



COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Victorian Gorse Taskforce (VGT) held their Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, 7 November where the incoming committee was elected for the next 12 months.

The incoming committee consists of representatives from Catchment Management Authorities, Landcare groups, State Government and local community. You can read a short biography of each member on our website under 'The VGT' heading.

During the last 6 months we called for and received applications for our Atlas of Living Australia forums. These 6 hosts are announced on page 3, with forums set to be held around Victoria in early 2019. We hope these will be a useful tool for communities to coordinate mapping and planning for environmental activities.

Our 2018/19 Community Grant recipients have been awarded and we look forward to following their progress and seeing the fantastic results they are set to achieve! We will announce all recipients shortly in a news post on our website.

Our extension services in the Bellarine and Hepburn regions have wrapped up. We are pleased with the wonderful response to these services, with many land owners keen to engage and undertake gorse management.

Finally, the committee wish to thank the many workers, community volunteers and landowners for their ongoing commitment to helping control gorse in Victoria this year.

Gorse control takes a long-term, sustained effort and all your individual contributions are what drives and creates our success.

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Committee member Karen O'Keefe in attendance at Sheepvention 2018 in Hamilton.

DIVERSE BUSH MANAGEMENT AND PARKS VICTORIA TACKLE UNLAWFUL GORSE

Diverse Bush Management are working in partnership with Parks Victoria to manage gorse within the Dandenong Police Paddocks Reserve.

The reserve is a site of regional significance containing around 90 native plant species that make up 3 distinct groups of plants, known as vegetation communities. This includes Swamp Scrub which is an endangered plant community across Victoria.



Seedlings and regrowth found by Diverse Bush Management in a treated area.

Diverse Bush Management utilised several treatment methods for controlling gorse within the park, depending on the extent of gorse and characteristics of each area.

In open, grassy areas with small gorse bushes the team undertook knapsack spraying with a selective herbicide.

In more sensitive areas, such as near waterways or where previous revegetation works have occurred, the team utilised the cut-and-paint method to protect the environmental values and reduce off-target herbicide application.

Where the gorse bushes were large and extensive a groomer was used to reduce the biomass and amount of chemical used. These areas were then followed up a few months later with spraying to treat regrowth and seedlings.

Diverse Bush Management stress the need for follow up control on gorse and have been closely monitoring the treated areas. They are currently considering further options to try and activate the seed bank in an effort to lessen the number of years that will require follow up.

2017/18 COMMUNITY GRANT WRAP UP

The results of our 2017/18 Community Grants round show an extremely positive impact to controlling gorse within Victoria.

An overall investment of \$90,763 (exc. GST) was given to groups and community members to facilitate 8 small grants, 5 large grants in Year 1 phase and 2 large grants in Year 2 phase.

This investment resulted in:

- 90 individual landholders engaged in managing gorse with the assistance of VGT incentives.
- 85 new landholders signed up to 3-year Voluntary Management Agreements.
- 309 hectares of gorse treatment undertaken.



Before and after of gorse control facilitated by the Moorabool Catchment Landcare Group.

BASS COAST LANDCARE NETWORK TRIAL ECOBLADE

The EcoBlade is an attachment for machinery that cuts, mulches and paints cut stumps on woody weeds in the one pass.

Anna Brayley from Bass Coast Landcare Network (BCLN) sent through the following report, detailing their experience using the EcoBlade.

In May this year we had the opportunity to see the EcoBlade in action at a property on Phillip Island with a very bad gorse infestation. Spraying herbicide in previous years had been ineffective due to the sheer mass of plants, with some plants at 2metres high and so thick that it's hard to even make your way through to begin spraying.



The EcoBlade in action cutting, painting and mulching gorse in one pass.

Cutting and painting has also been an issue due to the prickly nature of the job, with the plants being far too dense to reach through and get to the stems.

This was a perfect property to trial the EcoBlade, and we

were not disappointed. The EcoBlade is a brilliant piece of machinery, featuring its own 'wet blade' technology, which simultaneously slashes the plant low to the ground and applies a herbicide to the bare stems. It is essentially a cut and paint machine, which also mulches the bulk of the shrub, leaving behind a lovely clean looking paddock with all remaining parts of the plant poisoned.



A patch previously densely infested with gorse following use of the EcoBlade.

The EcoBlade reduces the amount of chemical needed, as well as reducing spray drift and off-target damage. Additionally, it is suitable as an all year round treatment technique.

We returned a few months later to check the progress, and a majority of the mulched gorse had dried up with only a few specks of green standing out, which could easily be sprayed with a herbicide. There was the odd new shoot, as to be expected with such a persistent weed, but overall, we were very impressed with the results.

With technology such as the EcoBlade, the future for gorse is looking bleak, which is extremely positive for our environment.

ATLAS OF LIVING AUSTRALIA FORUMS

The Victorian Gorse Taskforce is pleased to announce 6 hosts for the Atlas of Living Australia forums, to be held February-March 2019.

The 6 hosting organisations are, Bass Coast Landcare Network, City of Greater Geelong, Hepburn Shire Council, Indigo Shire Council, Moorabool Catchment Landcare Group and Southwest Environmental Alliance (Portland).

Exact dates, times and locations are yet to be confirmed for the forums.

If you are interested in finding out more or attending a forum then keep an eye on the media pages of the above organisations and the VGT.

Alternatively, feel free to make contact with the VGT at info@vicgorsetaskforce.com.au and we will pass your details on to the relevant hosting organisation.

VGT EXTENSION SERVICES IN HEPBURN

The VGT ran a second extension service in partnership with the Hepburn Shire Council and Blampied-Kooroocheang Landcare Group.

The extension area targeted the localities of Blampied and Kooroocheang, with approximately 200 private landholders receiving a mailout offering them free property assessments to map any gorse found.

The VGT also held a stall at the Daylesford Sunday Market which was well attended despite snow in the morning!

Following a visit, property owners were offered aerial maps showing location of infestations found, and a short report detailing suggested best practice management techniques suited to their situation.

'The project complemented Hepburn Shire's roadside weed control, which will reinforce the outcomes of both programs', said Brian Bainbridge, Biodiversity Officer at Hepburn Shire Council.

'It has been great to see such a positive response from the community who are determined to remove gorse from the region,' said Brian.



VGT Extension Officer, Heidi Snow, mapping gorse in the Hepburn Shire Council.

For further information on the Hepburn extension project contact Heidi Snow, VGT Extension Officer, on info@vicgorsetaskforce.com.au or 0428335705.

Thank you to the following people who contributed to this issue of Gorse Talk:

Heidi Snow (VGT), Sander Groeneveld (Diverse Bush Management), Anna Brayley (Bass Coast Landcare Network) and Brian Bainbridge (Hepburn Shire Council).

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More information on gorse can be found on the Victorian Gorse Taskforce website:

www.vicgorsetaskforce.com.au or by contacting the DEDJTR Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be published in June 2019.

To make a contribution, please submit by Friday 17 May 2019.

Send contributions to:
info@vicgorsetaskforce.com.au

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This project is funded through the Established Pest Animals and Weeds initiative, part of the Australian Government's Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper, the government's plan for stronger farmers and a stronger economy.