

#142

COMPLETE

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Page 1

Q1

First name

[REDACTED]

Q2

Last name

[REDACTED]

Q3

Organisation name (if relevant)

Sydney Water

Q4

Email address

[REDACTED]

Q5

Phone number

[REDACTED]

Q6

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

Yes

Q7

What best describes you?

I am representing an industry body,

I am representing a state government agency

Q8

Greater Sydney

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

Q9

I agree to have my submission published with my name or company/organisation

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

Page 2

Q10

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

The impacts of invasive species across all these areas is significant, in terms of the damage done to infrastructure, community health and the environment. Sydney Water's own expenditure is ongoing and invasive plants and animals create new issues every day. Weed management to protect the environment, and in some cases human health are never ending and requires constant attention and follow up, which businesses and landholders only rarely meet. Invasive animals can cause significant problems, including as vectors for disease and other invasive's such as plants, and competing with native fauna and eating native plantings. To date, difficulty obtaining consistent funding has meant that the issue is a never ending game of catch up with few true victories for restoration of native vegetation and habitat.

Q11

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

Existing programs are making some progress in managing invasive species, but it is only the beginning of a marathon journey. Programs are often dependent on awareness and community voice, leading to volunteer involvement and continuous government support, and these aspects aren't growing as rapidly as invasive species spreading.

Q12

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

Some of the key barriers include:

- Justification, cost-benefit bench-marking and bench-marking of costs
 - Skilled program managers with sufficient knowledge to implement control programs efficiently
 - Some weaknesses in legislation around invasive species and obligation to control, e.g. the NSW BC Act 2016 and EPBC Act 1999 does not appear to place direct duty on a landowner to carry out invasive species management even if it is a Key Threatening Process under the Act (I note that there are some exceptions)
 - Lack of coordination of control programs
 - Inability to get ongoing effective funding for monitoring and control programs, partially due to lack of some of the above.
 - Lack of skilled and experienced bush regeneration practitioners.
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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?

Improvements from the Noxious Weeds Act 1993 and other legislation include making weed management tenure neutral and introducing shared responsibility for weed and feral animal control. The tenure neutral aspect of the Act has broadened the responsibilities and potentially the effectiveness of control efforts.

Authorised officers also have more powers and tools available to issue directions, undertakings, etc

Q14

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

If we do not control invasive species now, it will have a significant negative impact on inter-generational sustainability. Invasive species can cause a range of environmental, economic, human health and social problems that will have a long-term impact on future generations. Combined with other environmental challenges, such as climate change, the risks of loss of biodiversity, the changes in potential ranges of native (likely reduced or significantly changed) and introduced species (effectively unchanged or increased in most cases) means that effective control will become harder and the impacts greater.

Q15

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

- Better awareness and knowledge to increase effort and funding, and prevent the spread of new and existing weeds.
 - Increased funding allowing greater human resource skills/capability to develop in the management of invasive species
 - Use of drones, AI and other detection methods to detect and monitor weeds
 - There is already some progress with new biological controls, however, we should continue to be careful with its implementation
 - Improved collaboration between government, agencies and groups who have funding, knowledge and or resources. Potentially a dedicated body which facilitates collaboration.
 - A platform (or improved platform) to share information
 - Better guidance for the management of weed programs, which contains best practice information and information resources to implement programs best suited for business needs/lands
 - Better recognition of organisations which are standing out in their efforts
 - Government communication highlighting the issues
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Q16

Any other comments?

N/A
