



NSW NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE SERVICE

Pesticide Use Notification Plan



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1. Introduction

The Pesticides Regulation 2017 (the Regulation) requires the development of a plan to notify the public about pesticides application in outdoor public places. This Pesticide Use Notification Plan (PUNP) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Regulation.

The aim of this PUNP is to satisfy the community's right to know about pesticide applications made to outdoor public places that are controlled or owned by the Deputy Secretary of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) or the Minister administering the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act). NPWS (part of the NSW Department of Planning and Environment) assists the Deputy Secretary and the Minister in carrying out their functions with respect to the lands managed under the NPW Act, such as national parks, nature reserves, historic sites, Aboriginal areas, state conservation areas and regional parks. In addition to this, there are a number of lands joint managed by NPWS and local Aboriginal communities. Throughout this PUNP, references to 'NPWS' should be taken to mean NPWS carrying out functions on behalf of the Deputy Secretary and the Minister.

The PUNP allows members of the community to take action to avoid contact with pesticides, if they wish. It describes how NPWS will notify the community of certain pesticide applications it makes in public places. The PUNP describes:

- which public places are covered
- who regularly uses these public places and an estimate of the level of this use
- how and when NPWS will provide information to the community about its pesticide applications in public places (i.e. what notification arrangements will be used)
- how the community can access this PUNP and get more information about NPWS's notification arrangements
- contact details for anyone wanting more information on the PUNP
- special protection measures that will be taken if the pesticide is proposed to be used adjacent to a sensitive place
- the information that will be provided in the notifications.

NPWS manages an extensive system of more than 870 parks and reserves that protect approximately 7.1 million hectares. Under the NPW Act, NPWS has a statutory responsibility to manage these areas to conserve nature and places of cultural value. Hence, weed and pest control programs are a management priority for NPWS, and pesticides are an essential component of many of these programs.

NPWS uses pesticides when necessary to control weeds, pest animals and diseases, to protect public property and neighbouring lands from pest damage, and to ensure the ongoing use of public places by the community.

NPWS pest and weed management programs aim to use best practice techniques; that is, methods that are target-specific, humane and cost-effective. This often requires an integration of a range of control methods. Biological control is used where effective agents are available; however, pesticides remain the main method of control for many pest species. For example, while considerable effort has been devoted to research aimed at developing fertility control for foxes, poisoning with pesticides such as 1080 and other registered or approved products remains the only effective method for broad-area control.

Similarly, many biological control agents have been released to assist in weed control, however herbicides remain an essential component of most weed control programs undertaken by or on behalf of NPWS. Herbicide application techniques used include bush regeneration techniques such as cutting-and-painting or stem injection of woody weeds, foliar spot-spraying, and aerial spraying.

2. Public places covered by this plan

The following list identifies outdoor public places owned, controlled or managed by NPWS, that have public access and to which pesticides may be applied by or on behalf of NPWS:

- national parks
- nature reserves
- karst conservation reserves
- state conservation areas
- community conservation areas
- regional parks
- NPWS managed Crown reserves
- Aboriginal areas
- joint managed lands between NPWS and local Aboriginal communities
- historic sites
- other areas of land connected with the management, maintenance or improvement of reserved lands; for example, access roads and depots.

Information about these places can be obtained from the NPWS website (see section 12).

Most pesticide use by NPWS consists of applying herbicides for weed control and the use of registered chemical products to control pest animals. Minor uses of other pesticides include but are not limited to applying insecticides to control certain insect pests, termiticides to protect buildings, fungicides to control pathogens, and rodenticides to control rodents.

The public places, main user groups and the frequency of use, along with the types of pesticides used are summarised in the following table.

Table 1 Regular user groups, level of use of public places, and types of pesticides used in public places controlled or owned by NPWS

Public places	Regular user groups	Level of use of public place	Types of pesticides used
Viewing and day use areas e.g. picnic areas, lookouts, beaches	Day visitors, recreational users, employees and contractors	Highly variable and seasonal, i.e. low to very high use*	Herbicides, insecticides including plant injection or spray and bait termiticides, fungicides and vertebrate baits including rodenticides
Roads, trails and other vehicular tracks including verges	Recreational users, neighbours, motorists, employees and contractors	Variable – low in remote areas but often high near urban areas	Herbicides, insecticides and vertebrate baits including rodenticides
Walking tracks and pathways	Recreational users, day visitors, campers, employees and contractors	Variable – low in remote areas but often high near urban areas	Herbicides, insecticides and vertebrate baits including rodenticides

Public places	Regular user groups	Level of use of public place	Types of pesticides used
Camping grounds and caravan parks	Individuals or groups staying for varying periods (days to weeks), employees and contractors	Variable and seasonal, i.e. low to very high use*	Herbicides, insecticides such as spray and bait termiticides, fungicides and vertebrate baits including rodenticides
Cultural heritage areas e.g. North Head Quarantine Station, Mt Grenfell Historic Site	The general public including recreational users, Aboriginal community members, scientists and educational groups, employees and contractors, volunteer groups	The use of these sites is highly variable and seasonal, i.e. low to very high use*	Herbicides, insecticides such as spray and bait termiticides, fungicides and vertebrate baits including rodenticides
Playgrounds	Day visitors including children and families, employees and contractors	Highly variable and seasonal, i.e. low to very high use*	Some spot-spraying of herbicides and insecticides. Pesticide use in playgrounds is done when they are not in use
Sporting fields and ovals	Day users such as schools and sporting groups, employees and contractors	Seasonal – may be medium to high during relevant sporting season	Herbicides, insecticides such as spray and bait termiticides, fungicides and vertebrate baits
Electricity, telecommunications and pipeline easements	The general public including recreational users, employees and contractors	Low to medium use	Broad-scale and spot use of herbicides, insecticides and vertebrate baits
Other areas	The general public including recreational users, Aboriginal community members, scientists, volunteer groups and educational groups, employees and contractors	Use is highly variable and seasonal, i.e. low to very high use*	Broad-scale and spot use of herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and vertebrate baits including rodenticides

*Use of these public places peaks during weekends and holiday periods, when high to very high use occurs in places close to urban areas, while less frequent use occurs in more remote areas.

3. Notification arrangements

This section of the PUNP describes how and when NPWS (either through its staff or through its contractors) will provide notice of pesticide use in public places, including special measures for sensitive places, arrangements for emergency pesticide applications and circumstances where notice will not be given (including where the public place has been leased by NPWS to another party).

These notification requirements are based on NPWS's consideration of the following:

- some public places have high visitor use (e.g. picnic areas and campgrounds in areas visited frequently, or popular reserves close to urban areas); other public places are rarely visited by the public (e.g. nature reserves in remote areas)
- some park users may be more sensitive to pesticides than others
- some park users may be more likely than others to encounter pesticides (e.g. campers as opposed to passing motorists)
- for some application techniques, the public is unlikely to come into direct contact with pesticides (e.g. bush regeneration programs using the cut-and-paint or stem injection techniques)
- pesticides used have varying toxicities and exposure pathways.

3.1 How and when notice of pesticide use will be provided

Because of the large number of reserves managed by NPWS, the range of potential pest species and the range of pesticides available for their control, it is not possible for all detailed uses of pesticides to be specified in this PUNP. Each NPWS Branch will maintain Branch PUNP Guidelines to detail how this PUNP will be implemented, including a register of intended pesticide use. Therefore, it is important that park users who wish to avoid places where pesticides have been used recently contact the local NPWS office responsible for that reserve or area of land, and ask the staff for details (a list of offices is available on the NPWS website).

Pesticide use is subject to suitable weather conditions but wherever possible information on planned pesticide use will be available at least 3 days prior from the local NPWS office. Information available through local NPWS offices will also include:

- current information for pesticides that must be applied at short notice
- the area(s) where pesticides will be used
- the pesticide product(s) to be used
- where signs will be displayed with the details of the operation.

Notice of pesticide use will be provided in one or more of the following ways:

- erection or placement of signs¹
- postage of letters and letterbox drops
- through the media
- national parks alerts list (see section 12)
- by telephone, fax, email or personal contact for neighbouring landholders.

In most cases, the notification procedures will depend on the specific management technique as follows, except where no notification will be provided (see section 8).

For **vertebrate pesticides** covered by a Pesticide Control Order (PCO), notification will be provided as required in the relevant PCO, unless the PCO does not specify all of the information required by the Regulation. If the latter occurs, signs and/or notices will also provide the information as required by the Regulation.

¹ Signs installed by NPWS are often removed or vandalised. While NPWS will make every effort to replace such signs it cannot guarantee this will occur in all situations.

Notification for **aerial spraying** of weeds will comply with the procedures outlined in Appendix A (except for those situations described in section 8).

For **ground spot-spraying** of herbicides in frequently used public places, signs will be placed at the major entrances to the pesticide treatment area (except for those situations described in section 8). Additional information will also be available at the local NPWS office and via the contact number on the sign. Signs will be put up immediately prior to pesticide use and will remain in place at least until the pesticide has dried (or until such a time as directed on the pesticide label, permit or PCO).

For **ground spot-spraying** of herbicides in public places used infrequently, signs will be restricted to the operating vehicle only (except for those situations described in section 8). Additional information will also be available at the local NPWS office and via the contact number on the sign.

When using **insecticides, rodenticides, fungicides or termiticides**, signs will be placed at the major entrances to the pesticide treatment area (except for those situations described in section 8). Additional information will also be available at the local NPWS office and via the contact number on the sign. Signs will be put up immediately prior to pesticide use and will remain in place at least until the operation is completed (or until such a time as directed on the pesticide label, permit or PCO). When foliage is sprayed, signs will remain at least until the pesticide has dried.

4. Signage requirements for specific places

For each of the following places, signs will be placed at the locations detailed, with additional information available from the local NPWS office and via the contact number provided on the sign. For each of the following places, unless stated otherwise, signs will be put up immediately prior to pesticide use and will remain in place at least until the operation is completed (or until such a time as directed on the label, permit or PCO). In all situations listed below where foliage is sprayed, signs will remain at least until the pesticide has dried.

4.1 Viewing and day use areas

At viewing and day use areas, signs will be placed at the major entrances to the area to be treated (except for those situations described in section 8).

4.2 Roads and trails including verges

Along roads and trails, signs will be placed before and after the area to be treated (except for those situations described in section 8).

In remote areas where it is unlikely the public will encounter pesticides (e.g. in remote areas of nature reserves that are used infrequently), signs will be restricted to the operating vehicle only.

4.3 Walking tracks and pathways

Along walking tracks and pathways, signs will be placed before and after the area to be treated (except for those situations described in section 8).

4.4 Camping grounds

At camping grounds, signs will be placed at the major entrances to the area to be treated (except for those situations described in section 8).

4.5 Cultural heritage areas

At cultural heritage areas, signs will be placed at the major entrances to the area to be treated (except for those situations described in section 8).

In some situations, there will be direct liaison with the relevant stakeholders.

4.6 Playgrounds

Playgrounds will be closed prior to the use of any pesticides (except for minor control of insect pests using hand-held aerosols). Signs will be placed at the major entrances to the playground to be treated (except for minor control of insect pests using hand-held aerosols). Signs will be put up immediately prior to closure and will remain in place at least until the playground is re-opened for public use. In addition to the information required under the Regulation (see section 9 of this PUNP), the signs will provide information on the closure of the playground.

4.7 Sporting fields and ovals

At sporting fields and ovals, signs will be located at the major entrances to the area to be treated and at a location where they are most likely to be seen; for example, amenities block, change room (except for those situations described in section 8).

4.8 Electricity, telecommunications and pipeline easements

When NPWS is applying pesticides over electricity, telecommunications and pipeline easements, signs will be located at the major entrances to the area to be treated (except for those situations described in section 8).

Where a body other than NPWS is responsible for management of an easement that requires the application of a pesticide, that body will be responsible for notifying the public of its use of pesticides and NPWS will not provide notification in relation to this land. NPWS will request that body to comply with this PUNP.

5. Special measures for sensitive places

The Regulation defines a sensitive place to be any:

- school or pre-school
- kindergarten
- childcare centre
- hospital
- community health centre
- nursing home
- other category of place declared to be a sensitive public place by the Environment Protection Authority by notice in the NSW Government Gazette.

For pesticide use within 150 m of these sensitive places, NPWS will provide prior or concurrent notice to that sensitive place by phone, doorknocking or letterbox drop, depending on what is practicable.

6. Notification of emergency pesticide applications

In cases where emergency pesticide applications are required; for example, to deal with biting or dangerous pests such as wasps, bees, venomous spiders, fleas, bird mites or rodents (that pose an immediate health hazard), signs will be placed 'on site' (with the exception of those situations described in section 8). Additional information will also be available at the local NPWS office and via the contact number on the sign. Signs will be put up immediately prior to pesticide use and will remain in place until the operation is completed (or until such a time as directed on the pesticide label, permit or PCO).

Where broad-scale spraying is required at short notice (e.g. locust control) and public notification is not possible, special precautions will be taken to prevent the public encountering pesticides (e.g. closure of camping grounds or walking tracks).

7. Pesticide contractors

To ensure compliance, where NPWS uses contractors to apply pesticides on its behalf, it will require a written commitment that contractors and their employees will comply with the requirements of this PUNP.

8. Public places and pesticide uses where NPWS will not provide any notification

NPWS will not provide notification in any of the following public places:

- public places over which persons or organisations hold an existing lease on NPWS land; for these places, the lessee will be required to carry out notification as per this PUNP
- public places that have been closed temporarily to the public where the closure is unrelated to the pesticide use (except for playgrounds; see section 4.6)
- remote areas where there is little likelihood of pesticides being encountered by the public (e.g. areas where there is no vehicular access and low public visitation).

In addition, NPWS will not provide notification for the following pesticide uses in any of the public places it controls or owns:

- pesticides used in small quantities and readily available to the general public at retail outlets for the control of pests or weeds for which they are registered (i.e. exempt domestic like use, as defined in the Regulation):
 - example 1 – hand-held spray bottle (e.g. for cut stump work) or backpack spraying
 - example 2 – minor control of indoor and outdoor pests using baits or hand-held aerosols; for example, rodent and cockroach control at NPWS depots.

9. What information will be provided

In accordance with clause 41(1)(h) of the Regulation, the following information will be available from site signs/ notices or by contacting the phone number listed on such signs/ notices and from the local NPWS office:

- the full product name of the pesticide as it is listed on the label
- the purpose of the application
- the proposed date, dates or date range of the pesticide application
- the place of pesticide use
- contact telephone number of an officer from the local NPWS office where the pesticide is being applied
- any warnings regarding re-entry to the place of application specified on the product label or the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) permit for use.

All of the information listed above will be made available through the local NPWS office. At a minimum the site signs/ notices will indicate that a pesticide will be/is being applied and provide a phone number for this local NPWS office. Signs/notices may be required to provide additional information as directed by the pesticide label, permit or PCO. In all cases the operator will also be able to provide all of the above information.

10. How the community will be informed of this PUNP

Use the contact options below to obtain copies of the PUNP:

- Phone –
 - 1300 361 967 (within Australia)
 - +61 2 9995 5550 (from overseas),Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm, excluding public holidays
- Email – info@environment.nsw.gov.au
- Mail – Locked Bag 5022, Parramatta NSW 2124

The PUNP is also available online (see section 12).

Anyone wishing to obtain details of specific pesticide applications on lands managed by NPWS should, in the first instance, contact the relevant NPWS area office.

11. Future reviews of the PUNP

Unless there is a specific need for an earlier review, this notification plan will be reviewed after 5 years. Public consultation on any proposed changes will be undertaken in accordance with clauses 42, 43 and 44 of the Regulation.

12. More information

- NPWS (National Parks and Wildlife Service) (2022) *Alerts list for NSW national parks*, NPWS, accessed 22 April 2022.
- DPE (Department of Planning and Environment) (2022) *NPWS office locations*, DPE, accessed 22 April 2022.
- NPWS (National Parks and Wildlife Service) (2022) *NPWS website*, NPWS, accessed 22 April 2022.
- EPA (Environment Protection Agency) (2021) *Pesticide control orders*, EPA, accessed 22 April 2022.
- *Pesticides Regulation 2017 (NSW)*
- DPE (Department of Planning and Environment) (2015) *Pesticide Use Notification Plan*, DPE, accessed 22 April 2022.

Appendix A. Public notification for aerial weed spraying

For aerial spraying of weeds (generally boom or spot-spraying) the procedures below will be followed (except for those situations described in section 8).

Public notice

A public notice must be placed in a newspaper circulating in the local area and/or on the NPWS online alerts list at least 14 days prior to the proposed operation, to notify the public of:

- the area proposed to be sprayed and the reserve/beach/road/track closures
- that these areas will be patrolled and cleared of people prior to spraying
- possible traffic delays
- proposed dates or date range (date range is a maximum 28-day period) and anticipated duration of the spraying operation
- the agency/council undertaking the operation
- the full product name of the herbicide to be used (as per the label/APVMA permit or PCO)
- purpose of the application; for example, to control bitou bush
- any warnings regarding re-entry to the place of application specified on the product label, APVMA permit for use or PCO
- contact number for enquiries.

Onsite signage

Signs will be placed on all roads, trails and tracks that give access to the treatment area advising of the planned spraying operation and the closure of the reserve, subject to section 8 and other restrictions above. Wherever possible, the signs will be put up at least 3 days prior to the spraying operation.

Signs must contain the following information:

- the full product name of the herbicide as listed on the label/ APVMA permit/PCO
- the purpose of the application (e.g. to control bitou bush)
- the place name at which, or description of the area the herbicide is to be applied
- the proposed date/s and times (starting time – finishing time); the exact date will depend on various factors and thus the sign must specify a range of proposed dates
- the contact details for enquiries (name and telephone number)
- any warnings regarding re-entry to the place of application specified on the product label, APVMA permit or PCO.

Additional signage information should include:

- the words 'Warning – No Entry. Park closed to public. Aerial spraying of (*weeds or specific weed name, e.g. bitou bush*) will occur in this area sometime during the period (*range of dates*)'
- who is undertaking the operation (i.e. the agency coordinating the spray program and not the contractor, e.g. NPWS)
- a map of the proposed area to be treated.

Warning signs will be removed from the treated area the day after spraying (where the pesticide label, permit or PCO requires a longer period of signage, this will be followed).

Notification prior to aerial application of pesticides within 150 m of a dwelling, school premises, factory premises or another public place

As specified in Pesticide Control Order (AIR-1), NPWS must notify and obtain written consent from the occupier or person in charge of any dwelling, school premises, factory premises or another public place (excluding roads, travelling stock reserves and State Rail land), prior to aerially applying pesticides within 150 m of that dwelling, school premises, factory premises or another public place.

Such notification will include all information specified in section 9 of this PUNP. NPWS must keep a record of the notification provided and a copy of the written consent from the occupier.