

VICTORIAN COMMUNITY PEST MANAGEMENT GROUPS



I M P A C T
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VICTORIA'S FOUR COMMUNITY PEST MANAGEMENT GROUPS

The Victorian Gorse Taskforce (VGT), Victorian Blackberry Taskforce (VBT), Victorian Rabbit Action Network (VRAN), and Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party (VSTWP) are volunteer-led initiatives dedicated to tackling the state's most persistent invasive species.

Their shared vision centres on empowering communities to lead the charge in managing established weeds and rabbits through education, collaboration, and strategic action. Each group focuses on a specific pest, but they unite under a common goal: to protect Victoria's environment, agriculture, cultural heritage and biodiversity by fostering community-led, pest management.



CPMG'S SUPPORTING VICTORIA'S BIOSECURITY STRATEGY



Strategic Goal #4

Reduce the impacts of **established weeds and pests** through local action. Supporting local collective action, bringing together all participants in order to achieve sustainable, long term, whole-of landscape changes.

- Enable industry and community led action to reduce the impact of established weeds and pests.
- Foster much greater Traditional Owner involvement in weed and pest management.
- Promote sustainable models for long-term, whole-of-landscape weed and pest management.

Priority actions

- 13.** Promote and support community-led place-based action on established weeds and pests.
- 14.** Strengthen partnerships between Traditional Owners and private and public land managers to protect key cultural and ecological assets.
- 15.** Engage key participants in landscape scale planning for high-priority areas.

CPMG CHAIRS



Ron Cosgrave, VGT

Ron Cosgrave brings over 18 years of dedicated service to the VGT. A passionate resident of country Victoria, Ron operates a small farming enterprise in Smeaton and is an active contributor to his local Landcare group and has been heavily involved in his Catchment Management Authority.

Ron is particularly enthusiastic about improving water quality, enhancing river health, and tackling invasive species, especially gorse. His leadership and advocacy continue to be instrumental in driving community-led pest management initiatives across regional Victoria.



Lance Jennison, VSTWP

Lance Jennison, a Gembrook resident, joined the VSTWP in 2016, bringing extensive experience in landcare and invasive species management.

Lance plays a key role in guiding community-led strategies for serrated tussock control, championing collaboration with agency and stakeholders.

With a background in emergency management and leadership roles across environmental boards and community groups, Lance contributes deep expertise to VSTWP's mission, supporting biodiversity and sustainable land practices across Victoria.



Lyn Coulston, VBT

Lyn is a respected environmental leader and community advocate with decades of experience in natural resource management. As Chair of the VBT, she has helped establish over eighteen blackberry control groups across Victoria, promoting sustainable land use and community-led action.

A founding member of Landcare Lyn is known for building strong partnerships between communities, agencies, and government. Her contributions have been recognised with the Medal of the Order of Australia and the Joan Kirner Landcare Award.



Gerald Leach, VRAN

Gerald Leach is a passionate advocate for community-led rabbit management across Victoria. With a strong background in farming and natural resource stewardship, he has spent decades promoting sustainable land use and collaborative policy development.

As Chair of VRAN, Gerald leads efforts to unite communities, government, and industry in tackling invasive rabbit populations. Under his leadership, VRAN empowers landholders and stakeholders to take ownership of local solutions, fostering long-term, sustainable outcomes through shared responsibility and innovation.

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

Supporting Community Pest Management

By committing to a total annual funding of **\$330,000** Agriculture Victoria enables the Community Pest Management Groups (CPMGs) to deliver education, training, and on-ground support to thousands of landholders and community members.

Agriculture Victoria has supported these groups since the early 2000s, providing funding, resources, and strategic partnerships that enhance their impact.

This collaboration not only strengthens biosecurity but also empowers local communities to take ownership of pest management, fostering sustainable practices and resilient landscapes.

Note: the 2024/2025 CPMG Annual Funding was aligned with the Partnership Against Pest Program and is designated as 1A Funding.

**TOTAL 1A PROGRAM
FUNDING \$330,000**





Victorian Gorse Taskforce

FLAGSHIP PROJECT

COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM

The 2024/25 grants program funded 6 community groups to tackle gorse infestations through coordinated management. Grants of up to \$8,000 were available to groups, with participating landholders able to access up to \$1,500 if they matched the contribution. The program emphasized collective responsibility, required a three-year voluntary work agreement, and supported both on-ground control works and education initiatives to strengthen community capacity for sustained gorse management.

**\$37,705
Investment**

**65
Ha of Gorse
Controlled**

**27
Landholders
Involved**

**25
Signed Work
Agreements**

**\$133,601.39
Total Project
Expenditure**

**\$87,368.38
Landholder
Investment**

**\$8,528.01
Other
Investments**

**220
Hours of In Kind
Contribution**



Bald Hills - Creswick Landcare Group's control project: Image above: Gorse spreading across a property blocking native growth. Image below: Opening space for regeneration following herbicide control.



Victorian
Serrated Tussock
Working Party

FLAGSHIP PROJECT

EXTENSION PROJECT GREENDALE-STAGE 2

The VSTWP Extension Project aimed to reduce the impact and spread of serrated tussock by raising awareness, promoting best-practice management, and encouraging voluntary control. Educational and technical support was provided to landowners across 142 land parcels (2,600 hectares) threatened by serrated tussock. Landholders received invitations to an information day, tailored info packages, property inspections, infestation maps, technical advice, and Management Plans where needed.



Left: Serrated tussock infestation prior to extension support. Right: site condition following control measures implemented with VSTWP extension support .

**\$27,946
Investment**

**4 partners
organisations**

**17 hectares
treated**

**130 best
practice packs
distributed**

**115
properties
assessed**

**2600
hectares
assessed**



FLAGSHIP PROJECT

**\$41,673
Investment**

LEADERSHIP IN RABBIT MANAGEMENT COURSE

The Victorian Rabbit Action Network (VRAN) held its 2025 Bootcamp in Warrnambool from 24–26 March, offering an immersive “Leadership in Rabbit Management” course. This hands-on training brought together community members, land managers, and professionals from across Victoria to build skills in sustainable rabbit management. Participants engaged in both classroom learning and field-based activities, including spotlighting sessions, integrated control demonstrations, and planning exercises. The course emphasised collaboration, cultural sensitivity, and community engagement, and concluded with the opportunity to join a state-wide Learning Network for ongoing support and knowledge sharing



Scenes from the Warrnambool Bootcamp in March 2025. VRAN Mentor Brad Spear providing instruction on baiting techniques (top) and group photograph of attendees (bottom).

 **17 attendees:**
10 male
7 female



Attendees representing:
9 Agency staff
2 Commercial operators
1 Not-For-Profit
3 Landcare/volunteers
1 Landcare Facilitator/Parks Vic Ranger
1 Traditional Owner



3 separate site visits: private, coastal and Parks Vic reserve



Bootcamp video: Attendee reflections



5 VRAN Mentor facilitators



FLAGSHIP PROJECT

VICTORIAN BLACKBERRY TASKFORCE

**\$21,000
Investment**

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

- Friends of Kangaroo Creek
- Pheasant Creek Blackberry Action Group

This program is designed to empower local communities in the fight against invasive blackberry. Through targeted funding, the program enables community groups to employ their own dedicated Project Officers, who play a pivotal role in driving on-ground engagement and strategic weed management. Under the direction of the community group, the Project Officer works closely with land managers within a defined target area. Their primary objective is to provide expert guidance and support to landholders, helping them understand the importance of blackberry control and assisting in the development of tailored blackberry management plans. These plans are designed to be practical, achievable, and aligned with broader landscape-scale weed control strategies.

-  **533ha inspected for blackberry**
-  **1 Field Demonstration Day**
-  **42 Property Visits**
-  **12 Blackberry Managt Plans Developed**
-  **1 Liaison Meeting - Formalising Partnership**



Photos: Site conditions before blackberry control (left) and following successful management after the establishment of the Community Partnerships Program (right).

CPMG ENGAGEMENT



Above image: VSTWP Chair, Lance Jennison, engaging with attendees at Hamilton Sheepvention and providing insights into Serrated Tussock management.

6 Field Days/Expos attended

10 Webinars & Presentations delivered

8 Community demo/field days attended

3 Radio Interviews delivered

2 National Conference Presentations

4 Stakeholder Meetings delivered

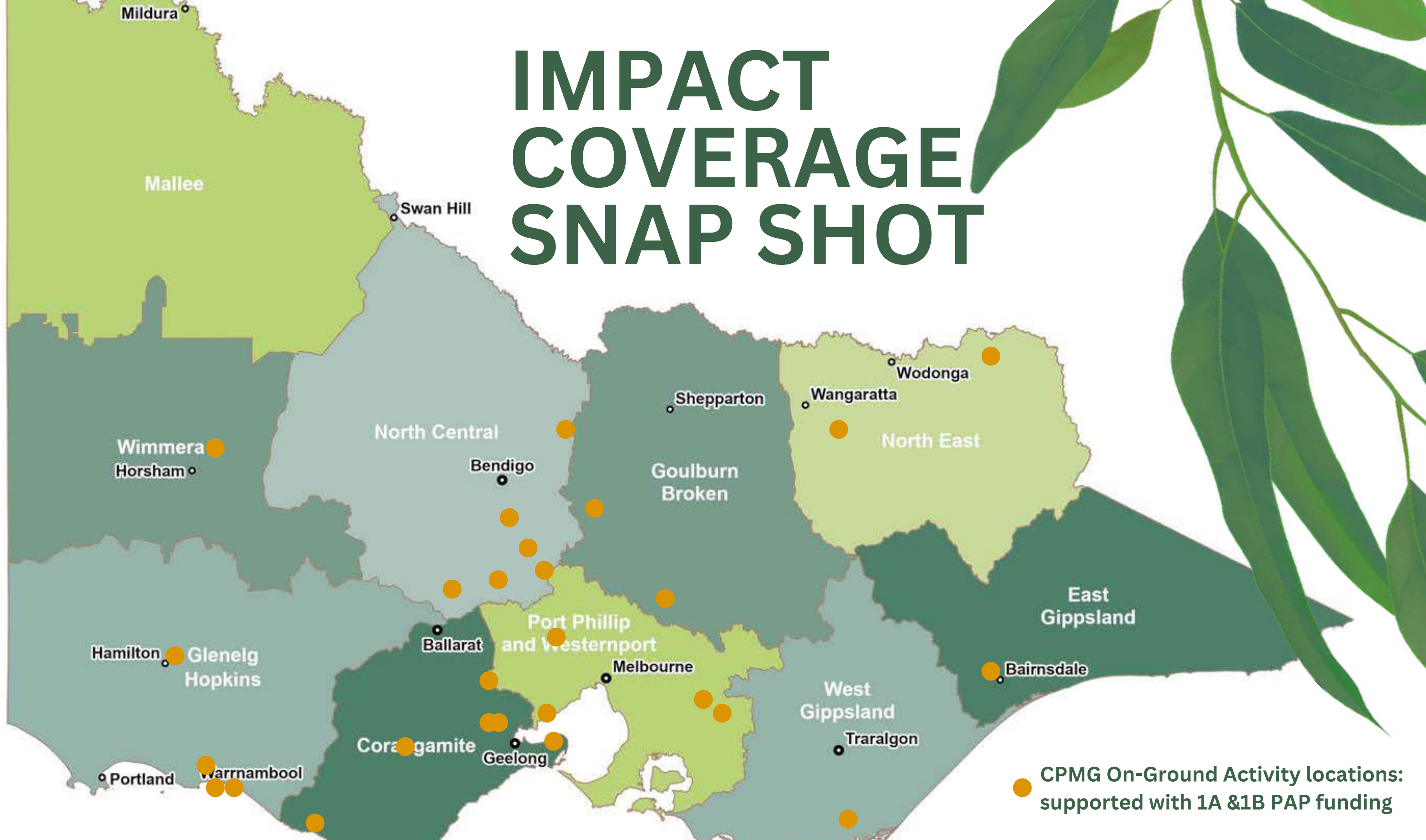


68 Partnerships Maintained

34 New Partnerships Formed

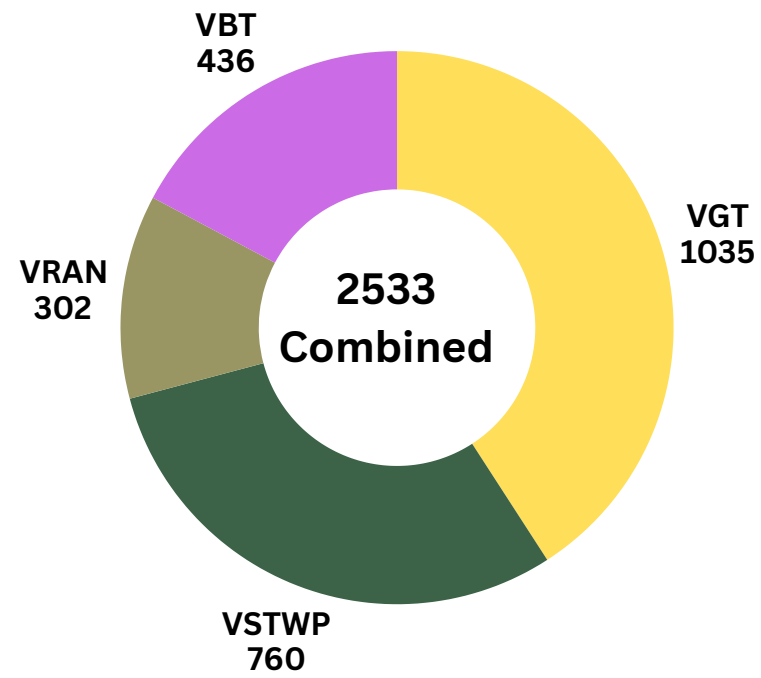
4 Field Trips Delivered

IMPACT COVERAGE SNAP SHOT

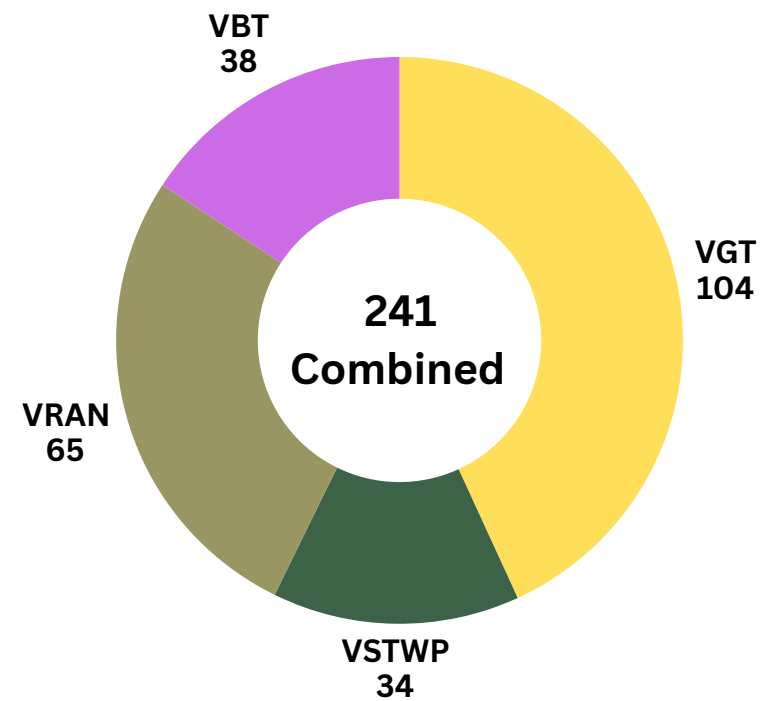


CPMG COMMUNICATIONS

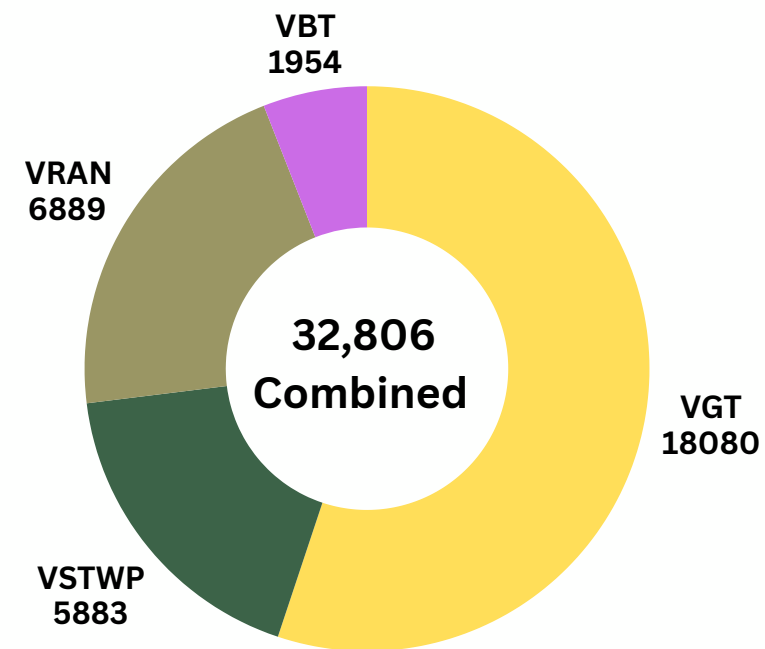
CPMG Total Facebook Followers 2024/25



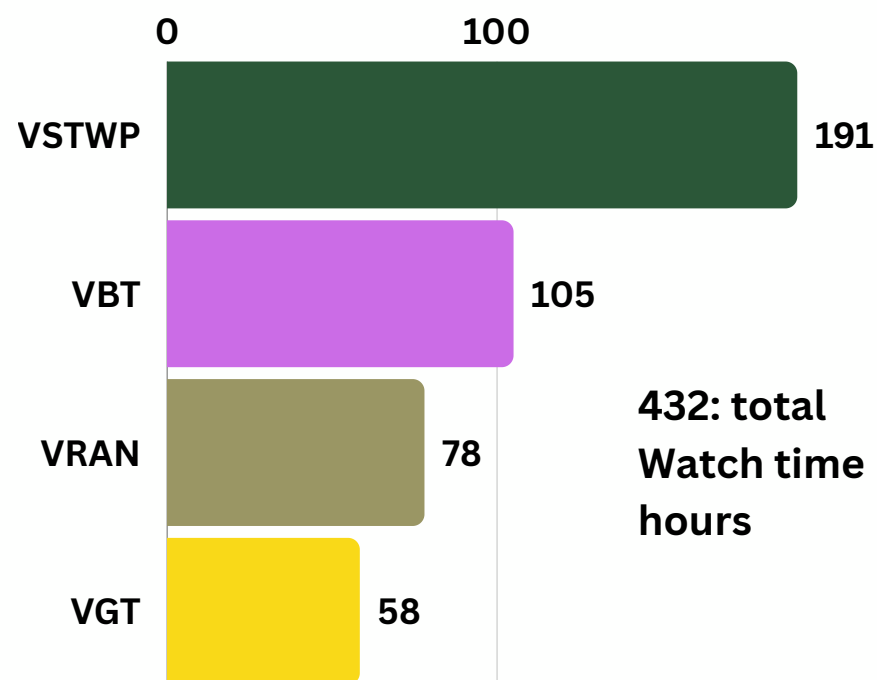
CPMG New Facebook Followers 2024/25



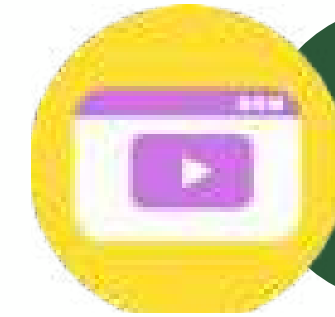
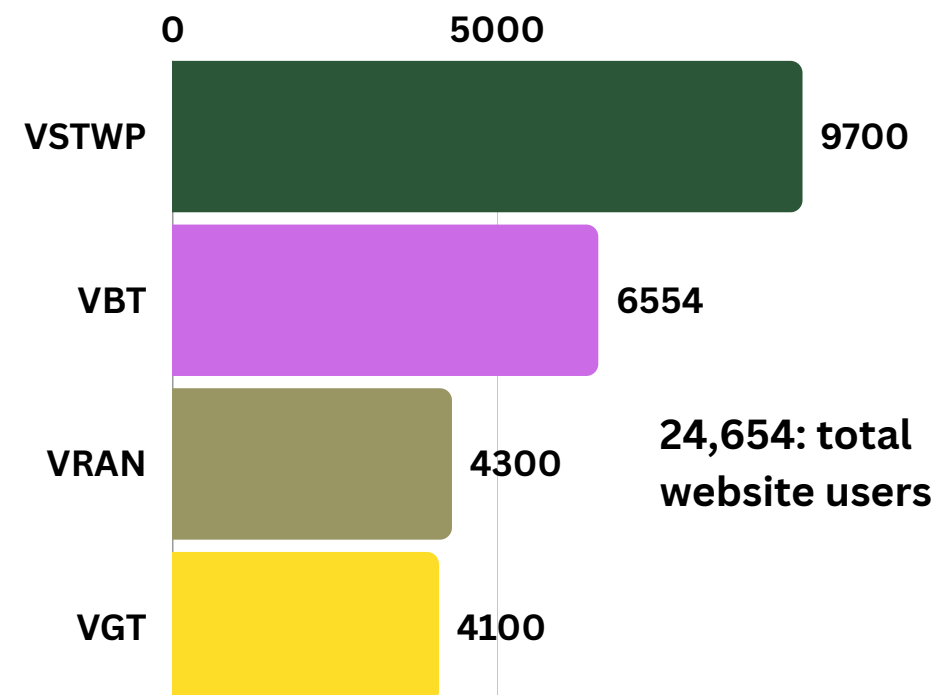
CPMG Facebook Reach 2024/25



CPMG YouTube Watched Hours



CPMG Website users 2024/25



3
TV: Community Service Announcements



5
New Resources



4
Newsletters



3
Case Studies



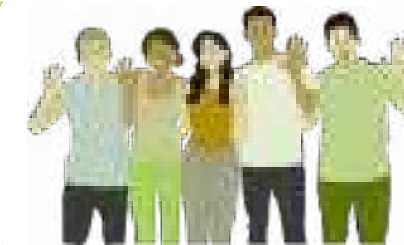
2982
Hard Copy Resources Distributed

CPMG GOVERNANCE

4 Annual General Meetings



34 CPMG Members



4 Annual Progress Reports



2557 In-kind Hours



23 General Meetings



CPMG COMBINED 1A GRANT EXPENDITURE
TOTAL = \$385,550.63

PARTNERSHIPS AGAINST PESTS

The Partnership Against Pests (PAP) program aims to ensure that people most affected by the problem of widely established invasive species are central in the process of defining the problem, co-creating strategies, and developing new community-based projects to build community capacity and support on-ground action.

**CPMG - PAP ROUND 2, STREAM 1B
COMPETITIVE FUNDING POOL
TOTAL EXPENDITURE = \$251,432**

STREAM 1B - CPMG FUNDING OBJECTIVES

- Capacity and capability building
- Awareness Raising
- Strategic Planning
- Awareness Raising



Image - VRAN's PAP funded Mentor Masterclass training event in Seymour



PAP 1B PROJECT

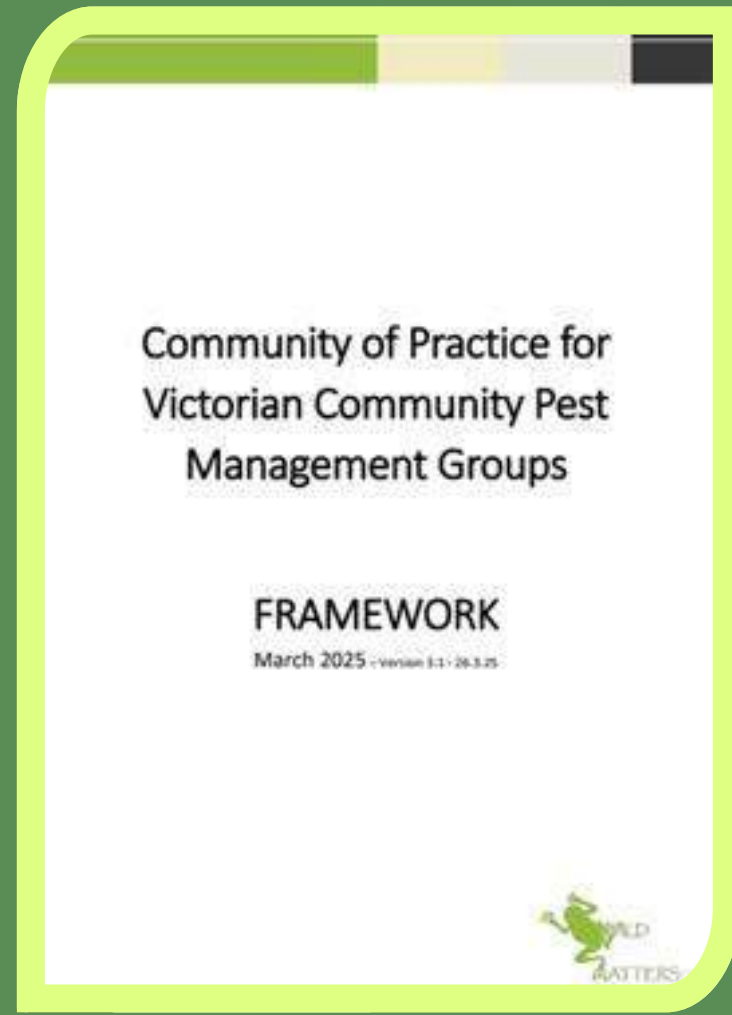
Round 2

Project: The power of community - Establishing foundations for gorse and serrated tussock Communities of Practice.

**\$85,000
INVESTMENT
PROJECT
ONGOING**

OUTCOMES

- The VGT and VSTWP engaged consultants from Wild Matters to design a Community of Practice (CoP) Framework.
- The VGT and VSTWP successfully contracted Community Engagement Coordinator (CEC) to oversee and facilitate the project for each group.
- The CECs are now tasked with identifying local CoP and ambassadors to initiate the project trial on ground.



PAP 1B PROJECT

Round 2

Project: Effective cross-tenure management of serrated tussock, gorse and rabbits.

**\$65,000
INVESTMENT
PROJECT
COMPLETE**

OUTCOMES

- VSTWP engaged consultants at RMCG to carry out the project including:
- Online survey to establish baseline weed data practices.
- Two forums informed by survey findings.
- Report with key outcomes and recommendations.
- Updates to the WeedScan App.





PAP 1B PROJECT

Round 2

Project 1: Mentor Recruitment & Professional Development: Ensuring a Sustainable Future for Community Led Rabbit Action Across Victoria.

OUTCOMES

- Mentor Masterclass curriculum delivered at two training events.
- Held in Seymour and Warrnambool with ~20 participants.
- Participants invited to join a Community of Practice; 3 appointed as VRAN Mentors.
- Training events recorded on video.

\$59,972
INVESTMENT
PROJECT
COMPLETE

Project 2: Understanding mental health, public health and invasive species management and compliance

OUTCOMES

- Engaged PhD candidate from the University of Melbourne to conduct a comprehensive literature review.
- Stakeholder interviews to capture diverse perspectives and insights.

\$15,000
INVESTMENT
PROJECT
ONGOING



PAP 1B PROJECT

Round 2

Project: Reducing horticulture biosecurity risks through engagement with agencies and community to promote blackberry control.

OUTCOMES

- Two Community Service Announcements broadcast on the WIN Network.
- One video information session produced and shared.
- VBT speaker participated in five Demonstration Days across Kiewa, Warrnambool, Heytesbury, Moorabool, Upper Ovens, and Westernport.
- Updated Local Government Area Information Pack with details on VBT initiatives and blackberry control guidance.

\$26,460
INVESTMENT
PROJECT
COMPLETE



WORKING TOGETHER

CPMG'S COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL GROUPS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AGAINST PESTS **STREAM 2 FUNDING**

ROUND 2 - CPMG combined support to groups

-  Presentations at local field events **4**
-  Information sessions and workshops **9**
-  Control demonstrations **5**
-  Strategy and planning meetings **1**
-  Groups receiving CPMG resource materials **6**
-  On ground site visits for pest management planning **1**



Image - VRAN Mentors demonstrating rabbit fumigation at the Emerald Feral Group event funded by PAP Stream 2 funding

LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead, the four CPMGs are enthusiastic about building on their collective achievements and delivering even greater outcomes for Victorian communities through the continued support from Agriculture Victoria.

As they reflect on their internal structures, each group is committed to strengthening its membership base, enhancing governance arrangements, and fostering leadership that supports long-term resilience and strategic growth. While the reduction in historical support presents new challenges, the groups remain confident in their ability to adapt and innovate, finding fresh avenues to continue their vital work in community-led pest management.

Continued collaboration with Agriculture Victoria remains a valued part of this journey, helping to maintain momentum and ensure alignment with broader biosecurity goals. With renewed focus and determination, the groups are positioning to deepen their support for landholders and communities across Victoria.

