

Strategic Management of Bellyache Bush in the Rangelands

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Bellyache bush (*Jatropha gossypifolia*) is an aggressive, invasive shrub that was introduced to Australia for medicinal and ornamental purposes over 130 years ago. Since that time it has become increasingly weedy with a demonstrated ability to invade relatively intact ecosystems. Bellyache bush can have significant economic, environmental and social impacts due to its invasive nature and the toxicity of all parts of the plant.

Bellyache Bush in the Rangelands

Bellyache bush is now widespread across the northern rangelands of Australia in Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia, particularly along watercourses and associated floodplains in the savanna country.



Bellyache bush seedlings



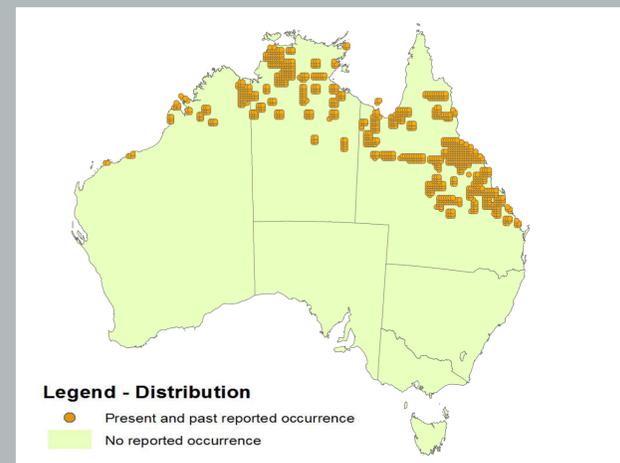
Branches



Juvenile plant



Fruit



Legend - Distribution
 ● Present and past reported occurrence
 ■ No reported occurrence

National Coordination

Bellyache bush was declared a Weed of National Significance (WoNS) in April 2012. A national bellyache bush program has commenced and is supported through the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country program.

The initial focus has been developing a strategic approach to establishing agreed, achievable, national management objectives and actions to prevent further bellyache bush spread.

A National Bellyache Bush Strategic Plan has been developed with extensive consultation with landholders, landcare groups, industry, local government and regional and state organisations that included:

- opportunistic presentations and input from regional meetings and events;
- discussion with research organisations and individuals;
- a two day national workshop;
- public comment period from 18 June to 16 July 2012 on the Draft Plan; and
- consideration of the final Plan by the newly established National Bellyache Bush Management Group.

The National Bellyache Bush Strategic Plan will guide the strategic management of this weed over the next five years. The Plan has been submitted to the Australian Weeds Committee for endorsement.



Consultation event - National Workshop



Dense monoculture along watercourse



Aerial photo of dense riparian infestation



Best Practice Management Manual



Mapping the Roper

Key Strategic Issues

Consultation resulted in identification of the following key issues and associated national actions for the management of bellyache bush:

| Key Issues | National Strategic Actions |
|--|--|
| Delimitation of the current extent and distribution | Establish a national mapping data set Collect existing distribution data Encourage mapping of priority unmapped catchments Encourage reporting of populations Produce a national management action map for bellyache bush Update potential distribution models |
| Lack of a strategic, coordinated approach to identifying management objectives | Develop a catchment based zone management system Promote awareness of the system Seek funding to implement management objectives identified for catchments Monitor and review implementation |
| Need for increased education, awareness and extension | Develop a national extension and communication plan Promote use of best practice management products Build community capability through training and demonstration Promote achievements |
| Further development of integrated weed management (IWM) methods including biocontrol | Further develop and promote IWM Promote use of most effective suite of control options for each situation Improve uptake of hygiene practices Encourage innovative investigation of high priority research gaps Complete current biocontrol research program |
| Availability of resources to implement strategic actions | Support a national bellyache bush management group Support appropriate management by all stakeholders Support planning and appropriate management at national, state/territory, regional, local and property levels Support applications for incentive and funding programs |

Implementation of the National Strategic Plan and the WoNS bellyache bush program is being overseen by the National Bellyache Bush Management Group and the National Bellyache Bush Coordinator.



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