

Using weeds for temporary needs

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Summary Sometimes weeds have positives, and in our case we have incorporated them into the restoration of a long term eroding sand dune. Seems strange to be planting the very things we are also removing from the greater area.

It is well known that coastal dunes are fragile environments. Our project commenced following community concern about a long term eroding dune that was a beacon for sand boarding thrill-seekers and generally an eyesore. Numerous attempts using drift fencing and planting had failed in the past, and left unsightly, hazardous and non-biodegradable materials behind.

Through utilising weeds around us, *Cakile maritima* Scop. subsp. *maritima* (two-horned sea rocket) and *Leptospermum laevigatum* (Gaertn.) F.Muell. (Victorian tea-tree) and through the installation of jute

netting, we observed rapid coverage of the dune area over a two year period.

Branches from surrounding infestations of Victorian tea-tree were driven into the sand at regular intervals, followed by the rolling of jute netting over this. Our observations suggest that the combination of brush and jute provided the necessary niche for native seed to be secured and plants to establish. *Cakile maritima* seed was broadcast throughout the site, providing rapid colonisation of the site and shelter for indigenous plants to establish. Following establishment of planted and seeded local natives, *Cakile maritima* has naturally thinned out and the *Leptospermum laevigatum* has had no germination from the soil seed bank as yet.

The project involved coastcare, council, community and traditional custodians and has led to duplication on other sites around the Coorong area.