

# Pistia stratiotes (Water lettuce)

**Description:** A free-floating aquatic weed which resembles an open head of lettuce. The leaves are spongy, light green and repel water. Water lettuce develops small green flowers and reproduces from seeds or division.

**Distribution:** Isolated to water features and artificial water ways particularly in Wonga Beach area. It prefers slow moving water bodies with high nutrient levels.

**Impacts:** Water lettuce floats on still or slow-moving water and can grow rapidly to cover the entire water surface. The thick mat of vegetation shades out any submerged plant life and limits oxygen exchange, making the water unsuitable for fish and other animals. It can provide breeding opportunities for mosquitoes.

**Key projects:** A top of catchment down approach is being used to systematically remove water lettuce from the water features and artificial waterways where it occurs in Douglas Shire. Water lettuce can spread on flood water so operations will focus on areas at risk following major weather events.

## Biosecurity obligations and legal requirements

### Obligations relating to restricted matter

Under the Act water lettuce must not be given away, sold, or released into the environment. Penalties apply.

Under the Regulation water lettuce may be disposed of by:

- Deep burial,
- Transporting to a waste facility securely (contact DSC 07 4099 9444),
- Sealing the matter in plastic and leaving the matter in the sun until any vegetative material being disposed has decomposed.

### General Biosecurity Obligation

The Act requires everyone to take all reasonable and practical measures to minimise the biosecurity risks associated with water lettuce under their control.

Contact DSC to report any suspect plants on 07 4099 9444.

#### In the prevention zone

You are responsible to know what you are buying online or at local markets to ensure you don't unintentionally introduce water lettuce from a contaminated source.

Be responsible and do not dump garden pond or fish tank contents into waterways.

Remove and bag specimens from water features and contact DSC to arrange disposal on 07 4099 9444.

#### In the eradication zone

Ensure soil or vegetation from known infestations is not moved from the site unless it is disposed of in accordance with the regulation.

If you have water lettuce in your possession do not share contaminated material including aquatic plants and do not dump garden pond or fish tank contents into waterways.

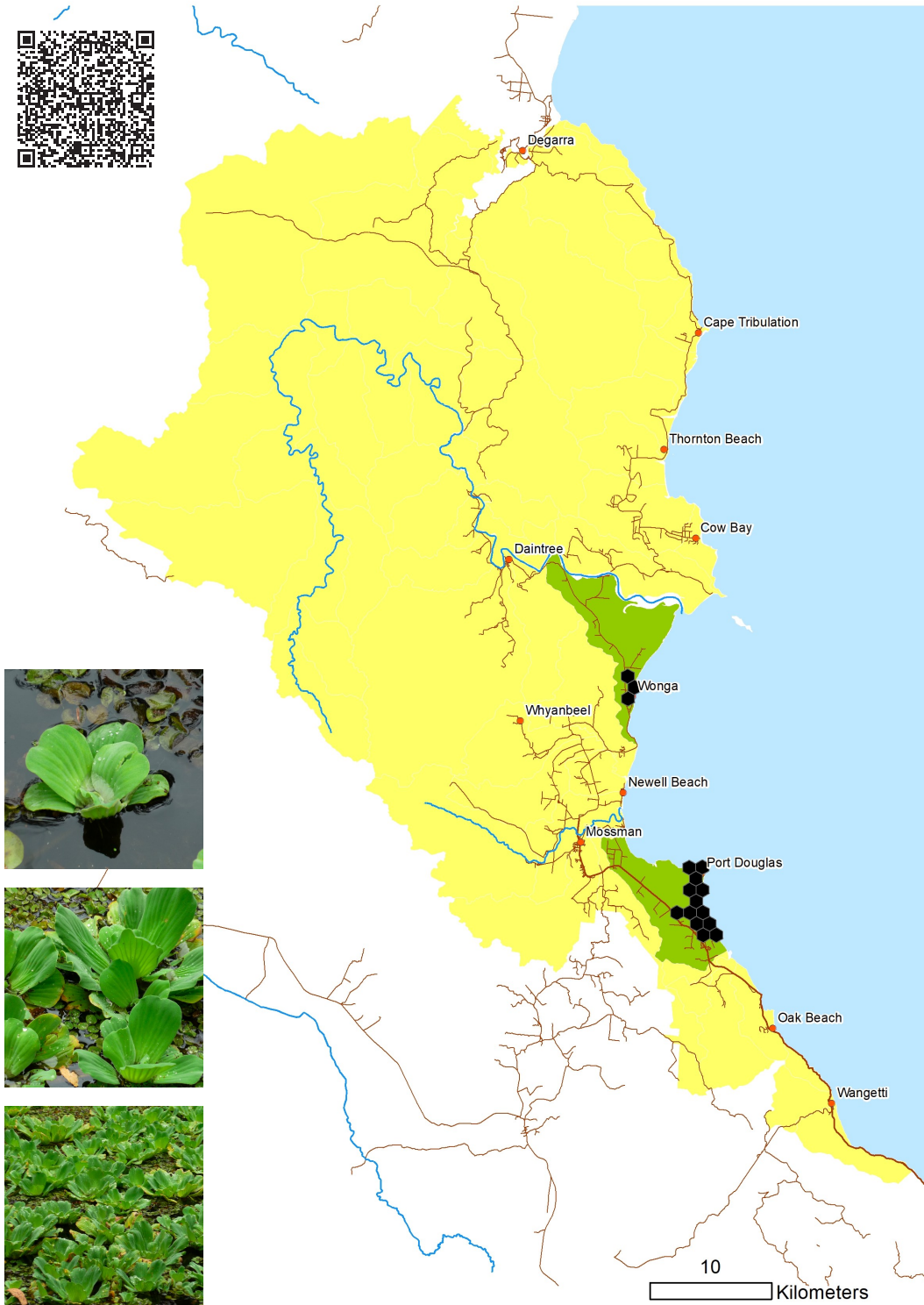
You are responsible to know what you are selling online or at local markets to ensure you don't unintentionally spread water lettuce.

For more information on using this biosecurity action plan fact sheet, and further information on control tools, refer to the Douglas Shire Biosecurity Management Plan available at [douglas.qld.gov.au](http://douglas.qld.gov.au) and customer service centres.



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## Management objectives and actions



Biosecurity Act  
Restricted matter category

**3**  
Do not distribute

Control



Spread



Flowering												
Vegetative												
Seeding												
Spray												
Manual												
Best time	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Key

- Peak ●
- First/last flush ●
- Occasional ●
- Optimal ●
- Good ●
- Marginal ●