

# Biosecurity Position Statement

## Policy Principles

This Position Statement relates to the following Policy Principles of LGNSW:

- (1) *Local government must have control of its revenue raising and investment decisions and be fairly funded by the Commonwealth and State/NSW Governments to meet its infrastructure and service responsibilities.*
- (6) *Local government actions reflect Ecologically Sustainable Development principles:*
  - a. *Intergenerational equity – today's actions maintain or enhance the environment for future generations*
  - b. *Precautionary principle – prevent environmental degradation and manage and mitigate risk*
  - c. *Conservation of biological diversity*
  - d. *Improved valuation and pricing of environmental resources – recognising the value of the environment to the community.*

## Background

Local government has a significant role in biosecurity:

- as a local control authority (LCA) in regulating weeds under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.
- as a land manager, to understand and implement its biosecurity responsibilities (eg weeds, pests); and
- in discharging regulatory responsibilities under the *Companion Animals Act 1998*, for domestic cats and dogs.

## Our Position

LGNSW advocates for:

- Mandatory upfront engagement by State and Commonwealth governments with local government about specific local priorities.
- The concepts that underpin the Biosecurity Act, such as risk based decision making and a tenure neutral approach to weed and pest management. The general biosecurity duty – the foundation for a shared responsibility approach – is also supported, however roles and responsibilities of all parties must be clear for it to work.
- Local government representation on the Biosecurity Advisory Committee, which has been established under the Biosecurity Act.
- Funding stability in relation to weed management. LGNSW's State budget submission (17/18) calls for funding via the Weed Action Program to be increased to \$20M per year.
- Local government to have input to the setting of relevant charges (for weed regulatory functions), and local government keeping any revenue from services or compliance and enforcement undertakings.
- Penalties for weed-related offences set at levels high enough to act as a deterrent.
- Many of the recommendations made by the Natural Resource Commission in its Pest Animal Review, however we express caution around resourcing implications regarding changes to the *Companion Animals Act 1998* eg to enable councils to declare and enforce cat confinement areas (NRC recommendation 17).

**Date Created:** August 2017

**Date reviewed:**