

Annual Report 2001 -2002
The Roadside Conservation Committee



Terms of Reference

To coordinate and promote the conservation and effective management of native vegetation on road and rail reserves for the benefit of the environment and the people of Western Australia

Mode of Operation

The care, control and management of most public road reserves in this State are vested in a local government authority under the Local Government Act or the Main Roads Western Australia under the Main Roads Act. The Roadside Conservation Committee (RCC) has no powers to regulate for, or enforce, the protection of roadside vegetation.

The RCC's approach to its task is set by the words "*To coordinate and promote*" in its terms of reference. This is entirely based on cooperation, liaison and the voluntary acceptance, by all who work in the roadside environment, of management practices, which maintain a safe and efficient road system, while concurrently ensuring the sustainability of the many values present within the roadside.

Three interrelated means are used to pursue this aim:

- (i) Promotion in various ways, including providing useable information such brochures policies, manuals and guidelines, of the multiple values of remnant vegetation, along road and rail reserves.
- (ii) Funding and encouraging research on issues relevant to the management of linear reserves, particularly to clarify their various values, and to seek innovative methods for managing them so as to ensure the sustenance of remnant vegetation within transport corridors.
- (iii) Collating and providing information and advice on the management of cultural and natural resources present within road and rail reserves.

RCC Membership, June 31st 2002

The past year has seen some changes to the membership of the RCC, namely the resignation of Water Corporation from the RCC and the addition of the Conservation Council of WA. Also this year Cr Tony Ietto resigned from the RCC as a member for local government who currently have no elected representatives on the RCC. It is expected that two new local government representatives will take up their position on the RCC in the near future. Current membership of the RCC is:

Dr Ken Atkins (Chairman)
Department of Conservation and Land
Management

Dr Robert Howard
Main Roads Western Australia

Mr Jim Ironside
Australian Railroad Group

2 Vacant (country elected member)
Western Australian Municipal Association

Mr Mick McCarthy
Western Australian Municipal Association
Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council

Mr Brian Moyle
Western Australian Wildflower Society

Mr G Beeston
Agriculture Western Australia

Mr Jeff Mustard
Fire & Emergency Services Authority

Mr Nathan McQuoid
Greening Australia Western Australia

Mr Craig Morgan

Western Power

Mr Dean Solmundsen
AlintaGas

Mr Chris Tallentire
WA Conservation Council

Mr David A Lamont
Executive Officer

Meetings

During the past year the Roadside Conservation Committee continued to meet on a quarterly basis. The increasing public awareness of the value of roadside vegetation has resulted in a noticeable increase in the public complaints about alleged excessive clearing of remnants in transport corridors. It is apparent that a number of agencies working in the transport corridor environment are not aware of the values associated with this vegetation or unwilling to provide adequate protection for it.

Finance

The Department of Conservation and Land Management and Main Roads Western Australia each pay 50% of the Executive Officers salary. However all costs associated with servicing the RCC, e.g. office space secretarial support etc are met by CALM. The RCC has no financial administration functions.

GIS Mapping and Roadside Surveys of Conservation Values

This project which has been ongoing since 1987 continues and involves organising local community groups to survey the roadsides within their local area. Training and support is provided for the volunteer data collection. A feature of current roadside surveys has been the desire by local community groups to map the occurrence of environmental weeds on

roadsides. This is now an integral part of all roadside surveys and provides a useful overview of the individual species present as well as an overview of the extent of weed infestation. Data from these is used to generate a series of maps that indicates roadside conservation value, remnant vegetation on adjoining landscape and weed infestations of roadsides. CALM's Geographic Information Section of the Information Management Branch now processes this data.

Liaison and Public Relations

The RCC has continued to liaise with state and local government and community groups, e.g. Greening Australia WA, landcare groups, Main Roads WA, FESA and CALM on roadside conservation issues. Information regarding roadside conservation has been disseminated by a variety of mediums, e.g.

- written material for print media, eg, Community Newspapers, Western Wildlife etc;
- displays at country shows, e.g. Dowerin, Wagin;
- response to public complaints re roadside conservation matters and requests from public for information.

Training

During the past year the RCC has collaborated with Main Roads WA in providing a series of two day workshops for Main Roads staff and the staff of their term net contractors. To date workshops have been held at Northam, Bunbury, Albany, Kalgoorlie and Geraldton.

Additionally the RCC has provided training workshops for a number of Shires and community groups as requested.