

## ***Egeria* (*Egeria densa* Planch.) presents an increasing threat to Australian waterways**

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**Summary** *Egeria* (*Egeria densa* Planch.), a species native to South-East Brazil and Argentina, is now widely distributed in many countries across the world. Aquarium trade is the recognised pathway of introduction to other countries. *Egeria* is a globally important invasive species because of its capacity to establish, spread and displace native aquatic plants in waterways. Following introduction in the 1950s, *Egeria* is now considered as naturalised in Australia and is tolerated, as an environmental aquatic weed that can occasionally cause problems. In recent years, we have observed a significant increase in its distribution and abundance in major rivers (Hawkesbury-Nepean; Georges Rivers), and a large number of urban creeks, lakes, ponds and other minor waterways across the Sydney basin. *Egeria* is also present in other parts of NSW and in Queensland, particularly, around urban centres (Brisbane, etc.). Nutrient enrichment and

variable flows are common in some infested waterways, which are likely contributory factors of increasing abundance.

Our view is that proactive management of new infestations of *Egeria* may reduce its rate of spread. Mechanical control efforts are usually ineffective under good growing conditions, unless water drawdown is achievable (as in small ponds and lakes). Diquat-Hydrogel<sup>®</sup> controls *Egeria* effectively as the species is quite sensitive to the herbicide. Given that turbidity in water often makes Diquat ineffective, mixing with Hydrogel, as a carrier, allows the herbicide to sink onto plant leaves with much reduced dissipation in the vertical water column. We present the results of several case studies demonstrating cost-effective control using Diquat-Hydrogel.

**Keywords** *Egeria*, *Egeria densa*, aquatic weeds.