



Mundijong Road Reserve

by Robyn Luu

The major threats to the small but nationally important **Mundijong Road Reserve** are being tackled by several local community groups and government agencies working in cooperation.

On the eastern side of the Swan Coastal Plain, where more than 90 per cent of native vegetation has been cleared, remnant vegetation on roadsides plays an important role in the conservation of biodiversity. One unique roadside remnant occurs on Mundijong Road, south of Perth. Though only 36.1 hectares, the reserve is 12 kilometres long, and runs along Mundijong Road, from Paterson Road to the Rockingham Shire boundary. Mundijong Road Reserve varies from 25 to 45 metres in width, and includes 'Duckpond Reserve', a triangular 2.9-hectare remnant at its western end.

Mundijong Road Reserve has extremely high conservation, scientific and educational values. It forms one of only two intact transects of native



vegetation running east-west across the Swan Coastal Plain, providing a snapshot of how the vegetation (and therefore the landscape) varies from the scarp to the coast. The road reserve also contains four rare plant communities, including two woodlands dominated by marri (*Corymbia calophylla*) and two claypan communities, as well as numerous species of rare flora. Because of these values, and the generally good condition of the vegetation, the reserve is of State and national significance.

Bush Forever

The two reserves make up a Bush Forever site. Bush Forever is concerned with protecting regionally significant bushland and associated wetlands in parts of the Swan Coastal Plain. Together with Soldiers Road Flora Reserve, they form a corridor of bushland from Byford to Duckpond Road and also connect with Byford to Serpentine Rail/Road Reserve, increasing its significance as a corridor. The reserve is used by walkers, birdwatchers and picnickers, and has been designated as a Flora Road, a public acknowledgement of particular roadside values.

The fact that the Mundijong Road vegetation still exists is because of the reserve's association with the early timber-milling industry at Jarrahdale. In 1872, a rail line was constructed from Jarrahdale's first sawmill to a newly-built jetty at Rockingham. The land set aside and used for the railway is the present location of Mundijong Road Reserve. The railway line was used until the mid-1940s. In 1950, the rails and sleepers were removed and the vegetation allowed to regenerate.

Members of the local community—including the Jarrahdale Land Care District Committee, one of its subcommittees known as the Roadside Care Volunteers, the Serpentine-Jarrahdale Land Care Centre, and officers and councillors of the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale—have been working together to care for Mundijong Road Reserve. With the help of external grants (such as the



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Verticordia heath in Mundijong Road.
Photo – Greg Keighery

Top *Casuarina obesa* clay flats dominated by *Acacia lasiocarpa* var. *bracteolata* on Mundijong Road.
Photo – Greg Keighery

Above left Information bay constructed by the Green Corps team.

Left Planting Mundijong Road.
Photos – C Rankin



Natural Heritage Trust), and with some assistance from a Green Corp team, the community has been mapping and spraying for dieback disease, collecting and propagating seed, planting 2,500 seedlings in degraded areas and undertaking other conservation measures. Green Corps has established an information bay at the eastern end of Mundijong Road Reserve to inform the public of the significance of the site.

The long, linear shape of Mundijong Road and Duckpond reserves means both reserves are vulnerable to weed invasion from adjacent paddocks. The Roadside Care Volunteers, with assistance from the Land Care Centre's Bush Rehabilitation Officer and the Shire's Environmental Officer, have been controlling noxious weeds, including watsonia (*Watsonia* spp.) and love grass (*Eragrostis curvula*), and gradually removing woody weeds including *Casuarina glauca*. Particular emphasis has been placed on the removal of watsonia infestations from high conservation areas. Despite these activities, weed invasion continues to threaten significant areas of bushland

on both reserves. However, even small remnants such as these often exhibit surprising resistance to weed invasion, particularly if left undisturbed.

The Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) is committed to maintaining the conservation values of Mundijong Road. In recent times, the Western Australian Threatened Species and Communities Unit (with funding assistance from the Natural Heritage Trust) and the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale have employed a consultant to write a management plan for the reserves. The plan is being completed in collaboration with the local community groups, local government and the department, and should be completed this year.

The Mundijong Road and Duckpond reserves are not yet vested in the Conservation Commission so are not yet under the care, control and management of the department. Their management is the joint responsibility of all stakeholders involved with the area. The department will continue to work with other stakeholders and assist the Roadside Care Volunteers wherever possible. The Roadside Care

Top Watsonia weed, introduced as an ornamental plant from South Africa.
Photo – Jiri Lochman

Above Volunteers planting Mundijong Road

Above left Drain maintenance is a threat to Mundijong Road Reserve.
Photos – C Rankin

Volunteers are to be congratulated for their tireless work and commitment to the area. It is a great example of community support for the environment and the extremely positive work that volunteers can do.



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