

**WIDE ROAD RESERVE BACKGROUND  
AND  
RCC TERMS OF REFERENCE**



## WIDE ROAD RESERVE BACKGROUND AND RCC TERMS OF REFERENCE

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## WIDE ROAD RESERVE BACKGROUND AND RCC TERMS OF REFERENCE

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This document:

- 1) Sets the RCC's Terms of Reference in context in terms of initial State Government and RCC intent.
- 2) Outlines related State Government Policy on road reserve widths to be set in rural land releases.

## 2. THE RCC'S TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SOME OF THEIR CONTEXT

### 2.1 Terms of Reference

#### **RCC (nee RVCC; 1985 on)**

"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." (RCC 1988)

#### **Road Verge Conservation Committee (RVCC; 1969 – 1970)**

"The Committee has considered the conservation and regeneration of native flora and allied problems in relation to road verges on those roads outside the metropolitan area and country towns." (RVCC 1970)

### 2.2 On the intent of the terms 'vegetation' and 'native flora'

Early documents are concerned with preserving the array of native plant diversity:

1952 - Member for Bunbury to the Minister for Forests

"Will he investigate the possibility of amending the Act affected so as to provide that a half chain (10m) on each side of all main roads ***be preserved in its natural state, with all its wildflower life and natural growth***, so as to preserve in perpetuity the unique and wonderful displays of ***wild flower life and indigenous plant life of this state?***" (RCC 1988)

1959 - Government notice to holders of newly released farmland

"Roads in many instances have been surveyed to a greater width than the normal one chain for the ***express purpose of protecting the growth of shrubs, wild flowers and trees.***" (RCC 1988; RCC ~1985-1995).

### 2.3 RCC 1985 Policy expands on conservation of vegetation via transects & networks

Such conservation required transects to conserve local elements in-situ (1) and networks to provide links for wider exchange (2); as per:

1. To promote the protection and enhancement of native rail/roadside vegetation, so that these **provide representative transects of the original plant communities** especially in regions which have been substantially cleared. (RCC 1988)
2. To encourage the development of a rail/roadside **network of flora and fauna conservation corridors to enable the natural transfer of plants and animals between more extensive areas of bushland.** (RCC 1988)

### 3. ROAD RESERVE WIDTHS AND STATE WILDFLOWER CONSERVATION POLICY 1952-1979

#### 3.1 From the 1800s to the early 1900s road reserves were set at 1 chain (20m)

“Originally road reserves were provided for the passage of people and goods from one place to another by rather primitive means compared with contemporary standards. For this purpose narrow road reserves were adequate.” (RVCC 1970) The old standard was 1 chain (20m) (Minister for Lands, April 1959; RCC 1988).

This changed as policy concerning road reserve reservation for conservation between 1952 and 1979 coalesced around initiatives of the Department of Lands (sparked by Ministerial requests). The Government first took advice from the Department (which implemented reconnaissance and survey (RCC1988)) and then also from an independent Committee it convened. Essentially the general minimum road reserve width in new rural land releases rose to 3 chain (60m) and 1 chain (20m) road reserves were discontinued. In short the Government and Department of Land’s policies were intertwined.

#### 3.2 1952-1964 Road Reserve widths and state policy (cited in RCC 1988; see Table 3.2)

From 1952 there was an initial phase of adding a half chain on each side of select main roads (Minister for Forests cited in RCC 1988)

Between 1952 & April 1959 wider road reserves were surveyed selectively in areas of light land (such as sand with kwongan shrubland); this was to a minimum width of three chains (60m), some five chains (100m), and even up to ten chains (200m) in order to preserve a strip of natural vegetation on each side of the road, and to help prevent soil erosion.

#### 3.3 1965-1979 - Road Reserve widths & state policy records (Lands & Surveys file 1781/36)

From 1964 to 1979 the general pattern in rural land releases was: Min: 3 chains (60m); Mode: 5 chains (100m); Max: typically 10 chains (200m), but sometimes more, up to 20 chains (400m). (Table 3.3 and Appendix 2)

After a year of deliberations, including field inspections, the Committee submitted a report to Government which contained eleven recommendations (RVCC 1970).

“1. The Lands Department policy of creating three to ten chain road reserves in new areas should be continued.”

“3. Roadside flora areas should be provided at intervals along existing narrow road reserves. These areas should be selected in Crown Land where possible, but the resumption of suitable private land should also be considered where necessary.”

#### **4. TWO FUNDAMENTAL PROPERTIES OF WIDE ROAD RESERVES**

There are two properties of wide road reserves that make it important to integrate their roadside vegetation into planning.

First, because of the state's emphasis on putting wide road reserves in light land areas (especially between 1952 and 1959, but continuing thereafter) they will often reflect the most diverse vegetation types (especially the kwongan shrublands, which are found on lighter, sandier soils (RCC 1988; Lambers 2014)). So they are likely to be markers of high conservation values that need to be a key part of management planning.

Second, is that larger size makes them more resistant to change, so they tend to have higher conservation values than standard width local road reserves in the same local government area. In other words they represent more substantial deposits of conservation values with stronger internal defences. (Adjacent rail reserves augment this; Appendix 1.)

#### **5. REFERENCES**

Lambers, H (ed.) 2014 Plant life on the sandplains in Southwest Australia: A global biodiversity hotspot. UWA Publishing, Crawley, Western Australia. 332p

RCC [~1985-1995] Wide Roadsides Flora Drives (pamphlet). (The text is a little inaccurate as in 1952 half a chain was added to select main roads to make them 40m wide, and 60m came later; whereas this pamphlet states 'From 1952, rural road reserves were made 60, 100 or even 200m wide to preserve the distinctive native vegetation of each region.');

RCC 1988 Roadside Manual

Road Verge Conservation Committee (RVCC) 1970 Conservation of road verges. Committee report, November 1970.

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Table 3.2: 1952-1964 - Road Reserve widths and state policy cited in the RCC 1988 Roadside Manual				
DATE	WHO	WIDTHS & POLICY	WHERE	AUSPICES
1952-10-15 (Source: RCC 1988 Roadside Manual)	A) State Government	A) The Minister for Forests to the Member for Bunbury "Consideration would be given to proclaiming areas half a chain wide on each side of specified main roads." (40m total)	A) Wheatbelt agricultural clearing	A) Department of Lands (likely)
	B) Minister for Lands	B) 'The then Minister for Lands ... took the necessary action within his Department to ensure that that some land was set aside for the preservation and growth of shrubs and sandplain flowers along certain highways and other roads, particularly those passing through light land areas.'	B)~a/a	B) Department for Lands
April 1959 & before (Source: (Paraphrased account; RCC 1988 Roadside Manual)	Minister for Lands (replying to a query from the Premier)	<u>Prior to April 1959 wider road reserves were surveyed in areas of light land (such as sand with kwongan shrubland). The Minister for Lands replying to a query from the Premier (30 April 1959):</u> He added that in subdivisions of light land, roads were laid out to a minimum width of three chains (60m), some five chains (100m), and even up to ten chains (200m) in order to preserve a strip of natural vegetation on each side of the road, and to help prevent soil erosion. The Minister for Lands did not think that there were many light land blocks then available which were surveyed with the old one chain road. Light land: Min: 3 chain (60m); some 5chain (100m); Max:10 chain	State rural areas	Minister for Lands on behalf of Department of Lands
1959 on (Sources: RCC 1988 Roadside Manual; RCC [pamphlet no date; 1985-1995] Wide Roadsides Flora Drives)	Lands Department to new landholders	<u>From 1959 holders of newly released farmland were sent a Government notice that said:</u> "The attention of land holders is directed to the need to confine their activities within the area owned or leased by them. Roads in many instances have been surveyed to a greater width than the normal one chain for the express purpose of protecting the growth of shrubs, wild flowers and trees. It is therefore essential that no trespass be made by ploughing or otherwise working land contained in roads, reserves or other Crown Lands."	State rural areas	Department of Lands – advice and caution to landholders

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<p><b>1960-12-09</b> (Source: RCC 1988 Roadside Manual)</p>	<p><b>Surveyor General (to the Minister for Lands)</b></p>	<p>“In recent years much has been said and written concerning our wildflowers, and I am firmly of the opinion that we should take steps before it is too late to protect the vegetation to a reasonable depth along our main roads. This vegetation is disappearing quickly and it is imperative therefore that immediate action be taken.”</p>	<p>State rural areas</p>	<p>Department of Lands – advice to the Minister for Lands</p>
<p><b>1962-09-17</b> (Source: RCC 1988 Roadside Manual)</p>	<p><b>Cabinet agreement to adopt recommendations signed by Premier</b></p>	<p><u>“Conference” on Preservation of Wildflowers in WA (15/12/1961).</u>                  “Item 2 – The availability of greater areas in which wildflowers could grow and flourish – (a) by having more wildflower reserves; and (b) by having wider roads (both main roads and roads in local areas).”                  Subsequent recommendations to Cabinet included:                  - “That where new roads are constructed through alienated land, a minimum road width of 5 chains (100m) should be adopted.                  - That where new roads are constructed through Crown land, and the country is suitable for flora preservation, a minimum road width of 10 chains (200m) should be adopted.                  - That an investigation be made into the width of existing road reserves to ascertain what portions of these reserves could be widened to encompass areas suitable for the preservation of flora.”</p>	<p>State rural and Crown areas</p>	<p>Government convened a conference and adopted its recommendations</p>
<p><b>1964-09-__</b> (Source: RCC 1988 Roadside Manual)</p>	<p><b>Minister for Lands (on request of the Premier, to the Country Shire Councils Association)</b></p>	<p>“In planning new subdivisions, the Lands Department creates Flora reserves by setting a minimum width of roads at three chains; and in some areas, widths of roadways extend from five to ten chains. When approvals are given to leases under conditional purchase, a special attachment is put on the papers, drawing attention to the necessity not to trespass on Crown lands, roads and reserves for the purpose of ploughing or otherwise working the land contained in these reserves.”                  Min: 3 chain (60m); Max: 5 chain (100m) or 10 chain (200m).</p>	<p>State rural areas</p>	<p>Department of Lands – on behalf of Cabinet and Government</p>



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<b>DATE</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WIDTHS &amp; POLICY</b>	<b>WHERE</b>	<b>AUSPICES</b>
1965-01-08 (ref 124)	Under Secretary for Lands (to The Tree Society)	“...the type of vegetation and soil of the area being subdivided has a large bearing on the width of the road that is designed.” “There are subdivisions in recent years that had had roads designed at widths varying from 1 to 20 chains depending upon the soil and indigenous vegetation.” Min: 1 chain (20m); Max: 20 chains (400m)	New agricultural subdivision land in WA	Approved by the Surveyor General’s Division at the time of subdivision. Department of Lands.
1965-11-09 (ref 129)	Under Secretary for Lands (to Dumbleyung Shire)	“The minimum width is now three chains, and depending on circumstances, could vary from three to twenty chains.”  Min: 3 chains (60m); Max: 20 chains (400m)	Dumbleyung	a/a (Department of Lands) & investigating resumption of Conditional Purchase Land for road widening.
1965-12-22	Minister for Lands (to the Country Shire Council’s Association)	“The present Government has a policy of providing in all new subdivisions” in Agricultural lands “at least 20 per cent for reserves....” “It has been found by experience that the road width of less than three chains would not give the necessary area for services such as the formation of roads, drainage and the protection of the natural flora.” Min: 3 chains (60m)	State	Minister for Lands - Government
1966-01-13 (ref 137)	Under Secretary for Lands (to Esperance Shire)	“I have to advise that the provision of roads of a width of five chains and in excess thereof is a long established policy of the Department of Lands and Surveys, which policy was adopted following the recommendations of a committee of specialists appointed by the Government, the scope of which panel included the determination of desirable, minimum road widths both for the Preservation of Flora and the provision of ample space, (for) the establishment and maintenance of essential services within the roads.” “The present Government Policy is to provide in all new subdivisions” in Agricultural lands “at least 20% of such ands for	Esperance	Department of Lands - based on Government appointed committee recommendations on road widths.

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		<p>the purpose of reserves, and it has been found from experience , that a road width of less than three chains would not give the necessary area for purposes such as the formation of roads, drainage and the protection of the natural Flora.”</p> <p>Min: 3 chains (60m); Mode: 5 chains (100m); Max: above 5 chains</p>		
1968-04-22	<p><b>Minister for Lands (to Goldfields Local Government Bodies)</b></p>	<p>“Generally, the policy is to provide in all new subdivisions at least 20% of such land for the purpose of reserves and it has been found from experience, that a road width of less than three chains would not give the necessary area for purposes such as the formation of roads, drainage and the protection of the natural Flora.”</p> <p>“The policy on the width of road reserves followed by this Department conforms with a motion passed by a committee appointed by the Hon. Premier in connection with the preservation of wild flowers in Western Australia which is as follows:</p> <p>“(a) That where new roads are constructed through alienated land a minimum road width of five chains should be adopted.</p> <p>(b) Where new roads are constructed through crown land and the country is suitable for flora preservation, a minimum road width of ten chains should be adopted.</p> <p>(c) An investigation be made into the width of existing road reserves to ascertain what portions of these road reserves could be widened to encompass areas suitable for the preservation of flora.”</p> <p>Min: alienated land 5 chain (100m); Min: Crown land 10 chain (200m)</p>	<p><b>Goldfields region – specifically Esperance concerns.</b></p>	<p><b>Government and Department of Lands and Surveys policy</b></p>
1970-08-17 (ref 178)	<p><b>Road Verge Committee - Road Reserve Widths Sub-committee Report</b></p>	<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>“(e) the Lands Department practice of creating three to ten chain road reserves in new areas be continued.”</p> <p>Min: 3 chains (60m); Max: 10 chains (200m)</p>	<p><b>State Rural areas</b></p>	<p><b>Road Verge Committee - State convened. Sub-committee comprised Main Roads Dept., Lands Dept., Ag. Protection Board, Public Works Department</b></p>
1976-05-20	<p><b>Minister for</b></p>	<p>“The proposal to provide for wider road reserves in country areas</p>	<p><b>Scadden – MLA</b></p>	<p><b>Minister for Lands -</b></p>

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	<b>Lands (to MLA for Esperance)</b>	<p>was investigated several years ago by a specially appointed committee and the recommendations of the committee were subsequently adopted by the Government as a matter of policy. There is now a standing committee for the Conservation of Road Verges which is under the chairmanship of the Conservator of Forests. The existing Government policy provides for new country roads to be of sufficient width to allow for the formation of the road, drainage, and the adequate protection of natural flora.”</p> <p>“Generally, the policy is to provide in all new subdivisions” in agricultural land “at least 20% of such land for the purpose of reserves and it has been found from experience, that a road width of less than three chains would not give the necessary area for purposes such as the formation of roads, drainage and the protection of the natural Flora.” Min: 3 chains (60m);</p>	<b>raised a query after receiving a local resident’s letter.</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>After 1979-08-10 (ref 217)</b>	<b>Surveyor General</b>	<p>“I advise as follows: 1. There was only 1 60 metre (3 chain) road designed in the original subdivision and this was to maintain the road width requested by the Local Authority for resumption. The roads being provided in the subdivision are 200 metres (10 chain) 100 (5 chain) excepting those being resumed by the Council which are 3 chain (60 metres). 2. The suggestion that all wide road reserves are being scrapped is incorrect. Wide road reserves are provided along major routes where the nature of the soil and vegetation indicates that they are necessary. For minor roads and in areas where the soil and vegetation is less likely to be denuded, lesser road widths are provided but these are not surveyed at less than 60 metres.” Min: 3 chains (60m); Max: 10 chains (200m)</p>	<b>“The subdivision referred to lies within the Shire of Kent and provides for 7 new locations.”</b>	<b>Department of Lands</b>
<b>1979-08-30 (ref 220)</b>	<b>Under Secretary for Lands (to Director Department of</b>	<p>“...the general policy dealing with road widths as recommended by the Road Verge Conservation Committee. The Committee’s report and recommendations which were accepted by the Government in 1970 included reference to the desired width of road reserves. I</p>	<b>Kent Shire – in response to a letter from a resident.</b>	<b>Department of Lands</b>

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	<p><b>Conservation and Environment)</b></p>	<p>understand that the position is unchanged including the Committee’s specific recommendations that:            1. The Lands Department practice of creating three to ten chain road reserves in new areas be continued.”            “In accord with the general recommendations together with Departmental appreciation in relation to desired road widths, the Department had continued to pursue its policy of creating three to ten chain road reserves in new areas.”            Min: 3 chains (60m); Max: 10 chains (200m)</p>		
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**APPENDIX 1: INFLUENCE OF ROAD RESERVE WIDTH ON ROADSIDE CONSERVATION VALUES**

**1. Corrigin case study**

**Summary**

Wider road reserves (including any adjacent rail reserves), not entirely dedicated to infrastructure, are more likely to retain higher roadside conservation values and in the absence of RCV mapping or other information should be carefully managed for such values.

**Background**

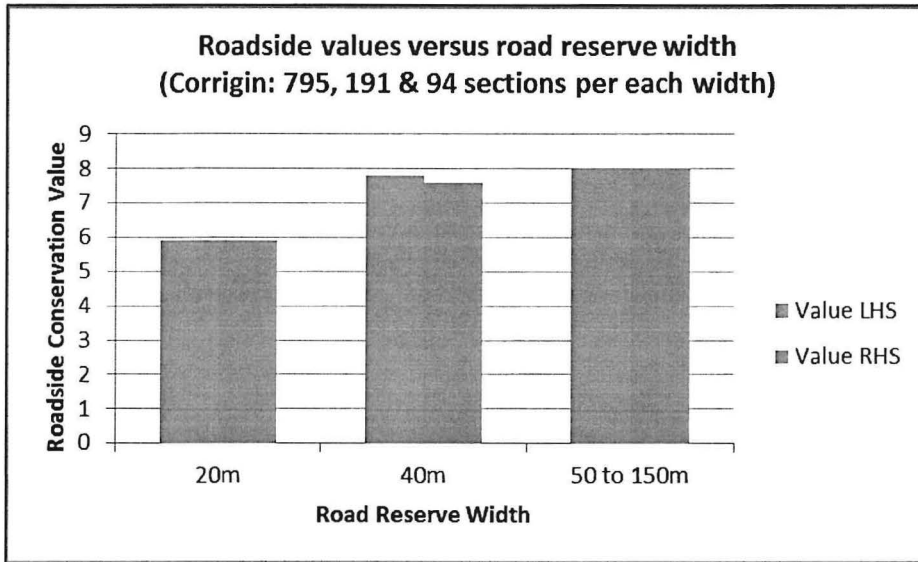
As road reserves get wider their capacity to retain higher roadside values over time increases. This is not to say that road reserves of the early and common default width of 20m do not hold significant values. However, it does suggest that in the absence of more detailed information on roadside values, road reserve width offers a guide to which roadsides should be a central part of planning and management, if not a priority.

Corrigin’s roadside conservation value mapping data was used as the basis of a simple analysis, with the result that those roadsides in 20m wide road reserves were generally 2 units lower in value than those in 40m or 50-150m road reserves (on average, 1994 data). Such a difference can reflect a lower value class and lower condition (in this case medium-low (5-6) versus medium-high (7-8)).

Road reserve widths were measured from aerial imagery at about 1:2000 scale and the modal width along a road section matching a given RCV class was recorded. Any rail reserve that ran alongside and was still vegetated was also measured and added to the width. The subtotal of sections measured was 1080; of which 795 were 20m wide, 191 were 40m wide and 94 were 50-150m wide. Mean RCV’s were 5.9, 7.8 (& 7.6) and 8.0 respectively. RCV differences between 20m and 40m or 50-150m wide road reserves were significant (t-test, p<0.001, 2-tailed, LHS values); while no difference was discernible between the two wider categories. These differences show despite the variability inherent in impacts along roadsides and variability that is part of the scoring process itself. This approach assumes that roadside width increases as road reserve width increases.

<b>Mean Roadside Conservation Values versus road reserve width (incl. rail) in Corrigin (1994)</b>			
<b>Road Reserve Width</b>	<b>Value LHS</b>	<b>Value RHS</b>	<b># Road Sections</b>
<b>20m</b>	5.9	5.9	795
<b>40m</b>	7.8	7.6	191
<b>50 to 150m</b>	8	8	94
<b>TOTAL</b>			1080

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**APPENDIX 2: RECORDS FROM LANDS AND SURVEYS FILE 1781/36 – 1965 TO 1979**

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124.

Mr. Sertorio

State Secretary,  
The Tree Society,  
37A Havelock Street,  
WEST PERTH, W.A.

8th January, 1965.  
1781/36

Dear Madam,

Re: Road Width - New Agricultural Land.

In reply to your letter dated 24th November which I regret was not answered earlier, it is advised that no legislation has been enacted in this State to set out a road of a width of more than one (1) chain.

The width of roads in new crown subdivision is determined at the time of the design of subdivision which is approved by the Surveyor General's Division.

It is also advised that the type of vegetation and soil of the area being subdivided has a large bearing on the width of the road that is designed.

There are subdivisions in recent years that had had roads designed at widths varying from 1 to 20 chains depending upon the soil and indigenous vegetation.

Yours faithfully,



UNDER SECRETARY FOR LANDS.

HIS:LJ





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1781/36

129

SHIRE CLERK,  
DUMBLEYUNG SHIRE COUNCIL,  
BOX 99,  
DUMBLEYUNG.

9th November, 1965.  
1781/36

Dear Sir,

re : Road Reserves

In reply to your letter of the 27th September, concerning the road widths, I have to advise that country roads are no longer laid out at one chain width. The minimum width is now three chains, and depending on circumstances, could vary from three to twenty chains.

The Department has neither the authority nor the funds to resume land for road widening from freehold land. This action is the prerogative of the Shire Council or the Main Roads Department.

However the Land Act does provide for resumption from Conditional Purchase land, and investigations are in hand with a view to widening roads adjoining such lands, where the land is unimproved.

Yours faithfully,



UNDER SECRETARY FOR LANDS.

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22nd December, 1965.

Dear Sir,

In my letter to you of the 6th December, 1965 I mentioned that the Motion submitted at your last Bi-ennial Conference and stated in your letter of the 1st December, 1965 would receive my full consideration. Over the years there have been many arguments advanced for and against wider width for roads so as to preserve areas for the protection of flora and fauna.

There are many Shires throughout the State which have asked this Department to bear in mind when creating new subdivisions of Agricultural land, to have roads in the greatest possible width, so as to provide areas to protect flora and fauna on the one hand, and wind breaks on the other.

The present Government has a policy of providing in all new subdivisions at least 20 per cent for reserves, and this you will no doubt agree, is a very wise policy. From time to time the Hon. Premier has drawn attention to the absolute need to preserve the verges on the road sides because of the disappearance of wildflowers in the State, and to this extent our major tourist attraction would be placed in serious jeopardy.

It has been found by experience that the road width of less than three chains would not give the necessary area for services such as formation of roads, drainage and the protection of the natural flora. In the areas north of Geraldton through to Carnarvon so many comments had been made by overseas tourists of the magnificent panorama of the wildflowers that it would indeed be a pity for any lesser areas to be established for the protection of the natural beauties of the State.

No doubt members of your Country Shire Councils Association are just as concerned in the protection of our natural heritage as I am and in fact the whole Government with the public generally. Necessary action could be taken in some joint effort by members of the Association to solve any problems associated with the control of vermin and the like. I feel, and in fact I believe, that the right policy is being followed.

Believe me, Sir, the Compliments of the Season,

Yours faithfully,

*F.B.*

MINISTER FOR LANDS.

Mr. M.J. Watts, A.C.J.S.,  
Secretary,  
The Country Shire Councils  
Association of W.A.,  
G.P.O. Box J 634,

*A.C. Richards*

*TH* *R.N.*

FILE  
23 Dec

1781-36

137

Mr. deLuca

The Shire Clerk,  
Esperance Shire Council,  
ESPERANCE. W.A.

Ext: 223  
13th January, 1966.  
1781/36

Dear Sir,

re: Width of Roads

In reply to your letter of the 23rd ultimo, in which you requested advice as to the reasons for the creation and widening of roads to a width of five chains or more, I have to advise that the provision of roads of a width of five chains and in excess thereof is a long established policy of the Department of Lands and Surveys, which policy was adopted following the recommendations of a committee of specialists appointed by the Government, the scope of which panel included the determination of desirable, minimum road widths both for the Preservation of Flora and the provision of ample space, the establishment and maintenance of essential services within the roads.


Many Shires throughout the State have asked this Department to bear in mind when creating new sub-divisions of Agricultural land to have roads of the greatest possible widths provided so that there are areas set apart to protect Flora and Fauna on the one hand, and to provide necessary wind breaks on the other.

The present Governmental Policy is to provide in all new sub-divisions at least 20% of such land for the purpose of reserves, and it has been found from experience, that a road width of less than three chains would not give the necessary area for purposes such as the formation of roads, drainage and the protection of the natural Flora.

In certain areas so many comments have been made by Overseas Tourists of the magnificent panorama of the Wildflowers, that it would be indeed a pity for any lesser area to be established for the protection of the natural beauties of the State.

Yours faithfully,

ECdeL:ES

  
UNDER SECRETARY FOR LANDS.

*No Records*

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22nd April, 1968.

Dear Sir,

I refer to your letter dated the 3rd instant and my acknowledgement of the 5th concerning the views of the Esperance delegates on ten chain roads in farming areas.

The policy on the width of road reserves followed by this Department conforms with a motion passed by a committee appointed by the Hon. Premier in connection with the preservation of wild flowers in Western Australia which is as follows :

- (a) "That where new roads are constructed through alienated land a minimum road width of five chains should be adopted.
- (b) Where new roads are constructed through crown land and the country is suitable for flora preservation, a minimum road width of ten chains should be adopted.
- (c) An investigation be made into the width of existing road reserves to ascertain what portions of these reserves could be widened to encompass areas suitable for the preservation of flora. "

Generally, the policy is to provide in all new subdivisions at least twenty per cent of such land for the purpose of reserves and it has been found from experience that a road width of less than three chains would not give the necessary area for purposes such as the formation of roads, drainage, and the protection of natural flora. x

Yours faithfully,

Mr. A.E. Rasmussen,  
Secretary,  
Conference of Goldfields Local Bodies,  
P.O. Box 67,  
KALGOORLIE, W.A. 6430.

*S.B.*  
MINISTER FOR LANDS.

*F2*



*File*

WIDE ROAD RESERVE BACKGROUND AND RCC TERMS OF REFERENCE

M.R.D. 107,10.

CHAIRMAN,  
ROAD VERGE COMMITTEE.

ROAD RESERVE WIDTHS

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

GENERAL

1. The sub-committee formed to examine road reserve widths in relationship to the conservation of native flora on road verges met on three occasions viz., 16th June, 7th July and the 17th August, 1970.

2. Members of the sub-committee were ;

T.A. Pedersen	-	Convenor
D.P. Hill	-	M.R.D.
R.B. Hawking	-	Lands Department
C.D. Gooding	-	A.P.B.
J.E. Davis	-	P.W.D.

3. Reports from members of the sub-committee are attached as follows ;

(a) Appendix A	-	D.P. Hill
(b) Appendix B	-	J.E. Davis
(c) Appendix C	-	R.B. Hawking
(d) Appendix D	-	C.D. Gooding

OBJECTS

4. The main objects of the sub-committee were to examine the adequacy and usage of rural road reserve widths in accommodating;

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- (d) a survey of existing rural arterial and lesser roads of major importance be undertaken by a specialised group consisting of a highway engineer, botanist and forester to ascertain what sections of reserves could be widened to encompass areas suitable for conservation of native flora.
- (e) the Lands Department practice of creating three to ten chain road reserves in new areas be continued. ✓
- (f) it is not a practical proposition for an allowance to be made on all road reserves for the future provision of public utilities. As a general rule, road reserves should not be used to accommodate public utilities, particularly when this would produce severe depletion of the existing native flora, introduce roadside hazards and/or detract from the natural landscape.
- (g) The Town Planning Board in giving approval to rural subdivisions gives full consideration to the surrender of those areas of value for conservation of native flora as part of the 10% surrender condition of approval.

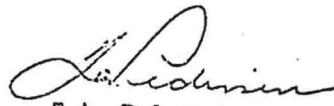
34. The sub-committee also concluded that the problem of conservation of native flora within the road reserve would not be a viable proposition in the long term. The widths available and likely to become available within the limits of practical acquisition are not adequate to achieve the ecological conditions required for true conservation. Although the preservation of road verge growth can be achieved,

WIDE ROAD RESERVE BACKGROUND AND RCC TERMS OF REFERENCE

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setting aside of specially selected broad areas where  
an environmental balance can be maintained.



T.A. Pedersen,  
CHAIRMAN,  
Sub-Committee,  
ROAD RESERVE WIDTHS.

TAP:LB  
17.8.70.

WIDE ROAD RESERVE BACKGROUND AND RCC TERMS OF REFERENCE

20th May, 1976.

Dear Mr. Grewar,

I have received your letter dated 23rd April in which you raised the issue of wide road reserves and also enclosed a copy of a letter from Mrs. E.M. Hancock of Scaddan on the question of the siting of reserves away from major traffic routes.

The proposal to provide for wider road reserves in country areas was investigated several years ago by a specially appointed committee and the recommendations of the committee were subsequently adopted by the Government as a matter of policy. There is now a standing committee for the Conservation of Road Verges which is under the Chairmanship of the Conservator of Forests. The existing Government policy provides for new country roads to be of sufficient width to allow for the formation of the road, drainage, and the adequate protection of natural flora.

Many Shires throughout the State have asked this Department to bear in mind when creating new sub-divisions of agricultural land to have roads of the greatest possible widths provided so that there are areas set apart to protect flora and fauna on the one hand, and to provide necessary wind breaks on the other.

Generally, the policy is to provide in all new subdivisions at least twenty per cent of such land for the purpose of reserves and it has been found from experience that a road width of less than three chains would not give the necessary area for purposes such as the formation of roads, drainage, and the protection of natural flora.

In certain areas so many comments have been made by overseas tourists of the magnificent panorama of the wildflowers, that it would be indeed a pity for any lesser area to be established for the protection of the natural beauties of the State.

Yours sincerely,

*[Signature]*

MINISTER FOR LANDS

Mr. G.R. Grewar, M.L.A.,  
Member for Roe,  
P.O. Box 154,  
6450

*[Handwritten note]*  
21.5.76 (07)



SURVEYOR GENERAL :

Please refer to the letter at page 214 and the minute by the O.C. Roads and Reserves Branch at page 216. (August 10 1979)

38/77 The subdivision referred to lies within the Shire of Kent and provides for 7 new locations.

The original design provided for road widths from between 60 metres (3 chains) to 100 metres (5 chains). This was subsequently amended to provide for a 200 metres (10 chains) link road and 100 metre (5 chains) subsidiary roads.

The original 60 metre road was provided to join with a new road resumption of the same width requested by the Local Authority to facilitate access to the new subdivision.

In answer to the questions at page 215 I advise as follows:

1. There was only 1 60 metre (3 chain) road designed in the original subdivision and this was to maintain the road width requested by the Local Authority for resumption. The roads being provided in the subdivision are 200 metres (10 chain) 100 (5 chain) excepting those being resumed by the Council which are 3 chain (60 metres).
2. The suggestion that all wide road reserves are being scrapped is incorrect. Wide road reserves are provided along major routes where the nature of the soil and vegetation indicates that they are necessary. For minor roads and in areas where the soil and vegetation is less likely to be denuded, lesser road widths are provided but these are not surveyed at less than 60 metres.

I am not aware of any policy which prescribe that all roads in all new land subdivisions would be 10 chains wide.

It could be pointed out that one of the roads within the subdivision which is surveyed at 100 metres services only three or four farm locations

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AAS:PT  
1781/36V2  
79/77

Director,  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION &  
ENVIRONMENT :

Reference is made to your memo dated July 31, requesting advice with respect to the provision of roads within new land subdivisions in relation to issues raised by Ms. Walsh to your Minister.

The enclosed copy of a Departmental report by the Acting Assistant Surveyor General, Mr. R.K. Morland, is enclosed for your information and this should provide sufficient response to enable you to reply to your Ministerial correspondence. Incidentally a similar approach was also received direct by the Department from another resident at Newdegate.

In addition to the specific comments provided by Mr. Morland you may also be interested in the general policy dealing with road widths as recommended by the Road Verge Conservation Committee. The Committee's report and recommendations which were accepted by the Government in 1970 included reference to the desired width of road reserves. I understand that the position is unchanged including the Committee's specific recommendations that :-

1. The Lands Department policy of creating three to ten chain road reserves in new areas should be continued.
2. Where wider reserves place an added burden on either individual farmers or the local authority in relation to vermin, noxious weed or fire control, Government assistance should be considered.

In accord with the general recommendations together with Departmental appreciation in relation to desired road widths, the Department has continued to pursue its policy of creating three to ten chain road reserves in new areas.

UNDER SECRETARY FOR LANDS

August 30, 1979.

Encl. (pages 217-218)

FILE

30 AUG 1979

## WIDE ROAD RESERVE BACKGROUND AND RCC TERMS OF REFERENCE

### APPENDIX 3: LIST OF SOME WIDE ROAD RESERVES

#### **RCC pamphlet (no date): Carnamah-Eneabba Wildflowers**

Brand-Mudge Road 60m wide.

Dookanooka road also wide.

#### **RCC [pamphlet no date; 1985-1995] Wide Roadsides Flora Drives**

Old Vasse Road National Park at Pemberton. "When the Government wished to preserve the character of an attractive drive, they made the road reserve wider or, less often protected it by linear National Parks." This is an example.

#### **RCC 1988 Roadside Manual (Part 2.3)**

Newdegate-Lake-Grace Road

(Hassell National Park as part of scoping exercise.)

(Frank Hahn National park as part of scoping exercise.)

Southern-Cross-Yellowdine section of Great Eastern Highway – "Protected Flora" designation (Tree Society recommendation).

Ravensthorpe-Hopetoun Road (Tree Society recommendation).

Wubin-Mullewa Road (Department of Lands and Surveys advice to Main Roads to purchase uncleared conditional purchase land along roads important for wildflower conservation).

Marchagee to Watheroo Now the extremely important Marchagee sandplain corridor.  
(Department of Lands and Surveys advice to Main Roads to purchase uncleared conditional purchase land along roads important for wildflower conservation).