

## Media Release

# RIDDELLS CREEK LEARNS HOW TO MANAGE SERRATED TUSSOCK

**28<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

The Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party (VSTWP) is providing a successful serrated tussock extension program to support landholders to the south and west of the Riddells Creek township and north of Sunbury, with the aim to improve knowledge and identification skills for treating serrated tussock. The project was made possible from funding received through a Caring For Our Country grant and complements recent extension projects in the Clarkefield and Riddells Creek Stage 1 areas.

Starting in August 2014, the project offered the 159 landholders in the target area the opportunity to attend an information session, receive educational advice, have their property assessed and mapped for serrated tussock infestations, and be provided personalised treatment advice. Landholders were also offered the opportunity to apply for a financial incentive to assist with the costs of treating larger infestations of serrated tussock, subject to meeting defined eligibility criteria.

The outcomes from the project to date have seen landholders conduct treatment on approximately 20 hectares of serrated tussock across the target area and also improve their knowledge on how to distinguish the invasive plant from native and pasture grasses. Over 100 landholders have taken the opportunity to learn how to identify and manage serrated tussock infestations.

VSTWP Extension Officer Ivan Carter said he “mostly found scattered serrated tussock infestations during the inspections in the Riddells Creek and northern Sunbury area, which if left untreated will rapidly decrease biodiversity in native grasslands and seriously reduce the agricultural capacity of properties”. Carter also noted that “there are also some areas of heavy infestation, which is both concerning and detrimental to the local agricultural and environmental assets of the region.”

The recent fires around the Clarkefield, Sunbury and Riddells Creek areas affected much of the target area, and has lead to the mass germination of serrated tussock seedlings since the fires. “Landholders are reminded that monitoring, early detection and treatment of weeds is important after fire. A hot fire will not kill adult serrated tussock plants, it will remove biomass (the thatch) and destroy surface seed, however buried seed is largely unaffected and fire stimulates the mass germination of serrated tussock seed” said Mr Carter.

Landholders also need to monitor their property for the occurrence of new infestations that may result from seed being inadvertently spread during emergency and recovery related activities, by vehicles, machinery, livestock and fodder.

For more information on serrated tussock please visit [www.serratedtussock.com](http://www.serratedtussock.com)

(Photo: Serrated tussock invades grazing pastures and lowers stock capacity).