

Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Minister for Ports and Freight

Minister for Local Government

Minister for Suburban Development



Monday, 19 September 2022

PROTECTING RURAL ROADSIDES AGAINST WEEDS AND PESTS

The Andrews Labor Government is continuing to support regional and rural councils to prevent the spread of invasive weeds and pests on roadsides.

Minister for Local Government Melissa Horne today announced the Labor Government is investing \$2.86 million to be shared across 56 councils through the *Roadside Weeds and Pests Control Program*.

Each council will receive between \$5,000 - \$75,000 to manage problematic plants and pests, with rural roadsides often a breeding ground.

Weeds and pests cost the Victorian economy over \$900 million each year by disrupting agricultural production, damaging native biodiversity and contributing to the spread of fires.

Local Government Victoria and Agriculture Victoria will work closely with local councils to ensure weeds and pests are tackled appropriately in their local area.

The funding will assist councils with a range of activities along their rural roadsides, including treating and preventing 'regionally controlled' and 'restricted' weeds, managing rabbit populations and community consultation.

'Regionally controlled' weeds are defined as being widespread in a region, requiring landowners to prevent their growth and spread, while 'restricted' weeds are considered a serious threat to all states and territories.

Trading 'restricted' weeds and their propagules, either as plants, seeds, or contaminants, in other materials, is banned.

Weeds can be categorised differently depending on where they are in the state, for example, Ragwort is 'Controlled' in Corangamite, Glenelg, East and West Gippsland, Port Phillip and Western Port, 'Prohibited' in Goulburn and Northeast Victoria and 'Restricted' in Mallee, North Central Victoria and the Wimmera.

The Government is investing \$11.5 million over four years in the Weeds and Pests Control Program, providing greater protections for agriculture, roads and the environment.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Local Government Melissa Horne

"We're supporting local communities to reduce the spread of weeds and pests along rural roadsides, that have the potential to wreak havoc on native plant species."

"Through better control of our roadside weeds and pests, we could potentially save our farmers and economy millions of dollars each year."