

# VBTnews

VICTORIAN BLACKBERRY TASKFORCE

## COOPERATIVE BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT PILOT PROJECT

Four landholders, who have engaged in the North East Blackberry Action Group (NEBAG) program for several years and adjoin an 80-acre patch of forest at Walwa, are involved in a cooperative public land management pilot program.

The blackberries in this patch haven't been treated for several years under the Good Neighbour Program, due to reduced funding.

At the Invasive Species Workshop in the Upper Murray in 2016 it was suggested that landholders could be given permission and herbicide to treat blackberries in Crown Land which are impacting on biodiversity values on both sides of the fence.

NEBAG took this suggestion and approached 4 landholders who are or have been participants in the NEBAG blackberry control program to see if they would be interested in participating. All have high levels of blackberry management on their properties and border public land with contiguous boundaries.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DEWLP) was asked to consider a pilot program, which they did.

NEBAG proposed stringent requirements for the pilot - that landholders have an active Blackberry Management Plan, an ACUP, no glyphosate to be used, records kept on treatment dates, time, conditions, photo record etc.



COOPERATIVE BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT - WALWA

DELWP conducted an induction and briefing session for the landholders outlining their conditions and requirements.

The chemical treatment sessions were arranged as a Landcare event, with a project officer attending and suitable herbicide supplied. The aim is to reduce blackberry infestation and impacts on the native species within the site and on private land over three years.

The project methodology and progress is being documented and results recorded.

This will be available on the VBT website before the end of June. After three years an evaluation will look at all aspects of the pilot to see if the objective has been achieved.

# Blackberryaction



CHARLES KIDD - WALWA LANDHOLDER

## NEBAG DEMONSTRATES LAND-SCAPE CHANGE

Victorian Blackberry Taskforce (VBT) and North East Blackberry Action Group (NEBAG) committee members toured the NEBAG project area on the 14th December. The bus tour visited localities of Towong, Tintalra, Walwa, Cudgewa and Wabba Gap, where delegates listened to program participants outlining their personal journeys.

The day began with a presentation from the North East Blackberry Action Group, who highlighted the landscape change over a 10 year period on private /public land and council roadsides. The two maps from 2006 and 2017 showed an enormous reduction in blackberry.

The bus tour started with a visit to an organic dairy farm, the location of the VBT's pine oil demonstration site. It was an opportunity for delegates to appreciate the difficulties in adequately controlling blackberry and being organic. For more information on the demonstration site, follow the link at [www.vicblackberrytaskforce.com.au/managebb/NonChemical\\_control01.html](http://www.vicblackberrytaskforce.com.au/managebb/NonChemical_control01.html)

NEBAG, for over 10 years, has collaborated with and supported public land managers, which was highlighted by a visit to Neils Bend, a Murray River Reserve managed by Parks Victoria. The group has supported Parks Victoria by sourcing funds to assist in the management of a number of these reserves along the Murray River.

Charles Kidd, a Walwa Landholder on NEBAG's Program, gave an inspiring speech about the support via the group's project officer. This was invaluable to him in reducing the impact of blackberry on his property.

His chemical output has reduced remarkably since joining the program. Currently his control program is at a maintenance level. Charles Kidd's program experiences are highlighted in a VBT Case study video: [www.vicblackberrytaskforce.com.au/vbt\\_vcs\\_nebag\\_asset.html](http://www.vicblackberrytaskforce.com.au/vbt_vcs_nebag_asset.html)

A visit to a Cudgewa North property gave delegates a chance to appreciate the real economic costs of blackberry. Kelly and Murray initially purchased the property at a price that reflected the amount of blackberry on the property. Kelly outlined the effort required each year since taking ownership and have now increased the carrying capacity to a point where this property is almost self-sufficient.

Our last visit really encapsulated the difficulties of controlling blackberry in the Upper Murray. Ian's property is steep and like many property owners in the region, he has difficulty safely accessing blackberry infestations.

NEBAG has shown the need to tailor a program to meet community needs and while not providing any herbicide incentive will assist with the costs of track installation where there are clear benefits to controlling blackberry in remnant vegetation.

## FORUM 'WHITTLESEA FORUM'

MAY 18TH, 9AM - 3PM  
Emerging Challenges And Opportunities For  
Invasive Species Management  
WHITTLESEA GOLF CLUB

See page 4 for further details.

## RESEARCH: Noxious Weed Control Spraying in Mature Pine Plantations - HVP Plantations at Shelley

It is with great excitement I report on a fairly new operation in our more mature pine plantation. Seeing real improvement in our control of the blackberry and other weeds is quite satisfying as a land manager.

A Skidder (forestry tractor) with a 1,500l spray tank and three cluster jets is used to apply the herbicide (see photo). The herbicides are Glyphosate at 5l/ha and Metsulfuron at 100g/ha with a Canola based wetting oil at 2l/ha.

The Spray Skidder travels up access rows created by a harvesting machine. Plantations have a first thinning harvest at 11 - 14 years old, at this time every 5th row of trees is removed by the harvester, providing access to control a range of noxious weeds, which in the Shelley plantation are predominantly blackberry.

The two side cluster jets are set to spray out each side, and a smaller cluster jet sprays behind the Skidder giving a spray width of about 16 metres.



SKIDDER SPRAYING IN THE SHELLEY PLANTATION, MARCH 2018

The pine plantation's green canopy is well above this and is not affected by the herbicide. The shady environment seems to delay the response to the herbicide up to 8 weeks.

The longer-term benefits to the Plantation include, reduced competition for water and nutrients and improved access for our staff and contractors that work in the plantation.

Article by Andrew Bussau,  
District Forester at HVP Shelley Plantation

## MOORABOOL BLACKBERRY ACTION GROUP SHORT FILM



'This program has brought blackberry to the forefront of pest plant control in the shire.'

ANTHONY DUFTY, PRESIDENT OF THE MOOBAG

The Moorabool Blackberry Action Group (MooBAG) will produce a short film in May focusing on their first two years of operation under the VBT's Community Partnership Program. This will be used to encourage other communities within the group's target region - particularly around the locality of Lal Lal.

Landholder participants and MooBAG Committee members will participate in the filming, relaying their experiences and benefits of the program. Anthony Dufty, President of the MooBAG commented, 'This program has brought blackberry to the forefront of pest plant control in the shire. For instance, VicRoads and Moorabool Shire Council are coordinating their efforts on roadsides adjacent to private landholders within the program. This is increasing both public and private landholder efforts to control blackberry in areas where we have program participants.'

The MooBAG have now signed 47 landholders to voluntary management agreements, totalling 97 hectares of blackberry mapped.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Wellington Blackberry Taskforce Information Day

The Wellington District Blackberry Taskforce (WBT) has been a strong advocate for using best practice techniques to control blackberry for the past 3 years. The community field day held on the 21st February, 'Beating Back The Blackberries' was intended to provide practical examples of control techniques and attracted more than 20 attendees.



ATTENDEES LISTENING TO CHEMICAL EXPERTS

It was an opportunity for landholders in the Glenmaggie and Licola regions to listen and observe experts on blackberry control techniques - specifically chemical control.

The day began with a chemical spraying demonstration by a local contractor, followed by Peter Quennell, project officer for the Wellington District Blackberry Taskforce, who outlined the benefits of a 3-year blackberry control plan.

The event finished at the Glenmaggie Community Hall where chemical company representatives explained the pros and cons of the different blackberry control herbicides and outlined wetting agents, mixing rates and timing of control.

The event was also an opportunity for WBT to recruit Licola and Glenmaggie landholders. The WBT is seeking cooperation from Licola and Glenmaggie residents to identify local infestations and support the program by committing to a voluntary 3-year blackberry control plan.

For further information on WBT's community-led program, call Peter Quennell on 0412 387 102.

## Whittlesea Forum - May 18th, 9am-3pm

The Victorian Blackberry Taskforce and the Whittlesea and Surrounds Blackberry Action Group will co-host a forum and workshop at the Whittlesea Golf Club on the 18th May.

The event - 'Emerging Challenges And Opportunities For Invasive Species Management' will be an opportunity for delegates to listen to a range of speakers and convene in groups to discuss the challenges and formulate ideas to improve outcomes in invasive species management.

Topics will include projected deer populations in Australia, blackberry bio-control, new and emerging weed issues in the Whittlesea Shire region, Whittlesea Shire Council's Environmental Sustainable Land Management Program and Melbourne Water's management of water frontages.

A record of the proceedings will be produced with the speakers' notes and outlining group discussions - What is working? What can we do better? And how can we do it better?

The document will provide a conduit for further discussion between the community and partners and assist the Whittlesea and Surrounds region to collaborate better across programs.

For information on the event or to register attendance please contact the Victorian Blackberry Taskforce [vicblackberrytaskforce.com.au](http://vicblackberrytaskforce.com.au) or telephone Barton Roberts 0409 332 258 or the Whittlesea and Surrounds Blackberry Action Group President - Peter Rutely 0403 385 556.



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