



COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Victorian Gorse Taskforce (VGT) committee are excited to welcome you to the inaugural edition of Gorse Talk.

Gorse Talk will initially be a bi-annual newsletter, moving to quarterly in 2019. It will showcase gorse management activities being undertaken by various land managers. If you would like to make a contribution to future issues then see the last page for the submission deadline and contact details.

The VGT has been busy delivering projects to improve our communications and resources. So far we have updated our website, produced 6 new resource videos, undertaken a pilot mapping program, created a fresh Best Practice Guide and contracted a Communications, Community Engagement and Extension Officer.

The pilot mapping project was undertaken in Moyne Shire and Warrnambool City Council. It collated and ground-truthed records from 12 stakeholders, then added the results into the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) mapping portal. A follow on from this project is a series of community forums to showcase how the ALA can be used for planning and reporting on a range of environmental projects.

We welcome Heidi Snow to the role of Communications, Community Engagement and Extension Officer. Heidi has been busy attending field days, updating resources, liaising with key stakeholders, developing our pilot extension projects and much more.

Finally, our 2018/19 Community Grants round has opened and closed. We are in the process of assessing applications so keep your eye out for an upcoming announcement of the successful projects.

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L to R: Marg Hatton, Brian Rowe, John Cable, Lisette Mill, Peter Forster, Peter Everist, Martin Forbes, Ron Cosgrave, Karen O'Keefe

TAKING GORSE TO TASK ON THE BELLARINE

The VGT have begun their first extension project on the Bellarine Peninsula. The project area is located at the northern end of the peninsula around Drysdale, Portarlington, Indented Head and St Leonards.

Around 400 private landholders are being offered access to extension services comprised of individual property assessments to provide tailored advice on managing gorse and an aerial map showing any infestations found. Also included were open community information sessions.



Bellarine Peninsula extension services target area.

This project is being delivered with support from the City of Greater Geelong, Bellarine Landcare Group and Bellarine Bayside Foreshore Committee of Management.

The Bellarine Peninsula has seen a steady decline in the amount of gorse over the years. However, there are still properties with moderate to high infestations and it is hoped that the addition of extension services will lead to an even greater reduction in the extent of gorse.

The City of Greater Geelong, Bellarine Bayside Foreshore Committee of Management and VicRoads are leading the way in treating gorse on public land, and community advocacy has been important in reducing gorse on private properties.

The Bellarine Landcare Group have worked tirelessly over the years to support and encourage landholders to remove gorse. In recent times their efforts have been complemented by a successful grant from the VGT.

The group has found that holding regular workshops, including practical demonstration of pest plant and animal treatment methods is effective. “Managing pest plants and animals requires skills and experience. The workshops can fast-track knowledge for new landholders keen to manage their land responsibly”, said Sophie Small, Bellarine Landcare Facilitator.

“The Landcare Group is delighted with the positive response from landholders to these land management workshops and we commend their commitment to follow-through with the ongoing tasks of gorse and rabbit control,” said Sophie.

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

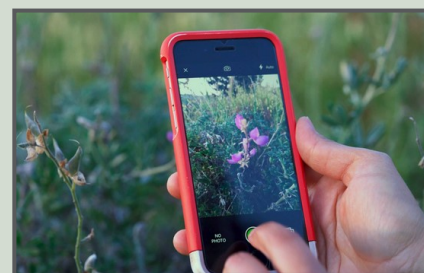
EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST SOUGHT - ATLAS OF LIVING AUSTRALIA FORUMS

With funding provided under the National Agriculture White Paper Project, the VGT is seeking to engage service providers / contractors to host a series of forums across Victoria during early 2019, showcasing the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) mapping portal.

The forums aim to:

- Increase the level of community awareness of the use and applications the ALA can have for stakeholders.
- Showcase the application of the ALA to engage with the community in preparation and planning of projects.
- Assist collaboration between stakeholders to promote a unified approach to resource management.
- Empower communities to use the ALA to map their local area’s biodiversity.

For more information go to: <https://www.vicgorsetaskforce.com.au/ala-forums/> or contact VGT Executive Officer, Paige McDonald on 0437798148 or paige.mcdonald@ecodev.vic.gov.au.



OUTCOMES OF THE VGT COMMUNITY SURVEY

The VGT recently engaged RMCG to undertake a community survey to better understand how gorse is affecting Victorian communities and how they can be supported.

An online survey was undertaken first to capture the differences in needs and demographics of respondents. This survey was distributed widely through networks across the state and garnered a good spread of respondents.

In terms of impacts of gorse it showed that all types of landholders can be affected by gorse, and the biggest concerns were amenity and the negative impact on

landscape values.

The main challenges highlighted in controlling gorse were time, cost and a lack of equipment to do so. This aligned with the forms of support most requested, being provision of technical advice and a contribution to the costs of either equipment or labour to treat gorse.

To further explore the findings of the online survey two focus groups were held, one in Hepburn Shire and one in Mitchell Shire. These two local government areas were selected as they had a high number of respondents to the online survey.

At both focus groups local residents shared their experiences in managing gorse and there were similar trends in both. Mulching of gorse was found to be an effective first step as it reduces both the physical size of the problem and herbicide use.

NEW BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

The new VGT Best Practice Guide for managing gorse is here!



The Best Practice Guide has been developed to be a short but comprehensive document that covers a range of aspects of gorse. It includes the biology and habitat of the plant, as well as information on the negative impacts of gorse and different control methods that can be used.

The Best Practice Guide is designed to assist with identifying gorse, providing a summary of management options and informing landowners of their responsibilities to manage gorse. This is a timely release given our recent community survey indicated a need for this document.

The Best Practice Guide is available as a download on the VGT website and as a printed brochure. If you would like printed copies please let us know and we will send some out.



Before and after of gorse being mulched at a field day hosted by the Bellarine Landcare Group.

Both communities had queries around decreasing the reliance on herbicide and what other methods might be effective, i.e. grazing, cultivation or grubbing (pulling plants out, roots and all).

As a result of the survey and recommendations, the VGT are reviewing their available resources for advice on managing gorse. We will also look at how we can better support community engagement activities, field days and other local partnerships to increase community engagement.

UPCOMING FIELD DAY ATTENDANCE

Throughout 2018 we are attending a series of field days across Victoria to raise awareness of gorse and provide advice on best practice management.

The field days you can catch us at in the second half of 2018 are:

- Sheepvention, Hamilton
- 6 to 7 August
- Daylesford Sunday Farmers Market
- 19 August
- Wangaratta Show
- 12 to 13 October
- Bairnsdale Show
- 10 November
- Clunes Show
- 17 November
- Yarram Agricultural Show
- 24 November
- Kilmore Show
- 1 December

Heidi, our Communications, Community Engagement and Extension Officer, will be at all the shows with committee member support. Our committee members have extensive knowledge and experience so come along to meet them if you can!

We will have a range of technical notes and brochures available on gorse, as well as serrated tussock, blackberry and rabbit management.

If you can't make it to any of the field days then visit our website to find gorse control resources, information on our Community Grants Program, regular news updates or to contact us.



Lisette Mill (VGT committee member) and Heidi at the Sungold Field Days in Warrnambool, February 2018.

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

Heidi Snow (VGT), Sophie Small (Bellarine Landcare Group)

Mailing list enquiries

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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 December 2018.

To make a contribution, please submit by Friday 30 November 2018.

Send contributions to:
info@vicgorsetaskforce.com.au

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