# Weeds and Pests on

**Public Land**

Program Report

2022-2023

The Department of Energy, Environment

and Climate Action (DEECA)

**Weeds and Pests on Public Land 2022-2023**

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The [Weeds and Pests on Public Land (WPPL) Program](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/invasive-plants-and-animals/invasive-species-on-public-land/weeds-and-pests-on-public-land-program) funds landscape-scale weed and pest projects, focusing on protecting Victoria’s biodiversity. The program began in 2005 and is delivered by DEECA and Parks Victoria along with now 42 partners and key stakeholders across Victoria. In 2022-2023, the WPPL Program continued to fund eight flagship projects across Victoria including:

* Glenelg Ark, Grampians Ark, and Southern Ark projects targeting foxes to protect and benefit a wide range of native mammals, birds, and reptiles.
* Central Highlands Eden, Glenelg Eden, and Otway Eden projects controlling high risk weed species that threaten native plants and animals.
* The Mallee Bounceback project which aims to control rabbits to restore semi-arid woodlands.
* The Weeds at the Early Stage of Invasion (WESI) project which builds the capability of land managers to respond to early invader weeds.

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**WPPL Program Achievements in 2022-2023**

**$1.91 mill**

of co-investment provided by project partners

**9,407**

Total hectares of weed control

**4,888 Ha** in priority locations

**50,239**

Total hectares of herbivore control

**49,084 Ha** in priority

locations

**721,111**

Total hectares of predator control

**457,698 Ha** in priority

locations

**42**

Delivery partners and key stakeholders

**2,254**

Volunteer hours

**21**

Community engagement events delivered by projects

**18**

Staff directly employed

**10**

Traditional Owner groups engaged or involved

4 **Partnering and engaging with Traditional Owners**

**Mallee Bounceback**

First People of the Millewa Mallee Aboriginal Corporation Cultural Rangers undertook rabbit control in Taparoo Murray Sunset National Park allowing them to build skills and knowledge regarding rabbit control

**Weeds at the Early Stage of Invasion (WESI)**

WESI ran a Swifts Creek, Gippsland, weed identification training event that was attended by 8 First Nations people, including participants from Moogji Aboriginal Council East Gippsland and Bidwell First Nations Clans Aboriginal Corporation

**Southern Ark**

Partnered with Moogji Aboriginal Council East Gippsland to deliver the fox baiting program across the Murrungowar area

# 5 Mallee Bounceback

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

**50,239 Ha** of rabbit control

**3,124** rabbit warrens fumigated

**2,334** rabbit warrens ripped

**96%** of transects with an average of **1 or**

**fewer rabbits** per spotlight kilometre

* No evidence of rabbit browsing pressure at most sites
* Increase in juvenile canopy trees
* Semi-arid woodlands still in decline and need additional intervention such as revegetation

**2 engagement events**

* Neds Corner Safe Haven Workshop
  + Parks Victoria field visit to Pippins

Management block and Murray

Sunset National Park

# 6 Weeds at the Early Stage of Invasion

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

**3** [newsletters published](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/invasive-plants-and-animals/early-invaders)

**3** school visits

**2** training events delivered with 51 people attending

**Social media engagement**

**5** social media accounts

**2,963** followers across all social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram & X/Twitter) **34,988** Tweet (X) impressions

WESI has shared its resources with over **68 stakeholders** via its newsletters, social media engagement, and training events

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# Weeds at the Early Stage of Invasion

***Case Study:* First record of the weed, Pencil Cactus,**

**found in Victoria**

Pencil Cactus (*Cylindropuntia leptocaulis*) is listed as a Weed of National Significance in Australia. It has been introduced from Southwest USA and northern Mexico. Until April 2023, this weed species had not been recorded in Victoria.

The WESI Team, in collaboration with DEECA's Loddon Mallee Region, undertook a field survey and found 35 plants over an area of approximately 400-700m2. The site of this new invasive cactus is on public land in north central Victoria, about 70km north of Bendigo. All plants have been mapped and will be entered into the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas.

To raise awareness about the new cactus, WESI did a radio interview with the ABC. Information about the new weed was successfully shared on social media, in the WESI newsletter, and in subsequent weed ID training.

The WESI Team is supporting local land managers with its eradication.

# 8 Central Highlands Eden

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

**4,476 Ha** of weed control

**10** partners involved

WeedStop training occurred for the first time

since 2019, with **34 participants** completing

On-ground works in **20 (of 24) biodiversity asset areas**

the accredited course in November 2022

**20** eradication target species

**18** containment target species

# 9 Glenelg Eden

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

**4,246 Ha** of weed control

**2** training events delivered

Building capability of Gunditj Mirring Traditional

Owners to respond to high threat weeds

Workshop with South West TAFE students

The team treated weeds at **250 sites** across the landscape this season:

**76%** of all eradication targets treated

**17** species of priority weeds for containment infestations

**3** species of priority weeds for asset protection infestations

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10 **Otway Eden**

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

**686 Ha** of weed control

**13** delivery partners

**371** volunteer hours

**15** species of weeds were targeted for eradication

**25** species of priority weeds for

containment infestations

**45** species of priority weeds for asset protection infestations

Control areas were extended to cover new infestations of South African Weed Orchid in **Metallic Sun Orchid population sites** in the Port Campbell Area

11 **Otway Eden**

***Key learning:***

***Pruning saws for woody weed removal***

The Otway Eden team have found the purchase of a relatively inexpensive item – a small battery-powered pruning saw – has made woody weed control much more efficient.

Traditional chainsaws are heavier and therefore harder on the operator, and comparatively less safe. These small saws are ideal for cutting woody weeds with a diameter less than 15cm.

As they don’t use petrol they are also more environmentally friendly, don’t expose the user to fumes, and help to reduce the carbon

emissions associated with weed control.

12 **Glenelg Ark**

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

**73,630 Ha** of fox control

**13,000** baits deployed for fox control through **26** treatment rounds

The annual monitoring program was delivered in October 2022

Over **100,000 images** from camera traps were collected and processed

**3+ engagement presentations**

to South West TAFE students, Country Fire Authority members, & field staff about the risks of Phytophthora

13 **Glenelg Ark**

***Case Study:* Ecological monitoring in the Glenelg Ark project**

In June 2023, Alan Robley and Paul Moloney from the Arthur Rylah

Institute (ARI) produced the 2022 monitoring and evaluation update for the

Glenelg Ark project with assistance from Glenelg Ark lead Ethan Le Duc.

This was the 13th report produced on the project and touches on the progress made in achieving biodiversity benefits by reducing levels of fox predation. Three native species are the focus of this monitoring: Common Brushtail Possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*), Long-nosed Potoroo (*Potorous tridactylus)* and Southern Brown Bandicoot (*Isoodon obesulus*).

The report found that colonisation and/or survival rates for Long-nosed Potoroo and Southern Brown Bandicoot were higher at locations with fox control than at locations without fox control. Common Brushtail Possums were less influenced by fox control, although at areas with fox control their rates were higher.

There was also some evidence that the Short-beaked Echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*) may also have benefited from this ongoing fox control, and this needs further investigation.

*Text taken from the report:*

*Robley, A., Moloney, P.D. and Le Duc, E. (2023). Glenelg Ark—2022 monitoring and*

*evaluation update. ARI Technical Report Series No. 358. DEECA, Heidelberg, Victoria.*

# 14 Grampians Ark

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

**162,779 Ha** of fox control

**11,150 baits** deployed

**1,854** volunteer hours

**7** delivery partners

**3,000+** camera nights and **8,784** trap nights (Elliott & Cage traps) monitoring small mammal populations

**2 Long-nosed Potoroo’s** were fitted with GPS trackers, the first capture in the Gariwerd landscape in almost 20 years

Increased capture of **Southern Brown**

**Bandicoot’s** at long-term monitoring sites

The Grampians Ark team hosted **3 work experience students** and ran **3 training events**

The autumn Great Gariwerd Bird Survey recorded **1,796** individual birds across **60 species**

# 15 Southern Ark

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

**484,702 Ha** of fox control

**16,340** fox baits deployed

with **26% bait take**

1. community events & presentations  
   **1** radio interview

**1** DEECA Yammer posts

**5** DEECA Gippsland Facebook posts

Camera-trap monitoring of **679 sites** undertaken in 2022

Sites were surveyed for 35 nights, equating to **23,765 camera-trap nights**

Over **2.6 million images** are currently being analysed in 2023-2024

# Southern Ark

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***Case Study:* Community engagement by Southern Ark**

The Southern Ark team led the charge in 2022-2023 with excellent community engagement. See below for a snapshot into the events they presented at or hosted to promote their work and to share their project’s learnings:

* Provided Gippsland TAFE students with an overview of the Southern Ark

project.

* Provided members of the Bidwell Nation an overview of the project.
* Engaged over 100 Year 9-10 students from Gippsland Grammar, giving them an overview of the Southern Ark project and having them carry out cage and camera-trapping activities.
* ABC Gippsland radio interview on Long-nosed Bandicoots.
* Provided a project update to community in Mallacoota, Goongerah Hall, Wairewa Hall, and Tubbut Community Hall.
* Presented at “The Nature of the Bluff” (covering Red Bluff, part of

Lakes Entrance-Lake Tyers Coastal Reserve, baited by

Southern Ark)

* Southern Ark overview at DEECA conference “Gipps-yarn”.

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