

Released on behalf of the Australian Weeds Committee by Dr Jim Thompson, Chairman

20 April 2012

Australia's Weeds of National Significance grow by 12

The Australian Weeds Committee has declared an additional 12 Weeds of National Significance (WoNS).

Chairman, Dr Jim Thompson said the announcement further strengthened Australia's commitment to protecting Australia's natural ecosystems and primary industries.

"Since its introduction in 1999, the WoNS initiative has assisted government and stakeholders to prioritise investment and provide strategic management of widespread weeds that have serious detrimental environmental, economic and social impacts," he said.

These additional weeds have been selected based on their economic, environmental and social impacts and their potential to spread:

- African boxthorn
- asparagus weeds
- bellyache bush
- brooms
- cat's claw creeper
- fireweed
- gamba grass
- madeira vine
- opuntoid cacti
- sagittaria
- silverleaf nightshade
- water hyacinth.

"Adding these 12 weeds to the Weeds of National Significance list, which already contains 20 weeds, brings each of them under a coordinated management approach," Dr Thompson said.

"In the future the focus for all states will be on reducing the risk of spread to new areas while managing outlying infestations.

"Identifying and promoting research priorities and developing best practice management information will also remain a priority, as will improving community awareness and capacity to help in the fight against weed spread."

Dr Thompson said working in close partnership with governments across Australia allowed us to deliver an efficient and effective response to managing the most serious weeds, at a national, state and regional level.

"The program has helped to contain the impacts and associated costs to agriculture and the environment by minimising the spread of WoNS to uninfested parts of Australia," he said.

Key achievements include:

- Educating land managers on best practices for managing WoNS and equipping them with extension materials to successfully plan and implement weed control operations.
- On-the-ground activities focused on managing WoNS.
- Up-to-date national mapping of WoNS infestations to provide a clearer understanding of actual and predicted distribution.
- Strengthened networks between landholders, research providers and government to encourage sharing of information and technology.
- New herbicide and biological control options.

- The establishment of containment lines to prevent further spread and targeting of national outlier infestations.

For more information on Weeds of National Significance visit
<http://www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/index.html>

Media: Vanessa Sandhu, 07 323 93725.