

## *Caulerpa*: here today, not gone tomorrow

Native to Queensland, *Caulerpa taxifolia* is a highly invasive macroalgae that has colonised benthic areas in the Mediterranean, New South Wales and South Australia.

*Caulerpa taxifolia* was first reported in South Australia in 2002 in the semi-closed suburban West Lakes system and the upper regions of the Port River. Following its discovery, research was conducted to determine its environmental tolerances and consider eradication options.

human activity, are driving the establishment and growth of *C. taxifolia* in this region.

The tidal flushing of the Port River and Barker Inlet into the GSV, and the ability of *C. taxifolia* to regenerate from small fragments, has raised concerns over a large scale spread of this weed into the gulf.

Researchers from the South Australian Research and Development Institute have recently completed an Environmental Risk Assessment



*Caulerpa taxifolia* in West Lakes, South Australia

As a result, *C. taxifolia* was successfully eradicated from West Lakes however, it spread within the Port River and Barker Inlet and continues to pose a risk for areas within the Gulf St. Vincent (GSV). It is now accepted to be ineradicable in South Australia.

It has become clear from the inability to eradicate *C. taxifolia* from the Port River that the environmental conditions within this system, including increased temperatures and nutrients, coupled with a high level of

mapping the current distribution of *C. taxifolia* in South Australia, its effect on marine communities, the factors that drive its growth and survival and estimates of areas within the GSV that are at risk of being invaded.

The report on this assessment is presently being considered by PIRSA Biosecurity and is expected to be released later this year.

Management options for the South Australian population of *C. taxifolia*, are currently under review.

## Key Points

*Caulerpa taxifolia* is a highly invasive algae.

It has invaded areas in the Mediterranean, New South Wales and South Australia.

It is now known to be ineradicable from the Port River and Barker Inlet.

There are concerns that *Caulerpa* could spread into the Gulf St Vincent.

An Environmental Risk Assessment mapping the current distribution and areas at risk of invasion, has recently been completed.

Management options for the South Australia population of *C. taxifolia* are currently under review.

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