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Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

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Its successor, the Roadside Conservation Committee continues to work towards the preservation of wildflowers along roadsides.

Thirty six years after the original decision the Committee feels that people need to be reminded why wide road reserves were created.

They are NOT intended to be used for firebreaks, gravel pits, rubbish dumps, grazing paddocks, or commercial wildflower picking sites.

The extra width was provided for one purpose only - to preserve the local wildflowers.

As more agricultural land has been cleared and as we have become more knowledgeable about our flora and fauna, other values of the State's roadside vegetation are being realised. These include shade and shelter for stock, windbreaks, erosion and salinity control. They are also the basis on which our wildflower tourist industry is built.

Native vegetation along roadsides gives an individual local character to each region, and helps to create a local identity. Nowhere else in the world can you

drive through an avenue of Salmon Gums, or marvel at the Bush Cauliflower.

Thus, all areas outside the designated road construction and maintenance zone should be managed for flora conservation.

It is the responsibility of all Western Australians to preserve our wildflower heritage for all time, and that includes roadside wildflowers.



Old Vasse Road National Park.

ROADSIDES AS FLORA RESERVES

To make the Government's intention quite clear, the following notice was issued to all occupants of newly released farmland from 1959 onwards:

"The attention of land holders is directed to the need to confine their farming 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."

HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. Take part in survey to determine which roads are important for conservation.
Contact the RVCC for further details.
2. Revegetate a road verge.

Greening Australia, Men of the Trees and other organisations promote and organise the planting of trees and shrubs along roadsides. Contact them to find out what is happening in your area.

Alternatively, organise your own plantings!

Remember to:

contact the road manager (Shire or MRD).

select only local species.

plant a mixture of trees, shrubs and herbs as appropriate to the area.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

PLEASE CONTACT:

Roadside Conservation Committee

PO Box 104

COMO WA 6152

Ph: (09) 367 0333

Main Roads Department

Waterloo Crescent

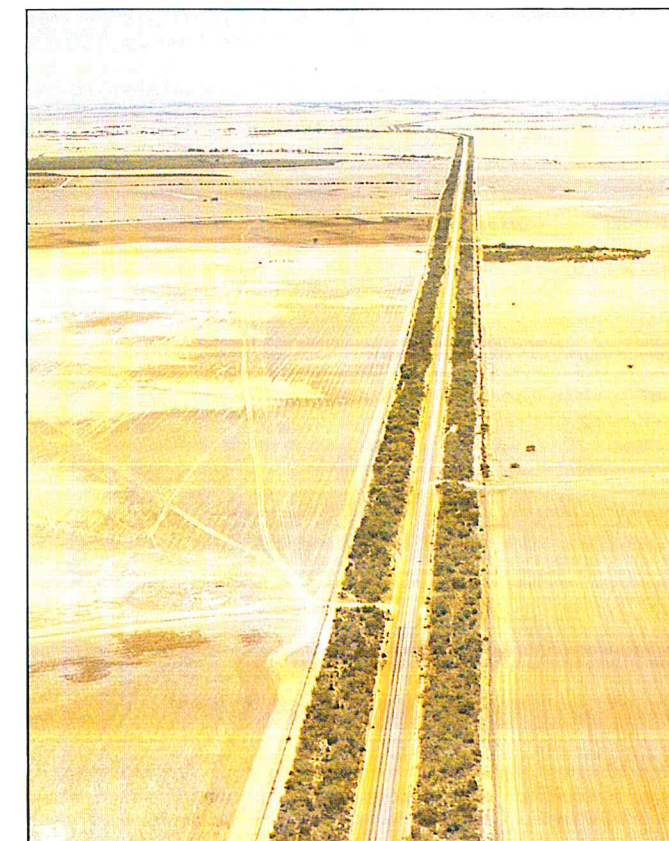
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W I D E ROADSIDES FLORA DRIVES



Roadside Conservation Committee



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WILDFLOWER DRIVES

Roads are made to travel on, but many Western Australian road reserves were created much wider than necessary for traffic to preserve them as wildflower drives.



Wide roadsides provide beauty for travellers.

THE ROAD RESERVE

When a public road is created, a corridor of land is dedicated for a road and called the road reserve.

The road formation and its associated drainage works are accommodated within the road reserve. The remaining space is called the roadside.

THE WILDFLOWER STATE

Western Australians are rightly proud of their wonderful wildflowers.

Long isolation on an ancient landsurface has meant evolution into many varied and unique forms.

From the very earliest days of the Colony, visitors and residents alike have been delighted by the beauty of the wildflowers.

Preservation of attractive drives became a high priority for government as closer settlement and land clearing progressed.

When 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.

IN THE FOREST

In the Karri forest, linear National Parks prevented logging along some tourist roads. The Old Vasse Road National Park at Pemberton is an example. Along this road the visitor can still experience in full the towering magnificence of mature uncut Karri - although you must slow down from a modern speed to do so safely.

IN THE WHEATBELT

As the pace of agricultural clearing increased, so did concern for loss of the State's natural heritage.



It became government policy in 1961 that when land was to be released for agriculture, roads would be three or more chains wide (60 m) to preserve the local wildflowers. The block on the right demonstrates an increase in road width resulting from this decision.

Widespread ownership of the motor car made the flora destruction more obvious. In books, articles and letters, Western Australians urged two things: special conservation reserves and beautiful wildflower drives. The government responded.

As land was released for agriculture, so areas were reserved for conservation. Compact areas became nature reserves.

From 1952, rural road reserves were made 60, 100 or even 200m wide to preserve the distinctive native vegetation of each region.

ROADSIDE CONSERVATION

To help to ensure that its intentions for wildflower conservation were carried out, the Government appointed the first Road Verge Conservation Committee in 1969.

CONCERN AT OVERCLEARING

from "A Story of a Hundred Years" (1929)
Western Australia's official Centenary Book:
"So great has been the desire of the settler to conquer the forest and produce crops that far too little timber has been left for the purposes of shade, shelter and firewood."

G.L. Sutton, Director of Agriculture.

"It may be that in 2029, regret will be expressed that so little effort was made as far back as 1929 to ensure the preservation of the rare and beautiful flora. To deny future generations the right to enjoy its wonders is to deserve the censure of the unborn."

Emily Pelloe, botanist.