

**REVIEW OF PROGRESS TOWARDS
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL
GORSE STRATEGIC PLAN**

(2008 - 2009)

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30 October 2009

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Acknowledgments

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Background

Gorse is a Weed of National Significance in Australia, originating from Central and Western Europe. The National Gorse Task Force and National Gorse Coordinator oversee the implementation of the National Gorse Strategic Plan. This report summarises the outcomes from activities during the 2008/2009 reporting period.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A number of actions from the Gorse National Strategic Plan were completed during the reporting period including:

- Revision, publication and distribution of the second edition of the Gorse National Best Practice Manual
- Improvement and production of a National Gorse Distribution and Strategic Activity Map,
- Consolidation of nationally strategic 25 Year Eradication MOU programmes.
- Expansion and revision of the communications data base
- Establishment of the 'Gorse Baton – community guardian partnership programme'
- Review of the National Gorse strategy in preparation for the Gorse WoNS review.

Completion of these actions has enabled the National Gorse Task Force to reach a wider and greater audience, to be able to provide consistent and high quality advice and to be able to increase public capacity in gorse management. Release of Edition 2 of the National Gorse Best Practice Manual is testimony of the high demand and value land managers place on this resource. Of the total 9000 copies produced 7500 are in circulation and 1500 in reserve.

The greatest achievements of the National Gorse Task Force during this reporting period included:

1. Consolidation of the focus on efforts to create eradication programme areas for gorse in outlying infestation areas which are identified as National Priority Eradication Areas by the Task Force.
2. Establishment of the Gorse Baton Programme.

A continuation of the process where a **25 year Eradication Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** is used to secure formal agreement and commitment, in writing from relevant organisations was continued with great success this year. The MOU's again were signed off by General Managers of organisations with the capacity to maintain long-term project commitment, support staff, invest and facilitate a change in thinking from ad hoc or no management to a focus on eradication. In several areas of Australia where there has been little or no management of gorse in the past, we now have written confirmation from organisations that they will eradicate defined infestations.

A total of 17 organisations around Australia have committed to 25 year eradication programmes for gorse, effectively stamping out this invasive species from 4 entire NRM Regions, 2 part NRM Regions and 11 local governments. These commitments will effectively reduce the northern range of the species by 600km to the Sydney outliers and the western range by 1700km to the Clare Valley in SA! In addition the South Australian weed managers in The Mt Lofty Ranges and Fleurieu Peninsula now form an 'Island infestation' which is gradually being reduced with on-going oversight of treated areas. Over **220,000 square kilometres are now under the MOU** programme. This means that much of Australia is under surveillance for new incursions of gorse.

To further secure the MOU's over the 25 year period, the **Gorse Baton Programme** selects suitable community members such as landcare champions to act as observers of the ongoing MOU activities. The Baton holder meets annually with the

weed managers to oversee and ensure the ongoing commitment is continued by reminding organisations over the years as they move through staff changes. Specific details and copies of the pledge can be found in appendix 5 and 6.

A major component of the eradication programs developed is that they are self-sustaining financially. Most programs sought no funding for establishment or operational costs. A shift in thinking from needing a handout to be able to get an on ground outcome has occurred in several areas nationally.

Future Priorities

- Extend approach to organisations with capacity to eradicate outlying gorse infestations encouraging them to take up this challenge
- Follow-up current MOU signatories with establishment of 'Gorse Baton Programme in their jurisdiction'
- Continue to identify and facilitate management programs for gorse in areas which have unique and significant natural values

INTRODUCTION

This report outlines how national coordination in gorse management, provided through various investment sources including Local, State and Australian Government and the Community has contributed towards implementation of the National Gorse Strategic Plan.

Gorse its history and distribution in Australia

Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), a native of Central and Western Europe has spread widely throughout the temperate regions of the world and has naturalised in almost every temperate country, including North America, New Zealand and Australia. Gorse is a weed in Chile, India, South Africa, Iran, Spain, Italy and Poland.

Gorse was introduced to Australia during the early 1800s as a hedge and ornamental plant. In Tasmania gorse was planted for hedges, shelter and fodder into the 1940's. In TAS, NSW and ACT gorse was deliberately planted into the late 1980's.

Found across temperate Australia, gorse ranges over 23 million ha of land and infests up to 1 million ha of land. Potential distribution based on scientific modelling is in the order of 87 million ha. This includes most agricultural land in Victoria and Tasmania, coastal South Australia and much of south-west Western Australia.

Gorse can be recognised as a dense, extremely spiny shrub which can grow to 7m in height but more commonly grows between 1 and 2.5m in height. A major obstacle in gorse control and eradication is the long lasting seed, which can stay viable in the soil for up to thirty years. Seed production is high with up to 40,000 seeds/m² or 400 million per ha at mature infestation sites.

Impacts of Gorse in Australia

The impacts of gorse are felt socially, economically and environmentally. Impacts on agriculture include reduced carrying capacity, restricted stock and human access, harbouring feral animals and reducing land value. In forestry, gorse interferes with access, seedling establishment and harvesting. The annual cost of management to agriculture and forest industries in Australia is approximately 8 million dollars annually.

In native vegetation gorse can form dense mono cultural stands increasing fire prevalence and intensity, altering vegetation community structure. Where gorse invades native vegetation it dramatically reduces biodiversity and impacts on natural values including under-reserved vegetation communities, Ramsar wetlands and threatened species.

A National Approach to Gorse Management

The National Gorse Strategic Plan was drafted in 2001 and published in 2003. The development of the Strategy was overseen by the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries and Water with full cooperation of all states, territories and the Australian Government.

The Strategy established five desired outcomes for gorse management in Australia:

1. Best Practice management of established infestations across Australia
2. Prevention of spread from established infestations
3. Eradication of isolated and scattered infestations

4. Management of at risk areas to maintain them gorse free
5. The strategy for gorse control is best managed at the national level.

Statutory controls and regulation

Gorse is specifically recognised in legislation in all the states it affects. The States have individually put in place policy and regulation enacting their respective legislation.

- Tasmania has developed a State Strategy for the management of gorse and several other WoNS weeds present in the state.
- Victoria released a state-wide Control Strategy for Gorse this year (2009).
- South Australia has developed a Gorse Policy,
- Australian Capital Territory has developed an ACT Broom and Gorse Management Plan,
- NSW DPI has developed an internal organisational plan and NSW Parks and Wildlife Service has a gorse weed management program.

Funding information

National Weed Program funding in 2002 provided a catalyst for a range of actions in WA, SA, Victoria and Tasmania. Funding for a national gorse coordinator was secured and appointment made in July 2004 which has further assisted the implementation of the strategic plan. The Defeating the Weed Menace program funding (2005 – 2008) has enabled the development and distribution of two editions of the Gorse National Best Practice Manual, a WA led gorse seed-bank eradication research program and the continuation of the national gorse biological control program.

Numerous stakeholders contribute to the implementation of many strategies and actions not listed in this report. These include;

- State agencies,
- local government,
- project managers,
- individual landholders,
- community groups,
- Aboriginal organisations,
- utilities,
- research institutes,
- schools and
- regional NRM bodies.

The Australian Government via the NHT, Defeating the Weed Menace program, Envirofund and the Caring for Our Country Programme have supported much of any funding allocated directly to gorse management, however significant in-kind contributions in the form of time and planning, staff activity have been allocated by the above organisations. The level of this funding remains unrecorded as does the quantity of time and personal funding allocated by the community and landholders toward gorse management.

REVIEW OF PROGRESS TOWARDS THE GORSE STRATEGIC PLAN 2008/2009

Outcome 1 - Best practice management of established infestations across Australia

Gorse National Best Practice Manual

The Gorse National Best Practice Manual was first published in 2007. Since publication 6000 copies were circulated to organisations and individuals across the country. All copies were distributed by July 08. Due to the huge demand for this resource the 2nd edition of the Manual has now been produced and printed following a review of the first edition. Minor changes were adopted; being largely typographical and format errors. The herbicide lists and application rates were also updated and a new cover was also designed based on the model used in the Willow, CNG and Serrated Tussock manual format. Reprinting of 3000 copies occurred during October 2009 with production and circulation of 1500 copies complete in October 09. The remaining 1500 copies remain available with the Tasmanian Government DPIPWE.

The manual which contains detailed case studies explained in a range of agricultural and natural settings has enabled users to draw on the experience of others from around the country. It has provided a platform for people to feel confident in planning, undertaking and reviewing their gorse management programs. The National Gorse Task Force has received anecdotal feedback that the provision of the manual has increased the number of gorse management programs across the country and has empowered people to undertake gorse control who had not done so previously.

It has also been evident through discussion on the ground that users often adopt elements from a number of case studies combining them with their own ideas and methods to implement gorse management which suits their experience and their environment. Thus the tool inspires activity and confidence enabling people beyond it's recommendations.

Additional to the Manual is a digital copy (in CD format) of the Bureau of Rural Science Field Mapping guide for weeds of National Significance. This document guides users to capture data based on a National standard of a set of 15 core attributes for data collection. i.e. species, collector, date, grid reference/lat long, accuracy etc.

Mapping

During 2008 the coordinator with support from the Tasmanian Government GIS staff produced a new version of the National Gorse Map. Subsequently in 2009 improved data collection and the adoption of 'ArcReader' software has allowed portable fine scale mapping of the nation to be available to the coordinator in the field.

This tool has been very useful for the coordinator and stakeholders to demonstrate rationale for targeting priorities, for work planning and to inform gorse managers around the country of how they fit into the national picture. Also, the visual image of the existence of so many areas which have eradication programmes has inspired other regions to more actively manage gorse.

A version of the current national map can be seen in Appendix 1 and displays gorse distribution against the predicted range of gorse and the status of MOUs and partnership arrangements to date.

The map clearly demonstrates the progress made at the national scale. The progress is strategic, displaying the way in which smaller infestations and those that are spatially isolated are being targeted for control via the development of eradication programs and establishment of 25 year eradication MOUs with the National Gorse Taskforce.

Biological Control of Gorse

The release of a new gorse biological agent, the Gorse Soft Shoot Moth (*Agonopterix ulicetella*) from quarantine in Victoria has now occurred. Further releases are planned for Victoria and Tasmania during 2008. This agent feeds on the soft shoots of gorse. There are now three foliage-feeding agents and one seed-feeding agent contributing to the biological control of gorse.

Release of the other biological control agents continued nationwide, with releases being conducted in South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania.

The Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research (TIAR) and the Victorian Department of Primary Industry work closely to deliver research into gorse biological control. These groups along with the Western Australian Department of Food and Agriculture have stated that further agents are required to further reduce the vigour of gorse to a stage where biological control has a significant effect on the distribution and impacts of gorse nationally.

An agent that damages the root system of gorse would be highly valued but research to date has drawn a blank on a suitable agent.

Asset Protection and Prioritisation

The coordinator has further developed the national mapping to include Ramsar wetlands, National Heritage, World Heritage National reserves and National Estate data to determine the presence of gorse within or nearby such assets. Dependant on the quality of the gorse point data provided by the states, all assets sites within the range of gorse in Australia can be analysed for the presence of gorse. This also means gorse infestations nearby which threaten the sites can also be included in this analysis.

Strategic Management of Gorse

The South East NRM (SA) Board during 2009 entered into a 25 year MOU and Gorse Baton with the National Gorse Task Force to eradicate all infestations within this NRM Region in SA. The National Gorse Coordinator travelled to the Mt Gambier to discuss management of the core infestation within the NRM region with the Authorised Officers and Project Manager from the Board. The Region had also been successful obtaining *Defeating the Weed Menace* funding of \$120,000 to fund the treatment of the 200 ha present in their area.

The visit and a presentation to the NRM Board by the previous coordinator in 2007 led to the region undertaking a mapping, extension and control activity for the area. This activity was seen as a major achievement by the Task Force and will be used as a model to motivate other organisations around the country.

Of interest is the fact that the region resolved to sign the MOU *because* the Gorse Baton provided security to the organisation into the long term future. The Chair of the Board expressed concern that little guarantee of follow-up for works conducted with Federal funding exists. Thus a risk management structure for the project was very attractive.

Weedmercial

A 30-second television commercial produced in 2008 as a tool to create awareness of the threat and financial burden of gorse particularly from an agricultural perspective. The commercial was filmed in Tasmania and features a landowner that relays his experience. The television commercial has been aired in all States and Territories where gorse is located, with the exception of Western Australia, during the gorse flowering periods of spring and autumn.

Airing of the commercial was invested in by the South East NRM Board and the Mt Lofty and Adelaide Ranges NRM Board in South Australia. All other airing was achieved via free to air community service announcement time allocation, with particularly good airplay in Tasmania from Southern Cross TV. This product was not used during the 2008-2009 period. Subsequent airing of the commercial is proposed for 2009 – 2010.

Outcome 2 - Prevention of spread from established infestations

Declaration

Gorse is widely declared and prohibited from importation into Australia, satisfying action 2.4.1 of the National Strategy. The degree of control or eradication required under various state legislation varies as a result of density and practicality of control / eradication and is generally reasonable.

In Tasmania sub regional stakeholders in the Dorset Municipality managed a Defeating the Weed Menace project to control gorse. While around 20ha of gorse was controlled the greatest outcome from the project was the development of a map of infestations within this project area and a mapping tool (MS Excel recording sheet). At the initiation of the project there were 14 known infestations and at the conclusion there are now over 150. This increase in knowledge has helped to inform a review of the *Tasmanian Weed Management Act 1999* and enabled better implementation of the Act through policy and operational approach by Departmental mrowland00Weed Officers.

Through the presence of a WoNS Coordinator making contact with weeds officers around the country and engaging them on the issue of gorse management, greater levels of gorse management has occurred. Personal contact by the Coordinator has motivated officers to control gorse in areas where it has not been a priority for control for reasons including the prevalence of other weeds which are a higher priority such as serrated tussock in NSW. This contact has motivated weeds officers to manage greater levels of gorse often through using the powers under the relevant State act to enforce management based on the particular declaration.

In some cases such as Wingecarribee and Bombala Shires in NSW gorse is being targeted for eradication even though legislation requires continual suppression rather than management. This is a credit to the Noxious Weed Officers who have a focus on prevention of spread of weeds, which are not widespread in the immediate local government area.

Hygiene

Engagement and better practice from stakeholders with capacity to reduce the spread of gorse seed is still a major challenge. While active gorse management programs may be in place in many areas the transport of seed in these areas continues to create new infestation sites.

Individual NRM regions such as the Tasmanian Cradle Coast NRM and SE NRM in South Australia have developed their own Hygiene policies and action plans to compliment their general weed management programmes. Gorse management by default receives attention through these documents.

In Western Australia seed transport is a major issue for the eradication program centred on the Albany area. Gorse is confined to the Albany region in the South Coast NRM Region. Local government and the Department of Food and Agriculture have implemented policy to prevent soil being moved from all 350-infestation sites. GIS stored polygon locations were given a buffer of 20m and all land titles, which correlate, to this zone have had a prevention order placed on them to ensure contaminated soil is not moved from the area and allowed to infest other areas. This

council has also been very pro active in ensuring contractor vehicles and machinery are cleaned well whenever there is a chance of seed dispersal from infestation sites.

Outcome 3 - Eradication of isolated and scattered infestations

The National Gorse Task Force continued its commitment to focus on encouraging the development of eradication programs for scattered and outlying gorse infestations nationwide.

Organisations with capacity to maintain a 25-year commitment to annual inspections and control of infestations were invited to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National Gorse Task Force. The MOU stipulates what requirements are needed to ensure eradication, rather than merely control and acts as a point of securing support for such projects at management level within the organisation.

The following agreements were finalised at the end of the reporting period.

MOU Number	MOU Organisation	Significance
1.	Orange City Council	Entire Local Government Area
2.	Albury City Council	Entire Local Government Area
3.	Tumut Shire NSW	Entire Local Government Area
4.	Bega Shire NSW	Entire Local Government Area
5.	Greater Hume Shire NSW	Entire Local Government Area
6.	Kempsey Shire NSW	Entire Local Government Area
7.	Glenn Innes Severn Shire NSW	Entire Local Government Area
8.	Tenterfield Shire NSW	Entire Local Government Area
9.	Kangaroo Island NRM Board SA	Entire NRM Region
10.	Eyre Peninsula NRM Board SA	Entire NRM Region
11.	Northern and Yorke NRM Board SA	Part NRM Region
12.	SA Murray Darling Basin NRM Board SA	Part NRM Region
13.	Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area TAS	Entire World Heritage Area
14.	Mt Lofty Ranges and NRM	Strategic sections of NRM Region
15.	New England Weeds Authority NSW	Entire Local Government Area
16.	South Coast NRM Region Western Australia	Entire NRM Region
17.	South East NRM Board South Australia	Entire NRM Region

The efforts of local government in NSW effectively means that gorse is under eradication in 4 entire NRM Regions in this State. On the national scale the MOU process has set up gorse eradication programs to ensure eradication from 8 entire NRM regions.

Further to this the following Local Governments in NSW have agreed to MOU's but the WoNS Coordinator had not received documentation at date of this report; Bellingen Shire, Bombala Shire, Cooma Monaro Shire, Palerang Shire and Wollondilly Shire.

The outcome of these agreements in many cases means that infestations previously under ad hoc management now have been targeted for eradication by a local control organisation. Eradication programs have been designed which, if maintained by the lead proponents, will ensure eradication of the infestations, rather than just their management.

A major component of all of these eradication programs is that they are self-sustaining financially. These programs sought no funding for establishment or operational costs. A shift in thinking from needing a handout to be able to get an on ground outcome has occurred in several areas nationally.

This approach using the MOU is a first for gorse management in Australia and many of the projects listed here serve as ideal case studies to motivate and inspire other organisations across the country.

Defeating the Weed Menace – Western Australian Gorse Eradication Project

For the last two years the Task Force had been attempting to facilitate a project in WA with the South Coast NRM region. The Task Force had written to Minister Abetz and secured investment, which would be provided to the Region based on a matching contribution and the proviso that the regional body would enter into a MOU to eradicate gorse from WA.

With the passing of Minister Abetz the Task Force once again wrote to the new Agriculture Minister, Minister Bourke stating the case for a sum of \$80,000 for this project. DAFF supported the proposal, which was finally approved in mid June 08 on the proviso that the investment would be granted as long as the WoNS program received its interim funding for 08/09.

At this stage the MOU is expected to be signed in August 2008. The MOU is significant because no other regional body in Australia has committed to such a large project for such a long time frame for any WoNS species.

The Gorse Baton - Community oversight of 25 year Eradication MOU

With the knowledge that 25 years is a long time for organisations to commit to agreements and to manage the problem of staff turnover and the consequent loss of 'corporate memory', the taskforce resolved that there was a need to establish a risk management process for the MOU's. Localised oversight outside the formal programmes and structures of weed managers to 'risk manage' the potential weakness in the MOU programme was seen to be the way forward.

Development and distribution of the new "Gorse Baton" programme has brought an element of risk management to the 25 year MOU activity. The Baton is simply a document tube which houses all the relevant information pertaining to the management of gorse in the jurisdiction. Being a visible 'symbol' in the workplace it serves to remind the managing body to keep up the programme. An additional smaller Baton (also a document tube) is held by a community member who's responsibility it is to 'see' that the work continues and no gorse ever gets to seed. This smaller tube holds a pledge to maintain commitment and provides the community custodian the right to 'remind' the jurisdiction of their responsibility so the infestation areas remain gorse free. An annual meeting of the custodian and managing authority keep the project alive. (See appendix 5). In addition, the community custodian has the right and responsibility to pass the baton on to another community member to carry out the commitment should the first custodian be unable to keep the pledge.

Outcome 4 - Management of at risk areas to maintain them gorse free

This outcome is perhaps one of the most difficult within the National Strategy to tangibly do anything constructive with. The development of hygiene plans and greater implementation of hygiene procedures is increasing around the country. The Cradle Coast NRM Committee in Tasmania has provided a copy of its Hygiene Plan to the SE NRM Board in SA who is in the process of developing a strategy for their NRM region. Many organisations around the country are developing such policy to assist with a reduction in the spread of weeds yet the outcome of these policies is difficult to measure.

The Coordinator developed a tool that has been successfully employed in areas that the Task Force considered at risk from infestation of gorse. In developing regional gorse management projects in NSW 'Partnership Agreements' have been entered into by two local governments. Local government areas (LGA) that were 'surrounded' by gorse present in other LGA were engaged by the Coordinator and informed of the control programs occurring around them.

Noxious Weeds Officers were asked to keep an eye out for gorse at particular locations defined by the Officers that they believed were at risk of being infested by gorse via particular vectors. These agreements contain tangible actions which organisations with capacity to keep an eye out for gorse and manage any infestations can conduct to effectively keep areas free of gorse and respond to new incursions quickly and effectively. This Partnership Agreement template can be seen in appendix 4. Wellington and Eurobodalla Shires in NSW have entered into 'Partnership Agreements with the Task Force.

Eradication MOU protects areas free but at risk of gorse infestation

The Gorse Eradication MOU defines a project area in which an organisation commits to an eradication project. The project areas are generally local government or regional boundaries. The MOU is a useful tool as while the organisation is busy treating the known sites they have taken on a commitment to control any new sites discovered. The discovery of new sites has occurred in nearly every case and organisations have contacted the Coordinator to voluntarily add them to the MOU's in place.

In this manner the scope of gorse management is broadened from just the infestation sites to the surrounding area and indeed entire LGA or regional area. This is demonstrated on the National Gorse Distribution Map in Appendix 1.

Outcome 5 - The strategy for gorse control is best managed at the national level.

The National Gorse Task Force meetings

In this reporting period the Taskforce completed a review of the actions within the National Strategy to determine which actions had been sufficiently completed and reassigned a priority rating to each action in line with the National Priority Action Framework. This review was conducted at a face to face meeting in Canberra (Dec 08) and the outcome of the review was to continue the focus on outcome 3 of the Strategy. Conducting the review assisted the Task Force to determine the degree of implementation of the National Strategy allowing many actions to be put to the side and considered complete. Indeed the Taskforce felt the end of the Gorse programme is well within sight.

At the last NGT Teleconference (Oct 09) agreement was reached to begin winding down the activities of the programme so as to conclude activities by June 2010 at the end of the Australian Government funding commitment. The Taskforce considered planning activities beyond that time would be risky if funding were not to continue. Rather the meeting felt securing the work done and ensuring the states and regions were ready to maintain the gorse management activity without Taskforce or coordinator assistance was more important at this point in time. Thus actions relating to winding up the programme are to be the core agenda for the next face to face meeting in Canberra next month (November 09) At this meeting the National Strategy will be reviewed again and the Task Force will plan for 2009/2010.

National Gorse Taskforce Representatives

All States and Territories where gorse exists have provided representation on the National Gorse Task Force. WA, NSW, VIC, SA & TAS.

The Taskforce also has representation from community (Agriculture in Tas and VIC), Scientific (WA) and industry sectors (National Forestry) which has been critical in providing linkages and expertise for the Taskforce. State Government representation has been central in directing the Coordinator within states for networking and targeting authorities to work with.

Representatives have assisted the Coordinator in designing processes to achieve identified goals within the National Strategy. They have been available, in person to show the Coordinator infestations and programs within their regions. Without this support few outcomes would have been achieved, specifically those related to Outcome 3 of the National Strategy.

Without doubt the success of the National Gorse Taskforce has been largely due to the very focussed and dedicated direction of the Chair Mr Ian Sauer. He has been of significant assistance and support providing guidance to the three coordinators since 2006. Despite uncertainty of funding which has led to departure of coordinators, the success of the Gorse programme can very clearly be attributed to Ian's extraordinary commitment and drive to see the National Strategy outcomes achieved.

In addition, the state representatives have regularly supported the coordinator providing valuable local knowledge. For example; In South Australia the State representative accompanied the Coordinator on a visit to the SE NRM Board to inspect a Defeating the Weed Menace funded project, adoption of a gorse Baton and signing of another 25 year Memorandum of Understanding.

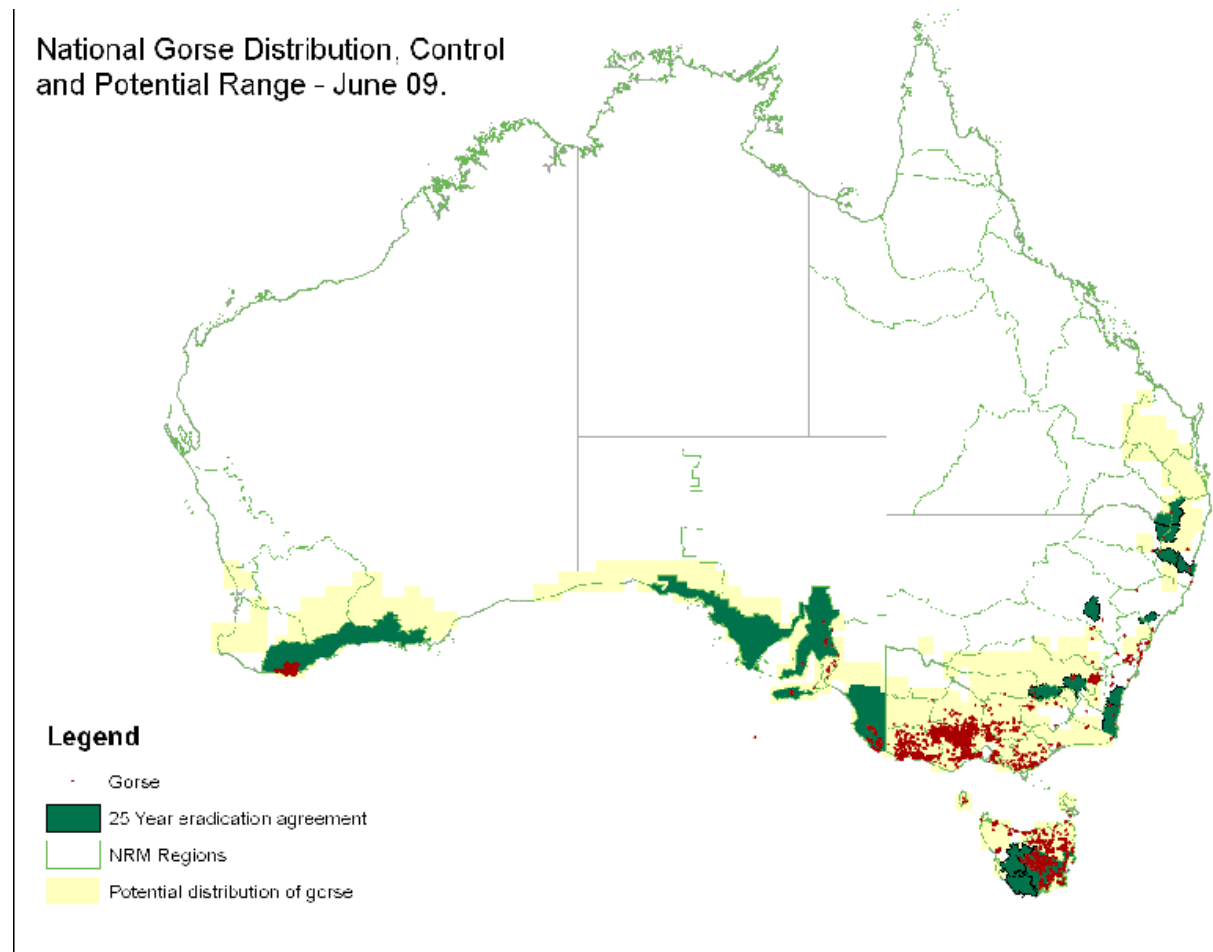
The Taskforce have been central in supporting the direction of the coordinator particularly as the current incumbent was relatively new to the role.

Further to this, the chairs of each of the WoNS Management Groups have met to share information about strategic directions and activities which have resulted in productive outcomes and combined their voices to provide advice and information to the Australian Government.

Coordinator tenure

Following Dean Vincent's departure from the Coordination position, the Coordinator position was vacant from June 08 through September 08. Uncertainty of funding contributed to his departure. Three months elapsed during the preparations for filling the position. The next Coordinator Michael Rowland was appointed to the position and commenced in the role in Late September 2008 to end in June 2009. Late confirmation of ongoing funding from the Australian Government lead to further uncertainty until approval to use unspent funds was confirmed By the Australian Government and a new contract was offered to the incumbent extending a further 4 months to October 09. Extension of this contract was not offered following confirmation in September 09 of further Australian Government funding being offered due to Internal Human resources policy. The incumbent ended their role in the position October 30 and was replaced by a current permanent employee to continue the role until June 30 2010. The loss of corporate knowledge though this change and also the two previous changes of coordinators has meant a significant loss of activity through the periods of familiarisation to the role.

Appendix 1 - National Gorse Distribution, control and potential range - Map



Appendix 2- Area km²- under Local Government and NRM Regional 25 year Eradication MOU Surveillance and Treatment

25YrAgreem (Multiple Items)

Row Labels	Sum of areasq_km
Albury (C)	313
Armidale Dumaresq (A)	4,142
Bega Valley (A)	6,311
Cessnock (C)	1,938
Eurobodalla (A)	3,421
Glen Innes Severn (A)	5,357
Greater Hume Shire (A)	5,738
Kempsey (A)	3,308
Orange (C)	281
Tenterfield (A)	7,151
Tumut Shire (A)	4,553
Wellington (A)	4,048
Grand Total	46,562

STATE (All)
25YrAgreem (Multiple Items)

Row Labels	Sum of Area_km
Eyre Peninsula	51,844
Kangaroo Island	4,417
Northern and Yorke	34,406
South Coast Region	54,492
South East (SA)	27,867
Grand Total	173,026

46,562

Total area under MOUs across Australia

219,588

Appendix 3 - Memorandum of Understanding Template

Draft MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

AND THE

NATIONAL GORSE TASK FORCE

Eradication of Gorse from the XXXXXXXX area

1. Purpose

To eradicate Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) a Weed of National Significance (WoNS) from the xxxxxxxx area

2. Back Ground

Eradication of outlying infestations such as the infestations listed below (Item 3) in the xxxxxxxxxx area is a Nationally Strategic Priority for the National Gorse Task Force and is of major significance in managing the impacts of gorse nationally.

Gorse is one of Australia's twenty worst weeds. Gorse ranges across 23 million hectares of land, infesting up to 1 million hectares. Its potential range is 87 million hectares of land. Impacts to primary industry alone, in Australia are in excess of \$7 millions dollars per annum.

The National Gorse Task Force (NGTF), formed in 2004 is an Australia-wide body representing production, conservation, government and community organisations. The NGTF oversees the implementation of the National Gorse Strategic Plan. Outcome 3 of the National Gorse Strategic Plan is 'Eradication of isolated and scattered infestations.'

Control of above ground gorse is carried out successfully around the country. Seed viability of gorse is in the order of 25 years and remains a major obstacle in eradication of gorse infestations. Eradication of infestations is possible providing that seed is not transported from the infestation and control of all regeneration of the infestation is conducted for the life of the seed bank.

3. Scope.

This eradication project is to be conducted in the xxxxxxxxxx of xxxxxxxxx.

The infestations recorded in the following table represent the scope of the infestations at the date of this MOU.

Example Only

Locality	Infestation Size	Easting and northing	Description
Place name	0.1 ha		100m long hedge on council land.

4. The National Gorse Task Force will

- Provide a letter of context to all landowners who have gorse infestations to assist in facilitating the eradication project
- Provide mapping and best practice gorse control advice to ensure that the management approach of the infestations will lead to eradication in the shortest practical time
- Provide coordination and facilitation when requested to assist in the eradication project
- Promote and highlight the eradication project in the media for the benefit of all parties who have entered into this MOU
- Contact the project contact, annually to seek an update on the eradication of the infestations

5. The xxxx organisation agree to

- Map the infestations to the National Mapping Standard as developed by the Bureau of Rural Science
- Ensure that gorse seed from infestations is not moved to infest other areas in the Region
- Facilitate eradication of all living gorse plants within twelve months or before the next seed set
- Undertake annual inspections and have destroyed any regrowth or seedling germination to ensure that the infestation does not produce seed again
- Report annually to the National Gorse Task Force so that progress on the National Gorse Strategy can be tracked
- Ensure that other land managers such as Local Government are working cooperatively towards the goal of eradication of the listed infestations

6. Memorandum of Understanding Duration

The duration of this agreement is for twenty-five (25) years. This is typically the duration of gorse seed viability in the soil.

7. Termination of this Memorandum of Understanding

Termination of this Memorandum of Understanding may occur at any stage of the agreement duration. However, a party seeking to terminate this agreement must first write to the other party and express the conditions by which they seek to terminate the agreement. Both parties will attempt in good faith to resolve the situation.

8. Relevant Agreements, Policies, Plans and Strategies

The relevant references to the MOU are;

- The Australian Weeds Strategy
- The Gorse National Strategic Plan
- The Gorse Best Practice Manual
- The Determination of the Weeds of National Significance

- Insert relevant Acts or Document Names

Effective date.

SIGNATURE BLOCK
XXXXXXXXXXXX

(Date)

SIGNATURE BLOCK
Ian Sauer
Chair
National Gorse Task Force

(Date)



Partnership Agreement

between the

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

and the

National Gorse Task Force

Management of at risk areas to maintain them free of Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) A Weed of National Significance

9. Purpose

To prevent financial loss to primary industry and impacts on biodiversity, from Gorse a Weed of National Significance.

10. Back Ground

Gorse is one of Australia's twenty worst weeds. It ranges across 23 million hectares of land, infesting up to 1 million hectares. Its potential range is 87 million hectares. Impacts to primary industry alone are in excess of \$7 millions dollars per annum.

The National Gorse Task Force, which formed in 2004, is a national management group representing industry, conservation, government and community organisations. The Task Force oversees implementation of the National Gorse Strategic Plan. Outcome 4 of the National Gorse Strategic Plan is 'Management of at risk areas to maintain them free of Gorse.'

Once gorse establishes in an area it can be extremely difficult and costly to eradicate. In many parts of Australia the management of gorse is a burden on land managers and can cost individuals thousands of dollars annually. Gorse seed can be viable for more than 25 years.

Seed is generally carried on vehicles and machinery, in floodwaters and on animals. It can insidiously spread into areas where it has not been present before, producing seed within twelve months of establishment. Under a mature plant there can be up to 40,000 seeds / m².

Because the xxxxxx is currently free of gorse it makes good financial sense to regularly survey areas where there is a high risk of gorse invasion and to destroy any gorse plants discovered before they set seed.

This Partnership Agreement serves as an opportunity for the xxxxxxxx efforts to be recognised at a national level and offers assistance from the National Gorse Task Force where practical.

11. Scope.

This Partnership Agreement involves surveillance for gorse in the xxxxxxx of xxxxx.

The areas listed below are considered at risk from invasion of gorse as a result of seed movement on vehicles, animals and in flood waters.

Xxxxxx Sale Yards
Xxxxxx Road

12. As a result of this Partnership Agreement the National Gorse Task Force will

- Provide copies of the Gorse National Best Practice Manual on an as needs basis
- Keep the xxxxxx up to date with gorse management from around Australia
- Assist with mapping of gorse infestations if required
- Contact the xxxxxxxxx on an annual basis

13. The xxxxxxxx agree to

- Survey the areas listed in Item 3 on an at least annual basis
- Where gorse is discovered and it has set seed map the infestation to the National Mapping Standard and provide this information to any relevant control authority and to the National Gorse Task Force
- Destroy any gorse infestation located during inspections

14. Period of the Agreement

The nature of this agreement is ongoing, as resourcing permits.

15. Termination of this Agreement

This Partnership Agreement is non-binding and voluntary. Both parties will attempt in good faith to execute the agreement to assist in implementation of the National Gorse Strategic Plan.

16. Relevant Agreements, Policies, Plans and Strategies

- The Australian Weeds Strategy
- The Gorse National Strategic Plan
- The Gorse Best Practice Manual
- The Determination of the Weeds of National Significance

- The NSW *Noxious Weeds Act 1993*
- Regional Weed Management Plan
- The New South Wales Weed Strategy
- Regional Catchment Management Plans
- Regional Gorse Control Plan

SIGNATURE BLOCK
xxxxxxxxx
General Manager
xxxxxxxxx

SIGNATURE BLOCK
Ian Sauer
Chair
National Gorse Task
Force

Appendix 5 -Gorse Baton Custodian protocols and guidelines template



National Gorse TASKFORCE

As custodian of the Gorse Baton you are accepting the responsibility of overseeing the continuance of works associated with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to eradicate gorse from the region by *The MOU Signatory* who has signed the MOU with the National Gorse Taskforce.

The Signatory* has agreed to maintain the 'state of eradication' of gorse from their jurisdiction by continued annual recurrent surveillance of the sites treated, to ensure gorse does not regenerate to flower and seed. It is the responsibility of The MOU Signatory to visit the sites on an annual basis to ensure eradication has taken place and to arrange for treatment of any re-infestation or regeneration of gorse.

Your role as custodian is **not** to carry out the work of treatment of gorse (though you are not precluded from this activity). Your role is to watch the areas by perhaps revisiting them on an annual basis to inspect the sites for the presence of gorse. If you become aware of any gorse infestation it is your responsibility to inform the MOU Signatory of the infestation.

In the event that you are unable to continue this responsibility, it is then your responsibility and as part of the pledge to locate a new custodian, inform them of the task and award the baton to the new bearer in the presence of The MOU Signatory. This handover should, at your stimulus, be arranged and carried out formally at the Jurisdictional offices in the presence of the Chief Executive Officer and appropriate witnesses.

The new bearer should be a community member who is able to continue the work of overseeing the commitment to the signed Memorandum of Understanding between The MOU Signatory and the National Gorse Taskforce.

It should be understood that this agreement and activity carries no legal recourse but is carried and perpetuated with the integrity of a gentleman's agreement.

**The MOU signatory* is the Jurisdictional Authority (CMA, NRM Region or Local Government authority) who has the responsibility to manage weeds and encourage compliance of associated weed management regulations.*





Gorse Baton Overseer Custodian Certificate

This is to certify and endorse the accountability of the signatory below to accept responsibility to maintain oversight of the momentum of activity and commitment of the partners to the eradication of Gorse in the **XXXXX** Natural Resource Management Region.

The Spirit of this agreement empowers the overseer to coerce, persuade, encourage and lever the resource management organisation (responsible authority) to continue the work of eradication of Gorse for twenty five years from the original date of signing.

In the event of the signatory ceasing or declining to continue this responsibility, the signatory must as a matter of responsibility and as part of the pledge, award the baton to a new bearer being a community representative, to continue the work of overseeing the commitment to the signed Memorandum of Understanding between the **XXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXXX** and the National Gorse Taskforce.

Bearer Signed this **xx**th day of **XXXX** 20**XX**

In the Presence of

Ian Sauer

(Chair of the National Gorse Taskforce)

New Bearer..... Signed this day of 20 ...

New Bearer..... Signed this day of 20 ...

New Bearer..... Signed this day of 20 ...