

Snowy Monaro Regional Council Local Management Plan for African Lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*)

Introduction

African Lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*) is regarded as one of the most devastating weeds within the Snowy Monaro region due to its invasiveness, potential for spread, fire risk and economic, environmental and social impacts. African lovegrass has little grazing value due to its low nutritional value and palatability. This results in stock and other wildlife avoiding it unless there is nothing else to eat. Therefore it rapidly replaces more palatable grasses, especially during drought. It also invades native vegetation including grassland, woodland and open forest. African Lovegrass poses a high risk to the Snowy Monaro regions \$78m agricultural industry and unique environment (2010/11 Australian Bureau of statistics (ABS) – Value of Agricultural Commodities Produce 2010-2011).



African lovegrass is identified as a key threatening process of the endangered ecological community; Natural Temperate Grasslands of the Southern Tablelands (NSW and ACT) because of its ability to dominate native plant communities and displace native plants.

Purpose of this plan

To specify the control measures that a land manager must implement to ensure that his/her General Biosecurity Duty is discharged in relation to African Lovegrass.

Legal status

The management of invasive weeds in NSW is governed by the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. The Local Control Authority (Snowy Monaro Regional Council) is responsible for ensuring the prevention, elimination, minimization and management of the [biosecurity risk](#) posed or likely to be posed by invasive weeds. It is also responsible for the development, implementation, coordination and review of invasive weed control programs within its area of jurisdiction.

Any person dealing (eg the owner or occupier of land) with African Lovegrass must comply with his or her General Biosecurity Duty.

Biosecurity ACT 2015 – General Biosecurity Duty

Any person who deals with biosecurity matter or a carrier and who knows, or ought reasonably to know, the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed by the biosecurity matter, carrier or dealing has a biosecurity duty to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the biosecurity risk is prevented, eliminated or minimised.

Control Objective

The primary objective of this plan is to reduce the negative impact of African Lovegrass on the Snowy Monaro Region's economic, environmental and social sustainability.

Council requirements

Snowy Monaro Regional Council has a duty as Local Control Authority to inspect all land in connection with its weed control functions. In achieving this it must ensure the management of the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed by weeds within its area of jurisdiction.

Surveillance Council inspects private and public lands for the presence of African Lovegrass infestations on a 6 year cycle. Frequency of inspection increases where isolated infestations occur and in cases of non-compliance; the frequency of which is determined by the level of risk posed by the infestation(s).

Reporting Council provides an inspection report to the land owner/occupier following inspection. The report shall indicate the level of infestation, its spatial distribution on the property and the level of weed control required by the owner/occupier. Infestation data is reported to the NSW Biosecurity Information System.

Enforcement Council will enforce the control of African lovegrass where non-compliance is identified. Enforcement measures may include the issue of a penalty infringement notice, entering the land and controlling infestations at the owner/occupier's expense, or the issue of a court attendance notice. Penalties for non-compliance with the *Biosecurity Act 2015* are significant.

Land owner/occupier requirements

All property managers have a responsibility to prevent, eliminate or minimize adverse effects on the economy, the environment and the community that arise from weeds. Where full control is feasible Council will enforce that requirement. Where widespread and established invasive species have become "naturalized" in our environment and full control is not deemed feasible by Council it will promote a strategy of minimization and containment.

African Lovegrass is identified in the South East Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2017 – 2022. The plan specifies that African Lovegrass must be managed in accordance with a published local weed management plan.



Isolated infestations

Objective: Prevent establishment

Action: Eliminate infestations

Established infestations

Objective: Containment. Reduce incidence in affected areas.

The growth of the plant must be controlled in a manner that continuously inhibits the ability of the plant to spread. Infestations may be managed in accordance with a staged control plan approved by Council. In situations where Council deems this requirement not reasonably practicable in accordance with Section 16 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, buffers and containment strategies may be introduced to protect priority assets.

Other restrictions Land managers must mitigate the risk of introducing this weed to their land. The plant or parts of the plant must not be traded, carried, grown or released into the environment.