



## Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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### Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

Senator the Hon Murray Watt  
Minister for the Environment and Water  
Australian Parliament  
E: [minister.watt@dcceew.org.au](mailto:minister.watt@dcceew.org.au)

Date: 23 June 2025

Dear Minister,

#### **National Threat Abatement Plan Escaped Garden Plants**

I am writing to you on behalf of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society (The Society). The Society is comprised of over 900 members and seeks to protect, conserve and advocate for the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

I am writing to support the development of the government's proposed National Threat Abatement Plan on Escaped Garden Plants. We request urgent action that comprehensively regulates all (including inter and intrastate retail, wholesale and online) exchange of environmental weeds in Australia, and their importation.

The Society is strongly focused on preventing the spread of escaped garden plants and environmental weeds in the Blue Mountains. Weeds choke our natural ecosystems and streams, displace indigenous plants and destroy the habitat of indigenous animals. Weeds pose a serious threat to the Outstanding Universal Value of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWhA). At considerable expense, Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service staff, as well as many hundreds of bushcare volunteers, work hard to control the spread of weeds in the Blue Mountains. Our members and many local residents are opposed to dense thickets of Ivy, Japanese Honeysuckle, English Holly, Privet or Tutsan, for example, outcompeting Endangered species, and overrunning local plant communities, swamps, scenic areas and bush walks. Visitors come here to view pristine bushland and our beautiful streams and waterfalls, and not expanses of Blackberry and Lantana.

Loss and degradation of native plant and animal habitat by invasion of escaped garden plants was listed as a key threatening process in January 2010 under the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. However, an appropriate Threat Abatement Plan has never been developed.

The current system of plant sale self-regulation is not working. The exchange and sale of plants known to be environmental weeds, and those with the potential to become environmental weeds, must be regulated to protect the biodiversity of the GBMWWHA. Legislation and accompanying regulations that stop the exchange and sale of environmental weeds must be developed.

The Society was pleased to note that in the Environment Ministers Meeting Communique of 21 June 2024, all state environment ministers and the Australian Government Minister for Environment and Water agreed to progress a national threat abatement plan to combat the impact on native species of a priority invasive, namely escaped garden plants. The Society notes that at its meeting of 27 August 2024 Blue Mountains City Council formally resolved to support the commitment of state and federal governments to prepare a national threat abatement plan for escaped garden plants.

The Society requests that the terms of reference for the draft plan and consultation should include research and comprehensive regulation concerning translocation, propagation, and exchange and sale of potential and known environmental weeds and garden escapees and propagules (Australian and overseas species) by wholesale and retail plant distributors and outlets, nurseries, landscapers and allied industries, plant collectors, aquatic species dealers, market operators, online distributors and any other dealers in plant or associated matter, including inter and intrastate operators and importers.

The Society urges you to develop and implement the national threat abatement plan as a matter of urgency. The plan must include provisions that effectively regulate all avenues available for the sale or exchange of invasive garden plants.

We also request that we be advised of the anticipated timeframe for the establishment of the threat abatement plan and consultation process.

The Society looks forward to presenting a submission on the proposed threat abatement plan during the consultation process. Thank you for considering the Society's proposals and position on this issue. I may be contacted on my email address [president@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:president@bluemountains.org.au)

Yours sincerely,



Ms Annette Sartor  
Acting President  
Blue Mountains Conservation Society