

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

## WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Wood

to Minister for Lands and Planning

### Weed Management

1. How much did DIPE spent on weed management in 2003/04? How much will it spend in 2004/05.
2. How much money would be needed to contained the spread of the Territory's worst 10 weeds.
3. Has any assessment been done of the money needed for overall weed containment.
4. Is there a "priority weed" eradication program. If not, why not.
5. Are approvals still being given for the introduction of new exotic pasture improvement species in the Territory, and
  - (a) if yes, by what process is approval granted; and
  - (b) what assessments are conducted to determine the risks associated with such releases.

*1: How much money did DIPE spend on weed management in 2003/04? How much will it spend in 2004/05*

### ANSWER

1. In the 2003-04 financial year DIPE Weeds Management Branch spent \$2 330 000 on weed management. In addition, approximately \$5 million was spent **by other divisions of DIPE** on weed control on territory roads, Crown land and Territory parks and reserves.

The DIPE Weeds Management Branch budget for the 2004-05 financial year is \$2 338 000. A similar level of funds to the previous year is likely to be spent in weed management on roads, parks and crown land in 2004-05.

*2: How much money would be needed to contain the spread of the Territory's worst 10 **weeds**?*

### ANSWER

2. The commencement of the *Weeds Management Act* in 2001 placed the responsibility of weed control onto the landowner including the Crown.

**Many of the worst weeds** in the Northern Territory are regarded as Weeds of National Significance (WONS). These species include: Alligator weed, Athel pine, Cabomba, Hymenachne, Lantana, Mesquite, Mimosa, Parkinsonia, Parthenium weed, Prickly acacia and

Salvinia. There are strategies in place to contain the spread of all of these species that have been developed cooperatively with other state agencies and the Commonwealth Government. These strategies are signed off by the NT Government at Ministerial Council and are active programs. The Commonwealth contributes to some programs addressing WONS.

Regional Weed Management Plans are currently being developed for each of four Regions of the Northern Territory through the Regional Weed Advisory **Committees**. These plans, when finalised, will identify the high priority weed issues and associated control costs for effective control. In addition a number of Government agencies are also finalising Weed Management Plans which identify budget requirements to undertake appropriate weed management on government managed lands.

DIPE is currently assessing future resource requirements necessary to meet obligations in controlling the identified priority weeds, Weeds of National Significance and implementing the Regional Weed Management Plans.

3: *Has any assessment been done of the money needed for overall weed containment?*

**ANSWER**

See above answer - The overall resource requirement for the effective overall containment of weeds is currently under review and will be considered by government later this year.

4: *Is there a priority weed eradication program? If not why not?*

**ANSWER**

Yes. The “priority weed” eradication program is being addressed through Weeds of National Significance (WONS) with the assistance of support funding from the Federal Government. Of the 20 weeds of National Significance, 13 of these weeds are found in, or can impact on the Territory. DIPE is confident that eradication programs in place for Cabomba, Parthenium, Mesquite, Prickly Acacia and Alligator weed are working and will be effective. Additionally, eradication of Athel Pine is feasible **with additional resourcing**. In most other cases eradication of the other priority WONS species from the Northern Territory is not a feasible objective at the current time. They are, however, being contained and the potential for further spread reduced. These weeds include Mimosa, Olive Hymenachne, Lantana, Parkinsonia, and Salvinia. National Strategic Plans, to which the Northern Territory is a signatory, exist for each WONS species. The NT Government is National Lead Agent for two of these species, being Mimosa and Athel Pine.

5: *Are approvals still being given for the introduction of new exotic improved pasture species in the Territory, and*

*(a) if yes, by what means is approval granted; and*

*(b) what assessments are conducted to determine the risks associated with such releases?*

**ANSWER**

The Department of Business, Industry and Resource Development is the lead agency for importing exotic pasture species into the Northern Territory in consultation with the North Australian Quarantine Strategy, AQIS and CSIRO. AQIS conducts a Weed Risk Assessment to approve all new plant species being allowed into the country.