Why has this been so successful and what are the best ways to engage with landholders?

We asked Danielle Cleland, Project Officer with the North East Blackberry Action Group, her thoughts.

‘The Project Officer (following the program designed by the Committee) is the direct contact person for your landholders. From my experience it works well if the Project Officer is not someone directly involved within the community (so as to avoid any perception of bias or personal conflict).

A good project officer who is able to relate to people easily, be open to different situations and provide an unbiased point of support will quickly engage landholders.

The ability to build relationships with people, starting where they want to start (blackberry in this case), is a critical skill. As the reasons for unmanaged blackberry are complex, understanding ‘why’ is necessary in order to proceed with a negotiated management plan.

First, establish that weeds are the responsibility of the landholder, understand why the blackberry infestation is out of control then negotiate a plan.

• Make an appointment and sit down with landholders at the kitchen table or the tray of the ute to discuss the problem
• Provide a map of the property and negotiate an achievable agreement (3 year plan)
• Take along a laptop, mapping software and portable printer. Print and sign the documents and provide maps on the spot. This is really important as it completes the process and saves time (and money)
• Follow up annually with a phone call or visit

The Steering Committee’s role is to drive the project, make decisions about incentives and gain the support of partners. The project officer is a community liaison officer.’
CONTROL WORK ON THE MACALISTER RIVER INTERFACE

Corner Inlet Blackberry Action Group

Obtain Extra Funding
council roads respectively.

kilometres of channels and drains and 3 kilometres of

Water and the Wellington Shire Council sprayed two

hectares of private property, as a result Southern Rural

region, signing five landholders, accounting for 310

scale. This season the group targeted the Upper Maffra

priorities to achieve blackberry control on a landscape

for land managers to work with the taskforce and shift

One of the positive aspects of the program is the eagerness

of private property.

voluntary management agreements, accounting for 3400 ha

results over the past two years, signing up 41 landholders to

The Community Partnership Project has produced excellent

and the Wellington Shire Council (WSC).

The Wellington District Blackberry Taskforce (WDBT) has

gained cooperation from a wide range of land managers,

The Northeast Blackberry Action Group in conjunction

with the Victorian Blackberry Taskforce (VBT) recently set up a pine oil based control demonstration
towards the township of Towong. The VBT are actually aware of the need for blackberry action groups to
have alternative blackberry control options when assisting landholders.

The property involved is ‘certified organic’, which means traditional chemicals, including glyphosate,
metsulphuron-methyl and picloram triclopyr are not used on the property. The pine oil based product
used for the demonstration site is NASSA and

BFA approved.

The demonstration will be conducted over a year,

with results updated on the website in September

2015 and February 2016.

Up to Us Gathering Momentum

Following the mapping of pest plants on

council roadsides by Up to Us Blackberry

Action Group, the Mansfield Shire sent letters
to adjoining landholders outlining the council’s

works program. A weed forum was also run to

engage private and government organisations to
discuss how to coordinate weed control in the
target area. As a result, Up to Us Blackberry

Action Group is implementing an integrated

blackberry management program with DELWP,

DEDJTR, Mt Buller Mt Sterling Alpine Resorts,

HVP Plantations, Parks Victoria, Goulburn

Murray Water, Vic Roads and Goulburn Broken

Catchment Management Authority.

COMMUNITY STORIES:
Raelene and Russell Bond

Raelene and Russell Bond's property is located in
Foster North. Coming from a non-farming background
they have climbed a steep learning curve in blackberry
management.

In 2013 they developed their three year Corner Inlet
Blackberry Action Group (CIBAG) plan with realistic
and achievable goals, using chemical as the main tool.

One of the barriers faced by the couple has been the steep
terrain. In the first year they spent weekends walking the
slopes with a 200 litre olive barrel containing chemical on
the back of a tractor, with a 30 meter hose and nozzle.

Outside work commitments, in the second year,
potentially caused the first year’s effort to be in vain,
so they rolled out their backup plan. A contractor was
engaged and a budget was carefully negotiated. The
amount of blackberry controlled was enormous and
done quickly, and they were delighted to see large brown
patches all over the property. However, they acknowledge
the need to continue follow up with any new growth and
creep further into larger infestations.

As committee members for the Corner Inlet Blackberry
Action Group they recommend developing a three year
plan for blackberry management, as it is easy to consult
and keep track.

To view Raelene and Russell Bond’s presentation,
visit www.vicblackberrytaskforce.com.au. For more
information on CIBAG’s program, ring Helga Binder
on 0432 141 843

COMMUNITY SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

'THE TAKE ACTION
TOGETHER'

The Victorian Blackberry Taskforce produced three thirty second community service announcements
which aired on the ABC, Prime and Win from January to March 2015. The ads feature private and
public land managers, including - Parks Victoria, HVP Plantations and a local landholder with the
message ‘let’s take action together’.

The Community Service Announcements have increased the level of traffic to the VBT website and the amount of correspondence through the VBT email address - visitvicblackberrytaskforce.com.au. Most enquiries have centred around the Community Partnership Program and blackberry control advice.

The community service ads have been viewed in Gippsland, North East and North Central Victoria and thereby connecting the public to the VBT directly on a wider scale.

To view the community service announcements, visit www.vicblackberrytaskforce.com.au
NEWS IN BRIEF

TBAG Trivia Night
Triangle Blackberry Action Group (TBAG) held a successful trivia night at the Buxton Hotel on February the 11th, with Glen Ridge, former game show host from Sale of the Century, as master of ceremonies. The night raised $1793 which will go towards TBAG’s program. Well done!

CIBAG Award
The Corner Inlet Blackberry Action Group received the Yarram Yarram Highly Commended Outstanding Community Group award along with their project officer Helga Binders’ individual Landcare award. 

Photo (above): Back, left to right - Corner Inlet Blackberry Action Group committee members Raelene and Russell Bond, Arie Bos, Werner Lange, Front left to right Helga Binder (Project Officer) and Lyn Coulston (Chair).

Frequently Asked Questions
The VBT has received many enquiries about unsatisfactory results using glyphosate for blackberry control. We would like to hear from you about your experiences using this chemical on blackberry. Please contact us at vbt@vicblackberrytaskforce.com.au.

Just announced
$5000 from the Victorian Government to progress research into purple blotch disease for blackberry biocontrol. The VBT welcomes this contribution which will kick start our efforts to engage with partners to achieve the target $50k for the next stage of the research.

Over the next twelve months the VBT will be speaking with Industry, community and other levels of Government seeking support. There has already been a positive response from some of our Partnership Groups with fundraising ideas in their communities.

Some of them sound more like ‘fun raising‘ which is a great way to further the fight against blackberry while enjoying ourselves. A pleasant change from dragging hoses up and down mountains!

CONTACT
vbt@vicblackberrytaskforce.com.au
www.blackberrytheweeds.com.au
www.vicblackberrytaskforce.com.au