



# Development of a regional invasive plants and animals strategy

## Community background paper and survey

### Introduction

Pest plants and animals, sometimes referred to as invasive plants and animals, are a major problem and impact on environmental, agricultural and social values. Pest management is made difficult by the number of current and potential species, the large number of stakeholders, and changing environmental and social conditions.

There are many stakeholders with responsibilities for pest management across different land tenures in Victoria. The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) provides state government policy direction while others such as local government, Parks Victoria, committees of management and private landholders have varying responsibilities for the control of pest plants and animals.

Catchment management authorities have the role of promoting a regional approach to pest management, and to incorporate this into regional catchment strategies to prioritise actions and attract investment into the region. A coordinated approach will help provide the best protection possible for the region's natural environment and agricultural industry from the introduction, establishment or spread of pest plants and animals.

The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is preparing a regional invasive plants and animals strategy to replace previous regional weed and rabbit action plans. The purpose is to provide priorities and goals for weed and vertebrate pest management in the North Central region across all land tenures. More specific actions may be adopted in property management plans or local natural resource management plans. As well as providing guidance on priority actions, the strategy aims to develop an understanding by all land managers of their responsibilities in pest plant and animal management.



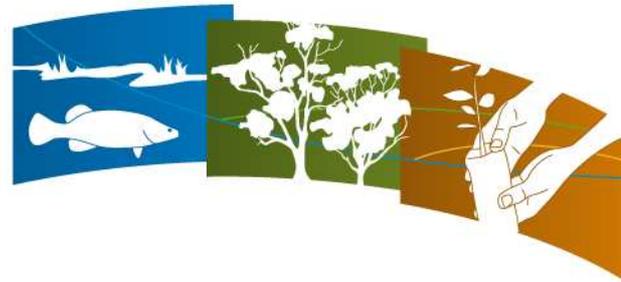
Figure 1: Map of North Central CMA region

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**Historical approach**

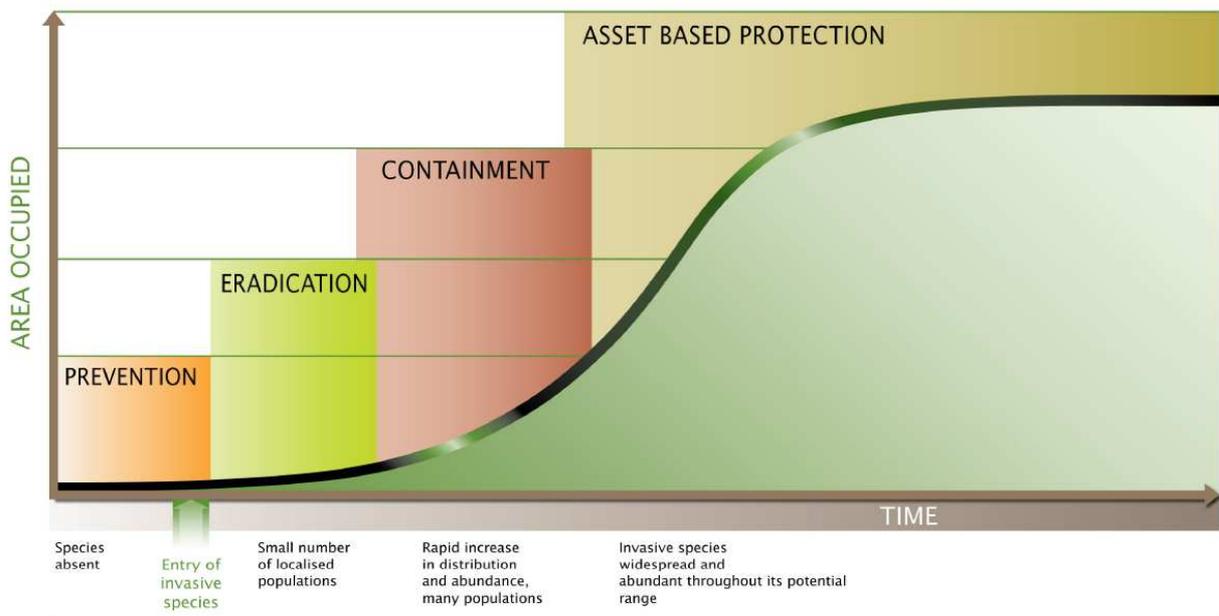
Much of the historical focus on pest management has been species-driven, targeting noxious weed and animal species declared under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* within each CMA region. The classification of a noxious weed (such as Regionally Prohibited) determines the level of responsibility of land managers to manage a particular species.

**The biosecurity approach**

While it is important to manage noxious species, the effectiveness may be limited as declared species become more widespread and common. In addition to this, new and emerging high-risk species may not yet be declared as noxious. With this in mind there is a statewide review of noxious weeds underway.

The recent [Biosecurity Strategy for Victoria](#) and [Draft Victorian Invasive Plants and Animals Policy Framework](#) outline the state government approach to managing invasive species by assessing the level of risk posed and the significance of assets impacted on by pests. This includes natural assets with environmental, social and/or economic value to the Victorian community.

Prevention, eradication, containment and asset protection are the management approaches in the [Draft Victorian Invasive Plants and Animals Policy Framework](#). Given that there are not enough resources to manage all pest species, there is a strong emphasis on getting the best public value from government investment in pest management. Figure 2 shows how these management approaches are linked to the size of a pest invasion and the time required to act.



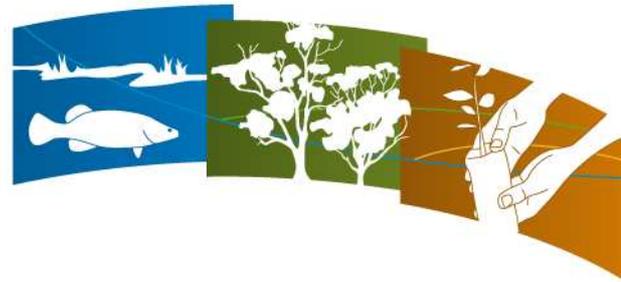
Source: DPI 2009



The invasion graph shows that management efforts are best focused on prevention and eradication rather than the treatment of widespread and established pests that may or may not be able to be contained. Furthermore, the focus should be on high-risk species with the greatest potential to cause damage. This is not to say that low-risk or established pests should be ignored, and actions to manage these can be pursued through local property or public land management plans.

An example of a high-risk invasive species not yet present in the North Central region that might be prevented from establishing is Camel Thorn (a State Prohibited Weed). A species that could possibly be eradicated is Arrowhead, and a species that may be suitable for containment is Serrated Tussock.

For widespread species that are beyond containment (such as rabbits), an asset-based protection approach applies, where a priority asset is managed for all threats including pests. In this case, an asset is a natural thing or place that can be valued for any number of reasons e.g. social, environmental or economic. An example of a priority asset is a Ramsar wetland, recognised for its international environmental significance. In the North Central region, identification of highly valued community natural assets is currently underway as part of the renewal of the North Central Regional Catchment Strategy. This is the first step to developing a list of assets where management efforts, including invasive species management, should be a priority.



## **SURVEY**

The objective of this survey is to gather information about pest plants and animals across the North Central CMA region, to assist in the renewal of pest management strategies.

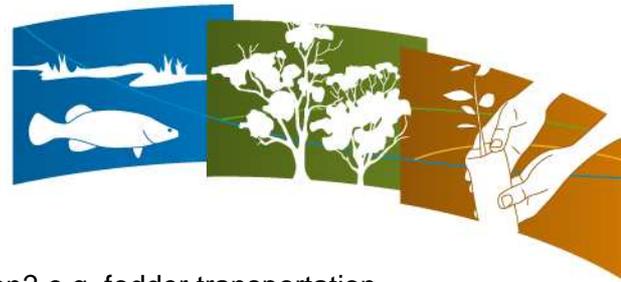
### **As a land manager/owner:**

What do you consider to be the main issues with the control of pest plants and animals on your land and/or in the broader North Central CMA region?

What are the pest species of greatest concern in the North Central CMA region?

Where do you see these species fitting on the invasion curve? (refer to Figure 2 in the Background Paper to see which management approach best fits)

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What causes of spread for pests can you identify in the region? e.g. fodder transportation

What type of support would assist you to address pest issues? (e.g. education, enforcement, extension, incentives)

How can pest management in the North Central CMA region be improved?

Any other comments?

**If you would like to be notified when a draft regional invasive plants and animals strategy is available, please provide contact details with this form.**

**Please submit this form to the North Central CMA (via email, fax or postal address below) by 5 March 2010.**

***Thank you for your input***

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