



SUBMISSION 37  
RECEIVED 13/09/2016

Reg No. A0020257S Lexton Landcare Group Inc. ABN: 73 629 440 693  
PO Box 21, Lexton Vic. 3352 Australia  
Project Manager: David Clark (03) 5343 5236, [REDACTED]

12<sup>th</sup> September 2016

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 group is larger than most, 100 members and works across to CMA regions, North Central and Glenelg Hopkins. Lexton is approximately 40 km north west of Ballarat.

Weed and pest control has been key part of activities since we commenced in 1988. Gorse control in our higher rainfall southern end of the group, along with other woody weeds like broome, Spanish heath, boxthorn, briar has been our main activity. Invasive weed control of pattersons curse and St Johns wort has been a smaller risk to deal with. Our rabbit control works have been enormous over the years but almost exclusively on private land.

Our group is exclusively in the Pyrenees Shire.

**Key Issues**

Our group wrote its first weeds strategy in 1994 and began coordinated weed control work in that year. At our earliest sites for gorse control we have now 6-8 plants per 100 m of roadside still to control where once the gorse was 2 metres high and impenetrable. We continue to actively manage around 12-15 roadside sites where invasive weeds are present, though now our control takes half a day instead of 3 days when we began.

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

We thank the Pyrenees Shire for three things:

1. The funding of Landcare weed control through its community grants process, prior to the current roadside program commencing,
2. Involving us in the strategic planning for which weeds are to be controlled and where, and
3. For the works undertaken through the State funded weeds and pests program.

We consider ourselves very fortunate to have had a strong and un-relenting focus on weeds for over 20 years now. From spending \$8-10,000 a year in our early days we are now spending \$1-2,000 a year to continue to wear the problem down.

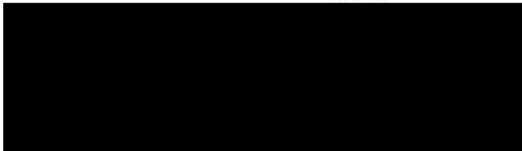
We are however the exception rather than the rule in terms of landscape management, both within Pyrenees Shire and in the broader areas of Victoria, particularly the high rainfall areas where gorse is a key problem.

We would like to make the point that longevity of funding is, for us, more critical than quantum. As you can see by our work to date you don't win the war on weeds in a 5, 10 or even 20 year time frame. We would encourage the committee to give careful thought to how this program can be sustained for many years to come.

The current program is also well set up to assist with rabbit control in conjunction with complementary private land control and / or compliance programs that take place across our area, led either by Landcare or by DELWP. Though we have not utilised these to date we consider this remains a key facet of the program for the future.

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.

Regards



David Clark  
Project Manager