Roadside Weeds and Pests Control Program
2019 – 2022

Regional Context of Noxious Weed and Pest Animal Management

Towong Shire Council is located in the northeast of Victoria and covers approximately 6,500 square kilometres.

The landform consists of fertile river flats and sparsely treed rolling hills rising to extensive mountainous tracts of forested public land. The area is predominantly rural and includes large production farms down to smaller hobby farm plus significant commercial pine plantations.

There are low density settlements surrounding the rural townships of Mitta Mitta, Eskdale, Bethanga, Walwa and Cudgewa and urban settlements in the major centres of Tallangatta and Corryong.

Towong Shire Council is responsible for the management of a local road network of approximately 1,183km and is dedicated to managing weed infestations on Council managed land and to the early prevention and control of weed species newly identified in the area.

Through past State Government funding initiatives Towong Shire Council has monitored and, since 2015, treated approximately 4,636 km of roadsides for regionally controlled and regionally prohibited weeds as well as established pest animals. Please refer to Table 1 for a list of current target species.

The 2019-2022 Roadside Weeds and Pests Control Program (RWPCP) has been developed from visual monitoring of ongoing blackberry control carried out along local roads since 2005/06, with further refinement following programmed mapping of roadside infestations and community feedback.

Remapping of blackberry along all local roads in the Shire was completed in May 2016 and provides an indication of the achievements of the program. This mapping formed the basis for the treatment of blackberries along local roads from 2016-2018.

An analysis of the mapping completed since 2006, demonstrates that there has been approximately 70% reduction in blackberry infestation on Towong Shire roadsides. The majority of the infestations now fall in the “scattered” class and no longer fall into the highest infestation category (linear / dense). Mapping is planned to be conducted again in late 2019.

Key Stakeholder Consultation

The following agencies and groups were directly involved in the development of this plan:
- Upper Murray Blackberry Action Group
- Mitta to Murray Blackberry Action Group
- Towong Shire Plantation Sub-committee
- Leading Biosecurity Officer – North East, DEDJTR
Community involvement in development of the plan

Towong Shire Council is an active member of the Upper Murray and Mitta to Murray Blackberry Action Groups. Both groups involve wide representation from land managers and local Landcare groups.

The action groups are vigorous in implementing ongoing programs for the treatment of blackberries on private land via formal land management agreements with land owners. These groups actively coordinate with both public and plantation land managers to achieve an across-boundary approach to blackberry control.

Council is in close contact with plantation owners who play an active role in the management of blackberries along plantation boundaries. Council actively consults with the Towong Shire community via participation in Action Group meetings, phone calls, emails and correspondence/complaints directed from individuals to Council.

Council specifically encouraged community views about the RWPCP via invitations to provide feedback promoted through advertisements in local traditional and social media, posters published throughout the Shire and direct dialogue with interested parties. Feedback was also sought from the Blackberry Action Groups and the Towong Shire Plantation Sub-committee.

The plan is published on Council’s website and is available in hardcopy from Shire offices.

Policy Context

State
- Invasive Plants and Animal Policy Framework 2010
- Biosecurity Strategy for Victoria 2009
- Victorian Blackberry Strategy 2014-19
- Victorian Landcare Program Strategic Plan 2012
- Victorian Landcare Program Review Action Plan 2016

Regional
- NE Regional Weed Action Plan 2000-2004
- NE Regional Catchment Strategy 2013
- NE Waterway Strategy 2014
- North East Landcare Support Plan 2013-15

Local
Objectives

Council’s overall roadside weed management objective is the effective and proactive management of invasive species on Council managed roadsides across the Shire.

The RWPCP complements past investments made by Council. This work has been enabled through State Government initiative funding since 2005/06.

Priorities

Although the overall priority species to control is blackberry, the council has adopted a holistic approach and has taken action to treat other declared invasive plant species across the Shire, particularly where such work augments similar programs on adjoining lands.

Focus Areas

1. Treatment for the eradication of Regionally Prohibited Weed infestations.
2. Treatment for the containment or reduction in area infestations of Regionally Controlled Weeds, and established pest animals particularly but not exclusively, blackberry and rabbits – aligned to the Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions weed and rabbit compliance project areas.
3. Regularly monitoring the success of the blackberry control program along local roads.
4. Supporting community group investment in weed and pest control projects.
5. Contributing to the maintenance of previous investment in the control of Regionally Controlled and Regionally Prohibited Weeds and established pest animals.
6. Protect identified assets such as significant roadside vegetation under threat from weed invasion and encourage reintroduction of native species on treated areas.
7. Addressing other roadside declared noxious weed infestations of concern to the Shire’s community, in particular Tree of Heaven, Hawthorn, St John’s Wort, Broom, Gorse and Sweet Briar.
8. Treatment for the containment of Restricted Weed infestations.
## Target Species

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>CaLP classification</th>
<th>PRIORITY RATING (1 highest – 4 lowest)</th>
<th>Reasons for Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rabbit</td>
<td>Oryctolagus cuniculus</td>
<td>Established Pest Animal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>- Response to information received from residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackberry</td>
<td>Rubus fruticosus (agg.)</td>
<td>Regionally Controlled Weed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>- Support and contribute to community led blackberry management projects across the shire.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Demonstrate responsible land management and protection of community assets.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- To support DEDJTR CaLP Act compliance programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Briar</td>
<td>Rosa rubiginosa</td>
<td>Regionally Controlled Weed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- Treat in conjunction with Blackberry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Johns Wort</td>
<td>Hypericum perforatum</td>
<td>Regionally Controlled Weed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- Good neighbour policy only, supporting successful control on adjacent privately managed land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawthorn</td>
<td>Crataegus monogyna</td>
<td>Regionally Controlled Weed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>- Persistent woody weed. Treat in conjunction with blackberry where appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Watsonia</td>
<td>Watsonia meriana</td>
<td>Regionally Controlled Weed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- Treat in conjunction with blackberry where appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Broom</td>
<td>Cytisus scoparius</td>
<td>Regionally Controlled Weed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>- Treat in conjunction with blackberry where appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree of Heaven</td>
<td>Ailanthus altissima</td>
<td>Regionally Controlled Weed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>- Treat in conjunction with blackberry where appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weed Type</td>
<td>Scientific Name</td>
<td>Action Required</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gorse</td>
<td>Ulex europaeus</td>
<td>Regionally Controlled Weed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variegated Thistle</td>
<td>Silybum marianum</td>
<td>Regionally Controlled Weed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>African Lovegrass</td>
<td>Eragrostis curvula</td>
<td>Regionally Controlled Weed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Twiggy Mullein</td>
<td>Verbascum virgatum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fleabane</td>
<td>Conyza bonariensis</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Control Measures and Target Roadsides

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name*</th>
<th>Control Measures</th>
<th>Location of where works will be done</th>
<th>Estimate of length of roadside to be treated (Km = length of road along which both sides are treated.)</th>
<th>Approximate Annual Timing of Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rabbit</td>
<td>- Warren destruction and fumigation</td>
<td>- Random nominal locations identified to Council</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mar - May</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Blackberry   | - Spot spray application of a registered herbicide(s) in accordance with the product label  
- includes simultaneous treatment of co-located Sweet Briar, Gorse, Broom and Hawthorn | - Throughout the Shire  
- All local roads                                                              | 900 km                                                                            | Nov - Mar                               |
| St John’s Wort | - Good neighbour treatment of St John’s Wort on request                           | - Selected properties                                                      | 1 km                                                                               | Oct-Nov                                 |
| African Lovegrass | - Good neighbour treatment of African Lovegrass on request                       | - Selected properties                                                      | 1 km                                                                               | Sept-Mar                                |
| Variegated Thistle | - Good neighbour treatment of Variegated Thistle on request                      | - Selected properties                                                      | 1 km                                                                               | Sept-Dec                                |
| Tree of Heaven | - Spot spray or Cut & Paste application of a registered herbicide(s) in accordance with the product label | - Throughout the Shire  
- All local roads                                                              | 0.5 km                                                                            | Nov - Mar                               |
| Wild Watsonia | - Good neighbour treatment of Wild Watsonia on request                           | - Selected properties                                                      | 0.5 km                                                                            | Aug-Oct                                 |
|              | - Observe weed hygiene practices in conduct of local roads maintenance programs | - Throughout the Shire  
- All local roads                                                              |                                                                                                  | July - June                             |