



ROADSIDE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

POLICIES OF THE RCC

Terms of Reference

To coordinate and promote the conservation and effective management of rail and roadside vegetation for the benefit of the environment and the people of Western Australia.

Policies

The Roadside Conservation Committee will:

- Encourage rail and road management authorities and utility providers to conserve rail and roadside vegetation where possible.
- Provide information on the importance of rail and roadside vegetation for nature conservation, for landscape protection, and as an amenity.
- Develop rail and roadside management practices that conserve the native vegetation while achieving rail and road management objectives.
- Promote model by-laws, codes of practice and roadside management plans for rail and road management authorities and utility providers to use for conserving and managing roadside vegetation.
- Encourage the rehabilitation of degraded rail and roadsides to local native vegetation communities.
- Encourage the community to be involved in all aspects of conserving and regenerating rail and roadside vegetation.
- Promote specific research programs directed toward the conservation and management of rail and roadside vegetation.
- Promote the training of road managers, contractors and workers in techniques for conserving and managing rail and roadside vegetation.
- Encourage the integration of rail and roadside vegetation into regional management (eg. natural resources management, conservation and development) strategies by community groups, local government and government agencies.

Strategies

The Roadside Conservation Committee uses and promotes a number of strategies to implement its Terms of Reference and policies. The strategies outline what people and organisations should do to protect and enhance rail and roadside vegetation.

In the strategies that follow, the term 'roadside' refers also to rail reserves and may also be pertinent to other linear corridors.

While these strategies apply on a statewide basis in different parts of the State they have different context or implemented in differing ways.

1 Liaison

- Identify other bodies with a management interest in roadsides, and develop a communication strategy with them.
- Consult with relevant bodies when works might disturb roadside vegetation.

2 Planning

- Ensure the maintenance of roadside vegetation values is taken into account when planning construction or maintenance activities on road reserves.
- Undertake an inventory of roadside values as per the RCC roadside mapping project.
- Develop Roadside Management Plans to conserve those values identified in the roadside inventory.
- Develop a Code of Practice for the implementation of Roadside Management Plans in accordance with the policies and strategies of the RCC.

3 Management of Roadsides with Special Values

- Designate roads with high quality roadside vegetation as Flora Roads if they meet certain criteria, and manage such roads so as to maximise the roadside vegetation values.
- Increase public recognition of Flora Roads by erecting signs that publicise them, and encourage their promotion in tourist literature.
- Identify areas of roadside with special environmental values as Special Environmental Areas (SEA), and get advice about their management from the relevant authority.
- Mark SEAs with standard roadside markers, to prevent them being disturbed accidentally, and inform relevant personnel of the function of such markers.
- Establish a register of Flora Roads and SEAs, for use in planning roadside management and other activities.

4 Clearing for Fenceline and Services

- Locate new or replacement services on cleared land to avoid damaging native vegetation.
- Encourage landowners to set replacement fences further inside their boundaries, avoiding damage to roadside vegetation and allowing for vegetation establishment contiguous with roadside vegetation.
- When fencelines and services are constructed or maintained within roadsides, ensure that the least possible native vegetation is cleared and limit degradation of the remaining vegetation, especially on roadsides with medium to high conservation value.
- Insist that service authorities working on road reserves follow *Phytophthora* Dieback hygiene procedures.

5 Removal of Timber or Flora

- Timber harvesting should not be permitted from roadside vegetation except in defined road safety, fenceline or service clearance zones, or where an individual tree has fallen or might fall into clearance zones.
- Commercial harvesting of native flora (wildflowers, seeds and cuttings), should not be permitted from roadsides, except as provided for below.

Only give consideration for harvesting seed and cuttings from roadside vegetation if the seed and cuttings are needed for bona fide local revegetation projects and there is no other source of local seed.

Don't permit harvesting of any plant product for any reason between the markers delineating a Special Environmental Area.

Set specific conditions to limit the impact of harvesting of timber or flora, in association with Department of Conservation and Land Management licensing requirements.

6 Regeneration and Replanting

- Revegetate roadsides with the aim of establishing self-sustaining local native vegetation with overstorey and understorey components that will provide wildlife habitat, wildlife corridors, and maintain the region's natural identity.
- On degraded sections of roads with otherwise high conservation values, encourage regeneration of the native vegetation.
- Encourage landowners to plant local native vegetation on their property next to the roadside to protect the roadside vegetation, increase the conservation value and shelter effect of the vegetation itself, and create a wider and more useful wildlife conservation corridor.
- Work through the local Land Conservation District Committee and other community organisations to integrate the roadside vegetation into regional vegetation plans to form a network of conservation corridors.

7 Fire Management

- Implement fire management strategies that do not cause permanent damage to the native vegetation.
- Adopt policies or by-laws to control roadside burning.
- Integrate roadsides into Shire or regional fire management plans.
- When designing a fire management plan, take into account ecological management of the vegetation when addressing abatement of potential fire hazards.
- Do not permit the burning of both sides of any section of a road in any year.
- Allow firebreaks on road reserves only when they are necessary for protecting roadside vegetation, and when construction does not affect existing vegetation values. Furthermore, specify construction methods and the maximum allowable width of the break.
- For disputes about roadside fire management, arbitrate through the Western Australian Bush Fires Service.

8 Weed Control

- Establish a register of weed occurrence on roadsides.
- Control weed species in a way that least harms native vegetation.
- Control roadside weeds which are "declared plants" under the Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Act to the standard laid down in the Act for specific regions.
- Identify other (environmental) weeds, particularly where they compete with native plants, and control them if possible.
- Regularly inspect roadsides for new occurrences of declared or environmental weeds.

- Target new or small weed infestations for control as soon as possible to maximise the success of control measures and to reduce new infestations.
- Minimise disturbance of roadsides to limit opportunities for weeds to invade native vegetation communities.
- Use appropriate hygiene practices in road management to discourage weed seeds spreading between areas, especially when operating between weedy and weed-free areas of a roadside.
- Obtain advice on the most appropriate and environmentally sensitive methods of controlling target weeds.

9 Control of Animal Pests

- Control declared animals on roadsides as the Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Act specifies.
- Use control methods that least damage the roadside vegetation.
- Carry out animal pest control in conjunction with regional control programs.
- Obtain advice on the most appropriate and environmentally sensitive methods of animal pest control.

10 Control of *Phytophthora* Dieback

- Identify the presence of dieback on roadsides and store this information in a central register.
- Mark dieback occurrence along roadsides using a standard code system.
- When constructing or maintaining roads, establish dieback hygiene procedures and follow them to prevent the spread of disease.
- Test all sources of road building material where interpretable and record whether they are dieback-free or infested. Use only dieback-free materials in dieback-free areas.
- Get advice about dieback management from CALM or Main Roads WA.