

Declared Plant Policy

under the Natural Resources Management Act 2004



cane needlegrass (*Nassella hyalina*)

Cane needlegrass is an unpalatable perennial tussock grass that superficially resembles native *Austrostipa* species and may invade unsown pastures or native vegetation with a grassy understorey.

The management plan for cane needlegrass is based on the program for serrated tussock, as it is not yet present in South Australia.

Management Plan for Cane Needlegrass

Outcomes

- Pasture and native vegetation protected from degradation by unpalatable invasive grasses.

Objectives

- Prevent the establishment of cane needlegrass in South Australia.

Implementation

- Surveillance for infestations as part of routine inspection by NRM authorities.
- Any infestations found to be delimited, contained and destroyed.
- Movement of machinery or fodder from an infested property to be monitored to contain any dispersal.

Regional Implementation

Refer to regional management plans for further details.

NRM Region	Actions
Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges	prevent entry or sale, destroy if detected
Alinytjara Wilurara	prevent entry or sale, destroy if detected
Eyre Peninsula	prevent entry or sale, destroy if detected
Kangaroo Island	prevent entry or sale, destroy if detected
Northern and Yorke	prevent entry or sale, destroy if detected
South Australian Arid Lands	prevent entry or sale, destroy if detected
South Australian Murray Darling Basin	prevent entry or sale, destroy if detected
South East	prevent entry or sale, destroy if detected

Declaration

To implement this policy, cane needlegrass is declared under the *Natural Resources Management Act, 2004* throughout the whole of the State of South Australia. The movement or transport of the plant on a public road by itself or as a contaminant, its entry to South Australia, or the sale by itself or as a contaminant are prohibited. Notification of infestations is necessary to ensure these are destroyed. Land owners are required to destroy any cane needlegrass plants growing on their land. NRM authorities are required to destroy plants on road reserves, and may recover costs from the adjoining land owners.

Cane needlegrass is declared in category 1 under the Act, for the purpose of setting maximum penalties and for other purposes. Any permit to allow its movement or sale can only be issued by the Chief Officer pursuant to section 188. Under the *Natural Resources Management (General) Regulations 2005*, the transport or movement of grain for milling or wool for cleaning is exempt from the operation of sections 175 and the sale of wool or grain is exempt from section 177(2) if at the time of the sale the person believes on reasonable grounds that the purchaser will remove the plant from the wool or grain before any re-sale.

The following sections of the Act apply to cane needlegrass throughout each of the NRM regions noted below:

Sections of Act	Region							
	AMLR	AW	EP	KI	NY	SAAL	SAMDB	SE
175(1) Prohibiting entry to area	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
175(2) Prohibiting movement on public roads	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
177(1) Prohibiting sale of the plant	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
177(2) Prohibiting sale of contaminated goods	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
180 Requiring notification of infestations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
182(1) Landowners to destroy the plant on their properties	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
182(2) Landowners to control the plant on their properties								
185 Recovery of control costs on adjoining road reserves	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Review

This policy is to be reviewed by 2020 or in the event of cane needlegrass being found established in SA.

Weed Risk

Invasiveness

Cane needlegrass disperses by two types of seeds. Aerial seeds produced abundantly in panicles become attached to animals, clothing, and vehicles, or are blown by the wind. Stem fragments containing embedded stem seeds may be broken off and transported by passing animals or vehicles. Both types of seeds can be dispersed by movement of soil and water, and in contaminated produce, notably hay.

Impacts

Cane needlegrass forms dense infestations in pasture, native grasslands and woodlands where it can exclude desirable species. The sharp-pointed seeds can cause injury to

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animals. It has only medium feed value to stock, and is not very palatable so tends to be allowed to increase as long as more palatable pasture species are present.

Potential distribution

Cane needlegrass may grow in grasslands, pastures, woodlands and grass-dominated disturbed areas on fertile soils. In Victoria it has been found in riparian vegetation and areas subject to seasonal water-logging. Climate matching suggests that only high-rainfall regions of South Australia are at risk.

Feasibility of Containment

Control costs

Permits exist for use of glyphosate, fluazifop and flupropanate for the control of cane needlegrass. Herbicide control would be expensive and labour intensive, as these are non-selective controls and it would be necessary to repeat treatment over several years and search for remaining needlegrass plants.

Persistence

Eradication of an incursion would be slowed by the long life of seeds in the soil and the difficulty of detecting all needlegrass plants among other grasses.

Current distribution

Cane needlegrass is absent from South Australia, but is naturalised in southern and central Victoria and inland parts of eastern New South Wales.

State Level Risk Assessment

Assessment using the Biosecurity SA Weed Risk Management System gave the following comparative weed risk and feasibility of containment scores by land use:

Land use	Weed Risk	Feasibility of control	Response at State Level
Grazing - southern	low 29	very high 0	monitor
Native vegetation	negligible 8	very high 0	monitor

Considerations

Cane needlegrass is native to South America (Argentina, south eastern Brazil, and Uruguay). It was first recorded between Glen Innes and Inverell in central NSW in 1951, and then in Victoria at Woodstock in 1964.

Risk assessment indicates monitoring as a management action to detect and destroy any incursion of cane needlegrass in the State. Due to its absence from the State and very high feasibility of control, cane needlegrass is regarded as a State Alert Weed and a high priority surveillance target to increase the likelihood of early detection.

Synonymy

Nassella hyalina (Nees) Barkworth, Taxon 39: 610 (1990)

Basionym: *Stipa hyalina* Nees, Fl. Bras. Enum. Pl. 2: 378 (1829)

References

Gardener, M. R. & B. M. Sindel (1998) The biology of *Nassella* and *Achnatherum* species naturalised in Australia and the implications for management on conservation lands. *Plant Protection Quarterly* 13: 76-79.

Hon Ian Hunter MP
Minister for Sustainability, Environment and
Conservation

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