

The Lower Isis Catchment project

The Tasmanian Weeds Action Fund (WAF) is a \$6.4 million state government initiative that supports farmers and other community organisations tackle weeds impacting valuable agricultural and environmental assets across the state.



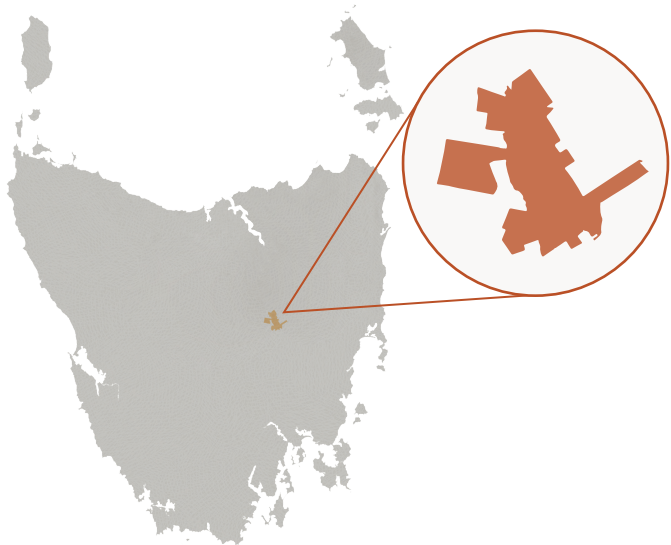
CASE STUDY

Shared responsibility

Underpinning the WAF is the concept of ‘shared responsibility’. Landowners, local government, and the community are encouraged to work together to identify and, where possible, eradicate priority weeds.

The initiative is also designed to support and drive shared responsibility through co-investment (of cash or in-kind resources) for the life of the program and beyond, to achieve long-term outcomes.

Project snapshot



WHERE

The Lower Isis Catchment in Tasmania’s Northern Midlands

WHO

Three local landholders

ACTIONS

Weed management plans and control of 405 ha of gorse via aerial spraying, mechanical removal and follow-up control including ploughing, grazing and spot-spraying

WHAT IS GORSE?

Gorse (*ulex europaeus*) is widely distributed in Tasmania and is found in most municipalities. Gorse is a major agricultural weed. Serious infestations of pasture can dramatically reduce stocking rates. Gorse is also a threat to many natural environments such as forests, woodlands, riparian vegetation, wetlands and native grasslands. Gorse provides shelter for pest animals and is a dangerous fuel for bushfire.



Weeds Action Fund Objectives

- Provide a strategic and targeted approach to tackling high priority weeds impacting agricultural and environmental assets
- Support landowners, local government and the broader community to make sustainable, long-term and effective actions to address high priority weeds with eradication as a key objective
- Ensure there is a strong coordinated link between the different levels of government and the Tasmanian community in tackling serious weeds

- Encourage the concept of ‘shared responsibility’ for weed management and biosecurity in general and provide an opportunity for landholders to co-invest in removing the threat of serious weeds on their properties
- Improve the productive value of agricultural land and protect Tasmania’s natural values by removing the harmful effects of serious weed threats



Project delivery



John Atkinson has made tackling gorse a priority at his property in Tasmania's Northern Midlands

The Lower Isis Catchment project includes weed management planning and on-ground weed control on 405 ha of land in the Northern Midlands. Farmer John Atkinson initiated a partnership with two neighbouring landholders to strategically tackle gorse.

The highly invasive weed threatens productivity and conservation values across the properties, which comprise more than 3,000 ha of productive pasture, riparian vegetation, native grassland, and grassy woodland. The properties also provide habitat for several threatened species and vegetation communities.

“Gorse has become well established and it can really reduce the amount of feed for stock,” Mr Atkinson said.

Given the extent of the gorse infestation, and investment required to address it, Mr Atkinson said collaboration is key.

“Tackling a weed problem of this size can seem overwhelming but by working together, and with co-investment from the Weeds Action Fund, we’re confident we can effectively control gorse on our properties.” - John Atkinson

Gorse seeds can remain viable in the soil for up to 30 years, making control a long-term proposition. The project landholders invested in a specialist to review their existing gorse control strategies and develop long-term property and landscape scale weed management plans which are used to inform ongoing gorse control activities.

“We’ve made control of gorse on our properties a long-term commitment by having our weed control strategies professionally reviewed and updated, and we all now have 10-year weed management plans,” Mr Atkinson said.

Landholders are co-contributing over \$190,000 towards the total cost of the three-year project.