

Using detection dogs as part of an integrated weed management strategy – A local government perspective

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Summary Serrated tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*) is a Weed of National Significance that impacts on both native grassy ecosystems and agricultural grazing land. Serrated tussock was inadvertently introduced to Tasmania in 1956, and has been the target of many government-funded eradication and management campaigns for many years. Situated on Tasmania's east coast, Glamorgan Spring Bay (GSB) is a rural municipality with scattered infestations of serrated tussock spreading over a relatively small number of properties, many of which are active grazing properties, and others which are rural residential land, some with absentee landowners. Since 2005 the GSB Council has undertaken an integrated, cross land tenure approach to weed management, in line with the municipal strategic weed management plan. Landholders throughout the municipality have been supported by the GSB Council, NRM South (the regional NRM organisation), and State and Federal Governments to

manage their serrated tussock since it was first detected in the municipality. In some locations, populations of serrated tussock have been reduced to a point where it is difficult to detect any remaining plants. There are also other locations (such as north-facing rocky banks) where it is highly likely outlying plants may be found. Glamorgan

Spring Bay Council is now trialling the use of a conservation detection dog to seek out remaining tussock plants in difficult country, where it may be harder for human eyes to detect, to enable both mapping and control. This activity is embedded within the broader strategic management framework. The dog being trialled is a working line German Shepherd from Garsova Kennels; his primary trainer is veteran detection dog trainer Steve Austin. The dog handlers are all people with extensive serrated tussock management experience.