

ROADSIDE REVEGETATION BEYOND 2000

Workshop Outcomes

29 May 2000
South Perth

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The workshop endorsed the following strategic initiatives for roadside conservation:

- ❖ A structured process involving a Government level Taskforce to review existing legislation and develop one policy for Transport Corridors.
- ❖ Improving integration and co-ordination of authorities and issues through:
 - the development of generic Roadside Management Guidelines, and
 - a conservation database using Shire maps to highlight biodiverse rich areas.
- ❖ Planning guidelines developed from the single policy for Transport Corridors and adopted at the Local Government level.
- ❖ Promote roadside conservation within Local Government.
- ❖ Support schemes where local landholders are given authority to manage and protect areas of verge.
- ❖ Development of a standard assessment process or checklist for use by proponents and developers in regard to roadside conservation issues.
- ❖ Roadside Conservation Committee to be represented on the Utilities Providers Services Committee.
- ❖ Continue the focus on education with particular emphasis on the general public, community groups and on-ground workers.

- ❖ Maintain a focus on weeds and herbicide spraying as major degrading threats to roadsides.
- ❖ Approach WA Municipal Association or the Minister for Local Government for funding support for RCC.
- ❖ Support Main Roads WA to develop an auditing program for Local Government road grants to ensure that conservation work is undertaken.

CONTEXT

This report provides the outcomes from a workshop for the Roadside Conservation Committee, held in South Perth on 29 May 2000. The participants represented a wide range of stakeholders who are involved in Roadside Conservation.

FOCUS

The focus of the workshop was to provide direction to the Roadside Conservation Committee on strategic directions to be addressed over the next five years.

OUTCOMES

By the end of the workshop, participants had:

- ◆ received an overview of the current situation;
- ◆ examined the evolving role of the Roadside Conservation Committee (RCC);
- ◆ determined the issues facing roadside conservation;
- ◆ prioritised the issues facing RCC;
- ◆ generated initiatives and activities to address the issues;
- ◆ identified strategic directions;
- ◆ built support from stakeholders; and
- ◆ agreed on the next steps.

OUTCOME ONE – THE EVOLVING ROLE OF RCC

Participants compiled a brief history of roadside conservation in Western Australia, as a way of establishing a common understanding of the forces that have shaped the RCC.

Key points to emerge included:

- 1950's and 1960's
 - massive land clearing under the Brand/Nalder government
 - the creation of wide road verges
 - Government leadership around the potential for tourism
- 1969
 - Road Verge Conservation Committee formed
- 1970's
 - identity promoted as the Wildflower State
 - Initial policies formed
 - funding from Main Roads Department
 - initial corporate funding, eg: Alcoa
 - Government begins to focus on conservation
- 1980's
 - Road Verge Conservation Committee ceases to meet
 - rise of landcare movement
 - conservation becomes more mainstream
 - at the same time, the decade is dominated by commerce and WA's identity is promoted as the State of Excitement
 - final part of the decade is dominated by excess and WA's identity as the Home of the America's Cup
- 1990's
 - roadside conservation makes large gains
 - Roadside Surveys begin
 - major revegetation initiatives and Government support
 - by the mid-point of the decade, the focus shifts to economic rationalisation
 - Agency input declines, private contracting increases, downsizing increases
 - issues such as salinity and biodiversity gain prominence
 - conservation is regarded as a responsibility



Thus the role of the Roadside Conservation Committee has changed from:

- a reactive focus
- to
- a planning focus (surveys)
- to
- a capacity building focus (training and stakeholder involvement)

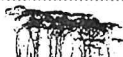
OUTCOME TWO – ISSUES FACING ROADSIDE CONSERVATION

Participants worked in small groups to identify the difficulties that face roadside conservation.

The list of issues were sorted into twelve strategic areas that need to be addressed.

The Strategic Areas and Issues are:

- **Lack of Clear Policy, Legislation and Responsibility**
 - lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the management of roadside reserves
 - multiplicity of players, objectives and responsibilities
 - confused ownership, leading to a decline in community support and responsibility
 - complex bureaucratic process and many Acts
 - nebulous nature of legislation or lack of political will to enforce
 - lack of clear legislation
 - lack of Standing Government Policy leading to uncertainties and resulting in no specific roadside management (ie: an ad hoc approach)
 - lack of a clear vision at all levels of Government
 - Local Government Authorities act as road managers not land managers
 - roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders are not clear
 - ie: - State Government service providers
 - Local Government
 - Private contractors
- **Lack of Integration and Co-ordination of Authorities and Issues**
 - In terms of environmental management (ie: weeds, disease, salinity and drainage), there is little:
 - co-ordination of management
 - comprehension by management



- integrated natural resource management (can not deal with verges in isolation)
- lack of communication between Managers (ie: Local Government, Government Departments, Community)
- little or limited recognition of the role of roadside vegetation in the landscape
- failure to include environmental (natural capital) and social costs into decision-making

➤ **Linear Nature Impacts on the Viability and Sustainability of Road or Rail Reserves**

- road verge is the least appropriate place for a conservation reserve
 - linear rather than block shaped
- linear reserves have a large edge effect
 - weeds
 - burning
 - maintenance
 - dieback
- failure of the ecosystem process, leading to degradation

➤ **Increased Urban Pressure**

- expanding urbanisation
- increased subdivision resulting in more crossovers and greater disturbance of roadside vegetation

➤ **Operation and Duplication of Services in reserves by Utility Providers**

- duplication of networks by utility providers, resulting in more contractors and more mechanical destruction
- utilities clearing roadsides for services

➤ **Degrading Threats to Roadsides**

- lack of seed for Landcare revegetation leading to plundering of roadside seed resources
- dieback effects
 - hygiene being compromised
 - biodiversity being reduced
- dumping of weeds and rubbish
- accelerated decline of vegetation, weed invasion and greater herbicide use



- damaging roadside management practices
 - clearing
 - fire
 - weeds
 - gravel extraction
 - weed invasion
 - inappropriate fire regimes affecting the quality of vegetation
 - weeds competing against native species
 - increased impact of weeds (traditional and new)
- **Social Impacts of Declining Rural Population**
- decline in the rural population
 - community group burnout, resulting in fewer people to do the work
- **Changes and Increases in Road Transport Pressure**
- heavy goods transport pattern has changed from carriage via rail train to carriage via road train (however, the selling of the rail freight network may slow the trend)
 - wider roads, leading to a greater loss of vegetation
 - population growth, leading to more use
 - bigger trucks and harvesters (ie: need for road widening)
 - conflict of use (transport versus conservation)
 - more cars and an increase in the use of roads
 - increasing road use
 - upgrading
 - heavy traffic
 - larger vehicles
 - more wear and tear
 - more pollution
 - bigger turning circles (more room needed)
- **Lack of Education and Training at All Levels**
- lack of education about practices at the ground level for Shires, contractors and public
 - lack of targeting of education
 - lack of knowledgeable trainers
 - inadequate public awareness and education on the importance, values and management of roadside vegetation



- lack of money and people to communicate the message for
 - user information
 - school education
 - funding and personnel
- public focus on bigger issues such as old growth forest and salinity

➤ **Lack of Continuity from the Changing Workforce**

- lack of continuity in informed staff and decision-makers at State and Local Government level
- organisational change resulting in contracting out and a potential lack of innovation regarding roadside conservation management
- contractors are characterised by problems with
 - new workforce
 - management (supervision, QA)
 - training
 - subcontracting

➤ **Funding Issues at all Levels**

- low budget allocations by Local Government
- insufficient resources to promote and ensure roadside conservation
- fewer resources for Local Government
- perceived economic expense of managing or caring for roadside vegetation
- failure to distribute available funds for conservation works by Local and State Governments

➤ **Values Resulting in a Narrow Perspective**

- European cultural heritage values of "parkland" (ie: grass and a few trees) that devalues "wasteland" (ie: bush)
- lack of knowledge about roadside conservation values

OUTCOME THREE - PRIORITISATION OF ISSUES

Each group of issues was examined to determine the amount of influence that could be exerted by the RCC.

Issues that the RCC can influence are:

- Lack of clear policies, legislation and responsibilities
- Lack of integration of authorities and issues



- Local Government planning
- Operation and duplication of services in reserves by utility providers
- Lack of education and training at all levels
- Degrading threats to roadsides
- Funding issues at all levels

Issues that are of concern to RCC but in which RCC can have little direct effect are:

- The linear nature of roadside reserves which impacts on viability and sustainability of the reserves
- Increases in urban pressure
- The social impacts of the declining rural population
- Changes and increases in road transport pressure
- Lack of continuity from the changing workforce
- Values resulting in a narrow perspective

OUTCOME FOUR – INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS

The workshop focused on the issues in which RCC can have an influence and small groups worked on each of the seven areas.

Within each area, participants identified a range of possible initiatives, actions and responsibilities.

The initiatives were posted up and all members of the workshop used a voting process to indicate their support for individual initiatives.

The results of this prioritisation process are provided below:

Issue: Lack of Clear Policies, Legislation and Responsibilities

<i>Strategy / Approach / Initiative</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Votes</i>
Development of Terms of Reference and funding for a Review process	RCC to advise Minister	Within one month	
Review existing legislation	Ministry of Environment (Task Force) Possibly Environment Defenders Office	To commence 2000	1



Review Native Vegetation Working Group Report	Taskforce	Commence 2000	2
Report on values of roadside vegetation to relevant Ministers	RCC	Commence 2000	7
Investigate mechanisms to achieve State Policy Task Force at Local Government level	Taskforce		1
Develop one policy for Transport Corridors Encourage Local Government Authorities to enhance the policy through local laws and initiatives	State Government (Taskforce)	Within 2 years	18

Examples:

- Rationalise public utility use
- Define Local Government role as Land Managers as well as Road Managers
- All Government Agencies have environmental responsibility

Issue: Lack of Integration and Co-ordination of Authorities and Issues

<i>Strategy / Approach / Initiative</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Votes</i>
Base RCC executive function within Local Government rather than CALM, to get closer ties	RCC	With CALM 'restructure'	6
Development of generic Roadside Management Guidelines for both new and existing road reserves	RCC in consultation with 'users' and stakeholders	From 2001, with regular updates	5
Regionalise the RCC's activities through and into Local Government		2001	
WA Tourism Commission to help co-ordinate as "end users" and WATC to have a seat on the RCC		2001	1
Develop Awareness Strategy for generic Roadside Management Guidelines	RCC	From 2001	



Environmental approvals to meet Roadside Management Guidelines	DEP	When Guidelines developed	7
A conservation database using Shire maps to highlight biodiverse rich areas Encourage Shires to focus effort on areas of high value (high conservation area)	RCC	2001	8
Initiatives in Roadside Management, Conservation and Biodiversity as a category in "The Tidy Town" awards	Chairman & Executive Officer	December 2000	2

Issue: Local Government Planning

Three levels of influence are possible:

- State and Regional – Western Australian Planning Commission; Minister for Planning
- Local Government – Rural Strategy, Town Planning Schemes
- Developers, landowners and community - education

<i>Strategy / Approach / Initiative</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Votes</i>
Prepare planning guidelines for the conservation of roadside vegetation (State Government level), eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase width of existing roads • Road alignment in degraded areas • Single road access to development through present roadside vegetation • Link to one policy initiative 	RCC approach Minister for Planning	Short term	18
Standard conditions for roadside vegetation for applications for rezoning, subdivisions and developments	RCC to initiate Local Government	Ongoing	2
Include roadside vegetation in TPS and rural strategies (statement of importance in text / zoning)	RCC Local Government	Ongoing	
Encourage and support locals and landholders in conservation and management of roadsides (locals given authority to look after verge) (notify and management concept)	Local Government	Ongoing	9



Local laws on roadside management	RCC, WAMA, Local Government		5
Continue Roadside Vegetation Survey project	Local Government, RCC	Ongoing	5
Enhance vegetation survey to include mapping of weeds, fire, dieback, etc	Local Government, with RCC support		
Prepare action plans for priority management areas and set aside budgets to implement	Local Government with RCC support		4
Include roadsides in activities of Bushcare Co-ordinators, LCDC's and interest groups	Local Government and RCC		3

Issue: Operation and Duplication of Services in Reserves by Utility Providers

<i>Strategy / Approach / Initiative</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Votes</i>
RCC to be represented on Utilities Providers Services Committee (UPSC)	David Lamont	ASAP	7
Requirement by Local Government Authorities to ensure that any proponent has consulted with other relevant utilities to reduce duplication and conflict in the provision of services at the design stage	Propose to WAMA / Minister for Local Government by RCC	Next meeting	7
Standard assessment process or checklist for use by proponent / developer for roadside conservation issues, eg: Rare Flora, Vegetation, Weeds, Disease, etc Similar to Notification of Intent to Clear Land procedure	CALM in consultation with Agriculture Western Australia, WA Museum, etc UPSC	2001	14
Defined rehabilitation standards for all utilities construction, upgrades and maintenance work		2 years	
Provision for "trade-offs" in rehabilitation to reallocate resources to high conservation priority zones.	WAMA / CALM / RCC	2 years	



Issue: Lack of Education and Training at All Levels

<i>Strategy / Approach / Initiative</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Votes</i>
To provide information so that all "users" of road reserves have appropriate knowledge to ensure maintenance of roadside conservation values.			
<u>Identify client groups</u>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency • Catchment • Community • Shire Councils – RCC • Media • Schools 			
Face to face presentations			2
<u>Schools program</u>	RCC, as a special project?	ASAP	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop suitable material • Main Roads sponsored program (?) 			
<u>Agency groups</u>	RCC Executive Officer and committee	ASAP	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising program using RCC material • Senior officer groups addressed to • Raise RCC profile 			
<u>Community groups</u>	RCC role	Continuing and long term	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify existing RCC package for workers • Enhance biodiversity and landscape integration sections • TAFE courses 			
<u>On-ground worker</u>	RCC	Start now	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation and extension of RCC TAFE courses • All supervisors and employers to undertake Best Management Practices and Quality assurance on roadside management 			
<u>General public and individuals</u>		ASAP	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through media and events, eg: Camping Expo or 4 x 4 clubs • Booklets, eg: tourism drives • landcare pages on the Net 			



- Seek funds through Tourism Industry and Bureau
- NHT funds for specific landcare projects

Crucial

- a partnership (between NHT and Gordon Reid Foundation) to employ a person to become a roadside publicist
- prepare material and do presentations
- provide information to LCDC coordinators so they can disperse information
- provide a set of overheads and file
- also provide to Rivercare / Bushcare / FESA community coordinators

RCC to seek group (Greening Australia or other community group to work with)

Now

When material produced

Issue: Degrading Threats to Roadsides

<i>Strategy / Approach / Initiative</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Votes</i>
<u>Fire</u>	RCC	Now	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate landholders about damage that fire does to roadsides 	Local Government FESA		
<u>Weeds</u>			9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support <i>State Weed Plan</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify priority weeds - Identify priority areas • Education regarding dumping and impacts 	RCC Survey / Reserve Mgrs. Local people	Now	
<u>Gravel Extraction</u>	RCC and public	Ongoing	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify offending Local Governments • Find alternative gravel supplies • Educate Local Governments and landholders (farmers) 	RCC		
<u>Herbicide Spraying</u>	Road Managers	Ongoing	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and compliance • Develop techniques specific to local conditions 			



<u>Dumping of Rubbish</u> • Awareness campaigns	Keep Australia Beautiful Local Government RCC	Ongoing	
<u>Dieback</u> • Compliance with best practice	Road managers	Now	
<u>Seed Collection</u> • Reinforce abstention from seed collection in verges	RCC Road Authorities Local Government	Ongoing	
<u>Feral Pests</u>			
<u>Overall Initiative</u>	RCC		1
Campaign on raising awareness of the values of roadsides			

Issue: Funding Issues at All Levels

Only two people responded – what does that say?

Funding For RCC

<i>Strategy / Approach / Initiative</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Votes</i>
New money from within RCC would lead to ownership of RCC issues To be used for training and research <i>If endorsed, put to RCC meeting for member commitment</i>	RCC "Agency" members	Now	
Money contribution to RCC from Local Government via WAMA – larger role as greatest road land managers To be used for Training and education <i>If endorsed, put to WAMA for commitment</i>	WAMA	Now	9
Seek private sponsorship <i>If endorsed, develop sponsorship strategy</i>	RCC	Future	1
Maintain existing fund base (in addition to any extra funding) <i>Agencies to seek re-affirmation of commitment</i>	CALM MRWA Westrail	Now	

Funding for Rail and Roadside Conservation

<i>Strategy / Approach / Initiative</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Votes</i>
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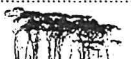
Maintenance of support and funding base in MRWA, Westrail and CALM (+ GST) <i>Reaffirmation by agencies and external pressure from community</i>	Agencies and community RCC	Ongoing	1
Recognition of need within Local Government for roadside conservation <i>Community to lobby Local Government with support of RCC</i>	Community	Now	2
Auditing of Local Government road grants to ensure roadside conservation (revegetation) works are undertaken (can be held in reserve fund) <i>MRWA to develop auditing program and awareness</i>	MRWA	Ongoing	13
Application to Grant schemes (eg: NHT, Gordon Reid) for project funds <i>Committee to identify central projects and community to integrate into regional initiatives</i>	Local Government, Community	Ongoing	1
Promotion of roadside conservation within Local Government <i>If endorsed, seek positive affirmation and implement plan</i>	WAMA	Ongoing	8

VISION STATEMENT

All of these initiatives form one process.

Expected outcomes are:

- The formation of a Transport Corridors Conservation Committee.
- The adoption of a vision statement that -
 - "all agencies accept responsibility for arresting further loss of existing native vegetation and where possible, seek to restore vegetation".



OUTCOME FIVE – IDENTIFIED STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

From the whole group voting and subsequent discussion session, the following strategic directions were endorsed:

- ❖ A structured process involving a Government level Taskforce to review existing legislation and develop one policy for Transport Corridors.
- ❖ Improving integration and co-ordination of authorities and issues through:
 - the development generic Roadside Management Guidelines, and
 - a conservation database using Shire maps to highlight biodiverse rich areas.
- ❖ Planning guidelines developed from the single policy for Transport Corridors and adopted at the Local Government level.
- ❖ Promote roadside conservation within Local Government.
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- ❖ Continue the focus on education with particular emphasis on the general public, community groups and on-ground workers.
- ❖ Maintain a focus on weeds and herbicide spraying as major degrading threats to roadsides.
- ❖ Approach WA Municipal Association or the Minister for Local Government for funding support for RCC.
- ❖ Support Main Roads WA to develop an auditing program for Local Government road grants to ensure that conservation work is undertaken.

OUTCOME SIX – NEXT STEPS

The workshop agreed that the outcomes should be presented to the Roadside Conservation Committee at their next meeting on Monday, 12 June 2000 for consideration and implementation.

