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Page 1

Q1

First name

[REDACTED]

Q2

Last name

[REDACTED]

Q3

Organisation name (if relevant)

[REDACTED]

Q4

Email address

[REDACTED]

Q5

Phone number

[REDACTED]

Q6

Yes

Can we contact you about your submission (if required)?

Q7

I am representing local government

What best describes you?

Q8

North Coast

Which of the following regions best describes your location/area of interest?

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Q9

The Commission publishes submissions on its website for transparency. If you do not want your personal details or responses published, please tell us below.

**I agree to have my submission published anonymously – please remove my name and company/organisation before publishing**

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Page 2

Q10

To what extent are the NSW environment, industries and communities currently impacted by invasive species?

Where invasive species have surpassed certain population thresholds, they have a highly negative impact on the environment, industry and community. Invasive species are leading to declines in native biodiversity, reducing agricultural productivity and damaging high value assets. In certain locations across NSW invasive species have a significant impact.

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Q11

To what extent do you think existing programs in NSW are effectively managing invasive species?

The NSW Weeds Action Program is effective in limiting the impact of new invasive weed species provided that Weeds Officers are supported at all levels. Aquatic weeds however are barely being contained and in some areas are increasing. Biological weed control programs also have some success, although in many cases only hold weeds at current levels rather than reduce them. Widespread weeds on private land and public land with limited access are not being effectively managed. Invasive vertebrate and invertebrate pests can be managed effectively in limited situations (e.g. foxes are managed well in some areas), however overall the number of pests is still increasing. The varroa mite program has not been greatly successful. Deer numbers are continuing to increase with limited management options.

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Q12

What, if any, are the key barriers to effective management of invasive species?

Lack of effective management options, or not enough investment in developing new management techniques. Inadequate legislation particularly around game vs pest animal, and heritage horse legislation in Kosciuszko. Lack of knowledge amongst landholders and the general public around invasive weeds and their obligations. Competing priorities for land managers and insufficient resources to deal with the scale of widespread weeds and pests. Lack of willingness from Transport for NSW to accept and act on their biosecurity duty.

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Q13

How has invasive species management changed since the introduction of the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015 legislation and associated programs and plans?

Biosecurity Officers now have greater clarity around compliance pathways to enforce legislation. Prioritisation of investment into weed management has shifted focus to new weeds and species in the early stages of invasion.

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**Q14**

What are the future risks posed by invasive species to the NSW environment, industries and communities?

Native plants and animals will be placed under ever increasing pressure with ongoing extinctions likely. Agricultural operations will become less viable due to overwhelming costs in trying to manage invasive species. Communities will become more disenfranchised and unlikely to control weeds if public land managers are unable to contain weeds on their land.

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**Q15**

What opportunities do you see to improve the outcomes of invasive species management in the future?

Greater investment in the use of remote sensing and machine learning algorithms to improve detection of weeds in remote settings or inaccessible environments. Use of eDNA and bioherbicides to detect and control invasive pests more effectively. Greater research into biological controls and expansion of control programs. Introduction of community engagement and behaviour change specialists into local government and community organisations to drive increased levels of compliance with weed control requirements.

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**Q16**

Any other comments?

WAP funding needs to be locked in and delivered to local control authorities in a timely manner to improve efficiency and certainty of local programs. WAP20-25 funding was originally promised to increase year on year, however it has remained the same and seems to be bogged down at the ministerial level every year - i.e. funding is not released until well into the next financial year.

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