This document is a result of the community workshops in the Bega Valley Shire initiated by the Bega Valley Shire Council and endorsed by the Voluntary Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy Management Team formed by a South East Catchment Management Board Task Group, NSW Agriculture, Rural Lands Protection Board, Department of Land and Water Conservation, National Parks and Wildlife Service, State Forests and Far South Coast Landcare Association.

Terry Irwin capably facilitated all the Workshops.

Cover illustration by Max Campbell

The community consultation process was partially funded by a Natural Heritage Trust Grant.
BEGA VALLEY SHIRE WEEDS STRATEGY

Background

The National Weeds Strategy defines a weed as

"a plant that has, or has the potential to have, a detrimental effect on economic, social or conservation values."

A weed is simply a plant out of place. A plant is usually considered a weed when it interferes with beneficial uses of land or water, displaces desirable or native plants, or affects human and animal health. Weeds aggressively compete for moisture, nutrients, space and sunlight with surrounding plants. They are spread by dispersal of seeds or plant parts by wind, water, animals, machinery and people.

Many weeds produce abundant seeds with barbs, hooks or other attaching devices that facilitate adherence to people, animals or equipment. With society becoming increasingly mobile, weed seeds can and do travel great distances quickly. Weeds usually become established and advance along roadways and river corridors. Some weeds have been spread through ill-advised horticultural and home garden plantings. Others have been inadvertently introduced through planting of contaminated pasture and crop seeds, the feeding of weed seed contaminated forage to livestock, on vehicles, or other machinery.

Throughout this document the term weed refers to both noxious and environmental weeds affecting economic, social and/or conservation values.

Noxious weeds have been proclaimed under the Noxious Weeds Act 1993, generally because they are serious economic pests, toxic to stock or a danger to human health. There is a legal requirement on landowners to control these weeds. The species listed as noxious vary between different parts of NSW. A list of the species noxious in the Bega Valley Shire can be obtained from the website www.agric.nsw.gov.au/noxweed/

There are several categories of noxious weeds:

- W1 weeds must be continuously suppressed and destroyed, and Council must be notified within three days of detection of the plant on a property (eg. water hyacinth),
- W2 weeds must be continuously suppressed and destroyed (eg. St John’s wort),
- W3 weeds are widespread species whose total destruction is impractical. Landholders are required to prevent their spread, and reduce numbers to the satisfaction of Council (eg. blackberry, bitou bush),
- Actions required for W4 weeds vary. Some (eg. willows) must not be propagated or sold, but there is no legal requirement to remove existing plants.

Environmental weeds are plants which invade native plant communities, and that may replace native plants and cause the loss of habitat for native animals. Some environmental weeds have been declared noxious (such as bitou bush), but most have not. A plant may be both an agricultural and an environmental weed, depending on where it is growing.
Introduction

This Weeds Strategy is based on the ideas, strategies and recommendations from each of the local area community consultations. Four community groups took part in the development of this Strategy. This document is a direct result of their energy, enthusiasm and commitment to weed control.

The goals and objectives grew out of the first and second round of meetings, while the third round provided the Facilitator with the objectives/strategies and actions, which form the basis of this document.

Given the consensus of ideas across all the groups, the Strategy does not identify from which local community group particular objectives/strategies or actions originated. The objectives are not prioritised. The Facilitator applauds those members of the community who persisted in attending difficult and demanding meetings to produce this Strategy.

The Strategy addresses the principles of the South East Catchment Blueprint, an initiative of the South East Catchment Management Board. Community members and agencies acknowledge their responsibilities for sound resource management through targeted action, the development and implementation of integrated weed management programs leading to the reduction and control of weeds. Identified Shire strategies and local actions fit within the wider catchment targets of the Blueprint.

The community consultation process leading to the development of this Strategy was partly funded by a grant from the Natural Heritage Trust. NSW Agriculture provided assistance throughout the process and other agencies, including the Rural Lands Protection Board, Department of Land and Water Conservation, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Far South Coast Landcare Association and State Forests have given freely of their time and support. All agencies have made a commitment to work cooperatively, largely as a result of the Voluntary Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy developed by a South East Catchment Management Board Task Group. The Weeds/Biodiversity Working Group, composed of agency representatives and private landholders, reported directly to the VBDCS Management Team, which strongly supported the community consultation process.

The community groups identified seven goals for which strategies and actions were identified. Council’s Weeds Team, community groups and agencies involved in the process then identified responsibilities, actions and completion dates.
Outcomes

There are six desired outcomes for this Strategy:

1. to heighten awareness among the community of the risk to the Shire's biodiversity, aesthetic values, and economic viability caused by the explosive spread of weeds;

2. to allow the efficient use of private and public resources to halt or slow the spread of weeds throughout the Bega Valley Shire and thus reduce the ecological, economic and social impacts of weeds;

3. to lead to the definition of objectives and performance indicators that will allow the monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation of action plans;

4. to provide the community with clear lines of accountability;

5. to adopt strategies providing incentives for landholders taking prompt and effective action to control and eradicate weeds, and finally,

6. to maintain and enhance cooperation between Council, agencies and individuals to achieve positive weed management outcomes across the landscape, regardless of land tenure.
## Summary of Goals

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<th>Goal I</th>
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GOALS

For each goal, strategies and actions have been identified. These are detailed below. Following each action is the agency, agencies and/or community groups responsible and the dates by which each action is to be achieved. The coordinating agency/group is listed first.

I Funding

Rationale
Stable, consistent funding dedicated to weed control is required. Weed management is not a short-term affair and consequently needs consistent funding to allow coordination, planning and implementation of projects to effectively manage weeds. Assured on-going funding will largely influence the success of the Shire’s weed control program.

Goal I
Funding
Develop stable, consistent funding dedicated to weeds.

Strategies/ Objectives
1. Explore funding opportunities to enhance BVSC's integrated weed management strategy
   ACTION
   a. Lobby relevant authorities (including NHT)
       BVSC, Landcare, SECMB On-going
   b. Investigate non-government sources of funding
       Community 30/06/03
   c. Council to make a submission to NHT to remove discrimination in accessing NHT funding for weed control
       BVSC, Landcare, SECMB 31/12/03
   d. Lobby Council for a share in the proposed environmental levy to be set aside for control of environmental weeds
       BVSC, SECMB, community ASAP

2. Develop quantitative goals for the allocation of resources
   ACTION
   a. Ensure proposed weed management programs match available funding
       BVSC On-going

3. Consistently lobby politicians at all levels regarding the weed problem and the need for extra funding
   ACTION
   a. Lobby relevant authorities (including NHT)
   b. Lobby for a commensurate increase in funding for each new declared weed
       State Weed Control Coordinator, NSW Ag. On-going
       Regional Weeds Committees
II Early Detection and Control of New Invaders

Rationale
Prevention and treatment of new weed introductions is the most successful, cost effective and least environmentally damaging means of control. If new invasive weeds are allowed to go unchecked, economic losses will exceed the present control costs of eradication or containment by several orders of magnitude. After introduction of a new invasive plant, there is a short period of opportunity for eradication and containment. Once permanently established, a new invader becomes a long-term management problem.

Goal II
Early Detection and Control of New Invaders

Prevent and treat new noxious and environmental weed introductions.

Strategies/ Objectives
1. Develop and implement a contingency plan for early detection and rapid response to new invaders
   ACTION
   a. Identify likely newcomers
   b. Action plans to be developed to enable early treatment of infestation
      BVSC 30/06/02

2. Early identification of new weeds
   ACTION
   a. Train field people in weed identification
      BVSC In place, on-going
   b. Landholders be made aware of new weeds on their own and nearby properties
      BVSC Inspections, on-going
   c. Community education plans to be implemented, see Goal VI Education, Awareness and Communication
   d. Identify likely invaders and publicise, see Goal VI Education, Awareness and Communication

3. Monitor and control new infestations to prevent the spread from infested to clean areas
   ACTION
   a. Follow-up inspection after treatment
   b. Re-vegetate controlled areas
   c. Identify and develop an incentive scheme for reporting new outbreaks of weeds, see Goal V Leadership and Planning
   d. Lobby for funding to set up a “Weeds Hotline”
   e. Update Weed Maps
   f. Continue to monitor treated areas (twice yearly)
   g. See actions under Goal IV Control of Current Weeds and Goal V Leadership and Planning
      BVSC, DLWC On-going
4. Identify areas of new contamination

**ACTION**

a. Develop a reporting system that is inclusive of key Shire and agency staff and others who may be able to provide early identification of new weeds
b. Report outbreaks to the wider community to alert them of a new risk
c. Encourage community reporting of new weeds, see Goal VI Education, Awareness and Communication
d. Enlist the support of Shire Council workers, the public and other authorities

| BVSC | Commenced, on-going |

5. Understand how new weeds may intrude and create a Watch List

**ACTION**

a. Steps need to be taken so that key participants and advisers communicate new threats and create a Watch list of the most likely weeds to threaten the Shire

| NSW Ag, BVSC, NWAC | ASAP |

b. On a regular basis, experts to create a risk assessment of weeds that might appear on the Watch list

| NSW Ag | First list 30/06/02 |

c. Information produced should be shared with the wider community, see Goal VI Education, Awareness & Communication
d. Draw up a list of the way new weeds might be introduced, eg. fodder, grain, contractors, plant nurseries, public authorities, etc., see Goal VI Education, Awareness & Communication
e. List key authorities and individuals that might introduce new weeds

| BVSC | 30/06/02 |
Commitment and Cooperation

Rationale
As the weed problem becomes more widespread and acute, the need for effective coordination is critical. Scarce resources should not be wasted. Cooperation is necessary to bring together all interested and concerned parties in the Shire for the purpose of combining expertise, energy and resources to deal with common weed problems. Community based weed committees can provide an open forum for the concerns of all citizens, landowners and managers to consider and deal with the challenges of weed control and eradication.

Goal III
Commitment and Cooperation

Increase cooperative and coordinated actions by the community and agencies in the Shire to maximise the effectiveness of money and time being used to manage and/or eradicate weeds.

Strategies/ Objectives

1. Shire and agencies to demonstrate commitment to Weeds Strategy implementation
   ACTION
   a. Use community groups to review outcomes and provide feedback on a regular basis to ensure accountability
      BVSC On-going
   b. Council control/eradicate roadside weeds and maintain clean land
      BVSC On-going
   c. Long term funding for weed control pledged by Council and NSW Agriculture
      BVSC, NSW Ag 30/06/03
   d. Council to share planned action and protocols with communities, see Goal VI Education, Awareness & Communication.
   e. State agencies meet commitments to manage weeds on public land, including Crown Land
      Agencies 30/06/03

2. All stakeholders and agencies come together to be involved in an integrated management program
   ACTION
   a. Meet regularly (at least annually) with communities, Council staff and other agency staff to build commitment for an integrated community response to weed management
      BVSC Commenced, on-going
   b. Look for opportunities for effective partnerships, and encourage group assistance
      BVSC, Landcare, community groups On-going
   c. Ensure other agencies "sign off" the Weeds Strategy
      BVSC, SECMB, all agencies 30/06/02
3. Develop effective and consistent coordination of activities

**ACTION**

a. Encourage regular oversight by community based weed committees to ensure consistency of effort and focus

| BVSC, community | Minimum annually |

b. Implement reporting system with appropriate database, see “Weeds Hotline” under Goal II *Early Detection and Control of New Invaders*

| BVSC | Implemented March, 2002 |

4. Encourage willing participants (voluntary compliance) with the objective that landowners accept their responsibilities

**ACTION**

a. Develop a plan to encourage compliance by the use of both incentives and penalties, see Goal V *Leadership And Planning*

| BVSC | 30/06/02 |

b. Provide assistance/guidance to willing participants

| BVSC, NSW Ag, DLWC | On-going |

c. Refer to people who have succeeded in controlling difficult weeds, see Goal VI *Education, Awareness & Communication*

| BVSC, NSW Ag | On-going |

5. Ensure fair and consistent enforcement

**ACTION**

a. Develop protocols to meet various responses from landholders to ensure consistent enforcement

| BVSC | 30/10/02 |

b. Ensure follow up and continuous inspection

| BVSC | 30/06/02 |

6. Encourage local cooperation with Shire Weeds Officers

**ACTION**

a. Develop a communication system to promote the effort and success of weed control to the general community

| Local weeds committees | 30/10/02 |

b. Lobby Landcare group (or some individual) to be repository of information on weeds location in order to encourage reporting of weed outbreaks

| Local weeds committees | ASAP |

c. Implement a Complaints Register and ensure response to complaints within two weeks

| BVSC | 30/10/02 |
IV Control of Current Weeds

Rationale
The desired outcome is to detect weeds quickly and then to use all treatment "tools" such as physical, mechanical, biological, herbicidal and management practices to control or eradicate the outbreak. Once the spread of a weed is halted, weed infested areas must be reclaimed and restored to a healthy and productive condition. The objective will be to restore economic productivity and/or to reduce the possible loss of habitat and erosion.

Goal IV
Control of Current Weeds
Develop and promote sustainable, cost-effective management systems for the control of weeds that are already present in the Shire.

Strategies/ Objectives
1. Weed identification and management
   ACTION
   a. Accurate and easily accessed information for identification and management is needed, see Goal VI Education, Awareness and Communication
   b. Prioritise work by defining core, marginal, rare and isolated and clean areas, see Goal V Leadership and Planning

2 Adopt a new classification and priority system
   ACTION
   a. Map Shire weeds by survey (with inspections to confirm and/or update findings)
   BVSC, NSW Ag
   Inspection/confirmation by BVSC 30/09/02
   Commenced March, 2002
   Inspect/confirmation by BVSC 30/09/02

b. Key weeds: African lovegrass, serrated tussock, St John’s wort, new weeds, bitou bush, lantana to be mapped. Mapping categories to be designated as “Rare and Isolated”, “Marginal” and “Core”

c. Map bridal creeper and develop a management plan
   DLWC 30/06/03

   d. Map pine wildings and develop a management plan
   NPWS 30/06/04
3. Community cooperation

**ACTION**

a. Work together to develop and implement catchment-wide weed control programs using broadacre and aerial spraying techniques, pasture management and rehabilitation

| Community groups | On-going |

4. Roadside management

**ACTION**

a. Priority to be given to rare and isolated roadside infestations to prevent further invasion and establishment of new weed species
b. Where appropriate, establish partnerships with stakeholders
c. Council to work with other agencies and individuals to develop an integrated and coordinated attack on target weeds to maximise efficient eradication

| BVSC, DLWC | 30/06/02 |

d. Investigate the 'Adopt a Road' scheme (refer to Towamba Community group) that encourages a direct input from local communities and individuals towards a shared responsibility for controlling roadside weeds. BVSC will support the community effort

| BVSC, community groups | Commenced April, 2002 |

e. Trial native revegetation along roadways to better compete with weeds

| BVSC, DLWC | 30/06/02 |

5. Encourage Shire to target major "spread" areas (eg. Saleyards, Candelo markets where visiting vehicles may pick up or deposit weeds)

**ACTION**

a. Develop a suitable action plan that defines the problem, identifies the areas at risk, and implements a suitable control plan

| BVSC, NSW Farmers, NSW Ag, RLPB | Commenced April, 2002 |

6. Disposal of weeds

**ACTION**

a. Investigate and report on alternative disposal methods

| BVSC, NSW Ag | 28/02/03 |

7. Disinfection stations

**ACTION**

a. Investigate cost effective alternatives and develop Code of Practice for Shire employees, contractors, truck operators, etc. to clean machinery and equipment between jobs, farms, etc.

| BVSC | 31/03/03 |

b. Develop and implement a road plant washdown procedure

| BVSC | 30/06/03 |

8. Livestock and Transport

**ACTION**

a. Develop a Code of Practice regarding weeds in conjunction with NSW Farmers, transport operators, and individual farmers
b. Educate landowners concerning best practice for introduction of new stock onto their property

| BVSC, NSW Ag | 31/03/03 |
9. Waterways

**ACTION**

a. Encourage a community acceptance regarding the need to manage weeds in waterways and riparian zones, see Goal VI *Education, Awareness & Communication*

b. Investigate practical and cooperative approaches and accountability for waterways

c. Investigate legal responsibilities

BVSC, DLWC, SECMB, Landcare 30/06/03

d. See also actions regarding Roadside Management

10. Weed control options

**ACTION**

a. Develop easily accessible information on options regarding weed control, see Goal VI *Education, Awareness & Communication*

BVSC Commenced, 30/06/03

11. Bulk soils and aggregates (extractive industries)

**ACTION**

a. Develop a policy on extracted material used for Shire works to minimise weed dispersal

b. Develop a weed standard to minimise weed dispersal for all Shire contracts and tenders

BVSC 31/12/02

12. Codes of Practice

**ACTION**

a. Develop Codes of Practice and best management guidelines in the following areas:

- Supplementary feeding of stock
- Transportation of fodder in the Shire
- Resellers of grain and fodder
- Contractors, agencies and others who may move from farm to farm
- Landowners on the introduction of stock onto their property

NSW Ag, BVSC 31/03/03

The extraction and use of bulk soils and aggregates

NSW Ag, BVSC 31/03/03

Nurseries and others who sell plants or plant material

Landcare, BVSC On-going
V Leadership and Planning

Rationale
Leadership and organisation are required to direct cooperative weed projects and allocate limited resources. The need for leadership and planning extends to federal and state, as well as local levels to organise weed control projects, develop partnerships, provide assistance, and implement effective programs.

Goal V
Leadership and Planning
Extend planning and prioritising to allocate limited resources and provide direction for implementation of programs and projects. Establish effective planning procedures that take account of the special requirements of local differences while integrating weed management into sustainable resource management.

Strategies/ Objectives
1. Develop weed action plans including priorities for specific geographical areas
   ACTION
   a. Action and work plans need to be developed for African lovegrass, serrated tussock, fireweed, St John’s wort, bitou bush, lantana and “new weeds”. These action plans will take into account local priorities
   b. Develop action and work plans for local areas
      BVSC 30/06/02

2. Develop and implement incentives for landholders who control weeds
   ACTION
   a. Investigate incentives such as a reduction in Council rates on properties that control weeds
      BVSC 30/10/02
   b. Council to enforce buffer zone between neighbours (eg. 50m in total)
   c. Canvass the possibility of an environmental levy for weed control
      BVSC 31/03/03

3. Examine the possibility of a pre-purchase weed report for prospective buyers
   ACTION
   a. Investigate and implement if appropriate
      BVSC 31/03/03

4. Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Weeds Strategy
   ACTION
   a. Weeds Officers to liaise with specific local weed committees and agencies
      BVSC, agencies 30/06/02
   b. Support and maintain the weeds advisory committee and the community based weed groups
      BVSC 30/06/02
   c. Review outcomes of work plans and provide feedback to the community
      BVSC 30/06/03
5. Adapt the Weeds Strategy as required
   **ACTION**
   a. Community based weeds groups and Shire staff to adjust the Weeds Strategy in light of the evaluation of the Strategy
      BVSC 28/02/03

6. Weeds Officers to be linked to local community weeds committees
   **ACTION**
   a. Build a closer relationship between Weeds Officers and landholders to encourage weed reporting
      BVSC ASAP

7. Nursery sales
   **ACTION**
   a. Work with local nurseries to develop an appropriate Code of Practice
      Landcare, BVSC 30/06/03

8. Ensure environmental weeds are considered along with other weeds
   **ACTION**
   a. Liaise with Landcare and Dunecare groups to maintain awareness of environmental weeds that may not be declared noxious
      Landcare, SECMB, BVSC, NPWS 30/06/03

9. Develop a drought and post-drought guide
   **ACTION**
   a. Prepare guide for distribution to local weeds committees
      NSW Ag, BVSC 30/06/03

10. Utilise the Shire Web site for information and reporting
    **ACTION**
    a. Plan for identification and technical information to be available on the Shire Web site
       BVSC 30/06/03
    b. Investigate practicality of weed report or sighting system on the web site
       BVSC 30/06/04

11. Identify current gaps in legislative powers to control weeds
    **ACTION**
    a. Review Weeds Legislation (NSW)
       NSW Ag 30/06/04
VI  Education, Awareness and Communication

Rationale
The public is generally not aware of the economic and environmental impacts of weeds. There is a need to improve awareness of weeds and to provide educational information to landholders and the public. As people become more aware of weeds, the probability of detecting them is greatly increased which allows for more effective and timely control. Education and awareness assist weed identification, reporting new infestations, prevention and control and fosters cooperation and partnerships.

Goal VI
Education, Awareness and Communication
Encourage a well-informed community with a good understanding of weed issues as such a community will be confident in making management decisions for the benefit of the whole Shire.

Strategies/ Objectives
1. Improve community ability to identify weeds
   ACTION
   a. Develop an appropriate identification plan
   b. Promote and distribute appropriate material
      BVSC, all agencies 30/09/02

2. Expand understanding of impacts of weeds
   ACTION
   a. Develop and implement a specific education plan, see Goal V Leadership and Planning
      BVSC 31/01/03
   b. Enhance community understanding of biodiversity and aesthetic values of controlling weeds
      SECMB, all agencies On-going
   c. Provide weed information to the community at large
      BVSC, all agencies New publication 30/06/02
   d. Communicate successful activities, with particular reference to individuals who have been successful or played an important part in the control of weeds
      BVSC, NSW Ag, Landcare On-going
   e. Conduct demonstration projects as required
      NSW Ag, BVSC On-going
   f. Educate transport drivers, contractors, Shire, Telstra, etc. and general community on transport of weeds into the Shire
      BVSC On-going
3. Improve Communications

**ACTION**

a. Develop and implement a comprehensive Communication plan

BVSC See below

b. Utilise a variety of means to disseminate information: local weeds committees, radio, newspapers, RLPB newsletters, rates notices, business newsletters (Cobargo Co-op, Bega Cheese), displays (Council offices, markets, businesses, etc.), tourist information centres, shows, road-side warning notices (“You are entering a serrated tussock area”) Landcare, SECMB, school newsletters, individuals and groups, notice boards in community halls, roadside rest areas; display cases in schools.

**Action** for a) and b): explore the possibility of employing an education/communication/field officer either on a part-time or for a period of time (6 months) to prepare and implement a communication/education plan. Otherwise, implementation is ongoing.

c. Communicate the efforts of groups and people in the Valley who are making an effort to control weeds

d. Particularly target absentee landholders with information

e. Share information with neighbouring Shires

BVSC On-going

4. Particular focus on new-comers to the Shire

**ACTION**

a. Develop and implement specific actions to educate and inform new landholders

b. Investigate a pre-purchase weeds report for prospective buyers (like a pink slip)

BVSC 31/03/03

5. Promote and encourage the acceptance of “codes of best practice.”

**ACTION**

a. Encourage the development of Codes of Practice

Weeds CRC, NSW Ag On-going

b. Document the available Codes of Practice

c. Disseminate these Codes to appropriate groups, individuals etc.

d. Encourage consumers to prefer sellers who follow the appropriate Codes

NSW Ag On-going

e. Promote the Codes in various media

Landcare, NSW Ag 30/06/03

6. Involve Schools in the fight against weeds

**ACTION**

a. “Weeds Week”; competitions; visits by government departmental representatives, Weedbusters Week

b. Lobby teachers to encourage students to inform weed sightings to Council

BVSC 31/03/03
VII The Need for On-Going Research

Rationale
There is a need for on-going research to allow the most effective control of existing weeds using various available control methods. However, there comes a time when a noxious and environmental weed is beyond the economic and environmental possibility of control in a region. At this point biological control may be the only hope.

Goal VII
Research
Provide direction and support for research into the development of cost-effective and sustainable weed management practices.

Strategies/ Objectives

1. Investigate knowledge/ resources of other Councils/ groups
   ACTION
   a. Share information with other Councils, Landcare groups and others
      BVSC On-going

2. Document best practice and most up to date research
   ACTION
   a. Collate and question current information
      NSW Ag, BVSC On-going
   b. Document successful farm weed management plans
      NSW Ag, BVSC As available

3. Establish test plots to assess treatment and application methods
   ACTION
   a. Work with other land management agencies and landholders to assess control methods
   b. Evaluate control methods and refine techniques to specific needs
      NSW Ag, community, others On-going
   c. Assess herbicide treatments, timing, rates and application methods
      NSW Ag On-going

4. Review management tools.
   ACTION
   a. Work with landholders to refine grazing and rotation techniques
      NSW Ag On-going
   b. Evaluate integration of chemical and biological control methods
      NSW Ag, CSIRO On-going
   c. Develop and evaluate competitive planting methods
      NSW Ag, BVSC, SECMB Commenced

5. Establish alternatives to chemical control
   ACTION
   a. Consult agencies such as the CSIRO, Weeds CRC
   b. Establish links with key weeds research organisations
      BVSC On-going