

Summary document

NATIONAL ESTABLISHED WEED PRIORITIES - TOWARDS A NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Summary points from a report commissioned by the Australian Government to assist the Environment and Invasives Committee (EIC) to deliver a revised WoNS initiative under the Established Pest and Diseases of National Significance (EPDNS) framework

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Summary

Section 1: WoNS 1999 to 2019

Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) is a national initiative that began in 1999 with the aim of reducing the impact of widespread weeds. The National Framework report provides:

- A complete summary of the first 20 years of the WoNS initiative, including structure and governance arrangements, achievements, lessons learnt and legacy;
- Overview of current status of the 32 existing WoNS;
- Conceptual processes and structures for future WoNS nominations under the EPDNS framework.

National coordination increased capacity and capability to manage weeds through:

- increased understanding of the weeds' biology and ecology,
- national partnerships that leveraged support and resources, and
- the provision of best practice information and tools

The WoNS initiative summary allows for a common understanding by all stakeholders of the initiative's intent and the mechanisms used to achieve this intent.

Section 2: WoNS and WINS, beyond 2021

To align with the EPDNS framework, **Section 2** explores options for a re-invigorated established weed initiative, National Established Weeds Priorities (or NEWP). This is based on learnings from WoNS, including the need for national coordination, that could provide a logical, adaptable and proven model to deliver the weeds component of the EPDNS framework.

In 2019, the EIC endorsed the development of a WoNS framework and communication plan that would outline the future direction for WoNS, as well as to deliver more integrated management options at the landscape scale. This includes:

- steps required to manage the existing 32 WoNS; future WoNS nominations; the identification of Weed Issues of National Significance (WINS) and national coordination under the EPDNS framework.

The report proposes development of a framework that goes beyond WoNS to encompass a suite of National Established Weed Priorities (NEWP) that consist of the following components:

- Weeds of National Significance (**WoNS**)
- Weed Issues of National Significance (**WINS**)
- National Established Weeds Action List (**NEWAL**).

Weed Issues of National Significance (WINS)

A strength of the WoNS Initiative is in promoting strategic, integrated weed management at a landscape scale. However, a criticism of the first 20 years of WoNS has been the overall focus on a single-species approach. The introduction of 'issues' of national significance, to sit alongside WoNS, addresses this by taking an holistic view that includes other key threatening process and considers the collective threats posed to landscapes. With this lens, key national actions for established weeds can be identified and targeted to achieve long-term landscape-scale impact reduction.

- Identifying nationally significant weed issues allows for coordinated action on established weeds at the landscape scale in the context of issues that influence, and are influenced by, established weeds. These issues need to be clearly defined and could include climate change, habitat degradation, herbicide resistance, drought or bushfire preparedness and recovery, and other landscape scale issues that necessitate integrated weed management.

- All levels of government have a desire and responsibility to assist landholders to manage landscape scale threats holistically and temporally, together with reducing the impacts of established weeds. An issues-based approach would allow flexibility for national coordination to be adapted and applied to the greatest needs, as those needs arise.

WINS could adapt or adopt several of the proposed WoNS elements (figure 7), but in broad terms it is anticipated WINS would allow for:

- A process to determine issues of national significance.
- Strategic actions and national plans to be developed.
- Taskforces or reference groups that can provide strategic, cross-discipline guidance,
- Consideration of how long an issue would receive national focus and coordination.

National Established Weeds Action List (NEWAL)

The National Established Weeds Action List (NEWAL) concept was proposed by the EIC WWG in 2019 to manage and complete outstanding national actions of the 32 WoNS through coordinated action.

- The concept of NEWAL is expanded here to form a significant component of the proposed NEWP initiative (refer to figures 3 and 4), to allow for completion of national actions and a rolling list of WoNS and WINS.

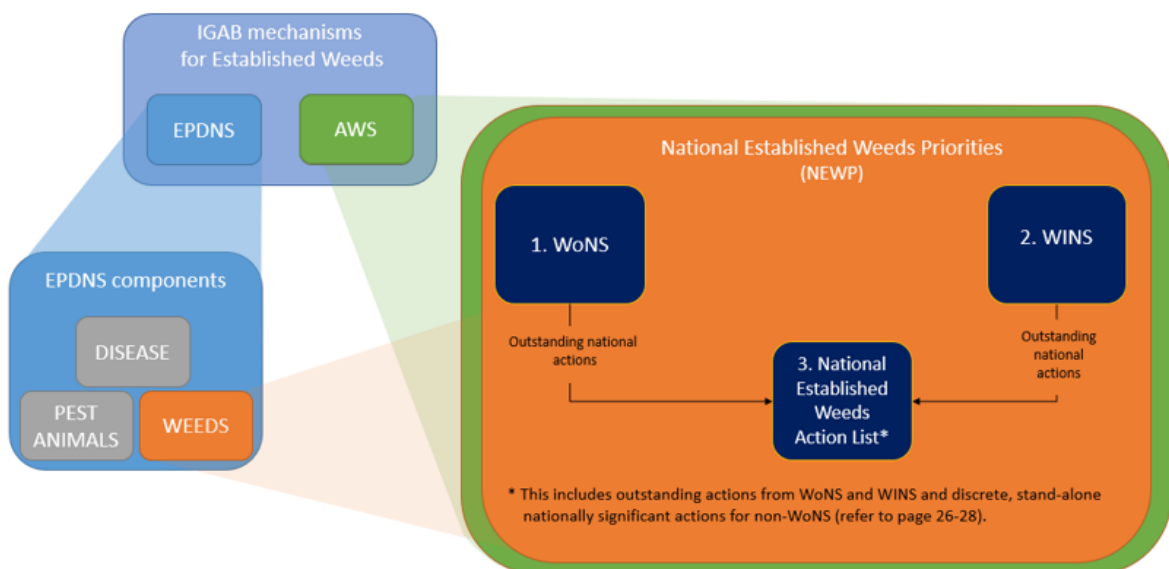


Figure 3: Suggested approach to manage established weeds under the EPDNS framework through the development of National Established Weed Priorities (NEWP).

NEWAL is proposed as a mechanism for:

- Completing outstanding national actions of the existing 32 WoNS and transitioning them to “Legacy WoNS” Status.
- Completing outstanding national actions of new WoNS for their transition to “Legacy WoNS”.
- Completing outstanding national actions of WINS.
- Delivering discrete, stand-alone nationally significant actions for non-WoNS.

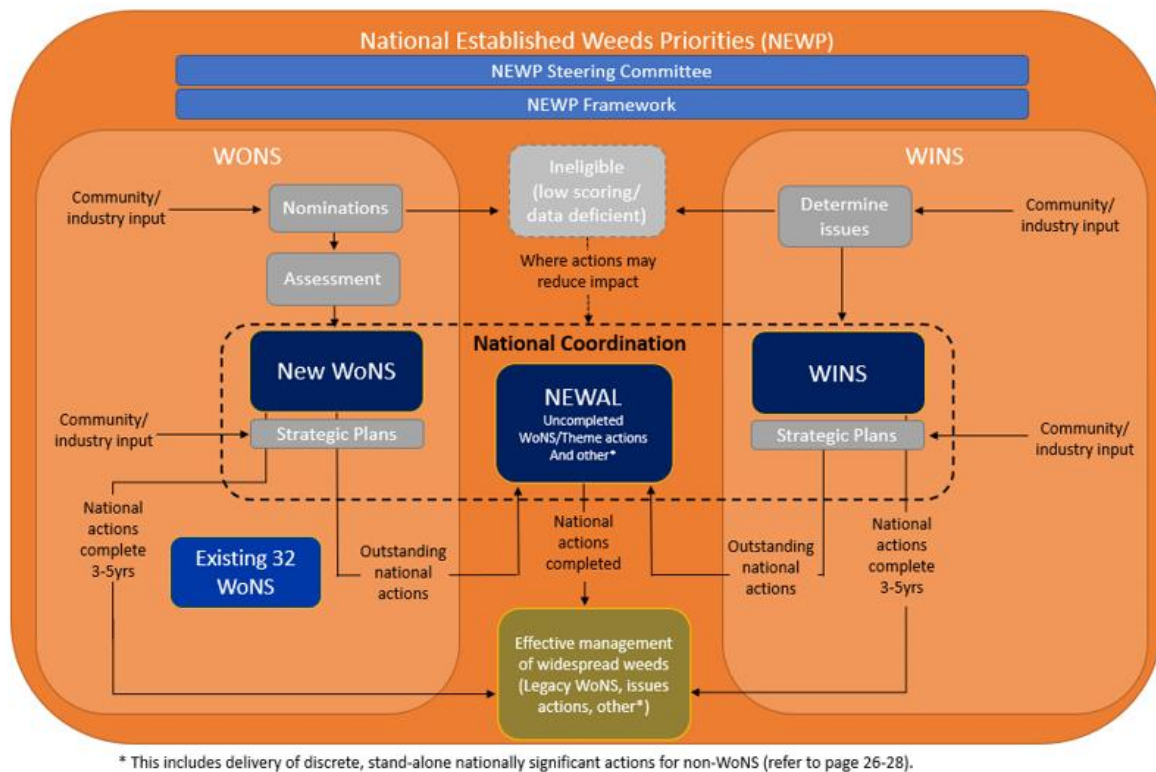


Figure 4 – Potential NEWP processes for effective management of established weeds under EPDNS and the Australian Weeds Strategy.

The NEWP initiative offers a cohesive and effective delivery mechanism for established weeds, which includes a:

- Proven model with existing networks and support
- Well recognised and highly valued branding within the community
- Detailed, risk-based assessment process that can be modified/applied to new species and is consistent with the EPDNS framework
- Collaborative, cross-jurisdictional approach to national coordination, with an emphasis on community and industry participation and leadership
- Strong return on investment with funds leveraged from all stakeholders.

The report provides further information and recommendations on implementation and governance for the NEWP initiative, including:

- Proposed NEWP Steering Committee, national task forces and technical groups
- National Coordination and Coordinators
- Nomination, assessment and categorisation processes
- Term limits for National Established Weed Priorities
- Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement
- Investment opportunities and strategies
- Communication

The full report will be provided to participants prior to workshops in March and April 2021.