

## Dr Sidney Plowman Travel and Study Award

### David Boyle

Just over ten years ago David Boyle took a position in pest control in the Geelong region. He's predecessor warned him to 'stay away from the tussock,' saying it was just too hard and there was nothing that could be done about it.

The tussock referred to is Serrated Tussock, one of Australia's greatest threats to its pastoral lands. David Boyle has spent the last decade working out new and better ways to tackle this environmental nightmare, along the way creating one of the most successful weed control programs seen in Victoria.

Serrated Tussock was estimated to cost the Australian wool industry \$12.9 million dollars a year. Frustration was high but knowledge and action was low. In 1994 David Boyle arranged a community meeting which brought about the formation of the Victorian Serrated Tussock Taskforce. The taskforce came up with a model for tackling Serrated Tussock which involved increasing awareness of the problem, carrying out property inspections and developing a comprehensive extension program. The goal was to increase the wider community's ownership of the Serrated Tussock nightmare.

The Taskforce has now become a key driver of land management and land use change in infested areas. Over 75% of landholders now view Serrated Tussock as a high priority for control, understand the importance of co-ordinated control and work to control infestations on an ongoing basis.

David Boyle's often behind-the-scenes work has changed the way the Department of Primary Industries tackle weeds. His passion and focus achieves results and his respect for the input and opinions of others ensures truly co-operative outcomes. He is highly respected by his peers and by landholders and while he is happy to sing the praises of the taskforce, he would never be heard singing his own!



*Pictured L-R: Tony Plowman MP, David Boyle, winner of the Dr Sidney Plowman Travel and Study Award, John Thwaites, Minister for Environment and John Landy, Governor of Victoria.*