Psoralea pinnata L.

Psoralea pinnata is a slender, fast-growing, medium-sized shrub that forms dense thickets that could shade out and impede the growth of lower stratal species. Native to South Africa, P. pinnata has been introduced to Australia (Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria) and New Zealand. In its native South Africa it is found growing near waterfalls and rocky areas. In its introduced range in Australia it occurs in riparian areas, occupying edges of rivers creeks and swamps; it is found growing amongst low trees, low (sclerophyll) shrub-land; in rocky or stony soil, gravely soil, sand, loam, clay, wet soil; road verges and walk-trails, old quarries and rubbish tips; growing on wasteland, in gravel pits, in disturbed natural vegetation, and bare areas. It is reported to be highly invasive in heathland in Australia (Muyt 2001). In the far north of New Zealand, P. pinnata is found on volcanic soils and is most common close to roads and tracks.

P. pinnata is a nitrogen fixer and can alter soil nutrient status and affect indigenous species persistence (Muyt, 2001). Any disturbance for e.g. a fire incident can trigger a mass germination of soil stored seed.

P. pinnata is one of several weeds (Ulex europaeus; Acacia longifolia var sophorae; bitou bush (Chrysanthemoides monilfera) that threaten the heath and swamp habitat of emu wrens in South-west Victoria (Maguire & Mulder, 2004). Additionally these weeds need to be managed and cause the use of chemicals and other mechanical tools in this sensitive habitat.

In Western Australia, P. pinnata is one of several weeds that invades the habitat of the endangered mountain villarsia (Villarsia calthifolia) and is listed as a threatening competitor to this rare species (Gilfillan & Barrett 2004).

References:

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