

5.12 Eel grass (*Vallisneria australis*)

Why is it a threat?

Eel grass is a submerged, aquatic, perennial herb that originates from Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia. It is a potential competitor with native wetland and aquatic species. It will block drains and impede water flows. It spreads by rhizome fragments. Spread is often aided by humans who may have this previously popular aquarium plant at home then dispose of it into waterways.

As a likely result of aquarium material disposal, infestations have been identified and managed within the Ōpaoa Loop and Waterlea Creek. Ongoing management can mitigate the infestations building to problem levels.



5.12.1 Objective

Over the duration of the RPMP, control eel grass (*Vallisneria australis*) in the Marlborough district to less than or equal to 2016 levels to minimise adverse effects on the environment and enjoyment of the natural environment.

Intermediate Outcome:

Exclusion	Eradication	Progressive Containment	Sustained Control	Site-led
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Principle measures to achieve the objective

1) Council Inspection and Service Delivery

Inspection by Council may include staff or contractors:

- a) Delivering a service to manage eel grass.
- b) Visiting properties or doing surveys to determine whether pests are present.
- c) Monitoring effectiveness of control.
- d) Carry out control using administrative powers of the Biosecurity Act 1993, if necessary.

2) Requirement to Act

- a) Land owners and/or occupiers or other persons may be required to act where rules or statutory obligations dictate:
 - i) The presence of pests is to be reported.
 - ii) Pests are not to be spread (propagated, sold or distributed).

3) Advocacy and Education

Council may:

- a) Provide general purpose education, advice, awareness and publicity activities to land owners and/or occupiers and the public about pests and pathways (and control of them).
- b) Encourage land owners and/or occupiers to control pests.
- c) Promote industry requirements and best practice to contractors and land owners and/or occupiers.
- d) Encourage land owners and/or occupiers and other persons to report any pests they find.
- e) Facilitate or commission research.

5.12.2 Rules

Rule 5.12.2.1

Occupiers are required to notify Council of any new infestation of eel grass (*Vallisneria australis*) on any place that they occupy within 5 working days of the initial observation.

A breach of this rule will create an offence under section 154N(19) of the Biosecurity Act.

Note: Current distribution data is able to be viewed online via Council's Smart Maps service.

Explanation of the rule:

The purpose of this rule is for occupiers to assist Council with surveillance. Requiring occupiers to notify Council of new sites and plants in a place they occupy, in addition to Council's own surveillance, will assist Council in achieving the objective of the programme. New infestations will be able to be controlled and incorporated into the programme.

Notifying the Council of the presence of the specified pest will enable the Council to:

- Update its records.
- Map new sites of this pest.
- Carry out control work before they spread.
- Determine whether new control regimes should be considered.
- Provide advice and information to occupiers where appropriate.

Council as the management agency will administer the rule.