![Murray Region Forestry Hub logo]

Murray Region
Forestry Hub

Blackberry Project Strategic Plan –

'Restoring our landscapes'

Contents

Introduction

The Murray Region Forestry Hub (MRFH) has developed this Strategic Plan to address the longstanding and pervasive issue of blackberry infestation in southern NSW and north-east Victoria – the footprint of the Murray Region Foresty Hub. This plan, aptly titled "Restoring Our Landscapes", aims to tackle the significant economic and environmental impacts of blackberries across all land tenures in the region.

Blackberries have been a persistent problem in the pine plantations and surrounding areas for many years, prompting MRFH to initiate research into the scope of the issue and identify agencies working on innovative solutions. The widespread nature of the infestation affects **all** land tenures within the region, making it a shared concern for various stakeholders.

Recent studies have highlighted the substantial economic burden of invasive species in NSW, with weeds alone contributing to an estimated annual cost of $1.12 billion[1]. Using the MRFH region as a case study, it has been estimated that blackberries impose average annual costs of approximately $71 million over an area of 170,000 hectares, encompassing softwood plantations, livestock grazing, and conservation areas.

Recognising the need for collaborative action, MRFH convened a workshop in October 2024, bringing together diverse agencies and stakeholders to discuss the blackberry problem and explore potential solutions. This workshop laid the foundation for the development of this Strategic Plan, which aims to implement effective control measures and reduce the impact of blackberries on our landscapes.

The pervasive nature of the blackberry infestation in the Murray Region demands a substantial investment in research to develop innovative control measures. It has become increasingly clear that traditional chemical spraying methods are no longer sufficient to address the scale and complexity of the problem.

This Strategic Plan recognises the need for a comprehensive, landscape-scale approach that goes beyond mere control, aiming to significantly reduce infestation levels across all land tenures. A key component of this strategy involves providing advice to government bodies on the critical need for supporting an extension program. The Plan is based on the creation of a collaborative approach, bringing agencies together to share their expertise and work collectively towards landscape restoration.

The Strategic Plan is built on three key pillars: Collaborative Management and Governance, Research and Innovation, and On-Ground Implementation and Demonstration. By fostering a unified, cross-tenure approach to blackberry management, this plan seeks to harness collective expertise, optimise resource use, and seek innovative control measures to restore the ecological balance of the landscape.

By fostering this cooperative environment, we can leverage the combined knowledge and resources of various stakeholders to develop more effective and sustainable solutions. Furthermore, the lessons learned and research outcomes from this regional initiative have the potential to be transferred to other areas facing similar challenges. The collaborative model developed through this strategy can serve as a blueprint for other regions, offering a tested framework for addressing complex environmental issues through multi-agency cooperation and coordinated effort.

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[1] *Source: NSW NRC 2024*

The Rationale for this Plan

Why do we need a plan to control blackberries in our landscapes?

Blackberries are one of the more widespread weeds in Australia. Weed infestation is recognised as a major problem for all land tenures, in terms of costs of control and loss of production from weed-infested land. Recent research (NSW NRC, 2024) suggests that the total annual financial cost of invasive species (including flora and fauna) in NSW in 2020/21 was around $1.35 billion. Weeds alone were assessed as contributing nearly 83% of this total, indicating that the **cost imposed by all weeds in NSW could be around $1.12 billion annually**.

The prevalence of blackberries in southern NSW and north-east Victoria has been recognised as a major weed problem affecting forestry, grazing activities, and management of conservation areas for many years. Blackberries are classified as a Weed of National Significance, but this plant is now so widespread that prevention, eradication, and containment are no longer considered possible – with asset-based protection (involving the use of chemicals as the main method) being the only control used. Blackberries are impacting on the entire landscape of the region, and therefore are an issue for all land uses and all land tenures.

Work commissioned by the Murray Region Forestry Hub (MRFH 2024) has revealed that the costs imposed by blackberries are significant. Using the MRFH area as a case study (some 170,000 ha where the main land uses are softwood plantations, livestock grazing, and conservation), it has been estimated that **the average annual costs of blackberries over this area could be in the order of $71 million.**

A Strategic Plan is required to implement effective measures to control the spread of blackberries, and to reduce the level of impact on our landscapes.

Process of Developing the Plan

How did we start to develop this plan?

The Murray Region Forestry Hub (MRFH) convened a workshop in October 2024, bringing together a wide range of stakeholders to discuss the extent of the problems of blackberry infestation, and to consider the contribution each might make to finding solutions. Data on the estimated costs imposed by blackberries within the MRFH case study were provided as a factual base for the development of a plan.

A facilitated process led to the development of strategic priorities in work required to reduce the level of this weed, across all land tenures. In discussing possible outcomes of a coordinated approach to the problems posed by this weed, the group agreed that their goals could be summarised as the following vision:

> *A healthy, productive Murray Region where blackberry infestations are sustainably managed and progressively reduced across all tenures through a collaborative, landscape-scale approach. This will protect biodiversity, reduce fire risk, enhance the productivity of enterprises, and restore the ecological balance of the landscape.*

The Intent of the Plan

This plan is intended to deliver a cross-tenure, collaborative approach to blackberry management in the MRFH area, which will reduce the costs (financial and environmental) imposed by this weed. By aligning stakeholders' efforts, resources, and expertise, we aim to implement effective control and reduction measures, promote sustainable practices, and secure lasting benefits for both the environment and local communities.

The overall purpose of the project is to take actions to reduce the level of blackberries across all tenures of the region, and in so doing attempt to restore the landscapes of the MRFH area by such a reduction. Actions taken will include research into innovative control measures, and extension programs to share knowledge of the implementation of new management programs.

The purpose of this Strategic Plan can be summarised as **'Restoring Our Landscapes'.** There are three components to the Plan, described as Pillars, which are:

Pillar 1 – **Governance**
Establish an effective and collaborative management group

Pillar 2 – **Research and Innovation**
Develop program of required research

Pillar 3 – **On-ground Implementation**
Deliver new control programs and demonstrate results

The Strategic Plan has been summarised as a single page document. The context within which each component Pillar has been developed is set out in the following information, which should be considered as an explanatory document to the one-page summary of the Plan.

Outcomes of the Plan

Through this strategic plan, the Murray Region Forestry Hub aims to foster a unified, cross-tenure approach to blackberry management. By harnessing the collective expertise, resources, and commitment of stakeholders, this plan will address the multifaceted challenges posed by blackberry infestations, safeguard valuable natural and economic assets, enhance resilience across the region, and restore the regional landscape.

Pillar	Desired Outcomes	Potential Measures
Collaborative Management and Governance	- Unified cross-tenure approach with clear accountability and coordination. - Optimised resource use and minimised duplication of efforts. - Transparent, data-driven decision-making supported by shared data and technology.	- Formation of a multi-stakeholder management group with defined roles and responsibilities. - Establishment of a centralised data hub accessible to all stakeholders. - Number of joint initiatives launched and maintained annually.
Research and Innovation	- Long-term investment in research delivering practical, scalable solutions. - Targeted prioritisation of high-risk areas based on fire risk, biodiversity, and economic impact. - Deployment of innovative tools and biocontrol agents.	- Multi-year funding secured for prioritised research programs. - Number of research projects completed and implemented. - Percentage reduction in blackberry infestations in areas targeted by research initiatives.
On-Ground Implementation and Demonstration	- Demonstrated success in reducing blackberry infestations through integrated management approaches. - Increased community ownership and participation in management efforts. - Scalable models developed for regional application.	- Number of pilot projects initiated, completed, and evaluated. - Measurable reductions in blackberry density across pilot and targeted areas. - Community engagement metrics, eg participation in programs and field days.

Vision

A healthy, productive Murray Region where blackberry infestations are sustainably managed and progressively reduced across all tenures through a collaborative, landscape-scale approach. This will protect biodiversity, reduce fire risk, enhance the productivity of enterprises, and restore the ecological balance of the landscape.

Strategic Pillars

Pillar 1:   Collaborative Management and Governance

Goal: Establish a multi-stakeholder management group to provide leadership, coordination, and accountability for a unified, cross-tenure blackberry management initiative.

Desired Outcomes:

- Unified action across tenures and stakeholders.
- Efficient use of resources, with minimal duplication.
- High levels of accountability, transparency, and community buy-in.

Potential Measures:

- Establishment and utilisation of a centralised data hub.
- Regular publication of progress reports with measurable outcomes.
- Number of stakeholders actively contributing to the initiative.

Rationale:

The early stages of the MRFH blackberry project identified a large number of individuals and agencies that have attempted various methods of controlling blackberries in southern NSW and north-east Victoria. These groups include government agencies and research bodies, as well as community groups such as the Victorian Blackberry Taskforce. While sharing a number of goals, there has not been any attempt to coordinate efforts via a collaborative approach to the blackberry problem.

Considerable expertise and valuable experience has been developed by these disparate initiatives, but this has not been shared. Similarly, there has been no pooling of available funds to achieve any economies of scale or efficiencies.

The establishment of a Management Group, to be administered by an auspice body (eg Softwoods Working Group (tbc), with all operational activity undertaken by a dedicated Project Officer will effectively 'hold' this strategic plan and oversee its implementation.

Duties of this Project Officer will involve all managerial and secretarial support functions for the group. The 'charter' of the group will be to source the required funding and then implement the actions set out in the Strategic Plan. A multi-stakeholder group, sharing common objectives, has been found to deliver a sound mechanism to resolve shared problems. The Collective Impact approach has been effective in weed management at various scales. A "backbone organisation" is established, with a clear shared vision, and measurable goals, defined and shared responsibilities for action and regular reporting.

Setting up the management group will require:

- Seeking volunteers (drawn from workshop participants, and others invited to bring specific skills and experience) to form the group which should include representatives of all agencies concerned with the blackberry problem.

- Set up the group and agree the roles of the group, which will include overseeing blackberry management initiatives, setting priorities, and facilitating coordination between government agencies, private enterprises, community groups, and Traditional Owners.

- Develop clear roles for policy input, operations coordination, advocacy, funding management, and research partnerships.

- Establish a central data hub for mapping, monitoring, and sharing blackberry management data across tenures, leveraging technology and partnerships to enhance effectiveness and transparency.

This Pillar is therefore a fundamental prerequisite for the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan. It will be on the basis of achieving collective and collaborative action that the various agencies involved can focus effort to achieving the restoration of our landscapes.

Actions:

The following actions closely follow the Collective Impact framework. This approach was described by Dr Sonia Graham at the Blackberry Forum (October 2024) and recommended in a previous study commissioned by the Murray Region Forestry Hub.[2]

The key actions and elements of the Collective Impact framework are:

1. **Shared Vision and Strategic Oversight**:

   o Define and communicate a shared vision for blackberry management, ensuring alignment among stakeholders.
   o Lead the implementation and periodic review of the Strategic Plan.

2. **Backbone Organisation**:

   o Establish a backbone organisation (referred to in this strategy as the 'management group') as the central coordinating body, facilitating collaboration and maintaining focus on collective goals.
   o Provide operational and administrative support to ensure continuity and effectiveness.

3. **Stakeholder Engagement and Coordination**:

   o Organise regular meetings and workshops to maintain open communication and transparency.
   o Actively engage all stakeholders, including government, private enterprises, community groups, research organisations, and Traditional Owners.

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[2] *Source: Murray Region Forestry Hub – Blackberry Impact Project Report: https://murrayregionforestryhub.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/MURR-2022-016a-Blackberry-Impacts-Report-Stage-1.pdf*

4. **Data and Evidence Management**:

   - Develop and maintain a centralised data hub for mapping infestations, tracking progress, and sharing resources.
   - Leverage technology, such as LiDAR and drones, to provide evidence-based insights.

5. **Policy and Advocacy**:

   - Create policy frameworks and advocate for funding and resources at state and federal levels.
   - Coordinate collective lobbying efforts to elevate the priority of blackberry management.

6. **Funding and Resource Allocation**:

   - Pool financial and in-kind resources to maximise impact.
   - Allocate resources strategically, focusing on high-priority areas and leveraging data for decision-making.

7. **Monitoring and Reporting**:

   - Develop shared performance metrics to track progress and refine strategies.
   - Publish annual impact reports to ensure transparency and build stakeholder confidence.

Action Table: Collaborative Management and Governance

Action/Task required for Strategy Implementation	Immediate	Short term	Medium term	Long term (and on-going)
Set up management group: • Find and fund co-ordinator/project officer to lead group formation and operations*[3]	✔			
• Confirm auspice body	✔			
• Seek volunteers to form the management group (drawn from workshop participants and others with specific skills and/or representing agencies concerned with the blackberry problem)	✔			
• Agree roles (and name) for the group, and for individuals within the group	✔			
• Provide operational and administrative support to ensure continuity and effectiveness (facilitating collaboration and maintaining focus on collective goals)		✔	✔	✔

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[3] *This is an **essential** first step. This person/position will be responsible for initiating and/or actioning all other actions required to implement this Pillar of the Strategy. This can be a temporary position until such time as funding can be obtained to support a more permanent officer. Involvement may prove to be part-time after the initial set-up. Support to create this position could be financial, or in-kind (i.e. a secondment of an already employed position in another agency).*

Action/Task required for Strategy Implementation	Immediate	Short term	Medium term	Long term (and on-going)
Activities of the group: • Confirm shared vision for blackberry management • Periodic review of vision (and Plan) • Organise regular meetings and workshops to maintain open communication and transparency • Actively engage all stakeholders (government, private enterprise, community groups, research organisations, Traditional Owners)		✔ ✔ ✔	 ✔ ✔	 ✔ ✔
On-going functions of the group: • Create policy frameworks and advocate for funding and resources at state and federal levels. • Coordinate collective lobbying efforts to elevate the priority of blackberry management. • Pool financial and in-kind resources to maximise impact. • Allocate resources strategically, focusing on high-priority areas and leveraging data for decision-making. • Develop shared performance metrics to track progress and refine strategies. • Publish annual impact reports to ensure transparency and build stakeholder confidence				✔ ✔ ✔ ✔ ✔ ✔

Responsibility for this Pillar:

Involves all agencies concerned with and/or affected by the problems imposed by blackberries.
In particular:

- The MRFH as the source of data and information on the dimensions of the blackberry problem
- AgVic and Dr Raelene Kwong (and others identified by the management group) as agencies already conducting research into control of blackberries
- The VBT as holders of existing knowledge and expertise
- All land managers concerned with the problems imposed by blackberries
- Dr Sonia Graham for advice on collective impact framework and functions of the management group (the 'backbone organisation')

Pillar 2:   Research and Innovation

Goal: Develop a robust long-term research program to identify and implement innovative solutions for sustainable blackberry management.

Desired Outcomes:

- Long-term investment in innovative solutions that deliver measurable reductions in blackberry infestations.
- Practical tools and strategies that can be adapted to diverse land tenures and environmental contexts.
- Informed decision-making supported by robust data and research.

Potential Measures:

- Percentage reduction in blackberry infestations in targeted areas.
- Adoption of research findings in operational practices.
- Number of research projects funded and completed.

Rationale:

The MRFH project (*op cit*) has quantified the economic impact of blackberries on the plantation sector of the region. This study has also provided some qualitative estimates of parallel costs imposed by blackberries on grazing and conservation activities conducted in other parts of the regional landscape. This work has indicated that blackberries impose average costs of around $41 million per year on the plantation sector and could also cost grazing and conservation uses around $30 million annually.

Blackberries are now widespread in the regional landscape. The level of invasion by this weed has reached an extent where prevention, eradication, and containment are no longer considered possible, other than in limited areas with intensive management. Blackberries are recognised as a Weed of National Significance, but appropriate action for blackberry management is now limited to protection of key assets, usually via spraying selected areas of blackberries with herbicides.

As indicated in Figure 1, economic returns available from this level of control are much lower than would be obtained from prevention, eradication, and containment activities.

Figure 1 : *Generalised Invasion Curve[4]*
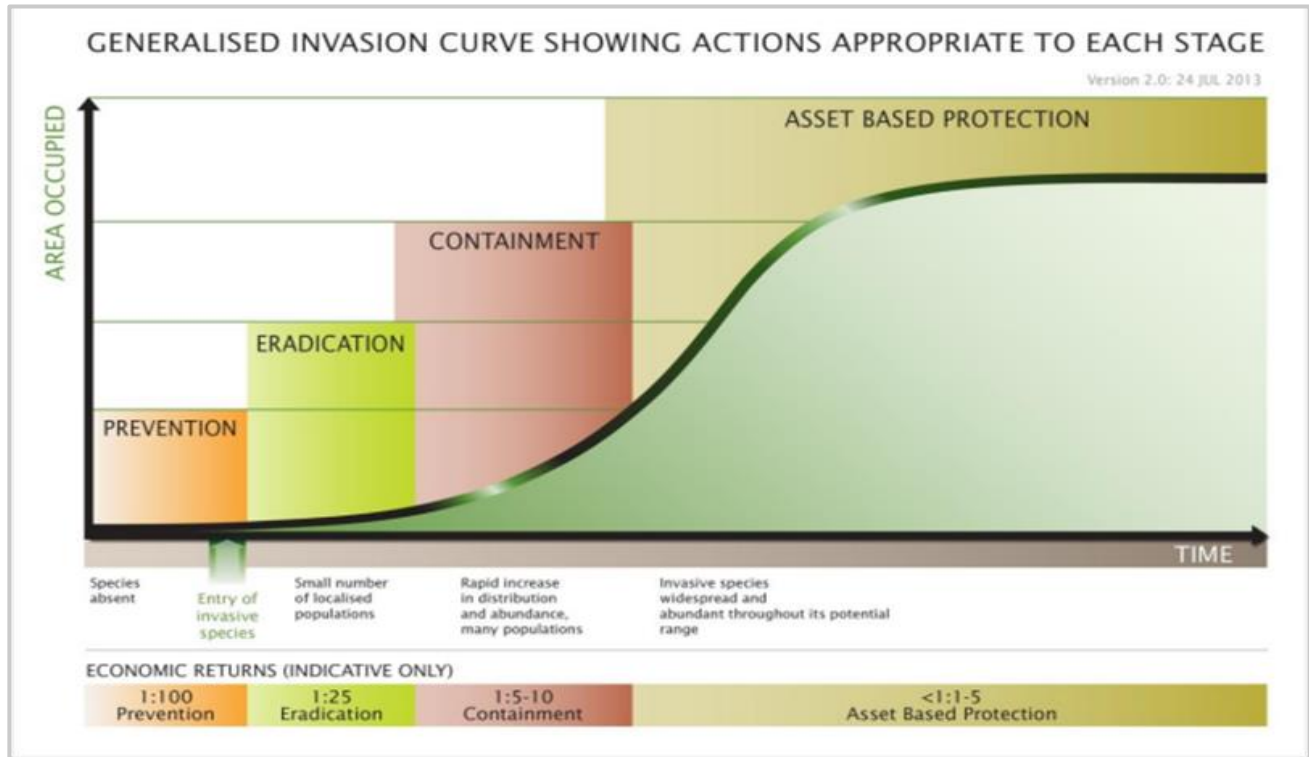
In order to find more effective (non-chemical) means of controlling blackberries, and even reducing the level of infestation, significant levels of applied research will be required. The success of biological controls in causing dramatic reductions in the levels of Paterson's Curse (*Echium plantagineum*) in the landscapes of this region suggest that an equivalent impact on blackberries could be possible.

However, new mechanisms for the control of blackberries will require long-term research projects to be planned – which will require significant levels of funding. Much work has already been done by individual researchers, but they have tended to work in isolation, and funding has not been readily available. A compelling business case must be developed, to indicate the level of benefit that can potentially be obtained from research investment.

The costs imposed by blackberries, in terms of expenditure on control and productivity losses, have been estimated. By making assumptions as to the efficacy of new control measures identified (timing and extent of control), it is possible to compare the costs of research programs with the benefits delivered.

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[4] *Source : Victorian Department of Primary Industries, 2010. Reproduced in*
https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/582255/Invasive-Plants-and-Animals-Framework-Sep-22.pdf

A preliminary assessment of the potential returns delivered from research has been made as part of the provision of some background to this Pillar. By making assumptions as to the degree of reduction in blackberry infestation over assumed time periods that could result from investing in research directed towards control measures, and on the quantum of that investment, it is possible to estimate the financial return that could be obtained as a result of implementing the findings of the relevant research.

A simple model has been constructed, in which alternative scenarios can be developed, each varying in terms of the assumptions made on the key variables of:

- Quantum of research investment – the amount of investment in research programs, over what time period.

- The degree of blackberry control and reduction delivered as a result of implementing research findings.

- The time taken for reduction of infestation to occur.

Three scenarios have been modelled to date, using indicative assumptions for the values of these key variables as set out in Table 1. It should be stressed that no actual data to quantify these variables have been obtained – the scenarios are entirely hypothetical but serve to indicate that significant returns can be derived if research is successful in developing alternative control measures. Based on the Paterson's Curse experience, some form of biological control may offer attractive opportunities.

Table 1 : *Returns potentially available from research into blackberry control (MRFH area)[5]*

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Assumed annual costs imposed by blackberries	Plantation sector only – $41 mill./yr	Plantation sector only – $41 mill./yr	All land tenures – $70 mill./yr.
Control achieved after one rotation (28 years) - **First reduction achieved (extent and timing)**	25% reduction 2% reduction in year 6	10% reduction 2% reduction in year 8	15% reduction 2% reduction in year 6
Research investment (spread over 5 years)	$25 million	$25 million	$25 million
IRR delivered	**10.6%**	**4.3%**	**10.4%**

It is clear that significant returns can be delivered from investment in relevant and appropriate research projects. These results can form the basis of a Business Case that can be attached to funding applications – both for major research projects, and also for improved management regimes. By altering the variables in the model, a range of estimated future outcomes can be assessed.

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[5] *Source : MRFH modelling*

Actions:

In order to implement the second Pillar of the Strategic Plan, activities must be managed by the Coordination group such as:

- Work with all stakeholders to identify priorities for research.

- Prioritise areas for control efforts based on fire risk, biodiversity value, and economic impact. Use mapping and LiDAR technology, as offered by FCNSW and Albury City, to identify key infestation zones and monitor control progress.

- Develop a business case for use in funding applications. Seek support from the Australian Government, AFWI, FWPA, and private sector contributors.

- Co-invest in research with experts to advance and deploy innovative controls.

- Secure stable, multi-year funding to support the research and development required to find innovative mechanisms to control blackberries.

Action Table: Research and Innovation

Action/Task required for Strategy Implementation	Immediate	Short term	Medium term	Long term (and on-going)
Planning functions:				
• Work with all stakeholders to identify priorities for research.		✓		
• Prioritise areas for control efforts based on fire risk, biodiversity value, and economic impact.		✓	✓	✓
• Support research applications that consider multi-tenure approach and innovative thinking.		✓		
• Use mapping and LiDAR technology, as offered by FCNSW and Albury City, to identify key infestation zones and monitor control progress.				
Source funding:				
• Prepare funding application for AFWI National Open Call #2 (opens 21 February, closes 20 May 2025) (include costs of project officer)	✓	✓	✓	✓
• **Involves:** The management group, VBT, AgVic, Forestry Corporation NSW, Albury City Council, NSW DPIRD, CFA				
• Develop a business case for use in funding applications.		✓	✓	✓
• Regularly review and update business case with findings from research and on-ground demonstrations.		✓	✓	✓
• Seek support from the Australian Government, AFWI, and private sector contributors.	✓	✓	✓	✓
o **Involves:** The management group, VBT, AgVic, FC NSW, NSW DPIRD. MRFH, Agriwealth, FFM Vic, Parks Vic, AWFI				

Action/Task required for Strategy Implementation	Immediate	Short term	Medium term	Long term (and on-going)

Research:
 	
 • Quantify impacts of blackberries on biodiversity and ecosystem services
   ○ **Involves:** MRFH, researchers
 • Co-invest in research with experts to advance and deploy innovative controls.
 • Support fire risk/biomass research being undertaken by Forestry Corporation NSW.
 • Secure stable, multi-year funding to support the research and development required to find innovative mechanisms to control blackberries.
   ○ **Involves:** The management group, AgVic, FC NSW, land managers
	✔		✔
			✔
			✔
				✔
				✔
				✔

Pillar 3:   On-Ground Implementation and Demonstration

Goal: Deliver targeted, collaborative control programs that integrate research findings, demonstrate measurable impacts, and inspire broader adoption.

Desired Outcomes:

- Demonstrated success in reducing blackberry infestations through pilot projects.
- Broader adoption of effective control measures across land tenures.
- Enhanced community and stakeholder buy-in, driving sustained action.

Potential Measures:

- Measurable reductions in blackberry density across targeted sites.
- Community participation rates in on-ground programs and extension activities.
- Number of pilot projects initiated and evaluated.

Rationale:

Discussions and presentations in the Workshop conducted by the MRFH indicated that a range of case studies would be required to demonstrate the efficacy of new control measures and landscape management protocols. In this way, extension programs could be developed to showcase the success possible from new measures, including new measures developed as a result of specific research projects initiated.

A range of case studies will be developed, using pilot sites selected to offer a range of scales and conditions. The goal of this Pillar is to deliver practical examples of new control programs (management changes and use of research findings) and thus demonstrate the results that can be obtained in terms of a reduction in the level of blackberry infestation in the regional landscape.

Real-life examples will be vital to converting research into implementation, to clearly demonstrate what could be achieved. Tasks will include:

- Select pilot areas to test research outputs.
- Develop and apply effective, multi-faceted control methods across the Murray Region, using a combination of biological, chemical, and mechanical approaches tailored to different land tenures
- Integrate blackberry management with fire risk reduction strategies to improve fire safety, protect access trails, and enhance the resilience of affected ecosystems.
- Foster active involvement and awareness across local communities, landowners, agencies, and industries, building a strong support network to drive on-ground management and advocacy efforts.
- Initiate localised control trials, and then scale up trials to larger areas.
- Document and evaluate outcomes - summarise data on impacts achieved, and then use this information in funding applications.

- Continually update best-practice manual for integrated weed management (Blackberry Control Manual[6]) with new research findings - partner with Victorian Blackberry Taskforce, AgVic, LLS and NSW DPIRD - set standards for biological, chemical, and mechanical controls.
- Share resources and training materials with local councils, Landcare, and forestry operators to encourage consistent, effective practices across the region
- Involve community groups and develop media campaigns.
- Engage Traditional Owners and local groups to foster community-led monitoring, reporting, and on-ground action, leveraging programs like the Good Neighbour Program.

This Pillar will involve on-going tasks, to continue to develop new alternatives for control of blackberries, and to encourage adoption of these alternatives by demonstrating the success that can be achieved. In this way, significant reductions in blackberry infestation at a landscape scale will be achieved.

Action Table: On-Ground Implementation and Demonstration

Action/Task required for Strategy Implementation	Immediate	Short term	Medium term	Long term (and on-going)

Demonstration:
 	
- Develop and apply effective, multi-faceted control methods across the Murray Region, using a combination of biological, chemical, and mechanical approaches tailored to different land tenures (integrated management).
  o **Involves:** Agriwealth, Albury CC, Mt Hotham, Alpine Shire, FC NSW
- Select pilot areas to test research outputs.
  o **Involves:** FC NSW, Mt Hotham, Falls Creek, all private forestry growers
- Share learnings regarding control processes through onsite visits (eg HVP Shelly Forest). Set up regular program of site visits.
	✓	✓	✓
			
			✓
			
			✓
				✓
				
				✓
				
				✓

Adoption and Advocacy: - Integrate blackberry management with fire risk reduction strategies to improve fire safety, protect access trails, and enhance the resilience of affected ecosystems. - Foster active involvement and awareness across local communities, landowners, agencies, and industries, building a strong support network to drive on-ground management and advocacy efforts. o **Involves:** VBT, AgVic, FC NSW, SWG, Riverine Plains, Towong Shire, HVP, Gulbali Institute			✓	✓

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[6] *Management and control options for blackberry (Rubus spp.) in Australia – Weeds of National Significance June 2009*. The manual was produced by the NSW Department of Primary Industries, the Blackberry Technical Reference Group and the National Blackberry Taskforce with funding from the Australian Government *Defeating the Weed Menace* program, and supported by the Department of Primary Industries, Victoria.

Action/Task required for Strategy Implementation	Immediate	Short term	Medium term	Long term (and on-going)
Implementation: • Continually update best-practice manual for integrated weed management (Blackberry Control Manual) with new research findings - partner with Victorian Blackberry Taskforce, NSW DPIRD and AgVic - set standards for biological, chemical, and mechanical controls.			✓	✓
• Engage Traditional Owners and local groups to foster community-led monitoring, reporting, and on-ground action, leveraging programs like the Good Neighbour Program.			✓	✓
• Share resources and training materials with local councils, Landcare, and forestry operators to encourage consistent, effective practices across the region.			✓	
• Involve community groups and develop media campaigns. ○ **Involves:** The management group, VBT, AgVic, FC NSW, Albury CC, NSW DPIRD, Murray LLS				
Evaluation and monitoring: • Develop monitoring and evaluation framework for all pilot programs – including social impacts, benefits and collaboration.		✓		
• Review and adaptively update evaluation framework as more information/learnings become available.			✓	✓
• Monitor, document and evaluate outcomes - summarise data on impacts achieved, and then use this information in funding applications and to refine integrated weed management practice. ○ **Involves:** The management group			✓	✓