

Navigating Bushfire Recovery in the Adelaide Hills

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Summary After witnessing the devastating effects of the 2019 Cudlee Creek bushfire on the landscape, the Hills and Fleurieu Board applied and was successful in receiving both federal and state funding to assist with recovery. The Cudlee Creek Bushfire Recovery project facilitates a targeted, tenure blind approach to pest plant control and supports landholders to implement activities that:

- Manage mass germination of weeds seeds in the soil seedbank that are advantaged by fire,
- Protect and enhance remaining stands of native vegetation, and
- Provide funding to local councils to undertake roadside pest plant control activities

This funding support has presented the Board with a unique opportunity to address weed control issues in a way which traditional programs have not allowed, and we have some great, success stories we would love to share. Broom Control Campaign - English Broom and Cape Broom produce seeds that can be viable for over 40 years and are notoriously fire-active with their seeds forced to germinate. Infestations explode in numbers after fire but there is a significant yet temporary reduction in the seed bank, presenting a time critical opportunity. We put the call out to landholders to sign up for free Broom control and had an excellent response. From September to November 2021 our contractors visited 63 properties and controlled a total of 195.6

Ha of English and Cape Broom prior to seed set. A fantastic result.

Gorse control at Birdwood – Fire prevention works
A Gorse infestation located to the North of Birdwood posed a major bushfire risk to the. The Gorse patch was smothering pasture and native vegetation above the Torrens River and provided a hiding spot for pest animals such as foxes and rabbits. We partnered with the National Parks and Wildlife Burning on Private Lands Program to coordinate a plan for the site which involves initial mulching, prescribed burning and then follow up spraying.

Biological Control Project - ‘Nurseries’ for Salvation Jane Crown Weevil

Salvation Jane has made a reappearance in the fire scar after almost being eradicated from the Hills landscape with successful biological control. We want to help kick start a weevil boom to work as another tool to help keep the weed under control. In the future, agents can be collected and spread beyond the release site to tackle other Jane infestations.

Bushfire Recovery Action Plans (BRAP)-The Bushfire Recovery Action Plan (BRAP) serves as a tool for landholders to guide their land management efforts over time, and may also serve as a contractual document committing funds for the provision of on-ground works.