

## Eradication of tree heath

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

Bruny Island and outlier populations located in the Kingborough area

#### WHO

Kingborough Council

#### ACTIONS

Treatment of known population of tree heath, survey to determine extent of infestation; trials to determine best management practices; and creation of a long-term strategic management plan for eradication

### WHAT IS TREE HEATH?

Tree heath (*Erica arborea*) is one of 17 *Erica* species declared a pest under the *Biosecurity Regulations 2022*. *Erica* in pastures can reduce productivity, replace native species in bushland, and increase the risk of fire due to its high combustion properties



# Weeds Action Fund Objectives

- Provide a strategic and targeted approach to tackling high priority weeds impacting agricultural and environmental assets
- Improve the productive value of agricultural land and protect Tasmania’s natural values by removing the harmful effects of serious weed threats
- 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

- 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



## Project delivery



Control actions have been used on Erica species to allow natives to regenerate

Bruny Island is a sanctuary for many endemic and endangered plants and animals. These natural values are under threat from tree heath. The Kingborough Council’s project focuses on eradication of tree heath through a strategic and combined effort.

Tree heath, alongside other invasive heath species, are hard to spot because they are similar in shape and size to native heaths. In addition, the plants are fast-growing and hardy, making them a highly problematic weed species.

Their prolific seed production increases their capacity to spread along roadsides and into bushland. Once established, heath can form large thickets, invading and smothering native vegetation and productive agricultural land.

Kingborough Council Biodiversity Officer Rene Raichert said undertaking extensive mapping exercises has enabled staff to determine the scale of infestation.

*“The extent it was spread across Bruny Island was much greater than we originally thought, as many patches had been mistaken for Spanish heath prior to surveying.” - Rene Raichert*

“The mapping allowed us to make informed, strategic decisions about where to prioritise on-ground actions. We also engaged with landholders who have a vested interest in removal of the weed to conserve natural values on their properties.”

With co-investment from the Weeds Action Fund, the Kingborough Council has developed a 3-year plan to tackle this priority weed species, including the control of outlier populations, and trials to determine best management practices for successful eradication.

Mrs Raichert said testing different management actions provided a greater insight into the effectiveness of particular chemicals to control tree heath.