

TUSSOCK TIMES

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Rowsley Landcare Group held two field days to inform the community about the impacts of serrated tussock. *Source: R. MacRaild.*

330 LANDOWNERS SKILLED IN SERRATED TUSSOCK MANAGEMENT

The Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party (VSTWP) has assisted local community groups to build the capacity of landholders to control serrated tussock thanks to Caring for our Country Community Action Grants.

The grants offered to community groups in the Corangamite and Port Phillip and Westernport Catchments last year have wrapped up and the groups have reported on their successes.

Four community groups took up

the challenge of managing serrated tussock through community awareness, education and extension activities.

Two community groups used their funding to run extension programs in their area.

Another used funding to run a field day, while the final group used the funds to initiate production of an educational DVD.

Read more about these successful serrated tussock projects on page 2.



330 LANDOWNERS SKILLED IN SERRATED TUSSOCK MANAGEMENT

Continued

The Surf Coast and Inland Plains Network (SCIPN) was awarded \$5000, which enabled them to assist 200 landholders in the Gherang and Moriac communities. Landholders were aided in serrated tussock management through an information session by a local expert and one on one property visits. Property visits allowed landholders to be shown where serrated tussock was growing on their properties and be offered personalised management plans if required.

Rowsley Landcare Group were also provided \$5000 to run a serrated tussock extension program. The group tied this into a program involving chemical subsidies and coordinated treatments. Rowsley Landcare Group was able to offer serrated tussock advice to 100 landholders covering 8000 Ha. The administration of the coordinated treatments allowed 400 Ha to be aerielly sprayed for serrated tussock.

The Geelong Landcare Network educated community leaders on active management of serrated tussock with a visit to a focus property as part of the 2012 Landcare Forum. The visit illustrated best practice management of serrated tussock, balancing production and conservation outcomes.

The Lismore Land Protection Group have used their funding to initiate their project to produce a DVD showcasing personal stories of land managers successfully managing serrated tussock. The DVD will be available later in the year.

The VSTWP congratulates all groups on their project successes.

CHANGES FOR THE WEEDS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE PROGRAM

National coordination of the Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) program is no longer being funded by the Australian Government under new changes to the program.

From 1st July 2013, the national coordination of WoNS strategic plans ceased. The Australian Government instead encourages the development of specific projects to address priority actions in the plans.

Under these new changes, WoNS species will still exist and the strategic plans should still be referred to when applying for national, state and regional funding and support.

WoNS resources will continue to be available on the Weeds Australia website at www.weeds.org.au/wons until 30th June 2014.



Species such as serrated tussock will still be considered WoNS under the new changes. Source: VSTWP

COMMUNITY PEST GROUPS UNITE

Three key community pest management groups have taken the opportunity to collaborate and learn from each other's experiences during a recent forum hosted by the Department of Environment and Primary Industries.

The Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party met with the Victorian Gorse Taskforce and the Victorian Blackberry Taskforce to discuss the priorities, objectives and operations of each group.

Throughout the day, participants were able to identify that many of their activities were similar to those of the other groups, and through this were able to recognise areas for future collaboration, despite focusing on separate species.

"Collectively we have a better understanding of how we can share our skills and knowledge to

improve what we do" said participant and Chairwoman for the Victorian Blackberry Taskforce, Lyn Coulston.

The groups have committed to continued collaboration and communication with each other to enable more effective working relationships with communities and government.



Members of the three community pest management groups and DEPI staff talk about the challenges they face and brainstorm potential solutions. *Source: DEPI Victoria*

SERRATED TUSSOCK SUPPORT PLANNED ALONG JACKSONS CREEK

Landowners south of Riddells Creek will be offered support to manage serrated tussock on their properties thanks to the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party (VSTWP) and funding from Caring for our Country.

The VSTWP has secured funding through Caring for Our Country Community Landcare Grants to undertake an education and extension project in an area to the south of the Riddells Creek township, extending north and south of Jacksons Creek.

This project will be in partnership with local councils and Landcare groups and will offer

landowners the opportunity of one-on-one property visits and expert serrated tussock management advice from a VSTWP Extension Officer.

Landowners who meet project guidelines may be offered incentives towards an initial treatment of serrated tussock on their properties.

Supporting the efforts of communities to reduce the impacts of serrated tussock on the landscape is a key aim of the VSTWP and one of the main objectives of the Victorian Serrated Tussock Strategy 2012-2017.

PARKS VICTORIA TACKLING SERRATED TUSSOCK

Parks Victoria is taking charge of serrated tussock in core infested areas.

Within the Western Basalt District over \$40,000 will be spent during 2013/14 to control serrated tussock in seven Parks Victoria managed reserves. This is a combination of the Good Neighbour Grants Program and Parks Victoria recurrent funding.

It is estimated that over 1000 hours of Parks Victoria and volunteer labour will also contribute to tackling serrated tussock during the next year.

These programs will build on previous successful serrated tussock control on Parks Victoria managed land.

Since 2007 Parks Victoria has reduced the density of serrated tussock from 10% to less than 1% at the Boonderoo Nature Conservation Reserve.

Parks Victoria reserves are surrounded by agricultural properties which actively control serrated tussock.

These programs will improve serrated tussock management on public land whilst developing neighbour relations and contributing to biodiversity protection in the area.

For further information please contact Mark Whyte, Team Leader, You Yangs on 03 5282 3356

COUNCILS RECEIVE FUNDING TO TREAT ROADSIDE INVADERS

The state government is providing local councils across Victoria \$7.8 million to plan and manage regionally prohibited and regionally controlled weeds and pest animals on council managed roadsides.

Roads can be a significant spread of invasive species around the state. The Roadside Weeds and Pests Management Program 2012—2015 will help councils prevent the spread of invasive plants and animals throughout Victoria, which threaten parks, forests and rural land assets.

Councils involved in the program may receive a funding allocation of up to \$50,000 per year until June 2015.

In order to receive the funding, participating councils must have completed a Department of Environment

and Primary Industries approved Roadside Weed and Rabbit Control Plan.

Responsibility for the management of roadside weeds and pests has been the subject of confusion for many years. A working party was formed under the former government to review the current situation and make recommendations to clarify the responsibility.

A key recommendation made by this working party was for the government to enact a legislative requirement for councils to prepare and implement approved roadside weed and rabbit control plans.

Although not yet a legislative requirement for councils to produce a control plan or to be involved in the Roadside Weed and Pests Management Program, the government has accepted the recommendations by the working group and considers councils to be best placed to control weeds and rabbits on local roadsides.

For more information on the Roadside Weed and Pests Management Program 2012—2015 visit <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/localgovernment/projects-and-programs>

VICTORIAN SERRATED TUSSOCK WORKING PARTY CONTINUES PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO LANDOWNERS

The Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party's (VSTWP) 2013 extension programs are well underway around the core infestation area of serrated tussock.

Landholders in three communities are currently receiving support to identify and effectively manage serrated tussock on their properties with one on one tailored advice.

In the Corangamite catchment, Mandy Coulson is providing extension services in the area north of Winchelsea, while Roger MacRaild is assisting landholders to the area west of Meredith.

Ivan Carter is providing serrated tussock management support to landholders in the area east of Clarkefield, located in the Port Phillip and Westernport catchment.

Arming landholders with the knowledge and skills to manage serrated tussock helps communities to build sustained community-led action on serrated tussock.



Current VSTWP extension programs: Clarkefield in green, Meredith in red, and Winchelsea in orange. *Source: VSTWP*

VSTWP Serrated Tussock Extension Officers not only provide one on one advice, but landowners receive a map of their property with any serrated tussock infestations found, a management plan if required and follow up support.

The VSTWP chooses to support these communities to reinforce the current work occurring by DEPI in the serrated tussock containment line. The VSTWP

project areas adjoin the containment line and fit together to support containment of serrated tussock to the core infestation areas.

For more information on the VSTWP extension programs, please contact Alison Head at alison.head@depi.vic.gov.au.



Serrated Tussock Extension Officer, Ivan Carter is assisting landholders to the east of Clarkefield.



Landholders to the west of Meredith are receiving serrated tussock support from Roger MacRaild.



Mandy Coulson continues to provide advice to landowners in Corangamite, working near Winchelsea.

GLYPHOSATE IS NOT THE ONLY OPTION

Chemical control of serrated tussock can be a vital part to an integrated management plan for serrated tussock, but using glyphosate to do this is not the only option.

In many situations, using flupropanate can be more effective than glyphosate for controlling serrated tussock in the longer term.

Flupropanate is a slow acting herbicide that can take two to twelve months to kill the plant. However, unlike glyphosate, flupropanate provides a residual action in the soil for up to three years that can prevent or limit the growth of emerging serrated tussock seedlings.

While glyphosate is a non-selective herbicide, flupropanate provides some selectivity. Some non-target species however are susceptible to flupropanate, which should be taken into account when spraying. Flupropanate does also have a significant withholding period.



An example of successful flupropanate application. *Source: Charles Grech.*



Flupropanate can be applied in a number of ways. When spot spraying, use a carefully directed spray into the centre of the plant with a low volume knapsack. *Source: VSTWP*

Applying flupropanate in certain situations can kill serrated tussock with minimal damage to desirable vegetation. Being residual in the soil, the chemical can reduce or prevent the growth of new seedlings for an extended period – up to a number of years under very low rainfall conditions.

If spraying later in the season, flupropanate can be combined with glyphosate products as instructed on the label. This will provide the instant knock down effect of glyphosate with the residual effect of flupropanate.

The Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party strongly recommends that the use of any chemical to control serrated tussock is used within a broader management plan incorporating other control measures such as providing strong competition and preventing spread.

To find out if flupropanate would be suitable for your application, visit your local chemical reseller for tailored advice. Always read and follow all label directions and material safety data sheets before use.

MELTON LANDOWNERS FAIL TO CONTROL SERRATED TUSSOCK

Two companies and five landowners faced court in June for failure to control serrated tussock on their Melton properties.

In one case, Rainn Pty Ltd was found guilty of not complying with a legal notice to control serrated tussock. The company was ordered to pay almost \$11,000 in costs and received a \$10,000 fine and conviction.

Another company, Update Pty Ltd was also found guilty of not complying with a legal notice in the time specified and was fined \$1,000 with a conviction.

A third property with four owners did not comply with a legal notice to control serrated tussock and DEPI was forced to undertake serrated tussock works on the property after the landowners failed to do so. These landowners were ordered to pay over \$17,000 in costs and received a \$2,000 fine.

Another landowner in Melton was also found guilty of not complying with a legal notice in the time specified and was fined \$250.

Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) Biosecurity Area Manager Chelsea Wardrope said the landowners were fined because they failed to meet their obligations to control serrated tussock on their properties.

Ms Wardrope said "Landowners have a legal responsibility to manage pest plants and animals on their property."

"We have a clear message from the community that they want DEPI to enforce action on priority species such as serrated tussock, and support community-led efforts." Continued Ms Wardrope.

BAMGANIE EXTENSION PROJECT COMPLETE

Residents around Bamganie and Warrambine, south of Ballarat have been provided expert assistance with managing serrated tussock from the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party (VSTWP).

With assistance from Caring for our Country Community Action Grants, the VSTWP provided extension services to 71 landholders over 152 properties covering over 22 000 hectares.

"Overall the attitude and response [to the program] was receptive" said Serrated Tussock Extension Officer Roger MacRaild.

MacRaild also stated that the general infestation of serrated tussock in the area was scattered.

The Bamganie project area supports work that has been completed in the Barunah Plains area and aligns with work that is currently being completed in the Meredith Project Area.



Serrated tussock such as this found in the Bamganie area were generally scattered. *Source: R. MacRaild*

IS SERRATED TUSSOCK AN ISSUE FOR YOU?

Make a difference to long term state-wide serrated tussock management and influence government direction with the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party (VSTWP).

The VSTWP welcomes new members to join the current team of highly skilled volunteers who share a state-wide focus on serrated tussock management.

The committee is comprised of community representatives working in partnership with a range of stakeholders including the Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Catchment Management Authorities, municipal councils, and other land managers.

Members are required to attend quarterly meetings held in Geelong, Bacchus Marsh and Melbourne (remuneration of meeting costs available). Occasionally commitment outside of meetings is required for the review, comment and endorsement of documents or presenting VSTWP information to other groups impacted by serrated tussock.

The VSTWP invites nominations from people who have an interest in the management of serrated tussock. A varied range of skill sets are required, so see what you can bring to the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party.

For More information, contact:

Alison Head 5366 0028 or alison.head@depi.vic.gov.au

NEW LOOK WEBSITE COMING SOON...

A new look website at www.serratedtussock.com is coming soon. The website will provide lots of useful information on identifying and managing serrated tussock as well as updates on the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party. Keep an eye out for it.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND FEEDBACK

Thank you to those who contributed to this edition of the Tussock Times.

The Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party welcomes your contributions and feedback at any time.

For contributions, feedback or to be added to or removed from the mailing list, please contact:

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In our efforts to reduce the number of newsletters being printed if you currently receive a hardcopy of this newsletter but have access to email please send your email address to Alison .

More information on serrated tussock can be found on the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party website: www.serratedtussock.com or at DEPI online: www.depi.vic.gov.au or by contacting DEPI on 136 186.

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