

VICTORIAN SERRATED TUSSOCK WORKING PARTY

ADDENDUM TO THE BY – LAWS

24th AUGUST 2016

The Addendum to the registered By-Laws is for administration purposes and may only be amended in accordance with the By-Laws of the VSTWP Inc. (Rule 41. Alteration of By-Laws).

PRE-AMBLE:

Serrated Tussock is one of the twenty Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) due to its highly invasive nature, its negative impacts on agricultural production and its threat to biodiversity. In 1995 the community was deeply concerned with the spread of serrated tussock, a devastating weed that had invaded 130,000ha of land in Victoria. In response to that community concern, a strategy for the control of serrated tussock in Victoria was produced, which called for the development of the Victorian Serrated Tussock Society, as it was known then. Today, that organisation is the community-managed and driven Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party (VSTWP).

Since that time, the Working Party has strived in partnership with all levels of Government and their agencies, industry, research institutions, Landcare and the wider community to achieve the original recommendations of the strategy. These include undertaking research into pastures and herbicide technology, production of appropriate extension materials, provision of incentives to land managers and community groups and a comprehensive mapping, extension, monitoring and compliance campaign.

The VSTWP is a Member Group of the Farm Tree & Landcare Association Inc. As a consequence of this membership the VSTWP is an incorporated non-profit organisation and is subject to the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic).

It is comprised of community members in collaboration with a range of stakeholders, including members of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs Transport and Resources (DEDJTR), Port Phillip and Corangamite Catchment Management Authorities and local Councils. The Victorian Serrated Tussock Program has conducted and/or sponsored a wide range of serrated tussock research and development, education, extension and enforcement activities and has promoted a holistic approach to land management and serrated tussock control/

VISION STATEMENT:

"To provide healthy catchments where serrated tussock has a minimum impact on social, economic and environmental values."

STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

In 2012, the VSTWP released the Victorian Serrated Tussock Strategy 2012-2017. The aims of the strategy are:-

- To contribute to the National Serrated Tussock Strategic Plan by communicating progress of goals and outcomes of projects.
- To ensure the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party is adequately resourced.
- To monitor and evaluate serrated tussock management across Victoria.
- To oversee the preparation of annual budgets.
- To develop and deliver project plans.
- To report against annual budget and project plans.
- To meet quarterly; meeting locations are at the discretion of the Committee and are to include, but not be restricted to, the DEDJTR offices of Bacchus Marsh, Geelong and Spring Street.

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The Working Party is to regulate its own proceedings, subject to the VSTWP Inc., Statement of Purposes and, the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012. The affairs of the Working Party shall be managed by an elected Committee of Management consisting of:

- a Chairperson
- a Vice Chairperson
- a Treasurer
- a Secretary and;
- two (2) Ordinary Committee Members. The Working Party shall not exceed ten (10) members.

Invited Representatives:

- Agency staff – DEDJTR, MAV, Local Gov., Catchment Authorities representatives.
- Research Representative.
- Executive Officer (Secretary) – (currently from DEDJTR).
- Reference groups/technical experts are to be co-opted depending on the issues.
- Invited observers may be invited at the discretion of the Chairperson.

TERM OF APPOINTMENT

- One term in office equates to one year.
- Individuals can be seconded to the committee at any time, and then officially elected to become a permanent member at the next annual general meeting. The one year term in office commences from the date of election.
- Each member of the committee shall hold office until the annual general meeting one year from the start of their term, and are eligible for re-election.
- A maximum of six consecutive terms is suggested (one term equates to 1 year).
- In appointment of members, the Working Party must take account of the need for consistency and continuity between retiring and new committee membership.
- Members are to be appointed by the Working Party following a call for “Expression of Interest”. Appointment will be made on the basis of skills, knowledge and experience that the applicant can bring to the committee.
- Geographic representation will be considered when appointing members.
- In the event of a casual vacancy in any office, the VSTWP may appoint one of its members to the vacant office and the member so appointed may continue in office up to and including the conclusion of the annual general meeting next following the date of his/her appointment.
- If a member of the committee at any time wishes to resign from the Working Party a formal letter of resignation is to be submitted to the Chairperson or Executive Officer, to be tabled at the next meeting and acknowledged in the minutes of the meeting.

MEETINGS

- The Working Party will meet at least 4 times a year.
- The Working Party meeting year is from 1 July to 30 June.
- The Annual General Meeting will be held each year on or after the 30 July.
- Each committee member will be given written notice of any meeting.
- Committee members are required to attend a minimum of 50% of meetings in a year. Members unable to attend in person have the option of joining the meeting via teleconference.
- Any four (4) members of the Committee constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of a meeting of the Committee.
- The VSTWP may establish technical or advisory groups to address specific tasks/issues between meetings.

- Invitations to attend VSTWP meetings must be endorsed by the Chairperson and Executive Officer.
- The Chair will contact Working Party members between meetings to inform them of important matters as they arise.
- Working Party members will contact the Chair or Executive Officer prior to representing the VSTWP at external meetings.
- Members are required to declare pecuniary or other interest in any item on the agenda.
- VSTWP financial records are to be externally audited each year and presented at the corresponding Annual General Meeting.

EXPENSES:

- Committee members are eligible to be paid session fees and travelling expenses incurred as a result of attending a meeting of the VSTWP Inc.
- Committee members are eligible to be paid expenses incurred as a result of attending other meetings as an authorised representative of the VSTWP Inc., upon receipt of a signed "Personal Expenses Claim Form" and accompanying proof of expenditure to the Secretary.
- Committee members are eligible to be paid expenses for attending any authorised meeting or, engaging in any authorised project, providing approval from the Chairperson and the Secretary is obtained prior to attending the meeting or, engaging in the project.
- Each member will decide whether to submit a claim, based on their individual employment and other circumstances.
- In accordance with section 16.7 of the 'Appointment and Remuneration Guidelines 1 July 2016' page 28; community representatives can only claim for the payment of sitting fees as an individual and not as a business, and all claims are to be made using the VSTWP Advisory Committee Personal Expense Claim Form and not via a personal/business invoice.
- Retrospective sitting fee claims cannot be made after the end of the applicable financial year

VICTORIAN SERRATED TUSSOCK WORKING PARTY ROLES

CHAIRPERSON

The Chairperson will play an influential leadership role, providing vision, flair and pragmatic leadership and work with a cross-section of stakeholders.

The Chairperson of the VSTWP will:

- Authorise meeting agendas.
- Start the meeting on time and keep to “time limits” allowing reasonable time for each agenda item.
- Facilitate discussion during the meeting, encouraging all members to participate.
- Bring items on the agenda to a conclusion with a brief review of points. This will involve inviting proposals/decisions from the Committee.
- If a vote has to be taken the Chairperson will clarify the voting procedure. In the event of a tie the Chairperson will have the casting vote.
- At the close of the meeting determine a date for the next meeting.
- Liaise and act on behalf of the VSTWP but, limited to those outcomes as agreed by the VSTWP.
- Act as media representative for the VSTWP.
- Contact Working Party members between meetings to inform them of important matters as they arise.

VICE-CHAIRPERSON

The Vice-Chairperson – this person will be a community/landholder representative of the Working Party, who as well as acting as a proxy for the Chairperson will also have the roles of an ordinary member.

TREASURER

The Treasurer will be responsible for submitting the statement of accounts to the annual general meeting and will also have the roles of an ordinary member. The day to day administration duties are delegated to the Secretary.

SECRETARY/EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Secretary/Executive Officer role plays the key support role of the VSTWP working closely with the Chairperson and undertakes the administrative roles of Secretary/Treasurer.

The Secretary/Executive Officer will undertake the following tasks:

- Prepare meeting agendas.
- Arrange for guests to attend the meeting.
- Distribute information required for the meeting.
- Distribute the minutes post meeting.
- Arrange meeting venue and meals if required.
- Provide administrative support (if required) for the meeting.
- Prepare meeting outcomes and follow up on actions required.
- Contact Working Party members between meetings to inform them of important matters as they arise.
- Monitor all the organisation's financial resources.
- Advise VSTWP on the use of those resources for maximum advantage.
- Protect the financial interests of the individual committee members.
- Accurately maintain the books of the account.
- Liaise with internal and external people who deal with VSTWP financial matters (e.g. Banks, Accountants, and Government Agency Staff).
- Prepare estimates and budgets.
- Submit regular financial reports to the committee (e.g. Bank Statements, ATO and BAS statements).
- Obtain external audit of VSTWP books of account annually.
- Oversee fundraising developments and applications.
- Exhibit leadership behaviours (see Supplement to the By - Laws).

ORDINARY MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE

Ordinary Members of the Committee are community/land holder representatives and have voting rights regarding the acceptance or rejection of motions.

- Be regular in attendance and arrive on time.
- Be well prepared with an agenda and relevant papers.
- Have completed the action points required of them.
- Be able to contribute to discussions constructively.

- Be well briefed and informed about the various items on the agenda and prepared to take the lead occasionally.
- Be assertive without being aggressive and aware of the organisation's goals and bear them in mind in all discussions.

A GUIDE FOR VSTWP COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE'S

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS.

Identifying Opportunities:

The VSTWP recognise new opportunities for the serrated tussock management program that others might miss. They are to make use of past experiences and look for patterns in order to form new and different ideas. They are expected to clearly and concisely explain these opportunities to others and they are to campaign to have their ideas adopted.

Shaping the Future:

The VSTWP members have a sound knowledge of agencies' business (DEDJTR, PV, CMAs), and they understand their long term vision for the future. They constantly look at every plan and activity to make sure that it will help the agencies, and the VSTW to better meet its long term objectives. They are not interested in holding onto the past, unless it is a key element of the future as well.

Influencing Stakeholders:

The VSTWP members have the ability to work with key individuals and groups both internal and external in ways that help it achieve its objectives. They are astute negotiators and use networks and contacts for influence while remaining totally transparent and ethical.

Managing Relationships:

The VSTWP members build close relationships with a wide network of people and organisations in order to create important information pipelines for the serrated tussock management program. They use the knowledge they gain to create new opportunities and synergies that advance the VSTWP's objectives and position it for the future success.

Responsibility:

All VSTWP members, both ordinary members and those holding officer positions, are considered community representatives who represent the Victorian community. As community representatives they are responsible for delivering the Victorian Serrated

Tussock Strategy. It's their responsibility to meet the outcomes of this strategy by educating, promoting and encouraging the Victorian community to adopt serrated tussock best management practices.

- The role of a community representative is broad and adaptable but the following lists examples of where your role can be applied to achieve community benefit. The community representative must make contact with the Chairperson or Executive Officer prior to attending any meeting or event.
- Promote serrated tussock best practice management.
- Make yourself well known in your local community as a representative of the VSTWP, attend meetings and participate as a VSTWP community representative relaying community concerns and solving issues.
- Represent the VSTWP at events and deliver presentations where appropriate.
- Speak to landholders and engage other community groups to educate their local community on serrated tussock best management practices and provide technical advice on serrated tussock control.
- Write letters on behalf of the VSTWP on Working Party letterhead remembering, all communications must be approved by the Chairperson and the Executive Officer of the VSTWP prior to sending.
- Be in regular contact with the VSTWP Chairperson and other community representatives.
- As mentioned, a community representative's role is adaptable but if you are unsure whether your role encompasses something else please don't hesitate to call the Chairperson or Executive Officer of the VSTWP for support or advice.

A MEDIA GUIDE FOR VSTWP COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE'S

As a member of the VSTWP it is your responsibility to be in the public domain promoting the serrated tussock program and raising awareness of serrated tussock as a Weed of National Significance. This document has been developed by the VSTWP to ensure member's interactions with the media provide accurate information; that key messages are kept consistent and any contact with media on behalf of the VSTWP is approved.

MEDIA PROTOCOL

- The Chairperson of the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party is the chief media representative.
- A member, from time to time, may be nominated by the Chairperson to be a media representative for the VSTWP.
- All members have a duty to provide support for the program in a public forum.
- All members are to have the Serrated Tussock Media Kit.

When Contacted by a Journalist:

- Remember, once journalists introduce themselves the journalist can use any comment you make.
- Remain polite in pointing out to the journalist that there is a procedure you need to follow and that you will call them back. Most journalists will respect this.
- Find out what they want to know and ask them to provide you with a list of questions they will be asking. Is it for a newspaper, radio, TV quotes etc?
- If you are not the person that should be speaking with the media, refer the person to the VSTWP Chairperson or Executive Officer. After speaking with the Chairperson or Executive Officer, and having been granted approval to speak on behalf of the VSTWP, if you are comfortable in speaking to the journalist, take the time to prepare your responses to their questions before calling them back.

Remember: there will never be consequences for missing a media opportunity but there may be implications for saying something you shouldn't.

If You Contact a Journalist:

- Prior to contacting a journalist on behalf of the VSTWP please speak to the VSTWP Chairperson or Executive Officer.

Key Messages:

Use the following as a guide to preparing your key messages and quotes. For assistance please contact the VSTWP Chairperson or Executive Officer.

Why Should the VSTWP use the Media?

- To raise awareness of serrated tussock.
- To promote the VSTWP and be known in the community as a contact person for serrated tussock.
- To create a positive public image of the VSTWP as a State-wide community group involved in the decision making processes of serrated tussock management in Victoria.
- To transfer information from the VSTWP Inc., to the target audience (e.g. advertise events, research results etc).

Handy Hints for Handling the Media:

Approaching or being approached by the media can be quite daunting to most people however there are a few fundamentals in dealing with the media which are explained below;

- ***Identify the Program or Publication***

Is it for radio, TV, newspaper etc. and what is the reason for the story?

- ***Prepare your Message***

Gather accurate facts, figures, illustrations, photos and most importantly know the VSTWP position in relation to the story. Contact the VSTWP Chairperson and Executive Officer for approval and assistance in gathering key messages and information for the story.

Represent the VSTWP's position in a positive and constructive manner by providing 'useable' material to the media. Leave out the jargon and technical language as the story may not be published and, if it is you'll lose the audience in the sentence.

HANDY FACTS & FIGURES

Distribution and Impact of Serrated Tussock:

- Covers more than 2 millionha in South East Australia but has the potential to spread to 32 millionha if left untreated.
- Currently covers 160,000ha of Victoria.
- Is found in NSW, ACT, Tasmania and Victoria.
- Is well known to cause major problems for farmers reducing stock carrying capacity and the biodiversity by reducing competing with grassland vegetation.
- Is a fire risk; serrated tussock burns with intensity 7 times greater than native species.
- Is a Weed of National Significance.
- Is difficult and expensive to control.

The Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party and the Victorian Program:

- The VSTWP formed in 1995 in response to community concern that serrated tussock was fast taking over Victoria, at this time serrated tussock covered more than 130,000ha.
- The VSTWP is made up of community and government representatives who provide advice to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.
- The VSTWP is an incorporated not for profit community group which can apply for local, regional, State and Federal funding.
- Serrated tussock is a containment species in Victoria and priorities for investment include the development of a containment line around the core infestation, eradicating isolated infestations and reducing pathways of spread.

General Duties of Land Owners:

In relation to his or her land a land owner must take all reasonable steps to;

- (a) avoid causing or contributing to land degradation which causes or may cause damage to land of another land owner;
- (b) conserve soil;
- (c) protect water resources;
- (d) eradicate regionally prohibited weeds;
- (e) prevent the growth and spread of regionally controlled weeds; and
- (f) prevent the spread of, and as far as possible eradicate, established pest animals.

State Prohibited Weeds:

- These weeds either do not occur in Victoria, but pose a significant threat if they invade, or are present, pose a serious threat and can reasonably be expected to be eradicated. If present, infestations of a State Prohibited Weed are relatively small. They are to be eradicated if possible from Victoria or excluded from the State.
- The Victorian Government is responsible for their eradication, but under Section 70(1) of the CaLP Act it may direct land owners to prevent their growth and spread.

Regionally Prohibited Weeds:

Regionally Prohibited weeds are not widely distributed in a Region but are capable of spreading further. It is reasonable to expect that they can be eradicated from a Region and they must be managed with that goal. Land owners, including public authorities responsible for Crown land management, must take all reasonable steps to eradicate Regionally Prohibited weeds on their land.

The Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 states inter alia:

Regionally Controlled Species (serrated tussock in Corangamite, Port Phillip and West Gippsland)

- Landholders must take all reasonable steps to prevent the growth and spread.

Regionally Prohibited Species (serrated tussock in all other Catchments)

- Landholders must take all reasonable steps to eradicate the species.

Identification of Serrated Tussock:

- ST rolls smoothly between the thumb and forefinger unlike native grasses which feel as though they have flat edges.
- When running your thumb and forefinger along the leaf towards the base of the plant it feels serrated.
- Have 1mm white hairless ligules.
- Is a lime green colour in warmer months and yellows in cooler months making it easy to identify amongst other grass species.
- Flowers in spring and summer. The flowers are a distinct purple colour and have a branched arrangement.

Prevention and Control of Serrated Tussock:

- Is transported primarily by wind but also by livestock, hay, fodder, vehicles and machinery
- Produces over 100,000 seeds per mature plant every season
- remains viable in the soil for up to 10 to 15 years
- The best method of controlling serrated tussock is by integrated management. Integrated weed management is the use of a combination of weed management techniques such as manual removal, chemical application, cropping, cultivation and using replacement species.

Serrated Tussock Herbicide Resistance:

- The plant has developed resistance to the herbicide flupropanate.
- Has a resistant population in the Rowsley Valley and Diggers Rest, Victoria and Armadale and Goulburn in New South Wales.
- A national research program is being undertaken to determine the extent of herbicide resistance.
- To prevent resistance developing its important that land managers adopt integrated management into their long term management plans.
- The consequences of serrated tussock herbicide resistance are serious and will lead to its increased dominance on the landscape and increase management costs for land managers.
- It is critical that land managers do not rely solely on one herbicide to control serrated tussock.
- To reduce the likelihood of chemical resistance a range of control methods should be used including alternate cropping, hand chipping, pasture rehabilitation and improved grazing management. The other herbicide registered for treating serrated tussock in Australian pastures is glyphosate.

For further information:

- Please visit www.serratedtussock.com or contact the VSTWP by calling 136 186.
- For further facts and figures please refer to the National Serrated Tussock Best Practice Manual.