
9 DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

9.1 RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION 948 INVASIVE WEEDS

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Attachments: 1. Draft Mitchell Shire Pest Plant and Animal Taskforce Terms of Reference

SUMMARY

This report refers to Notice of Motion 948 made at the 25 June 2018 Council meeting:

“Council officers organise a round table to look at ways of addressing the rapidly growing problem of invasive weeds in the Shire. Those invited should include local Members of Parliament, Council representatives, officers from CMA and South West Goulburn Landcare Alliance, local landcare groups and other Government agencies who have infrastructure effected by various weeds”.

In response to the Notice of Motion, Mitchell Shire Council facilitated a Collaborative Weeds Workshop on the 16 May 2019.

This report details the outcomes of the meeting and recommends that a Mitchell Shire Pest Plant and Animal Taskforce be established.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council:

1. Establish a Mitchell Shire Pest Plant and Animal Taskforce with representatives from public land managers and local community representatives involved in weed management
2. Adopt the attached Terms of Reference for the Mitchell Shire Pest Plant and Animal Taskforce.
3. Note that an operational budget of \$4,500 is required to establish this initiative.
4. Explore funding contributions from government stakeholders to ensure the long-term viability of the Taskforce.
5. Nominate Councillor Chisholm as a representative for the Mitchell Shire Pest Plant and Animal Taskforce.
6. Evaluate the effectiveness of the Taskforce in twelve (12) months.

BACKGROUND

On the 16 May 2019 Mitchell Shire Council facilitated a Collaborative Weeds Workshop The purpose of the meeting was to establish a collaborative approach to invasive weed control in the Mitchell Shire.

RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION 948 INVASIVE WEEDS (CONT.)

There was representation from twenty three agency and community groups throughout the Shire including;

- South West Goulburn Landcare;
- Landcare Victoria Incorporated;
- Hughes Creek Catchment Collaborative (Landcare);
- Upper Campaspe Landcare Network;
- Ashbourne Landcare Group - Weed Action Group;
- Dept. of Jobs Precincts and Regions - AG VIC;
- Serrated Tussock Working Party;
- Victorian Gorse Taskforce;
- Parks Victoria;
- Regional Roads Victoria;
- V/Line Corporation;
- Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC);
- VicTrack;
- Melbourne Water;
- Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority; and
- Mitchell Shire Council

In the context of developing a Pest Plant and Animal Taskforce it is important the responsibilities for weed control are understood.

Section 20 of the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* includes in the general duties of a landowner that a landowner must take all reasonable steps to;

Eradicate regionally prohibited weeds;

- *Prevent the growth and spread of regionally controlled weeds; and*
- *Prevent the spread of, and as far as possible eradicate, established pest animals.*

The *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* also states that a person must not (without a permit from the Secretary) transport within Victoria a noxious weed or any part of a noxious weed capable of growing.

The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions are the regulating authority for enforcing landowner obligations under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act (CALP) 1994*. This means that landowners who fail to control noxious weeds or established pests on their land can be issued with directions or land management notices. Failure to comply with these notices can result in fines or court action.

In addition to responsibilities under Section 20 of the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* for land owned or managed by Council, in 2013, the CALP Act was amended to clarify that municipal Councils are responsible for controlling declared species on roadsides if the land is a municipal road.

RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION 948 INVASIVE WEEDS (CONT.)

Other than Councils obligations under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*, local governments can also play an important role in weed management via community engagement and education, fire prevention on public and private land, undertaking partnership projects including advocacy work with other agencies and groups such as Landcare.

ISSUES AND DISCUSSION

Items of discussion included funding, priority weed species, examples of projects that have worked well, legislation and compliance, the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*, weed spread, understanding personal motives for weed control, sharing resources and work plans and advocacy opportunities. The group also discussed the possibility of establishing a Mitchell Shire Pest Plant and Animal Taskforce.

The workshop attendees resolved that it would be desirable for Mitchell Shire Council to convene a Mitchell Shire Pest Plants and Animals Taskforce.

- *The Taskforce would initially comprise the stakeholders invited to this forum.*
- *The first business of the Taskforce would be to establish a Terms of Reference.*
- *The desirable actions identified in this workshop would be considered in establishing the Terms of Reference.*
- *The scope of the Taskforce should include pest animals because they contribute as a vector for weed distribution. Pest animals and pest plants have similar impacts on loss of productivity and biodiversity.*

Given the large distances that representatives travelled and resource impacts, it is recommended that there are two (2) meetings per year and an online sharing platform is established to facilitate collaboration year-round.

It is proposed that the initial meeting will be to confirm the Terms of Reference and develop an annual action plan. The second meeting will be a mid-year check in on the action plan.

CONSULTATION

The purpose of both the Collaborative Weeds Workshop and the proposed Mitchell Shire Pest Plant and Animal Taskforce is to increase communication between all stakeholders involved in weed and pest animal management throughout the shire.

FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

It is estimated that the initial Collaborative Weeds Workshop cost Council over \$9,000 including officer time, catering and the engagement of an external facilitator.

It is proposed that there are two (2) meetings per year and the first meeting, the establish an annual action plan is facilitated by an external consultant.

The estimated annual costs to Council to administer a Mitchell Shire Pest Plant and Animal Taskforce is \$9,500 including \$5,000 of officer time.

These costs are not currently included in the adopted 2019/2020 budget as such a budget increase is being sought as part of this report.

RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION 948 INVASIVE WEEDS (CONT.)

POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The development of a Mitchell Shire Pest Plant and Animal Taskforce is supported by the following Council documents:

Mitchell Shire Council Plan 2017-2021 strategic objective *“To be responsible custodians, by managing and enhancing our environment, minimising the impacts of development, waste, natural disasters and climate change”*, and in particular the following key strategies:

- *Protect and enhance Mitchell Shire’s rural landscape and natural assets.*
- *Empower the community through partnerships and education*
- *Improve compliance with fire hazard removal, weed management and appropriate waste disposal.*

Mitchell Shire Environment Strategy 2014-2024

In particular the following desired outcomes:

- *“Partnerships with agencies, industry, landholders and community groups are strengthened to achieve shared environmental goals”*
- *“Implementation of sustainable land management practices on private rural land is encouraged and supported”*

RISK IMPLICATIONS

Risk Ranking is determined using [ROHS201-G1- Corporate Risk Matrix](#). Risk is identified as Low, Medium, High or Very High.

Risk	Risk Ranking	Proposed Treatments	Within Existing Resources?
There is a risk that the agency and community representatives will not commit to the Taskforce	Low	The development of an action plan will be a collaborative project, to ensure commitment from all participants.	Additional resources are required to administer the proposed group

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL)

The proposal to establish a collaborative approach to pest plant and animal control in Mitchell Shire is aiming to improve land management and hence the productivity and native biodiversity of the shire.

CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

The rights protected in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* were considered in preparing this report and it’s determined that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.

RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION 948 INVASIVE WEEDS (CONT.)

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

This report does not pose any implications for children and young people.

OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in this matter.

CONCLUSION

In response to a Councilor Notice of Motion Mitchell Shire Council hosted a Collaborative Weeds Workshop in May 2019. This report details the outcomes from the meeting and recommends that Council establish a Mitchell Shire Pest Plant and Animal Taskforce.

The purpose of the Taskforce is to provide a forum through which community representatives, agency and Council staff can discuss, develop and contribute to collaborative Pest Plant and Animal (PPA) programs and initiatives in Mitchell Shire

RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION 948 INVASIVE WEEDS (CONT.)

MITCHELL SHIRE COUNCIL

Council Meeting Attachment

DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

15 JULY 2019

9.1

**RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION 948
INVASIVE WEEDS**

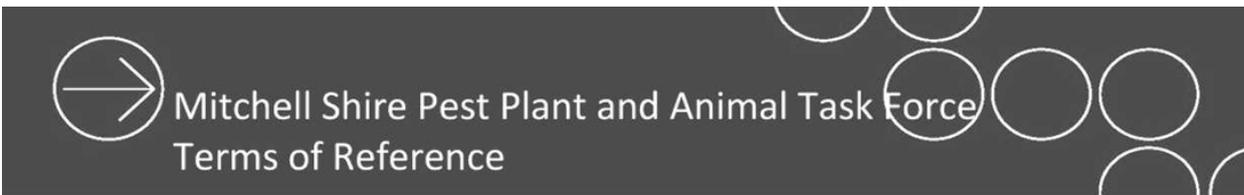
Attachment No: 1

**Draft Mitchell Shire Pest Plant and Animal
Taskforce Terms of Reference**



Mitchell Shire Pest Plant and Animal Task Force Terms of Reference

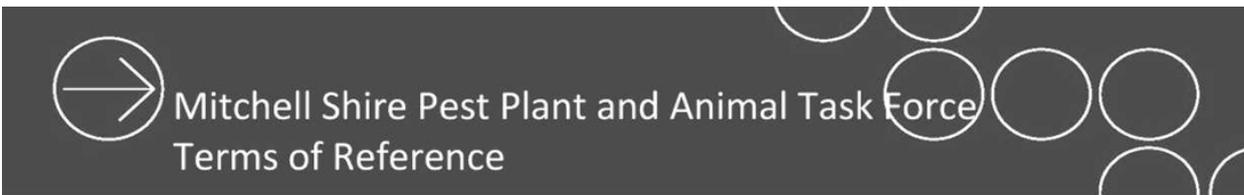
Name	Mitchell Shire Pest Plant and Animal Task Force
Purpose	To provide a forum through which community representatives, agency and Council staff can discuss, develop and contribute to collaborative Pest Plant and Animal (PPA) programs and initiatives in Mitchell Shire.
Roles and tasks of the Task Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an annual action plan for PPA control in Mitchell Shire • Produce a biannual and annual update report in the action plan • Develop an understanding of strategies & actions of each stakeholder • Develop PPA advocacy priorities • Develop and coordinate PPA education programs • Develop a “library” of PPA resources on a web-based platform • Coordinate and/or share PPA mapping, monitoring and evaluation of infestations • Facilitate effective information exchange between members
Relationship between the Reference Group and Council	The activities of the Taskforce will compliment Council’s advocacy strategies for increased funding and resources for pest plant and animal control.
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings will be held on biannual basis. • Specific additional meetings may be required on an as needs basis. • Additional meetings will be subject to approval by both the Chairperson and the Director Development and Infrastructure or their delegate. • A matter that cannot be safely or conveniently deferred until the next meeting may be resolved via email. • Member apologies are to be received at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting time (where possible). If apologies are received from 50% or more members, meetings will be cancelled and rescheduled (if feasible) • A quorum of the Task Force consists of 50% +1 of the representatives.
Chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings will be chaired by the Mitchell Shire Councillor, nominated by Council on an annual basis or a Council representative as their delegate
Membership	<p>The Task Force will comprise of representatives of;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Councillor, nominated by Council on an annual basis (who will act as Chair) • Mitchell Shire Council • Landcare



Mitchell Shire Pest Plant and Animal Task Force
Terms of Reference

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ South West Goulburn Landcare Network ○ Goulburn Broken Catchment Region Landcare Victoria Inc. ○ Hughes Creek Catchment Collaborative ○ Upper Campaspe Landcare Network ○ Campaspe Valley Landcare ○ Upper Maribyrnong Catchment Group ● Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Group ● Victorian Gorse Taskforce ● Victorian Blackberry Taskforce ● Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning ● AgVic - Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions ● Parks Victoria ● Regional Roads Victoria ● V/Line Corporation ● Australian Rail Track Corporation ● Vic Track ● Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority ● North Central Catchment Management Authority ● Melbourne Water
Working Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Task Force may auspice the establishment of special interest working groups as needed to progress specific initiatives for a defined period of time. ● Subject to the approval of the Task Force, these working groups may invite other members as required to address the specific issue at hand.
Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Members will be encouraged to disclose any perceived conflict of interest and/or any interest that may result in personal or financial gain. ● In the event of a conflict of interest arising for any member of the Task Force, the member will disclose the interest and clearly state the nature of the interest at the meeting before the matter is considered. Any member who discloses a conflict of interest in a matter, must leave the room and not participant in any discussion. ● Members will be required to sign a Pledge of Confidentiality at the commencement of their term.
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Members are not to represent the Task Force to the media. Representation to the media may result in termination of membership from the Reference Group.
Executive Support	<p>The Council will provide the necessary support to assist the Task Force to function effectively including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintaining up to date contact details of members ● Preparing and distributing agendas and prior reading material





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing and distributing meeting minutes • Circulating other material to Task Force members as necessary • Managing all other administrative processes associated with the Task Force meetings.
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Task Force shall report to Council by providing an annual report of activities. • Working groups must report to the Task Force
Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the role, function, membership and productivity of the Taskforce and the Terms of Reference will be conducted at least every two years to ensure currency, effectiveness and stakeholder engagement. • These terms of reference may be revoked or reviewed by the Director of Development and Infrastructure at any time.

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