



**Upper Mount Emu Creek**  
Landcare Network

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To: Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee  
PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY INTO THE SUSTAINABILITY AND OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES OF  
VICTORIA'S RURAL AND REGIONAL COUNCILS**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to this enquiry. Our submission focusses exclusively of part f (weed and pest animal control) of the inquiries terms of reference.

**Background**

Our Landcare Network covers 9 Landcare groups located in the Glenelg Hopkins CMA region in a broad triangle west from Ballarat to Skipton and Beaufort.

Weed and pest control is a key part of each groups activities. Woody weed control (gorse, broome, Spanish heath, boxthorn, briar) is around 70% of this activity. Invasive weed control (pattersons curse, St johns wort) is a further 10% and rabbit control 20% in this area of our activities.

Our Network goes across the municipalities of Ballarat and Pyrenees.

**Key Issues**

We would like to submit our support the ongoing resourcing of the roadside weeds and pests program.

We have seen significant good and strategic works by these Councils in utilising the funds of the program for roadside weed control. In particular the woody weed gorse has been our priority issue and occupied at least 50% of our activity.

Over the past four years Council have sought our input into where works should be undertaken across their municipalities. This action combined with our capacity to access funds through the gorse task force for complimentary works on private land has seen good control across public and private land being achieved.

In the case of both municipalities each have had a long commitment to weed control on roadsides. Ballarat has over many years utilised its own funds for control, while Pyrenees has provided community grants for Landcare to undertake such works.

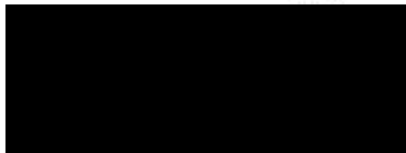
While these funds have been quite small in amount, they have had a significant impact in keeping the weeds at much more manageable levels than in surrounding municipalities, meaning the funds Council now spends are being much more effective, due to the ongoing work of Landcare over many years keeping the weeds from fully recovering.

Within our two Municipalities we consider the current funding levels as effective. While more funds can be used the current levels are seeing good progress on knock down of established areas and capacity to return to previously controlled areas and protect the investment already made in control.

What is most critical to our Network is the continuity attached to this funding. The weed scourge we have now is a direct result of the previous Lands Department (early 1980's) stopping doing this work on roadsides when the task was close to complete. For gorse control 25 years is the expected period (see Gorse Task Force website) needed to control gorse effectively. Clearly 80% of the cost for this is in the first ten years, but the continuity is what is critical.

We thank you for your consideration of our submission and would be pleased to appear before the committee if this added value to your deliberations.

Yours Sincerely

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David Clark  
Network Facilitator