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: