



Victorian Gorse Taskforce
Progress Report



2015/16

Victorian Gorse Taskforce Progress Report 2015/16

Acknowledgements: The VGT wishes to acknowledge the support received from the State Government of Victoria through the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources that has assisted in producing this document.

Published and Authorised by: The Victorian Gorse Taskforce, November 2016

Designed by: Small Dog Design,
101-107 Albert Street, Ballarat Vic 3350
Tel 03 5333 7777

Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this document is accurate. The Victorian Gorse Taskforce does not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence that may arise from relying on any information contained within.

Enquiries: VGT Executive Officer,
Department of Economic Development,
Jobs, Transport and Resources,
703-709 Raglan Parade, Warrnambool Vic 3280

www.vicgorsetaskforce.com.au

Contents

Chairperson's Report	4
Background	6
On-Ground Gorse Control Projects 2015/16	8
Facilitated 'Action Group' Projects	8
'Small Grant' Projects	14
Income and Expenses	28
Appendix – 2015/16 VGT Members	30



Chairperson's Report





Victorian Gorse Taskforce

I am pleased to present the 2015/16 progress report on behalf of the Victorian Gorse Taskforce (VGT).

Over the past 12 months the Taskforce has had continued success with implementing our Control Strategy for 2014-2019 through a range of programs involving community education and landholder extension.

The Taskforce has assisted in the establishment of and supported a number of large co-ordinated community led gorse control projects around the Ballarat region. Through the provision of funding for landholder incentives for on ground works and project extension officers, successful group control projects have been implemented in the communities of Invermay, Miners Rest, Creswick-Bald Hills, Clarendon-Lal Lal and Blampied-Kooroocheang. A number of these projects are long term requiring sustained efforts over many years to be successful. These groups have further consolidated their control areas during this year and in some cases control boundaries have been extended to adjoin and compliment neighbouring control target areas. These communities continue to maintain a strong will to tackle the gorse problem and the Taskforce is very committed to supporting these communities actively controlling gorse.

The Taskforce continue to offer a small grant program (up to \$5,000) to support smaller community based groups to assist landholders financially in sharing the cost of on ground control works. Twelve small grants were commissioned around the State in the locations of Riddells Creek, Barfold-Campaspe Valley, Upper Loddon and Avoca, Bass Coast, Murroon, Black Hill-Kyneton, Woodend, Ballarat, Woody Yaloak, Tylden and Hamilton.

Partnerships with other land managers have been forged through these projects. Many local Shire Councils have been involved this past year, playing their part by ensuring that roadside control happens within project target areas and assisting with group co-ordinated landholder mail outs. Roadsides provide key avenues for the spread of weeds and with financial assistance through the State Government's Roadside Weeds and Pests Management Program (RWPP); we hope that Municipalities continue with their control programs on roadsides into the future.

We are grateful to the State Government of Victoria for continued funding support. The sum of \$65,000 was again provided to the taskforce for 2015/16, all of this allocation going towards on ground projects.

There is no doubt that controlling gorse requires a long term commitment from land managers. I believe that through the projects sponsored by the Taskforce we are reinforcing this reality. Throughout many years involvement with gorse control projects I have seen great inroads made by community volunteers and it is pleasing to be able to support this action wherever we can. Community ownership of the problem is something that the taskforce strives to promote; this is a key component of a successful project. Gorse always needs follow up control so it's important that communities are well aware of this. This is an underlying message in all of our project implementation work.

A new Federal Government initiative has provided funding to the management of established pest animal and weeds in Victoria, including gorse, blackberry, serrated tussock and rabbits. A project management plan has been established to facilitate community capacity to manage widely established weeds and pest animals, to co-develop new community based projects, to support on ground action and to strengthen networks and partnerships for continuous learning.

Funding for this initiative will be available over a three year period commencing 2016-2017. We eagerly anticipate the effect this funding will provide to the Taskforce.

Finally I would like to express my thanks to the Taskforce committee representatives and to all our partner stakeholders for their continued support and commitment to our Control Strategy. Special thanks to Doug May for acting as Executive Officer after Shane Herberton's departure and Nicole Garfi who was appointed Executive Officer in March 2016, the Taskforce welcomes her on board. I would like to thank all people involved for their efforts in this past year and trust that you will have the energy and determination to continue the battle into the future.

Peter Everist
Chair – Victorian Gorse Taskforce

Background

The primary role of the VGT is to oversee the implementation of the Victorian Gorse Control Strategy 2014-2019.

The nine principal Goals and Key Directions of the strategy are as follows:

1 Provide leadership in community-led invasive plant control

The VGT coordinates and implements the Victorian Gorse Control Strategy (VGCS) across Victoria. In doing so the VGT makes a valuable contribution to preventing the spread of gorse and developing the community-led invasive plant control model.

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. Accurate mapping of the extent of gorse distribution is an important management and education tool. The DEDJTR Biosecurity and GIS teams provide important support in this area.

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

The VGT places 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, where necessary, enforcement.

5 Achieve a reduction in the core infestations of gorse across Victoria

Ongoing programs are aimed at protecting key community assets where these are prioritised through regional catchment strategies and regional invasive plant and animal management strategies, and within core infestations.

6 Reduce infestations and the spread of gorse in and along corridors

The VGT and facilitators will work with the community and linear reserve managers in focus areas to reduce the spread of gorse in and along corridors.

7 Increase the community's capacity to be actively engaged in long-term gorse control

Communities are empowered to act and are committed to the long-term control of gorse, and are supported to do so.

8 Ensure communities are aware of their statutory obligations to control gorse

Communities are aware of their statutory responsibilities and the VGT will work with partners to advocate that, where necessary, enforcement complements community-led action.

9 Ensure effective monitoring and reporting of the Victorian Gorse Control Strategy

The implementation of the VGCS is monitored, and stakeholders and the community are informed of its progress.



Focus Areas

To provide strategic direction for the control of gorse throughout Victoria, the state is divided into two focus zones (see Figure 1) considering principles of invasive plant control and mapping of present and predicted gorse occurrence (reference *Victorian Gorse Control Strategy 2014-2019*).

Reduction Zone

The Reduction Zone is the part of Victoria where substantial, scattered but not yet widespread and abundant populations of gorse occur. In this zone the Strategy aims to reduce populations (shaded orange on Gorse Control Areas map).

Eradication and Prevention Zone

The Eradication and Prevention Zone is the part of Victoria where gorse may already occur as isolated infestations or is predicted to occur based on potential distribution modelling (shaded green on Gorse Control Areas map).

Whilst this Strategy focuses on partnership development, capacity building and compliance, it will support eradication of isolated infestations where feasible. Prevention of gorse incursions will be the priority.

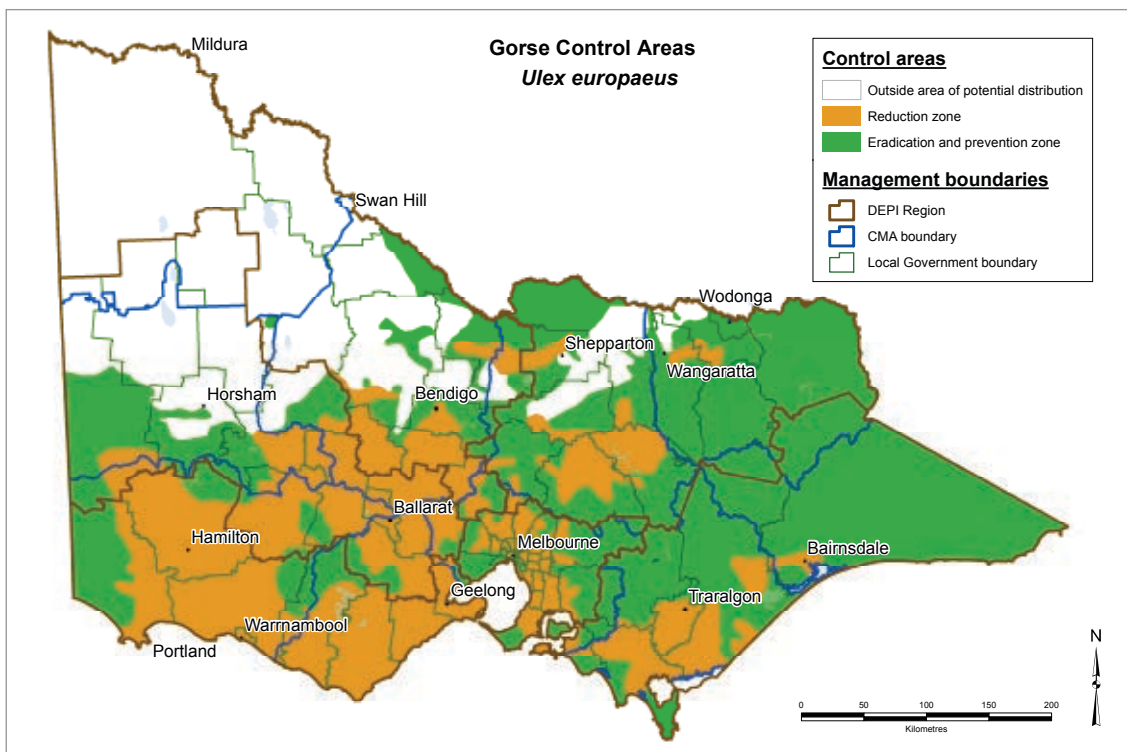


Figure 1: Victoria's gorse control zones. (DEPI, 2014)

On-Ground Gorse Control Projects 2015/16



The Taskforce has supported the implementation of these projects to help communities build successful control programs in their local areas. The aim for these projects is to increase landholder awareness and ownership of the problem so that long term control can be achieved.

The Taskforce actively promotes the implementation of a Community Led Approach to the management of this widespread pest. This is where a collective of concerned community members have come together to take action towards achieving successful control. Local communities have formed small groups to guide the planning and implementation of these projects. The Victorian Gorse Taskforce has supported these projects by providing resources for their implementation.

Facilitated ‘Action Group’ Projects

This approach is about placing a greater emphasis on voluntary compliance for gorse management rather than regulatory enforcement. Through these projects Project Officers are encouraging landholders to sign up to long term voluntary management agreements recognising that successful gorse control involves a commitment over many years. Where this Community Led Approach fails to convince landholders of their obligations to control gorse, Department of

Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) compliance is then recommended so that the sustained action of the majority of landholders is supported. The five projects that were supported by the VGT in 2015/16 assist in implementing the goals and strategies found within the Victorian Gorse Control Strategy 2014-2019. These projects also work to prevent gorse from impacting upon important environmental and agricultural assets.

Clarendon-Lal Lal Joint Area

VGT Contribution for 2015/16	Other contributions	Voluntary management agreements signed with landholders / approx. hectares of control	Project Partners
\$33,000	\$14,000	44 / 94ha	Private Landholders, Leigh Catchment Group, Moorabool Landcare Network, Moorabool Shire Council, City of Ballarat, Golden Plains Shire, Lal Lal Upper Williamson's Creek, Moorabool Landcare Group, Leigh Catchment Group, CFA, VicRoads

Nearest town: Clarendon

This project aims to connect two previous Gorse Taskforce supported target areas, the Napoleons-Garibaldi and the Lal Lal target areas. It takes in an area of 197 square kilometres and covers three municipalities.

The project received a lot of interest after the introductory mail out took place. The responses from the communities of Lal Lal, Durham Lead, Clarendon and Elaine were very positive. There were sites in the target area where people had struggled with gorse over a very long period of time and this program really gave them a lot of hope and a direction forward to getting on top of the problem.

A key aspect to the success of stages one and two of the project has been the partnerships formed between the Moorabool Landcare Network, Leigh Catchment Group, City of Ballarat, Moorabool Shire Council and Golden Plains Shire. There have been great results using integrated weed management between lands managed by both municipalities and privately owned land. The project also received great support from DELWP, VicTrack and VLine in also targeting gorse control on any Crown Land within the target area.

There are still issues with absentee landholders and landholders managing land on behalf of private landholders who don't understand the gorse problem. Also dealing with gorse in the post bushfire Clarendon area will be an emerging issue for spring 2016.

Since beginning the project, the group have successfully treated approximately 94 hectares of gorse and have signed forty private landholders on to a three year voluntary management agreement.



Creswick-Bald Hills Landcare Initiates Community Action Against Gorse

VGT Contribution for 2015/16	Other contributions	Voluntary management agreements signed with landholders / approx. hectares of control	Project Partners
\$5,318	\$0	36 / 44ha	Private Landholders, Bald Hills-Creswick Landcare Group Inc, Upper Loddon and Avoca Landcare Network, Upper Mount Emu Creek Landcare Network, Creswick Community Centre, Hepburn Shire Council

Nearest town: Creswick

Creswick-Bald Hills Landcare Group is situated around 20km north of Ballarat and has had an ongoing battle with gorse. In recent years, there has been little to no gorse control in large areas of the community, particularly on public land. There has also been a change in the residents in Creswick with many tree changers and town people moving into lifestyle properties. The Creswick-Bald Hills Landcare Group held a community meeting back in 2014 inviting residents with issues around gorse to attend. Everyone who attended was willing and ready to be part of a collaborative effort to reduce gorse infestations and raise awareness among residents.

This project compliments work being undertaken in surrounding districts including Miners Rest/Sulky and Invermay with Creswick probably being the worst impacted community north of Ballarat. This project has concentrated on the heavily infested areas of north Creswick but has also extended the opportunity for involvement of all residents within the Creswick region. Within the north areas of Creswick there are many smaller lifestyle properties as well as larger agricultural properties.

Independent works by both the Hepburn Shire Council and landholders have seen some properties take control of their gorse whilst other properties are in need of support both financial and informative. Other land managers including Vic Track, DELWP and Parks Victoria have significant land management interests in this project area.

Landholder letters and gorse control flyers have been distributed widely around the project area via the local post office and the Creswick and District newsletter to raise awareness. The project officer will continue to work with private landholders and the public land managers who have significant gorse infestations in 2015/16 developing further management agreements, providing technical control advice and offering financial incentives where appropriate for on ground control works.

Due to the continuing interest in the project, the group is now onto its second stage of funding through the VGT. To date the group has achieved approximately 44 hectares of gorse control and has signed up 36 private landholders to three year voluntary management agreements.



Invermay Community Takes Action Against Gorse

VGT Contribution for 2015/16	Other contributions	Voluntary management agreements signed with landholders / approx. hectares of control	Project Partners
\$6,551	\$0	32 / 54ha	Private Landholders, Invermay Landcare Group, Miners Rest and Upper Mount Emu Creek Landcare Networks, CFA, Invermay Progress Association

Nearest town: Invermay

The Invermay project adjoins the Miners Rest Landcare Gorse Action Area and has been a historical strong hold of gorse. There are a number of properties that have demonstrated good success in removal of gorse with the assistance of the Victorian Gorse Taskforce around twelve years ago; some properties are still managing and reducing gorse and a number of properties with extensive infestations of several hectares. The area is primarily smaller properties between one and eight hectares in size, although a number of large properties still remain.

The target area extends on the northern boundary to the Creswick State Forest. The project was initially delivered through engaging a facilitator to raise community awareness and provide assistance and direction for the removal of gorse. There continues to be widespread concern from the community about the impacts of gorse and the battle continues against the weed which is so widespread in the area. Many landholders in this area have the capacity to pay for their gorse programs, however there are other landholders who are more financially limited and these are often the properties with some of the larger infestations.

This project is now into its second round of VGT funding and to date the Project Officer has engaged with over 32 landholders and has controlled approximately 54 hectares of gorse.



Miners Rest Landcare Community Takes Action Against Gorse

VGT Contribution for 2015/16	Other contributions	Voluntary management agreements signed with landholders / approx. hectares of control	Project Partners
\$8,738	\$0	23 / 50ha	Private Landholders, Upper Mount Emu Creek Landcare Network, Ballarat City Council, Ballarat Grammar Junior Landcare, Miners Rest Lions Club, Miners Rest Primary School, Ballarat Turf Club, Ballarat North Waste Water Treatment Plant



Nearest town: Miners Rest

This project covers a large population of mixed sized properties from house blocks and lifestyle properties through to large farms. Approximately 500 properties have been identified from Sulky through to Miners Rest with a small number being corporately owned. Infestations throughout this area are found along creek lines with heavy patches along Burrumbeet Creek, roadsides particularly Olliers Road and Millers Road, fence lines and the old quarry site. The region to the north east of the target area is potentially the most severe with 5-20 acre lifestyle properties and consistent patchy gorse throughout. The VGT has operated in Miners Rest in the past and infestations in this area were heavily targeted with successful reduction in coverage. During the year there has been a change in project officer working in this area.

This project is now into its second round of funding and to date has achieved 50 hectares of gorse control and developed 23 voluntary management agreements with landholders. The project officer continues to work closely with the Ballarat City to control gorse on roadsides and with the Conservation Volunteer Australian Green Army Program. Whilst significant progress has been made in this area there is considerable work to undertake and this project will continue in future years. The area has an enthusiastic community with a growing sense of town pride and is currently a town of focus for the Ballarat City Council.

Tackling Gorse in the Muddy and Joyces Creek Catchment

VGT Contribution for 2015/16	Other contributions	Voluntary management agreements signed with landholders / approx. hectares of control	Project Partners
\$25,000	\$15,000	9 / 51ha	Private Landholders, Blampied-Kooroocheang Landcare Group Inc, Hepburn Shire Council, DELWP

Nearest town: Kooroocheang

Blampied-Kooroocheang Landcare Group is situated around 40km north of Ballarat and has a long history of tackling gorse in the local area. Since 2010, there has been five gorse control projects administered by the Blampied Kooroocheang Landcare Group, three of these projects were in partnership with the VGT. Gorse has been predominantly targeted on large areas of private land. Part of the project aim was to concentrate on the districts worst gorse infestations and to build on previous works.

The focus of the project will be to target gorse located in the Muddy and Deep Creek catchment areas which runs north of the Blampied settlement. Within this area there has been a change in the residents with many tree changers and town people moving into newly created lifestyle properties as well as farming and agriculture land. There are approximately 50 properties located in the target area. Independent works by both the

council and landholders have seen some properties take control of their gorse whilst other properties are in need of support both financial and informative. There are properties with solid gorse that extends for several hundred meters as well as properties with patches both large and small. Gorse located in the target area includes small isolated plants to the major three metre high thickets running along waterways and fence lines.

So far the project has found the uptake of grants to be slower than first anticipated, due to many absentee landholders and the reluctance by some landholders to use herbicides. However those involved have completed excellent on-ground gorse control with landholder contributions stretching well above the \$1:\$1 ratio. The group is looking at extending the target area to attract further interest. At this stage the project has signed nine landholders up to a three year voluntary agreement and has controlled 51 hectares of gorse.



‘Small Grant’ Projects

The small grants program is designed so that smaller community based groups can be empowered to implement key gorse control projects in Victoria. The small grants program in 2015/16 funded 12 projects up to \$5,000 (GST exclusive) to support community-led action.



Gorse Control – Little Coliban River 2015-16

(Proponent: Tylden Landcare Group)

VGT contribution for 2015/16	Other Contributions	Approx. hectares of control
\$2,900	\$5,700	16

Nearest town: Tylden

Gorse control is a priority for the Tylden Landcare Group and this projects achievements are complementary to the ongoing work of active individuals and groups around the area. The Tylden Landcare Group project involved four properties and achieved approximately 16 hectares of gorse control. The project target area was concentrated along and adjacent to the Little Coliban River near Tylden. This project looked at several aims including gorse control for removal of threatening processes, harbour control, encouraging native vegetation germination and protection of grazing production.

The project has effectively controlled gorse from a section along the Little Coliban River and has controlled an infestation of gorse on a nearby hillside that slopes towards the river. Looking forward, the group would like to target their control efforts to gorse patches in paddocks which are often under large old trees. The objective of these works and future works is always agricultural production and biodiversity protection.



Eradicating Isolated Outbreaks of Gorse in the Woody Yaloak Catchment

(Proponent: Woody-Yaloak Catchment Group)

VGT contribution for 2015/16	Other Contributions	Approx. hectares of control
\$3,279	\$9,494	5



Nearest town: Werneth

During 2015-2016 the Woody-Yaloak Catchment Group undertook an on-ground project that saw gorse control delivered across 66.9 hectares with a 10% gorse infestation. The project involved nine separate properties around Werneth, Illabarook, Rokewood and Pittong, which were all dealing with isolated patches of gorse.

The projects aim was to prevent the isolated outbreaks from spreading and to compliment gorse control work on nearby waterways that are being funded through the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority. The project also looked at revisiting the catchment wide mapping undertaken in 2013 and to work within two target areas (Staffordshire Reef and Corindhap) to determine effectiveness of control. In association with this project the group will look at creating two case study examples of the long term effects of the project.



Gorse Control Project

(Proponent: Damascus College Ballarat)

VGT contribution for 2015/16	Other Contributions	Approx. hectares of control
\$2,500	\$2,500	3

Nearest town: Ballarat

Damascus College occupies a 26 hectare hilltop site at Mount Clear. Gorse is present on the site as a remnant planted hedge along its north-west boundary. This has stimulated the spread of gorse seedlings that are extending into the College's bushland, covering an area of approximately 14 hectares. The site is located on the windward side of the College therefore representing potential fire hazard and risks.

This project has achieved a very high standard in its gorse control, totalling three hectares. Goldfields Weed Management undertook expert and precise spraying, safeguarding the indigenous plants amongst the gorse infestation. The College are expecting seedling regrowth in spring and will take responsibility for further treatment necessary to manage germinating gorse. It is hopeful that with further treatment in succeeding years the number of gorse plants on the property will gradually dwindle.



WAG Gorse Program 2015-2016

(Proponent: Ashbourne Landcare Group)

VGT contribution for 2015/16	Other Contributions	Approx. hectares of control
\$5,000	\$22,000	36



Nearest town: Woodend

This project is a further stage in the gorse control program that the Weed Action Group (WAG) has been conducting since 2012, in the upper catchment area of the Campaspe River. Stage one was completed with the involvement of 36 landholders and supported by the Macedon Ranges Shire complementary Roadside Weed Control Program.

This 2015-2016 project stage involved a further 25 landholders. These landholders have worked together to control approximately 36 hectares of gorse with an average plant height of 0.9 meters. All landholders were asked to match the VGT grant assistance on a \$ for \$ basis and signed a three year weed control agreement. Land holders were provided with funding for the purchase of chemical, based on a gorse infestation assessment on their properties. All labour, equipment hire or contractor charges were met by landholders.

To launch the project the ALG held a community field day where representatives discussed weed control. It was also an opportunity for participating landholders to provide maps on the gorse infestation that they were to control under their three year agreements.

Muddy Creek Gorse Control Program

(Proponent: Pierrepoint Land Protection Group)

VGT contribution for 2015/16	Other Contributions	Approx. hectares of control
\$4,940	\$4,940	5

Nearest town: Hamilton

The Muddy Creek Gorse Control Program saw two Landcare Groups join forces with the aim of controlling gorse, preventing gorse reinfestation and improving water quality. The Pierrepoint Land Protection Group coordinated two group meetings where three sites were identified within the Buckley Swamp and Muddy Creek system.

Site one achieved excellent control, with the area now being returned to productive grazing land. Small patches of germination are occurring along the roadside which the Green Army will treat later this year.

The area known as site two focused on gorse control along Muddy Creek, however treatment success was limited. The group believe in retrospect using a boom spray was not the most effective technique in that situation. When suitable the landholder will consider another control method and has plans to fence out the creek and revegetate it next year.

Site three completed works with good control, around Rifle Road and the Rifle Range and has successfully revegetated the area. The landholder continues to work along the rest of his creek frontage areas with good success.

All participating landholders and groups are committed in dealing with their gorse and keen and willing to see good follow-up over the next few years.



Wannon Tributaries Gorse Control Program

(Proponent: Hamilton to Coleraine Railway Landcare Group)

VGT contribution for 2015/16	Other Contributions	Approx. hectares of control
\$4,400	\$4,400	5



Nearest town: Hamilton

Five hectares of gorse has been controlled within three properties as part of phase two of the gorse eradication program which covers areas of the Grange Burn and McKinnon Creeks. The HCRLG has worked closely with the Southern Grampians Shire to eradicate gorse infestations on roadsides and private property. Members of the group have the area of concern mapped with the aim of funding opportunities through the local Landcare Facilitation Program.

The group will continue to work with and build relations with the Hamilton to Coleraine Reserve, the Southern Grampians Shire and the North Hamilton CFA to eradicate weeds.

All data is presented to the Landcare members through a newsletter and Landcare gatherings. The HCRLG will continue mapping new areas of gorse with the aim of involving as many landholders as possible to apply for future funding.



Gorse Control – Post Black Hill Fire (Lightning Strike 7 January 2015)

(Proponent: Upper Campaspe Landcare Network)

VGT contribution for 2015/16	Other Contributions	Approx. hectares of control
\$4,000	\$7,080	8

Nearest town: Kyneton

This project targeted gorse on seven private properties and achieved approximately eight hectares of control. The project focused on private land areas with an emphasis on controlling resprouting gorse burnt in the Black Hill fire. The Langley Landcare members also carried out an assessment using a weed prioritisation formula that identified gorse as a high priority following fire. The main aim of the project looked at gorse control to remove a threatening process, controlling harbour, encouraging native vegetation growth and protecting grazing production.

Herbicide control was the main methodology used; once the plants had regrown sufficient leaf material to absorb herbicide, foliar spray application onto recovering burnt gorse plants was undertaken. During the program other gorse patches (i.e. unburnt gorse patches) were sprayed as part of the strategy to control gorse in this area.

Interest in the project is ongoing; Langley Landcare made herbicide, dye and surfactant available to the project as a contribution to spread the project further. Other landholders have expressed interest in the project as well so this could be the beginning of a sustained control program.



Controlling Gorse Around Waterways Catchment in Murroon Area

(Proponent: Murroon Landcare Group)

VGT contribution for 2015/16	Other Contributions	Approx. hectares of control
\$5,000	\$5,000	10



Nearest towns: Birregurra and Deans Marsh

The Murroon area is predominately agricultural land with flat topography. Previous River Health projects have included woody weed removal, including willows, stock exclusion fencing and revegetation with indigenous trees and shrubs. This Victorian Gorse Taskforce funded project aimed to assist landholders in the Murroon District with ongoing management of gorse infestations along waterways and catchment areas.

The size and density of gorse infestations varied, with approximately 2.5km of a heavily infested area along the Matthews Creek as well as isolated patchy areas spread over the remainder of the catchment area. The group have targeted approximately ten hectares of gorse.

A preliminary expression of interest saw numerous landholders interested in the project. Meetings and e-mails with gorse information were also distributed. Further contact with landholders found that smaller landholders and absentee landowners were happy to manage their small amounts of gorse control without financial assistance. At this stage, four farmers have used the project incentive and completed spraying of gorse on their properties. Some very wet areas are still to be sprayed and this will be an on-going project for these areas. As the weather improves and the land along the waterways dries, these areas will be sprayed and the project funds will be exhausted.

Integrated Gorse Control in Bass Coast – Capitalising on Past Success

(Proponent: Bass Coast Landcare Network)

VGT contribution for 2015/16	Other Contributions	Approx. hectares of control
\$3,200	\$9,200	6.25

Nearest towns: Bass and San Remo

There has been significant investment in gorse control programs in this region for many years now; from the Bass Coast Shire Council and VicRoads on roadsides, Phillip Island Nature Park and Committees of Management on public land, Bass Coast Landcare Network and Victorian Gorse Taskforce on private land. Phillip Island in particular has had an enormous reduction in the extent of gorse, especially over the last ten years thanks to Matt Stephenson’s efforts while with BCLN.

During this project the BCLN has achieved approximately 6.25 hectares of gorse control dispersed over 60 hectares. The site of concern was located within the containment zone along the major road leading off Phillip Island as it had the largest untreated patches of gorse on Phillip Island. The main landholder was approached with the offer of assistance with rabbit and weed control, as part of a larger program. The landowner, for their 50% contribution, sprayed half of the gorse, and contractors sprayed the other half as well as following up on landholder’s area with great success.

This project was integrated with other gorse control programs that BCLN coordinate on behalf of the Bass Coast Shire Council, one of which focused on 11 roadsides with gorse infestations.



Gorse Removal – Upper Loddon and Avoca Landcare Network

(Proponent: Upper Loddon and Avoca Landcare Network)

VGT contribution for 2015/16	Other Contributions	Approx. hectares of control
\$4,050	\$4,370	27



Nearest town: Avoca

The assistance from the Victorian Gorse Taskforce has provided incentive to create much larger and expanded projects than were originally envisioned. This has also been due to the diligence and dedication shown by individuals in each group who are prepared to run with these projects and garner community interest and support.

The Upper Loddon and Avoca Landcare Network Facilitator assists the groups with identifying problem areas, liaising with local Shire staff and providing extra chemical when available for follow up works. The Network also own hand held sprayers and lopping tools for small jobs. These services are at no charge to member groups of the Network. The Avoca and District Landcare Group have a very active gorse project driver in the form of their President, a retired farmer who knows all the affected landowners and even absentee owners. He is vigilant in offering assistance and advice to all those who require follow up works.

Landholders in the Mount Bolton/Beckworth area now have gorse works as part of their farm plans, in fact the district is now gorse spotting for the Landcare member who drives their projects. Follow up is not an issue as it is accepted now that following up is the cheaper option to allowing gorse to become out of control. Local residents in that area are extremely proud of their efforts.

To date the project has seen approximately 27 hectares of gorse controlled across several sites, four in the Percydale-Avoca area and two sites at Glendaruel, all sites are situated on grazing land. The group was also hopeful to include a large site along McCallums Creek, which fosters significant biodiversity values along its length, however due the property being sold, it was unfortunate that control works could not be completed. The group are hoping to discover the details of the new owners in order to assist with the works at a future date.



Dallistons Road Gorse Project

(Proponent: Campaspe Valley Landcare Group)

VGT contribution for 2015/16	Other Contributions	Approx. hectares of control
\$3,000	\$3,000	36

Nearest town: Redesdale

The area of focus for this project is land adjoining Dalliston Road, Barfold. The aim is to control the gorse infestation in the area as well as protecting a clean area to the south. Gorse control has been undertaken by Campaspe Valley Landcare Group over a number of years.

This project has enabled a landowner to carry out clearing and spraying of gorse allowing double the infestation area being treated and totalling over \$12,000. Adjoining landholders with help of CVLG volunteers and others have followed the example and begun work on their own land. CVLG is working with these landowners to find additional forms of support. Bolstering this project are the partnerships with DEWLP, who has controlled gorse on crown land, through their Good Neighbour funding and the Mount Alexander Council who have also completed gorse control on roadsides that adjoin the project. The CVLG have also enlisted the help of a nearby prison team that will carry out cutting and pasting along Back Creek which runs north along Dalliston Road.

The group is hopeful that the gorse in this section of Dalliston Road can now be largely brought under control requiring only follow-up work and some replanting in the coming years.



Yellowstones Gorse Project

(Proponent: Riddles Creek Landcare Group)

VGT contribution for 2015/16	Other Contributions	Approx. hectares of control
\$3,080	\$4,580	0.4



Nearest town: Riddells Creek

This project focused on landholders who sought assistance through the Riddles Creek Landcare Group for their gorse infestations. The landowners had removed approximately 0.1h of gorse themselves manually by cutting and poisoning since purchasing the property six months ago. Gorse is located along Riddells Creek itself in the riparian zone and below the escarpment. There are also patches of gorse surrounded by grassy woodlands and farmed pasture.

The property lies within a significant environment zone due to its proximity to Riddells Creek and the Conglomerate Gully Flora and Fauna Reserve. The property is currently home to a large population of kangaroos and swamp wallabies that frequent the creek area. In total this small project saw 0.4 hectares of gorse controlled.

It is hopeful that removal of gorse from this property will also demonstrate to neighbours up and downstream the importance and relative ease with which gorse can be removed and encourage conversations and future gorse removal projects with neighbours. Once gorse is removed the owners wish to revegetate the gorse areas with indigenous plantings and have no plans of having stock in the area.

Involvement in this project will allow the owners to eradicate the gorse more quickly while at the same time building stronger partnerships with the Victorian Gorse Taskforce and Riddells Creek Landcare Group.



Victorian Gorse Taskforce



Income and Expenses



Summary of VGT income for 2015/16:

Source	Amount
Grants – DEDJTR	\$65,000.00
Interest Received	\$9,580.04
TOTAL INCOME	\$74,580.04

Summary of VGT expenses for 2015/16:

Source	Amount
Project Subsidies	\$114,048.12
Research and Promotion	\$400.00
Administration and Other Expenses	\$2,362.07
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$116,810.19



Appendix



2015/16 VGT Members

Nigel Ainsworth	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources
Jenny Blake	Golden Plains Shire
David Clark	Upper Mount Emu Landcare Network
Ron Cosgrave	North Central CMA, Natural Resource Management Committee
Doug Dalglish	Newham and District Landcare Group
Peter Everist	VGT Chair – Haddon Landcare Group / Woody Yaloak Project
Singarayer Florentine	University of Ballarat
Martin Forbes	Dales Landcare Group / Woody Yaloak Project
Peter Forster	Upper Hopkins Land Management Group
Doug May / Nicole Garfi	Executive Officer
Margaret Hatton	Sunday Creek / Sugarloaf Sub-Catchments Inc
Brian Rowe	Blampied/Kooroocheang Landcare Group
Lisette Mill	Basalt to Bay Landcare Network
Karen O’Keefe	Corangamite CMA



The VGT committee discussing the Creswick gorse project with project officer Jennifer Johnson.

