Good Neighbour Policy approaches for weed spread prevention

The Good Neighbour Policy concept

A new community approach to reduce weed spread between properties is the 'Good Neighbour Policy' (GNP). A GNP is a local government policy that identifies the actions expected from land managers to sufficiently manage specific weeds (may also include pest animals) on their land to reduce the likelihood of spread causing adverse impacts to neighbours. While a GNP may involve multiple elements, the establishment of weed-free property boundary buffer zones is central to achieving its weed related objectives.

Weed-free buffer zones

Property boundary weed-free buffer zones are established to reduce the likelihood of weed seed moving between adjoining properties. 'Weed-free' generally entails the control of all weeds and follow-up to ensure no plants reach maturity and set seed within the buffer zone. The width of buffer zones is determined by local government within their GNP and may reflect the ecology of priority weeds balanced with what is reasonably practicable for landholders.

Images 1 & 2: Infestations of prickly acacia on a boundary fence can contribute to the weed invasion of a neighbouring property (left) and (right) prickly acacia seedlings in a creekline resulting from infestations from an upstream neighbour.

Flinders Shire GNP case study

The Flinders Shire GNP case study was undertaken in 2014 – 2015 and co-led by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Southern Gulf NRM and Flinders Shire Council. The case study involved 13 cattle grazing properties predominantly on Mitchell grass downs. Surveys, boundary weed management plans, and initial and follow-up control of

This factsheet was co-developed by Southern Gulf NRM and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries through the Queensland Government funded War on Western Weeds initiative.

Southern Gulf NRM

Queensland Government

prickly acacia on boundaries were undertaken on all properties. Control involved soil applied herbicides using ground crew, Epple Skattergun and aerial application plus basal bark spraying and loader pushing. Weed-free buffer zones were created on 430 km of property boundaries. Buffer widths were a minimum of 10 m from boundaries and 250 m upstream within watercourses from a boundary.

The key findings of the case study were:

- Teams of two people were usually sufficient for boundary weed control activities
- The use of soil applied herbicides, where appropriate, increases the speed of application and longevity of results
- Treatment costs (including both initial and follow-up) calculated on a commercial basis were $44 - $379/km with average treatment speeds of 1 – 4.5km/hr/pp
- Watercourse buffers require more effort for treatment and maintenance
- Establishment of weed-free buffer zones were generally quick, easy and of low to moderate cost.

Benefits of weed-free buffer zones

The case study demonstrated a number of benefits from the establishment of weed-free boundary buffer zones as part of a GNP including:

- Immediate reduction in weed-seed movement between properties
- Incentive for landholders already implementing weed control programs
- Transfers the burden of weed management back to property owner producing weed seed
- Reduces tensions between neighbouring properties
- Increases aspirations of landholders for weed management
- Helps fulfil weed management obligations
- Aids fence maintenance and property boundary access.

Images 3 & 4: Successful control of prickly acacia on property boundaries within the Flinders GNP case study to create weed-free buffer zones.

Further information

Further information is available by contacting **SG NRM** (call **1800 676 242**) or **Biosecurity Queensland** (call **13 25 23** or visit **www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au**)

This factsheet was co-developed by Southern Gulf NRM and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries through the Queensland Government funded War on Western Weeds initiative.

Southern Gulf NRM

Queensland Government