



COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Victorian Gorse Taskforce (VGT) wants to thank it's readers for their patience and understanding over the past 6 months. It's been a rollercoaster start to the year and like everyone else, we are learning to adapt in these challenging times.

The early months of 2020 saw the VGT represented at Sungold Field Days, the Seymour Alternative Farming Expo and the Kyneton Farmers market. All were successful days that we were very grateful to attend before the COVID-19 pandemic. Much like the rest of the world, the VGT has had to adjust it's operations to adapt with COVID-19. Due to COVID-19, the VGT did not run the 2020/21 annual Community Grants Program. We apologise for the inconvenience but hope the community is understanding, due to these uncertain times.

The VGT were also unable to deliver the four demonstration field days due to COVID-19 and therefore created an online virtual field day that could be accessed via our website. The video can be accessed at any time by anyone interested and details tips and tricks for effective gorse management.

Finally, the VGT pay our respects to the late Peter Everist, our friend, member of the committee for 14 years and chair for the past 10 years. He was a passionate, generous man and he will be sorely missed.

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VALE PETER EVERIST

1946-2020



'TUNING' INTO GORSE MANAGEMENT

The VGT's Extension Officer, Brydie Murrhy, talked all aspects of gorse management during five radio interviews conducted in the last 6 months.

With the intent of reaching as many listeners as possible across Victoria and in gorse infested towns, Brydie spoke to Voice FM in Ballarat, Pulse FM in Geelong, ABC Ballarat, ABC Goulburn Murray and ABC Central Victoria. Each radio interview had a unique point of view as Brydie aimed to focus on the area's gorse management stories and mentioned any programs the VGT intended to deliver in the area.

The radio interviews allowed the VGT to broaden their scope of delivering educational messages to private landowners who may not know of gorse management or the VGT. She spoke of the plant's biology, ecological and economical impacts of gorse, control method options and resources available to the public. She also talked about the benefits of getting into your backyard to manage gorse during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviews were well received and it will be a practice the VGT will use moving forward.



Left: hosts of Voice FM radio holding up the VGT's Best Practice Guide and fire safety flyer after the interview. Right: host of Pulse FM radio holding a Best Practice Guide post interview

COMMUNITY SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT AIRED ON WIN

The VGT aired a community service announcement on the WIN network for 6 weeks during Masterchef.

Being innovative during COVID-19, the VGT took the opportunity to air the announcement during the popular television show.

The announcement highlights that gorse is a generational issue, especially if left untreated. The VGT hopes that anyone viewing it will recognise the importance of gorse management for their children in family run businesses.



Above: a snapshot of the announcement showing a young girl who has taken over her family farm that is full of gorse

GORSE MANAGEMENT: A HOT TOPIC AT COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Victorian Gorse Taskforce (VGT) displayed at the Sungold Field Days, the Alternative Farming Expo and the Kyneton Farmers market in early 2020.

Our Extension Officer, Brydie Murrphy, represented the VGT at these events and spoke to over 160 attendees across seven days of exhibiting. Our most successful field day was the Alternative Farming Expo due to its popularity and size, held in Seymour every year.

The conversations had with attendees included contractor or chemical recommendations, issues regarding neighbouring properties, general gorse management enquiries including suitable control methods and requesting resources to assist landowners at home. The VGT use these enquiries to assist them when deciding on effective programs that are needed in communities.

Unfortunately due to COVID-19, all future field days and expos that the VGT would normally attend have cancelled for 2020. This means capacity for VGT representatives to have these conversations with the public has been restricted. However, we are always contactable via email, info@vicgorsetaskforce.com.au or via our website.

Brydie would like to especially thank Margaret Hatton and John Cable for their assistance at the Alternative Farming Expo.

GORSE MANAGEMENT AND COVID-19: ADAPTING TO SURVIVE

The Victorian Gorse Taskforce has made a number of changes to adapt to a socially distant, challenging new COVID-19 world.

The annual community grants program and the demonstration field days were meant to occur during the initial Stage 3 restrictions enforced across Victoria. This provided difficulties and both were cancelled for 2020.

However we encouraged more people over social media to get in contact with the VGT and saw a spike of interest as residents had more time in their homes. Being able to talk to our Extension officer, Brydie, they understand their gorse management options and are provided tailored advice.

We also produced more online resources and will continue to create virtual content to educate and support private landowners looking for assistance.



Above: committee member John Cable manning the display at the Seymour Alternative Farming expo

VIRTUAL DEMONSTRATION FIELD DAY: AN ONLINE RESOURCE FOR ALL

The virtual online field day was created for private landowners to watch at their leisure and refer back to when progressing along their gorse management plans.

The presentation includes an introduction to the VGT, details the control methods available through demonstrational videos, outlines the essential components to an effective gorse management plan, details our annual grant program and more. The aim of the presentation is to provide relevant and important information about gorse management to ensure it acts as a one-stop-shop for those viewing it.

The virtual field day will remain available on our website and is available to download. If you are interested, please see our website: www.vicgorsetaskforce.com.au



Above: two slides from the virtual field day; left: a slide explaining the 5 main components to have for all effective gorse management plans; right: a slide explaining the VGT annual community grants program

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www.facebook.com/VictorianGorseTaskforce

Mailing list enquiries

Contact the VGT

Phone: 0428 335 705

Email: info@vicgorsetaskforce.com.au

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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Gorse Talk is published by the Victorian Gorse Taskforce.

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be published in December 2020

To make a contribution, please submit by Friday 27th of November 2020.

Send contributions to:

info@vicgorsetaskforce.com.au

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