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www.vicgorsetaskforce.com.au
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On behalf of the Victorian Gorse Taskforce (VGT) I am pleased to present the combined 2007/08 and 2008/09 progress report. I wish to thank Laurie Norman for his efforts as chair during 2007/08.

The last two years have been challenging for the committee to keep the Gorse control momentum rolling. These challenges can be demonstrated by the investment that the VGT has been able to attract. In 2007/08 the VGT was able to source funds for Gorse control activities totalling $370,668 and then in 2008/09 that figure was $180,000.

Various factors can be said to contribute to this reduction in available funds. The main contributor being that a program, (namely the Natural Heritage Trust) through which the VGT was historically able to access funds, finished up at the end of 2007/08. The VGT acknowledges the support that this trust provided and the great work that the various Catchment Management Authorities completed in administering this investment.

Whilst a reduction in investment has been challenging there are also positives to emerge. The Victorian Government has supported Community Pest Management Groups such as the VGT through the Department of Primary Industries and their Future Farming Initiative. This has allowed the VGT to retain the services of a full time Executive Officer.

Even with the various changes and challenges highlighted above the VGT has been able to achieve many successes on the ground. Over
The period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2009 staff representing the VGT visited 16,256 hectares of land and managed to facilitate the treatment of 159.5 hectares of Gorse infestation.

During 2008 committee members of the VGT were involved, along with the University of Ballarat Centre for Environmental Management, in formulating a strategy that we will adopt for the future. The strategy will enable the VGT to use its resources efficiently and effectively. I am confident that adoption of the strategy will make a significant impact on the Gorse problem. The Victorian Gorse Control Strategy 2008 – 2013 is available now for your reference.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank both the Australian and Victorian Governments for supporting the VGT through their various Natural Resource Management funding programs.

I invite anyone reading this to get involved in Gorse control activities. It’s not just at the state-wide level (i.e. the VGT) where differences can be made. The VGT would not function at all if it weren’t for people at the local level that are prepared to put in long term control measures. Importantly many actions involve replacing this species with alternatives, reducing the risk of reinvasion. The VGT encourages long term thinking such as this to protect the investment made in the initial control measures. Gorse control is more that just killing the plant!

Finally I would like to thank the members of the VGT for giving their time at meetings and other events, promoting the work of the VGT and for their support during the time that I have been Chair.

Peter Everist
VGT Chair
Over the past two years the Gorse Task Force has evolved into the Victorian Gorse Taskforce (VGT). The committee is now working towards more of a state-wide focus and this work is guided by the Victorian Gorse Control Strategy 2008 – 2013. The primary role of the VGT is to oversee the implementation of the Victorian Gorse Control Strategy.
Staff Resources

The Victorian Gorse Taskforce has over the last two years contributed funds to the Department of Primary Industries so that Gorse Control Facilitators can be employed. These facilitators are authorised under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 and have provided technical advice, information and compliance services on behalf of the VGT.

CASE STUDY:
Grenville landowner gains ground in Gorse battle, but war goes on

Landholders in the Durham Lead – Garibaldi-Grenville area are using an integrated approach to controlling Gorse infestations on their properties along the Leigh River and its tributaries.

This is a community led initiative involving the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority, the Victorian Gorse Taskforce, the Leigh Catchment Group and the Department of Primary Industries (DPI).

Debbie Lewis is one landholder involved in this project with a 50 acre riverside property.

Following advice from the DPI’s Rural Extension Officer, she employed a contractor to slash the Gorse, which formed a dense belt beside the river. Subsequent regrowth has been sprayed.

“The project came along at just the right time,” said Debbie “We have gained 2 acres of paddock and can see the river at last.”

A total of 22 hectares of Gorse on private land has already been controlled in the project area since it was initiated in July 2007.

With much of this Gorse growing adjacent to waterways, this cooperative approach to woody weeds is helping to protect and enhance the whole catchment and is part of a long term approach to rehabilitation of riparian zones.

Pictures: Debbie’s property before (top) and after (bottom) Gorse control.
The ten principal Goals and Key Directions of the strategy are as follows:

1. **The Victorian Gorse Control Strategy is coordinated at a State level**
   The Victorian Gorse Control Strategy (VGCS) is implemented in liaison with the National Gorse Coordinator and National Gorse Task Force, and programs are coordinated with other natural resource management (NRM) programs across Victoria, particularly with Regional Weed Plans.

2. **Achieve an accurate knowledge of the extent and threat of Gorse in Victoria**
   Knowledge of the extent of Gorse distribution including ‘clean’ areas provides the basis for effective planning and delivery of control programs.

3. **Promote Best Practice Management for Gorse control in Victoria**
   Gorse control and site rehabilitation is effective and efficient, using Best Practice Management methods.

4. **Prevent the spread of Gorse into new areas of the state**
   An emphasis on programs in the areas of the state that are at risk from invasion by Gorse, where the focus will be on prevention of spread activities, partnership development, community capacity building and compliance.

5. **Achieve a reduction in the core infestations of Gorse across Victoria**
   Ongoing programs aimed at protecting key community assets, prioritised through the Regional Weed Plans, within core infestations.

6. **Reduce infestations and the spread of Gorse in and along pathways**
   A focus on the management of linear corridors, which will be the major priority for facilitators working with the community.

7. **Achieve a reduction of Gorse infestations within townships**
   Township areas will be a high priority for control programs that protect public assets. These projects will advocate to the community that Gorse is an invasive plant that landholders are legally obliged to manage.

8. **Increase the community’s capacity to be actively engaged in long-term Gorse control**
   Communities are empowered to act and are committed to long-term control of Gorse, and are supported to do so.

9. **Ensure compliance with statutory obligations to control Gorse**
   Communities are aware of statutory responsibilities and the VGT will work with partners to ensure that these are enforced.

10. **Ensure effective monitoring and reporting of the VGCS**
    The implementation of the VGCS is monitored, and stakeholders and the community are informed of progress.
A key strategic direction for the Victorian Gorse Control Strategy is to divide the state of Victoria into three focus zones that consider the principles of invasive plant control and the mapping of present and predicted Gorse occurrence.

These zones are:

1. **Containment Zone** – the core infestations of Gorse where the plant is widespread and abundant.
2. **Reduction Zone** – areas with substantial, scattered but not yet widespread and abundant populations.
3. **Eradication and Prevention Zone** – the part of Victoria where Gorse exists as isolated infestations or is predicted to occur.
FACILITATION AND EXTENSION

The VGT facilitators employed through the Department of Primary Industries have worked closely with land managers to facilitate Gorse control activities and improved long term management so that reinestation risks can be minimised.

Specific roles and responsibilities of the program include:

- Identifying and establishing partnership opportunities as well as developing integrated Gorse control projects
- Working with community members to identify priority activities and work programs
- Supporting Landcare and other community-based natural resource management programs
- Strengthening community and government collaboration
- Maintaining, improving and establishing links with all land managers
- Providing information and assistance in defining weed management responsibilities and preferred control techniques to private landholders.
- Developing and coordinating informative field days and community meetings
- Engagement of state-wide public land managers to collectively undertake weed control works on private-public interface
The following lists some of the work coordinated by facilitators on behalf of the VGT over the last two years:

- Followed up the Lal Lal and Tea Tree Creek target areas.
- Worked on Durham Lead, Yendon, Napoleons, Deadman's Gully, Glenlyon, Lauriston and Sailor's Creek target areas.
- Mobile Compliance Task Force program in the Ross Creek area.
- Contributed to the Mount Egerton “Multiple Outcomes Project” Area.
- Supported Lal Lal, Ross Creek, Napoleons, Moorabool East and Meredith Banganie Landcare Groups and the Leigh Catchment Group.
- Attended and presented at various meetings.
- Represented the VGT on the Moorabool Gorge Recovery Project.
- Advised on soil hygiene for the Creswick – Ballarat pipeline project.
- Coordinated field day at Durham Lead with Gorse mulcher – July 2007.
- Represented the VGT at a field day at Tylden June 2009.
- Presentled sessions on woody weed control as part of Whole Farm Planning courses.
- Supported Piper’s Creek Landcare Group by taking a role at a woody weed control field day.
- Supported Wattle Flat – Pootilla, Invermay and Burrumbeet Landcare Groups.
- Presented information about Gorse control and the VGT.
- Represented the VGT at a field day at Tylden June 2009.
- Supported the VGT at a field day at Tylden June 2009.
- Presented sessions on woody weed control as part of Whole Farm Planning courses.
- Supported the VGT at a field day at Tylden June 2009.
- Supported the VGT at a field day at Tylden June 2009.
- Assisted DPI’s Earth Resources (formerly Minerals and Petroleum) in their targeted Pest Plant and Animal Audit Blitz (see case study).

CASE STUDY: Quarry and Mine Site Pest Plant and Animals Audit Blitz

DPI’s Landscape Protection officers (that are part funded by the VGT) have been assisting DPI’s Earth Resources (formerly Minerals and Petroleum) in their targeted Pest Plant and Animal Audit Blitz. This is part of the ongoing quarterly audits which Earth Resources undertake on quarry and mine sites to ensure that managers comply with the terms of their mining and extractive licences.

This has involved identification and mapping of weeds and established pest animals at a number of sites throughout Victoria. A broad range of pest plant species have been mapped including Gorse, blackberry, Paterson’s curse, fennel, boneseed, boxthorn and broom. Officers have ensured that mine and extractive managers have weed management plans in place and have been able to advise on best management practice. Mine and extractive managers have been made aware of the need for ongoing monitoring of weeds and for the necessity to train employees in weed identification and management.

Wherever heavy machinery is used and where materials are removed from quarry sites there is the potential for the spread of noxious weeds. Where required, officers have ensured that adequate wash down facilities are in place to minimise the risk of transportation of weed seeds, both within the quarry site and in materials leaving the site.

This has been an important opportunity to ensure mine and extractive managers are aware of their responsibilities with respect to weed management, not only under the terms of their mining and extractive licences, but under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.
Funding support in 2007/08 from the Victorian Government’s Second Generation Landcare Program and then in 2008/09 from the Biosecurity Victoria division of the Department of Primary Industries has allowed the VGT to provide for projects in several areas of Victoria over the past 2 years.

Additional investments have been obtained from the Corangamite, Glenelg Hopkins and the North Central Catchment Management Authorities to deliver Gorse control work in areas where the aim is to protect key environmental assets.

Facilitation and Extension Program achievements resulting from funds invested through the VGT for 2007/08 and 2008/09 include:

- Over 530 property inspections covering approximately 16,256 hectares of land
- Private landholders controlled over 159 hectares of Gorse.
- 14 Landcare/Community groups have actively participated or continued to participate in the VGT program by implementing or planning coordinated and strategic Gorse control programs.

### Summary of VGT income for 2007/08:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$125,000</td>
<td>Victorian Government Second Generation Landcare grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$128,000</td>
<td>Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (through the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$54,508</td>
<td>North Central Catchment Management Authority (through the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$63,160</td>
<td>Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (through the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust)</td>
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### Summary of VGT expenses for 2007/08:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Expense</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$266,500</td>
<td>Facilitation staff wages (including employment of the VGT Executive Officer)</td>
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<tr>
<td>$26,232</td>
<td>Grant for the Community Weed (Gorse) project (Portland Gorse Control Committee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$24,000</td>
<td>Grant for the Moyne Weed Eradication Network (St Helens and District Landcare Network)</td>
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</table>

### Summary of VGT income for 2008/09:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$130,000</td>
<td>Victorian Government, Department of Primary Industries (Biosecurity Victoria)</td>
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<tr>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>North Central Catchment Management Authority</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Summary of VGT expenses for 2008/09:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Expense</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$165,000</td>
<td>Facilitation staff wages (including employment of the VGT Executive Officer)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bald Hills / Broomfield

Properties in the Bald Hills and Broomfield areas were the focus of a mobile team of Department of Primary Industries (DPI) compliance officers searching for untreated Gorse during 2008.

These inspections were part of the Victorian Government’s Weeds and Pests Initiative, which supports community groups who demonstrate leadership in pest management and land owners who meet their responsibilities for pest plant and animal control.

The project was initiated to complement Gorse control work already undertaken in these areas by the DPI in partnership with the VGT, North Central Catchment Management Authority and the local Landcare group.

Extension and community awareness programs targeting Gorse were carried out in the area in 2001 and this work ensures that the gains made on Gorse in the area will be maintained.

Ross Creek

As part of the Supporting Community Led Action on Pests component of the Weeds and Pests Initiative Gorse control compliance activities in the area of Ross Creek was undertaken during 2009. This was to support the efforts of stakeholders such as the VGT who have been involved in controlling Gorse in the area. It follows up on extension activities by representatives of the VGT who have worked in this area since 2001. Activities undertaken include:

- 109 properties were sent a pre-compliance letter providing details of the project.
- Subsequently Authorised Officers carried out initial property inspections and issued 67 Directions Notices (DN) on 50 properties.
- All properties issued with a DN were re-inspected to determine compliance with the direction to control Gorse.

Non compliance with a DN has the potential to lead to infringement notices being issued by the detecting officer.
CASE STUDY: Gorse control on Deadman’s Creek, Meredith

The Victorian Gorse Taskforce in conjunction with the Meredith/Bamganie Landcare Group and the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) implemented a Gorse extension and compliance program, on Deadman’s Creek, in the Meredith area.

Gorse is a regionally controlled weed in the Corangamite Catchment. It competes with native vegetation and reduces primary production. It is primarily spread along watercourses and linear reserves such as roadsides.

The Meredith/Bamganie Landcare Group identified Deadman’s Creek as a priority for Gorse control in 2008/09 and the area follows on from the previous project which targeted Coolebarghurk Creek.

The Deadman’s Creek project area runs from Slate Quarry Road in the north down to Sharp Road in the South, with Taylor Road as its Western Boundary. The area extends to over 1,500 hectares and covers 44 properties.

All properties were visited by an extension officer from DPI Ballarat and all landowners with Gorse infestations have been offered advice on control. Control methods for Gorse may include a variety of techniques including chemical application, physical removal, cut and paint methods and mulching.

Within the area, a total of 20 hectares of Gorse have been identified with over 10 km of creek being infested.

With a collaborative approach using a range of control techniques Gorse can be controlled to a manageable level. Although ongoing control will usually be necessary for a number of years, this menace can be beaten.

Funding towards the cost of control was offered to those landowners within the project area who have Gorse on the creek.
### Corangamite

- Number of properties inspected – Initial: 183
- Number of properties inspected – Follow-up: 73
- Area of priority land inspected (Ha): 5868
- Estimated area infested (Ha): 45
- Area Treated (Ha): 41

### Glenelg Hopkins

- Number of properties inspected – Initial: 75
- Number of properties inspected – Follow-up: 43
- Area of priority land inspected (Ha): 9624
- Estimated area infested (Ha): 38
- Area Treated (Ha): 21

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**Present Distribution of Gorse**

*Ulex europaeus*

The infestations shown on this map are derived from the Flora Information System (FIS) (2006) and the Integrated Pest Management System (IPMS) (2009). They are not meant to display a complete statewide inventory for this species. There are areas where this species may be present but has not been recorded.
North Central

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of properties inspected – Initial</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of properties inspected – Follow-up</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of priority land inspected (Ha)</td>
<td>4104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated area infested (Ha)</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Treated (Ha)</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2008-09 VGT Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Adams</td>
<td>Miners Rest Landcare Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigel Ainsworth</td>
<td>Department of Primary Industries – Biosecurity Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alison Boak</td>
<td>Department of Sustainability and Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Cosgrave</td>
<td>Community representative – North Central CMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doug Dalgleish</td>
<td>Community Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Everist</td>
<td>VGT Chair – Haddon Landcare Group / Wody Yaloak Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singarayer Florentine</td>
<td>University of Ballarat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Forbes</td>
<td>Dales Landcare Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shane Herbertson</td>
<td>Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cr Bill McArthur</td>
<td>Golden Plains Shire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pam Manning</td>
<td>Representing Landcare groups in Hepburn, Central Goldfields &amp; Pyrenees Shires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian Miller</td>
<td>Blampied/Kooroocheang Landcare Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurie Norman</td>
<td>Corangamite CMA Pests Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lillian Parker</td>
<td>Glenelg Hopkins CMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Smith</td>
<td>VGT Treasurer – Ross Creek Landcare Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cr Pat Toohey</td>
<td>Moorabool Shire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jo Trotman</td>
<td>Invermay Landcare Group</td>
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