

# TUSSOCK TIMES

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[CLICK HERE:  
VSTWP WEBSITE](#)



*Community Pest Groups discuss opportunities with Costa Georgiadis (Source: VSTWP)*

## VSTWP A HIT AT LANDCARE CONFERENCE

The Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party (VSTWP) had an informative and educational two days at the National Landcare Conference late September 2016, with many landowners and managers attending the stall to learn how to identify and manage serrated tussock.

The stall was shared with other Community Pest Management Groups and attracted much attention, including the advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce. The purpose of the two days were to share and highlight the VSTWP's extensive work on serrated tussock control and management in Victoria and present information on best practice management and identification.

Community Representative, Lance Jenison said, 'the live specimen of serrated tussock was very popular, and helped to assist in the identification of these two species'. "Landowners really appreciated being able to get up close and personal with the live specimens and see the key differences in identifying each species".

The VSTWP were thankful to have the support of new committee members Lance Jenison and Alan Morton, who both manned the stall at various stages and worked the floor to bring interested stakeholders and landowners to the staff throughout the two days of activity.



## VSTWP A HIT AT LANDCARE CONFERENCE (CONTINUED)

The VSTWP found the conference an excellent opportunity to network with other groups and organisations and also gave out many information sheets on case studies from successful landowners managing larger infestations of serrated tussock across Victoria. "These case studies, along with the online videos, have proved to be very popular with the community and highlight that persistence and integrated management are the key to successfully reducing the impact of this invasive plant" said Mr Jenison.

The next events for the VSTWP will be the Kyneton, Kilmore and Whittlesea agricultural shows, which are in late Spring and early summer, hopefully with good weather and large crowds.

For more information on the National Landcare Conference, please visit:  
<http://www.nationallandcareconference.org.au/>

## URBAN TUSSOCK OFTEN GOES UNNOTICED

**Serrated tussock is a word that might strike fear in many rural Victorians, but did you know that it can be common to find this noxious weed in front and back yards in suburban Melbourne and Geelong?**

With the urban sprawl moving further towards the core serrated tussock infestations north and west of Melbourne, serrated tussock has been observed on nature strips, roadsides and even backyards around our new urban suburbs. Serrated tussock can often go unnoticed for many years, until it has significantly increased in density and infestation size, mostly because it looks similar to native grasses around these regions.

Whilst this noxious weed has the most impact on the agricultural sector and native grasslands, urban communities may also experience the detrimental effects of serrated tussock infesting their lawns, gardens and also seeds heads blowing up against their house.

VSTWP Extension Officer Roger MacRaild said "Serrated tussock effects small and large landowners alike, including those in urban areas, through the sheer amount of seeds each plant can produce each season". "One plant can produce up to 10,000 seeds

per season, so you can imagine the effect that can have on a struggling lawn, garden or an entertaining area". "The best option to prevent larger infestations becoming an issue is to remove any plants on your property before they seed and as soon as they are positively identified" stated Mr MacRaild.

For control options and the best options for serrated tussock in urban areas, please visit our website at: <http://www.serratedtussock.com/control-techniques>.

*This mature plant was found in a backyard in Deer Park, Melbourne (Source: VSTWP)*



## GISBORNE SOUTH TACKLE PROLIFIC TUSSOCK SEASON

The Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party (VSTWP) is midway through stage 2 of its Gisborne serrated tussock extension project. The project area is to the south west of the Gisborne Township and complements recent extension projects in the Riddells Creek and Clarkefield areas.

Since its commencement in May 2016, assistance has been offered to 226 landholders in the project area. Landowners were able to have their property assessed and mapped for serrated tussock, and provided with personalised treatment advice. Serrated tussock information sessions were also available along with guidance in identification. All of these services are free and funded by the community led VSTWP.

To date, 136 landowners have taken up the offer of one-on-one advice, improving their ability to identify and manage serrated tussock for the long-term. The outcomes from the project so far include the treatment of approximately 55 hectares of serrated tussock infested land across the project area.

VSTWP Extension Officer Ivan Carter said "I have found mostly scattered serrated tussock infestations in the areas of Gisborne and Gisborne South. If left untreated these infestations have the potential to spread and will rapidly decrease biodiversity in native grasslands and seriously reduce the agricultural capacity of properties". Mr Carter cautioned "landowners and managers are best advised to treat this noxious weed each season prior to seeding, as each plant can produce thousands of seeds each year."



Scattered plants treated over a large farm in Gisborne South (Source: VSTWP).



A larger infestation in Gisborne South area, that has recently been treated with selective herbicide (VSTWP)

## OUTCOMES FROM AGM

The VSTWP held their Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 23rd of November at Bacchus Marsh, with all committee members choosing to stay on for another year to battle serrated tussock.

Successful community engagement, solid work by extension officers and the dedication of community representatives were just a few achievements mentioned during outgoing Vice-Chair, John Webb-Ware's speech.

Mr Webb-Ware said over the past year the Working Party have developed TV Commercials, further radio announcements and a popular YouTube channel, and through the targeted extension program provided personal education and advice to over 400 landowners affected by serrated tussock.

"We have continued to work in partnership with Agriculture Victoria to help support their programs, while also building stronger partnerships with our stakeholders and providing landowners skills in serrated tussock identification and management techniques," Mr Webb-Ware said.

Mr Webb-Ware thanked the dedicated community representatives, staff and extension officers for their efforts and commitment.

## HAY WHERE DID THOSE PLANTS COME FROM?

In some parts of Victoria, large areas of serrated tussock seed heads are common sight during the warmer parts of the year. This season is shaping up to be one of the worst yet.

The serrated tussock plant produces seed heads that break off at the base and are well adapted to spreading by wind. With each plant having the potential to produce up to 100 000 seeds, large infestations can easily produce masses of seed heads. While wind spread seeds are often contained to within half a kilometre of the plant they came from, wind can also carry the seeds up to 20 km away. However, there are ways in which the seeds of serrated tussock and other noxious weeds can spread further.

It is a bumper season and many paddocks are being cut for hay. There is the potential for large quantities of serrated tussock seeds to be spread in fodder. Vehicles, machinery and animals can also collect seeds and transport them to non-infested areas. Precautions to help prevent weed spread can include sourcing fodder from a weed free properties, vehicle and machinery hygiene, and quarantining livestock. Prevention is a lot easier than control.

For more practical information on prevention of serrated tussock spread, please view our newly produced Serrated Tussock Pathways of Spread Brochure at our website: <http://www.serratedtussock.com/serrated-tussock-educational-info>



## CONTRIBUTIONS AND FEEDBACK

The VSTWP would like to thank the following people for contributing to this edition of the Tussock Times:

Ivan Carter, Roger MacRaid.

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

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

VSTWP Executive Officer  
Phone: (03) 5366 0000  
Email: [info@serratedtussock.com](mailto:info@serratedtussock.com)

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 the Executive Officer.

More information on serrated tussock can be found on the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party website: [www.serratedtussock.com](http://www.serratedtussock.com) or by contacting the DELWP Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

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