

## FAQ

The purpose of this FAQ is to answer some commonly asked questions regarding weed control and biosecurity within the Wingecarribee shire. If a question you have is not answered below, please send an email to [Biosecurity@wsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Biosecurity@wsc.nsw.gov.au) and our staff will get back to you as quickly as possible.

### 1. What is a biosecurity weed?

A biosecurity also referred to as a priority weed is a species of plant not native to the area that is or has the potential to cause damage to agriculture, environment, or waterway. In order for a weed species to be considered a biosecurity weed it first is put through a Weed Risk Management System provided by the Department of Primary Industries.

### 2. Why are widespread weeds not considered priority weeds?

Where a weed species has become widespread (that is, low to negligible feasibility of coordinated control), there is little to be gained from attempting to prevent further spread. The effect of biosecurity law is to prevent the creation of external costs such as those caused by weed spread. When a weed species has spread to the point that it is established on most

### 3. What can I do if I have an issue with a weed that is not a priority weed impacting my property from a neighbouring property?

Where a weed is causing an issue between private properties that is not a biosecurity risk and the issue cannot be resolved with your neighbour then it may be able to be addressed as a civil matter. Contact a Community Justice Centre <https://www.cjc.justice.nsw.gov.au/> for advice and mediation assistance.

### 4. What is General Biosecurity Duty?

Any person who deals with biosecurity matter or a carrier and who knows, or ought reasonably to know, the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed by the biosecurity matter, carrier or dealing has a biosecurity duty to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the biosecurity risk is prevented, eliminated or minimised. In general terms, once a person is made aware of a biosecurity risk, they have a duty to ensure that it is prevented, eliminated, or minimised.

### 5. What is meant by Reasonably Practicable?

**Reasonably practicable**, in relation to the prevention, elimination or minimisation of a biosecurity risk, means that which is, or was at a particular time, reasonably able to be done, taking into account and weighing up all relevant matters including—

- (a) the biosecurity risk concerned, and
- (b) the degree of biosecurity impact that arises, or might arise, from the biosecurity risk, and
- (c) what the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know, about the biosecurity risk and the ways of preventing, eliminating, or minimising the risk, and
- (d) the availability and suitability of ways to prevent, eliminate or minimise the biosecurity risk, and
- (e) the cost associated with available ways of preventing, eliminating, or minimising the risk, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.

## 6. Why does Council need a Local Weed Control Program?

A local Weed plan enables the Local Control Authority (LCA) to ensure that weeds that are known to pose a biosecurity risk or impact to the local environment are dealt with appropriately. This may include enabling enforcement of control measures (as outlined in the *Biosecurity Act 2015*). Without a Local Weed Plan, LCAs will rely on the Regional and State Priority Lists – which may contain plants that are not an issue in the local area.

## 7. How do I request an inspection?

If you would like our Biosecurity Team to inspect your property for Priority Weeds or would like us to assist you in identifying a weed, please contact us at:

[biosecurity@wsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:biosecurity@wsc.nsw.gov.au)

While we do appreciate the community informing the Biosecurity Team about weed incursions, we cannot guarantee we will inspect neighbouring properties based on complaints received. We will also never divulge information about your property to a neighbouring property.

## 8. Do I need to have an inspection?

If your property is in a High-Risk area or if a Biosecurity Risk has been detected in a neighbouring property, a Biosecurity Inspection on your property may be necessary. If you receive a notice of inspection and have any questions as to why your property has been selected, please feel free to contact our biosecurity team at [biosecurity@wsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:biosecurity@wsc.nsw.gov.au)

## 9. Do I have to be present if an inspection is taking place on my property?

No - if you cannot be present during an inspection our Biosecurity Officers will undertake the inspection without you (providing that you have ensured dangerous livestock and pets are contained).

## 10. What should I do if I need help to identify a weed on my property?

If you need help identifying a new weed incursion on your property you can contact our biosecurity team at [biosecurity@wsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:biosecurity@wsc.nsw.gov.au)

Alternatively, you can contact a local agronomist.

## 12. How often will inspections take place?

The frequency of inspections is dependent on a number of factors including.

- The size and density of the priority weed infestation
- The weed species present on the property
- The proximity to High-Risk Sites and Pathways
- The Business being conducted on the property

## 13. I live in town. Why did I receive an inspection letter?

Inspections are not just for large rural properties – many urban properties may contain priority weeds in horticultural settings. Inspections are required based on a number of factors including:

- Proximity to High-Risk Sites and Pathways
- Proximity to known populations of Priority Weeds

## 14. Why should I care about weeds?

Biosecurity weeds are a significant concern due to their ability to outcompete native plants, disrupt natural habitats, reduce biodiversity, and degrade agricultural productivity.

If left un-checked, biosecurity weeds can have far-reaching consequences. By understanding and actively addressing this issue, we can help protect our environment, preserve native species, maintain the integrity of ecosystems, and safeguard agricultural resources. Additionally, promoting biosecurity measures can help prevent the introduction and spread of harmful weed species.

It is crucial to stay informed about biosecurity weeds and support efforts to prevent their introduction and control their spread. This includes following guidelines for plant importation, practicing good hygiene in agricultural and natural settings, and reporting any suspected biosecurity weed sightings to relevant authorities. By taking these actions, we can collectively contribute to the preservation and protection of our ecosystems and agricultural systems.

## 15. What is a biosecurity officer?

In New South Wales (NSW), a Biosecurity Officer is someone that is an Authorised Officer (under the *Biosecurity Act* (2015)) who plays a crucial role in protecting the state's agricultural industries, environment, and community from biosecurity risks. These officers are responsible for implementing and enforcing biosecurity regulations and policies to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species.

Biosecurity officers in NSW work across various sectors, including agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture, and environmental management. Their primary responsibilities include:

- 1. Surveillance and monitoring:** Biosecurity officers conduct regular inspections, surveys, and monitoring activities to detect and identify potential biosecurity threats. This helps in early detection and prompt response to prevent the establishment and spread of pests and diseases.
- 2. Compliance and enforcement:** They ensure compliance with biosecurity laws, regulations, and protocols. This involves conducting inspections and taking appropriate enforcement actions when necessary.
- 3. Education and awareness:** Biosecurity officers play a vital role in educating and raising awareness among industry stakeholders, landowners, and the general public about biosecurity risks, best practices, and the importance of compliance.
- 4. Response and management:** In the event of a biosecurity incident or outbreak, biosecurity officers coordinate and implement response measures. This may involve quarantine, containment, eradication, or control strategies to minimize the impact and spread of invasive species.

## 16. Where can I find more information about weeds?

For more information regarding the identification, treatment, and priority listing of weeds, please consult the state government's online resources at <https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au> or our biosecurity team at [biosecurity@wsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:biosecurity@wsc.nsw.gov.au)

## 17. What powers do biosecurity officers have?

Biosecurity Officer (as authorised officers under the *Biosecurity Act* (2015)) have a number of powers granted to them by the Act in order to carry out their duties. These include:

- Power to require information and records s93
- Powers to require answers s94
- Powers to demand name and address s96
- Under section 98, an authorised officer of an Authority may enter any premises:

At any reasonable time; or in the case of an emergency, at any time.

- Take and remove samples s102(2)(b)
- Isolate, confine or detain any biosecurity matter or other thing s102(2)(e)
- Require records to be produced for inspection s102(2)(l)

## 18. What is the difference between biosecurity and noxious weeds?

Many landowners and residents may be accustomed to referring to particular weeds as 'noxious' however this is no longer the accepted terminology as it references an outdated piece of legislation.

From 1st July 2017 the NSW Government replaced the Noxious Weeds Act 1993 with the Biosecurity Act 2015. The new Biosecurity Act 2015 combined 14 different pieces of legislation, including the Noxious Weeds Act, into a single Act of law.

Under the Noxious Weeds Act all landowners had a responsibility to control noxious weeds on their property. Under the Biosecurity Act the same responsibility applies and is known as a General Biosecurity Duty.

Landowners have a responsibility to control weeds on their property under the Biosecurity Act as they did under the old Noxious Weeds Act - this is known as General Biosecurity Duty. If you notice invasive weeds coming up on your property, you will need to control them as soon as possible to prevent them from spreading to other properties or our native bushland.

Moving forward it is important to reference the State, Regional and Local Priority Weeds Lists. These weeds are referred to as Priority weeds or Biosecurity Weeds.

## 19. What are Weeds of National Significance (WONS)? What do they mean to me?

Weeds of National Significance (WONS) is a list created by the Federal Government to describe plants that pose a significant biosecurity threat in particular areas of Australia. It is important to note that this list does not override the Local/Regional or State Priority Weeds List and does not mean that all weeds on the list are an issue in our local area. To find out which weeds are a priority in our area, please consult our Local and Regional Priority Weeds Lists.

## 20. If I ask for a biosecurity inspection, will I receive a fine or a Biosecurity Direction if priority weeds are found?

No, our biosecurity officers strive to work with landowners to reduce biosecurity threats in our region. Where possible we will educate and provide advice and assistance to minimize the impact and spread of invasive weeds on both public and private land. Biosecurity measures such as undertakings and directions are generally reserved for repeated non-compliance.

## 21. How can I trust that the Biosecurity team's vehicle and boots are clean?

Landowners and residents can rest assured that the Biosecurity team conduct a full vehicle and boot hygiene process after each High-Risk Site that is visited. In this way they ensure that priority weed seed is not spread between properties.

## 22. How can I report a suspected Priority Weed on Public Land?

If you notice a plant in public land that you suspect may be a Priority Weed, please contact council either via email [Mail@wsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Mail@wsc.nsw.gov.au) or call 0248680888 with a brief description and location or by submitting a snap, send, solve.

## 23. What are some common Biosecurity Risks?

Common biosecurity risks include the introduction and spread of invasive species, plant and animal diseases, pests, and weeds. These can be transmitted through contaminated soil, water, equipment, vehicles, and human activities. It is important to be aware of these risks and take appropriate measures to prevent their spread.

## 24. How can I contribute to Biosecurity?

You can contribute to biosecurity by following good hygiene practices, such as cleaning and disinfecting equipment and footwear before entering or leaving an area, reporting any biosecurity risks (such as unusual plants, animals, and diseases) to the relevant authorities, and complying with biosecurity regulations and guidelines. Additionally, being informed about biosecurity risks and spreading awareness within your community can also make a positive impact.

## 25. Can I reschedule a Biosecurity Inspection?

Yes. If necessary, our Biosecurity team can reschedule your inspection for a time in the very near future that is more mutually agreeable.

## 26. Where can I find more information on biosecurity measures?

You can find more information on the websites of your government departments responsible for biosecurity, such as the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and the Local Land Services (LLS). These websites provide resources, guidelines, and contact information for further assistance:

LLS - <https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity>

DPI - <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity>

## 27. Where can I find information about Weed Control?

If you have had a Biosecurity Inspection and have been notified that you have priority weeds, you can find information for the control of them via the following sources:

### **Wingecarribee Shire Council Biosecurity**

[biosecurity@wsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:biosecurity@wsc.nsw.gov.au)

### **Department of Primary Industries**

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity>

<https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au>

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/weeds/weed-control>

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/weeds/weed-control/general-management/integrated-weed-management>

### **Local Land Services**

<https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/help-and-advice/weeds-and-plant-diseases/weed-identification-and-management>

## 28. How will the inspection be conducted?

Our Biosecurity Team are happy to accommodate best practice for your land in this regard. If you would prefer the inspection, be conducted on foot let our team know in advance. Alternatively, the team will drive where possible and walk where needed.