

# **PROPERTY PEST MANAGEMENT PLANNING ON CAPE YORK PENINSULA**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **WHY PLAN?**

Effective weed management can only be achieved through a planned approach. Any program to stop land degradation by pest plant and animal invasions is a major undertaking and needs to be an integral part of the overall property plan. By setting goals and defining the means of achieving them, resources can be allocated and utilised in the most beneficial way.

A property pest management plan will benefit you through:

- More effective use of resources available.
- Providing a sounder basis for making land management decisions.
- Addressing landholder responsibilities under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002 and Regulations 2003*, Local Government Area Pest Management Plans and lease conditions.
- A coordinated approach to pest management between stakeholders.
- Improved knowledge of control techniques, gained through regular monitoring.
- Providing access to incentive schemes.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR DEVELOPING A PROPERTY PEST MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Before developing a Pest Management Plan for your property you need to access some background information. The information you will need is:

- A list of plants and animals declared under legislation and local government by-laws.
- A list of weeds and pest animals that occur on your property.
- General information about the weeds & pest animals you have.
- A map of your property (this can be hand drawn) showing the location of weeds and feral animals (if there are localised populations or areas where they occur most frequently).

A flow chart is provided at the end of this document to assist in the development of your plan.

### **DECLARED PESTS**

When developing your pest management plan you need to be aware of any declared pests occurring on your land. You are obliged by law to control any declared pest plant or animals and so these should be given a high priority for management. Pests can be declared under state legislation or under local council by-laws.

## State Legislation on Declared Pests

The following information has been extracted from the Information Kit Land Protection Pest and Stock Route Management Act issued by Natural Resources and Mines.

The *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002* and the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Regulation 2003* provide legislative measures to manage pests and address the impacts they have on the environment. This Act and its regulation commenced on July 1, 2003. There are three classes of declared pests, which cover both plants and animals. Class 3 requires pests to be controlled on environmentally significant areas or on land adjacent to them. The declaration of Class 3 pests does not come into force until November 1, 2003.

Under this legislation economic, environmental and social impacts of pests are recognised. Environmental weeds, weed seed and spread of animal pests, as well as Local government and State land pest management, including planning requirements, are included. A declared pest cannot be offered for sale, traded, or given away without a permit. Persons are required to take reasonable steps to not spread the pest by their activities. Pest management planning activities for land and fresh water bodies in Queensland are to take note of all declared pests.

Under the Act, an owner of land has an obligation to take reasonable steps to keep the land free of Class 1 and Class 2 pests. A pest control notice can be issued to enforce this obligation. A notice may also be issued for a Class 3 pest where that pest threatens an environmentally significant areas, including World Heritage listed areas, protected areas, sites occupied by rare and threatened or endangered species, or identified in a local government area pest management plan. A notice may specify the protection of native vegetation and habitat as well as the required control measures. Local governments in Queensland are responsible for ensuring pest plants and animals are controlled on private lands and lands under Council control.

There are three declaration categories, common to both plants and animals. Categories and species included under them are listed in Schedules of the Regulations. The categories of declaration are:

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>EXAMPLES</b>
Class 1	Not generally established in Queensland and has potential to cause an adverse economic, environmental or social impact.	Giant Sensitive Tree See note below for animals
Class 2	Established in Queensland and can cause significant adverse economic, environmental or social impact (including in another State).	Sicklepod Hymenachne Dingo Feral pig
Class 3	Established in Queensland and has or could have adverse economic, environmental or social impact (including in another State).	Lantana  Singapore daisy

### ***Class 1 animals***

The list of Class 1 animal pests includes all mammals, reptiles and amphibians other than mammals, reptiles and amphibians in Class 2 or 3; mammals, reptiles and amphibians indigenous to Australia; and domestic, farmed or common non-native animals found in Australia.

A landholder who fails to control declared animals and plants on their land commits an offence and a notice may be issued requiring the landowner to control the declared pest present on the land. If the landowner fails to comply with the requirements of a pest control notice, the issuer of the notice or a contractor can undertake the work and the cost can become a charge upon the land: that is the work is done at the expense of the landowner. While State government agencies cannot have binding pest control notices issued against them, all State government agencies have the same obligation to control declared pests as an ordinary landowner.

### **Declared Species under Local Government By-Law**

The Cook Shire Pest Management Plan lists several plant species that have been declared within the Shire. These are in addition to those declared by the State Government. As other shires and areas of local government develop pest management plans there may be other plant and animals species declared at a local level. You need to obtain the latest information on locally declared pests from your local council.

## **FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT PESTS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT**

### **Local Government**

Part of Cook Shire Council's responsibilities in relation to pests, is to provide advice to landholders on appropriate pest control options. The Council also has a Pest Management Plan for its local government area, which details priority weeds and feral animals in the Shire and strategies to address them. This should be used as a reference when developing pest management plans for properties within this shire, to ensure the strategies are consistent with those of the Shire as a whole.

### **State Government**

The Department of Natural Resources & Mines (NR&M) is responsible for providing technical and management information and training to landholders and local government staff. A pest series of NRM Facts sheets is available on the NR&M web site [www.nrm.qld.gov.au/factsheets/index](http://www.nrm.qld.gov.au/factsheets/index). Hard copies of the NR&M Facts for pest plants and animals common to the Cape York Peninsula are also available from the Cape York Weeds and Feral Animals Project (CYWAFAP) and the Cook Shire Council Office.

The Department of Primary Industries provides information relating to sustainable land management in agricultural areas.

### **Catchment and Landcare Groups**

Catchment groups may have a pest management plan for the catchment in which you live. They are a good contact for information about pest identification and local management techniques and may even be able to offer equipment for hire or loan and other assistance.

## **PRIORITISING PESTS**

With finite resources available it is important to prioritise the pest plants and animals occurring on your property. Those that are rated as high priority are what you will put time and money into first. You probably already have a system like this now, so this will just be a way of formalising the process and writing it all down. The method below is the system used to prioritise pests in the Cook Shire Pest Management Plan. For consistency it is the recommended way of prioritising pests on your property. You may choose a different method, but the actual method you use should be included as an Appendix to your Property Pest Management Plan.

### **Methodology**

Pest plants and animals are rated or prioritised for management action as high, medium or low priority based on the following criteria:

- Potential threat the species imposes
- Achievability rating
- Declaration category (if any)
- Operational, technical, administrative, financial and social feasibility

### ***Threat***

Based on the pests' biology, ecology and distribution, each pest plant and animal is rated according to its potential "threat" to areas of high value or strategic importance. The rating categories are:

- |                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1 = High threat   | 3 = Low threat |
| 2 = Medium threat | 4 = No threat  |

### ***Achievability***

An "achievability" rating is assigned to each pest as follows:  
(Those species where there is no possibility of achieving any positive outcomes from control measures are not included).

- 1 = Could be **eradicated** from the property or specific area
- 2 = Could be significantly **reduced** in area (plants) or numbers (animals) in the property or specific area
- 3 = Could be **contained** / prevented from spreading (plants) or could prevent major / rapid increase in numbers (animals)
- 4 = Could be **managed** effectively with biocontrol agents or fire

### ***Declaration Category***

The Declaration Category for declared pests is listed in the Queensland Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Regulation 2003 and local government pest management plans. Check the NR&M Fact Sheets on Declared Plants and Animals and your local council PMP.

### Prioritising your pests

Draw up a table similar to the one below, containing all this information.

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	THREAT		ACHIEV ABILITY	DECLAR -ATION CATEG- ORY	PRIORITY
		Natural areas	Agriculture areas			

The “Threat” column can be split into as many areas as you like. You need to include any areas that you intend to manage in different ways or where the level of threat is likely to be different. For example, Gamba grass may not be a threat in pasture areas, but is a high threat in natural bush areas. The *Priority* is derived from columns 3, 4 & 5. If a pest achieves the following scores: 1; 1; P2; it would receive a “High” rating. When you have allocated the Priority for each pest check them against those of your local government pest management plan. If a plant or animal is listed as a high priority in the local government PMP you should also have it listed as a high priority. However there may be pests listed in the local government PMP as low or medium priority that you want to list as high on your property. This is OK as it may be present as a localised problem on your property, but not of great concern in the region as a whole.

Include this table in your pest management plan.

The information created in the priorities table will assist you to develop the objectives (what you want to achieve) for the life of the plan (usually about 4-5 years).

To assist with the development of your PPMP there is a step-by-step list at the end of this document.

The CYWAFAP has also developed a template for a Property Pest Management Plan to assist you develop your own plan. This template has useful tips and examples of what should be included in each section. It is available in both digital and hardcopy format, with and without the notes. Please contact Cathy Waldron, Technical Support and Stakeholder Liaison Officer for further assistance with developing your Property Pest Management Plan (4069 5030).

## STEPS TO DEVELOPING A PROPERTY PEST MANAGEMENT PLAN

Use this table in conjunction with the Property Pest Management Plan Template.

STEPS	ACTIONS	NOTES
<b>Assess the current situation</b>	Obtain a property map	The NR&M have several Facts sheets relating to property mapping in the “Land” series. The CYWAFAP may be able to supply you with a map of your property and any weeds that have been recorded on it.
	Identify water courses, roads, fences etc	Weeds spread downstream and along roads.
	List and identify all known weeds and feral animals on your property. You may also identify potential pests from neighbours and other nearby properties.	Use the Cape York Peninsula Weed Pocket Guide for initial weed identification. A weed officer from the CYWAFAP can visit to confirm your weeds if in doubt. Also check for upstream invasions, which may enter your property.
	Prioritise weeds and feral animals for management action according to distribution and potential impact (see Prioritising Pests above)	Landholders are required under legislation to control weeds and feral animals declared either at a State level or at local government level. Check the Cook Shire Council’s Pest Management Plan for a list of locally declared pests. Lists of State-declared pests are available on NR&M Fact Sheets, available from NR&M offices, or NR&M web site.
	Map priority weeds and feral animals	CYWAFAP may be able to help with this.
	Identify weed free and feral animal free areas	Areas that are almost weed-free – prevention is cheaper than control. Note where in the catchment weed spread centres are.
	Identify conservation areas that may need protection	Protect biodiversity
	Identify other areas that may need special protection.	This may include production areas, yards, swimming holes, culturally significant areas
	Identify resources available to you for control work for both weeds and feral animals.	Equipment you own or can borrow, people who can assist, funding you can dedicate.
<b>Writing the Plan</b>	Determine a <b>goal</b> for your property	What is your long-term desire for the property regarding pests?

(fill in the template as you go)	List a set of <b>objectives</b> for the next 4 – 5 years	Ask “what do I want to achieve for pest management on my property over the next 5 years?”
	Identify the <b>obstacles</b> to undertaking your pest management and achieving your objectives.	Ask “Why have I not undertaken the appropriate pest management to date” or “What could stop me from achieving my goals?”
	<p>Develop <b>Action Plans</b> for each objective: For each objective you have set, list the actions to be undertaken and prioritise these actions (usually write them down in order of importance).</p> <p>You may want to include who will do or is responsible for each action and when they will be done (this is another way of prioritising the actions).</p> <p>You may wish to write out specific action plans for high priority weeds and feral animals.</p> <p>When writing up your action plans ensure that what you set is achievable and can be done in the time frame that you set.</p> <p>The PPMP Template document provides 3 example layouts for writing up action plans. You can use one or all 3 designs or create your own layout. The “Priority” box provided in the templates can be used to prioritise your objectives/action plans.</p>	<p>Ask “How am I going to overcome fulfil the objective and overcome the obstacles preventing me from doing so?”</p> <p>This may include –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey and mapping of areas of particular pest species</li> <li>• Eradication or different levels of control of weeds in particular areas (including timing for the weeds and methods to be used)</li> <li>• Agreements to be negotiated with contractors</li> <li>• Establishment or purchase of facilities (eg washdown areas, chemical storage sheds or spray units)</li> <li>• Training in pest management and chemical usage</li> <li>• Holding paddocks for imported stock</li> <li>• Revegetation needs</li> <li>• How this fits with your grazing regimes</li> <li>• Preventative activities to minimise the spread of existing pests and the introduction of new pests</li> </ul> <p>Determine what resources will be needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People, equipment, vehicles and operating</li> </ul> <p>Identify a performance indicator and monitoring program (this is a way of checking that your actions are working).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This could be a reduction in area/number of a pest or no pest plants growing in an area.</li> <li>• Monitoring can be done by field surveys or by photo points etc.</li> </ul>

## IMPLEMENTING AND IMPROVING THE PLAN

Once the plan has been written it is then time to put it into practice. This is where you get to find out if you can really overcome the obstacles and reach the goals you set.

<b>Implement your plan</b>	The only good plan is one that is put into practice.	Ensure that the plan is workable and that it is readily available so that it can be consulted on a regular basis. Copy the Action Plans and put them on a notice board in the office or work shed where equipment and chemicals are stored. Draw up a work plan or year planner with the work required clearly marked and check it off when completed. This will not only help you to achieve your targets set in the objectives, but give you a sense of achievement.
	Coordinate your control strategies with neighbouring properties.	Much feral animal work depends on working on a large area at once with control strategies. Coordinated weed control is also beneficial and prevents reinfestation. Check what is being planned on a catchment basis with your local catchment or Landcare group.
	Ensure safe work practices.	Participate in a chemical safety course. Have and use Personal Protective Equipment
	Look after the environment.	Refer to NRM Pest Facts for information on approved chemicals to use. Be aware of likely runoff and spray drift into waterways and native vegetation areas. Consider non-chemical control strategies.
	Check with the local council and catchment group on incentive programs that may assist you implement your pest control actions.	At present there is an incentive program run by the CYWAFAP for property owners of Cape York Peninsula. This program will reimburse up to \$1000 for herbicide and \$500 for ammunition for landholders implementing an approved pest management plan. As the Natural Heritage Trust supports this scheme the funds are limited. Contact the CYWAFAP for more information.

<b>Monitor and review</b>	The Plan as a “living” document.	It is important to keep a record of what works and what changes are needed. At the end of the 1 <sup>st</sup> year review the plan and update it as necessary.
	Take note of daily weather conditions	Record these in your notes on control work. This will help with planning future control work as you discover what conditions give the best results.
	Monitor costs and performance of different strategies used.	What strategies gave the best results? What strategies are the best value?
	Monitor impacts of management	What has happened to the site post treatment? Have there been any detrimental impacts on production or to the environment/native animals? Has the site been recolonisation by desirable plants or does it require rehabilitation?