

Environment Weeds Control Budget 2023-2024: Total On-Ground Management Expenditures

Part 1: How much of the money budgeted for **2023/24** was **actually spent on weed control for each of the areas listed**. Given that the hectares controlled was about the same as the previous year but the budget was increased significantly, it seems unlikely that the budgeted amount was fully expended.

Total pest plants on-ground control and management (excluding GST)	\$2,211,760.38
Total pest plants expenditure (excluding GST)	\$2,414,311.90
Percent of total spent which is on-ground weed management	92%
Total pest plants expenditure (including GST)	\$2,655,743.09
Budget for pest plants including GST	\$2,860,550.00
Underspend including GST	\$204,806.91
Underspend excluding GST	\$186,188.10
Percent underspent	8%

Accumulation of information:

This information was accumulated by downloading all payments made to the pest plant program code 6219 across Parks and Conservation Services (PCS) and Biosecurity and Rural Services (BRS). Natural accounts relating to on-ground work were then tabulated to determine the “actual” on-ground weed (pest plant) management expenditure (natural accounts: gardens and grounds, contractors, contract management, herbicides, plants and materials).

Comments:

- Weeds (pest plants) budgets across PCS and BRS totalled \$2.9m (including GST) or \$2.6m excluding GST.
- Total weeds expenditure (pest plants) \$2.7m (including GST) or \$2.4m excluding GST.
- **92% of expenditure was for on-ground weed (pest plant) management**
- The 8% underspend was due to weather, contractor availability, and some equipment purchases being made from different budgets.
 - Please note: the apparent 8% underspend, once adjusted for weed control equipment purchased with a different budget (another invasive species budget), was much less resulting closer to 4%.
 - An example is the remote controlled tritter machine used for non-herbicide control of weeds.
- **Total control work in 2023-24 was 10,800ha, approximately the same as in 2022-23**, based on the weed control dashboard data – [2023-24 Invasive Plant Control on ACT public land](#)
 - 10,880ha in [2022-23 Invasive Plant Control on ACT public land](#)
- Costs of control per ha have increased in 2023-24 due to:
 - Contractor and herbicide price inflation
 - The marginal cost of control increasing at follow-up control sites as it is time consuming to search for all the last remaining seedlings.

Part 2: ...number of staff who were actually part of the Invasive Plants Programme for the years listed.

<i>FTE involved in on-ground environmental weed and other invasive plant control</i>	
On-ground control by rangers and Biosecurity Officers	5.6 FTE
Supervision of weed control contractors by Rangers and Biosecurity staff	4.8 FTE
Total FTE involved in on-ground weed control and supervision of contractors	10.4 FTE

Calculations:

- Staff undertake the most time consuming of control work, such as careful spot spraying. This leads to an average of 4 hours per hectare of weeds controlled.
- Supervision of weeds contractors requires 3 hours for every \$1,000 of expenditure.
- The [2023-24 invasive plant reporting & control dashboard](#) assumes staff to work for an average of 6 hours a day for 300 days a year. This takes into account down time, leave, incidents, and training days. Sensitivity analysis to this assumption would put the FTE range as 8 to 12.