leased, occupied Crown Land, vacant crown land, council land or land controlled by Local Land Services.

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* gives Biosecurity Officers legal access to inspect for weeds. It is important to remember, that Biosecurity Officers are obligated to do the right thing by the landholder/occupier. It is recommended the procedures set out below be followed and common courtesies and good manners be observed when dealing with the public and government representatives. Always respect the rights of other people and treat their property as if it were your own.

2. Formal weed inspections under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*

Formal weed inspections are necessary when there is a breach or suspected breach of the Act. This could include identification or suspected identification of a weed classified as prohibited matter or a weed incursion identified as a species not previously existing in NSW. It is within an LCA's jurisdiction to inspect land in connection with its weed control functions as prescribed in the Act.

NSW DPI may assist any authorised officer from an LCA in conducting a formal weed inspection and an LCA authorised officer can request assistance from NSW DPI where difficulty is being experienced by the LCA authorised officer. Note: Where NSW DPI and LLS conduct a weed inspection in collaboration, the inspection will normally be led by the LCA officer.

If a Biosecurity Officer notices a more common species on land where urgent attention is not required, they must report their suspicions to the relevant LCA rather than conducting a formal weed inspection.

2.1 Training

A person must be appointed as an authorised officer under the Act in order to conduct a formal weed inspection. NSW DPI will provide approved biosecurity legislation training and participants will be awarded a certificate of attainment upon completion of the training. It is also desirable that authorised officers attain nationally accredited enforcement training to a level appropriate for their role.

2.2 Inspection requirements

- the Biosecurity Officer must consult and gain approval from their supervisor prior to conducting a formal weed inspection without being accompanied by an LCA authorised officer. If the Biosecurity Officer is 'out of range', they must carry out the inspection and inform the appropriate level of management of their actions as soon as reasonably practical
- the Biosecurity Officer must determine if it is reasonably appropriate to conduct a formal weed inspection
- the Biosecurity Officer is to exercise the statutory powers and functions as far as reasonably
 practicable and in accordance with relevant workplace safety procedures and wear
 appropriate safety clothing and equipment
- the Biosecurity Officer must ensure necessary procedures and "fit for purpose" equipment and vehicles are used when conducting a weed inspection.

2.3 Equipment and documentation requirements

Biosecurity Officers are required to have the following pieces of equipment when conducting formal weed inspections:

- notepad or electronic tablet to make Biosecurity Information System (BIS) compliant records
- tape measures
- camera
- other equipment necessary for the task
- access to a vehicle fit for the task
- effective communication equipment including, as required by the situation and location, one or more of the following devices: mobile telephone, satellite telephone, UHF radio, personal Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB).

2.4 Risk assessment

A risk assessment is to be conducted based on the information available prior to conducting a property inspection. The risk assessment should be used to guide appropriate management actions. The aim of conducting a risk assessment is to minimise or eliminate any illness, injury or other negative impacts occurring in relation to the property inspection and weed incursion. The following general steps must be taken when conducting a risk assessment:

- identify the hazards
- assess the degree of risk created by the hazards
- determine how to eliminate risks and if this is not reasonably practicable, determine appropriate measures to control risks, including improving existing controls
- ensure appropriate supervision
- ensure appropriate instruction, education and training is provided to people involved in conducting the inspection
- record any action or work procedure established to manage an identified risk. A strategic risk assessment template is available to record the risk assessment process .
- check the implementation and success of the implemented control measures.

2.5 Conducting the inspection

Property inspections are to be conducted in accordance with relevant procedures, safe work method statements, codes of practice and the Act. Collection, use and disclosure of information and field records are to be recorded in NSW DPI's BIS.

All records are to be maintained:

- if the authorised officer uses a notebook, this needs to be kept for two years
- records need to include notes on the movement of inspectors, including entry and exit times, who was spoken to, and any person seen during the property visit
- BIS records must be submitted appropriately.

Property inspection reports need to be completed following a formal weed inspection. A copy must be kept on file, provided to the relevant LCA and, if the inspection was carried out on private property or involved an owner, provided to the owner.

2.6 General requirements

Wear or carry clothing and PPE suitable for the terrain, weather, and distances being covered. At a minimum a person conducting a property inspection should wear the following clothing items:

- hat, sunglasses and sunscreen or long-sleeved clothing
- high visibility vest or other clothing
- protective gloves if deemed appropriate
- appropriate footwear.

2.8 Vehicle hygiene

Weeds are easily spread from property to property by vehicles and other machinery. To prevent spreading weeds, authorised officers have a general biosecurity duty to keep their vehicle free of contaminants by:

- ensuring as far as is reasonably practicable that the work vehicle is free of plant material before entering a property
- avoiding driving through weedy areas during inspections
- checking clothing, footwear and vehicle (including floor mats) on the completion of each inspection. Plant material found in these items should be removed and appropriately disposed of in order to mitigate the biosecurity risk.

2.9 Entry to premises

The authorised officer may enter the premises at a reasonable time. However, an authorised officer is not empowered to enter any part of premises used only for residential purposes without the permission of the occupier or the authority of a search warrant. Before seeking the authority of a search warrant, an authorised officer must gain approval from their Director within Biosecurity & Food Safety.

3. Types of formal weed inspections

3.1 Inspection on a private property, including home gardens

When inspections are scheduled, arrange a reasonable time for the authorised officer and the owner/ occupier of the property. Whenever possible, the owner /occupier of the property should be present for the property inspection. For unannounced inspections, the authorised officer must make themselves known to the owner. If the owner/ occupier is unavailable, the authorised officer should leave a business card advising that they will contact the owner / occupier by telephone to make arrangements for an inspection on another date.

Whilst conducting an inspection, ensure all gates which were closed are closed after passing through and report any damages.

If the owner/ occupier is present, the authorised officer should offer the option for them to observe the inspection. At the completion of the inspection the authorised officer should provide the occupier with a copy of the property inspection report, discuss findings and provide guidance if action is required for weed management. If a prohibited matter weed is identified, advise the owner/occupier that the weed is prohibited matter and of the urgency to take action as recommended by the authorised officer. Advice should be given on the owner/occupier's general biosecurity duty and the biosecurity risks associated with the weed.

3.2 Plant nurseries, garage sales, public market, and fetes

When conducting a property inspection at a public market, fete or similar event, the authorised officer should endeavour to determine who the person in charge is and explain the statutory requirements for any plants of concern and the biosecurity risks associated with the species. Determine the source of the origin of the weed through questioning the person in charge. Authorised officers must report the findings to the relevant LCA where the source property is located so they can carry out a property inspection. If the LCA authorised officer is unable to conduct an inspection at the alleged source property, then the Biosecurity Officer should initiate an inspection at the source property.

- a. ensure vehicle is as far off the road as practical, turn on vehicle's hazard lights if appropriate
- b. put on a high visibility vest
- c. if required documentation and equipment is not available to conduct inspection, take sufficient notes in a notebook to allow for adequate completion of the report once back in the office.

3.4 Formal Identification

A Biosecurity Officer must reasonably determine which weed species they are inspecting. If the Biosecurity Officer does not regularly work with weeds but suspects a new weed incursion, they can consult with the Invasive Plants & Animals Hotline (1800 680 244) to assist with identification.

If the biosecurity matter needs to be collected and transported for further testing, refer to relevant procedures.

3.5 Post Inspection

Following a property inspection, the Biosecurity Officer who carried out the inspection needs to complete the BIS record and provide a property inspection report to the owner/ occupier of the land. The report needs to contain the following:

- d. title 'Property Inspection Report'
- e. occupier's name, address, property identification
- f. date of inspection
- g. scientific name and common name of biosecurity matter
- h. the location and level of infestation
- i. the biosecurity impact and the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed by the biosecurity matter
- j. suggested management measures for each type of biosecurity matter detected during the property inspection
- k. notes on where more information can be found
- I. photographs if deemed necessary
- m. authorised officer's name, address and contact details
- n. name and signature of authorised officer
- o. date on which reinspection will occur
- p. confirmation regarding whether NSW DPI or the LCA will conduct the reinspection work.

Refer to the NSW DPI Weeds Metadata Standard when collecting information.

3.6 Follow up Actions

When a Biosecurity Officer has finished a formal weed inspection, the final report is the responsibility of the relevant LCA.