



## Regional Local Weed Management Plan Serrated tussock - *Nassella trichotoma* (incorporating Central Tablelands Local Land Services and Central West Local Land Services Regions)

Serrated tussock is a **Weed of National Significance**. It is regarded as one of the worst weeds in Australia because of its: invasiveness; potential for spread; and economic, environmental and social impacts. Serrated tussock has little to no grazing value because of its high fibre and low protein content. Infestations result in a significant loss in livestock production. Dense infestations may completely dominate pastures; making large areas incapable of supporting livestock.

### PURPOSE OF THIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

The primary objective of this management plan is to minimise the negative impact of serrated tussock on the Central West and Central Tablelands Local Land Services regional economic, environmental and social sustainability.

This plan specifies the control measures that a land holder / occupier **must** implement under the NSW *Biosecurity Act 2015* to ensure that their General Biosecurity Duty is discharged in relation to serrated tussock in the Central Tablelands Local Land Services (LLS), and Central West LLS Regions. Given the biosecurity risk this weed poses, these control measures are consistent with the priority status of serrated tussock in both Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans for these LLS Regions.

**Any person dealing with serrated tussock must comply with their General Biosecurity Duty.** Dealings are defined under Section 12 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, and an example is the presence of serrated tussock on a property.

“Any person who deals with biosecurity matter or a carrier and who knows, or ought reasonably to know, the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed by the biosecurity matter, carrier or dealing has a biosecurity duty to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the biosecurity risk is prevented, eliminated or minimised.”

### CENTRAL WEST LOCAL LAND SERVICES REGIONAL STRATEGIC WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN

**Weed Objective – CONTAINMENT:** *This weed is widely distributed in parts of the Central West Local Land Services region. While broad scale elimination is not practicable; minimisation of the biosecurity risk posed by this weed is reasonably practicable. An exclusion zone is established for the whole of region, except the core infestation area which is defined as*

*“from the Central West Local Land Services Boundary North along Burrendong Way to Stuart Town. East along Mookerawa Road to Burrendong Dam. East along Oak Creek bounded by the Central West Local Land Services boundary”.*

[https://centralwest.lls.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/722873/Web-version\\_Central-West-Regional-Weed-Mgmt-Plan..pdf](https://centralwest.lls.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/722873/Web-version_Central-West-Regional-Weed-Mgmt-Plan..pdf)

## CENTRAL TABLELANDS LOCAL LAND SERVICES REGIONAL STRATEGIC WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN

**Weed Objective – ASSET PROTECTION:** *This weed is widely distributed in the Central Tablelands Local Land Services region. While broad scale elimination is not practicable, minimisation of the biosecurity risk posed to certain assets is reasonably practicable.*  
[https://centraltablelands.ils.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/722727/Central-Tablelands-Regional-Strategic-Weed-Management-Plan-June-2017.pdf](https://centraltablelands.ils.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/722727/Central-Tablelands-Regional-Strategic-Weed-Management-Plan-June-2017.pdf)

### How does this weed affect you?

Serrated tussock is highly adapted to a range of environments, produces many seeds, and is difficult and costly to control. Large volumes of seed are spread long distances by wind, allowing new populations to establish over large areas.

### Impact on agriculture

Serrated tussock can infest agricultural land ranging from highly arable and fertile areas, through to steep and non-arable areas with low fertility. It will colonise both native and introduced pastures, and its spread is most rapid in degraded or disturbed pastures. It can be particularly difficult to control in native pastures as many native species are susceptible to flupropanate - the most commonly used selective herbicide for serrated tussock control.

Uncontrolled serrated tussock can develop into a monoculture (where nothing else grows) within a few years. Serrated tussock is not palatable to livestock and has little feed value. Significant infestations will dramatically reduce carrying capacities on infested land making them incapable of supporting livestock. Serrated tussock seeds are also a serious contaminant of hay and grain.

Farm machinery such as slashers, vehicles and tractors can readily transport seed to clean areas. Control of serrated tussock within a farming system, once the weed is established, is on-going, and often at great cost to producers. Total production from infested country can be substantially reduced and land values lowered.

### Impact in native ecosystems

Serrated tussock threatens the biodiversity of many native vegetation communities, including native grasslands, grassy woodlands, sclerophyll forests and some coastal vegetation. Serrated tussock is very similar in appearance to many Australian native grass species making it hard to identify when not in flower.

It can therefore go unnoticed for many years and eventually form monocultures in once diverse ecosystems. The reduction of threatened and non-threatened biodiversity it causes makes it a serious threat to native fauna and flora.

### What does it look like?

Correct identification of serrated tussock is essential in order to prevent spread, and to ensure control is carried out early. Several key features can be used to distinguish it from similar tussock forming grasses.

These can be found at NSW WeedWise (refer to page 4 for link).



Photo: Snowy Monaro Regional Council

## LEGAL STATUS

The management of weeds in NSW is governed by the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. Local Control Authorities (LCAs, usually local councils or weed county councils) are responsible for ensuring the prevention, elimination, minimisation and management of the biosecurity risk posed, or likely to be posed, by weeds.

Local Control Authorities are also responsible for the development, implementation, coordination and review of weed control programs within their area.

## LOCAL CONTROL AUTHORITIES REQUIREMENTS

Local Control Authorities have a duty to inspect all land in connection with their weed control functions. Further, they must ensure the management of the biosecurity risks posed, or likely to be posed, by weeds within their area.

**Surveillance:** Local Control Authorities will inspect private and public lands (including lifestyle and absentee land holder properties) for the presence of serrated tussock infestations. The frequency of inspections will increase where isolated infestations occur and in cases of non-compliance; this frequency is determined by the level of risk posed by the infestation(s).

**Reporting:** Inspection information is reported to NSW Department of Primary Industries through the NSW Biosecurity Information System.

**Enforcement:** Local Control Authorities will enforce the control of serrated tussock where non-compliance is identified. Enforcement measures may include: the issue of a penalty infringement notice; entry of the land to control infestations at the owner/occupier's expense; and/or the issue of a court attendance notice. Penalties for non-compliance with the *Biosecurity Act 2015* are significant.

For weeds, a **Biosecurity Direction** may be given by an authorised officer in a LCA. A Biosecurity Direction may be given to an individual, or to a class of persons, and specifies what the person or class of persons are required to do "to prevent, eliminate or minimise a particular biosecurity risk", or to enforce the requirements of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. A Biosecurity Direction is legally enforceable. Non-compliance can attract prosecution and significant penalties.

If an authorised officer reasonably believes that a contravention is occurring, or likely to occur in relation to a requirement imposed under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, a person may give the authorised officer a **Biosecurity Undertaking**. It is generally a written agreement that specifies the agreed actions that a person will take to remedy the situation. Biosecurity

Undertakings are also legally enforceable. Undertakings may be given in certain circumstances instead of a biosecurity direction being issued.

## **WHAT AM I REQUIRED TO DO? (LAND OWNER/OCCUPIER REQUIREMENTS)**

### **Exclusion Zone in Central West Region**

An owner or occupier of land in the Central West Serrated Tussock Exclusion Zone must ensure that the plant (serrated tussock) is eradicated from the land and the land is kept free of the plant.

### **Central Tablelands Region and core infestation area in Central West Region**

In all of the Central Tablelands LLS Region AND in the Central West LLS Region core infestation area (as defined as: *from the Central West Local Land Services Boundary North along Burrendong Way to Stuart Town. East along Mookerawa Road to Burrendong Dam. East along Oaky Creek bounded by the Central West Local Land Services boundary*), an owner or occupier of land must control the growth of the plant in a manner that continuously inhibits the ability of the plant to spread.

Infestations may be managed in accordance with a staged control plan approved by a LCA. In situations where a LCA deems this requirement not reasonably practicable in accordance with Section 16 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, buffers and containment strategies may be introduced at a property scale

**Exclusion Zone in the Central Tablelands Region:** Orange City Council Local Government Area. No core areas of serrated tussock are present. Land managers must eradicate all serrated tussock from the land and ensure the land is kept free from the plant. Land managers mitigate the risk of the plant being introduced to their land.

### **Other restrictions**

- a) Land managers must mitigate the risk of introducing this weed to their land.
- b) The plant or parts of the plant are not traded, carried, grown or released into the environment.

### **What is reasonably practicable?**

What is reasonably practicable is defined in Section 16 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, in relation to the prevention, elimination or minimisation of a biosecurity risk.

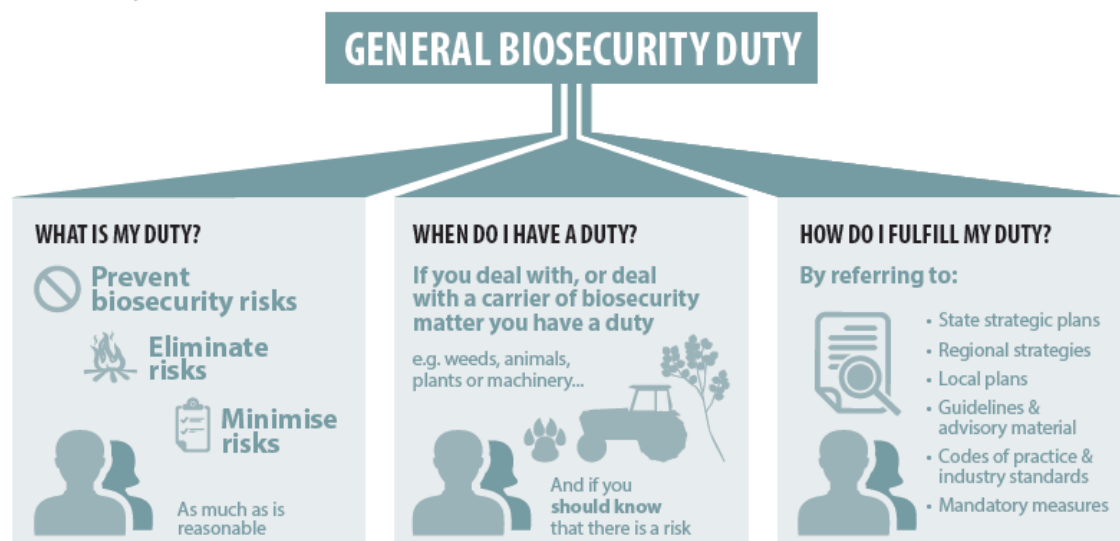
Its means that “which is, or was at a particular time, reasonably able to be done, taking into account and weighing up all relevant matters including:

- a) the biosecurity risk concerned, and
- b) the degree of biosecurity impact that arises, or might arise, from the biosecurity risk, and
- c) what the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know, about the biosecurity risk and the ways of preventing, eliminating or minimising the risk, and
- d) the availability and suitability of ways to prevent, eliminate or minimise the biosecurity risk, and
- e) the cost associated with available ways of preventing, eliminating or minimising the risk, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.”

## BIOSECURITY ACT 2015 – GENERAL BIOSECURITY DUTY

### What does the general biosecurity duty mean?

The general biosecurity duty supports the principle of shared responsibility, and means everyone is doing what is reasonable for them to do to prevent, eliminate or minimise biosecurity risks.



Information on your General Biosecurity Duty can be found on factsheets developed by the NSW Department of Primary Industries:

- for general information - [https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/722886/General-biosecurity-duty-with-diagram.pdf](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/722886/General-biosecurity-duty-with-diagram.pdf)
- for fodder and the general biosecurity duty - [https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/723178/fodder-and-the-general-biosecurity-duty.pdf](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/723178/fodder-and-the-general-biosecurity-duty.pdf)
- for visitors to your farm and the general biosecurity duty - [https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/724976/Factsheet-Minimising-the-risk-of-visitors-to-your-farm.pdf](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/724976/Factsheet-Minimising-the-risk-of-visitors-to-your-farm.pdf)

### Sale of land

The NSW *Conveyancing (Sale of Land) Regulation 2017* under the NSW *Conveyancing Act 1919* details that the vendor (seller) must disclose any **adverse affectations** that may be on the land for sale. Part 3 of Schedule 3 of the *Conveyancing (Sale of Land) Regulation 2017* lists all adverse affectations including:

- “a control order under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* that has been served on the owner or occupier of the land.”
- “an individual biosecurity direction (within the meaning of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*) that: (a) prohibits, regulates or controls the doing of anything, or (b) requires something to be done.” and
- “a biosecurity undertaking (within the meaning of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*).”

It may also be advisable to arrange a private inspection for the presence of serrated tussock (and any other weeds) on land that you are buying.

## Guides for the management of serrated tussock

NSW WeedWise: <http://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/Details/123>

Weeds of National Significance: <http://weeds.ala.org.au/WoNS/serratedtussock/>

For further advice contact the Local Council Weed/Biosecurity Officer and/or your local agronomist.

### Preventing further establishment and spread

There are several key principles involved in preventing new infestations of serrated tussock.

These include:

**Identification** - learn to identify serrated tussock and feel confident in your ability to do so;

**Early intervention** - control serrated tussock plants as soon as they appear and before they set seed (including odd plants and light or scattered densities of plants). Delaying control will quickly lead to larger infestations which are more difficult and costly to control. Early intervention is the best way to avoid heavy production losses and high costs of control at a later time;

**Check vehicles and machinery** - ensure vehicles and machinery are free of seed when moving into clean areas;

**Quarantine livestock** - while livestock do not readily consume serrated tussock, the seeds can be passed through the animal if they do. Animals may also pick up seeds in hooves, fleeces or coats. Transfer of the seeds can occur when fleece and/or hair are used as nesting materials; and

**Check fodder purchases (hay, silage or grain)** - serrated tussock can be easily spread through the introduction of fodder or hay containing serrated tussock seeds. Inspect hay or fodder for the presence of any weed seeds. Feed out areas should be monitored for germinating seedlings.



A serrated tussock monoculture. (Photo: Warwick Badgery)



Pasture establishment on the right serrated tussock on the left. (Photo: Malcolm Campbell)