

# TUSSOCK TIMES

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*Isolated plants treated along the western containment line area (VSTWP).*

## DEDJTR CONTAINMENT LINE PROJECT CONTINUES

Agriculture Victoria Biosecurity Officers are continuing to deliver the South West Region Serrated Tussock delimitation project that commenced in early 2017. The project includes 200 properties covering approximately 23,000 hectares. Public land and roadsides are also included in the project area.

The project will help evaluate the effectiveness of the serrated tussock Containment Line that was established in 2007. The purpose of the Western Containment Line is to provide a geographic boundary that government and community can use to prevent further

spread of serrated tussock into the western regions of Victoria, areas which contain significant agricultural and environmental assets.

The project will inform whether adjustments to the geographic boundary of the current Western Containment Line needs to be considered through the identification of new satellite incursions beyond the containment line. The project is also heavily focused on building awareness of serrated tussock within these areas to enable timely and effective control should it arrive in the future.



## CONTAINMENT LINE PROJECT (CONTINUED)

Biosecurity Officers have completed property inspections in the Winchelsea South, Cressy, Illabrook, Cape Clear, Buninyong and Dereel districts. Further inspections in the Beeac, Eurack, Mt Mercer, Elaine and Dereel districts are scheduled over the coming months.

Agriculture Victoria Leading Biosecurity Officer James Rowe said 'So far 80 properties have been inspected outside, and adjacent to, the Containment Line, with three properties found to have serrated tussock present.

"These landholders have been notified by Agriculture Victoria Officers about best practice serrated tussock management and the requirements for controlling serrated tussock on their property," Mr Rowe said.

"Although very few new infestations of Serrated Tussock have been found to date, the likelihood for incursions in this area is high, and Agriculture Victoria are encouraging landholders to remain vigilant," Mr Rowe said.

## IN MEMORY OF STEVE FENTON (BY ROGER MCRAILD)

Steve's attitude seemed to be that they didn't just own the land, but that they were custodians of it, and that they have a place in the landscape that influences, and is influenced by, others. To enable them to better look after their place, he and Glenda actively engaged with their local Landcare group in order to gain more insight, and to engage with neighbours.

Over the last couple of years, I had the privilege to get to know Steve and Glenda Fenton through the Rowsley Landcare Group. Their small property east of Ballan is typical of a trend in rural living. It's mostly made up of pasture paddocks at the front of the property with a bit of bush up the back, and typical of the region it has a few issues to manage. The front of the property had a light scattering of serrated tussock in the areas prone to disturbance, the gullies have had significant rabbit warrens, but it's due to Steve's quiet positivity that I'm able to talk about these issues in the past tense.

They made the time to come to meetings and had the sense to ask good questions to make the most of the experience. Steve had been suffering from poor health for several years with chronic heart disease, a bad back and reduced lung capacity. Despite physical limitations, he then set about getting the work done.

There's still some tussock around, but less than there was, and the fact that they are not overgrazing means that competition will go a long way to suppressing serrated tussock's re-emergence.

I think we should all take on a bit of Steve's attitude, we'll end up with a landscape in much better shape.

Steve lost his battle on the 5th of January, but his quiet example will stay with many of us.



*Steve's property near Rowsley (Roger McRaid)*

## CITY OF WHITTLESEA SET A HIGH STANDARD

The City of Whittlesea is in the fortunate position of having a relatively low level occurrence of serrated tussock and consequently any occurrences are a high priority for treatment to prevent its spread and wider establishment.

The local government achieves this through a number of mechanisms including proactive integrated roadside management, incidental landowner engagement and compliance. Early intervention is the most cost effective form of treatment available to the land managers.

Sustainable Land Management Officer Mark Williams said that "Council officers document sightings on rural roads throughout the year for targeting in an annual spring *Nassella* species program". "Works are timed to minimise the spread on slashing machinery and spread is also minimised through slasher operators implementing machinery hygiene practices".

Council land management officers work directly with rural landowners through incentive and extension programs. They can provide onsite advice and assistance regarding serrated tussock management and can encourage landowners commit to treatment through Council's Sustainable Land Management Rebate Scheme. All occurrences on private land are reported to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR).

DEDJTR also runs an active compliance program in Whittlesea area for serrated tussock and Council assists in identifying properties for inclusion in this program, which also includes properties that Council does not work directly with through incentives and extension.

For further information contact Mark Williams at the City of Whittlesea on 9217 2471 or [mark.williams@whittlesea.vic.gov.au](mailto:mark.williams@whittlesea.vic.gov.au)



*Scattered plants can form a dense infestation if left untreated over a few seasons (Mark Williams)*

## FURTHER ROADSIDE FUNDING FOR TUSOCK

The State Government has announced further funding to support rural and regional councils in managing weeds along Victorian roadsides.

The Victorian Budget 2017-18 provides \$5.39 million for local councils to manage roadside weeds and pests. This includes \$2.66 million for the 2017-18 financial year, with a further \$2.73 million for 2018-19.

Roadsides can be a breeding ground for invasive weeds such as serrated tussock to spread throughout Victoria and threaten parks, forests and rural land values. VSTWP Chairperson John Burgess said "Many isolated infestations of serrated tussock across Victoria have spread along roadsides, so it is great to see further funding to treat infestations".



## BULLENGAROOK ON THE VSTWP RADAR

The VSTWP has launched a new project area aiming to provide serrated tussock education and management advice to Bullengarook landholders. This continues on from extension projects at Gisborne, Gisborne South, Riddells Creek, Sunbury and Clarkefield over the past five years, which resulted in the voluntary treatment of over 150 hectares of tussock.

This year's project area includes 216 parcels of land and covers over 10,000 hectares of farmland and rural living properties around Bullengarook, and includes the waterways of Pyrites Creek and Djerriwarrah Creek.

The Bullengarook extension project commenced in late Autumn 2017 and will roll-out over a 12 month period, with all landowners in the project area being offered the opportunity to participate and receive free tailored advice. So far around one third of the properties have been visited and have received extension support.

VSTWP Extension Officer, Ivan Carter said "This project is all about engaging with landowners one on one to deliver personalised assistance with identifying and managing serrated tussock. Prevention and early detection of new infestations and replacement of existing infestations with desired species is critical in managing this invasive plant." "Last year's project in Gisborne South resulted in 60 hectares of serrated tussock being discovered and most of it treated by landholders at the same time" said Mr Carter



*An isolated infestation treated with the selective herbicide flupropanate, which is best practice management (VSTWP)*

## CONTRIBUTIONS AND FEEDBACK

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

Ivan Carter (VSTWP), Roger McRaid (VSTWP), Barton Roberts (DEDJTR), Mark Williams (City of Whittlesea)

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

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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 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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