

Implementation of a rapid response biosecurity program to eradicate a novel invasive species (*Bocconia frutescens*) in NSW

Terry Inkson¹, Matt Ansley¹, Alysha Wynan¹

¹MidCoast Council, TAREE, Australia

(Terry.Inkson@MidCoast.nsw.gov.au)

Summary As illustrated by the generalised invasion curve, a conceptual framework widely adopted within the biosecurity community, early detection and rapid response programs are necessary for the timely and cost-effective eradication of new invasive species. In January 2021 a specimen of the potentially invasive Plume Poppy (*Bocconia frutescens*) was detected near Taree on the mid-north coast of New South Wales. The incursion appears to be the result of seed bank dispersed from a horticultural plant that has germinated after a significant bushfire disturbance in 2019. It has been detected in rural residential land, as well as adjacent high-value conservation assets including National Park and Council bushland reserve. Plume Poppy has been recorded as being a highly invasive weed of disturbed areas in tropical and subtropical regions throughout the world, notably in Hawaii. This paper describes the response of the local control authority (MidCoast Council) in carrying out an identification, eradication and education program in the area where the incursion was detected, in

accordance with the Hunter Regional Weeds Committees' 'New Weed Incursion and Rapid Response Plan (2017-2022)'. A cross-tenure collaborative management approach is described, involving cooperation with stakeholders including NPWS and volunteer groups working on Council land. The implementation of a rapid response process is recorded in the context of managing the Plume Poppy incursion, and the efficacy of the initial control is documented through ongoing monitoring of the distribution of the target species. This case study illustrates the importance of community engagement in enhancing the early detection capabilities of biosecurity agencies, as well as the importance of community cooperation in the ongoing detection and control of an invasive species during an eradication program.

Keywords Post-fire weed management, Biosecurity Rapid Response, Invasive Species Management, Novel Infestation, *Bocconia frutescens*, Plume Poppy, Priority Weed, midcoast Council, Hunter Regional Weeds