

Taming tussock

LAST month's Gunning News reported on the recent Tussock Tamers field day at Ladevale. Around 60 people, some of them very familiar with this noxious weed and others unsure what it was, gathered to hear how the Tussock Tamer project proposes renewing community efforts to reduce its serious environmental and agricultural effects.

While everybody attending the day agreed we had a major problem to overcome, there were some different views about how to do it and whose responsibility it is.

Jerrawa Creek Landcare secretary Bob Spiller opened the day by reminding people that Gunning district residents at a major public meeting last year clearly identified serrated tussock as our most important agricultural and environmental problem by far.

Existing control measures were not working adequately and something more needed to be done. That's why Jerrawa Creek Landcare initiated this project in partnership with the Upper Lachlan Shire Council and Lachlan Catchment Management Authority (CMA).

Tussock Tamers is based on a number of beliefs. Firstly, management of serrated tussock needs a well thought out plan that takes into account your particular area and circumstances. Effective serrated tussock control is more than whacking a weed with a mattock or squirting some herbicide on it when you have the time.

Secondly, we can only make inroads into this problem if everybody works together. It is not enough for properties A, B and C to eliminate the weed if property D nearby fails to do so.

Thirdly, it requires sustained effort by all of us. It can't be done in just one season.

Bob explained that Tussock Tamers aims to create community awareness of the problem and gain commitment by everybody to make their best effort to tackle it. That's why Tussock Tamers is giving people the opportunity to join others in locally based short courses on natural resource management, weed con-



trol and property planning.

One Ladevale local at the field day pointed out quite rightly that planning never ever got rid of a single weed. Only effort by land managers could do this.

The Lachlan CMA's Christian Wythes, who spoke at the event, agrees that planning alone is not enough. However, he is firmly of the view that weed control done with the benefit of planning and the best knowledge you can get will make your work much more effective.

Further, Christian is confident that he can suggest some new techniques and practices to land managers that will help them reduce their weed burdens, increase profitability and perhaps the level of enjoyment and satisfaction they can derive from their properties. He is happy to meet individually with people who register with Tussock Tamers for a preliminary, obligation free consultation to explore these possibilities.

What next?

THE Council's Paul Brown, Christian Wythes and Bob Spiller all agreed there was a lot of

• **WEED WARFARE:** The Lachlan CMA, Upper Lachlan Shire Council and Jerrawa Creek Landcare, here represented by Christian Wythes, Paul Brown and Bob Spiller, plan to build on the success of their initial Tussock Tamers Field Day.

value to come out of the Ladevale field day.

Quite a number of people who attended thought it was well worthwhile.

Some Ladevale locals met one another for the first time and issues needing airing were brought out into the open.

There were also a number of enquiries about landcare membership and three new properties signed up for the Tussock Tamer project.

The organisers say they will be running further field days in coming months.

As well as organising field days based around plant identification, they hope to look at pasture renovation and also visit places that have used good planning and landcare practices to prevent tussock returning.

There will be more publicity about this in coming months. But if you would like to know anything more about Tussock Tamers you can contact Bob Spiller on 4845 8217.

Patchwork weekend a success

THE Gunning Patchwork weekend held at the end of June was a great success according to the organisers.

There were 59 participants at the various venues around the village, the largest enrolment yet for this event, now in its 11th year, and which won the Australia Day Event of the Year in 2010.

As they snipped, stitched and sewing machines whirred, the women enjoyed the wonderful opportunity to chat, exchange news and learn new techniques and designs.

There are many groups that get together to do their craft work and enjoy female companionship.

One lady confided that for her mother, parent to eight children, it was the opportunity to join other female parishioners to mend the priests' clothes and vestments. This provided a wonderful respite from the chores of family life.

Any guilt over leaving the family, even for a short time, was overlaid by the pleasure of companionship while carrying out a social obligation.

Sew and chat

THE Anglican community will have a Sew and Chat morning on Friday August 13 and each Wednesday morning at the Scout Hall on Warrataw Street, women are invited to meet to participate in weekly art and craft between 9.30 and 11am.

There is also, I'm led to believe, an informal group of women who call themselves the Stitch and (insert a rhyming word!) Club that meets for a weekend from time to time in Gunning and amid general hilarity somehow manages to get some quilting and other craft done.

For the men

THE Gunning Community Fitness provides also for men to get together.

The Fostering Rural Mateship group's "Combating isolation with conversation" program is on every Friday evening from 6.30pm with the