



Policy

Water lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*)

Background

Water lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*) is a free-floating, perennial aquatic plant. It forms compact mats which block waterways, interfere with drainage, rice cultivation and hydro-electric schemes (Holm et al., 1977).

Water lettuce was proclaimed under the *Pest Plants Act, 1975* following a recommendation from Dr D.S. Mitchell (1978). No plants have been found in this State, although they may exist in private aquaria or ponds.

It is a tropical plant which is unlikely to cause any problems in South Australia (Mitchell pers. comm.). Recent research has confirmed that water lettuce is a native to Northern Australia and is not as aggressive as first thought (Gillett et al., 1988). Based on evidence from Northern Australia, Mitchell (pers. comm. 1987) recommended that no restrictions need apply to water lettuce in South Australia.

Declaration

Water lettuce is not proclaimed, and no sections of the *Natural Resources Management Act, 2004*, apply to this plant.

References

Gillett, J.D.; Dunlop, C.R. & Miller, I.L. (1988) Occurrence, origin, weed status and control of water lettuce in the Northern Territory. *Plant Protection Quarterly* 3:144-146.

Holm, L.G.; Plucknett, D.L.; Panco, J.V. & Herberger, J.P. (1977) *The World's Worst Weeds: Distribution and Biology* (University Press of Hawaii: Honolulu).

Mitchell, D.S. (1978) *Aquatic Weeds in Australian Inland Waterways* (AGPS: Canberra).