



Weed ID recording in Gippsland – Bianca Gold.

# Weeds and Pests on Public Land Program Report 2023–2024





# Weeds and Pests on Public Land 2023-24

- The Weeds and Pests on Public Land (WPPL) Program aims to protect biodiversity across the state of Victoria through **targeting threats to ecosystems** such as weeds, rabbits, and foxes. These invasive species threaten native plant, animal, and fungi species through reducing their populations, damaging their habitats, or by competing directly with them for resources.
- The WPPL Program invests **over \$3 million** each year, with an additional \$1 million provided each year by Parks Victoria.
- There are 8 flagship projects within WPPL: the 3 x Arks undertaking fox control, the 3 x Edens undertaking weed control, the Mallee Bounceback which targets rabbits, and the Weeds at the Early Stage of Invasion project which builds the capability of land managers to respond to early invader weeds.
- The WPPL Program could not operate without its excellent network of collaborative partnerships, which in 2023-24 involved **61 partners** across several iconic national and state parks such as the Grampians, Murray Sunset, and Croajingolong National Parks.



Spiral Sun-orchid -  
Jeff Jeanes



Southern Brown  
Bandicoot - Glenelg  
Ark



Lace Monitor - Mark  
Gillow



Hooded Plover -  
Patrick Kavanagh



Brush-tailed Rock-  
wallaby - Museums  
Victoria



Shiny Nematolepis -  
Jo Antrobus



Pink Cockatoo (also  
known as Major  
Mitchell's Cockatoo) -  
Patrick Kavanagh



Long-footed Potoroo -  
George Bayliss

*The WPPL Program aims to protect and restore populations of many native species by targeting their threats – WPPL Team.*

# WPPL Program Achievements in 2023-24



**12**

Traditional Owner  
groups engaged or  
involved



**16.85**

Staff directly  
employed



**22**

Community  
engagement  
events delivered  
by projects



**4,349**

Volunteer hours



**61**

Delivery partners  
and key  
stakeholders



**694,615**

Total hectares of  
predator control

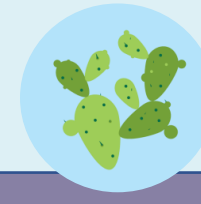
**648,755 Ha** in priority  
locations



**39,829**

Total hectares of  
herbivore control

**36,100 Ha** in priority  
locations



**16,482**

Total hectares of  
weed control

**4,321 Ha** in priority  
locations



**\$1,524,946**

of co-investment  
provided by project  
partners

# What threatened species are benefiting?



**Metallic Sun-orchid**  
(*Thelymitra epipactoides*)

Monitoring is carried out annually each spring for this endangered species in the Port Campbell area of the Otway Eden weed control project.



**Long-footed Potoroo**  
(*Potorous longipes*)

Southern Ark fox control in combination with 3 consecutive La Niña years has resulted in a strong population response from this species in East Gippsland.



**Semi Arid Woodlands**

e.g. Belah (*Casuarina pauper*), Buloke (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*), Slender Cypress Pine (*Callitris gracilis*), & Sugarwood (*Myoporum platycarpum*)

In the Mallee Bounceback area, some of these species are slowly showing signs of recovery, with monitoring between 2012-2024 detecting slight improvements in vegetation condition.



# Partnering and collaborating with Traditional Owners



Left to right: Darren Collins from Moogji turning over a bait station;  
Nathan Millard from Moogji with fresh fox baits – Andy Murray.

## Glenelg Ark

Work closely with Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation to provide technical expertise and equipment around pest and weed management.

## Southern Ark

Partners with 4 Traditional Custodian Groups: Moogji Aboriginal Council, Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative Ltd, and the Bidwell First Nations Clans Aboriginal Corporation.

Moogji is engaged to deliver fox baiting at 116 sites on public land in the East Gippsland project area to build capability and experience.

## Otway Eden

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation were engaged in the Surf Coast area to deliver weed control works.

Otway Eden also delivered Phosphite spray training to Wadawurrung for *Phytophthora cinnamomi* vulnerable vegetation.

# Grampians Ark

## Landscape-scale fox control to protect native mammals in the Grampians National Park

**163,478 Ha** of fox control  
**40,677 Ha** of cat control

**3,806** baits deployed  
for fox control at  
**1,064** bait stations with  
**14%** of baits taken

**3,952** volunteer hours

From Deakin University's small  
mammal surveys in 2023:

**143** records of Yellow-footed Antechinus  
**148** records of Heath Mouse  
**14** records of Southern Brown Bandicoot  
**3** records of Eastern Pygmy Possum

**4 presentations**  
to Castlemaine Field Naturalists  
Club, Friends of Grampians  
Gariwerd, Great Gariwerd Bird  
Survey, and Nature Stewards

**5 days of training**  
for 2 x Otways Parks Victoria  
staff on soft jaw trapping



Removing threats i.e. foxes,  
helps protect the  
**Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby**  
which is listed as a priority  
species under the  
Australian Government's  
Threatened Species Action  
Plan 2022-2032.

*Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby (Petrogale penicillata) in Gariwerd – Kailee Savoia.*



*Yellow-footed Antechinus (Antechinus flavipes) in Gariwerd – Kailee Savoia.*





# Glenelg Ark

**Landscape-scale fox control to protect the native biodiversity of Victoria's far south-west**

**73,063 Ha** of fox control

**14,170** baits deployed  
for fox control at  
**545** bait stations with  
**9%** of baits taken

**3** community events/school visits

Project staff presented to year 9 students of the Glenelg area for a career exhibition, highlighting endangered species in the area

Project staff ran a species ID session using the 2023 monitoring photos for field staff at the Heywood work centre



*Long-nosed Potoroo (Potorous tridactylus) and Rufous Bristlebird (Dasyornis broadbenti) recorded via cameras – Glenelg Ark.*



*Field staff accessing sites for fox control – Glenelg Ark.*



*Motion activated camera set up on a tree – Glenelg Ark.*



# Southern Ark

**Landscape-scale fox control to protect the native biodiversity across eastern Victoria**

**458,074 Ha** of fox control

**22,216** baits deployed  
for fox control at  
**3,047** bait stations with  
**37%** of baits taken

**4** school visits and presentations  
**4** Viva Engage/Yammer posts  
**1** Gippsland newsletter story  
**1** media release in Snowy River Mail  
**1** video on native birds in Southern Ark

**130 camera-traps**  
deployed to continuously  
monitor invasive species  
(and also native wildlife)  
across 13 transects across  
the Southern Ark footprint



Bianca McLaren from the Southern Ark Team  
preparing a fox bait station – Andy Murray.



Orbost Primary School Grade 6 hear about Southern Ark  
– Andy Murray.



The **Hooded Plover**  
is listed as a priority  
species under the  
Australian Government's  
Threatened Species  
Action Plan 2022-2032.

Hooded Plover (*Thinornis rubricollis*) can be found in  
the Southern Ark coastal area – Leo Berzins.



# Southern Ark

**Landscape-scale fox control to protect the native biodiversity across eastern Victoria**



*Marty Healey from the Southern Ark Team discusses data collection with GLaWAC staff - Andy Murray.*

## **Case Study: Working with the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation**

Southern Ark partners with 4 Traditional Owner groups in the East Gippsland area through the delivery of its fox control program.

In June 2024, Southern Ark held a 2-day training event at Mullungdung and Won Wron State Forests with staff from the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) Latrobe Natural Resource Management team.

The aim of the collaboration was to share advice gained from 20+ years of running the Southern Ark project and to discuss the fox control program that GLaWAC will be implementing to reduce the threat of this invasive species on Country.



# Central Highlands Eden

Reducing the impact of high threat weeds to protect native biodiversity of Victoria's Central Highlands

**4,522 Ha** of weed control

**24** eradication target species  
**18** containment target species  
**107** asset protection species

**10** partners involved  
 including Councils,  
 Alpine Resorts, CMA's  
 and Water Authorities.

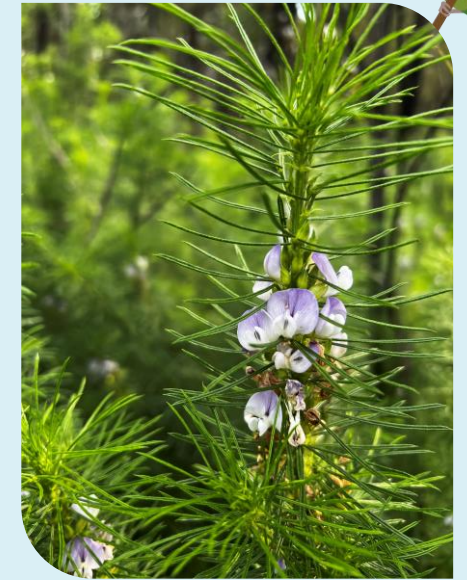
Central Highlands Eden coordinated an  
 "Edens" and WESI annual catch up, with the  
 team also presenting at this workshop.  
 Shared challenges and methods for weed  
 control were shared with the group.



Collecting weed herbarium specimens in the  
 Dandenong Ranges – Sally Lambourne.



African Scurf-pea (*Psoralea pinnata*) thickets in  
 Moondarra state forest – Sally Lambourne.



African Scurf-pea (*Psoralea pinnata*) is  
 an environmental weed found in the  
 project area – Sally Lambourne.





# Central Highlands Eden

Reducing the impact of high threat weeds to protect native biodiversity of Victoria's Central Highlands

## Case Study: Catching the Chocolate Vine

Chocolate Vine (*Akebia quinata*) is an invasive weed species that spreads by forming dense mats, suffocating nearby vegetation.

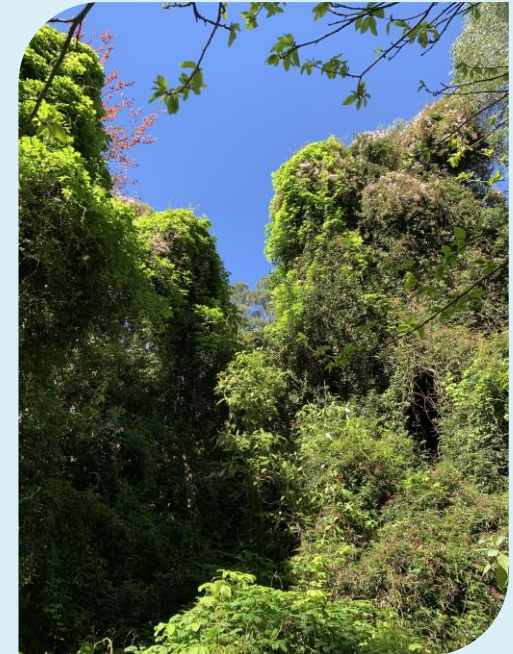
While not yet mapped in the Central Highlands Eden (CHE) project area, its presence is increasing in the Dandenong Ranges, east of Melbourne. It's important to act early to catch these weeds before they spread.

In October 2023, CHE project staff, along with Kate Blood (DEECA) and Sander Groeneveld (Diverse Bush Management), inspected several infestations in the Dandenong Ranges.

Specimens collected were submitted to the National Herbarium of Victoria.

Chocolate Vine has five stalked leaflets and flowers in spring with a sweet, chocolate-like fragrance. It produces separate male (rosy purple) and female (chocolate-purple) flowers, followed by elongated pods containing seeds that may be bird-dispersed.

Early intervention is key to managing Chocolate Vine. If sightings occur in the CHE project area or elsewhere, please notify project staff or the relevant land manager.



*Chocolate Vine (Akebia quinata)*  
flowers and growth form – Sally Lambourne.

# Glenelg Eden

Reducing the impact of high threat weeds to protect the native biodiversity of Victoria's far south-west

**3,996 Ha** of weed control

**53** eradication target species  
**18** containment target species  
**7** asset protection species

**288 sites**  
 for monitoring  
 – approx. 25 of  
 these are new  
 in 2023-24

**\$1,228,100**  
 worth of complementary  
 projects on integrated  
 pest control (controlling  
 weeds, pigs, foxes) nearby  
 the project area

Media release on  
 "Tackling Invasive  
 Weeds in the Far  
 South West"  
 developed in 2024



*Pampas Grass (Cortaderia selloana) is found along roadsides in the project area - Glenelg Eden.*



*New Zealand Cabbage Tree (Cordyline australis) is a weed found in Victoria – Glenelg Eden.*



*Glenelg Eden works to protect the Blotched Sun-orchid (Thelymitra benthamiana) – Geoffrey Derrin.*



# Otway Eden

Reducing the impact of environmental weeds to restore the biodiversity of the Otway Ranges National Park

**7,963 Ha** of weed control

**17** delivery partners

**373** volunteer hours

**25** eradication target species  
**33** containment target species  
**41** asset protection species

Monitoring of the threatened  
Metallic Sun Orchid is carried  
out annually each Spring in the  
Port Campbell asset area.

Gerangamete Landcare Group -  
weed identification and control  
training day at Forrest.

Hosted by Otway Eden Project  
Officer Gary Summers (focus on  
Asparagus Fern and Sweet  
Pittosporum).



*Left to right: Orchid hybrid found at  
Anglesea – Erin Nash; inspecting orchids in  
the Anglesea Heath – Erin Nash; Parks  
Victoria weeds spraying vehicle rig set-up –  
Matthew Russell.*



# Otway Eden

## Reducing the impact of environmental weeds to restore the biodiversity of the Otway Ranges National Park



Sweet Pittosporum mulching machinery and post works – Sarah Matthews.

### Case Study: Sweet Pittosporum Control

In December 2023, Parks Victoria and VicRoads worked together to address a Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*) infestation near and in the Port Campbell National Park.

Sweet Pittosporum is non-native to western Victoria, with its native range being coastal areas of eastern Australia.

The aim was to manage this weed species and to ensure a good return on investment for both organisations.

Both parties worked together to create a clear project plan with defined roles and lines of communication for the removal of the infestation.

Otway Eden mechanically mulched 2 hectares in the road reserve and applied a cut-and-paste treatment to another 2 hectares.

In the Port Campbell National Park, 50 hectares were assessed and treated.

Work was planned to avoid wildlife breeding periods and followed strict hygiene protocols, reducing the risk of spreading pathogens like *Phytophthora cinnamomi*.

This successful collaboration not only protected biodiversity but also established a model for future cross-agency initiatives.



# Weeds at the Early Stage of Invasion

Supporting Victorian land managers to manage environmental weeds threatening our native biodiversity

**4** community events/  
school visits  
**2** WESI training  
events delivered  
**2** newsletters published  
**76** weed management cases

## Social media engagement

**9** social media accounts  
across  
**5** different platforms  
**2,805** followers across all  
platforms

## 4 field trips

for early invader weed identification and  
management discussions at  
Horsham/Wimmera River, Goroke State  
Forest, Clear Lake Reserve, and Wilsons  
Promontory



Weed identification at Goroke  
State Forest – Bianca Gold.



WESI training at Fish Creek – Bianca Gold.



Kate Blood holding up an emerging weed  
at Wilsons Promontory – Bianca Gold.



# Mallee Bounceback

Protecting and restoring the biodiversity of semi-arid woodlands in north-western Victoria

**39,829 Ha** of rabbit control

**3,314** rabbit warrens fumigated

**417** rabbit warrens ripped

The Mallee is 1 of 20 listed priority places under the Australian Government's Threatened Species Action Plan 2022-2032.



*The Semi-arid woodlands species, Belah (Casuarina pauper), found in the Mallee – John Tann.*

Teams within Parks Victoria (PV) treated approx. **200 sites** at registered and highly sensitive cultural sites adjacent to and within the Mallee Bounceback project area

**2 Aboriginal staff members** were employed into the North-west District PV Team and will assist with the rabbit control program



*Rabbit warren smoking – Mathew Baker.*

Biodiversity monitoring at **60 sites**

These sites were monitored for Semi Arid Woodlands vegetation condition in the Murray Sunset National Park

**182 sites** were monitored for Rapid Rabbit Assessments



*Rabbit warren fumigation – Andrew Jardine.*



# Mallee Bounceback

Protecting and restoring the biodiversity of semi-arid woodlands in north-western Victoria

## Case Study: Ongoing Restoration at Raak Plain

The Raak Plain Reference Area (RPRA) within the Murray Sunset National Park is crucial for biodiversity but faces serious threats from invasive species, particularly rabbits.

The RPRA was established in 1989 and is adjacent to high-value ecological zones in the nearby national park.

A longstanding rabbit control program, spanning over three decades, aims to restore Semi Arid Woodlands by managing rabbit populations strategically across the park.

Additionally, work is being undertaken to carry out comprehensive mapping in the area, aiming to guide the control of invasive weeds and 1,036 recently identified rabbit warrens.

These actions are essential to prevent the RPRA from becoming overrun by invasive species, which could undermine decades of conservation work.

By continuing to manage rabbit populations effectively, natural resource managers in the Mallee can protect and preserve the biodiversity of Raak Plain for future generations.



*Aerial view of the Raak Plain – Stephanie Farley.*



*Slender Cypress Pine (Callitris gracilis) regeneration – Rhett Cameron.*

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Energy,  
Environment  
and Climate Action