

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Rapid response needed for new parthenium outbreaks

Natural resource management group, the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee (QMDC), has warned that recent heavy rains have brought with them a serious risk of new weed outbreaks, especially from the noxious parthenium weed that is already across much of central Queensland.

Areas on farms where fodder, dozers, vehicles or stock have been transported from other regions, or already infested areas, should be under regular surveillance for new weed outbreaks.

For this reason, QMDC is leading up a program to provide assistance to landholders to rapidly respond to new outbreaks of parthenium weed across the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin region. Local Governments across the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin region have partnered with QMDC and the Department of Primary Industries (DPI&F) Biosecurity Queensland to deliver the Rapid Response Program.

Ivan Gillies, Rural Lands Officer with the Roma Regional Council, said, "Parthenium weed seeds spread very easily by machinery, stock, grain and fodder."

"Landholders should be regularly monitoring their property for new outbreaks, especially in the six week window after rains," he said.

Parthenium seeds are known to be persistent, they have high germination rates and are capable of setting seed within 28 days, under optimal conditions. Each plant can produce up to 15,000 seeds, with seed banks typically ranging up to 40,000 per square metre. Parthenium also affects the viability of primary production, both livestock and grain, and all parts of the plant at any stage of growth can cause allergies to humans and animals.

Graham Hardwick, Principal Lands Protection Officer with Biosecurity Queensland, said, "Because this weed is so invasive and damaging, we are encouraging landholders to be on the look out for new parthenium outbreaks and to report them immediately to their local council."

"Parthenium is relatively contained to the north western parts of the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin, so we are investing a lot of effort and resources to keep the rest of the region parthenium free," he said.

Lavinnia Fiedler is a Weeds Technical Officer with QMDC, and said that QMDC would be providing a financial incentive to landholders who work with their local council, or Biosecurity Queensland, to quickly manage parthenium outbreaks.

"If you suspect you have a parthenium weed outbreak, contact your local council's Rural Lands Officer, QMDC or Biosecurity Queensland staff immediately," she said.

“They will inspect the site and work with you to develop a rapid response strategy to eradicate the outbreak. And QMDC will cover 30% of the costs of those agreed management actions.”

“The ideal response time from identification is one week, with follow up monitoring and control within six weeks then ongoing,” said Lavinnia.

For further information, or to report a parthenium outbreak, contact QMDC on 07 4622 8446, Biosecurity Queensland on 07 4622 9905, or your local council office.

**ENDS**

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