

WEEDS AND WIND FARMS

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SUMMARY

With the creation recently in NSW of five Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) to help ensure a strategic approach to electricity infrastructure development, there is also now a need to better understand and appreciate the planning and environmental approval considerations associated with wind farm developments in the five new REZs, especially in relation to biosecurity matters such as weeds. Wind farms are generally built in regional areas and with that comes the risk of intra-regional and inter-regional weed dispersal.

This paper highlights the variable approach to the prevention, elimination, minimisation and management of the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed by weeds during the construction and operations of wind farms in NSW. Because of this variable approach, there are potential and obvious strategic and on-ground failings emerging with regards to weeds and this problem needs to be recognised.

If biosecurity is to be shared community, industry and government responsibility, then concept of a general biosecurity duty and weed management investment needs to be better integrated into future decisions about renewable energy projects such as wind farms.

Keywords: electricity, biosecurity, construction, operations