

# Heroes are always on the Lookout!



Mitchell Ladd, Larnii Groenewald,  
Molly Crofts and Maddison Gibbons

Howlong Public School



## Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between our funding partners and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to agriculture and natural resource management issues.

**[www.wirraminna.org/creative-catchment-kids/](http://www.wirraminna.org/creative-catchment-kids/)**

## Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre

The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre is located in Burrumbuttock, north of Albury in southern NSW. Since 1995, the centre, which is adjacent to Burrumbuttock Public School, has provided opportunities for discovery and learning about the natural environment, the ecology of the local woodlands and the beauty of native plants.

**[www.wirraminna.org](http://www.wirraminna.org)**

## Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by Peekdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.

**[www.envirostories.com.au](http://www.envirostories.com.au)**

# Heroes are always on the Lookout!

**Authors:** Mitchell Ladd, Larnii Groenewald, Molly Crofts  
and Maddison Gibbons

**Teacher:** Gail Krause

**School:** Howlong Public School

*This book is dedicated to Kerryn Ladd.*

## Local Land Heroes - Securing Our Region

In 2015, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about their 'Local Land Heroes' who are involved in pest management in the Murray and Murrumbidgee regions. These heroes are local individuals, couples, a business or industries that have made a difference in their local community by contributing to the management of pest animals and plants. The program was generously funded by Murray Local Land Services and Riverina Local Land Services.

Local Land Heroes is part of Enviro-Stories, a PeekDesigns education program.



Local Land  
Services



Australian Government

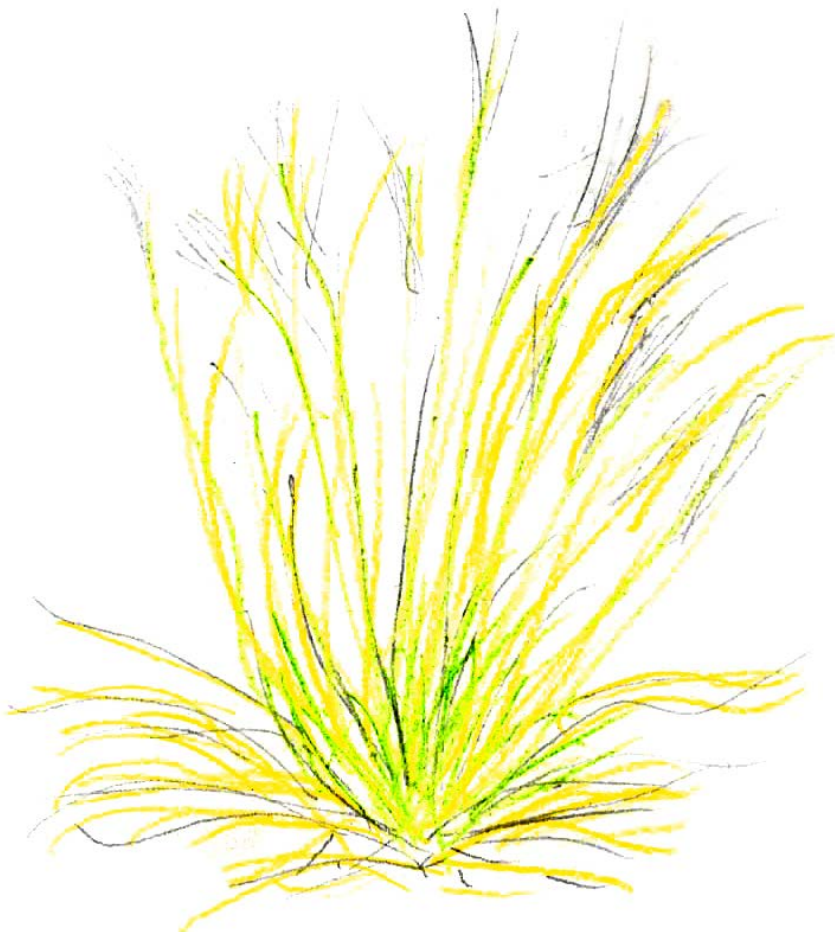


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Design by PeekDesigns, [www.peekdesigns.com.au](http://www.peekdesigns.com.au)

## What is Chilean Needle Grass?

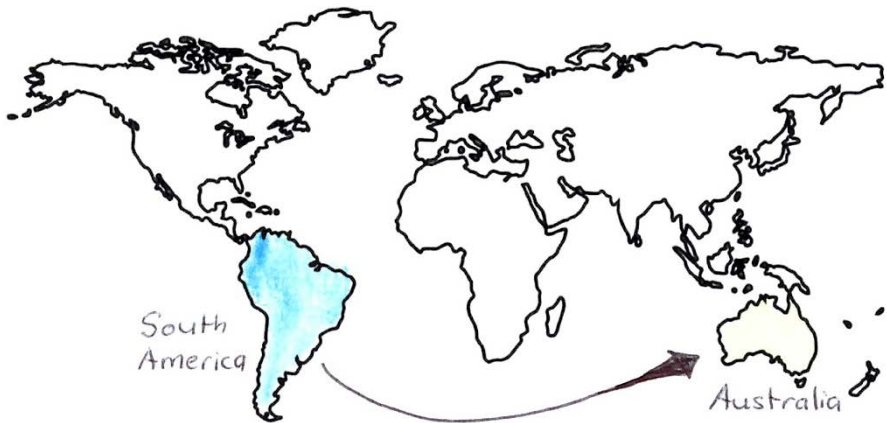
Chilean Needle Grass (*Nassella neesiana*), or CNG, is a flowering grass that grows in clumps.

This weed is a prohibited species in Australia. CNG is damaging to crops and farm stock.



## Where did it come from?

Chilean Needle Grass is native to many South American countries including: Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina, Uruguay, Southern Brazil and of course, Chile.



## How did it get here?

These are some possibilities. It could have been:

- brought in by visitors or immigrants as a plant
- come in with imported animals such as cattle
- in people's clothing or shoes.

We don't really know.

## Where was it first found?

It was first identified in Australia in 1934, in a Melbourne suburb called Northcote.

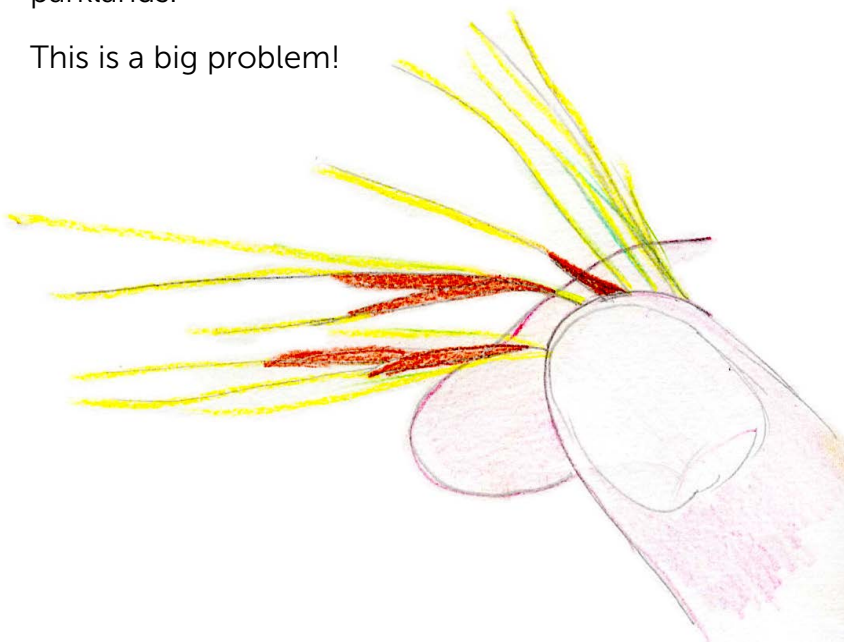
## Where will it grow?

Chilean Needle Grass will grow just about anywhere. It is invasive and will grow most places our Australian native grasses grow.

It grows in areas with summer or winter rainfall that ranges from 450-1000 millimetres per year. Howlong's average rainfall is about 590 millimetres so it has perfect conditions for this weed.

It will grow on all types of soil. It will invade roadside areas, cropping and pasture land, parks, gardens, sportsgrounds, schools and native parklands.

This is a big problem!



## Where is it growing now?

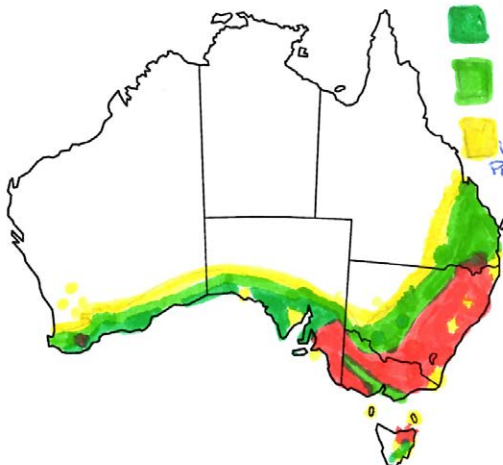
Chilean Needle Grass could possibly invade 40 million hectares of land in Australia if we don't take care.

### Current Distribution



Current Distribution of CNG.

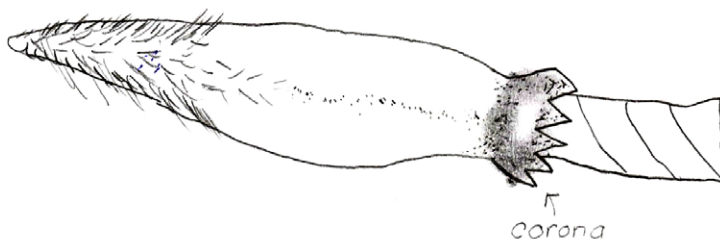
### Predicted Distribution



Best Prediction  
↓  
↓  
Worst Prediction

## How to identify Chilean Needle Grass

Chilean Needle Grass has a corona, a sharp feathery tip and a long twisted tail.



CNG is often mistaken for a native grass but native grasses do not have a corona.



## What is the life cycle of this weed?

Over winter the weed can be dormant. That means it is not as visible- but still there waiting for spring. In spring it develops and by summer it is fully grown, flowering and spreading seeds.

## Did you know?

One single CNG plant can produce up to 6,000 stem seeds which can be spread when flowering finishes in summer.





## Why is it a pest?

Chilean Needle Grass spreads quickly on its own but also can be moved from place to place by tractors that are slashing other weeds.

It can also be moved around by travelling stock. It can get in the feet of cattle and sheep and be moved on to other areas. It can affect animal health too. The seed digs into an animal's body and can penetrate its eyes.

Chilean Needle Grass can invade crops and then they are worthless.

## How is Chilean Needle Grass managed?

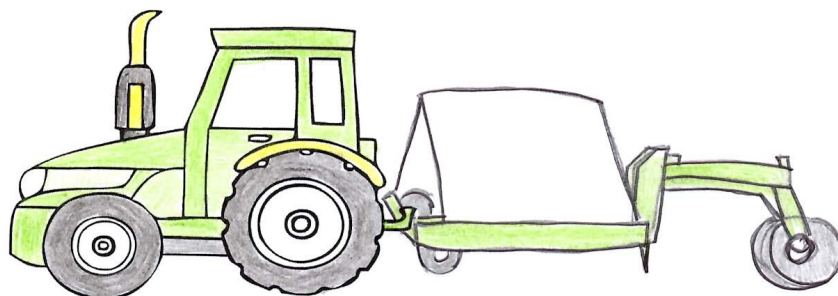
Pat Minogue is our Weeds Inspector at Corowa Shire Council. Pat says that CNG is the biggest weed problem in the Howlong area.

Pat also runs education programs for farmers and students about how to identify the weed and what to do if they locate it.

Pat has implemented a program to install red roadside markers and signs to identify areas that have Chilean Needle Grass. Hopefully people will become aware of the problem and not use these places.



In summer, spraying for CNG is Pat's team's main job in Howlong. Sometimes areas are slashed using a special protective cover over the slasher to gather the seeds and stop them from flying away. The tractor then has to be cleaned carefully so it doesn't spread the seeds.



## Farmers

All farmers have a responsibility to keep an eye out for this weed and report it to the shire council so that it can be quarantined and sprayed.

Farmers should learn to identify the weed.

Farmers can help manage current infestations and grow native grasses to compete with CNG.

Farmers need to take notice of the red markers and not mow, slash or move stock in these areas.





## Community Members

Most community members don't know about Chilean Needle Grass. But if they do, there are steps they can take to help in its control.

- They must report it to Corowa Shire Council.
- They could try and have it identified correctly.
- They should not mow over it or try to poison it.
- They need to notice the red markers and not walk through those areas.
- They could get involved with a landcare group.
- They can ensure they only plant native grasses in their gardens.

## Quick Facts on CNG

- It is an introduced species to Australia.
- It is a prohibited species, so we can't ignore it.
- Sightings should always be reported.
- It looks like many native grasses.
- It grows in clumps.
- It is extremely invasive, particularly over summer.
- It moves around naturally when the seeds fall.
- It can be carried by stock and machinery to other areas.
- Corowa Shire uses red signpost markers to identify where it is along roadsides.







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2015 Year 6, Howlong Public School

## CONGRATULATIONS

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre and  
the Creative Catchment Kids Program won the  
2015 NSW Junior Landcare Team Award and will be  
competing in the 2016 National Landcare Awards.



Local Land  
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