

REVEGETATION

RECONNECTIONS A NEW LANDSCAPE-SCALE REVEGETATION PROJECT ON THE SOUTH COAST

Barry Heydenrych

SHELL and Greening Australia are partners in a project that addresses some of Australia's key environmental issues whilst researching a "multiple outcome" approach to CO₂ capture. The challenge for this new partnership is to undertake large-scale revegetation that is environmentally sustainable, socially positive and economically feasible, while also adding value to existing regional conservation activities. By combining their skills, knowledge and experience, Shell and Greening Australia have devised a three year project with multiple outcomes which include:

- ▶ Reconstructing native vegetation in strategic areas on a large scale to recreate habitats for declining wildlife, provide protection against wind and water erosion and reduce the impact of salinity;
- ▶ Working with landholders, including indigenous groups, to develop and trial new forms of biodiversity-focussed agriculture that improve the environment whilst developing crops with commercial returns e.g. native sandalwood, indigenous edible crops;
- ▶ Using biodiverse, dry-country revegetation to sequester (store) carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas, in ways that also deliver tangible ecological and biodiversity benefits;
- ▶ Developing new models for carbon accounting valid for biodiverse revegetation;
- ▶ Working with groups such as the Fitzgerald Biosphere Group, a community-based organisation whose objectives include developing sustainable agriculture in their region, to further develop skills and



Experimental "industrial strength" direct seeding at Corackerup, funded through the Reconnections project

knowledge amongst local communities.

Information and skills sharing between local communities and experts in the fields of revegetation and carbon accounting will underpin the work of the project. In addition, skills development will be facilitated through hands on involvement of Green Corps teams with local communities over the lifetime of the project.

Importantly, this project contributes to and supports Greening Australia's work as a major partner in the ambitious landscape-scale project known as Gondwana Link (see article on page 17 of this issue). Reconnections is focussed in the Corackerup and Bremer Valleys, which lie between the Stirling Range and Fitzgerald River National Parks. The region contains many locally endemic plant species, as well as a number of wildlife species under threat, such as the Western

Whipbird, Tammar Wallaby and possibly Chuditch, as well as abundant Malleefowl. While it has been fragmented by land clearing in the past, large areas of bushland remain - a valuable area to restore and protect.

The first major part of the Reconnections project, revegetation of damaged landscapes, began in the winter of 2004 with approximately 100 hectares of native vegetation being established, primarily by direct seeding. The plantings have a range of outcomes, focused both on pure biodiversity and mixed biodiversity plantings with potentially commercial native species, both of which have a range of benefits, including nature conservation and carbon storage. The information gathered from this initial work will help determine whether this 'multiple outcome' approach can be applied to a wider landscape, and by doing so, offer input into the

also provide advice to the Federal Government on heritage matters.

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thesis. School of Environmental and Recreation Management, Uni. S.A., Adelaide.

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further development of Australia's Greenhouse Gas and Natural Resource Management Strategies and to revegetation efforts across larger areas of Western Australia. Shell and Greening Australia are working with the Cooperative Research Centre for Greenhouse Accounting in developing the carbon accounting methodology.

Importantly, Shell funding of \$500,000 is being utilised as catalytic funding to lever an additional \$500,000 of "in kind" or financial

support from a variety of sources over the next three years. From an international perspective, Shell believes this project will provide valuable insights into how similar projects can be applied around Australia and in other countries.

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Disclaimer: Greening Australia is a partner in the Gondwana Link Project, a project which involves the successful drawing together of a diversity of partners with a diversity of approaches and views. Greening Australia acknowledges that, in some cases, our funding sources do not align with other partners funding policies. No financial relationship between the Reconnections project and other Gondwana link partners is implied.