"off-label" environmental weeds permitting system

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An "off-label" permitting system registering a long list of herbicides for the control of environmental weeds in Queensland has been released due to the work of the South East Queensland Environmental Weeds Management Group (SEQEWMG) and the Department of Natural Resources Mines and Energy (NRM&E). The weeds management group was able to apply and being granted the permit by the National Registration Authority to have selected herbicides used for off-label purposes.

An "off-label" permit allows a herbicide to be used for specific purposes not already stated on the herbicide's label – in this case, to combat environmental weeds that have the ability to invade and threaten native animals and plants.

The EWMG had addressed the need for an off-label permit as part of their role in providing stakeholders with best practice information for environmental weeds management.

Very few products had previously been registered for controlling environmental weeds in bushland, forests, coastal areas and other natural environments. This permit allows the use of certain herbicides at specified application rates for the control of environmental weeds by members of environmental groups, local and state government employees, and pest control operators.

It is a big step forward for environmental weed control.

The products that had been registered include well-known agricultural herbicides that had been considered specifically for their appropriateness in controlling weeds in natural environments.

Mr Trevor Armstrong and Tom Anderson NRM&E experimentalists undertook much of the research into the appropriateness of the herbicides and their application methods for controlling environmental weeds at NRM&E's Alan Fletcher Research Station.

The off-label permit is available on the NR&M website at http://www.nrm.qld.gov.au/pests/environmental_weeds/and it is a requirement that all persons using products covered by the permit comply with the details and conditions listed in the permit itself.