

Australian Weeds Committee

a sub committee of the
National Biosecurity Committee

Weeds of National Significance - Phase 3 Attributes

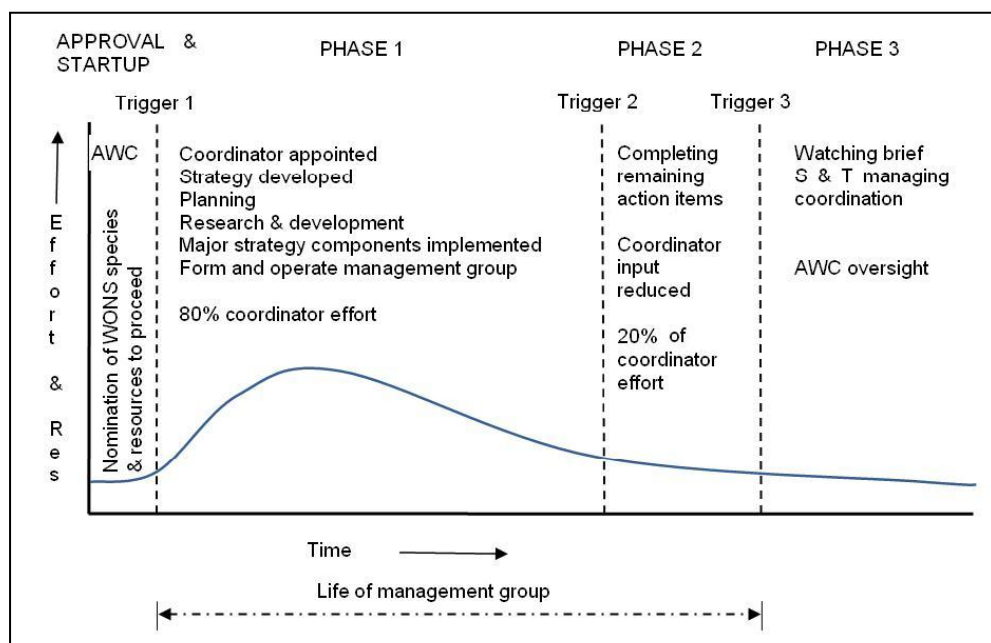
Introduction

Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) have selected through a risk assessment process as key, high impact, established weeds for which targeted, strategic co-investment in a nationally coordinated manner will deliver long-term benefits across Australia.

WoNS move through three phases (Figure 1) as their national strategic plans are implemented, reviewed and revised to ensure substantial improvement in the management of the weeds by governments, industries, communities and landowners.

Phase 3 is broadly a period of focussed maintenance for a WoNS, where the majority of nationally coordinated work has been undertaken and oversight reverts to states/territories for the coordinated implementation of a revised national WoNS strategic plan within their respective jurisdiction. By Phase 3, the WoNS has had considerable prior co-investment into the nationally coordinated implementation of a strategic plan, which has engaged relevant stakeholders in various actions to prevent the weed's spread, reduce the weed's impacts and build community capacity to manage the weed.

Figure 1 Australian Weeds Committee diagrammatic representation of coordinator effort and resource use when implementing a Weeds of National Significance strategy



In Phase 3 states/territories collaborate as required for cross-border and national actions, and report annually to the Australian Weeds Committee (AWC) on implementation of the revised strategic plans.

Key principles which underpin the operation of Phase 3 are as follows:

- There is a need to maintain the benefits arising from prior investment by stakeholders (government, industry and community) into management of the WoNS species.
- There is a need to ensure ongoing ownership by such stakeholders of WoNS species, with land managers having lead responsibility for sustained management of such species.
- Phase 3 WoNS remain eligible for project funding to implement aspects of the revised strategic plans. However, WoNS funding is normally competitive and is subject to jurisdictional budgets and investment priorities.

Governance Characteristics of Phase 3

The following gives guidance on stakeholder roles in strategic plan implementation:

- The WoNS does not have a government-funded national coordinator.
- The WoNS does not have a national management group/taskforce supported by the Australian and state/territory governments. However, this does not rule out national networks (established in Phase 1) continuing to function independently of dedicated government resourcing of WoNS.
- Implementation of the revised strategic plan resides with those relevant jurisdictions that are affected by or potentially at risk from the WoNS species. This may include the Australian Government in relation to lands specifically managed by its agencies, or where they can contribute to priority strategic actions, such as the annual collation of national maps.
- Jurisdictions may identify and implement co-operative action where national benefits and/or cost efficiencies are identified.
- Relevant jurisdictions report annually to the AWC on progress in implementing the revised national strategy, using a standard MERI template for all Phase 3 WoNS.
- AWC provides peer national oversight to foster management programs that have clear national benefits and to identify and recommend actions to address any major national risks that may arise.
- AWC annually monitors progress towards implementation of the revised strategic plans, including a review at three years after commencement of the plan.
- AWC will consider whether a species' WoNS status should discontinue, based on progress (or lack thereof) in the implementation of its revised strategic plan. In general, a species' WoNS status will not be extended beyond a maximum of five years from the commencement of the revised strategic plan.
- WoNS management actions by all stakeholders should focus on transitioning to long-term maintenance of efforts against three key goals:

Goals	Objectives
1. New infestations are prevented from establishing	eradication, outliers/containment, surveillance
2. Existing infestations are under strategic management	asset protection, effective management tools
3. Greater stakeholder capability and commitment to manage WoNS	access to best practice information, communication, embedding WoNS in regional/state plans and programs

Phase 3 Priority Strategic Actions

The following are highly beneficial as national actions that are critical to success of a WoNS revised strategic plan. All relevant AWC jurisdictions will commit resources to implement these. Note that these actions need to be viewed in the context of transitioning the WoNS to sustained management beyond the life-span of the revised strategic plan.

- Maintain up to date distribution data and collate annually into a national map that indicates priority management actions (Australian Government to consolidate data provided by states/territories).
- Conduct surveillance activities for new WoNS outliers, targeted at high risk pathways, regions and assets.
- Foster training in identification, awareness of impacts and best practice management options.
- Integrate national WoNS strategy objectives with regional and state policy and planning approaches.
- Facilitate strategic management of WoNS infestations using best practice management and IWM principles.
- Distribute WoNS best practice manual and supporting publications.
- Target distribution of awareness material and best practice information to priority regions for early detection and management.
- Maintain current legislation requirements (preventing sale, trade and movement as a minimum).
- Monitor work undertaken and progress towards completing implementation of the species' revised national strategic plan through annual reporting to AWC.
- Maintain the WoNS species actions by NRM region table, as found at http://www.weeds.org.au/docs/WoNS_National_Priorities_by_NRM_Region_March-2011.xls as a guide to on-ground investment priorities.

Other Strategic Actions

The following are highly beneficial actions at national and/or jurisdictional levels in revised strategic plans. However, implementation will be subject to resource availability and investment priorities. The need for these actions may vary considerably between jurisdictions due to WoNS being at a different stage of invasion, or posing different levels of risk.

- Encourage research and/or field trials into improved control options, e.g. herbicides, biocontrol, fire, seed bank dynamics etc
- Continue re-distribution of biological control agents in core areas.
- Identify key assets at risk from WoNS (required across species)
- Develop plans to protect priority areas at risk from WoNS
- Consider changes to declarations where WoNS are a high risk (e.g. to require control by landholders)
- Maintain eradication, containment/outlier management programs as identified in national strategies and national management maps.
- Monitor sites post-control and undertake restoration activities to improve site condition (natural and agricultural)
- Maintain communication activities to raise awareness of WoNS, impacts and management options
- Support community groups involved in WoNS management through the provision of technical advice, notification of funding opportunities, dissemination of research results and changes in best practice management.