



MEDIA RELEASE

A strategic approach to Weed Risk Management in the Northern Territory

Information on weed risk management in the NT is now available on the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (NRETA) website as part of Weedbuster Week.

Weedbuster Week, a nation-wide event from 7th-14th October 2006 aims to encourage people in the NT to help combat weeds and to raise awareness about the threats weeds pose and the ways we can deal with these threats.

NRETA weeds branch Weed Risk Assessment Manager Keith Ferdinands says weeds are recognised as a key threat to biodiversity conservation, industry and in some instances human health.

“Recognising the problem is the first step, we then need to establish how to deal with the wide range of weeds posing a threat and decide which ones are priorities,” Mr Ferdinands said.

“It is vital that people become aware of the risks posed by weeds and take these risks seriously.”

Mr Ferdinands said the Weed Risk Management (WRM) system being developed by the NT Government and Charles Darwin University to assess the relative risk posed by various weeds and how best to respond to these risks will improve the way weeds are managed in the NT.

“The NT WRM process will provide a standard, transparent, and scientifically based assessment of both potential and current weed species, which can be used to prioritise species for weed control,” Mr Ferdinands said.

“In developing a Weed Risk Management System for the NT we are being guided by the recently released National Post-Border Weed Risk Management Protocol and working with weed experts from around the country.

“We are currently customising the system to suit the NT environment and some of the unique problems we face, for example, weeds changing fire regimes.”

Mr Ferdinands said that stakeholder involvement is recognised as a key element in developing the weed risk assessment process system.

“To ensure input from key stakeholders the NT Weed Risk Management Reference Group has been formed,” he said.

“The Reference Group has government and non-government industry representatives including NRETA, Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines (DPIFM), Charles Darwin University, NT Cattleman’s Association, NT Garden and Nursery Association, World Wildlife Fund and the Central Land Council.

“The group met for the first time on 19th September and is expected to meet six times a year to assist with the development of the Weed Risk Management System and to ensure good communication with a range of stakeholders.

“The NT Weed Risk Management System will not be completed until 2008 however the possibility of “fast-tracking” parts of the system, for example weed risk assessment and feasibility of control and high priority species, is being explored.”

Information on weed risk management in the NT is now available at:
<http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/naturalresources/weeds/weedrisk/index.html>

Ends

Media Note – For more information contact Keith Ferdinands on 8999 4482 or 0428 826 756

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