

Towards a National Established Weed Priorities framework

Building the future of established weed management in Australia



The Environment and Invasives Committee's Weed Working Group has initiated the development of a National Established Weed Priorities (NEWP) framework, building on and learning from the Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) initiative.

[Wild Matters Pty Ltd](#) has been appointed by the Australian Government to work with the Weeds Working Group in bringing the framework to fruition. The aim of the framework is a revitalised, long term, strategic approach to reducing the spread and impacts of established weeds across Australia.

wildmatters.com.au/national-established-weed-priorities/

FRAMEWORK STATUS UPDATE – 23 NOVEMBER 2021

We want to hear from you:

Version 2 of the National Established Weed Priorities (NEWP) framework

Version 2 of the NEWP framework will be [available for download](#) shortly. A summary of the framework's proposed scope, elements, governance and implementation is given on the following pages.

We are seeking feedback on how the framework's design can jointly meet the needs of industry, community and government stakeholders in managing established weeds from local to national levels.

Version 2 has been prepared in a discussion format, with questions posed throughout. We welcome your views on the framework's logic. What are the best options when there are a range of options that could be taken? What are other ways to achieve aspects of the framework that we haven't thought of?

On the [Wild Matters NEWP webpage](#) there will be a response form with these questions for each section of the document. There will also be single topic modules of Version 2 to download if you want to focus on specific aspects of the framework.

We will be having jurisdictional, sectoral and organisational online meetings for stakeholders across Australia to build understanding and discuss what has been proposed for the NEWP framework. If your organisation has not been involved to date and would like to provide input into framework then please contact us.

Feedback on Version 2 of the NEWP framework is due by **Friday 21st January 2022**.

Wild Matters NEWP framework project team

wildmatters.com.au/national-established-weed-priorities/

Email: weedpriorities@wildmatters.com.au

Matt Sheehan 0427 722 793 Shauna Potter 0421 501 147 John Virtue 0480 312 768

Summary of draft NEWP framework

The draft National Established Weed Priorities (NEWP) framework outlines a proposed program that will:

- deliver information, tools and training to support and enhance on-ground management of established weeds
- enhance knowledge sharing and networks
- provide a conduit to research and development activity
- identify and document priority areas for investment in strategic plans
- strengthen collaboration through national coordination, and
- draw on the above to provide a strategic base to leverage funds, either through grants, in-kind contributions or other investment from government, industry and the community.

The program outlined in the framework is not intended to:

- provide a primary funding source for on-ground control actions
- provide a prescriptive approach to managing weeds/issues
- override the value or intent of local/regional plans or strategies, or
- continue national coordination for a weed until it is removed from the Australian landscape – this is not achievable as, by definition, established weeds cannot feasibly be eradicated.

The NEWP framework acknowledges that reducing the spread and impact of established weeds relies on the work of many. Additional contributions will be required to achieve these long term outcomes, as identified in Figure 1 below. Achieving and maintaining long-term impact reduction and spread prevention is reliant on uptake of the framework's deliverables, as well as leveraging funding and support from stakeholders to undertake on-ground control, prevention, and restoration activities.

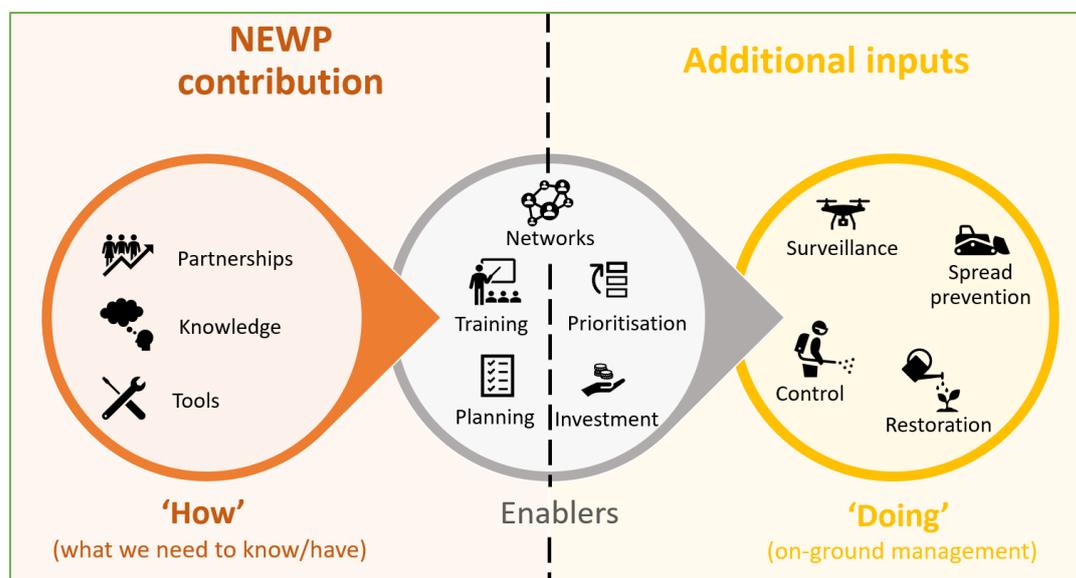
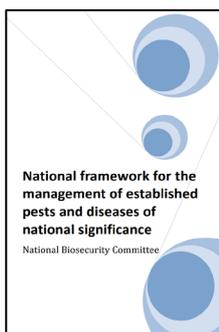


Figure 1 – NEWP framework and other contributions to achieving established weed management outcomes

The framework is intended to be a catalyst for stronger national action on established weed management. It will aid community, industry and government stakeholders in making the case for future investment and partnerships in tackling weed priorities.

National policy drivers:



EPDNS Framework

National priorities jointly set by industry, community and government

Priorities determined by considering:

- 1) Nationally significant Impact
- 2) Feasibility of management
- 3) Benefits of national coordination



Australian Weeds Strategy (AWS)

Goal 2: Minimise the impact of established

Draft Vision

Industry, community and government stakeholders routinely collaborate to better manage established weed priorities at all levels. Stakeholders share a goal to strategically, practically and sustainably prevent the spread and reduce the economic, environmental and social impacts of established weeds.

Included within scope of the NEWP framework

- Eligible weeds could range from those only established in one region to species that are widespread across Australia, as long as they pose nationally significant impacts and will benefit from a national approach
- All land uses, including primary industries, conservation, Indigenous lands, forestry, aquatic systems, public amenity or other areas where established weeds are having an impact
- A broad range of possible actions, including coordination, RD&E, guiding on-ground control, surveillance, policy development, communication and spread prevention
- The framework is being designed for the long-term, with the intention that it will be a key driver for the next 10 years and beyond of collaborative action across Australia in addressing established weed priorities.

What is an established weed?

Taking the lead from the EPDNS framework, established weeds in the context of the NEWP framework can be described as:

- a self-sustaining weed that occurs in Australia and is not regarded as eradicable (whether in terms of technical feasibility or a cost: benefit analysis)
- either being distributed widely across Australia, or only regionally distributed. A regionally-distributed established weed may be the subject of containment measures to mitigate further spread
- excluding native or indigenous plants.

Additionally, for a weed to be listed as nationally significant there must be tangible benefits from having a nationally coordinated approach or national plan for the species. The framework further defines what the tangible benefits of nationally coordination are.

Principles

The NEWP framework aligns with the principles of the [Australian Weed Strategy](#) and the [EPDNS Framework](#). The following principles have been identified in the framework.

1. National established weed priorities need to take state/territory, regional and local weed management objectives into consideration, recognising that priorities can differ amongst stakeholders and scales.
2. Established weed management is primarily undertaken at the local level.
3. Utilising, aligning with and partnering across existing frameworks, systems and programs can bring synergies to increase effectiveness and efficiency of achieving outcomes.
4. Protecting assets usually requires the management of multiple weeds and other threats in an integrated manner.
5. Sustained resourcing is required over multiple years to successfully manage established weed infestations and achieve long-term reduction in impacts.
6. Management tools and information developed needs to be practical and cost effective for ready uptake by land managers.
7. Established weed priorities should remain responsive and be subject to regular review. This includes the flexibility to change priorities according to emerging needs or risks, feasibility of actions and benefits of reallocating available resources.

Stakeholders in established weed management

STAKEHOLDERS IN ESTABLISHED WEEDS



Local

- Property level:
 - farmers
 - govt lands
 - indigenous
 - private conservation
 - forestry
 - tourism
 - resources
 - utilities
 - residential
- Volunteer groups
- Local government*
- Contractors

Regional

- NRM bodies*
- Indigenous Land Councils
- Pastoral leases
- Regional development organisations

* May also be weed management authorities depending on jurisdiction

State/Territory

- Government agencies, incl.:
 - Biosecurity*
 - primary industries
 - National Parks
- Peak bodies:
 - agricultural
 - conservation / environment
 - weeds

National

- Government agencies, incl.:
 - biosecurity
 - primary industries
 - National Landcare Program
 - Indigenous Lands
- Peak bodies:
 - agricultural
 - conservation / environment
- RD&E
 - Universities
 - RDCs
 - CSIRO
 - Herbaria

Draft Program Logic

Program Objective: Support and enhance on-ground control of established weeds through the delivery of information, tools and training; knowledge sharing and networks; identifying research and development needs and opportunities; and by identifying priority areas for investment.

Problem Statement	Inputs	Outputs: activities	Outputs: Participation	Short-term outcomes 1-3 years	Medium-term outcomes 3-5 years	Long-term outcomes 5-20 years
<p>Established weeds impact on both production systems and natural environments and in some cases, human health. The management and response to established weeds must also consider other key threats, processes and significant changes in the landscape. Reducing the impact of established weeds and preventing their further spread will require long-term management intervention. Management intervention is reliant on knowledge of impacts and invasiveness and cost-effective management solutions. It is further enhanced through knowledge sharing and strategic planning</p>	<p>EPDNS principles</p> <p>NEWP framework - WoNS - WINS - NEWAL</p> <p>Existing research</p> <p>Existing networks</p> <p>Partner organisations</p> <p>Funding</p>	<p>Process and methodology for determining national priority established WoNS/WINS.</p> <p>RD&E knowledge gaps identified.</p> <p>Development of Management tools (extension)</p> <p>Workshops, field days training</p> <p>Business case and other investment tools.</p>	<p>Private land managers- other (farmers, residential, Indigenous, private conservation)</p> <p>Private land managers - corporate (mining, utilities, forestry, water managers)</p> <p>RD&E (universities, RDCs, CSIRO)</p> <p>Regional organisations - NRM bodies, Indigenous land councils, pastoral leases</p> <p>Peak bodies (agriculture, conservation/ environment)</p> <p>State/Territory - biosecurity, primary industries, national parks, linear reserve managers</p>	<p>weed managers have access to tools and information that is allowing strategic, collaborative and cost-effective weed management.</p> <p>Increased participation in strategic planning for the management of established weeds</p> <p>Increase networks, partnerships and collaborations.</p>	<p>Land holder/manager capacity and drive to undertake weed control is built through access to new tools, best practice management information and local expertise.</p> <p>A culture of shared responsibility and common ownership of established weed problems drives ongoing collective actions and innovation.</p> <p>Implementation of strategic actions</p> <p>Increased investment in on-ground management of established weeds</p>	<p>Tools and knowledge are contributing to strategic, landscape-level control programs for established weed priorities.</p> <p>The future entry, spread and impacts of priority established weeds not present in regions are averted through ongoing prevention, local eradication and containment activities.</p> <p>Substantially reduced economic, environmental and social impacts and costs of control for priority established weeds present in regions.</p>

Assumptions: Implementation of the NEWP framework will result in short and medium-term outcomes by providing knowledge and tools and leveraging funding for ongoing investment. These will combine with additional enablers to achieve long-term condition and behavioural change.

External Factors: Government policy, competing issues, local and regional priorities, legislation, and compliance requirements, availability of external funding, state/territory/regional and local priorities, interest and capacity.

Three key elements in the NEWP framework

WoNS is an internationally recognised initiative that has delivered strategic and collaborative management for established weeds. The initiative was launched in 1999 to address Goal 2 of the of the then National Weeds Strategy; to reduce the impact of existing weed problems of national significance. Leveraging effort from the local to the national level, the initiative brought together community, industry, and government to reduce the impacts and minimise the spread of widespread weeds by:

- identifying shared national priority actions, supported through national coordination
- building knowledge, tools, and capacity for best practice management and
- supporting, encouraging, and facilitating on-ground action.

Subsequent reviews of the program identified areas of improvement, concluding that:

- I. a single single-species approach to weed management is now less desired
- II. WoNS species are not always the priority of partners, or form only part of broader landscape-scale land management issues that need to be addressed and
- III. there is a need to maintain currency of the management tools and capability of the existing 32 and future WoNS once national coordination ceases and new WoNS are added.

Building on these successes and learnings, the NEWP framework proposes a revitalised WoNS program, together with two additional elements to address establish weed management:



WoNS

The evolution of the 20-year-old Weeds of National Significance initiative – future directions for the current 32 WoNS and the selection of new WoNS.



WINS

A new concept of Weed Issues of National Significance – a broader, multi-species, landscape scale approach to addressing priority issues that drive, or are driven by, weed spread and impacts.



NEWAL

A National Established Weeds Action List – bringing together discrete, impactful, stand-alone priority actions of national benefit, including outstanding actions for any of the 32 WoNS and one-off actions needed for other important weeds/issues.



Weeds of National Significance (WoNS)

The achievements realised under the WoNS initiative include research and development outputs, best practice management tools and training, extension advice, updates to policy and national collaboration. There are currently 32 Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) and the proven delivery model associated with WoNS brings:

- existing networks and support
- well recognised and highly valued brand within the community
- detailed, risk-based assessment process that can be modified/applied to new species and is consistent with the EPDNS framework (refer to Module 3)
- collaborative, cross-jurisdictional approach to national coordination, with an emphasis on community and industry
- strong return on investment with funds leveraged from all stakeholders.

For these reasons WoNS continues to form a core element of the NEWP framework delivery.



Proposed new concept of Weed Issues of National Significance (WINS)

WINS takes a holistic view of established weeds by addressing high priority issues across Australia that involve multiple species of weeds. This includes how established weeds interact with other threats (for example, bushfire or drought), broader management and use of natural resources.

WINS seeks to:

- better integrate established weed management with managing and responding to other key threats and significant changes in landscapes
- address the underlying causes of weed invasion and difficulties in their control, which could include biological, spatial or social dimensions
- better integrate established weed management with managing and responding to other key threats and significant changes in landscapes.

Categories under which issues could be nominated for WINS would include:

1. **Technological impediments** to managing established weeds
2. **Wicked problems** – social or cultural problems in weed management that are difficult to solve
3. **Integrating management** – managing established weeds together with other management issues (e.g. bushfires or drought) to achieve broader natural resource management outcomes.
4. **Protecting economic, environmental and social assets** – where key ecosystems, industries or communities across Australia need improved tools or processes to manage similar threats posed by established weeds

A process for selecting WINS has been developed. Details can be found in the WINS module.



Proposed National Established Weeds Action List (NEWAL)

NEWAL's primary purpose would be to prioritise actions for national coordination that would manage and complete outstanding national actions from WoNS/WINS strategic plans. Initially its scope would include critical, nationally beneficial actions not yet done for the existing 32 WoNS. Over time it would also include outstanding national actions for new WoNS/WINS.

NEWAL could also include discrete, stand-alone nationally significant actions for non-WoNS/WINS. This could include weeds or issues nominated but not successful in becoming WoNS or WINS. In this way, the NEWAL could become an investment prospectus for co-investment on national established weed priorities.



Proposed national repository for established weed knowledge

Whilst the foundational work delivered through the framework (such as research, best practice information, improved control options) is critical, so too is continued on-ground management. Established weeds and associated issues will require attention and management for many years to come and there is a need to maintain a level of support to those undertaking this work. The framework can assist with this by ensuring the benefits of national coordination remain current, by developing and maintaining a national repository for established weeds information. This knowledge base may include:

- Updating national priority action maps to highlight strategic management locations
- Periodic review of changes to control options (e.g. registered herbicides)
- Maintaining/updating best practice information (e.g. via Weeds Australia website)
- Continued inclusion of WoNS as priority species for consideration in funding programs
- Continued integration of national objectives with regional and state policy and planning approaches

- Maintaining current legislation requirements (preventing sale, trade and movement as a minimum) and
- Maintaining communication activities to raise awareness of WoNS, their impacts and management options.



Implementation of the NEWP framework through Strategic Plans

National strategic plans will be developed for each element (WoNS/WINS/NEWAL) and will provide clarity and direction on priority actions and focus the efforts of all stakeholders towards mitigating the impacts of established weeds.

Development and implementation of strategic plans will be based on the successful model used for the existing 32 existing WoNS, where taskforces, facilitated by a national coordinator, drafted and implemented plans and used established networks to link to broader interest groups and stakeholders.

Strategic plans and associated progress reviews also provide a mechanism to identify when national coordination of WoNS, WINS and NEWAL can be reduced and allow for new priorities to be added. Three levels of national coordination have been identified:

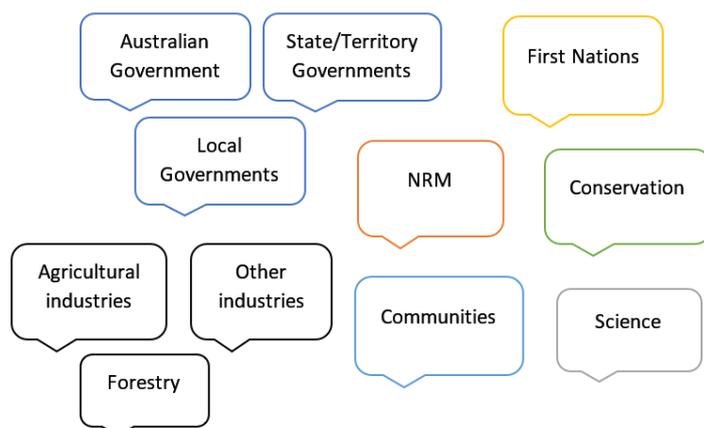
- Phase 1 – highest level of national coordination (WoNS and WINS, approximately 3-5 years)
- Phase 2 – reduced coordination (NEWAL, approximately 1-2 years)
- Phase 3 - no national coordination (maintenance of national repository).

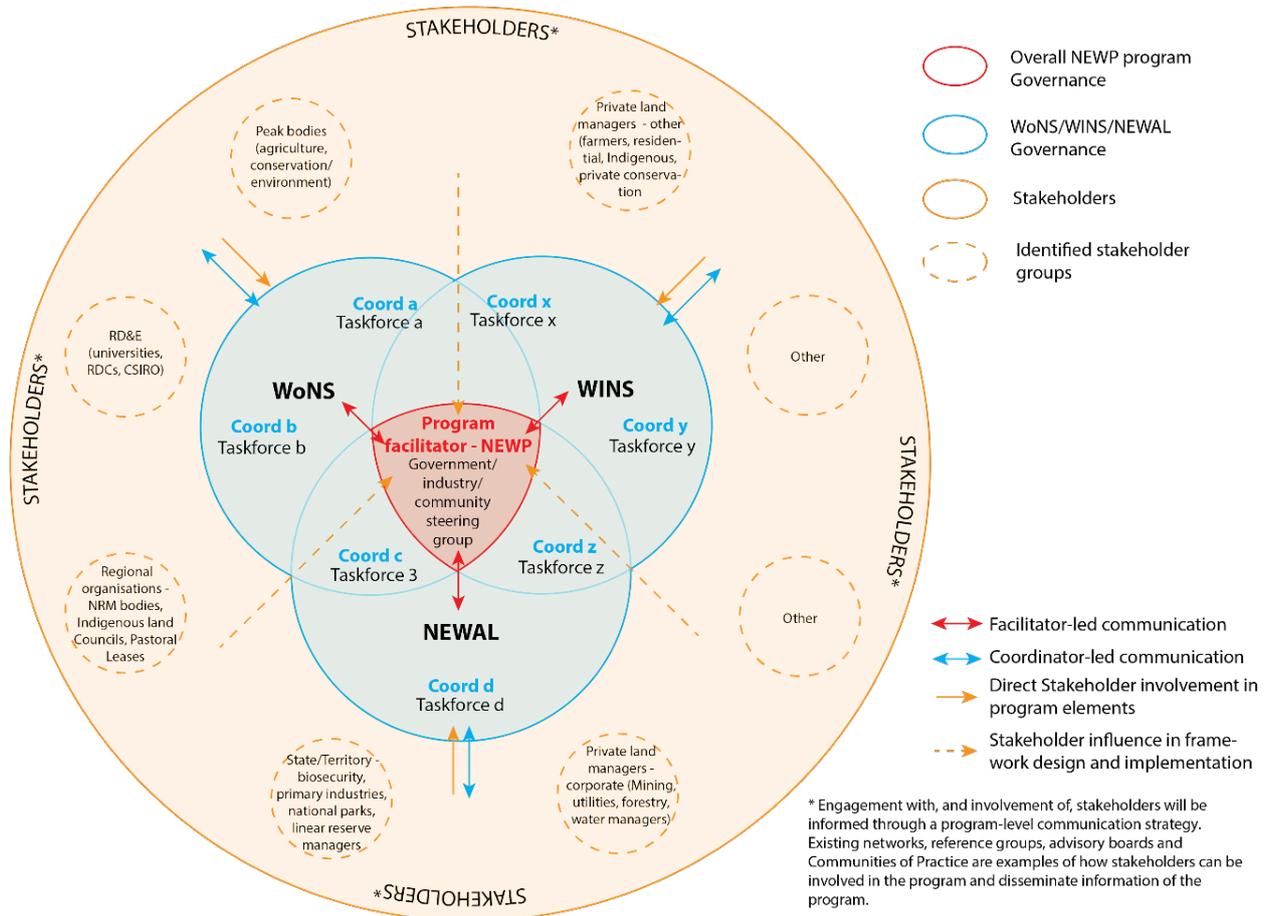
WoNS and WINS move from Phase 1 to Phase 2 when few strategic actions remain and they can conceivably be completed with less national coordination. Whilst indicative times are given above, progression is based on level of achievement of actions. National coordination ceases when all strategic actions are complete (Phase 3).

The NEWAL strategic plan is likely to take the form of an operational workplan that is subject to regular revision to remove completed actions and add new actions.

National Governance and Coordination

An optimal governance model is needed that involves all stakeholder voices in national decision-making.





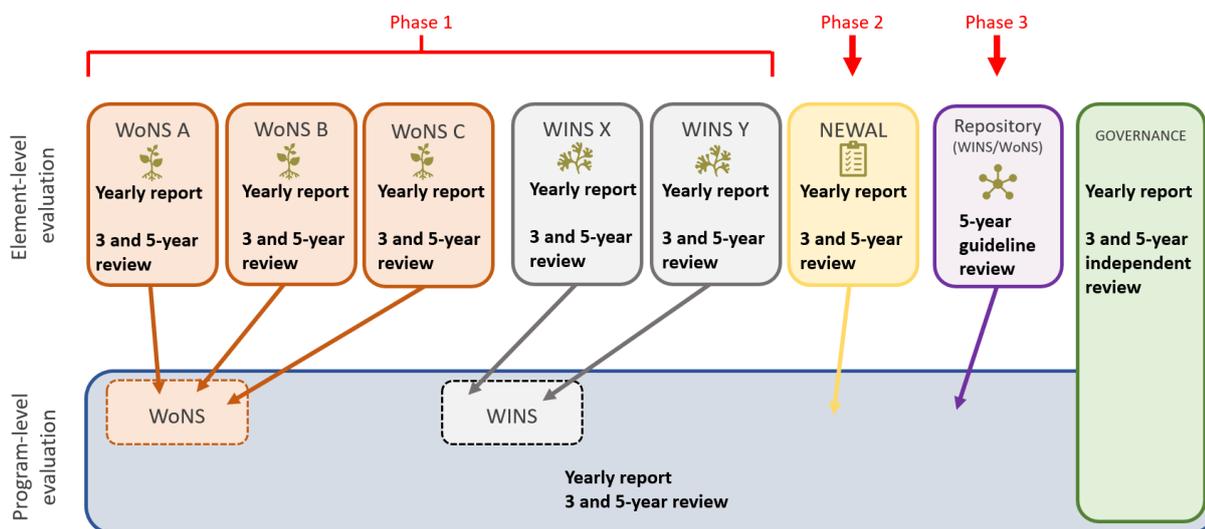
Feedback is sought on governance and coordination options proposed for:

- A **national steering group** that would oversight NEWP implementation
- **Taskforces** for WoNS and WINS implementation
- A national established weed management **facilitator**
- Hosting arrangements of WoNS and WINS **national coordinators**

Suggested interactions between these governance and coordination components and broader stakeholders are illustrated in the above figure.

Measuring the success of the NEWP framework

A draft program logic has been developed (see page 5) that describes how the NEWP framework will result in short and medium-term outcomes as a direct result of the program, while also contributing to and facilitating long term on-ground outcomes. Two levels of evaluation are proposed as follows:



Communication and Engagement

A NEWP Communication and Engagement Plan will be needed, with broad aims of:

- Marketing the need to prevent and manage established weeds to avoid and reduce their socio-economic and environmental impacts across Australia
- Promoting the achievements that have and can be made from taking a nationally coordinated approach to weeds and jointly focusing on agreed priorities and actions
- Explaining how national established weed priorities are determined under the NEWP framework and how stakeholders can participate in nominating and selecting these priorities
- Ensuring ready access to best practice control information, support networks and opportunities to access resources
- Fostering co-investment and partnerships from the national to the local level in developing better control tools, building industry and community capacity in how to manage weeds, and working together on landscape-level control programs
- Building levels of participation and activity in weed prevention and control at the individual land holder and community levels

Resourcing and Co-investment

The NEWP framework will not be able to be implemented without adequate, long-term resourcing for its governance, coordination and the carrying out of necessary actions under each of the WoNS/WINS/NEWAL strategic plans. As per the EPDNS framework, managing established weed priorities is a shared responsibility between landholders, government, industry and community.

Suggestions are sought on a sustainable funding model that enables equitable contributions from different sectors (cash and/or in-kind), for aspects of the NEWP framework that align with organisations' needs. A range of cost-sharing models are presented for consideration.