



## The REC Newsletter

May 2012 Edition 10

The aim of this newsletter is to share information about the management of NSW linear reserve environments and profile the NSW Roadside Environment Committee (REC). For more information on the REC, including how to create roadside vegetation management plans, go to: [www.rta.nsw.gov.au/rec](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/rec)

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### Latest news from the REC

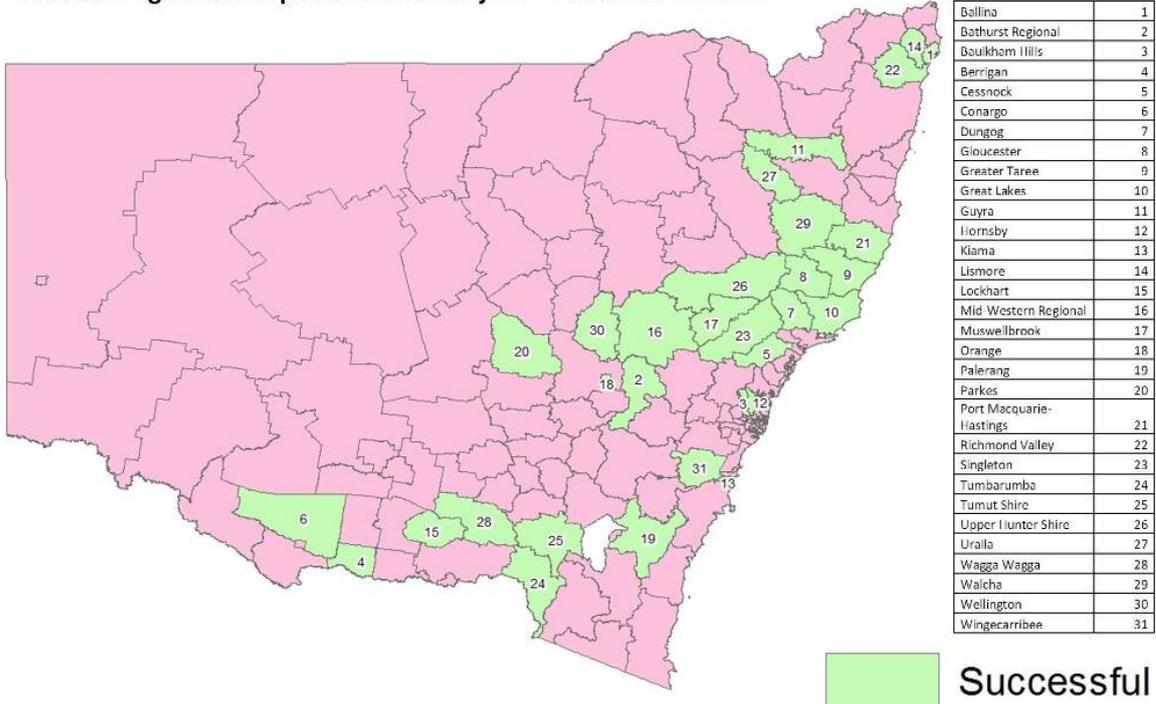
- ❖ At its last meeting, the REC received a presentation from Mr Vince Kelly, Group Manager Design and Project Management on Essential Energy's environmental management policies, plans and procedures. He outlined Essential Energy's environmental management measures related to new construction, refurbishment and maintenance. A guiding document is the Safety, Security and Environment Handbook. More details can be found at <http://www.essentialenergy.com.au/#>

### Roadside Vegetation Implementation Projects (RVIP) Underway



The RVIP is funding a total of 28 projects, involving 31 councils from across NSW. The map below details the geographic spread of the funded projects.

## Roadside Vegetation Implementation Project – Successful Councils



### Key activities of the RVIP

The most recent activities of the RVIP include:

- Finalising the payments for the first instalment of funds to all councils.
- Completing and distributing proformas for progress and final reports to monitor and evaluate projects.
- Seeking input from RVIP councils in relation to the best mechanism for information sharing, including a short survey to determine support, and structure of a potential event to facilitate this exchange.

### Media and promotion

The March 2012 edition of Local Agenda, the official magazine of the Local Government Association and Shires Association of NSW includes an article '[Councils driving roadside vegetation management](#)'. See pages 14 and 15. This article outlines the role of councils in managing roadside vegetation and details the risks associated when roadside vegetation values are not acknowledged. Hard copies of the magazine can be provided by contacting: [kirsty.mcintyre@lgsa.org.au](mailto:kirsty.mcintyre@lgsa.org.au)

### RVIP profiles

To share the types of projects underway through the RVIP, profiles will be included in REC newsletters. More information on projects profiled can be provided by the council involved, or by contacting Kirsty McIntyre, Project Manager – RVIP, [kirsty.mcintyre@lgsa.org.au](mailto:kirsty.mcintyre@lgsa.org.au)

### RVIP Profile: Conargo Shire Council – Improving Conargo Shires Corridors of Green

Conargo is a rural shire in south-western NSW, with a small population of 1,710 people, but a large land area of 8750.9 sq km. The Council has successfully applied for a grant through the Roadside Vegetation Implementation Project (RVIP), and will work in collaboration with the Murray CMA to deliver the project.

The council's project will:

- Reduce the isolation of existing vegetation communities within project sites
- Engage, encourage and educate community and stakeholders on the importance of

- roadside vegetation management
- Increase understorey in priority sites within the project, to improve biodiversity

This project is allowing the council to link high conservation value vegetation on key roads in the area, involving extensive direct seeding in two key areas of 67 km and 105 km. Other works to be undertaken include reducing environmental risks involving extensive weed removal.

These works will allow connectivity of medium to high value conservation areas and will control competing exotic weeds. Interpretive signage will also be erected to identify high conservation value vegetation. The council will also undertake community awareness raising events including field walks, shire newsletters and seek local media coverage.

Endangered Ecological Communities including *Acacia pendula*, *Callitris* mixed woodland, grey box and bulloake/rosewood woodlands will be offered further protection through the proposed works. Other threatened species such as the Letter-winged Kite, Bush Stone Curlew, Superb Parrot, Barking Owl, Painted Honeyeater, Grey Crowned Babbler and Squirrel Glider are also set to benefit.

Council contact: John Trist, Conargo Shire Council [tristy@conargo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tristy@conargo.nsw.gov.au)

### Report from the Australasian Bat Society Conference - by Josie Stokes (NSW Roads and Maritime Services)



In April, I was lucky enough to attend the 15th Annual Australasian Bat Society Conference at Melbourne University with over 150 students, researchers, consultants and bat enthusiasts.

The presentations were diverse and included themes around health, conservation, management, research, biology, habitat and even fossil bats.

One of the highlights of the Bat Conference for me was the morning student sessions where university students presented findings from their bat research projects.

*Photo from Josie Stokes, RMS*

Pia Lentini from Australian National University (ANU) has been conducting microbat and invertebrate surveys in 32 travelling stock routes (TSRs) and adjacent paddocks in the NSW wheat-sheep belt. Her findings will help inform which TSRs are important for microbat conservation.

Pia surveyed good condition TSRs (those that are wide with lots of old trees with hollows, natural Eucalyptus regeneration, fallen logs, intact native ground cover, and occasional mid-storey shrubs) and poor condition TSRs (narrow, over-grazed, weed-infested, and often adjacent to sealed roads).

Preliminary results indicate more microbat species occur in good condition TSRs that have lots of habitat structures (trees, logs, shrubs, native cover), and also those which are wider. As most of the remnant vegetation in the TSRs has not been cleared like the surrounding paddocks, they contain some of the oldest trees in the landscape, and in large patches. This means good condition TSRs may contain lots of hollow-bearing trees which provide really important roost sites for microbats. The microbats then fly out at night into the surrounding paddocks to feed on crop pests.

Survey results also show that native pastures (as opposed to improved pasture or crop

pasture), were preferentially used by microbats. So, TSRs which are adjacent to native pastures form better quality habitat for bats and other wildlife than those adjacent to improved or crop pastures. Additionally, fewer numbers of microbats were found in TSRs that were adjacent to sealed roads but TSRs that ran next to unsealed laneways/roads supported healthier bat populations.

Key recommendations for managing microbats in TSRs in the wheat-sheep belt of NSW include:

- Trees in TSRs (but especially in paddocks) were found to be really important for birds, bees and bats, so tree retention should be encouraged. Clearing trees will have a negative impact on these species, and the services they provide to farmland (eg pollination and pest control).
- Fallen logs provide important habitat for microbats, therefore firewood removal and 'cleaning up' of paddocks should be discouraged.
- With paddock tree decline, TSR remnants that support both large old trees with hollows, and regenerating trees, are going to become increasingly important for biodiversity conservation.
- Managing and planning for TSRs and private land use cannot be done in isolation of one another, rather, the approach must be integrated.

### Rabbit Control Workshop



Rabbit control was the topic of a special workshop hosted by Murray CMA in Deniliquin recently. Guest Speaker Dr. Brian Cooke, Australia's foremost expert on rabbits, urged farmers to work with each other, the LHPA, Murray CMA and National Parks staff to effectively control rabbits.

Dr. Cooke explained that a single rabbit can graze over 400 metres from its warren, so it was important that farming neighbours work together, and collaborate with public land managers on adjoining roadsides or in forests and national parks.

*Photo from Nicky Bruce, Murray CMA*

A combination of biological and traditional control methods is the way to get on top of rabbits, which directly cost \$200 million in lost production annually. The best time to bait is often in autumn when rabbit numbers are low, rather than spring when the population explodes and those with immunity from viruses are at a peak.

He also urged farmers to rip carefully, and get advice from organisations like the Murray CMA, so that effective rabbit control was done with minimal impact on sensitive ecological areas, such as sandhills, which also may contain items of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Work undertaken by Dr. Cooke in South Australia has shown that when rabbits are controlled, native grasses respond well and more native mammals can be found, such as an endangered hopping mouse.

"We can improve the sustainability of both agricultural production and environmental value by controlling rabbits, and keeping on top of weeds", Dr. Cooke said.

"The benefit to the whole Australian economy of controlling rabbits has been estimated at \$1.6 Billion" he added.

The workshop was organised by Murray CMA and the Livestock & Health Protection Authority as part of their ongoing partnership to manage Travelling Stock Reserves and other Public Lands and to bring the latest information about calici virus to local landholders.

For more information contact Nicky Bruce – Murray CMA, [nicky.bruce@cma.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nicky.bruce@cma.nsw.gov.au)

### NSW Government's backyard targeted in Weed Blitz



[nsw.gov.au](http://nsw.gov.au)  
Your gateway to information  
& services in New South Wales

The NSW Government's own backyard is the focus of a \$2.5 million push to control problem weeds and improve agricultural productivity across the state

The NSW Government has a large land footprint and is committed to playing a leadership role in the control of invasive weeds. The new program will ramp up weed control, monitoring and coordination across the Government's 36 million hectare land portfolio taking in Crown Land and Travelling Stock Routes.

The state-wide measures build on the \$8 million regional Weeds Action Program and the roll-out of thirteen regional weed management projects across the State. Under the scheme, specific funding will be allocated to NSW DPI's Catchment and Lands and Livestock Health and Pest Authorities for on-the-ground weed management, particularly targeting Crown Lands and travelling Stock Routes.

New initiatives include:

- Herbicide trials for the effective control of serrated tussock and overcoming herbicide resistance issues;
- Improved management of fireweed and other widespread species, including the provision of best practice advice for landholders;
- Improved identification and monitoring by Catchment Management Authorities of widespread weeds impacting on livestock, plants, crops and biodiversity assets.
- Parthenium weed strategy, incorporating emergency response for new weed outbreaks, coordination and compliance of cross-border weed incursions.

For more information visit <http://www.nsw.gov.au/news/nsw-governments-backyard-targeted-weeds-blitz>

### Review of the Livestock Health and Pest Authorities



The NSW Government has released the review of the NSW Livestock Health and Pest Authority (LHPA) model for public comment. The review - conducted by independent consultant Terry Ryan - was commissioned mid-last year to investigate and address concerns with the LHPA model that was put in place in 2009.

Content regarding Travelling Stock Routes & Reserves can be found in:

- Key findings (pg 8)
- Recommendation 7 (pg 13)
- Attachment 8

In summary the report notes that \$3.1 million per annum of rate payers money is spent on maintaining the existing network. "While particular parcels of the TSR system may deliver values, such as nature conservation and recreation to the broader NSW community and some grazing opportunities for a small section of the LHPA ratepayer base, there is no longer a robust case for landholders to continue to manage reserved public lands to support these values."

The report does make note of the significant work that has “already been undertaken for the National Parks and Wildlife Service, National Parks Association and other organisations on methodologies for assessing usages and values of TSRs of a non-agricultural purpose.”

There were a large number of submissions drawing attention to the fact that there were many other attributes of TSRs other than for use by livestock. These included environmental remnant vegetation, wildlife corridors, inland fishing, Aboriginal heritage and cultural heritage values that benefited the community in general. The issue of who should fund TSRs was raised at the public meetings especially for their benefits of a non-agricultural nature. There was a general acceptance by all participants in the public meetings discussing this issue that ratepayers alone should not be expected to pay for these public benefits.

In some public meetings, landholders made claims that neighbouring TSRs to them were a "pipeline for the spread of weeds and diseases". In one case the landholder said his neighbouring TSR was extremely rundown and would be uneconomic for him to utilise but he would consider leasing it as a means of ensuring his own farm biosecurity is not compromised by travelling stock bringing in new weeds or potential livestock diseases. It is accepted that the Rangers do inspect stock for diseases before providing permits.

Further information can be found at:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/about/legislation-acts/review/lhpa>

### Ecological Consultants Association of NSW Annual Conference



The Ecological Consultants Association of NSW 2012 annual conference will focus on Roadside Ecology.

Guest speakers include Dr. Peter Spooner (Charles Sturt University), Kylie Soanes (University of Melbourne) and Josie Stokes (Roads and Maritime Services).

**Date:** Monday 30 July 2012

**Location:** City Beach Function Centre, Wollongong

Further information is available at <http://www.ecansw.org.au/>

### Restoring Endangered Ecological Communities on Albury's Roadside



Albury City Council has been successful in its application to NSW Environmental Trust for funding for a three year project under the Vegetation Corridors/Vegetation Management category.

The project is titled 'Restoring Endangered Ecological Communities on Albury's Roadsides' and will involve three years of awareness raising and on-ground works on some of Albury's high and medium conservation value roadsides.

The project will involve the restoration and revegetation of approximately 6km of roadside reserves, as well as 200m of minor stream drainage line in an area 5km north west of the Albury CBD.

These roadside corridors provide links from the large, unfragmented habitat of Nail Can Hill Reserve, across the Albury Ranges, to the Thurgoona Environmental Lands corridors. The project will also involve an awareness and education initiative involving local residents, and highlighting the significance of EECs and the role remnant roadsides play in connecting fragmented landscapes. The aim of the project is to enhance the biodiversity value of the roadside vegetation (comprising an endangered ecological community) and improve the

habitat quality of the corridors.

The targeted roadsides comprise high, medium and low priority conservation values according to the Native Vegetation Management Plan for Roadsides, Waterways and Council Controlled Land in the City of Albury. This project will increase the biodiversity of the area, restore species diversity to the EECs on the roadsides, increase potential for wildlife habitat, increase connection within the landscape, and educate local residents about the significance of their area.

The vegetation type in the project area is Box-Gum Woodland. In NSW, this community is described as White Box Yellow Box Blakely's Red Gum Woodland and is listed as an Endangered Ecological Community. The Australian Government listing of White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland is a Critically Endangered Ecological Community.

There is a growing pressure on remnant vegetation on Albury roadsides from the clearing of native vegetation, removal of dead wood and dead trees, and the loss of hollow-bearing trees, all of which are listed as key threatening processes under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act. There is also a growing pressure from adjoining residents 'tidying up' outside their boundary (clearing and mowing), spreading weeds and encouraging growth of garden escapes. This results in the gradual disappearance of remnant native vegetation including endangered ecological communities. Allowing this behaviour to continue will result in further spread of weeds and loss of remnant vegetation and the total transformation of roadsides and remnant vegetation corridors from native habitat to introduced, totally modified environments, further displacing our endangered ecological communities.

This project is due to commence later in 2012 and will complement the 'Protect Albury's Woodlands' campaign that is currently running via regular TV, Radio and print advertisements. This project was funded by the Murray CMA as part of the Public Lands Biodiversity funding.

For more information contact Sarah Keir – Albury City Council, [SKeir@alburycity.nsw.gov.au](mailto:SKeir@alburycity.nsw.gov.au)

### **Latest News – Biodiversity Fund Round 1 Approvals**

The Australian Government has approved \$271 million worth of grants in the first round of the Biodiversity Fund. A total of 317 successful projects will revegetate, rehabilitate and restore over 18 million hectares of the Australian landscape over the next six years. Around \$31 million in funding will go towards successful projects in the first year.

In the lifetime of the funding, it is anticipated that over 100,000 hectares of land nationwide will be revegetated, while close to 5 million hectares will be restored. Around 13 million hectares will be protected from invasive species.

Just over a third of the Biodiversity Fund projects indicated that they will go on to participate in the Carbon Farming Initiative.

For more information visit <http://www.environment.gov.au/cleanenergyfuture/biodiversity-fund/projects/round1.html>

### **Murraguldrrie Station Droving Adventure**

Murraguldrrie Station is coordinating a droving adventure through southern NSW. Focusing on highlighting rural Australia's stock route history, conserving endemic flora and fauna and working with indigenous custodians of the land, the droving trip will run from June to late September 2012. Expressions of interest are sort from young and old, city and country, experienced and beginner riders to join this unique opportunity for one week or many. Contact Arthur Webb at [murraguldrriestation@gmail.com](mailto:murraguldrriestation@gmail.com) for more details.

**Do you have an article on Linear Reserve Environmental Management to share?**

The REC encourages readers to submit ideas or article outlines to the REC newsletter. If you have a project, idea or any other piece of news regarding linear reserve environmental management that you would like to share with others from around the State, we would love to hear from you. Email your ideas or article outlines to [abryce@molinoestewart.com.au](mailto:abryce@molinoestewart.com.au)

**For more information or if you wish to be added to the REC newsletter mailing list contact:**

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**Links:**

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[Molino Stewart](#)