



# QMDC comments on the Toowoomba Regional Council Draft Pest Management Plan 2014 - 2018

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## Submission to:

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These comments are presented by the Chief Executive Officer, Geoff Penton, on behalf of the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee Inc. (QMDC). QMDC is a regional natural resource management (NRM) group that supports communities in the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin (QMDB) to sustainably manage their natural resources.

## 1.0 General comments

QMDC supports the general intent of the Draft Pest Management Plan 2014-2018 (the Draft Plan). QMDC looks forward to an ongoing partnership with the Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC) to help coordinate pest management across the broader landscapes of the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin.

QMDC advocates the following key actions to assist the Draft Plan's delivery and the overall effectiveness of its containment and control efforts:

*Catchment Health Targets* are identified to address the impact of existing widespread pests and weeds throughout the Catchment in accordance with collaborative management principles. QMDC strongly supports the coordination of pest control requires collaboration in baiting across a whole community rather than supporting individual property requests for isolated baiting actions.

*Regional Issue Strategies* are informed by investigation and development of improved pest management practices which requires a commitment by all Councils in the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin region to collaboratively develop and implement coordinated monitoring and control plans for weeds, pest and feral animals, including potential and emerging species, from the property to the regional scale.



QMDC recommends increasing current and future collaboration with neighbouring Councils on a catchment basis.

*Sub Catchment Management Targets and community education and ownership* empowers whole communities to work together to manage their catchment's resources. Sub-catchment planning has been identified in the Regional Natural Resource Management Plan as a key element to achieving sustainable natural resource management. A sub-catchment plan will include all land managers in an area including landholders, local government, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Main Roads. This approach has been developed across the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin over the last few years as an effective means of achieving community-based action to manage our landscape.

A sub-catchment approach to weed management is an effective strategy, especially when the main vector for the target weeds is water, as it advances weed management by working with whole sub-catchments in order to map and coordinate control efforts across all land tenures.

QMDC would like to encourage Council to adopt a sub-catchment approach as an operational method of tackling target weeds.

QMDC suggests that another tool for the Council to consider is the strategic direction that NRM Plans offer local government in their project and field planning. Due consideration of the regional NRM Plan would provide the Council with the opportunity to develop any proposed pest management projects and future planning in a manner that supports the coordinated delivery of natural resource management in Queensland.

## **2.0 Specific comments**

### **2.1 Feral pigs**

Given the high environmental impact that feral pigs can cause and their recent increase in numbers throughout the Toowoomba Regional Council area, QMDC believe it is crucial that feral pigs are listed as a priority species for control.

### **2.2 Strategies for management of weeds**

QMDC recommends that another list of management strategies for weeds that may not have been produced or approved as yet by the State Government could be included to accompany those approved by the State Government as listed at page 9. These could be local strategies produced by other Local Government areas, Landcare Groups, NRM bodies or action groups.

### **2.3 Timeframes for actions**

It would, in QMDC's experience, be useful to include some definitive timeframes around some of the Draft Plan's proposed actions e.g. if stakeholders/partners etc notify Council of a weed or pest issue it would be a good management tool to know what actions have been taken to deal with that particular species or issue raised.

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For further information, contact QMDC on (07) 4637 6200 or visit [www.qmdc.org.au](http://www.qmdc.org.au)

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QMDC recommend including a clause that looks like this or similar to improve delivery:-

*Council to inform stakeholders of actions taken within xx weeks of notification.*

#### 2.4 Key target areas

QMDC recommends including in the Draft Plan directives informing stakeholders/residents etc of key target areas for work in the coming planning year where possible e.g. if the focus is on a particular geographic area that information should be part of providing PMPs for viewing at libraries, council offices and via websites as per the commitment to provide stakeholders information stated on page 17.

Sub-catchments could be target areas, for example, wherever Council can achieve a high level of landholder participation in coordinated control, that sub-catchment becomes a priority area.

#### 2.5 Collaborative arrangements

QMDC recommend clearly identifying some of the expected collaborative arrangements or collaborative approaches that will directly benefit landholders in the TRC area e.g. TRC staff involvement in Regional Body planning meetings with Landholder groups, TRC commitment to assist landholder groups to achieve coordinated control of weed and pest species etc

#### 2.6 Compliance measures & incentives

Where compliance measures/incentives are listed on page 31 there is only mention of this being DAFF and TRCs responsibility. QMDC is interested in exploring with TRC whether this is an area that assistance from NRM groups, Landcare Groups and Regional Bodies can assist in the facilitation of this. QMDC would be willing to look at such arrangements with TRC.