

Handbook

**National Post-Border Weed Risk
Management Protocol**

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Summary

This National Post-Border Weed Risk Management Protocol has been developed to foster the use and further development of decision support systems for prioritising weed species for management at the regional, state/territory and national levels. It is based on current best practice in weed management science, in combination with the principles of the two Australian/New Zealand Standards:

- AS/NZS 4360:2004, *Risk management*; and
- HB 203:2006, *Environmental risk management—Principles and process*.

A systematic process of six stages is presented for post-border weed risk management (WRM). Communication and consultation are an integral component of each stage and a communication plan needs to be developed and implemented at the commencement of the WRM process.

Stage 1 is establishing the WRM context. This includes the overall goal/s, geographic and land use scope, stakeholders, existing policies/legislation and resources available to undertake the WRM process and implementation outcomes. The methodologies for subsequent stages, overall project management and the final outcomes and outputs should be agreed upon.

Stage 2 is identifying the weed risk candidates. Plant species for weed risk analysis (WRA) are determined from collating existing weed lists, surveillance to detect new species and/or review of likely incursions. An initial list is screened to select candidates for formal analysis.

Stage 3 is analysing and evaluating weed risks. Existing general weed controls are documented. Comparative weed risks are scored and categorised using a weed risk analysis system that incorporates the three key criteria of Invasiveness, Impacts and Potential Distribution.

Stage 4 is analysing and evaluating feasibility of coordinated control. Weed controls required to target individual species are identified. Comparative feasibility of coordinated control programs are scored and categorised using a system that incorporates the three key criteria of Current Distribution, Control Costs and Duration.

Stage 5 is determining weed management priorities. Weed risk and feasibility of coordinated control are compared for different species to identify priorities for various weed management actions. Such actions include preventing entry, eradication, containment and improving targeted control techniques.

Stage 6 is implementing weed management actions, based on the priorities determined above. This is the transition from the strategic planning stage of WRM to operational, on-ground programs.

Monitoring and reviewing the WRM process are essential to measuring the effectiveness of each stage and to allow for improvement and reassessment as new information about weed species and/or WRA techniques arise. Records of the WRM process undertaken need to be kept for future reference.

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Preface

This Handbook was prepared by the National Weed Prioritisation working group established by the Cooperative Research Centre for Australian Weed Management (Weeds CRC), CRC for Australian Weed Management, Waite Campus, University of Adelaide, PMB 1, Glen Osmond, SA 5064, Australia. Weeds CRC received guidance from Standards Australia Joint Technical Committee OB-007, Risk Management and the Australian Weeds Committee was consulted in the development of this Handbook. The principal contributors were:

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The National Post-Border Weed Risk Management Protocol aims to foster the standardisation, use and further development of weed risk management (WRM) systems to prioritise weed species for coordinated control programs. The outcome sought is the efficient use of resources for weed management at the regional, state/territory and national levels. This is achieved through targeting resources to those species that (i) pose high weed risks and (ii) have a high feasibility of coordinated control.

This Protocol is based on the principles and approaches presented within AS/NZS 4360:2004 *Risk management*. It also draws upon the Standard's companion Handbook HB 436:2004 *Risk Management Guidelines* and the specialist document HB 205—2004 *OHS Risk Management Handbook*.

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NOTES

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1 Introduction

1.1 What is risk management?

AS/NZS 4360:2004

Risk management involves managing to achieve an appropriate balance between realising opportunities for gain, while minimising losses. It is an integral part of good management practice and an essential element of good corporate governance. It is an iterative process consisting of steps that, when undertaken in sequence, enable continuous improvement in decision-making and facilitate continuous improvement in performance.

The main elements of the risk management process, as shown in Figure 1.1, are the following:

(a) *Communicate and consult*

Communicate and consult with internal and external stakeholders as appropriate at each stage of the risk management process and concerning the process as a whole.

(b) *Establish the context*

Establish the external, internal and risk management context in which the rest of the process will take place. Criteria against which risk will be evaluated should be established and the structure of the analysis defined.

(c) *Identify risks*

Identify where, when, why and how events could prevent, degrade, delay or enhance the achievement of the objectives.

(d) *Analyse risks*

Identify and evaluate existing controls. Determine consequences and likelihood and hence the level of risk. This analysis should consider the range of potential consequences and how these could occur.

(e) *Evaluate risks*

Compare estimated levels of risk against the pre-established criteria and consider the balance between potential benefits and adverse outcomes. This enables decisions to be made about the extent and nature of treatments required and about priorities.