



# ILLAWARRA DISTRICT WEEDS AUTHORITY (IDWA) MEDIA RELEASE

## BIOSECURITY ALERT – PROHIBITED WEED AMAZON FROGBIT LOCATED IN THE ILLAWARRA

The Illawarra District Weeds Authority (IDWA) is asking for the public's help to report sightings of a new weed which poses a major risk to the regions freshwater river systems and storage ponds.

A Biosecurity Alert has been issued for the aquatic weed Amazon Frogbit since it was recently discovered being sold on an internet auction site and inadvertently purchased by at least 5 individuals in NSW including one in the Illawarra. All the prohibited matter has been seized by Weeds Biosecurity staff located in the affected areas.

Amazon Frogbit is listed as **Prohibited Matter** in the Biosecurity Act 2015 meaning it is prohibited entry to NSW and it is therefore illegal to buy or sell this plant in NSW.

The weed can be identified by its smooth, rounded, fleshy green leaves up to 4cm across with sponge like sections on their underside. The plants float on the water surface. It originates from the freshwater habitat of tropical and subtropical Central and South America and has the potential to seriously degrade our freshwater ecosystems if allowed to spread.

It is currently a popular ornamental plant used in fishponds, aquarium and water features. It is spread by illegal dumping of aquarium material and travels quickly and easily along water bodies once released.



Chief Weeds Officer for the IDWA, David Pomery said that members of the public can help stop the spread of the pest plant by reporting any sightings in waterways and ensuring they don't buy or sell this plant in NSW.

"Under the new Biosecurity Act, everyone in NSW now has a General Biosecurity Duty to minimise biosecurity risks, said Mr Pomery, and there are specified mandatory measures that must be taken in relation to Amazon Frogbit".

"The mandatory measure for this plant is that you are not allowed to deal with the plant – this means you cannot buy, grow, sell or trade it and if you find this plant or become aware of people selling it, or in possession of it, you have a duty to notify the local control authority, in this instance the IDWA" Mr Pomery said.

'If a person complies with these mandatory measures they will have discharged their General Biosecurity Duty and will not be guilty of any offence under the Biosecurity Act' Mr Pomery said.

To report any suspected sightings of Frogbit or other Prohibited Matter call the IDWA Biosecurity Officer (Weeds) on 4233 1129.

**Contact: David Pomery – Chief Weeds Officer** [dpomery@isjo.org.au](mailto:dpomery@isjo.org.au) or phone 42 331129