

The Gorse Report

Newsletter of the National Gorse Task Force

Issue 4, March 2009

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Best Practice Manual ready for reprint!

There are 5000 copies out there now in the hands of people having a go and doing their bit. But with stocks of the 2006 printing drying up we are going to print some more.

The new edition will look a little different and have a few minor changes but is substantially the same document so you won't need to replace yours. It is still an excellent tool to help you with your gorse management planning. If you need one urgently, you can still download the first edition from the web site at: www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/gorse

For further information or a copy of this newsletter visit - www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/gorse or contact - National Gorse Coordinator

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Hi there and welcome to the fourth issue of The Gorse Report!

My name is Michael Rowland, I have been in the position since September last year. Since the last newsletter The National Gorse Coordinator has changed. Dean Vincent is now coordinating the Protected Areas on Private Land Program, a program which contributes to the National Reserve system.

To introduce myself, I might just give you a brief picture of my background. I have worked in Natural Resource Management for about 20 years now and coming from a teaching background also have a degree in Education. Some of my roles have included working with insects and mammal ecology in forestry, sea-stars and intertidal marine research, school based bush land protection and lots and lots of weed management. I have recently come to the position from managing a landscape scale NRM planning project in Southern



Tasmania called Biolinks. Biolinks focused on planning connectivity in the natural environment using digital mapping and satellite imagery and then improving and restoring habitat for wildlife and bush land protection through support funding for landholders. Gorse has certainly been one of the species on my radar and I am excited to be here making a difference.

It has been fantastic to see how much has been achieved by the community and land managers across Australia. I have not had a lot of time to get out and meet with many gorse managers yet so I hope to be out on the ground working with more of you to support you with gorse eradication!

Michael Rowland
National Gorse Coordinator



Australian Government
Defeating the Weed Menace



National Gorse TASKFORCE



Coordinators Report

During the past 6 months the National Gorse Task Force has continued focusing on implementing Outcome 3 of the National Gorse Strategy – ‘Eradication of nationally isolated and scattered gorse infestations’ and also implementing the final stages of the Defeating the Weed Menace Programme

This edition of the Gorse Report outlines gorse management activities which have occurred in South Australia and Western Australia. In the Next edition I will focus on Victoria, NSW and Tasmania.

With the Nationally significant signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) In Western Australia by South Coast NRM, we now have 17 organisations around Australia which have made 25 year signed commitments to eradicate gorse from their jurisdictions, not just manage it.

These organisation have adopted a model which involves partnering with the National Gorse Task Force in a 25 year MOU to eradicate every last plant at every site under their management! All of the gorse in Western Australia which is located in the South Coast NRM Region will be eradicated. In fact most of it has already gone. Those Western Australians don’t muck about!



Root Raking with an Excavator – Sandy Leighton

As a result of these commitments, gorse will be eradicated from:

- an entire state,
- 6 entire NRM Regions, and
- 10 local government areas.

These activities represent extremely significant milestones in gorse management nationally.

Most of the Northern NSW Gorse has gone, All of the Gorse in South East South Australia has been treated. Now the northern extent in Australia is reduced by 600km and the western extent by 1700km!!! The strategy of dealing with outlying infestations means that now gorse is being contained to The Mt Lofty Ranges in SA, Victoria and Tasmania.

When you bring these projects together and look at their effect across Australia, there are more and more big green areas on the map (p.5) where local governments and NRM regions have taken a stand to say ‘we are going to take this seriously!’ These actions are a major contribution to gorse management in Australia and represent a significant shift in attitude to the way we as a community deal with a very big problem. Why is this happening? Because the community are taking responsibility to look after their patch.

Well done gorse managers!



Gorse infestation , Buckland TAS. Jonah Gouldthorpe

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The Western Australia First to Eradicated Gorse

Federal Minister for Agriculture Passes the Gorse Baton in Albany WA.

As you may recall in the last **Gorse Report** the western most range of gorse in Australia is in the south west of WA, concentrated in the Albany area. The Western Australian 'weed watcher' database shows 341 recorded infestation sites all found within 100km of the city of Albany. All together the infestations cover about 200 hectares. South Coast NRM inc (SCNRM). have agreed to commit to eradicating gorse from the region and to maintain vigilance in this aim for the next 25 years! They have signed an Memorandum of Understanding to guarantee it!

On January the 6th this year, to commemorate the Launch of the \$80,000 gorse eradication project in Perth Western Australia, The Federal Minister for Agriculture The Hon Mr. Tony Burke accepted and launched the first Gorse Baton. The Gorse Baton is a piece of (clean) yellow painted sewerage pipe and holds a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding and a sprig of gorse. There were three batons given out that day. In addition to Minister Burkes personal baton, a large Version was presented to



Chair of the National GorseTaskForce Ian Sauer, looking on as South Coast NRM Chair Alex Campbell, receives the Gorse Baton from Minister Tony Burke.



Chair of the National GorseTaskForce Ian Sauer, South Coast NRM Chair Alex Campbell, Minister Tony Burke and Community Champion Chris Gilmour.

the SCNRM Chair Mr Alex Campbell which contained the maps of the locations, the Signed MOU, and a flash drive carrying the mapping data and documents. The third and perhaps most important baton went to a community member Mr Chris Gilmour who has been a well known local farmer and community champion in the region for many years. Mr Gilmour's role is to be the memory in the community. Chris signed a Custodianship certificate which is a pledge to keep an eye on the landscape to see that the weed managers maintain their vigilance and ensure the MOU agreement is upheld.

Risk management of the MOU system failing has been in the mind of the TaskForce because there is a possibility that staff turnover in some places will mean the knowledge of the locations and commitment may be lost. So we have commenced the implementation of passing out the 'Gorse Baton'. This is simply a document tube made from sewer pipe but we feel it contains the key to longevity of the program.



Trials of different herbicides are underway in this industrial site in Albany. Most of the Gorse in WA occurs within the town boundary and so the Albany City Council have to be vigilant with the transport of soil on and around these sites

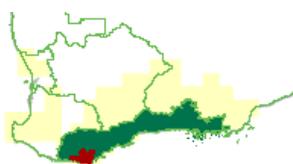
The Gorse Report

The National Gorse Taskforce with Dean Vincent, as the previous WoNS National Gorse Coordinator established a system of commitment from regional NRM bodies (and Catchment Management Authorities CMA) and local governments across Australia where they were invited to sign Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) to commit to the eradication of gorse in their jurisdiction for 25 years! Kangaroo Island was the first of 23 organisations across Australia to make this commitment and in some of those the gorse above ground has already been completely removed.



Innovative weed management tools designed for forestry but fantastic for nasty prickly weeds like gorse.!

South coast NRM shown here in green have signed on for 25 year to eradicate gorse



Killing gorse above the ground is a challenge and may require considerable resources. Seed longevity is actually unknown but the best estimates seem to be in the order of 25 to 30 years. However as so many (millions) of seed are produced, after 25years there may still be some left. Most of the seed germinates in the first few years but the large seed bank means there will be germination for many years following parent plant removal.

Some people balk at a 25 year commitment arguing all of the excuses they can to suggest eradication can't be achieved. "People move on", "people forget", "seed is too hard to deal with...". "What if the soil containing the seed is moved? How will records be kept? What if the funding stream fails?"

Yes it is hard work and there are lots of excuses *not* to commit but there are many Australians who have committed! Those organisations and the communities within them have a long term view and are doing the work! And they are winning because they have made the decision to do it and to follow through. With the MOU embedded in the business plans of the Local Government areas and Catchment Management Authorities there is an annual trigger to remember the commitment; and now with a community member pledging to remember. "we **will** eradicate gorse!" Well Done WA!!



Simon Wilkinson explains the benefits of dedicated machinery used for weed infestations managing difficult species such as gorse to the launch participants in Albany. Left to right John Moore, Alex Campbell, Simon Wilkinson, Minister Tony Burke, Rob Edkins.



The Gorse Batons

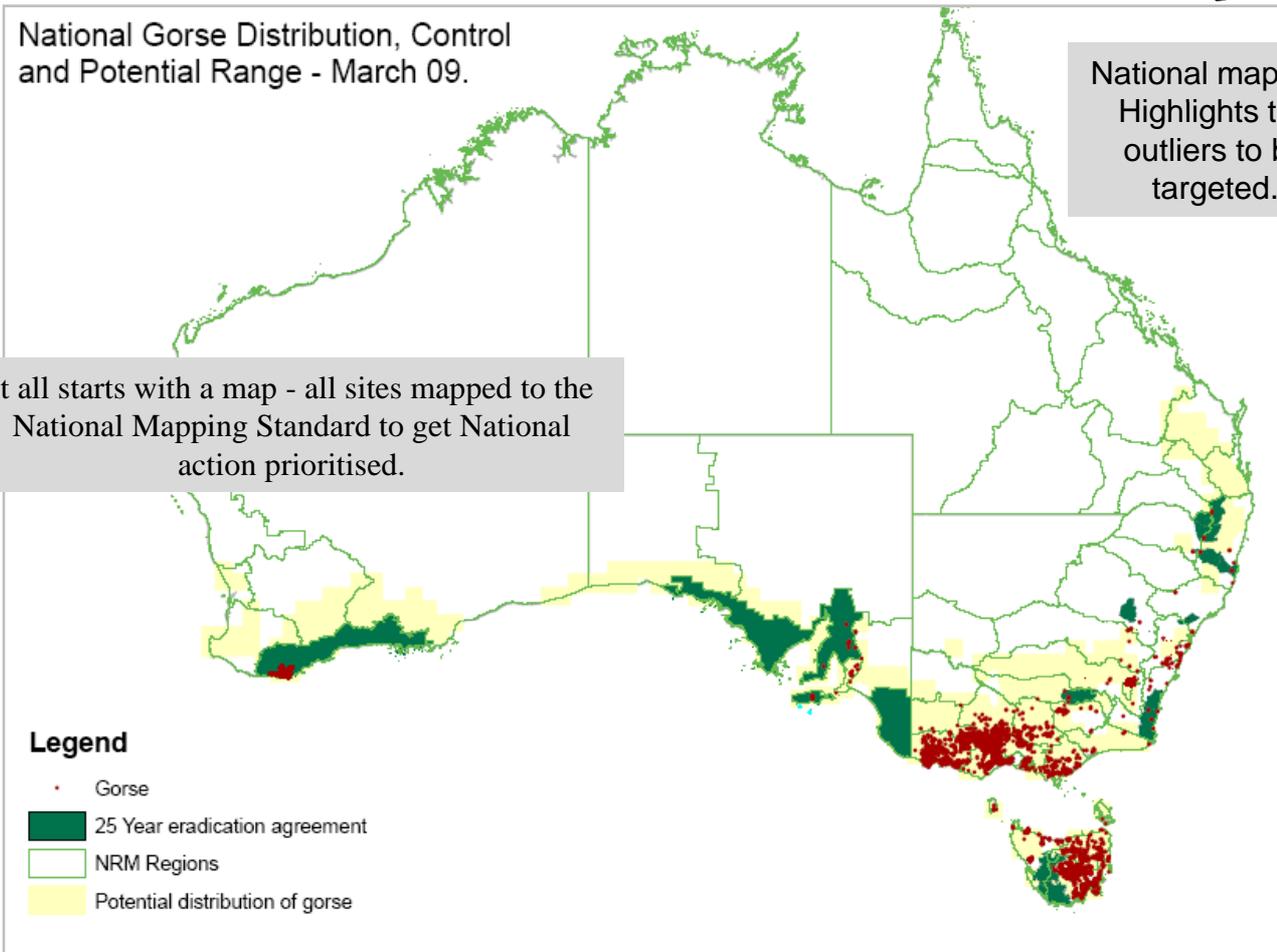
WA Agriculture Minister Terry Redman sharing a few words about gorse management with Michael Rowland National Gorse Coordinator.



National Gorse Distribution, Control and Potential Range - March 09.

National mapping Highlights the outliers to be targeted.

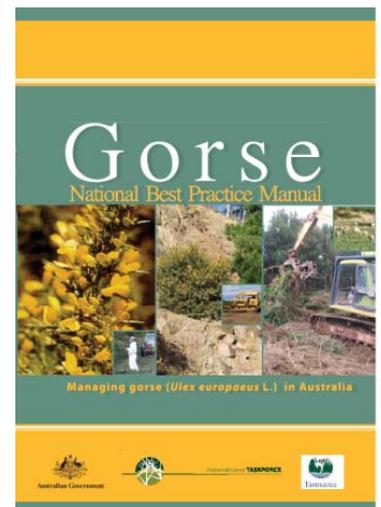
It all starts with a map - all sites mapped to the National Mapping Standard to get National action prioritised.



Mapping plays a vital part in the planning of any weed eradication program. Where comparatively simple or light infestations occur such as the Western Australian or Northern NSW sites. It is possible to ‘see’ the work done before you start. But where there are thousands of acres covered with a pest species, the job requires careful planning and implementation.

Critics might say “mapping is a waste of time, you should just get out there’n’ kill the mongrels”. There is also the argument that residents of the areas with light infestations are less effected and so don’t see the urgency. But given time, those light infestations may soon become a problem. As you can see above the yellow areas are where gorse *could* spread to if we let it! Weeds don’t move as fast a cane toads but I expect you can see my point.

So mapping gives you the capacity to stand back from the problem and have a good look to pick out the most important targets. It also gives you the benefit of hindsight. Assessing what you have done, has it worked? What should we change?



Download your copy of the Gorse Best Practice Manual at www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/gorse

South East NRM Board SA

Progress toward eradicating gorse in South Eastern South Australia has achieved a critical milestone. South East NRM have treated or removed **all** above ground infestations in their Region!. AND They have a programmed, recurrent management plan to (in the words of professor Moody) **maintain constant vigilance!** This is excellent news! Over 200 hectares in their region now treated! Well Done SENRMB!



Anton Kurray inspects gorse seedlings germinating to be followed up after spraying at Allendale.

An interesting thing we have discovered is how each region or area across Australia use the Best practice Manual to design their own method according to their climate and conditions. There is no single way to be successful and costing is an important factor in the planning. The South East team are spraying accessible gorse and grooming (Mulching) later. But they are grooming large infestations first, spraying re-growth and then sowing to pasture and boom spraying again. The final spot spraying remains the land holders responsibility but is overseen by the NRM compliance officers.



Here Deb Lang and Anton Kurray are inspecting some seedlings 2 years after the grooming of a 3 meter high infestation which covered the entire paddock. This last boom spray completed and it should only be spot spraying from here on.

Down on the Fleurieu Peninsula there use to be a lot more gorse than there is now . And the

Adelaide & Mt Lofty Ranges NRM

same can be said for the Eyre peninsula as well but I want to mention just one of the champions who have been battling gorse for years. Chas Hilder who works as the compliance officer for the AMLR NRM Board has been battling weeds for years. What Chas possesses like many other in his field is the knowledge of the **history** of weed management. What he knows must be recorded. The locations where weeds have been **eradicated** is very important. To attract future funding and corporate support for weed

This hill top was covered in gorse in 2005 - Deep creek national Park SA



management we have to be able to show what we have achieved. The best way to do this is with mapping. Taking the time to record your work and achievements is vital not only for ongoing support but also for organisational hindsight. It is wise to hold on to corporate knowledge in a usable format.

Bio-control - gorse seed weevil is visibly effective here where gorse clumps have **not** spread.



Chas Hilder and Lisa Blake inspecting seedling re-growth at Deep creek National Park. On this particular gorse bush the seed weevil has NOT been so successful. Seedlings are 'on-the-move'. Seed weevil has an annual life cycle whereas Gorse can flower and seed twice per year.

National Gorse Task Force Members

Ian Sauer

Chairman National Gorse Task Force

Michael Rowland

National Gorse Coordinator
House and hosted by TAS Dept Primary Industries & Water

Shauna Potter

SA Dept of Water, Land & Biodiversity Conservation (Also WoNS Asparagus plants Coordinator)

Shane Herbertson

VIC Dept of Primary Industries

Position vacant

Dept Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry
Australian Capital Territory

Mitch Michelmore

Dept Primary Industries
New South Wales

John Moore

Dept of Agriculture and Food
Western Australia

Dr. Peter Everist

Community Representative and
Victorian Gorse Task Force President

Karen Stewart

TAS Dept Primary Industries & Water

Warwick Ragg

Forest Industry Representative
Australian Forest Growers

Corresponding Members

John Thorp

National Weed Management Facilitator

Geoff Price

Environment ACT

Phil Maher

QLD Dept Natural Resources, Mines & Water

Coral Love

National Landcare Facilitator Project
DAFF ACT



National Gorse TASKFORCE

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.
2008	Partnership agreements signed by X organisations. 2 Western Australia commence plan to eradicate all the known gorse from Western Australia
2009	Launch of the Western Australian Defeating the Weed Menace Programme and hand over of the first Gorse Baton
2009	2 nd edition of the Gorse Best practice Manual printed for release.

We're on the web!
www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/gorse

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