

TUSSOCK TIMES

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**BULLENGAROOK HALTS
TUSSOCK SPREAD**

**DRONES FOR TUSSOCK
SURVEILLANCE?**

**VSTWP PROVIDES LOCAL
GOVERNMENT WITH
TRAINING**

**NEW UPDATED ANNUAL
CONTROL CALENDAR**

**MACEDON DISCOVERS 200
NEW ENEMIES**

[CLICK HERE:
VSTWP WEBSITE](#)



Before and after images of treatments conducted in the Bullengarook area (VSTWP).

BULLENGAROOK HALT TUSSOCK SPREAD

The Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party (VSTWP) has completed its Bullengarook serrated tussock extension project. The project was undertaken in an area around the Bullengarook township and complements recent extension projects in the Gisborne, Riddells Creek and Clarkefield areas.

The project area comprises 205 private properties and the Pyrete Range at the eastern most edge of the Lerderderg State Park. Controlling serrated tussock in this area is key to halting its spread north to areas not yet infested.

Since its commencement in May 2017, the project has offered extension services to all landholders in the area. These include the opportunity to attend a serrated tussock information session, receive identification guidance, have their property assessed and mapped for serrated tussock, and be provided personalised treatment advice. All of these services are free and funded by the VSTWP.

A total 190 landowners have taken up the offer of one-on-one advice, improving their ability to identify and manage
(continued on page 2)



BULLENGAROOK HALT SPREAD (CONTINUED)

serrated tussock for the long-term. The outcomes from the project include the treatment of approximately 65 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 Bullengarook area and some larger infestations to the south of the township. 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 advised. "The extension project is now completed, with all landowners in the project area visited at least once, and 98% of landowners completing their treatments in a timely manner."

The next project will commence west of Gisborne, which will complete the regions extension services, before the VSTWP move further south to Toolernvale.

For more images from Bullengarook, please see our facebook page.

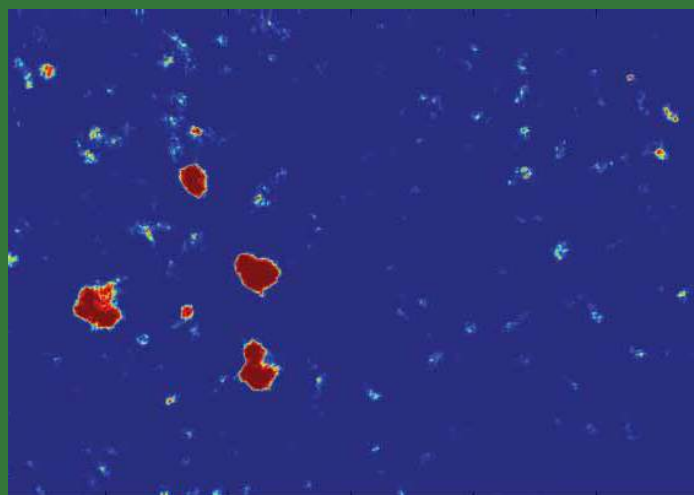
DRONES FOR TUSSOCK SURVEILLANCE?

A recent feasibility study in NSW outlined the methods used for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) as an aerial surveillance tool for mapping and classification of invasive weeds.

The study was co-ordinated by the Northern Inland Weeds Advisory Committee's (NIWAC) as part of a NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Innovative Project. Field work was conducted by The University of Sydney's (USYD) Australian Centre for Field Robotics (ACFR). Low altitude aerial images were collected for the invasive weed species, Tropical Soda Apple, Alligator Weed, Serrated Tussock and Water Hyacinth using a hexacopter UAV to calculate the optimum altitude

to achieve the highest classification accuracy for the four weeds.

This altitude information would ultimately help determine the flight duration and hence area covered during any one flight. The aerial imagery was then used to train and evaluate the weed classification algorithms. It was demonstrated that these classification algorithms were able to correctly classify the four weeds. The images below show four serrated tussock plants that were photographed at 20m above ground level. The computer algorithm then identified all four plants with 100 percent accurately. The technology is finally here!



VSTWP PROVIDE LOCAL GOVERNMENT WITH TRAINING

Knowledge is power. So goes the saying, which can be applied to weeds and invasive grass management across the State too! The VSTWP have been busy in rolling out training programs for local government staff on how to identify, prevent the spread and manage serrated tussock infestations on roadsides and council reserves.

The aim of the program is to provide the knowledge and empower local government staff to be aware of serrated tussock infestations and how best to manage them to prevent further spread throughout the shire.

Community Engagement Officer at the VSTWP, Ivan Carter, said “the understanding of how to accurately identify serrated tussock is fairly low in most local government organizations, so this program is about training field staff, works crews, road management staff, parks and gardens and office staff in local governments”. “We know from our previous engagement with local government, that education is vital to increasing the awareness of the issues that serrated tussock can have along roadsides around Victoria”.

The VSTWP have trained staff at Macedon Shire, Mt Alexander Shire, Hepburn Shire and Connecting Country in the past 6 months, and hope to roll out more training sessions to local governments which have serrated tussock in their region. “In particular, we are looking at preventing further spread along roadsides infestations of serrated tussock, so we have been targeting works and depot staff, who often work in these areas during serrated tussock seeding periods” noted Mr Carter.

If your organization would like training on serrated tussock, please contact the VSTWP for further details on info@serratedtussock.com



Training staff at Macedon Ranges Shire Council (VSTWP)

VSTWP UPDATE ANNUAL CONTROL CALENDAR

The much loved but often misunderstood Annual Control Calendar has received a timely update and redesign by the VSTWP.

The original purpose of the Annual Control Calendar was to provide the community and landowners with a visual list of when to inspect, treat and survey for serrated tussock across the 12 months. It also provides information on when the plant germinates and seeds.

After some feedback from landowners and stakeholders, the new Annual Control Calendar has been simplified, and is now clearer to understand the periods of germination, flowering and optimal control periods throughout the year. The new design is also a little larger and features a magnet to attach to the fridge or workstation. Let us know what you think or if you'd like some sent out to you.



MACEDON DISCOVERS 200 NEW ENEMIES

The Macedon Ranges Shire Council have been quick to act on the recent discovery of 200 serrated tussock plants next to the Golf course in Gisborne. The infestations were not previously known to the shire, and were promptly destroyed prior to seeding over summer, using the best practice selective herbicide to full effect.

It was clear that the infestation had been mowed for a number of years, due to the proximity to the walking trail. This would have made identification of the serrated tussock plants very difficult for shire staff, as they were stunted and very tufty after being mowed. It is also very likely that the infestation was spread by mowing and slashing the area when the plants were in seed, as the infestation was around 100m long and 10m wide.

The discovery was part of the VSTWP's extension project to the south of Gisborne, which included inspections along public land around the fringe of the township and the entire golf course at Gisborne. VSTWP Extension Officer, Ivan Carter, said that "it was pleasing to see the Macedon Shire treat these plants shortly after they were reported, and they will now be part of the annual weed spraying across the whole shire". "Without the good work of our extension officer's, this infestation may not have been discovered until it infested a very large area around the township of Gisborne".

(Below: Before and after treatments of the infestation)



CONTRIBUTIONS AND FEEDBACK

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

Ivan Carter (VSTWP), NSW Department of Primary Industries

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

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 or by contacting the DELWP Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

Published by the Victorian Government Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources - Agricultural Services Grampians region, and the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party.

Bacchus Marsh Victoria, Australia Autumn 2018.

© The State of Victoria, Department of Economic Development, Jobs Transport and Resources, 2017.
The Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party, 2017

This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

ISSN 1836-8158 (Print)

ISSN 1836-8166 (Online)

Disclaimer: This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

If you would like to receive this information/publication in an accessible format (such as large print or audio) please call the Customer Service Centre on 136 186, TTY 1800 122 969