



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

Protect
Grow
Innovate

Bathurst Burr Plan

2026 – 2031



Cover photograph

Bathurst burr (*Xanthium spinosum*) (*Atlas of Living Australia*, 2026).

Version

August 2026



Bathurst burr (Bathurst burr - QLD Fact Sheet)

Important Disclaimer

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Bathurst burr plants Mingenew

Introduction

Bathurst burr (*Xanthium spinosum*) is an invasive weed that poses a threat to the wool industry, pastoral agriculture and native vegetation, due to its adaptability and capacity to spread.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) has been involved in managing Bathurst burr since the 1980s in Western Australia (WA), with the main aim of protecting the wool industry from its impacts.

Currently, within the shires of Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie-Boulder, containment is considered the only feasible management option as the weed is widespread and established. There are a further 2 known sites under eradication within the shires of Yilgarn and Mingenew. However, the extent of the burr in some areas is largely unknown and the management aims for Bathurst burr in these regions may need to be revised.

This 5-year plan, 2026-2031, outlines the activities to be undertaken by DPIRD to support the containment and/or eradication of current Bathurst burr infestations.

DPIRD will continue to collaborate with key stakeholders including landholders, local governments, recognised biosecurity groups (RBG) and industry groups to implement this plan.

Aim

Review the establishment status of Bathurst Burr in southern WA, and where feasible take action to mitigate further spread of Bathurst Burr.

Governance

Landholders are responsible for managing pests on their land, while DPIRD is responsible for protecting WA's agricultural resources from biosecurity threats under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act) and associated regulations.

The Invasive Species Operations section leads the implementation and reporting on this plan. The Invasive Species Planning section will evaluate this plan in 2031.

New detections will be managed in accordance with this plan.

Important links

- [Bathurst burr and its control - DPIRD](#)
- [Bathurst Burr, Weeds Australia](#)
- <https://gnrba.com.au/bathurst-burr/>

Report sightings via:

- An online report at mypestguide.dpiird.wa.gov.au or
- Use the MyPestGuide reporter app, or
- Phone: (08) 9368 3080, or
- email Pest and Disease Information Service (PADIS): padis@dpiird.wa.gov.au

Context

The problem

Bathurst burr is a member of the Asteraceae (daisy) family and native to South America; it prefers a temperate climate but is highly adaptable.

It is a summer growing, upright annual herb that is highly branched with a stem up to 1m tall, lined with very long, sharp, yellowish, three-pronged spines 15 -25mm in length (Figure 1). Egg shaped burrs, about 1.5cm long, are covered in small hook-like spines (Figure 2). Each burr contains 2 seeds, with 1 capable of immediate germination, and the other able to remain dormant for several years (Atlas of Living Australia, 2026).



*Figure 1 – Spines and flowers
(Atlas of Living Australia, 2026)*



Figure 2 – Bathurst burr showing hooks on burrs

Invasive characteristics include:

- adaptability to a wide range of environments.
- ability to produce an abundance of burrs that are easily spread by floating on water and/or attaching to animals, people, machinery and agricultural produce.
- seeds that can remain viable for up to 8 years.

The weed impacts agriculture by:

- out-competing desirable pasture species, reducing the productive grazing capacity of pastoral lands.
- producing burrs that readily tangle in wool which are costly to remove, significantly reducing returns to wool growers.
- acting as a host for some fungal diseases in horticultural plants, posing a risk to the areas such as the Carnarvon horticultural district.
- producing seedlings that are poisonous to domestic stock, causing death in some circumstances.

The weed also impacts the environment by outcompeting native plant species.

Legal status

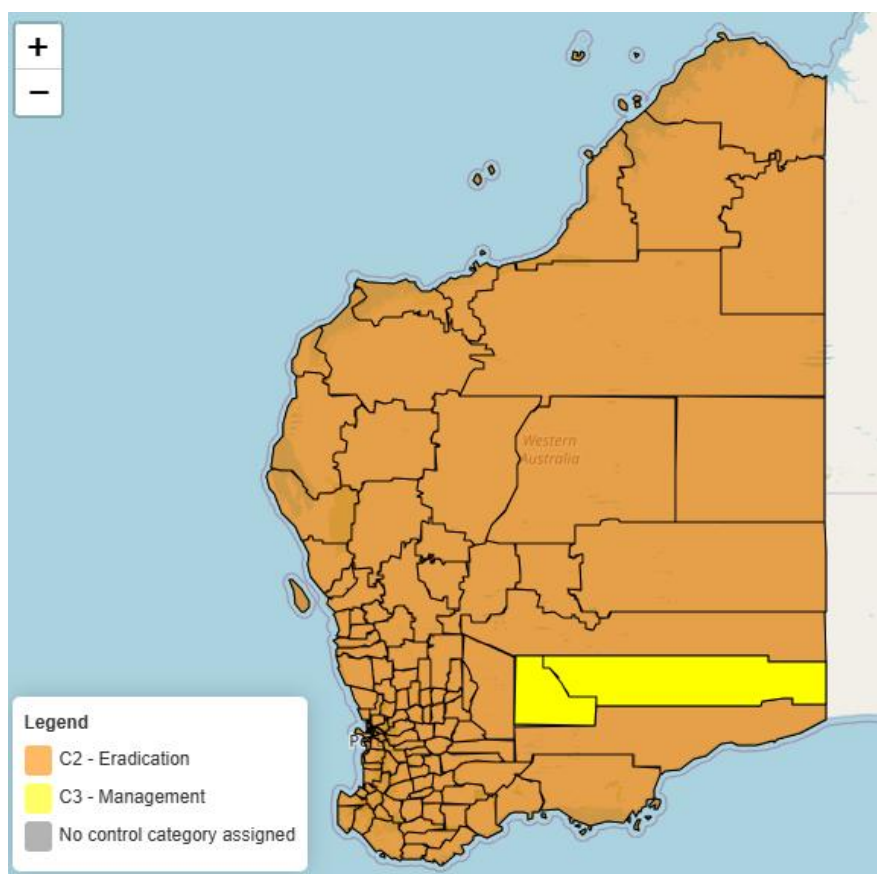
Bathurst burr is a declared weed under section 22(2) of the BAM Act and associated regulations for the whole of WA and is assigned to control category:

- 'C3 – Management' in the shires of Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie-Boulder where the weed is established and local control by landholders is the only management option; and
- 'C2 – Eradication' for the remainder of the state where a few isolated eradicable infestations occur (Figure 3) (Western Australian Organism List DPIRD).

As the extent of the weed in some shires is unknown, the C2 eradication category assigned to these may need to be revised if eradication is no longer considered a feasible outcome.

It is an offence under WA legislation to sell or transport produce or other material contaminated with declared pest plants.

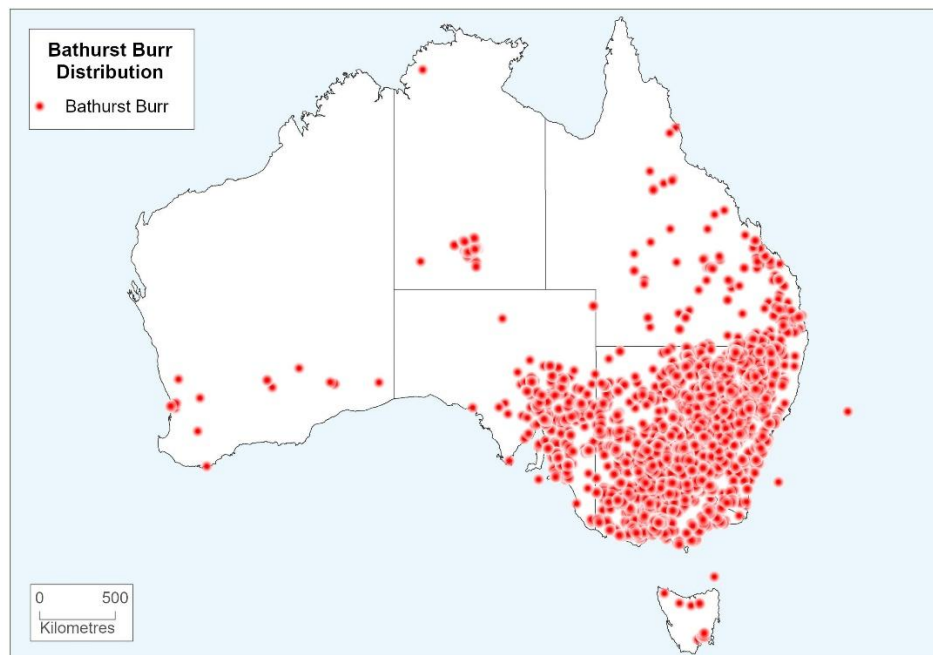
All landholders have a legal obligation to control declared weed species under the BAM Act and must report the presence of Bathurst burr to DPIRD before undertaking control.



*Figure 3. Declaration areas of Bathurst burr under the BAM Act.
Western Australian Organism List (WAOL) / DPIRD*

Distribution

Bathurst burr has spread across most of the temperate areas of the world. It was introduced to Australia allegedly tangled in the tails of horses imported from Chile in the 1840's but may have also entered as an impurity of grain. It became established in NSW and by the 1850's was causing public concern in Victoria and South Australia and was proclaimed a noxious weed in these states. By 1895 published reports of the time tell of Bathurst burr being established over much of eastern Australia (Figure 4).



*Figure 4 – Distribution of recorded Bathurst burr infestations in Australia
(Atlas of Living Australia, 2026)*

Distribution in WA

Bathurst burr was first detected in WA at Rawlinna rail siding in the mid-1980s. Prevalent in South Australia, the weed was most likely introduced by sheep being bought from an infested zone. Initially, quarantine zones were used to control the spread to protect the wool industry, but as that industry was scaled back the impacts from the weed became less important.

Currently, there are only 2 known infestations within the C2 eradication area, in the Mingenew and Yilgarn shires (Figure 5, Table 1).

The weed is considered established in the shires of Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie-Boulder but has also spread beyond these boundaries into surrounding shires to the north and south. However, the extent of this spread is unknown.

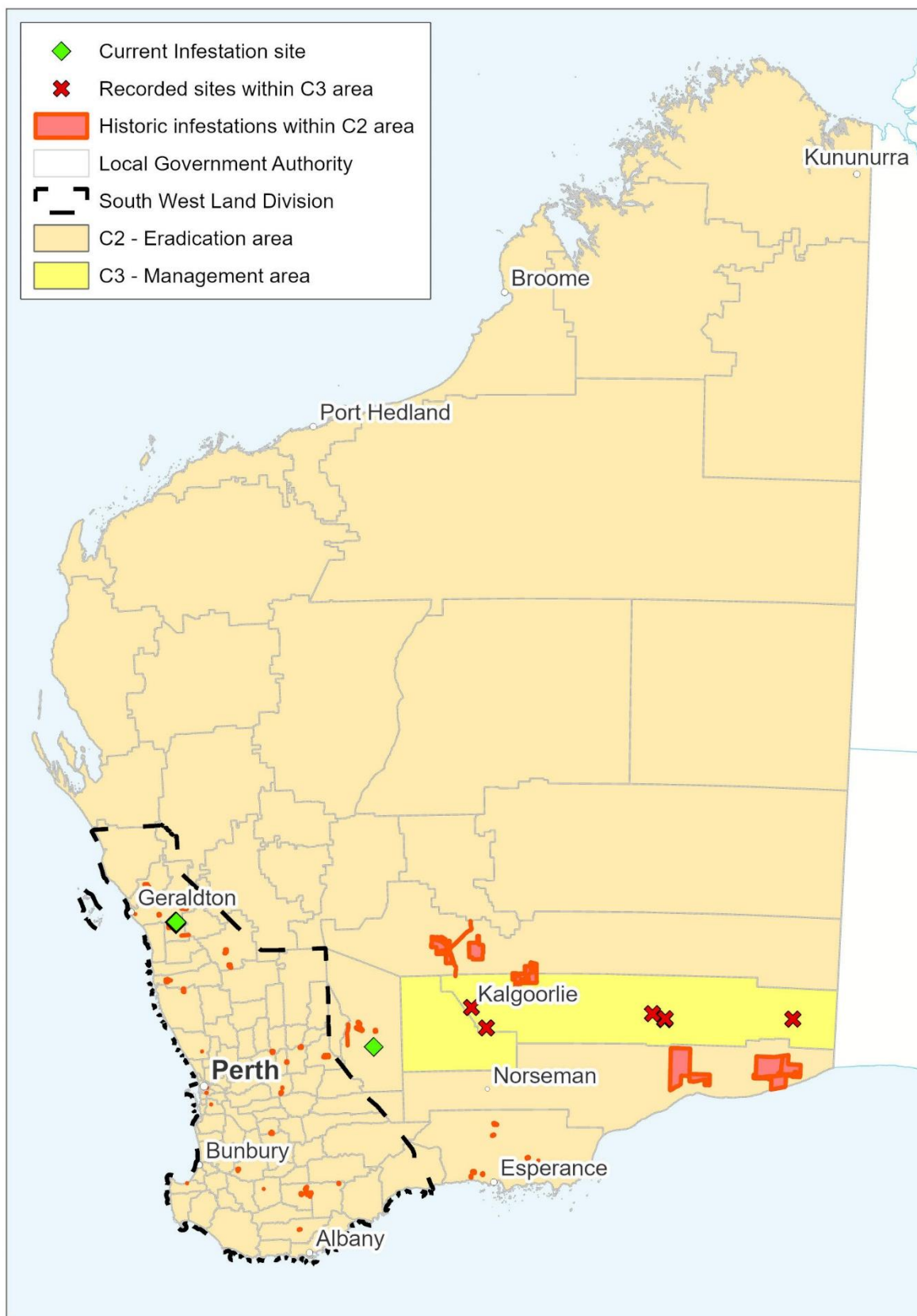


Figure 5 – Current and historic Bathurst burr sites. Note: The status of Bathurst burr infestations outside the Southwest Land Division is largely unknown.

Table 1: Status of known Bathurst burr sites in WA

Shire	Status
Manage infestations – C3	
Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie-Boulder	Eradication is not considered feasible. Landholders, the Goldfields Nullarbor Rangelands Biosecurity Association (GNRBA) and local government manage their own surveillance and control activities.

Shire (Ownership)	Property number	Last treatment date	Date of last inspection	Status	Expected eradication timeframe ¹
Eradication sites – C2					
Mingenew (private landholders)	Site A	Mar 2026	Mar 2026	First detected in 1995. Active infestation site in 2026. Site is difficult to access due to terrain. Ongoing surveillance and eradication activities required.	2040
	Site B	2021	Mar 2026	South of the infested site A. No plants found since 2021. Ongoing surveillance required to confirm eradication.	2030
	Site C	Apr 2026	Apr 2026	First detected in April 2026. Small infestation to the north of Site A, along a creek line. Ongoing surveillance and eradication activities required.	2035
Yilgarn (private landholder)	Site D	Feb 2026	Feb 2026	First detected in 1996. Small infestation in 2026 around inlet to a dam.	2040
Dundas and Menzies shires	Various stations and government managed lands	-	-	Still active infestations in these shires, but extent unknown. Infestations managed by landholders – pastoralists and local governments with support from the GNRBA.	-

¹ Eradication timeframe is dependent on no further plants being found for a period of 8 consecutive years.

Control methods

As a summer weed, control needs to occur between November and April, 2 -4 weeks after summer rains, which allows enough time for the plants to germinate but not set seed. Treating plants before seed set and depleting the seed bank are the key to eradicating Bathurst burr.

Control activities can align with skeleton weed inspection and treatments.

Mechanical/ manual removal

Physical or mechanical control or cultivation with a hoe or spade is effective for small areas, individual plants or isolated populations. However, disturbing the soil may encourage further germinations so follow up surveillance and possibly retreatment is essential.

Herbicide

Herbicide can be used and is most effective on young plants before the burrs have formed. A range of chemical products including 2,4-D amine, glyphosate, Starane, MCPA, Dicamba, metsulfuron, 2,4-D+picloram and Tordon® are all suitable herbicides to control Bathurst burr. Picloram containing products are preferred for eradication.

Refer to [Bathurst burr and its control](#) for details about chemical controls.

Landholders are encouraged to treat plants themselves or engage contractors or DPIRD if required.

Biological control

The accidentally introduced rust fungus (*Puccinia xanthii*) affects both Noogoora and Bathurst Burr but has had limited effect in the WA populations.

The native weed web moth (*Achyra affinitalis*) occasionally attacks and kills plants.

Disposal methods

All treated plants should be gathered and preferably burnt in a hot fire or wrapped and buried deeply to prevent seed set and germination.

Prevention

Movements controls

Preventing movement of seeds to non-infested sites is a critical management consideration. The movement of livestock, equipment, and vehicles through infestations during the seeding period should be avoided.

Pasture management

Strong competition, particularly from a well-managed pasture containing legumes, will greatly inhibit the successful establishment of Bathurst Burr.

Maintaining ground cover in pastures is vital. Pasture gaps result in an increase in burr germination and seedling survival. It is important to ensure that pastures are not overgrazed in spring and summer to reduce the potential for the establishment of burrs and other weeds.

Actions

Site	Action	Task
Management area – ‘C3’		
Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie–Boulder	Audit	Technically assess whether current actions sufficiently mitigate the risk of spreading Bathurst burr from the current C3 region to the Southwest Land Division by livestock, to inform potential amendments to this plan.
		Assess the option of cattle inspection protocols at local saleyards for transportation from the infested shires to saleyards or producers outside the region as an effective mitigation measure.
	Increase awareness	Increase travellers’ awareness of the weed, through targeted communication via: - various online media platforms, and/or - signage at primary recreational grounds, requesting people check for burrs before leaving an infested site.
		Increase awareness within key industry groups, including the GNRBA, to identify high risk pathways and the importance of checking livestock and vehicles prior to leaving the C3 regions, or on arrival at destination.
	Detect	Undertake annual surveillance at high-risk sites such as saleyards, abattoir holding sites, truck stops, tourist rest stops and bush camping sites.
	Treat	Treat any new detections at high public visitation sites, where possible to reduce the spread.

Site	Action	Task
Eradication area – ‘C2’		
In C2 areas	Review declaration status	Consider statewide declaration status of Bathurst burr in light of conclusions from the technical assessments undertaken with regards to the extent of spread of Bathurst burr outside the C3 area, which may trigger a review of this plan.
	Detect	Inspect sites when reported through PaDIS and MyPestGuide to confirm detections and determine extent of infestation.
		Undertake annual surveillance at high-risk sites, including historic sites, areas along transportation corridors, livestock yards and waterways.
	Delineate	Delineate any new site/s to determine extent of spread.
	Plan	Work with land manager to develop a property plan to prevent the weed spreading across the property and process for eradication.
	Treat	Work with land manager to undertake treatment and control at site/s.
	Compliance	Initiate compliance activities if landowner obligations are not met.
	Report	Report on the status of Bathurst burr across WA, annually.
	Declare area freedom	Where a site-specific eradication plan is implemented, if no evidence of the weed for 8 consecutive years after the last treatment, declare the area free from Bathurst burr.

Mingenew and Yilgarn sites	Detect	Undertake surveillance at known sites and surrounding properties at least twice a year, 2-4 weeks after summer rain events in late spring/summer (November-December) and at the end of summer-start of autumn (February-March), to confirm no seedling germination.
	Plan	Work with landowner/s to update or develop (if new site) an eradication plan.
	Treat	Work with landowner to treat the site/s.
	Compliance	Initiate compliance activities if landowner obligations are not met.
	Monitor	Inspect site/s if significant soil disturbance – such as construction earthworks, fire or flood has occurred – within 4-8 weeks of the disturbance to check for seedling germination.
		Undertake an annual audit of a site for a further 8 years at least, after site is considered free from Bathurst burr, to confirm eradication.
	Report	Seek annual progress report from landowner with information on extent of area infested and controls undertaken over past year, confirming progress towards eradication.
	Declare area freedom	If no evidence of the weed for 8 consecutive years (per site) after the last treatment, declare the area free from Bathurst burr.