

Weed Control and Revegetation Management Plan for the Outtrim Cemetery Nature Conservation Reserve

Project Description and Objectives

The Outtrim Cemetery Nature Conservation Reserve is approximately 2.8Ha within the whole of the 5.08Ha reserve managed by Parks Victoria at Outtrim in the lower foothills of the Strzeleckis. The grass area to the northeast of the reserve is slashed on a regular basis resulting in a diverse flora of grasses, sedges, lilies and orchids. The southern 3 hectares is zoned as a nature conservation reserve and contains one of the most intact remnants of the Ecological Vegetation Class, Damp Heathy Woodland, dominated by Bog Gum (*Eucalyptus kitsoniana*), on public land in South Gippsland. Bog Gum is listed by the Victorian Government as 'Critically Endangered' and is now mainly confined to roadsides. Most of the Damp Heathy Woodland vegetation community in South Gippsland has been cleared for agriculture and only scattered remnants are now found, mainly along roadsides.

Funding is sought from the Bass Landcare Public Fund Community Grants scheme for a three-year project that will undertake weed control and strategic revegetation over that period to:

- a. Prevent ongoing reinfestation of weeds into the future; and
- b. Conduct new planting of appropriate EVCs species to retard weed re-growth, and provide greater biodiversity and resilience of the remnant native vegetation.

Project Stage One

Despite some ongoing weed control by Parks Victoria and volunteers in this unique and robust patch of remnant Bog Gum, pest plants have proliferated over the last couple of years because of heavy spring rains. This has resulted in a major weed problem requiring urgent management: Sweet Pittosporum – spread across the site in the understorey areas of the Reserve; Watsonia – large infestations and individual plants spread across the site, especially in the south-east and along the



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southern boundary; and Blackberries, a Weed of National Significance, – infestations in south-eastern corner and scattered individuals throughout the site.

Weed control management cannot be done without targeted native revegetation because some of the existing large woody weeds like the Pittosporum currently provide habitat for native fauna. The weed control will thus be managed in conjunction with the revegetation. As part of the Project Stage One it is proposed to plant 100 of the Bog Gum on the reserve in appropriate areas where there is little or no Sweet Pittosporum present. Project Stages 2 and 3 will continue with the weed control of stage one and will undertake strategic revegetation with appropriate EVCs species.

Project Stage Two

Following weed control and targeted native revegetation, Stage Two of the current project will also seek further funding to monitor the site with wildlife cameras and audio recorders and conduct a much-needed flora and fauna survey.

A search of records for the Outtrim Cemetery Nature Conservation Reserve in the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas, together with records by local field naturalist, the late Ellen Lyndon, reveal that 94 indigenous plant species have been recorded in the Reserve. Included in these 94 species are critically endangered and endangered plant species such as critically endangered Strzelecki Gum (*Eucalyptus strzeleckii*), and endangered Orange-tip Finger Orchid (*Caladenia aurantiaca*) and Cobra Greenhood (*Pterostylis grandiflora*)

No comprehensive flora or fauna survey has been carried out in the Reserve in recent times. No threatened fauna has been listed for the Reserve but it is unknown if any fauna surveys have been carried out in the past except for the occasional bird survey. The Reserve contains potential habitat for the threatened Swamp Antechinus and koalas have been recorded in the past.



Pterostylis grandiflora Cobra Greenhood, photo courtesy Natalie Tapson