

Working with your contractor for effective management of weeds and/or rabbits

Engaging an experienced weed/rabbit control contractor can make your journey to a weed/rabbit free property much easier.

We have compiled the following questions that may be appropriate to ask a contractor, to ensure you get the highest quality and guarantee of weed and/or rabbit control.

Things you should consider when selecting a contractor

Do they have the appropriate business and liability insurance cover?

As your property is a work site, any contractor who is working on your property must have the appropriate business and liability insurance cover to protect you from damages or accidents.

- ▶ Ask about what levels of insurance they hold?
- ▶ Can they supply copies of these to support their written quote?

Do they have the appropriate qualifications?

All contractors must hold appropriate contractor qualifications and licences to operate their machinery or spraying equipment. And if using chemical, they must have completed a chemical user course and for restricted chemicals and/or Schedule 7 poisons must hold a current ACUP.

What is their level of experience?

Having an open discussion with your prospective contractor about their level of experience will allow them to give you valuable insight into how they propose to go about assisting you.

- ▶ What is their experience?
- ▶ Have they undertaken programs in the local area before?
- ▶ How much experience do they have controlling/removing the species in question?
- ▶ Which machinery and removal methods will they use?
- ▶ Do they have previous clients that will vouch for their work and provide relevant references?

What are their control options and costings?

Encourage contractors to conduct a site inspection to obtain an accurate quote. Ask about different control options and their cost and ensure that you get a written quote.

Ask them about long term management

Engaging a contractor can provide a catalyst for other landholders in the area to undertake control work, so it can be useful to know if the contractor has the capacity to undertake works on adjoining/nearby properties if appropriate/other landholders are interested?

- ▶ What are my long-term management options once you have completed the work?
- ▶ Do you think I will be treating the species for a long time?
If so, do you have any advice to help me manage it long-term?

Best Practice Gorse, Serrated Tussock and Rabbit control

Prior to engaging a contractor, please read species relevant Best Practice Guides and view the videos in the Virtual Extension Officer website to understand the relevant control options available to you.

▶ Best Practice Gorse Control

https://www.vicgorsetaskforce.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/18284-VGT-Brochure_LR.pdf

▶ Best Practice Serrated Tussock control

<http://serratedtussock.com/management/fact-sheets>

▶ Best Practice Rabbit control

<https://vran.com.au/resources/>

▶ Virtual Extension Officer

<http://www.virtualextensionofficer.com.au>

What the contractor may ask you and what information you can present

Having a two-way conversation will allow your contractor to better understand your objectives and requirements.

- ▶ Where on your property are the infested areas? E.g. along the fence line, or riparian areas.
- ▶ How big is your infestation approximately and a description of the infestation; for example: very small patches, dispersed with clear access across an acre of the property.
- ▶ How long have you have had the infestation on your property/any species history you can give about the property.
- ▶ If you are opposed to using a control method and why.

- ▶ If you would like to use a particular control method and why.
- ▶ If it is not obvious (secluded properties), whether the species is an issue for the area and if there are any current community control programs.
- ▶ Do the neighbours have a similar infestation?
- ▶ An indication of budget and expectation on when the works are to be completed.
- ▶ Can the removal be done in stages?
- ▶ Are nearby properties owner engaged in organic farming or local crops susceptible to the chemical to be used.
- ▶ Are nearby properties declared Chemical free area/zone?

If you are unable to provide this information, then the contractor may want to do a site inspection to gather it. If the contractor does not ask at least a selection of these questions, it may be worth seeking additional quotes.

Further information

- ▶ **VGT website**
www.vicgorsetaskforce.com.au
- ▶ **Victorian Rabbit Action Network**
<https://vran.com.au/>
- ▶ **Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party**
<http://serratedtussock.com/>
- ▶ **Local Landcare**
Your local Landcare group which can be located via their website: <https://www.landcarevic.org.au/groups/>
- ▶ **Internet Search**
Googling the contractor's website for service information before you obtain a quote
- ▶ **Local Council**
Local Council's websites for a local contractor's list. If they do not have this, then talking to their environmental or pest management team is another way of obtaining names.
- ▶ **Stock and Station agents**

We hope that this information will be of assistance and give you guidance when engaging with your next contractor