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## Submission

### Invasive species consultation

Environment East Gippsland Inc congratulates the government on its initiative in attempting to improve the way invasive species are dealt with. This problem will certainly increase as climate change alters the environment, the robustness of the ecosystem reduces and extra pressure is put on the land and our biodiversity.

We are pleased to see public or private land are regarded as the same as far as responsibilities for invasives go. We also support the inclusion of invertebrates and aquatic invasives in the legislation

However there are some weaknesses in the proposed changes we'd like to comment on.

- Animals, plants and pathogens that aren't known if they are likely to be invasive must be proven safe before being accepted and sold/released.
- Independent experts or a panel of must be used to determine the risks – rather than or as well as internal government employees and bureaucrats.
- The public should have a simple process available to them for recommending a species or investigated.
- If pests are already established but not widespread, they should be contained or eradicated.
- Only confirmed low-risk species should be allowed for sale/spread into the community.
- As with much government prioritising, the environment remains as an afterthought behind impacts on industry or agriculture. The effects of invasive species are an extremely serious threat to our natural ecosystems. This must be of equal focus and concern, and be given equal resources to deal with, as commercial impacts.
- Focusing on new species and threats is welcome, but existing invasive species is currently being overlooked in many instances. There must also be an intensification of work directed at properly managing these ongoing problems. Due to invasive species the environment has been

and continues to be in decline. This must be recognised and addressed in new legislation.

- It would be effective to set goals and have these goals assessed and audited regularly.
- New legislation must do more than simply acknowledge problems. It must also back up this acknowledgment with funding and resources.

We look forward to seeing the final draft of this new legislation.

Jill Redwood

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Redwood', with a stylized, sweeping flourish at the end.

Coordinator

4 October 2012