

Local Government Integrated Weed Management Practices

Local Governments undertake weed management in a variety of areas and participate in a shared responsibility approach

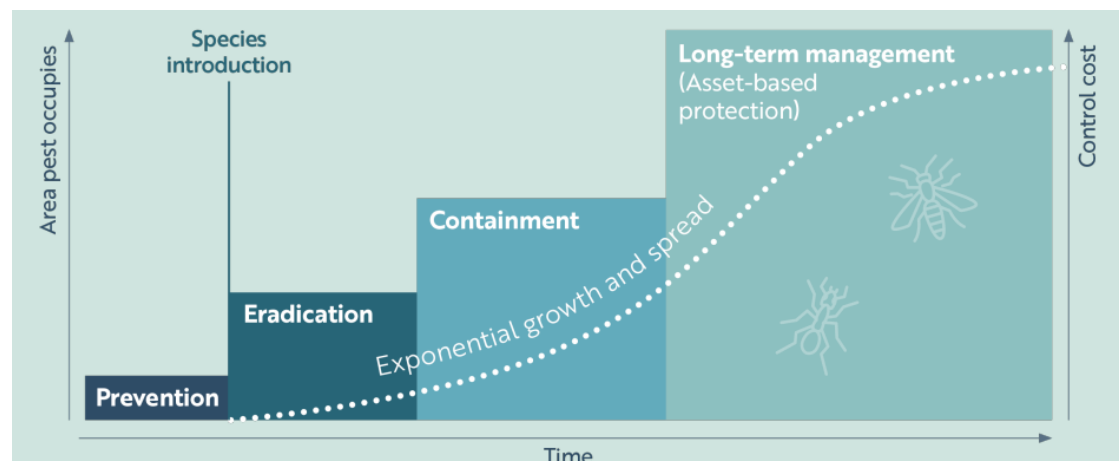
Local Governments undertake weed management in natural areas, parks and reserves, streetscapes and urban landscapes, and road reserves. Weed management is necessary to meet the regulatory requirements under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*, protect biodiversity, reduce bushfire risk, reduce damage to infrastructure and meet community expectations for the amenity and aesthetics of local areas. Local Governments undertake actions to prevent, monitor and control the introduction and spread of weeds. Effective weed management requires a planned, long-term approach that incorporates a combination of control methods, and coordination of activities across government, industry and members of the public.

Weed prevention

Preventing weed establishment is one of the most effective approaches to weed management. Local Governments implement a variety of weed prevention practices including minimising access and disturbance to natural areas, implementing weed hygiene procedures, undertaking weed management after fire and competitive planting and mulching. Best practice hygiene procedures include sourcing plants from Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA) accredited nurseries and using Australian Standard mulches and compost to ensure these products do not introduce weeds into an area.

The biosecurity invasion curve provides a useful illustration on how weed prevention and eradication achieve the greatest outcomes at the least cost. A robust weed management approach will implement controls across the continuum to manage the negative impacts of weeds.

The biosecurity invasion curve (Invasive Species Council, invasives.org.au)



Weed control

While weed prevention is important for reducing new infestation of weeds from occurring or spreading, weed control is necessary for managing weed infestations already present. The weed control methods used by Local Government include physical, chemical, hydrothermal and biological control. Physical weed control includes hand removal, smothering, mulching or stock grazing. Chemical weed control includes the use of synthetic or organic herbicides in accordance with regulatory requirements. Hydrothermal weed control uses steam and hot water. Biological control involves using a weed's natural control agents (usually insects or disease).

Integrated weed management involves the coordinated use of a variety of these control methods, reducing reliance on one method alone, and increasing the chances of successful control or eradication. Integrated weed management programs require long-term planning, knowledge of a weed's biology and ecology and use of the appropriate weed control methods.

Weed management in natural areas differs substantially to parks and urban landscaping areas due to the difference in weed density and biodiversity values. Local Governments can prioritise natural areas for protection and management interventions such as weed control to ensure the best allocation of available resources. WALGA's [Natural Area Initial Assessment \(NAIA\) templates](#) provide a process to undertake ecological assessments of bushland reserves and gather site-specific information on ecological values, conservation significance and threatening processes, including the presence and distribution of weeds. To manage weeds in bushland areas, the 'Bradley Method' of bushland regeneration is widely followed. It involves three main principles: 1) securing the best condition areas of vegetation first, 2) minimising disturbance and 3) letting restoration of the bushland set the pace of weed removal to allow native plants to successfully compete with weeds.

Weed monitoring and reporting

Weed monitoring is important to identify areas with weed populations, assess weed spread, discover new weeds, protect significant native flora species and measure the effectiveness of weed control actions. There are numerous approaches that can be used to monitor weed presence and distribution, including weed mapping, photographic monitoring and observations. Weed monitoring and reporting reviews the success of control efforts and ensures adaptive management.

Partnerships

Local Governments can partner with other agencies that also have weed management roles and responsibilities, including State Government, Natural Resource Management organisations, research institutions, universities, schools and Friends Groups. Friends Groups and community members make substantial contributions towards weed control on Local Government managed land and private property.

Education

Local Government plays a key role in community education by raising awareness of the impact of weeds, the need for shared weed prevention and control and providing information on Local Government weed control strategies and operations.