

# Introduced Species

---

AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS ACTION PLAN  
INTRODUCED SPECIES  
ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

*At present, the Federal Government is primarily responsible for border control, while the States and Territories manage pests and weeds in their respective jurisdictions. Unfortunately, neither the Federal, nor State and Territory Governments are devoting sufficient resources to dealing with introduced species. There are also flaws in the national framework for managing introduced species that are hindering efforts to control and manage pests and weeds.*

## Our Action Agenda

1. **Improve Commonwealth environmental laws** to restrict the introduction, sale and spread of introduced species, including laws to prohibit the importation, translocation and sale of “black listed” environmental pests and weeds.
2. **Develop** a national framework for the prevention and control of invasive species under the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council, which should facilitate the development of:
  - (a) uniform national laws on the control and management of pest and weed species;
  - (b) national action plans for non-native animals, weeds, invertebrate pests and diseases;
  - (c) a national facility for responding to new incursions of invasive species; and
  - (d) a national invasive species information system, which will provide up-to-date information on all introduced species.
3. **Increase Federal, State and Territory funding** for programs to eradicate priority pests and weeds (particularly species included on the Alert List and identified in the report, Potential Environmental Weeds in Australia). This should include an increase in funding available under the Natural Heritage Trust for pest and weed control.
4. **Establish** a national introduced species education program.

# Introduced Species

---

5. **Significantly increase funding** that is available for the development, testing and release of biological control agents. This should include:
  - (a) ensuring government grants to research institutions are provided for 5-10 year periods; and
  - (b) increasing funding to the CSIRO Centre for Research on Introduced Marine Pests, CRC for Australian Weed Management and Pest Animal Control CRC.
6. **Improve procedures and facilities** at ports and airports to detect and eradicate introduced species.

## The Issues

### Weeds, Feral Animals and Marine Pests

Pests and weeds cause enormous damage to our environment. They are generally regarded as being the second greatest threat to biodiversity behind land clearing. They can also adversely affect the availability and quality of water resources, destroy landscapes and interfere with the cultural practices of Indigenous communities. Many invasive plant and animal species also cause health problems, such as respiratory diseases (eg. exacerbating asthma) and allergic reactions.

However, pests and weeds are not only an environmental issue; they also have adverse impacts on our economy. The cost of pests and weeds to agriculture alone is over \$4 billion a year. They also pose a significant threat to our fishery and tourism industries.

### Aussie invaders

Australia already has in the vicinity of 28,000 to 32,000 introduced plant species, around 73 introduced vertebrate and 500 introduced invertebrate species, and more than 250 introduced marine pests. These numbers are continuing to grow rapidly and, as international trade increases, they will continue to grow unless appropriate frameworks are established to prevent the introduction and spread of exotic species.