

WEEDS ACTION FUND

The Coal River Valley 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.



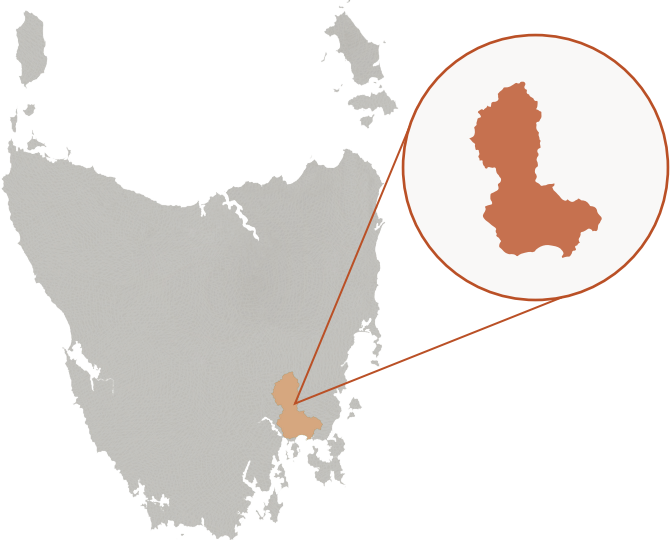
CASE STUDY

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 Coal River Valley, approximately 30km north west of Hobart

WHO

Coal River Products Association

ACTIONS

Targeted weed control across 56 properties covering 2,091 ha

WHAT IS GORSE?

Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) is a major agricultural weed, and serious infestations of pasture can dramatically reduce stocking rates

WHAT IS AFRICAN BOXTHORN?

African boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*) can form dense thickets, reducing access, preventing stock movement, and shading out native species

WHAT IS SERRATED TUSOCK?

Serrated tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*) can smother pasture, rendering large areas incapable of supporting livestock

WHAT IS CHILEAN NEEDLE GRASS?

Chilean needle grass (*Nassella neesiana*) competes with native grassland reducing pasture productivity and contaminating crops



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

- Improve the productive value of agricultural land and protect Tasmania’s natural values by removing the harmful effects of serious weed threats
- 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



Covering 15,000 ha from Colebrook to Cambridge, the Coal River Valley is one of the most productive vegetable, stone fruit, cropping, and viticulture regions in Tasmania, however, production values are at risk from invasive species including African boxthorn, serrated tussock, Chilean needle grass and gorse.

An initial Weeds Action Fund small grant enabled the Coal River Products Association to engage with community, industry, and other land management groups to produce the 2022 Coal River Weed Management Plan. The plan provided the foundation for this project which involves control actions on more than 2,000 ha across 56 properties.

The Coal River Products Association’s Dr Neville Mendham said the project provided insight into the extent of invasive weeds and grasses in the valley.

“Some landowners thought they had a lot of serrated tussocks, which turned out to be native grasses. Other landowners didn’t realise they had invasive grasses ... this can have a detrimental impact on grazing livestock and lead to further spread, particularly if paddocks are used for hay production.”
- Dr Neville Mendham

Project delivery



Progress across the Coal River Valley is tracked enabling land managers to be abreast of actions undertaken

Dr Mendham said individual management plans have proven to be valuable to landowners.

Actions and progress across the valley are recorded, enabling greater efficiencies on-ground such as resource sharing and coordinated control actions.

“Together, we are initiating ways to manage weed problems and alternative ways to smother weeds.”

Shared responsibility in this project has seen investment of resources by private landholders, industry, local and state government. The Weeds Action Fund has contributed \$150,000 towards this project with a \$275,000 co-investment from stakeholders.