

Central Highlands Eden – Working along the invasive species curve continuum

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Summary The Central Highlands Eden (CHE) project focuses on the detection and removal of high risk weeds that threaten the biodiversity values of the Central Highlands of Victoria. Active since 2012, the project area comprises almost 400,000 ha of mostly public land, including Baw Baw and Yarra Ranges national parks, Moondarra and Bunyip state parks and all interconnecting state forest.

In collaboration with local land managers, project staff undertake regular mapping of all active treatment areas and in response to disturbance such as fire. An increasingly complex picture of weed distribution is forming that aids in decision-making processes. Weeds at the early stage of invasion, for example, are delimited following detection to determine feasibility of eradication. There are a handful of species, restricted to isolated infestations where the risk of reintroduction is low, for which the aim is project-wide eradication. In contrast, treatment of widespread weeds is restricted to areas of recognised biodiversity value.

Working along the weed invasion curve continuum CHE aims to:

- Maintain ecosystem resilience in the absence of weeds,
- Achieve local eradication of weeds at the early stage of invasion before they can become naturalised,
- Contain those species whose range is actively expanding, and
- Protect high value biodiversity asset areas from the impacts of all high risk weeds.

Funded through the Victorian State Government Weeds and Pests on Public Land (WPPL) program, the Central Highlands Eden project is delivered by DELWP in partnership with Parks Victoria, VicRoads, Melbourne Water, alpine resorts, West Gippsland CMA and other land managers.