

# Wannon Flora Reserve *Acacia paradoxa* control report 2022

## Hamilton Field Naturalists Club

### Background to the project

See the 2021 report for the history of the reserve and concerns over the spread of Hedge Wattle (*Acacia paradoxa*) in the Flora Reserve, and previous works.

In Feb. 2018 HFNC applied to the SGSC (the official manager of the reserve) for a Planning Permit: (TP/3/2018): ‘Removal of Invasive *Acacia* Shrubs from the Wannon Flora Reserve’.



Five applications for funding have been made:

1. 2018 – DELWP SmartyGrants Community and Volunteer Action Grant to control the pest plants (‘Restoration of native understory flora on the Wannon Flora Reserve’).
2. 2019 – GHCMA Victorian Landcare Grants 2019-20 program
3. 2021 – Community and Volunteer Action Grants – Biodiversity on-ground action and stewardship (application for \$3,900 for equipment for volunteers to do the work).
4. 2022 – GHCMA Victorian Landcare Grants 2022-23 program. VLG042 “Enhance biodiversity through invasive woody weed control at Wannon Flora Reserve (\$18,266 grant in Nov).
5. 2022 – Southern Grampians Shire Council Greater Grants Program (\$2,480 grant in Sept). This grant was for equipment to deal with Hedge Wattle.

Bids 1-3 were not successful, possibly because the selectors may not have regarded the problem with invasive weeds such as *Acacia paradoxa* as being significant.

### Work objectives in 2022

1. Complete the removal of the large *A. paradoxa* shrubs from the eastern half of the reserve.
2. Pull out/cut off emerging *A. paradoxa* seedlings in areas treated in 2019, 2020 & 2021.
3. Treat weeds, including Wild Gladiolus (*Gladiolus undulatus*), Harlequin Flower (*Sparaxis bulbifera*), Sour-sob (*Oxalis pes-caprae*), Cleavers (*Galium aperiene*), Bridal Creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*), Freesia (*Freesia* sp.) & Angled Onion (*Allium triquetrum*).

### Activities in 2022:

30 April – Working Bee with RB, DL, SS, PH, JS (10.5 hrs):

- pulled hundreds of small seedlings and cut out larger shrubs from N<sup>th</sup> side, E end.
- near the Highway, E side and frontage, cut out dozens of large *A. paradoxa* and *A. longifolia*. Large shrubs in the heath area were also cut.

28 May – Working Bee with DL, RB, YI, RZ, PH, SS (14 hr) plus RT (6 hr on 3 previous visits):

- pulling or cutting out small shrubs over the N side and Powells Rd area. PM cut wattle from E side of Nigretta-Wannon Rd.
- RB & RZ worked on existing large shrubs in previously treated areas, also clearing cut debris from bases of old Manna Gums. There was some live branches on a few trees previously poisoned – need to inject into trunk all the way around. A Sugar Glider was seen gliding from one tree to another.

28 Aug. – Working Bee with RB, DL, PH, PM, RT (12 hr):

- pulling/cutting out small shrubs over the N area of reserve, Powells Rd area
- cutting (PH) or poisoning with Hydro axe (RB) previously untreated large shrubs in NE sector. A new species, Pine Heath (*Stenantha pinifolium*), found by PH & DL near the N fence. This species has not been recorded on the Wannon reserves or district.

29 Aug. – RB (4 hr):

- cut or poisoned *A. paradoxa* from clumps in NE and on W end of N side. Estimated from 1 L applied over 2 days, with 2 mL delivered per squirt x 8 squirts/tree, that about 60 trees were poisoned. RT estimated that about 125 seedlings on Powells Rd area were pulled/hr.

07 Sept. – RB, DL (5 hr):

- pulled *A. paradoxa* seedlings from N side
- herbicide-wiped Wild Gladiolus and a few Sparaxis at the old gravel pit area, near the fence.
- planted 23 *Allocasuarina pusilla* grown from seed from remnant shrubs in 2021. The seedlings were planted in 3 groups towards the SE corner. Two were put in each of 6 short mesh guards and the others were covered with branches to deter rabbits and kangaroos. Half of the seedlings were watered; the soil was very moist and rain fell the next day.

15 Oct. – RB, DL and 4 visitors with NGT (2 hr):

- pulled *A. paradoxa* from the Powells Rd area.
- RB also cut some shrubs on the fence area that were missed in 2019.

17 Oct – RB (4 hr):

- applied 6 L glyphosate + Ally spray on patches of Cleavers in the NE corner; one patch 20 m from the corner and the other under Cherry Ballarts ~70 m off the N track (masses of the weed present, though treated last year).
- spot-sprayed Sparaxis near gravel pit off N track and both sides of Powells Rd near 2 large trees and also near the Highway.
- Herbicide-wiped Sparaxis on Wannon-Nigretta Rd, near Highway and also (with Wild Gladiolus) W along highway. In SE corner, in old sand-stripped area, wiped Sparaxis & Wild Gladiolus (this area has been treated for several years)
- Cut remaining *A. paradoxa* shrubs near fence on Powells Rd and 1 large shrub in SE cnr.

**Summary** – on 7 days, 9 volunteers variously contributed 88 hrs work controlling environmental weeds on the Wannon Flora Reserve.

**Projected work in 2023** – HFNC have 2 funded projects to undertake and report on:

- SGSC project – this involves continued work in controlling regeneration of *A. paradoxa* on areas cleared in previous years, as well as continuing to treat the mature trees that have yet to be cleared from the central area of the reserve.
- GHCMA Landcare project – this involves a contractor cutting *A. paradoxa* on the western third of the reserve and pulling the shrubs out to the Powells Rd road reserve for removal. A contractor may also be required to chip and remove the residue. It will also require volunteers to assist and to manage the project.