

Enhanced online resource gives land managers "heads up" for invasive plants of Australia's future

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Weed invasion in Sydney's urban bushland. Credit: Michelle Leishman

A web resource that screens potential plant invaders under future climates and provides the information to land managers has been expanded to screen nearly 600 exotic plant species.

The [website](#), developed by researchers from Macquarie University and the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage, provides essential resources for land managers involved in conservation and agriculture.

"Invasive plants are a serious threat to Australia's [land managers](#), with millions of dollars spent on their control. However, until now we didn't have much of an idea how climate change may affect these exotic species," said Professor Michelle Leishman, Macquarie University.

"This website provides a window into the future by showing how weed species of today may be affected by climate change, and what climate change may do to create weed species of the future.

"The resources of the website essentially provide a 'heads up' for weed managers for any region of interest in Australia."

The website now includes the worst of the weeds, including the Weeds of National Significance, noxious weeds, and other weeds recognised as significant problems. It then highlights which of these invasive species are likely to have an increase in regional and local areas, including individual Local Government Areas, national parks and conservation reserves.

In Australia, there are more than 30,000 exotic plant species introduced since European settlement. A small number of these have become widespread problem weeds, including well-known species such as bitou bush, blackberry and lantana. Also among these are a huge pool of exotic plants known as 'sleeper weeds' – these are exotic plant species waiting for the right combination of factors to work together to support a successful invasion.

More information: Weed Futures website: weedfutures.net

Provided by Macquarie University

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