



Background

Landcare NSW gratefully acknowledges the consultation opportunity provided by the Natural Resources Commission. We are pleased to present a detailed written response that builds upon the critical issues previously discussed in our interviews. This response reflects the collective perspective of the Landcare community in NSW.

For many years, Landcare NSW and its members have been deeply involved in addressing invasive species issues. Our efforts have spanned from direct management of threats to strengthening the resilience of both ecosystems and agricultural systems against invasive species.

In preparation for this submission, Landcare NSW sought input from its members regarding invasive species. The feedback revealed the extensive variety of invasive species managed by Landcarers, the significant proportion of their efforts devoted to this management, the lack of adequate resources and strategic investment from responsible entities, and the concerning increase of invasive species across our landscapes. Selected quotes from Members are as follows:

"Over 200 pigs have been trapped along the Clarence, a relentless issue supported by LLS. The invasive Lantana also threatens our grazing lands."

- Volunteer from Clarence River

"Fire ants pose a significant threat not just to crops and native species, but to the invaluable work of Landcare volunteers, risking thousands of hours dedicated to environmental conservation"

- Executive Volunteer from Coffs Harbour

"Urban wildlife management is critical, with uncontrolled cats, foxes, and invasive birds like Indian Myners and Noisy Miners impacting biodiversity, alongside the challenges posed by feral pigs and deer"

- A Rivercare Member from Dubbo

During our discussions with the Natural Resources Commission (NRC), we proposed that the NRC's report consider the potential roles of Landcare in improving invasive species management throughout NSW. Landcare's unique position across various environmental and natural resource management settings, and the depth of experience and knowledge within our network, make us an invaluable partner. We urge the NRC to recognise Landcare's capacity to contribute significantly and to recommend appropriate resourcing for Landcare to integrate more effectively into the planning, surveillance, management, and monitoring of invasive species.

Key Issues:

- Despite governance of invasive species management not being within the review's scope, we commend the establishment of the Biosecurity Commission and advocate for its independent oversight and enforcement capabilities in invasive species management.
- The current engagement between the government, NGOs, and the community is often sporadic, unstrategic, and sometimes adversarial. We see an opportunity to cultivate a cooperative culture and a more strategic system for managing invasive species.
- We observe a tendency for responsible parties to neglect invasive species management on their properties, which often contributes to wider environmental risks. This issue is particularly prevalent with public land managers and occurs on private/corporate lands.
- We suggest a thorough review of funding strategies and management mechanisms. This review should evaluate the adequacy of funds, the distribution and duration of funding, the scale of projects, and the overall efficacy in achieving management goals.
- We recommend exploring new governance mechanisms, including both incentives and disincentives, improved regulation and education, and robust auditing and compliance, to enhance the effectiveness of invasive species management.
- Unstrategic or insufficient funding can lead to inefficiencies and unintended negative consequences. Enhanced cross-agency collaboration and strategic engagement could mitigate these effects.
- We identify a disconnect between biosecurity and biodiversity funding and management, which could be addressed by better integration, promoting ecosystem health and resilience against invasive species.
- We note a disproportionate focus on invasive species management in agricultural areas, with insufficient attention to natural areas.
- Climate change and extreme weather present both challenges and opportunities in invasive species management. Proactive planning for climate-induced changes and utilising natural events like droughts and fires could provide strategic advantages.
- Improved coordination and cooperation between government, NGOs, and the community are essential, extending beyond funding to include knowledge exchange, strategic alignment, and persistent effort.
- There is a need for enhancements in compliance, audits, education, and the application of penalties, especially regarding declared weed species.
- Rapid response capabilities for new or evolving incursions are critical. Prompt and decisive action can significantly reduce control costs and increase the likelihood of eradication.
- We advocate for clear management outcomes for different species and risks, with flexible, iterative goals that reflect the reality of managing each invasive species.
- The number of new incursions must be reduced, necessitating better inter-jurisdictional coordination, particularly in preventing new weed species from entering through horticultural avenues.

- Outcome indicators should focus on the effectiveness of the management approach rather than merely the allocation of funds or completion of actions.

For further details or clarification on any points raised, please feel free to reach out to us directly.

Regards

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3 November 2023