

Mexican Feather Grass - Statutory Weed Management Plan

***Nassella tenuissima* (Trin.) Barkworth**

Interpretation:

In this Weed Management Plan (10/4/2011):

- "Act" means the *Weed Management Act 1999*.
- "Approved quarantine place" means a place approved by the Secretary under section 70 of the *Plant Quarantine Act 1997* for the purpose of examining any prescribed matter imported into or to be exported out of the State.
- "Court fine" means a prescribed penalty for breaches against the Act. Court fines may be imposed if a person is convicted of any offence against the Act.
- "DPIPWE" means the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, Tasmania.
- "Infringement fine" means a prescribed penalty for breaches against the Act. Infringement fines are imposed by way of an infringement notice that may be issued by a Weed Inspector.
- "Inspector" means a Weed Inspector appointed under section 34 of the Act.
- "Penalty unit" means the basic unit of the fine for which persons who fail to comply with any prohibition or requirement under the Act may be liable. See [values of penalty units](#) under the *Penalty Units and Other Penalties Act 1987* for more details.
- "Quarantine Tasmania" means that branch of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment that, in cooperation with the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service, maintains both overseas and interstate quarantine barriers for this State.
- "[Regional Weed Management Officer](#)" means a person employed in the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment under that specific title.
- "Regulations" means the *Weed Management Regulations 2007*.
- "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment.
- "WoNS" means Weeds of National Significance. The WoNS program is a federally funded initiative for the development and implementation of State and national strategies for the management of a group of Australia's worst weeds.
- "Zone A" includes those Tasmanian municipalities for which eradication of a declared weed is the principal management objective. These municipalities are either free of the declared weed, host only small, isolated infestations, or host larger infestations which are deemed eradicable because a strategic management plan exists and the resources required to implement it have been or are likely to be secured. See

[Management of Mexican feather grass by municipality](#) (Section 12) for details.

- “Mexican feather grass” means *Nassella tenuissima* (Trin.) Barkworth (syn. *Stipa cirrosa* E. Fourn., *Stipa oreophila* Speg., *Stipa subulata* E. Fourn., *Stipa tenuissima* Trin., *Stipa tenuissima* var. *oreophila* (Speg.) Speg., *Stipa tenuissima* var. *planicola* Speg.) and includes the whole plant or plant parts. It does not include products such as tablets, lotions, tinctures or other preparations that contain extracts of this plant or other dead, non-reproductive *Nassella tenuissima* materials. People who are uncertain about whether products (e.g. dried materials) contain plant parts capable of producing a living plant should contact a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#).

1. Purpose of this management plan:

The purpose of this Weed Management Plan for Mexican feather grass is to:

- Provide direction upon the implementation of the *Act* with respect to Mexican feather grass.
- Specify measures to prevent the introduction and distribution of Mexican feather grass in Tasmania.

2. Area covered by this management plan:

The State of Tasmania is covered by this management plan.

3. Description and distribution of the weed:

Mexican feather grass is a tussock forming perennial grass growing up to 0.8 m high. The leaf blades are tightly inrolled and with small serrations that can be felt when fingers are moved downward along the blade. Long distance dispersal is via adherence to coats of animals, clothing, machinery, or in stock feed. Primary dispersal in Australia to date has been via nursery trade (e.g. propagation and dispersal of misidentified seed). Seeds can also be spread when soil is moved. Like the closely related Chilean and lobed needle grasses, Mexican feather grass is an extremely invasive weed due to its competitiveness, unpalatability and very sharp and clinging seeds.

Mexican feather grass has been recorded in Tasmania several times as an ornamental or garden plant. Mexican feather grass has also been inadvertently imported to some Australian mainland states for propagation for landscaping purposes.

Mexican feather grass is not naturalised in Tasmania at present.

See the DPIPW [Mexican Feather Grass Information Page](#) for more

information on this weed.

4. Importation of declared weed:

(1) A person must not import or allow to be imported into Tasmania any Mexican feather grass.

It is an offence against section 57(1) of the Act to fail to comply with this prohibition. A person found committing that offence may incur an infringement fine of 4 penalty units. A person convicted in court of that offence may be liable to a fine not exceeding 50 penalty units.

The Secretary may exempt a person from this prohibition under section 60 of the Act.

Actions to assist compliance in this matter could include but are not limited to the following:

- Persons travelling to Tasmania, in particular from areas infested with Mexican feather grass, such as New Zealand and parts of the Americas (Argentina, Chile, Mexico, New Mexico, Texas and California), should conduct thorough searches for the presence of the plant and apply appropriate hygiene measures, such as clothing, vehicle, machinery and baggage inspection and cleaning. Questions or concerns about weed hygiene issues should be directed to Quarantine Tasmania personnel before or directly upon disembarkation in Tasmania.
- Persons importing items to Tasmania that may contain Mexican feather grass should have these checked for the presence of the plant. This can be arranged through Quarantine Tasmania.
- Persons importing ornamental plants or plant seed should ensure their stock does not include Mexican feather grass and/or is not Mexican feather grass misidentified as an alternative species.

(2) Feed grain may be imported according to specifications in the Plant Quarantine Manual (Tasmania), Import Requirement 30: Grain and Grain Products Intended for Animal feed – Import Conditions. This document establishes requirements for importing feed grain in order to minimise the risk of declared weed seed entry and establishment. Import Requirement 30 should be consulted by all existing and prospective feed grain importers.

(3) A person must not import any livestock that may be carrying Mexican feather grass otherwise than in accordance with any

measures prescribed under the Regulations.

It is an offence against section 57(3) of the Act to fail to comply with this prohibition. A person found committing this offence may incur an infringement fine of 4 penalty units. A person convicted of that offence in court may be liable to a fine not exceeding 50 penalty units.

The Secretary may exempt a person from this prohibition under section 60 of the Act.

The prescribed measures for importing stock under regulation 5 of the Regulations are as follows:

- a) the length of hairs in the coat is not to exceed 25 mm;
- b) seeds are not to adhere to the coat or anywhere else on the livestock;
- c) a permit for importation is obtained from the Secretary, DPIPW;E;
- d) importation is direct to an approved facility for slaughter.

Actions to assist compliance in this matter could include but are not limited to the following:

- Persons importing livestock to Tasmania should liaise with suppliers on the subject of possible Mexican feather grass contamination of stock.
- Persons purchasing livestock imported from areas infested with Mexican feather grass should ensure their animals are confined to holding pens until they have undergone thorough external inspections and complete bowel evacuation. Pens should be checked subsequently for the emergence of Mexican feather grass.
- Anyone importing stock to Tasmania should make him/herself familiar with regulation 5 of the Regulations.

5. Procedures for notification of the occurrence of the weed:

Inspectors shall notify a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) of any Mexican feather grass occurrences. The [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) will then check the identity of the plant and if Mexican feather grass is confirmed the Principal Weed Management Officer will initiate a weed incursion response.

6. Sale, purchase, propagation, use, &c., of declared weed:

(1) A person must not:

(a) sell Mexican feather grass or any material or thing

containing or carrying Mexican feather grass; or

(b) purchase or offer to purchase Mexican feather grass or any material or thing containing or carrying Mexican feather grass; or

(c) grow, propagate or scatter Mexican feather grass; or

(d) store Mexican feather grass or any material or thing containing or carrying Mexican feather grass; or

(e) hire or offer for hire any material or thing containing or carrying Mexican feather grass; or

(f) use Mexican feather grass or any material or thing containing or carrying Mexican feather grass; or

(g) deal with Mexican feather grass or any material or thing containing or carrying Mexican feather grass in any manner that is likely to result in the spread of the declared weed.

It is an offence against section 56(1) of the Act to fail to comply with this prohibition. A person found committing that offence may incur an infringement fine of 4 penalty units. A person convicted of that offence in court may be liable to a fine not exceeding 50 penalty units

The Secretary may exempt a person from this prohibition under section 60 of the Act.

Refer to [Management of Mexican feather grass by municipality](#) (Section 12) for direction on how this prohibition is to be implemented in Zone A and Zone B municipalities in Tasmania.

Actions to assist compliance in this matter could include but are not limited to the following:

- Persons giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, growing, propagating or scattering, storing, using, or otherwise dealing with agricultural produce (e.g. wool, hay) likely to be contaminated with Mexican feather grass should ensure appropriate production hygiene and inspection measures are undertaken. These include practicing integrated Mexican feather grass control in pastures or crops likely to be harvested for sale or distribution, careful inspection of the product prior to sale or distribution and forgoing the sale and distribution of produce grown in areas where Mexican feather grass control has not been undertaken successfully.

- Persons giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, growing, propagating or scattering, storing, using, or otherwise dealing with ornamental plants should ensure their stock does not include Mexican feather grass. This includes roadside stalls, market stalls, fundraising events, garden club swaps, nursery sales, supermarket plant sales and ANY OTHER activities that involve the distribution of ornamental plants.
- Persons giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, storing, or otherwise dealing with firewood likely to be contaminated with Mexican feather grass should ensure that appropriate hygiene and inspection measures are undertaken.
- Persons involved in the giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, storing, hiring, using, or otherwise dealing with agricultural or roading machinery likely to be contaminated with Mexican feather grass should ensure that appropriate inspection and hygiene measures are undertaken. These include introducing thorough visual checks and cleaning of machinery as routine tasks when preparing these items for sale or distribution.
- Persons involved in the giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, storing, hiring, using, or otherwise dealing with livestock that may be carrying Mexican feather grass should ensure appropriate hygiene measures are undertaken to prevent spread of this weed. These include cleaning stock externally and penning them for a suitable period to ensure they have emptied their bowels prior to transport from infested properties.
- Persons involved in the giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, storing, using, or otherwise dealing with soil, gravel, lime, sand or other such materials from areas infested with Mexican feather grass should ensure appropriate hygiene and inspection measures are undertaken. These include practicing integrated control of the weed in quarries, stockpile areas, wholesale or retail outlets and other places from which these materials are sold or distributed.
- Persons involved in the giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, growing, propagating or scattering, storing, hiring, using, or otherwise dealing with agricultural produce, agricultural or roading machinery, stock, soil, gravel, sand or other such materials likely to be contaminated with Mexican feather grass should take direction from any relevant local, regional or State agricultural hygiene programs being implemented in the municipality.
- Persons purchasing or hiring any items (agricultural produce, machinery, livestock, soil, gravel or other such materials) likely to be contaminated with Mexican feather grass should liaise with suppliers on the issue of Mexican feather grass contamination and keep accurate records of their purchase transactions. Buyers discovering Mexican feather grass contamination post-purchase should implement practices that reduce the potential for Mexican feather grass establishment and spread. These include, creating dedicated areas for the wash down of purchased machinery and vehicles, feeding out purchased fodder and grain in specified, small areas, penning suspect stock for external inspection and

bowel evacuation, and carefully monitoring any suspect soil, gravel or other such materials for the emergence of this weed.

(2) Section 56(1) of the Act does not apply in respect of feed grain for animals that is:

(a) carrying a declared weed; and

(b) imported into Tasmania in accordance with any measures prescribed for the purpose of section 57(2) of the Act and as detailed in part 4(2) of this Management Plan.

(3) It is a defence in proceedings for an offence under section 56(1) of the Act if the defendant establishes that he or she took all reasonable actions to prevent the commission of the offence.

7. Measures to reduce the number of Mexican feather grass plants, eradicate Mexican feather grass from an area or restrict Mexican feather grass to a particular area:

An Inspector may, by serving a notice on the owner of any place, require that owner to implement any of the measures described in this part of the Weed Management Plan or any other measures consistent with it.

It is an offence against section 13(3) of the Act to fail to comply with a requirement notice issued by an Inspector. A person who fails to comply with that notice may be issued with an infringement fine of 8 penalty units. A person convicted of that offence in court may be liable to a fine not exceeding 100 penalty units and, in the case of a continuing offence, a further fine not exceeding 5 penalty units for each day during which the offence continues.

Actions to assist compliance in this matter could include but are not limited to the following:

- Persons discovering any plant resembling Mexican feather grass should contact a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) without delay.
- Persons wishing to dispose of Mexican feather grass or any thing contaminated with Mexican feather grass should notify a Weed Inspector or a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) first, in order to receive direction and upon how best to do this.

8. Storage in a specified area of any thing contaminated

with the declared weed:

Any thing found to be contaminated with Mexican feather grass may be removed to storage at an appropriate approved quarantine place. A [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) will determine whether removal to storage at any of these facilities or treatment/destruction of material in situ is most appropriate.

Failure to comply with this requirement is an offence against section 51(1) of the Act. A person found committing that offence may incur an infringement fine of 4 penalty units. A person convicted of that offence in court may be liable to a fine not exceeding 50 penalty units.

The Secretary may exempt a person from this requirement under section 60 of the Act.

Actions to assist compliance in this matter could include but are not limited to the following:

- A person who discovers or suspects he/she possesses any thing, (e.g. fodder, livestock, machinery, soil, gravel) contaminated with Mexican feather grass should contact an Inspector or a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#). The contaminated thing should not be moved, disturbed, treated or disposed of prior to making this contact. If Mexican feather grass is confirmed, the person will be directed and advised in the proper management, including storage or disposal options, of the contaminated thing.

9. Any other measures the Minister considers appropriate to control the weed:

There are no other measures appropriate for the management of Mexican feather grass in Tasmania at this time.

10. Exemptions:

A person may apply for an exemption from any of the provisions of the Act that relate to Mexican feather grass. He/she should contact a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) to discuss the reasons for seeking the exemption and obtain an exemption application form.

Persons granted an exemption should ensure they understand fully, any conditions specified in the exemption. Queries can be directed to a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#).

11. Review of this Weed Management Plan:

A review of this Weed Management Plan may be undertaken at least once every five years if it is necessary and desirable to do so. The review will incorporate consultation with stakeholders deemed appropriate by the Secretary, DPIPWE.

12. Management of Mexican feather grass by municipality:

Each Tasmanian municipality is classified into one of two management zones (Zones A or B) for the purposes of implementing this Weed Management Plan for Mexican feather grass.

Zone A Municipalities - eradication: Eradication is the most appropriate management objective for Zone A municipalities which have little or no Mexican feather grass, or when a credible plan for eradicating existing infestations is being developed and implemented. The ultimate management outcome for Zone A municipalities is achieving and maintaining the total absence of Mexican feather grass from within municipal boundaries.

Zone B municipalities - containment: Containment is the most appropriate management objective for Zone B municipalities which have problematic infestations but no plan and/or resources to undertake control actions at a level required for eradication. The management outcome for Zone B municipalities is ongoing prevention of the spread of Mexican feather grass from existing infestations to areas free or in the process of becoming free of Mexican feather grass.

The decision regarding which category is most appropriate for a particular municipality at a particular time is made jointly by DPIPWE and each municipality. Municipalities may change categories over time. For example, a Zone B municipality may decide to develop and implement a strategic plan for Mexican feather grass, with eradication as the objective. Provided the plan is credible, this municipality would qualify for inclusion in Zone A. Conversely, a Zone A municipality with widespread infestations may decide to stop supporting a strategic plan for Mexican feather grass eradication, in which case it would be re-classified as Zone B.

There are no known naturalised Mexican feather grass populations in Tasmania. Therefore all municipalities are currently classed as Zone A (eradication) for Mexican feather grass.

