

The Gorse Report

Newsletter of the National Gorse Task Force

Issue 3, January 2008

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Coordinators Report

Welcome to the third issue of The Gorse Report!

The National Gorse Task Force has been focusing on implementing Outcome 3 of the National Gorse Strategy - Eradication of Nationally Isolated and Scattered Gorse Infestations.

In this edition of The Gorse Report we outline a number of Gorse Eradication Programs. These project represent an extremely significant milestone in gorse management nationally. Many organisations around Australia have committed to 25 Year programs with a focus on Eradication, not just Management of Gorse.

These organisation have adopted a model which involves partnering with the National Gorse Task Force in a Memorandum of Understanding to eradicate every last plant at every site under their management and then some!

When you bring these projects together and look at their impact Nationally you can see how these organisations and individuals have made a major contribution to gorse management in Australia.

As a result of these projects gorse will be Eradicated from 6 entire NRM Regions and its northern extent in Australia reduced by 600km!!!

For further information or a copy of this newsletter visit -

www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/gorse

or contact -

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Open Invitation to Eradicate Gorse

The National Gorse Coordinator would like to hear from organisations who believe they could eradicate gorse from their local areas.

Reducing the impact of gorse nationally starts at the local level. Long term commitment is needed and often investment beyond the scope of an individual land manager.

Where eradication is feasible the National Program can assist with formation of partnerships, planning and advice.

Call Dean and tell him your story.



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National Gorse TASKFORCE



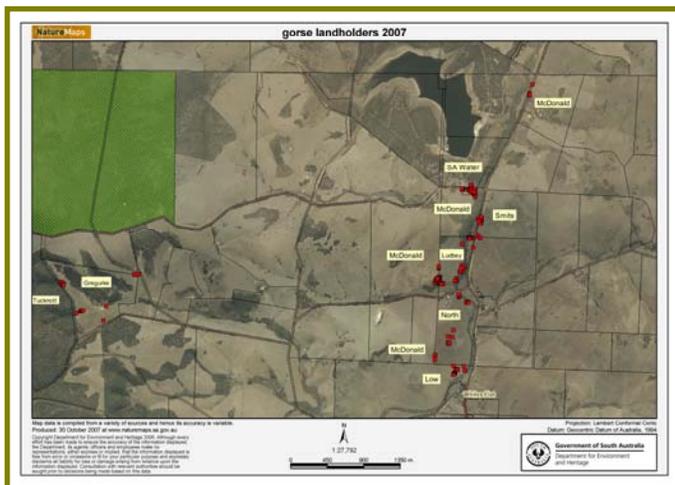
NRM Boards lead the way in Gorse Eradication in SA

Four NRM Boards in SA have shown a level of commitment in gorse management not seen in Australia before. Each of the four NRM Boards has made a 25 year commitment to make annual inspections and destroy any living gorse at defined project sites. This commitment has been made between the NRM Boards and the National Gorse Task Force by way of a Memorandum of Understanding. All infestations will be mapped to the National Mapping Standard and a search for unrecorded infestations undertaken.

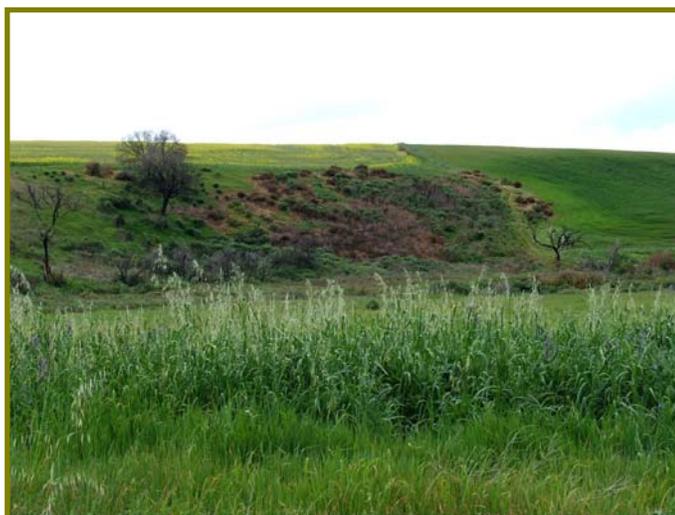
Eyre Peninsula NRM Board

The largest of these eradication projects is on the Eyre Peninsula at White Flat, involving the Eyre Peninsula NRM Board, SA Water, The Tumbly Bay and Lower Eyre Peninsula Councils and 11 Private Landowners. Mr Barry Wakelin MP launched this project in September 2007.

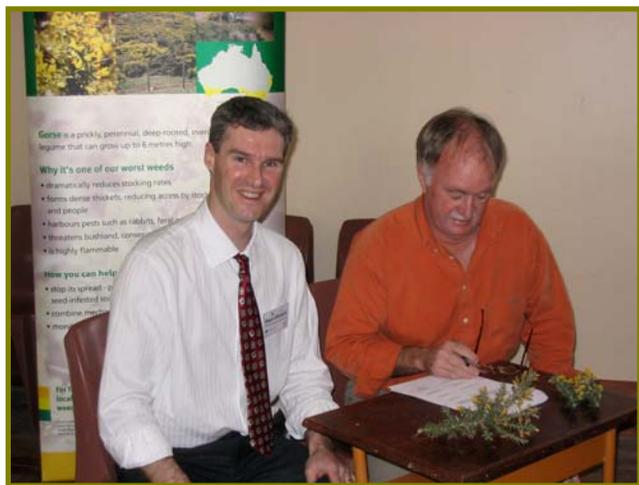
Gorse is present over about 200ha with 20 discrete infestation sites making up 8ha in total. One of the benefits of this project, through switching from an active management program to an eradication focus has been that extra infestations have been discovered. The community has got right behind Authorised Officer, Peter Sheridan's project and has been actively looking for and finding gorse infestations that even the landowners did not know they had. This project will ensure that all gorse within the Eyre Peninsula NRM Region is eradicated.



It all starts with a map - all sites mapped to the National Mapping Standard



A typical gorse infestation - sprayed out!



WONS National Gorse Coordinator, Dean Vincent and Presiding Member of the NRM Board, Brian Foster at the signing of the 25 Year MOU



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Northern and Yorke NRM Board

A commitment to a 25 year program will ensure the 4 outlying infestations in this NRM Region are eradicated. Sites at Curramulka, Jamestown, Goyder and Port Wakefield will undergo annual inspections and control. The next area of focus for this Region will be the core infestation in the Clare Valley area. For more information contact Grant Roberts at grant.roberts@nynrm.sa.gov.au

SA Murray Darling Basin NRM Board

The eradication project in this NRM Region focuses on the only infestation in the SA Murray Darling Rangelands area. Gorse is present along fence lines, roadsides and on 5 private properties over an area of 5ha. This NRM Board is working hard to manage a core infestation in the south of the Region on the east of the Adelaide Hills. For more information contact Kym Haebich at kym.haebich@internode.on.net



Roadside infestation in the Northern and Yorke NRM Region

Kangaroo Island NRM Board

The Kangaroo Island NRM Board were the first organisation in Australia to join with the National Gorse Task Force and commit to a 25 year eradication program. Gorse is present in the Parndana area where it is located on 3 private properties and is limited to 6 infestation sites. The NRM Board recently received Defeating the Weed Menace investment to control not only Gorse but the other Weeds of National Significance, Athel Pine and Blackberry. For more information contact Keith Hodder at keith.hodder@kicouncil.sa.gov.au



Roadside infestation near Hallett in the SA Murray Darling NRM Region

National Gorse Task Force Annual Meeting

In early November 07 The Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges NRM Board hosted our annual meeting. The meeting was held over 2 days with the first day being reserved for matters relating to the implementation of the National Gorse Strategy. The major outcomes from this meeting were a commitment to continue our focus on the eradication of scattered and outlying gorse infestations, see www.weeds.org.au/gorse

On the following day staff from the NRM Board led a field trip through the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu Peninsula. During the day Task Force Members received a presentation from Dr Jane Prider at one of her study sites where gorse is being attacked by the Native Dodder Vine (*Cassytha pubescens*). For more details on this project see Issue 2 of the Gorse Report at www.weeds.org.au/gorse.

NRM Board staff gave a detailed insight into gorse management within this NRM Region, the history, the successes, the lessons learnt and we saw a variety of infestations and how they were being managed. The Task Force would like to thank Dr Jane Prider, the NRM Board and the staff who assisted with the meeting and field trip. The opportunity to meet people with such experience in different areas of the country is invaluable in our efforts to implement the National Gorse Strategy.



Members of the National Gorse Task Force in front of an infestation to be targeted

For more information on the Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges NRM Region see www.a/mlnrm.sa.gov.au

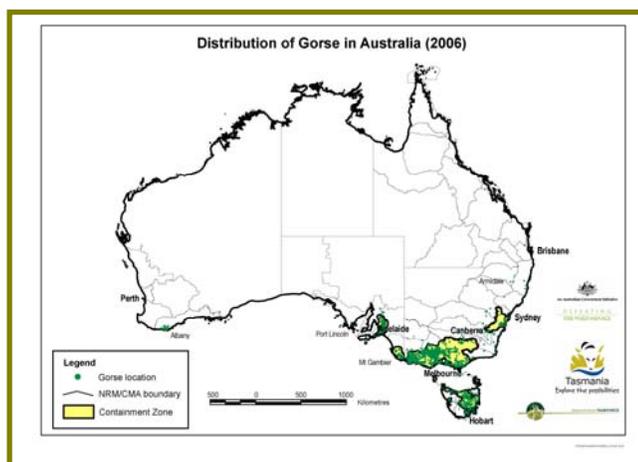
National Gorse Task Force Commends Eradication Focus in Northern NSW

The northern extent of gorse in Australia can be found in the Tenterfield Shire in NSW, just below the Queensland border. Between Tenterfield and Gosford, just north of Sydney, there are only 11 distinct gorse infestations.

This area was chosen as a focus area for eradication as a successful eradication program would reduce the range of gorse in NSW by half and reduce the northern extent in Australia by around 600km! On a state and national perspective this would be a fantastic achievement.

Most of these infestations are small, many only comprising a dozen or so plants over an area less than 1ha in size, so there is a real opportunity to stamp them out before they spread in size and distribution.

In line with the National Gorse Task Force's focus on Eradication of isolated and scattered infestations the National Gorse Coordinator contacted the 7 Local Government Authorities and 1 NSW Parks Region to find out how these infestations were being managed. Management of these sites is the responsibility of both private landowners and local government. Gorse is declared in almost all Shires in this area, for both control and eradication.



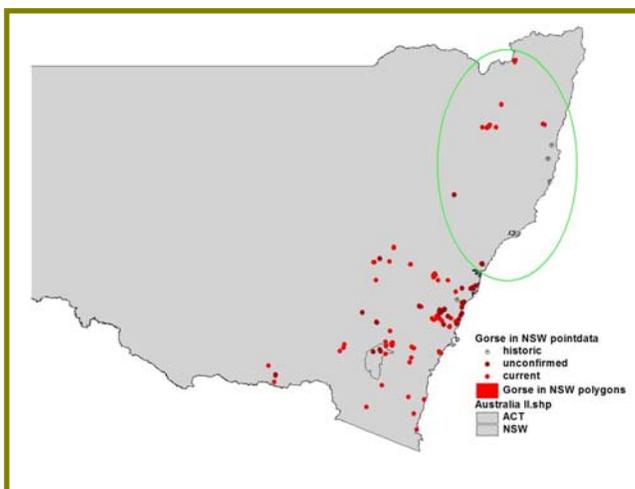
National Gorse Distribution Map

The largest infestation in northern NSW is along the Boorolong Creek (see Issue 2 of the Gorse Report) where gorse can be found along 25km of creek line. All gorse along this creek will be controlled with eradication as the focus. The seven private landowners are working with the New England Weeds Authority to implement Management Plans for their properties.

Tenterfield, Glenn Innes Severn and Kempsey Shires have shown their commitment to eradicating gorse by signing 25 Year MOU's with the National Gorse Task Force. The MOU is the same model as those described in SA. Other Shires are currently in negotiations with the Task Force.

Without exception every gorse infestation in this area of NSW is under management which will lead to eradication. Every infestation is being controlled on an annual basis, preventing seed set.

The Private Landowners, Local Government Authorities and the Parks Region are to be commended. If management of these infestations continues as it is currently, together they will reduce the northern extent of gorse in Australia by 600km!!



NSW Gorse Distribution showing Eradication Project Area

Victorian Update from the National Gorse Task Force's Victorian State Government Representative

Simon Martin
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'Community Supported Gorse Projects'

Working with Catchment Management Authorities, whose role includes strategic direction and priority setting for natural resource management, the Victorian Gorse Task Force (VGTF) helps to manage catchment based gorse control programs.

The VGTF is supported by state and local government, rural land owners and natural resource managers in its membership.

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) provides the delivery of the on-ground component of the VGTF gorse control projects across the state employing Rural Extension Officers, Pest Management Officers and Compliance Officers.

Staff provide awareness and extension, primarily individual property inspections with one on one contact to assist land owners understand their management responsibilities and adopt preferred control techniques for control of gorse.

These activities are undertaken in targeted areas developed in partnership with Landcare and catchment groups, primarily on waterways. This provides community benefit by focussing control works on avenues of spread.

In the future the VGTF strategy will attempt to focus activities on catchments such as the Wimmera, the North East and Gippsland, where gorse is not as well established as some other areas in Victoria.

Review of the Victorian Gorse Strategy

The Victorian Gorse Task Force (VGTF) has been in place 8 years and operating to a strategy developed in 1999. Obviously conditions, community attitudes and government policy have changed since then so there is a need to review the strategy in line with these changes.

The VGTF has contracted Ballarat University to undertake this task, with the Final Strategy to be launched at the next VGTF Annual General Meeting.

As part of this strategy review there has been comprehensive community consultation on the impacts and successes of the last strategy which will be incorporated into the development of the new document.

The consultants have been asked to investigate the future direction for gorse in line with the State Government Pest Management Framework and Catchment Management Authority Weed Management Plans.

The strategy has reached the draft stage and will be available for comment soon.



An Excavator Mulcher working in the Wimmera CMA NRM Region

Tasman Council Takes Out Gorse

Mel Fazackerley
Land & Coastal Management Facilitator
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Investment through the Australian Governments Defeating the Weed Menace programme and from regional stakeholders including land managers and private landowners is enabling strategic and coordinated management of gorse in the Tasman Municipality in the far south east of Tasmania.

Local Government is leading the project, which is being managed by the Tasman Councils NRM Officers. In Tasmania local government is only responsible for weed control works on land managed by the councils. In this project the local council is taking on a far greater role in coordinating control of all gorse in the municipality on all land tenures.

All gorse infestations within Tasman municipality will be treated during summer and autumn 2008. This involves around 25 infestation sites and 7 land tenures. All infestations will be mapped to the National Mapping Standard as developed by the Bureau of Rural Sciences and the data stored in a central database which will be managed by the Tasmanian department of Primary Industries and Water.

Many of the sites will be receiving their second or third treatment after previous investment through a past Greening Australia Gorse Management Project and from the land managers themselves during the last few years.



Mel Fazackerley who is the Project Manager for the Tasman project says, 'The project is very exciting, it involves every gorse infestation and every land manager. The Council and a consultant will develop a map of the infestations, ensure that all sites are treated in the best way to ensure eradication in the shortest possible time frame and are designing a system which will send annual reminder letters to the land managers, to ensure that the work is followed up.'

The National Gorse Coordinator, Mr Dean Vincent says that 'A shift in thinking from management to eradication of gorse is occurring in this municipality. This is not only a Regionally Significant Project but a Project of National Significance as the Tasman Municipality is considered as National Priority Eradication Area by the National Gorse Task Force.'

Mr Vincent has approached NRM South, the Regional NRM Committee to discuss how a regional partnership with a long term focus could achieve permanent eradication of gorse from this municipality.

In Tasmania the Parks and Wildlife agency have committed to a 25 year plan to eradicate gorse from the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The National Gorse Task Force strongly advocates this approach throughout Tasmania and interstate.



Left: A site which had 2m tall gorse, now groomed.

Top: An infestation in a quarry, sprayed out



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The Western Australia Gorse Program

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The western most range of gorse in Australia is in the south west of WA, concentrated in the Albany area. The 'Weed Watcher' database has 341 recorded infestation sites all found within 100km of the city of Albany.

This range means that gorse is located in only two NRM Regions within WA, with virtually all of these infestations within the South Coast NRM Region. Only two small sites exist within the South West NRM Region to the west of Albany.

Weed professionals from the WA Department of Agriculture and Food (WA DAF) have been recording and facilitating control of these infestations for many years. Over the last two years the South Coast NRM Region has had a strong focus on gorse management in their Region.

SC NRM in partnership with the WA DAF and other local organisations such as the Albany City Council have been unrelenting in their management of gorse during this time. Their goal is to eradicate gorse from WA.

Part of the success of the program in WA is a result of the work of a full time Project Manager. Phil Williams travels between infestations, skilling up land owners on the best management approach for their sites, providing incentives and some gentle persuasion. Phil also has a spray unit which rarely stops working.



Gorse spread through residential development is a real threat to any gorse eradication program

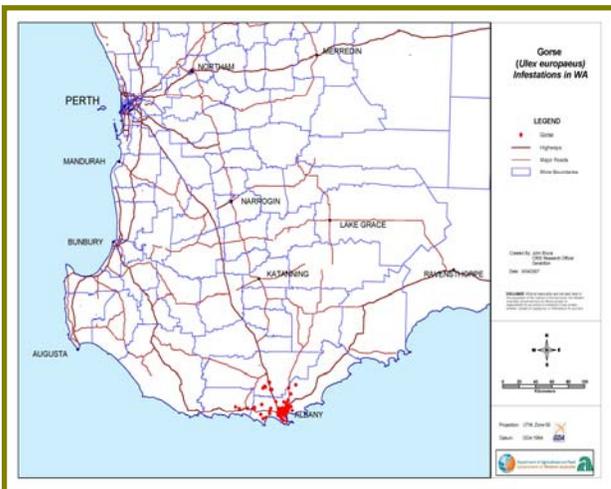
Phil has recently been joined by a full time trainee, so there now is a team tackling gorse.

One of the challenges for the program is to keep track of soil contaminated by gorse seed. Albany is seeing rapid development and with this there is always the chance that contaminated soil will be spread around the country side.

The Albany City Council and Contractors have been very good in ensuring adequate hygiene procedures are in place to reduce this threat.

As land managers become more able to control their own infestations Phil has been able to look at the project objectively, hunt out unrecorded infestation sites and to get to all sites on an annual basis.

In 2008 all infestation sites should be under a management regime which if maintained will lead to eradication of gorse from WA.



Gorse Distribution in Western Australia

Biological Control - The National Perspective

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Three gorse biological control agents are now established in Australia. These include two foliage-feeding agents, the Gorse Spider Mite and the Gorse Thrips as well as a seed-feeder, the Gorse Seed Weevil. The Gorse Spider Mite and the Gorse Seed Weevil are now widespread in Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia and NSW.

Recent efficacy studies in Tasmania have shown that the Gorse Spider Mite can cause reductions in dry matter production of around 36%. On an annual basis, damage to mature seed by the Weevil in Tasmania ranged from 12.4-55.4% of seed per pod.

Although the impact of these two agents has had some measurable impact on gorse in the field, the efficacy of the Gorse Spider Mite is being restricted by predation. Furthermore, the reduction in seed production by the Weevil is much less than the estimated minimum of 75% of seed that would need to be destroyed to have an impact on gorse populations.

The establishment of Gorse Thrips in mainland states is currently being assessed. The Gorse Thrips is already well established in Tasmania but the populations are not yet high enough to have a measurable impact in the field. However, a Tasmanian glasshouse study has shown that a combination of Gorse Thrips, ryegrass competition and simulated grazing resulted in a gorse seedling mortality of 93%. Individual and combined treatments significantly reduced the shoot dry weight of seedlings although the greatest reduction was observed when all treatments were combined.

The experiment demonstrated the potential of Gorse Thrips in an integrated control program if field populations can increase to sufficient densities.



The foliage feeding larva of the Gorse Soft Shoot Moth
(Photo courtesy of TIAR)



Kylie McGregor & Kelly Wood (DPI VIC) releasing the first Gorse Soft Shoot Moths into the field (Photo DPI VIC)

Additional agents will be required to increase the impact of biological control. The Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research, DPI Victoria and CSIRO are conducting research on additional agents with funding support provided by the Australian Government's 'Defeating the Weeds Menace Programme'.

This work has already resulted in the release of a third foliage feeding agent, the Gorse Soft Shoot Moth, in Victoria and Tasmania in October/November 2007. In addition, surveys are being conducted in Europe near the centre of evolution of the genus *Ulex* (north-west Spain and northern Portugal) during 2007/08 to search for diseased gorse specimens and to isolate, culture and identify potential host specific fungal pathogens. The introduction of additional host specific seed feeders is also being considered to augment the impact of the Gorse Seed Weevil in spring as well as reduce the autumn seed crop that currently escapes attack.

Control using integrated techniques offers the best prospects for long term control in areas where gorse is actively managed. The extent to which biological control will play a role will only be determined by future research once the full complement of available agents are established.

New biological control agents will be released in gorse infestations where access is difficult and the opportunity for other control methods is limited. If gorse is to be cleared or controlled in areas where the widely established Gorse Spider Mite and Gorse Seed Weevil are present, traditional control methods should proceed. Both agents have good dispersal abilities and can quickly reinfest gorse if it is cleared from an area and starts to grow back.

National Gorse Task Force Members



National Gorse TASKFORCE

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Australian Forest Growers

Corresponding Members

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National Weed Management Facilitator

Geoff Price

Environment ACT

Phil Maher

QLD Dept Natural Resources, Mines & Water

Coral Love

National Landcare Facilitator Project
DAFF ACT

The role of the National Gorse Taskforce is to facilitate, improve and encourage strategic National Action by coordinating the implementation of the National Gorse Strategic Plan.

The Task Force welcome contributions to the newsletter which will be circulated biannually

National Gorse Program Achievements

1995	Gorse biological control program began
2003	National Gorse Strategic Plan published
2004	National Gorse Coordinator appointed National Gorse Task Force formed
2005	National Gorse Eradication Areas identified Gorse National Priority Action Framework produced (a document that helps guide investment in gorse management and maximise public benefit)
2006	National Best Practice Manual Produced NSW gorse infestations mapped National Containment Lines developed for SA, WA, Tasmania and NSW National Gorse Map Produced
2007	Task Force Focus on Regional Eradication of Gorse Outliers Commences First 25 Year Agreement signed by Kangaroo Island NRM Board to Eradicate Gorse Gorse under eradication in 8 NRM Regions, through 25 year MOU commitments by various land managers with long term capacity to achieve eradication.

National Gorse Coordinator

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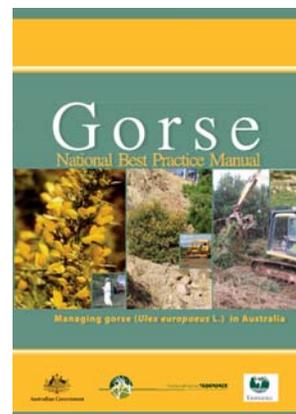
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Download your copy of the

Gorse Best Practice Manual

at www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/gorse



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