

Consultation on draft mining regulations

Draft information
sheet on biosecurity
for exploration and
mining operations in
South Australia



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of South Australia**

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Draft

Information sheet

Biosecurity for exploration and mining operations in South Australia

What is biosecurity?

Biosecurity is a series of measures to protect against the entry and spread of weeds, pests and disease. Biosecurity measures help keep our primary industries productive and our food and beverages safe and clean. They protect our natural environments and sustain the health and wellbeing of our communities.



Example of a biosecurity sign used at the entrance of a farm

Invasive species, whether plant, insect, animal or microbiological, have the potential to:

- compete with and kill crops, pasture, livestock and native flora and fauna
- degrade our production resource
- contaminate crops and seeds

- carry and spread diseases
- reduce the value of the state's natural environment
- impact the structure and function of ecosystems and native biodiversity.

Exploration and mining activities may pose biosecurity risks through the transport of contaminated material, soil or water – for example when vehicles, equipment and/or footwear travel between properties or from areas known to host weeds, pests and/or pathogens.

Every year, weeds cost the Australian economy about \$4 billion and pest animals \$720 million in control measures and lost agricultural production. Some weeds also increase the intensity and heat of bushfires.

South Australia's Biosecurity Policy 2020-2023 requires all landowners and people authorised to access land must:

- at all times avoid exposure to pests, pathogens and weeds or do their best to minimise the risk of being exposed to them
- conduct inspections of equipment, vehicles and footwear if there is a

significant risk of exposing the land to biosecurity threats

- consult, as far as reasonably possible, with landholders who work in areas at risk of exposure
- notify the relevant department and landholder and introduce controls to eliminate or minimise the risk.

Regulating biosecurity in SA

Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA) manages South Australia's biosecurity risks. Regional Natural Resource Management boards, through the Department for Environment and Water (DEW), and Invasive Species Unit within PIRSA oversee programs to destroy or contain weeds and pest animals and to prevent new pests coming into South Australia. Due to their pest risk, certain animals and plants may be declared under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004* to regulate their movement, sale, notification and control.

Every landowner in South Australia has legal responsibilities to manage declared plants under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004*. Declared plants are significant weed threats to our State's primary production industries, natural environments and public safety. Some parts of South Australia have defined pest management programs and risks.

PIRSA develops and implements a number of pest and weed strategic plan and control measures for specific risks to provide guidance and present a coordinated State wide approach.

For example, the new *South Australian Buffel Grass Strategic Plan for 2019–24* presents a coordinated state-wide approach to

buffel grass management. Buffel grass is an introduced, summer-growing, perennial pasture grass, with enforced control of Buffel grass in the Northern and Yorke, Alinytjara Wilurara and SA Arid Lands Landscape regions, and enforced destruction in the remainder of the state.



An example of Buffel grass

PIRSA works closely with DEW, the South Australian Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and the Department for Energy and Mining (DEM). When authorising access to land in South Australia under relevant legislation, these agencies require adequate control strategies to be in place to minimise the risk of exposing native vegetation and agricultural land, to pests and weeds.

Biosecurity leading practice

The Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment has prepared guidelines, [Arrive Clean](#), [Leave Clean](#), to help prevent the spread of invasive plant diseases

and weeds. The guidelines provide invaluable information and resources on:

- common pathogens and weeds and how they are spread
- undertaking risk assessment and hygiene management as part of project planning before entering the site (including a checklist for risk assessment, hygiene management plan and preparing a biosecurity hygiene kit)
- how to reduce the risk of spread
- revegetation, weed management and propagation.

Exploration and Mining Regulation Requirements

DEM is the lead regulatory agency for exploration and mining in South Australia. The *Mining Act 1971* provides the legislative framework for the management of exploration and mining operations. Before these operations are conducted, operators must submit a program for environment protection and rehabilitation (PEPR) to be approved by DEM. PEPRs need to detail the planned operations as well as identify credible risks and potential impacts to the environment – including biosecurity management – and how the operator intends to reduce or avoid negative impacts.

Explorers and miners must comply with the regulator approved PEPR, as well as licence and lease conditions. For information on the content of PEPRs refer to [DEM's website](#).

Biosecurity

Exploration and mining companies are expected to consider land biosecurity requirements as part of their overall

program management and engage openly and collaboratively with landowners and communities. As part of good practice, explorers and miners should discuss biosecurity with affected landowners prior to land access, in order to identify risks, controls and mitigation requirements.

The PEPR must identify and address all credible risks and potential impacts to the environment and existing land uses. This includes identifying potential biosecurity risks and implementing related control and mitigation strategies. Companies must outline in their PEPR the control strategies to prevent the introduction of weeds, pests and pathogens to a site and, where a weed, pest or pathogen already exists at a site, reduce its abundance and/or prevent its spread.

The presence of notifiable weeds under the *Landscape SA Act* in exploration or mining areas should be reported immediately to the relevant Landscape Board office or Biosecurity SA in PIRSA. Contact details for the relevant regional office can be found at: <https://landscape.sa.gov.au/>

Further information on biosecurity hazards and guidelines for the management of operations can be found at:

- [Biosecurity SA \(PIRSA\)](#)
- [DEW](#)

Compliance

DEM is responsible for compliance monitoring and assessment of approved exploration and mining work programs and operating sites across South Australia. Site inspections are undertaken to assess exploration and mining program compliance with the approved PEPR, including biosecurity management practices, and related licence and lease conditions, as applicable.

Where an operation presents a high risk of impact to the environment or community, DEM may require the explorer or miner to implement particular monitoring and remediation strategies to demonstrate compliance with the approved program.

DEM has a range of compliance and enforcement tools to ensure operators rectify any biosecurity related issues where weeds, pests or pathogens:

- have been introduced to a site by the operator
- have increased in abundance at a site arising from exploration or mining related activities, or
- are observed to be having an impact, either through direct observation, monitoring results or a community or landholder complaint.

For more information, refer to DEM's [Mining Act Compliance and Enforcement in South Australia](#).

Industry responsibilities and duties

Exploration and mining PEPRs and mining operation plans align with South Australia's Biosecurity Policy.

A new Biosecurity Act is being prepared by PIRSA and will create a unified state-wide approach to biosecurity management. Further information can be found on [PIRSA's website](#).

References and further reading

- The Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment webpage on [pests, diseases and weeds](#)
- [Arrive Clean, Leave Clean](#) from the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
- [South Australia's Biosecurity Policy 2020-2023](#)
- [Weed Control Handbook for Declared Plants in South Australia](#), July 2018
- [List of declared plants and animals](#) – PIRSA, March 2019
- [Buffel grass information page](#) and [State Buffel Grass Strategic Plan 2019-2024](#) – PIRSA
- [Management of Phytophthora cinnamomi for Biodiversity Conservation in Australia](#) from the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
- [Management Plan for Silverleaf Nightshade](#) – Rural Solutions SA, 2010

Legislation

- *Environment Protection Act 1993*
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)*
- *Mining Act 1971*
- *Native Vegetation Act 1991*
- *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*

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