

Background

The [National Established Weed Priorities \(NEWP\) Framework](#) was approved by the [Environment and Invasives Committee \(EIC\)](#) on 16 June 2023.

The NEWP Framework is a long-term collaborative initiative between community, industry and government stakeholders to determine and address shared weed priorities through strategic, nationally coordinated actions. The Framework seeks to reduce the economic, environmental and social impacts of weeds through new Weeds of National Significance (WoNS), a new concept of Weed Issues of National Significance (WINS), a National Established Weed Action List (NEWAL) and a Virtual Weed Information Hub.

The NEWP Framework will be implemented through national strategic plans for each WoNS and WINS and for the NEWAL. These plans will include activities relating to research, development and extension (RD&E), best-practice information and training, prevention, monitoring and supporting networks and partnerships for coordinated on-ground weed control programs.

Purpose and Roles

The NEWP Steering Group (NEWP SG) has been established by the EIC to oversee the implementation of the NEWP Framework. The NEWP SG seeks to bring together stakeholder views on managing established weeds from 'government' (Australian, state/territory and local), 'industry' (agriculture, forestry, extractive industries) and 'community' (Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representatives, natural resource management, biodiversity conservation, volunteer groups), with input also from the science sector.

Strategic roles of the NEWP SG are to:

- i. Oversee the process for determining new WoNS and WINS and the inclusion of actions into NEWAL.
- ii. Oversee national coordination, taskforces and strategic planning processes for WoNS, WINS and NEWAL.
- iii. Advise on the establishment and updating of monitoring and evaluation processes for the NEWP Framework's implementation.
- iv. Oversee implementation and updating of a NEWP communications plan, including defining user needs and oversight of the Virtual Weed Information Hub.
- v. Provide strategic advice on co-investment to support implementation of WoNS, WINS and NEWAL.
- vi. Champion and advise on aligning priorities under the NEWP Framework across government, industry and community stakeholder organisations.
- vii. Provide advice aligning NEWP objectives and outcomes against existing national, state, territory and regional weed strategies.
- viii. Advocate for collaboration on management of established weed priorities, including the establishment or support of stakeholder networks.
- ix. Provide advice on how to resolve conflicts between stakeholder groups where these are preventing strategic actions to address national priority weed impacts.
- x. Provide input into a review of the NEWP Framework, within 3 years of commencement, and advise on corrective actions where needed.

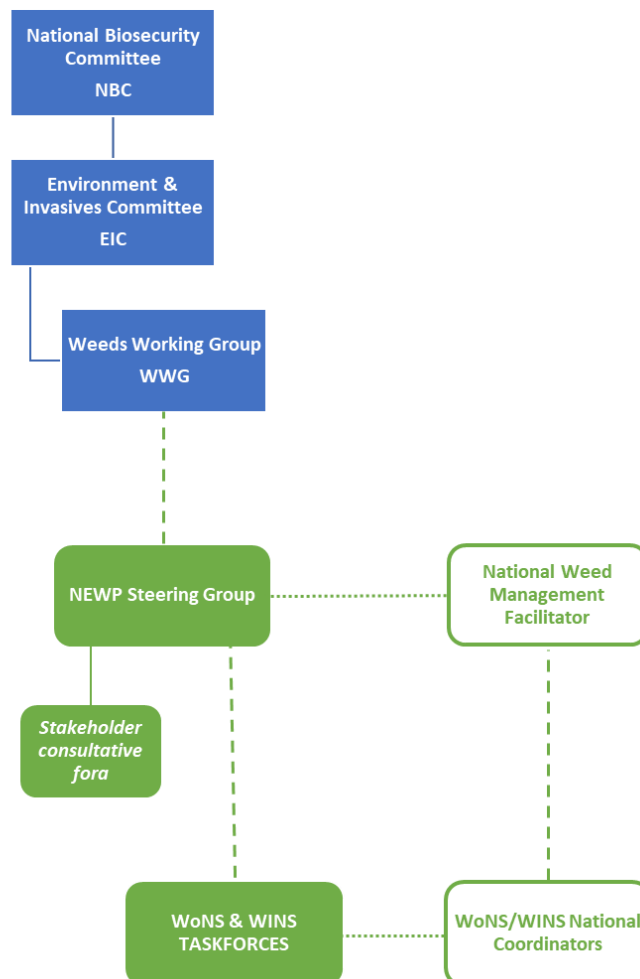
Reporting and governance relationships (Refer to Figure 1)

The EIC is the sponsor of the NEWP SG, approving its terms of reference and membership. The NEWP SG reports to the EIC via the EIC Weeds Working Group (WWG). The NEWP SG makes recommendations to the EIC, through WWG, for major decisions which require approval from the Australian and all state/territory governments. The EIC may in turn defer some decisions to the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC). Such major decisions include:

- determination of new WoNS and WINS
- approval of WoNS and WINS strategic plans
- co-investment requirements for NEWP Framework implementation.

The National Facilitator provides executive officer services to the NEWP SG. The National Facilitator also leads the day-to-day implementation of the NEWP Framework on behalf of the NEWP SG.

The NEWP SG can establish various consultative fora to aid communication and inform decision-making. The NEWP SG will have a collaborative working relationship with the WoNS and WINS Taskforces, including advocating on their behalf to WWG.



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Figure 1 - Governance relationships for the NEWP SG

Membership

The NEWP SG will have one or more members from each sector with an interest in and involved in the implementation of the NEWP Framework. This is likely to include the following sectors:

- *Australian government[^]*
- *State/Territory government[^]*
- *Local government*
- *Agriculture*
- *Forestry*
- *Extractive industries (i.e. mining and energy sector)*
- *Tourism and recreation*
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander**
- *Natural resources management*
- *Biodiversity conservation*
- *Riparian and aquatic ecosystem managers*
- *Community volunteer groups (e.g. landcare)*
- *Scientific research.*

[^] These government members will also be members of the EIC and/or WWG to allow for effective and consistent communication across the committees.

** In this case a person is not expected to represent First Nations people but rather provide advice on engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.*

Members of the NEWP SG are there to represent their sector's views based on their experience and involvement in relevant networks. They are not appointed as representatives of a particular organisation within that sector.

WWG will call for expressions of interest (Eoi) in being a member of the NEWP SG. This call will be communicated generally and may also be directed to specific organisations as considered appropriate, for example an existing peak national organisation.

In addition to their sectoral expertise, members will also have skills, knowledge and/or experience in the following areas:

- *program governance and implementation*
- *strategic weed management at the landscape level*
- *informing cross-sectoral priorities (at a national or state/territory level).*

In determining final membership WWG will also consider human diversity (e.g. gender, ethnicity, age) and geographic diversity.

Members will be appointed for a period of 3 years and may renominate.

If members are unable to attend a meeting they can provide a substitute, in consultation with the chair. The substitute is still bound by the terms of reference.

NEWP SG members will not be remunerated unless there is a need to provide this financial support to facilitate representation. For example, where a member is not a paid employee. Travel costs of attending meetings will be met.

Chairing

The NEWP SG will have an independent chair and deputy chair appointed by WWG through an Eol process.

Functioning

Meetings will be held quarterly, as a mix of face-to-face and online. Additional meetings and/or out-of-session items for decision may occur on an as-needs basis. Observers may attend meetings (at their own cost), at the discretion of the Chair or request from WWG.

Agenda papers will be provided no less than 2 weeks prior to a meeting. Minutes will be recorded for each meeting.

The NEWP SG will seek to make decisions by consensus. Where this is not possible, a vote will be taken and differing viewpoints will be recorded. Where consensus is not achieved advice may be sought from the WWG.

In providing advice and making decisions, members will consider logic, feasibility, stakeholder appeal, preferences (where options are given), completeness and risks. Members will also advise on any further stakeholder consultation required.

The NEWP SG will provide a public communique after each meeting.

Stakeholder consultation

Where stakeholder sectors already have relevant forums, then these should be used by the Steering Group. The NEWP SG may need to establish stakeholder consultation mechanisms which are not currently well represented. These will be defined as issue or time specific.

The NEWP SG may call on the advice of technical experts if required for specific matters.

Code of conduct

- All persons on the NEWP SG will act in a respectful and constructive manner, acknowledging that others may have different viewpoints on particular matters.*
- The NEWP SG shall abide by principles of transparency, equity, diversity and accountability.*
- In taking a national, strategic and cross-sectoral view, the NEWP SG will be mindful of regional, land use, cultural, social and ecological diversity and differing needs across Australia.*
- Members are appointed to communicate the views of their sector and not just particular organisations to which they have affiliations.*
- Notwithstanding the need to consult within sectors to inform decision-making, members are not to use information gained prior to or at meetings for the unfair advantage of their organisation.*
- Any conflicts of interest are to be declared at the commencement of each meeting and a register of conflict of interest will be maintained.*
- Information provided at meetings is confidential, unless specified as a public document. However certain documents may be circulated, with the approval of the Chair, where a member needs to consult with others in a sector on a particular matter.*
- Members are supportive of the NEWP Framework's intent and will be advocates for it within their sectors.*
- Members will promptly raise any concerns or criticisms with the Chair and/or NEWP SG.*
- Members are required to respond to requests within the agreed timeframes.*