

## First incursion, weed policy implementation and eradication of *Boerhavia erecta* (Nyctaginaceae) in northern Australia

John O. Westaway<sup>1</sup>, Bert Lukitsch<sup>2</sup> and Roni Opden<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, PO Box 37846, Winnellie, Northern Territory 0821, Australia

<sup>2</sup>Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Government, PO Box 496, Palmerston, Northern Territory 0831.  
(john.westaway@agriculture.gov.au)

**Summary** The herbaceous weed, erect tar vine, *Boerhavia erecta* was reported to Government weed management authorities in Darwin in 2017, the first record for Australia. This American species is a widespread and sometimes serious weed in Australia's neighbouring tropical countries, particularly in annual crops. As such *B. erecta* had been included on the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS) target weed list as a species that is likely to arrive in Australia and potentially impact domestic agriculture and the environment. The species' presence on a Darwin rural property was verified using morphological and molecular identification. Commonwealth and State jurisdictions were notified of the detection.

Weeds Management Branch of the NT Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) declared the species and arranged to collaborate with NAQS to assess population(s), and manage

this new incursion. DERN prepared an Incident Action Plan aimed at preventing the growth and spread of *B. erecta* which comprised a communications strategy and operational response plan. Communications included a weed alert pamphlet and letters to residential, farmer and nursery stakeholders. Operational response included traceback, surveillance of properties and repeated chemical treatment of the infestation with consent of affected landholder.

*B. erecta* appears to be confined to a single rural property near Darwin and prospects of eradication of this fast growing weed are promising due to the early response and collaborative effort between government departments and affected landholder. This case has also provided an opportunity for DENR to refine its weed rapid response policy.

**Keywords** *Boerhavia*, weed, policy, eradication.