



Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

Senator the Hon Murray Watt
Minister for the Environment and Water
Australian Parliament
E: minister.watt@dcceew.org.au

14 May 2026

Dear Minister Watt,

National Threat Abatement Plan on Escaped Garden Plants

I am writing to you on behalf of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society (The Society). The Society is comprised of over 900 members and seeks to protect, conserve and advocate for the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

I am writing to support immediate development of the Australian government's proposed National Threat Abatement Plan on Escaped Garden Plants. The Society requests urgent action that comprehensively regulates all (including inter and intrastate retail, wholesale and online) sale and exchange of environmental weeds in Australia, and the unauthorised importation of exotic plant species into this country.

Loss and degradation of native plant and animal habitat by invasion of escaped garden plants including aquatic plants was listed as a key threatening process on 8 January 2010 under the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. However, an appropriate Threat Abatement Plan has never been developed.

In the Environment Ministers Meeting Communique of 21 June, 2024, all state environment ministers and former Australian Government Minister for Environment and Water, Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP agreed to progress a national threat abatement plan to combat the impact on native species of a priority invasive, namely escaped garden plants. At a meeting of councillors on 27 August, 2024, Blue Mountains City Council formally resolved to support the commitment of state and federal governments to prepare a national threat abatement plan for escaped garden plants. Former Minister for the Environment and Water, Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP, formally approved development of a National Threat Abatement Plan on Escaped Garden Plants on 21 October, 2024.

Minister Plibersek stated in her *Reasons for decision to have a threat abatement plan* that “the state and trend of our environment is poor and deteriorating. This is a result of increased pressures, including from invasive species. Around 27,500 exotic plant species have been introduced to Australia, mostly for ornamental purposes, with approximately 70 percent of environmental weeds originating from our gardens. Weeds are the most frequently occurring threat to vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered native species in Australia” (<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/statement-reasons-decision-tap-egp-oct-2024.pdf>).

The Society wrote to Minister Plibersek in 2024 and to yourself in 2025 requesting development of a National Threat Abatement Plan on Escaped Garden Plants. The Society is deeply concerned that a National Threat Abatement Plan on Escaped Garden Plants has still not been developed.

The Society is strongly focused on preventing the spread of escaped garden plants and environmental weeds in the Blue Mountains. Environmental weeds choke natural ecosystems and streams, displace indigenous plants and destroy the habitat of indigenous animals. Weeds pose a serious threat to the Outstanding Universal Value of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWhA). At considerable expense, Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service staff, as well as many hundreds of bushcare volunteers work hard to control the spread of weeds in the Blue Mountains. Our members and many local residents are alarmed that dense thickets of Ivy, Japanese Honeysuckle, English Holly, Privet, Tutsan and other plant pests continue to constitute an ongoing threat to listed threatened species, locally indigenous plant communities, natural swamps, scenic areas and bush walks. Visitors to the Blue Mountains wish to view pristine bushland and our beautiful streams and waterfalls, and not expanses of Blackberry and Lantana.

The current system of plant sale self-regulation is completely ineffectual. The inter and intrastate exchange and sale of garden plants known to be environmental weeds, and those with the potential to become environmental weeds occurs on a daily basis in Australia and circumvents local and state government efforts to effectively manage environmental weeds. This practice must be regulated to protect the biodiversity of the GBMWhA and Australia’s other natural ecosystems. Legislation and accompanying regulations that stop the inter and intrastate exchange and sale of environmental weeds in Australia must be developed.

The Society requests the development of a comprehensive threat abatement plan that effectively regulates and prevents translocation, propagation, and exchange and sale of potential and known environmental weeds and garden escapees and propagules (Australian and overseas species) by wholesale and retail plant distributors and outlets, nurseries, landscapers and allied industries, plant collectors, aquatic species dealers, market operators, online distributors and any other dealers in plant or associated matter including importers and inter and intrastate dealers.

The Society urges you to develop and implement the National Threat Abatement Plan on Escaped Garden Plants as a matter of urgency. The plan must include provisions that effectively regulate all avenues available for the sale or exchange in Australia of invasive garden plants (environmental weeds).

The Society wishes to be advised of the anticipated timeframe for the establishment of the threat abatement plan, and the consultation process.

The Society looks forward to presenting a submission on the proposed threat abatement plan during the consultation process. Thank you for considering the Society's proposals and position on this issue. I may be contacted on my email address:

president@bluemountains.org.au

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Annette Sartor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Dr Annette Sartor
President
Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Copy: Hon. Susan Templeman MP Susan.Templeman.MP@aph.gov.au