

## TREES TO TARGET WEED SPREAD



An interest in the use of certain tree species to suppress the spread of silverleaf nightshade (SLN) prompted Bethungra farm manager Toby Jones, to become involved in the CPP project in 2013.

Toby has managed 'Coreena', a 2,400 hectare mixed farming property, owned by the Melbourne based Bunn family, since 2011. The property has good areas of remnant native vegetation, which has been enhanced over the last 21 years by further plantings of strategically placed shelter belts and wind breaks. These have helped to reduce the impact of the hot easterly summer winds and further plantings are planned for the future to not only reduce wind speed but also improve the aesthetics of the property.

Toby explained that silverleaf nightshade was introduced onto the property from the roadside in the 1960's, when infested sheep from outside the area were brought through the stock route. The weed has since spread across the property through cultivation and livestock movement, and now occurs on shale hills down to the alluvial creek flats.

Whilst SLN control has been successful on the flats, gaining control on the rocky hilltops is still a problem. Funding from the Cross Property Planning project is being used to plant out two areas on the property with eucalypt species, to give allelopathic control of the weed. These plantings will hopefully not only suppress and contain the populations of SLN, but also reduce the chemical and labour costs required each summer to control it.

It is hoped that the new native plantings will provide environmental, economic and aesthetic value across the property. The large block plantings also link to existing native remnants and existing shelter belts, improving the connectivity across the landscape, providing habitat for native bird species, particularly smaller insectivorous woodland birds which are declining across the area, and other native fauna.

Both sites (site 1 - 6.5 ha and Site 2 - 2.4 ha) were ripped at 3 m intervals in June 2014 and sprayed with a mixture of glyphosate 570 g/L, simazine 900 g/kg and oxyfluoren 240 g/L to control the existing grasses and broadleaf weeds, such as mallow and nettles. Due to an inability to source sufficient tree numbers of the required species, only one block of around 2,200 trees will be planted this year -at 3 m spacings along the rows. The remaining block will be planted in Winter 2015.



*Toby Jones, Manager, Coreena; Jacinta Christie, CPP project coordinator; and Phil Bowden, Silverleaf Nightshade project officer inspecting ground preparation at Site 2 on Coreena*