

MEDIA RELEASE | 18 August 2022

Weeds be gone! Council's weed control program continues to protect agricultural land

The City of Victor Harbor's Roadside Weed Control Program, overseen by the Council's Agribusiness Working Group, is now in its sixth consecutive year – and the results have never been better for local farmers.

The program commenced in 2017 after Council wrote to all primary production classified landholders in the City of Victor Harbor area, seeking to understand the constraints on local farmers in sustaining agricultural business in the region.

A number of responses noted land management concerns, including the infestation of weeds and impact that roadside weeds can have on primary production.

Representatives from the Agribusiness Working Group undertook roadside inspections and mapping to understand the weed varieties of most concern.

Chairperson of the City of Victor Harbor Agribusiness Working Group, Beryl Price, said weeds are one of the most serious threats to primary production.

"Weed invasion can become a very costly issue to resolve once it gets out of hand," Beryl said.

"Given the agribusiness sector is worth more than \$35 million to the local Victor Harbor economy, it's fantastic that Council can effectively support the sector in a meaningful and targeted way."

Weeds that have been targeted in previous years, and are now no longer commonly found on roadsides and reserves, include Blackberry, Rose, African lovegrass, Cape tulip and Gorse.

Council has again committed funds towards the program as part of the 2022/23 Annual Business Plan and Budget, with this year's focus broadening to include *Watsonia* weed.

City of Victor Harbor Acting Chief Executive Officer, Karen Rokicinski, said the Council will continue to prioritise positive working relations with local farmers and the agribusiness sector.

"Our Economic Development Strategy outlines the need to invest in high-value producing industries, like the agribusiness sector," Ms Rokicinski said.

"The Roadside Weed Control Program has been a substantial undertaking for Council over the past six years, but the results are priceless for our local farmers."

"This year, Council staff will commence on-ground work soon, and follow-up treatments will be undertaken as required."