

Mitchell Shire Council Weed Management Framework

December 2023



Directorate

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Infrastructure

Owner

Environment and
Sustainability
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Figure 1 Mitchell Shire Operations Team and Contractors Vehicle Hygiene Training June 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

Mitchell Shire Council acknowledges the Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Mitchell Shire.

We pay our respect to their rich cultures and to Elders, past, present, and emerging, as well as other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live, work, and play in the area.



1. INTRODUCTION

Mitchell Shire Council is committed to managing weeds on Council managed land for environmental, economic, and social benefit, as demonstrated in the Mitchell Shire Council Environment Policy 2020, which includes the goals:

- Prevent new high-risk invasive plants and animals from establishing in the Shire
- Net gain of the overall extent and condition of habitats across Council managed land

Council allocates an annual budget to control weeds on Council owned or managed public land. This includes controlling weeds in bushland reserves, open space areas and roadsides to protect biodiversity and amenity values in the shire and comply with Council's obligations as a land manager under state legislation and Council's own local laws.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this framework is to:

- Identify a set of guiding principles for Council's weed management actions,
- Establish a prioritisation framework for managing weeds using best practice principles that are effective and cost efficient; and
- Establish a weed monitoring, evaluation, and review program.

3. SCOPE

The framework outlines the approach to weed management on Council managed environmental reserves and rural roadsides, land Council owns (freehold) and Crown land that Council is responsible for under *Road Management Act 2004* or as an appointed Committee of Management under the *Crown Land Reserves Act 1978*.

The weed species considered in this framework are those that Council has a legal responsibility to manage on its land as declared under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act 1994), and those species recognised as a significant environmental or agricultural threat in the Shire, such as new and emerging weed species. See Appendix 1 Legislation and Local Laws for further information.

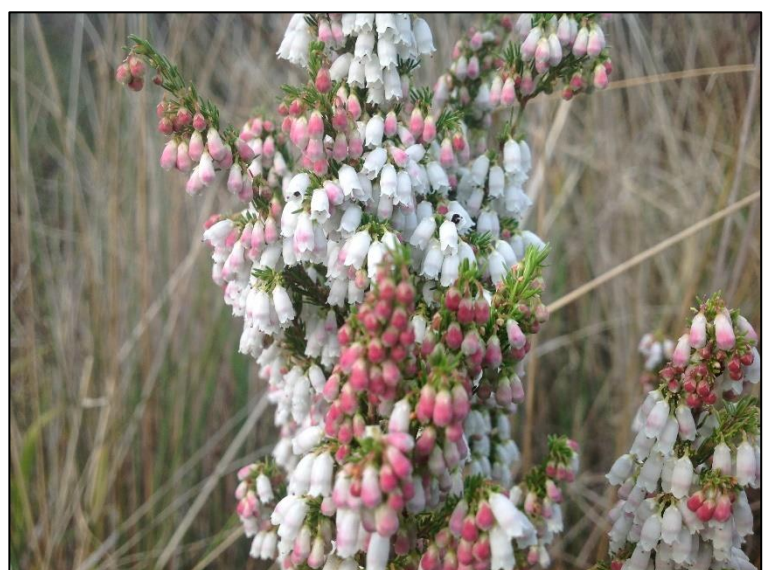


Figure 2 Spanish Heath (*Erica lusitanica*)

4. BACKGROUND

What is a Weed?

Weeds are plants growing in a place they are not wanted. They compete with other plants for space, water and nutrients and can invade natural bushland, grassland, farmland, and riverside habitats (riparian areas), reducing biodiversity values and agricultural productivity.

How Weeds Spread

Weeds can spread by many different ways including:

- Seed or plant pieces spread in farm produce such as grain and fodder
- Movement of seed or plant pieces in contaminated soil
- Seed eaten or carried by birds or animals including livestock
- Seed or plant pieces carried in water
- Seed blown by wind
- Seed or plant pieces carried on machinery, equipment, and/or vehicles
- Seed spread by slashing or mowing
- Seed or plant pieces spread by cultivation
- Illegal dumping of garden waste
- Seeds carried on clothing
- Garden escapees from backyards into adjoining parkland

Why Should We Control Weeds?

Apart from the legislative requirement to control declared noxious weeds, it is beneficial to control weeds because they can provide harbour for vermin, reduce agricultural productivity, impact on biodiversity values and cultural values and reduce water quality. Weeds can take many years to control and often require ongoing and integrated treatment.

Weeds and Climate Change

Climate change is set to further impact the distribution and management of weeds. Increased temperatures, changes to rainfall patterns and more extreme weather events are all expected to lead to a changing distribution of weeds in the landscape. Changing climatic conditions may also result in some weeds establishing in areas previously thought to be outside their normal distribution range, such as Bathurst Burr (*Xanthium spinosum*) which has been now been identified further south in the Shire than previously recorded.

Extreme weather events such as fires and floods can also spread weed seeds and/or trigger germination of weeds on exposed ground, as such weed management needs to be considered as part of any long term emergency recovery activities.

5. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

There are various legislation and Council local laws that apply to the control of weeds, these are detailed below.

5.1 Federal Government Legislation

5.1.1 Weeds of National Significance (WoNS)

Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) is a list of the most problematic plant species in Australia as determined by the federal government.

Thirty-two (32) WoNS have been identified based on their invasiveness, potential for spread and environmental, social, and economic impacts.

WoNS found in Mitchell Shire include:

- Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.)
- Bridle creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*)
- Chilean Needle Grass (*Nassella neesiana*)
- Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*)
- Serrated Tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*) and
- Willows except weeping willows, pussy willow, and sterile pussy willow (*Salix* spp. except *S. babylonica*, *S. X calodendron* and *S. X reichardtji*)

Landowners and land managers at all levels are responsible for managing WoNS.



Figure 3 Weeds of National Significance, top L to R Blackberry, Bridal Creeper, Gorse, and Serrated Tussock

5.1.2 Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) provides a legal significance.

Any weed control works that may impact on a matter of National Environment Significance such as a threatened native grassland or species habitat will need to be referred to the Federal government.

5.2 Victorian Government Legislation

5.2.1 Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994

i resources (DNRE 2001a). This Act is administered by the Department of Environment, Economy, and Climate Action (DEECA) and deals primarily with regulations regarding weeds and pest animals.

Weeds are classified according to four (4) main categories:

State Prohibited Weeds

Weeds that do not occur in Victoria and present a significant threat if they establish, or, if already present in Victoria, pose a significant threat with eradication considered feasible. The Victorian State Government is responsible for the eradication of these weeds on all land.

Regionally Prohibited Weeds

Weeds that are generally not widespread in a region (Catchment Region) but are capable of spreading further with eradication considered possible. Landowners and public land authorities are responsible for control of these weeds on their lands. The relevant land manager is responsible for the eradication of these weeds

Regionally Controlled Weeds:

Weeds usually widespread in a region but causing enough impact that preventing further spread is considered important and desirable. The relevant land manager is responsible for prevention of growth and spread of these weeds. The relevant land manager is responsible for preventing trade or spread (by contamination) of these weeds.

Restricted Weeds:

Plants that pose an unacceptable risk of spread if they were sold or traded. No weeds have been declared in this category. (Source Government of Victoria 1994).

Under DEECA, the CaLP Act established 10 Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) to manage 10 Catchment Regions (Government of Victoria 1994). Mitchell Shire Council is located in three (3) Catchment Regions known as:

- North Central Catchment
- Goulburn Broken Catchment
- Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment, which is further divided for the purpose of the CaLP Act into East and West regions.

The classification of weeds is based on Catchment Regions and can be viewed via the Agriculture Victoria website.

The CaLP Act states that each landowner/occupier is responsible for the maintenance of the land they occupy including weed control. Under the CaLP Act public and private owners are to take “all reasonable steps to avoid causing or contributing to land degradation that may damage land owned by another party (including roadsides)” and that ‘landowners should manage their land so as to...manage noxious weeds and pest animals (Government of Victoria 1994).’ Therefore, as a land manager Council has a legal responsibility to manage its own land accordingly.

5.2.2 Advisory List of Environmental Weeds in Victoria

In 2018 the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) published the Advisory list of environmental weeds in Victoria (White., M., et al 2018).

This list provides advice to land managers on the risks posed by environmental weeds and the urgency of managing them within natural ecosystems. The list ranks environmental weeds to indicate the priority for control or management in native vegetation. This ranking is based largely on the stage of invasion, the impact of the species on native ecosystems and the species rate of spread.

There are no legal requirements for species on the advisory list, unless the species is already listed under other legislation where legal requirements apply.

5.2.3 Planning and Environment Act 1987

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* establishes a framework for planning the use, development, and protection of land in Victoria. The act enables the development and use of planning schemes, including the Mitchell Shire planning scheme. Clauses of the planning scheme that may impact weed control including the native vegetation regulations and overlays including the heritage overlay, vegetation protection overlay, and erosion overlay.

It is important to note that some weed control works may require a planning permit to be issued prior to weed control commencing. Any damage to native vegetation via chemicals, earthworks or works near waterways could also be a breach of local, state, or federal legislation.

5.2.4 Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (control of use) Act 1992

The primary piece of legislation for chemical use in Victoria is the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1992*. It imposes controls in relation to the use, application, and sale of Agvet chemicals, fertilisers, and stock foods.

5.2.5 Other Relevant State Legislation

Other relevant state legislation that is applicable in the management of invasive plants is listed below.

- *Road Management Act 2004*
- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*

- *Biological Control Act 1986*
- *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*
- *Environment Protection Act 1970*
- *Fisheries Act 1995*
- *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*
- *Land Act 1958*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Road Management Act 2004*
- *Water Act 1989*
- *Wildlife Act 1975.*

5.3 Mitchell Shire Council Local Laws

The *Local Government Act 2020*, section 71(1) gives councils the broad power to make local laws ‘for or with respect to any act, matter or thing in respect of which the council has a function or power under this or any other act’. Local laws typically deal with, but are not limited to, protection of local amenity as well as regulating activities on council- controlled land and roads. In June 2022 Mitchell Shire Council resolved to introduce local law 3.1.3, as part of its Community and Environment Local Law 2022. Part 3 – Amenity, Public Health, and Safety, 3.1.3 states

“An owner or occupier of all land, must take all reasonable steps to control, reduce and manage regionally prohibited weeds, prevent the growth and spread of regionally controlled weeds, ¹* and prevent the spread as far as possible of pest animals.”*

This framework responds to Council’s responsibilities under both the CaLP Act and the Mitchell Shire Council Community and Environment Local Law 2022. Part 3 – Amenity, Public Health, and Safety.

5.4 Local Government Policies, Strategies

The following Council strategies and plans are also taken into consideration when coordinating weed control programs.

- Mitchell Shire Environment Strategy 2014-2024
- Mitchell Shire Rural Roadside Environmental Management Plan 2016-2026
- Mitchell Shire Municipal Fire Management Plan 2020-2023
- Mitchell Shire Road Management Plan 2021
- Various Council reserve master plans and management plans
 - Includes both Council managed land and Crown land for which Council is the Committee of Management.

¹ The terms ‘regionally prohibited weeds’ and ‘regionally controlled weeds’ are referred to in this Local Law within the definition of ‘noxious weed’ and are also defined under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.’

6. COLLABORATION

Weed management requires a regional integrated approach to be successful. Council works with many partners to control weeds effectively on its land.

The legislative responsibility of landowner's depends on the land type. There are multiple land types within the Mitchell Shire including Council managed, private, public, state, and Crown land which means that there are multiple agencies and individuals who are responsible for weed control under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*.

Land Manager	Responsibility/partnerships
VicTrack	Management of weeds on the rail reserve
DEECA	Management of weeds on unlicensed Crown land
Department of Defence	Management of weeds on the Puckapunyal Military Base
Parks Victoria	Management of weeds on designated Crown land such as Mount Piper and Beckingsale Flora Reserve
Private Landowners	Weed control on private land
Department of Transport and Planning	Weed control on state managed roads, such as Hume Freeway, Broadford-Kilmore Road etc.
Melbourne Water	Funding Weed control on waterways within the Port Philip Catchment
Goulburn Broken CMA	Funding Weed control on waterways in the Goulburn Broken Catchment
North Central CMA	Funding Weed control on waterways in the North Central Catchment
Committees of Management (CoM)	
Crown land for which Council has been appointed to CoM	Weed control in accordance with the <i>CaLP Act 1994</i>
Crown Land for which a community group has been appointed CoM	Weed control in accordance with the <i>CaLP Act 1994</i>
Council managed land for which a committee CoM has been appointed	Weed control on designated reserves in accordance with a Funding and Service Agreement with Council.
Leased or Licensed land	
Crown land leased or under licence agreement from DEECA	Weed control in accordance with the lease or licence agreement.
Council land leased or under licence agreement from Council	Weed control in accordance with the lease or licence agreement.

In addition to Government authorities and landholders, there are a number of community groups the undertake weed management activities, as listed below

Type of Land	Partnerships/activities
Landcare and Environmental groups	Community led action Community education Grants
State sponsored community weed groups - Victorian Serrated Tussock Working party - Victorian Gorse Taskforce - Victorian Blackberry Taskforce	Community education Grants Facilitating collaboration

7. EXISTING COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

Mitchell Shire Council is responsible for managing declared weeds on all Council managed land, including Council roadsides.

Council delivers an annual program to control declared noxious and environmental weeds on Council owned and managed land.

In 2022/2023 approximately 617km of rural roadsides and 12 environmental reserves covering 225Ha were treated as part of the annual Weed control program. Additional weed control was also undertaken as part of Council's Parks and Gardens maintenance program.

Council also undertakes a variety of educational and collaborative projects related to weed management including.

- Promotion of weed control through Council newsletters, website, and local events such as the Seymour Alternative Farming Expo
- Supporting Landcare groups in the region
- Inclusion of weed control in planning permit conditions,
- Distribution of the Central Victorian Weed Guide, in collaboration with Macedon Ranges Shire Council and the Mount Alexander Shire Council.
- In kind assistance for community led projects such as the Blackberry Taskforce.
- Collaboration with other public land managers on weed control programs e.g., working with the Department of Transport and Planning and VicTrack to support an integrated approach to weed control programs.
- Provision of free community webinars and events on weed management.

- Advice to landholders on weed identification and control,
- Implementation of the Mitchell Shire Council Community and Environment Local Law 2022.

8. COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

The Mitchell Shire community values the natural environment as illustrated through the Mitchell 2050 Community Vision where Nature and Parks was identified as one of the six main themes with following community aspiration.

“In 2050, Mitchell will be home to a vibrant and thriving natural environment where nature is part of resident's everyday life.

Our parks and playgrounds will be inviting, serving as a fun and exciting focal point for young people to come together and socialise.

Our natural reserves will be home to a rich ecological system supporting our important native flora and fauna.”

High priority weed species for identified for control by Mitchell’s community (based on enquiries and community led action) include:

- Blackberry
- Gorse
- Paterson’s Curse
- Serrated Tussock
- Chilean Needle Grass
- Cape Weed

The Mitchell community, and in particular landcare groups, also place priority on weed control which protects high biodiversity values, protects of agricultural land, and weed control in degraded areas with environmental enhancement opportunities as priorities for weed control.



Figure 4 Paterson’s Curse Rosette and in flower, Kilmore

9. TARGET WEED SPECIES

In accordance with the prioritisation framework, the following list of weed species are targeted annually as part of Council's weed control program along rural roadsides and in environmental reserves. Other weeds may be treated in accordance with the prioritisation framework.

Key P – Regionally Prohibited, C – Regionally Controlled, R – Restricted

Common Name	Botanical Name	CaLP Act Status		
		Port Phillip /Western Port	Goulburn Broken	North Central
St John's Wort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	C	C	C
Artichoke Thistle	<i>Cynara cardunculus</i>	C	P	C
Angled Onion	<i>Allium triquetrum</i>	R	R	R
Wild Garlic	<i>Allium vineale</i>	R	P	C
Serrated Tussock	<i>Nassella trichotoma</i>	C	P	P
Cape Tulip One leaf	<i>Moraea flaccida</i>	C	P	C
Cape Tulip Two leaf	<i>Moraea miniata</i>	C	P	C
Wheel Cactus	<i>Opuntia robusta</i>	P	R	C
Chilean Needle Grass	<i>Nassella neesiana</i>	R	R	R
Blackberry	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	C	C	C
Cape Broom	<i>Genista monspessulana</i>	C	C	C
English Broom	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	C	C	C
Flax-leafed broom	<i>Genista linifolia</i>	R	C	R
Gorse	<i>Ulex europaeus L.</i>	C	C	C
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	C	C	R
St John's Wort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	C	C	C
African boxthorn	<i>Lycium ferocissimum</i>	C	C	C
Sweet Briar	<i>Rosa rubiginosa</i>	C	C	C
Bathurst Burr	<i>Xanthium spinosum</i>	C	C	C
Paterson's Curse	<i>Echium plantagineum</i>	C	C	C
Horehound	<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>	C	C	C

Boneseed	<i>Chrysanthemoides monilifera</i>	C	C	P
Bridal Creeper	<i>Asparagus asparagoides</i>	R	R	R
Wild watsonia	<i>Watsonia meriana</i>	C	R	R

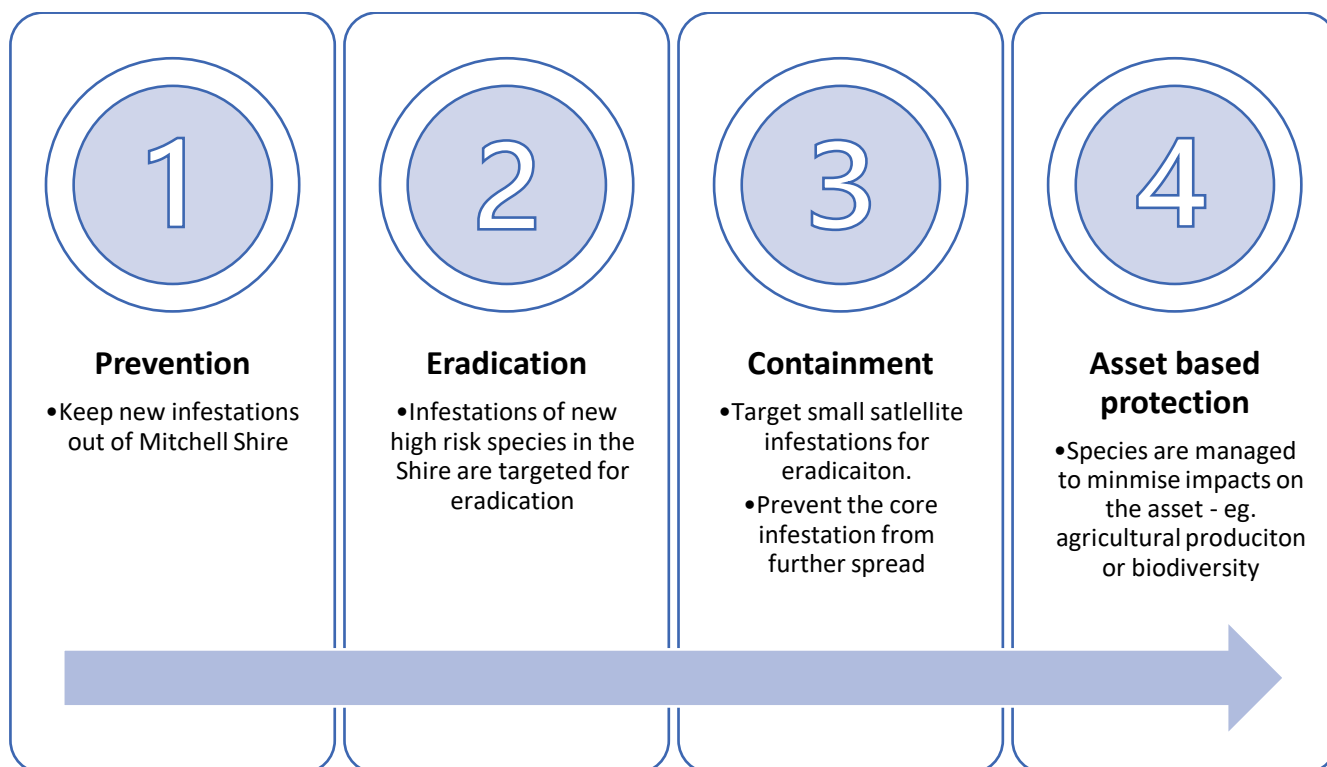
Environmental Weeds (non-Declared species)

South African Weed Orchid	<i>Disa bracteata</i>
Small Exotic trees (Cootamundra Wattle, Early Black Wattle, Pines, Elms, Willow etc.)	<i>various</i>
Phalaris	<i>Phalaris aquatica</i>
Tree Lucerne	<i>Cytisus proliferus</i>
Cape Weed	<i>Arctotheca calendula</i>
Solanum (exotic species)	<i>Solanum</i>
Agapanthus	<i>Agapanthus praecox</i>
Blue Periwinkle	<i>Vinca major</i>
Bluebell Creeper	<i>Billardiera heterophylla</i>
Spanish Heath	<i>Erica lusitanica</i>
Texas Needle Grass	<i>Nassella leucotricha</i>
Wandering Creeper (tradescantia)	<i>Tradescantia fluminensis</i>

10. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This Framework follows the biosecurity approach to weed management as adopted by the Victorian Government Invasive Plants and Animals Policy Framework (DEPI 2010) as an effective way to plan, manage and invest funds in invasive species control.

A risk-based approach is applied to weed control that incorporates management methods that avoid or minimise the risk to biodiversity, cultural values, productive assets, and people.



10.2 Prevent

Prevention of the spread of weeds provides the best return on investment in respect to weed management. Prevention includes actions such as.

- Vehicle hygiene measures for Council staff, contractors and volunteers working on Council managed land
- Education on weed identification and control for Council staff, contractors, volunteers, and landowners.
- Timely collection of illegally dumped green waste and actions to prevent further dumping such as physical barriers, signage, and enforcement.
- Collaboration with state government and community partners for early identification of new and emerging weed species and isolated infestations on public land.
- Minimising the amount of exposed soil for weed species to germinate.

10.3 Identify

There are many information sources that can be used to identify weeds, including reference books, websites and apps and environmental professionals.

Together with Macedon Ranges and Mount Alexander Shire Councils, Mitchell Shire Council developed the Central Victorian Weeds Guide to assist with identification of locally occurring weeds and new and emerging weeds.

It is important to correctly identify weeds in their early stages so they can be effectively controlled with the appropriate method and at the right time. Some weeds can also look very similar to native plants so correct identification is important.

For example, Blackberry (*Rubus fructus*) a widespread common weed in Mitchell Shire and Native raspberry (*Rubus parvifolius*) a local native species which looks similar, see Figure 3 and 4 below.



Figure 5 Blackberry (*Rubus fructus*)



Figure 6 Native Raspberry (*Rubus parvifolius*)

10.4 Mapping

Mapping the density of a weed infestation and the extent of its distribution is an important step in an integrated weed control program. Mapping assists to prioritise and plan targeted works. Priority is given to certain weed species in certain locations based on the guiding principles.

As sites are treated regularly for weed infestations, the extent and density of weeds should reduce. New weed infestations may develop due to the dynamic nature of managing road reserves with weeds introduced to the sites by adjoining landholder activities, traffic, road maintenance and utility companies working on these sites. New and emerging weeds can be introduced by a variety of vectors such as contaminated soil and machinery, vehicles, mowing/slashing, wind, water, and animals moving through the landscape.

Because of the dynamic nature of weeds in Mitchell Shire's environment, weed mapping is updated every five years in accordance with Council's annual Weed control program.

Accurate mapping data assists to better understand the future work that will be required for weed control programs.

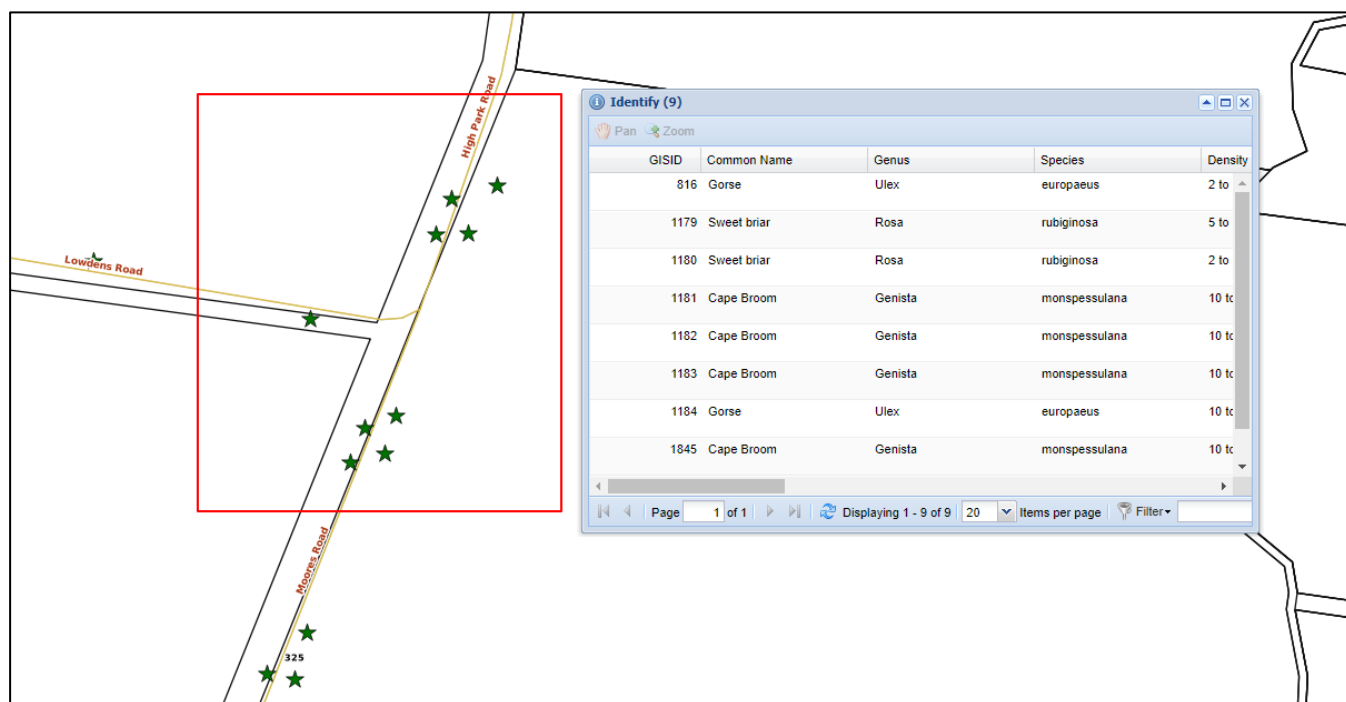


Figure 7 Example of roadside weed mapping February 2023

10.5 Research

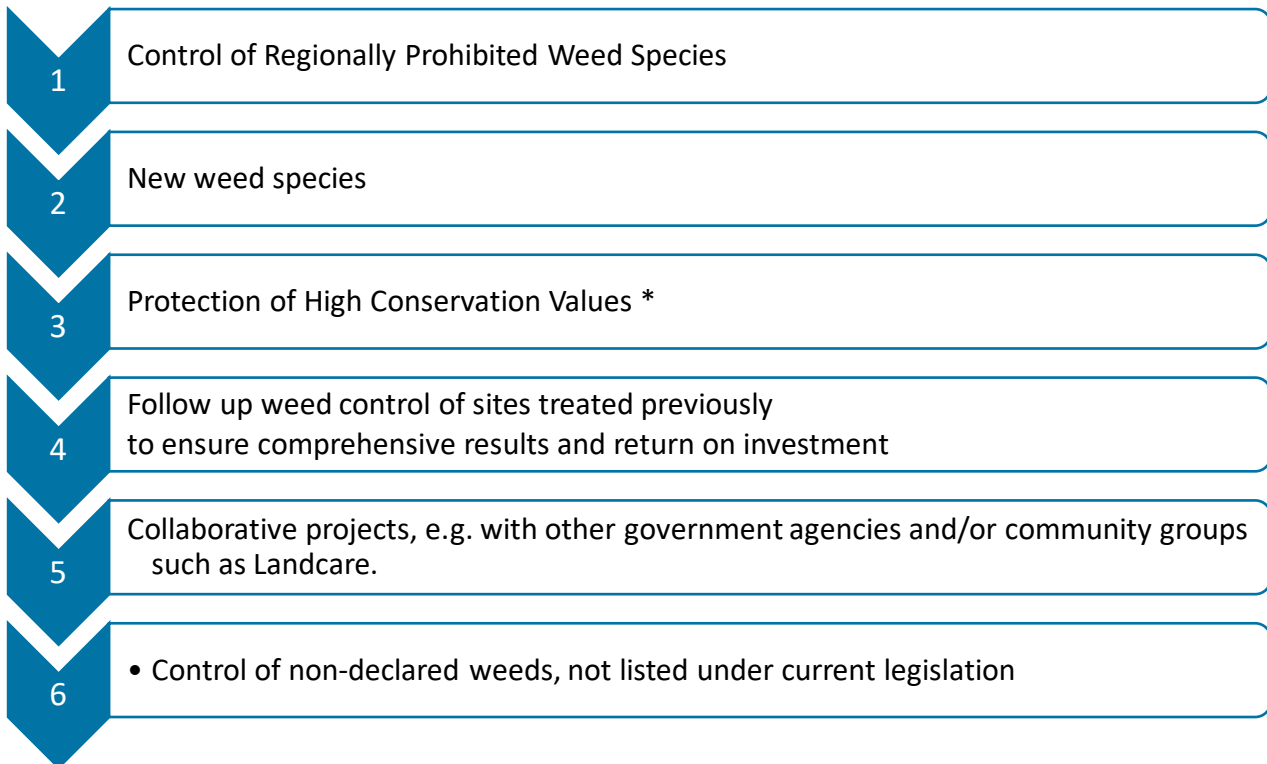
Council's Environment team keeps informed of the latest control methods and new and emerging weeds through professional development and networking with other councils and government agencies.



Figure 8 Examples of Government sites and newsletters relating to weed research and information

11. PRIORITISATION FRAMEWORK FOR COUNCILS WEED MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

In accordance with the guiding principles and steps for Councils weed control, investment of resources are aligned to, in order:



Where operational efficiencies and cost savings can be made, lower priorities may also be treated with higher priority actions. For instance, where non declared weeds are in close proximity to a regionally prohibited species and has the same treatment methods and timing, these will be controlled together.

* High conservation areas on Council owned land are mapped and include roadsides with high or very high conservation values, bushland reserves and waterways. High conservation areas meet most or all of the following criteria:

- Large amount of big trees with more than 50% canopy cover,
- Low weed cover (5 to 25%)
- High under-storey cover (75% and over)
- High recruitment for all species
- Record of rare and/or threatened species
- Ecological vegetation class (EVC) that is endangered or vulnerable
- Provision of significant wildlife corridors across the landscape

12. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

To help understand whether Council’s investment in weed control is achieving the desired outcome and providing a return on investment, a monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement (MERI) approach is applied, as illustrated in Figure 10 below. This is a simple concept developed by the Victorian Government which, when applied, helps understand what is being achieved and identify improvements for projects and programs.

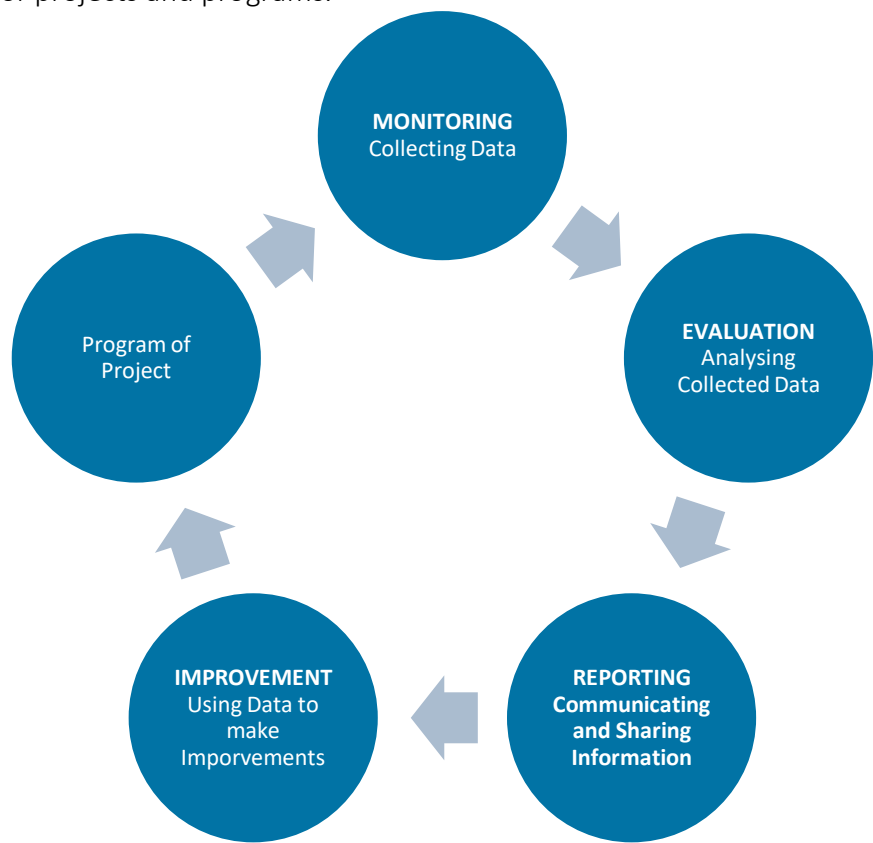


Figure 9 The Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting, Improvement (MERI) cycle

Monitoring Methods

Mapping

The use of GIS data capture of weed occurrences on rural roadsides and environmental reserves across the shire provides a real time snapshot of the extent, type, and locations of weed populations, and is an effective dataset to base program planning and monitoring against.

Weed mapping is updated through with observational monitoring and contractor mapping as part of the weed control program at least every four years.

Weed Control Contractor Compliance

The Environment team undertakes annual spot audits of weed control work to ensure weed control contractor compliance with contract specifications.

Reporting to DEECA

Council is under compliance from DEECA to control known infestations of regionally prohibited weeds, such as Serrated Tussock and One and Two leaf Cape Tulip on Council managed land and including roadsides.

Council officers also proactively inform DEECA of any new and emerging weed species found in the shire, such as African Weed Orchid.

Roadside Conservation Values

Mitchell Shire Council undertakes a roadside vegetation monitoring program, completing vegetation quality assessments (using the Rapid Habitat Assessment method) on identified roadsides every four years from 2007 through to 2021.

The project objectives are:

- To measure any changes in the management of roadsides after the implementation of Mitchell Shire Rural Roadside Environmental Management Plan (2016-2026)
- To measure any change in biodiversity value, weed cover, percentage of firewood removal and litter on Mitchell Shire roadsides.

This monitoring program includes weed species and can be used to monitor the effectiveness of Council's Weed Management Framework also.

12.2 Framework Review

The Framework will be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects the current processes and procedures of Mitchell Shire Council as well as current legislation requirements.

The framework review will consider:

- Changes in the species distribution and abundance
- The impact of fire, flood, and other natural disasters
- Impacts of climate change
- Legislative changes
- New and emerging weeds

13. ACTION PLAN

Action Number	Action	Responsibility		Timeframe
		Lead	Support	
Prevention				
1	Review and update vehicle hygiene measures in all relevant contracts and contract specifications	Environment and Sustainability	Operations and Parks, Community Amenity and Emergency Management	June 2024
2	Enforce vehicle hygiene measures for Council staff and weed control contractors on rural roadsides and in environmental reserves.	Environment and Sustainability	Operations and Parks, Community Amenity and Emergency Management. Capital Works.	2023/2024
3	Undertake training in vehicle hygiene for relevant staff members and include in relevant contractor induction.	Environment and Sustainability Department	Operations and Parks, Community Amenity and Emergency Management	Ongoing
4	Continue to respond to illegal dumping of weeds on public land	Community Amenity and Emergency Management, Parks, and Operations	Environment and Sustainability	Ongoing
Mapping				
5	Spatially map rural roadside weeds at least every 4 years as part of the weed control program	Environment and Sustainability	Strategic Assets and Property	Every four years from 22/23
6	Spatially map environmental reserve weeds every 4 years	Environment and Sustainability	Strategic Assets and Property	Commencing 23/24

7	Create a webform for landholders to register their certified organic farms to alert Council for consideration or to be contacted for use of appropriate weed control methods.	Environment and Sustainability	Information and Business Transformation	June 2023
8	Create a mapping layer of certified organic farms and advise relevant Council departments of these requirements	Environment and Sustainability	Strategic Assets and Property	December 2023
Weed Control Programs				
9	Implement the annual Weed control program for environmental reserves and rural roadsides	Environment and Sustainability		Ongoing
10	Implement weed control in accordance with Councils Parks and Gardens service standards	Operations and Parks		Ongoing
11	Include the control of woody and grassy weed species in Council's fire prevention programs	Community Amenity & Emergency Management		Ongoing
12	Establish a process to ensure that groups with Funding and Service Agreements (FASAs) and lease/license agreements for the management of Council owned land are meeting their weed control responsibilities	Community Planning and Delivery	Environment and Sustainability Operations and Parks	June 2023
Research				
13	Keep informed of changes and innovations in weed management by research, collaboration, attending industry events and conferences. Including issues such as new and emerging weeds by working with state government and the community	Environment and Sustainability		Ongoing

	• New weed control methods and weed classifications • methods to reduce chemical use for weed control			
Collaboration				
14	Continue to work with community groups such as Landcare to deliver coordinated weed control on the private/public interface	Environment and Sustainability	Operations and Parks, Community Amenity and Emergency Management Landcare	Ongoing
15	Continue to work with agencies such as Melbourne Water, Catchment Management Authorities, DEECA, Department of Transport, Vic Track, ARTC etc. to coordinate weed control programs	Environment and Sustainability		
16	Continue to collaborate with DEECA on the management of new and emerging weed species	Environment and Sustainability		
17	Advocate to the State Government for increased resources for weed control programs, compliance activities	Environment and Sustainability	Advocacy	Ongoing
18	Advocate to the State Government for increased resources for weed control programs, compliance activities	Environment and Sustainability	Advocacy	Ongoing
19	Work in partnership with the following groups. • Victorian Serrated Tussock Working party • Victorian Gorse Taskforce • Victorian Blackberry Taskforce			

Planning				
20	Review standard planning permit conditions for weed control and prevention.	Environment and Sustainability Department	Development Approvals	December 2023
21	Develop, distribute, and review a template for a weed management plan for development sites.	Environment and Sustainability Department	Development Approvals	Ongoing
Monitoring and Reporting				
22	Update weed mapping for Council's environmental reserves and rural roadsides on Councils internal GIS	Environment and Sustainability Department	Strategic Assets and Property	23/24
23	Monitor the effectiveness of the environmental reserve and rural roadside weed control programs through auditing, analysis of mapping layers, ecological assessments, and customer requests/feedback.	Environment and Sustainability Department		Ongoing
Community Capacity Building				
24	Undertake annual staff and contractor training to maintain and improve skills in identification and control of weeds	Environment and Sustainability Department Parks and Operations	Community Amenity and Emergency Management	June 2023 – Ongoing
25	Raise community awareness of the report a weed option on the <i>Report an incident or issue</i> function on Council's website	Environment and Sustainability Department Communications		Ongoing
26	Undertake actions to raise knowledge of weeds in the community through partnering with community groups such as Landcare to run events, distribute information and promote training opportunities such as Chemical user courses.	Environment and Sustainability Department Communications		Ongoing

27	Continue to collaborate with government agencies and community groups such as CMAs and Landcare to undertake regional approaches to weed control.	Environment and Sustainability Department		Ongoing
28	Regularly promote Council's weed control program for Environmental Reserves and rural roadsides through Council's media channels.	Environment and Sustainability Department	Communications	Ongoing
29	Investigate options for Land management programs for private landholders that include education on weed identification and management	Environment and Sustainability Department		2024
30	Promote membership and collaboration with Landcare and other environmental/land management groups	Environment and Sustainability Department		Ongoing
31	Include weed identification and control information in New Rural Landholder kits	Environment and Sustainability Department		Ongoing
32	Notify adjoining landholders in priority areas of Council's weed control programs to promote complementary works on private land	Environment and Sustainability Department		Ongoing
33	Host and/or support weed identification and control workshops/field days in partnership with Landcare, Agriculture Victoria etc.	Environment and Sustainability Department		Ongoing
34	Promote and facilitate whole farm planning/ land management courses and events	Environment and Sustainability Department		Ongoing
35	Review the Central Victorian Weeds Guide with partner Councils.	Environment and Sustainability Department	Communications	December 2023
36	Continue to distribute information on weed identification and control through Council's website,	Environment and Sustainability Department	Communications	Ongoing

	through the libraries and customer service centers, and at local events etc.			
37	Continue to enforce and review the Mitchell Shire weed local law.	Community Amenity and Emergency Management	Environment and Sustainability Department	Ongoing
38	Review the Mitchell Shire weed local law as part of the overall review of the Community and Environment Local Law 2022.	Community Amenity and Emergency Management	Environment and Sustainability Department	2025



Figure 10 Mechanical removal (grooming) of Gorse in Kilmore