



## From lab to land: strengthening coastal resilience through community-led sea spurge biocontrol

Sea spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*) is a coastal weed that threatens biodiversity and culturally significant sites across southern Australia. CSIRO has secured national funding to deploy the foliar blight fungus *Venturia paralias* as a safe and approved biocontrol agent to suppress sea spurge infestations and restore coastal resilience. Because the fungus does not spread quickly on its own, this project will rely on community-led release and monitoring to achieve widespread establishment. Through workshops, provision of release kits, and collaborative fieldwork, CSIRO invites government, community, and Indigenous partners to help deliver this exciting new biocontrol initiative and shape the future of weed management along Australia's coastlines.



## Introducing sea spurge and its impacts

Sea spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*) is an invasive coastal weed that threatens Australia's fragile dune ecosystems. It displaces native vegetation, alters sand movement, and degrades habitats that are ecologically and culturally significant. Infestations are widespread in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania.

## A new biocontrol solution: *Venturia paralias*

The CSIRO is leading a national initiative to deploy the foliar blight fungus *Venturia paralias* as a biocontrol agent against sea spurge. This fungus has already been released in parts of New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania, and is approved as a safe, specific, and effective tool for managing sea spurge. Due to its limited natural dispersal, human-assisted distribution is essential to achieve national coverage.

Once established, the fungus weakens sea spurge by damaging stems, reducing plant vigour, and lowering seed production. These effects help slow the spread of sea spurge across coastal dunes, reduce the risk of re-invasion after manual removal, and free up space for native vegetation and threatened shorebirds to recover and thrive.

## Project Overview

This new project supports community engagement in releases of biocontrol agents, including the fungal biocontrol agent for sea spurge. It is funded by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry under the Supporting Communities Manage Pest Animals and Weeds Program and led by the CSIRO. Project activities will commence in September 2025 and end in June 2027. Project goals include:

- Establish *Venturia paralias* across coastal regions under threat from sea spurge.
- Reduce sea spurge infestations.
- Protect biodiversity and culturally significant sites.
- Build community capacity for long-term weed management.

## How you can get involved

CSIRO is inviting community groups to help roll out the new biocontrol solution for sea spurge. CSIRO will provide easy-to-use biocontrol agent kits containing the fungus, along with clear and detailed instructions for its release and monitoring. You will be supported through workshops and training to effectively release the fungus and monitor its establishment and effects. By participating in this project, you will be helping to protect coastal ecosystems and contribute to a national effort to manage this invasive weed.

## Who is eligible to participate

All interested stakeholders are eligible to participate in this project. Participation will be collaborative. The CSIRO will provide you with the fungus along with training, and release and monitoring guidelines, whilst participants contribute their time to undertake releases of the fungus on ground. This will include participants managing their own site access and approvals for site access. The program is especially suitable for community groups and government agencies already working on ground to control sea spurge at approved sites.

A key focus of this project is to work in partnership with Indigenous organisations to support the rollout of the sea spurge biocontrol fungus in ways that align with local interests, values, and approaches to coastal weed management. We welcome conversations with Indigenous organisations about how this engagement can be supported, whether through funding, training, or other mechanisms, and are committed to co-designing activities that reflect community priorities and knowledge systems.

To learn more, visit: <https://research.csiro.au/sea-spurge/current-research-2025-2027/>

To submit an express interest, please email: [seaspurgebiocontrol@csiro.au](mailto:seaspurgebiocontrol@csiro.au).

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