

African boxthorn stakeholder survey: Impacts and management goals for biocontrol

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Summary African boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*) is a widespread and significant environmental and agricultural weed in regional Australia. An online survey was used to engage key stakeholders affected by African boxthorn, and ask them about the impacts and desired management goals for this weed. More than 200 people participated in the survey, with approximately 80% of respondents actively involved in natural resources management. A range of reasons were provided by respondents as to why this weed was problematic, with 75% of them identifying preventing stock access to water as the main economic impact and 95% reporting that it was displacing native vegetation. Close to 80% of respondents indicated that biological

control solutions would be useful in managing this weed. In terms of management outcomes, respondents ranked reduction in new infestations, reduction in management costs and reduction in negative impacts on native flora and fauna to be the top three management objectives to which biological control needs to make a significant contribution. The management objectives gleaned from this survey will guide the selection of candidate biological control agents, and the subsequent evaluation of their performance if they are deemed safe for release into the Australian environment.

Keywords Biological control, stakeholder engagement.