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KANGAROO ISLAND'S BLACKBERRY PROGRAM

In 2007 South Australia's Department for Environment and Heritage started a program to combat **Weeds of National Significance (WoNS)** on Kangaroo Island as part of a **Defeating the Weed Menace Initiative**. In 2008 with further funding from the Kangaroo Island Natural Resource Management Board the project evolved to focus on "Sleepers Weeds" on the island and again **WoNS** were at the top of the list.

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Blackberry mixed with *Acacia paradoxa* (Prickly Acacia) and *Muehlenbeckia adpressa* (Climbing Lignum) at Western Cove, Kangaroo Island, South Australia .

Photo: Susan Ivory

We would love to hear of any blackberry projects and success stories especially those implementing actions in the National Blackberry Strategy (2001)

Please contact:

Penny

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Kangaroo Island is in the fortunate position of have a natural sea barrier to weeds on the mainland but this hasn't stopped some weeds from jumping the garden fence and getting a foot hold. Blackberry is one of those weeds on Kangaroo Island. We have 12 known sites established on the island that range from one or two road side plants, scattered plants in creek lines, to a patch of 15,000m2. At this stage the low number of known populations means that eradication is a real possibility.

The first stage of the program involves confirming recent and historical sightings and collecting specimens for identification. At this stage, with the help of the State Herbarium of South Australia, we have identified **Loganberry**, *R. loganobaccus*, and **European blackberry**, *R. ulmifolius* and *R. anglocandicans*. Though Loganberry is not a declared weed in South Australia it is proving to be weedy, accounting for 4 of the 8 identified specimens.

The next stage of the program will be to survey creek lines and surrounding properties to determine the extent of the infestation and locate new infestations.

Kangaroo Island does not have foxes, an important pest vector, and this may have contributed to the very slow spread of historical populations. A feral population of peacocks is trying its best to fill this niche!

Stage three will involve control of all known populations in the next spring / summer. Since we are aiming at eradication it is important that initial control is thorough and follow-up monitoring and control is rigorously pursued. This will be the main focus of a 5 year control strategy for blackberry on Kangaroo Island together with continued public education.

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Supported by the State Government of Victoria



Australian Government



National Blackberry Program

NATIONAL BLACKBERRY TASKFORCE NEWS

Identifying Blackberry to Assist With Control Measures

Over 150 weed professionals participated in a series of nine Blackberry species identification workshops held nationally over the summer of 2007/2008. The workshops, run by The NSW Department of Primary Industries and Weeds CRC education team, with Defeating the Weeds Menace Program funding were held to improve the skills of weed professionals in identification of blackberry species with the view to helping with control programs. Course organisers appreciated the efforts of local groups in providing funding to expand the program from the original 5 workshops to 9 to meet demand. The one day workshop centred around the use of the CD-ROM **Blackberry, an identification tool to introduced and native Rubus in Australia** and also included segments on the Blackberry rust fungus, how to collect and submit Blackberry samples to herbaria for formal identification and the correct application of chemicals for effective blackberry control.

Participants were very positive about the workshops and found the most useful aspects were the ease of Blackberry species identification using the computerised identification key, the variation between blackberry samples displayed, seeing other states Blackberry samples, talks on rust and chemicals especially on effectiveness and rates.

A number of species were identified which had not been mapped on the Blackberry Identification CD-ROM and participants intended to send samples in to the herbaria for confirmation of their identification

The NBT and NSW DPI are seeking funding to hold more workshops and commence Blackberry species mapping over the 2008/09 summer months. For further updates see the weeds Australia website:

<http://www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/blackberry>

The Blackberry identification tool to introduced and native Rubus in Australia CD Rom by Robyn and Bill Barker, State Herbarium of South Australia can be purchased from the University of Queensland website: www.cbit.uq.edu.au/software/blackberry/

A series of fact sheets are available on the Weeds CRC Website: www.weedscrc.org.au/publications/factsheets_guidelines.html under integrated weed management.



Workshop participants enjoying examining blackberry samples for identification using the Blackberry Identification CD-ROM

Photo: Annette Beer

BLACKBERRY MANAGEMENT DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM (DSS) TO BE TRIALLED.

Blackberry, a **Weed of National Significance (WoNS)**, is regarded as one of the most serious weeds in Australia because of its invasiveness, and economic and environmental impacts.

Being so widespread, land managers are often at a loss to decide the best management approach for blackberry in any given area.

A Blackberry Management Decision Support System (DSS) Tool has been developed by DPI Victoria's Weed Risk Assessment team with funding from the Australian Government's **Defeating the Weed Menace Programme**.

The National Blackberry Taskforce saw the need for a decision making 'tool' that can be used by land managers to decide the optimum blackberry goals and management actions in terms of exclusion, eradication, containment and control to reduce impact or prevent spread.

The Chairman of the Project's steering committee, Mr. Alex Arbuthnot says the support tool consists of a flow chart or decision tree, which takes users through a series of steps to come to the most appropriate blackberry management goal for their area.

"It was developed at a national workshop attended by twenty 'blackberry experts' then refined in consultation with workshop participants and other 'experts' in the areas of blackberry ecology, management and developing priority setting systems," Mr Arbuthnot said

"The DSS tool will be trialled at a regional, catchment or sub catchment scale to give people a chance to suggest improvements and give feedback on its useability.

"At the end of the trial the decision 'tool' will be available for groups who have a need to determine the most appropriate blackberry management goals for their area.

It is expected to be available to land managers by October 2008.

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National Blackberry Program



INVASION OF NATIVE VEGETATION BY BLACKBERRY LISTED UNDER THE FLORA AND FAUNA GUARANTEE ACT

Invasion of native vegetation by Blackberry *Rubus fruticosus* L. agg. has been listed as a Potentially Threatening Process under Victoria's **Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988** (FFG Act) (Victorian Government Gazette 30 March 2006 p.641). The FFG Act is a key piece of Victorian legislation with the objective of conserving threatened species and communities and to manage potentially threatening processes.

The invasion of native vegetation by environmental weeds has already been listed as a potentially threatening process under the FFG Act. However, blackberry infestation of native vegetation is such a widespread and significant problem economically and ecologically in Victoria and indeed Australia, that it warrants being listed in its own right so that an action plan is prepared specifically for the item. (SAC (2005) Final Recommendation on a nomination for listing: Invasion of native vegetation by Blackberry *Rubus fruticosus* L. agg. (Nomination No. 733). Scientific Advisory Committee, Flora and Fauna Guarantee. Department of Sustainability and Environment: Melbourne.)

Blackberry is one of Victoria's most aggressive and invasive weeds and is a declared noxious weed in every state and territory except the NT (Australian Weeds Committee 2004). In Victoria alone, approximately 60% of bushland encompassing a wide variety of habitats is considered vulnerable to Blackberry invasion. The *Rubus fruticosus* aggregate poses a serious threat to many species and communities on a local scale, including at least 10 plant species and one insect species that are regarded as threatened in Victoria. (SAC (2005) Final Recommendation on a nomination for listing: Invasion of native vegetation by Blackberry *Rubus fruticosus* L. agg. (Nomination No. 733). Scientific Advisory Committee, Flora and Fauna Guarantee. Department of Sustainability and Environment: Melbourne).



Blackberry infesting native vegetation in Tasmania .**Photo: Penny Richards**

Blackberry's listing under the FFG Act provides a legal and administrative framework to monitor and manage its invasion of native vegetation. The yet to be completed action plan aims to promote cooperative management, provide community education and offer incentives to landowners to practice effective control methods.

Recognition of the importance of the invasion of native vegetation by Blackberry under the FFG Act is another contribution to achieving the goals of the National and Victorian Blackberry Strategies (2001).

For further information

www.dse.vic.gov.au (search for FFG)

Victorian Government Gazette 30 March 2006 p.641

SAC (2005) Final Recommendation on a nomination for listing: Invasion of native vegetation by Blackberry *Rubus fruticosus* L. agg. (Nomination No. 733). Scientific Advisory Committee, Flora and Fauna Guarantee. Department of Sustainability and Environment: Melbourne).

Invasive Species as threatening processes under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act – Blackberry Listed, in *Under Control*, Pest Plant And Animal Management News, No.34. June 2006. Department of Primary Industries, Department of Sustainability and Environment- Victoria .p.14.

SOME OF OUR NATIVE RUBUS SPECIES

There are currently 11 Blackberry (*Rubus*) species native to Australia, that are not known to be weedy. (A.R. Bean 1995, 1997a, b)

Two of these species are profiled here:

1. The relatively common *Rubus parvifolius*- Small-leaf bramble; known in SA, Tas, Vic, NSW, and Qld, and
2. *Rubus moorei* or Silky Bramble.

Rubus parvifolius--Small-Leaf Bramble

Rubus parvifolius is the most widely distributed native species of *Rubus* in Australia. It extends from central Queensland along the east coast to Victoria and Tasmania and from eastern Victoria in wetter areas along the coast-line across to the Mt Lofty Ranges in South Australia.



Similar to blackberry but not as aggressive, this native 'raspberry' has small bright pink flowers in spring and summer followed by red edible fruits with prickly stems growing to 60cm.

The leaves and root of this small evergreen shrub are known to treat skin diseases.

For further information see:

- Hunter and Central Coast regional environmental management strategy

www.lhccrems.nsw.gov.au/CPR/CPR/plant_profiles/r.parvifolius.htm

- Plants for a Future

www.pfaf.org/database/plants.php?Rubus+parvifolius

Rubus moorei, Silky bramble

Rubus moorei is generally confined to a distribution from Lismore in NSW to Conondale Ranges, Queensland, but can also be found in a few select areas around O'Reillys Guesthouse and adjacent to Lamington National Park.

This is a climbing species that is capable of reaching high into the canopy of the rainforests in which it is found. The palmate leaves are characterised by silky hairs on their undersides and a toothed margin.

Individual plants are either male or female (dioecious) and produce white flowers with petals measuring 1cm. Fruits produced in summer are red to black when ripe and measures approx 2.5cm.



Rubus moorei growing as a native climber in rainforest , Springbrook QLD.

For more information visit sources used:

<http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&vl=sp&name=Rubus-moorei>

<http://www.sgapqld.org.au/article37.html>

Photo ; Penny Richards



National Blackberry Program

VICTORIAN BLACKBERRY TASKFORCE EXPANDS THE COMMUNITY WEED MODEL IN THE MITTA VALLEY

Victoria's Mitta Valley boasts some of the best trout waters in the state and perhaps some of the hardest to reach blackberry bushes.

The Mitta region is now part of the Victorian North-East Blackberry Action Group and has received \$10,000 from the Victorian Blackberry Taskforce (VBT).

The VBT promotes community ownership of blackberry management by employing the Community Weed Model (CWM).

The CWM encourages all land managers to accept responsibility for the management of their blackberry and supports them to achieve positive results in an agreed timeframe.



Hugh Paton from the Mitta Valley in Victoria was presented with a cheque from Lyn Coulston, Victorian Blackberry Taskforce Chair.

Community-driven projects have achieved some remarkable results across the state.

"Their success is due to local knowledge and local interest, and coming up with ways to overcome the barriers to sustainable blackberry management," said Victorian Blackberry Taskforce Chairperson Lyn Coulston.

The Upper Murray Steering Committee is sending letters to landholders. The committee is excited about reducing the spread of blackberry across the valley and looks forward to seeing the landscape change within a few years.

For further information contact: Michael Reid, Victorian Blackberry coordinator,

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Or see : <http://vicblackberrytaskforce.com.au>

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Caring for our Country Open Grants

Call for Applications 2008-09

Funding is up to \$25 million for 2008-09, funding is targeted for Caring for our Country priority areas, which are listed at the website. <http://www.nrm.gov.au/funding/open.html> .

This round will fund projects costing from \$80,000 to \$400,000 that can be delivered in a timely manner with measurable outcomes by 30 June 2009, but will also accept projects that can be completed within 12 months.

Closing date for applications is 5.00 pm (AEST)

Friday 1 August 2008.

Funding for activities for Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) can be made that address a number of themes and criteria including threats to biodiversity, coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats and Reducing the Impact of Invasive Plant and Animal Species on agriculture

See the website <http://www.nrm.gov.au/funding/open.html> for further information and the application forms.

If you are interested in submitting an application for Blackberry and would like assistance or support from the National Blackberry Taskforce please contact the National Blackberry Coordinator .

Community Coastcare Funding

Community Coastcare is part of the new Australian Government's Caring for our Country package of activities contributing to the coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats priority outcome.

Applications for funding close on **Friday, 25th of July 2008** at 5:00pm.

Applications are aimed at protecting and rehabilitating our coastal and critical aquatic waterways and landscapes. This can be by means of physical work, education in skills and knowledge or protecting cultural values. This could involve education and removal of blackberry infestations!

Funding is available to a wide variety of applicants including incorporated community and non-government organisations, schools, Landcare groups, surf clubs, individuals, partnerships or trusts and government organisations amongst numerous others.

Applications must meet specified criteria. To ensure your application has the best chance of success please read the instructions for applicants on the new Caring for our Country website at: <http://www.nrm.gov.au/funding/coastcare.html>

UP COMING EVENTS

Bandicoots and Blackberry Field Studies SA

Dates and Locations in South Australia

Cherry Gardens 30 June - 18 July 2008

Fleurieu Peninsula 21 - 29 July 2008

Cherry Gardens 8 - 22 October 2008

Fleurieu Peninsula 23 - 31 October 2008

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National Blackberry Taskforce tour to Kangaroo Island, SA
29th July

If you are planning a Blackberry related event and would like to advertise it in this newsletter, please forward details of the event to the National Blackberry Coordinator

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We're on the Web! www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/blackberry