



MEDIA RELEASE

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Prickly acacia threatens Australia's cattle industry

It's not hard to see why prickly acacia is one of Australia's 20 worst weeds. This Weed of National Significance hits the hip pockets of landholders to the tune of around \$9 million per year in lost production and increased management costs.

Chair of the National Prickle Bush Management Group, Louise Moloney, said "Prickly acacia can reduce pasture production by up to 50 percent. It also hinders stock watering and mustering, and even causes tyre punctures."

"An economic study conducted recently showed that a property with medium to high levels of prickly acacia at Richmond experienced a cost of about \$128,000 annually in lost income and increased management costs." Mrs Moloney said.

Prickly acacia currently affects about 6.6 million hectares of Australia with the largest infestations in western Queensland, and infestations also occurring in coastal and southern Queensland, the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia.

If left unchecked, prickly acacia has the potential to invade over 70% of mainland Australia.

"Prickly acacia is a significant threat to the Mitchell Grasslands ecosystem with over 50 million hectares at risk." Mrs Moloney said.

"In addition to native pastures, it causes habitat loss, soil structure decline and erosion, a decline in biodiversity and provides a refuge for feral animals. The Julia Creek Dunnart is one species recognised as under threat due to the spread of prickly acacia."

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Fortunately, prickly acacia is being stopped in its tracks thanks to national efforts, driven by community and supported by state agencies, focusing on strategic control.

Mrs Moloney said that both Desert Channels Queensland and Southern Gulf Catchments regional groups have been active in coordinating major on-ground control programs with local government, community groups and landholders.

“During the past twelve months, over 109,000 ha of infestation were successfully treated in the Desert Channels region, safeguarding of the Lake Eyre Basin from invasion,” Mrs Moloney said.

”During Weedbuster Week, September 1-7, it is fitting to recognise the efforts of the community in combating weeds like prickly acacia.

“Some individual landholders have been contributing up to \$100,000 as part of efforts to combat the problem and community-based control programs are occurring in at least 43 areas of Queensland with over 150,000 ha successfully treated over 2007 – 2008,” she said.

To get involved in weed management and awareness activities during Weedbuster Week (1-7 September), or for more information on Weedbusting in your local area, go to www.weedbuster.info

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