



The REC Newsletter

August 2010 Edition 3

The aim of this newsletter is to profile the NSW Roadside Environment Committee (REC) and share information about the management of NSW linear reserve environments. For more information on the REC, including how to create roadside vegetation management plans, go to:

www.rta.nsw.gov.au/environment/roadsideenvironcommittee/index.html

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Latest news from the REC

The REC recently released its Annual Report for 2009-10. Based on its strategic plan, the REC carried out several key actions including:

1. Audit of Roadside Vegetation Management Plans (RVMPs) in NSW. From 2005-08, the REC managed a program funded by the NSW Environmental Trust that built the capacity of many local councils to develop RVMPs to help them better manage local road environments. Not all RVMPs were developed under this program and therefore the REC conducted an audit to ascertain the extent of the RVMPs and similar plans.

The audit found that 95 out of the 130 (73%) rural, regional and peri-urban councils in NSW had RVMPs or similar plans. However, only nine of the councils had this information available on their websites. The REC is investigating ways to further promote the development and communication of RVMPs.

2. Communication Plan. The REC commissioned Molino Stewart Pty Ltd to design its communications plan. The plan included collation of a stakeholder mailing list, updating the REC Speaker's Kit and updating the REC website. All these actions were completed in 2009-10.
3. REC Newsletter. As part of the Communication Plan, an electronic REC newsletter was commenced to highlight best practices in linear reserve environmental management and profile the work of the REC. Two newsletters were produced

(February 2010, May 2010) and emailed to over 140 stakeholders across NSW and interstate.

4. Bushfire Management. Linear reserves can be a source of bushfires but also play an important role in their containment. As linear reserves are corridors that may contain critical habitat, issues around environmental burning also need to be considered in management. With the guidance of the RFS member, the REC discussed bushfire management issues with a view to developing a strategic approach or position.
5. Clear zone assessment spreadsheets. The REC had previously commissioned consultants ARRB to provide a practical approach for local road managers that will provide guidance on decision making with respect to managing roadside hazards, particularly trees, while minimising any adverse impacts on the natural environment. The project was undertaken for roads with less than 1,000 vehicles per day.

Through member IPWEA, the REC is trialling spreadsheets from the ARRB study that aim to provide a simple approach for assessing and treating hazardous road segments or sites with roadside trees.

To obtain a copy of the Annual Report please contact the REC Executive Officer (details below).

Victorian Bushfires Report – Implications for Roadside Management



The Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission has released its final report into the devastating 2009 Victorian bushfires. The report lists 67 recommendations in regards to reducing the risk and potential impacts from future bushfires, including some recommendations for the management of roadside reserves.

Photo: Sydneycare

The summary report outlines the following observations regarding roadside vegetation and its implications for bushfire management:

"Managing clearing along roadsides is a particular challenge for municipal councils. The councils are responsible for bushfire prevention and mitigation and biodiversity management along local and some arterial roads; VicRoads has similar responsibilities for rural freeways and arterial roads. In some cases these roadsides contain the only remnant native vegetation in an area and offer important wildlife corridors and shelter. Consequently, differing objectives for road safety, biodiversity protection and bushfire prevention can be difficult to reconcile."

"In the case of bushfires, roads and roadsides can be important fuel breaks, so road managers need to reduce the fuel levels in preparation for the fire season. Roads are also essential for people seeking to escape fires and for emergency services seeking access to fires. Since the 2009 fires land and road managers and the CFA have identified high-risk roads and are carrying out fuel-reduction work to reduce the future risks of bushfire."

"The Commission is aware of the unresolved tensions between mitigation of bushfire risk and environmental conservation in the approach to roadside clearing and the legislative complexities to do with road safety, biodiversity and bushfire risk mitigation that affect roadside management. These concerns would be reduced if the State's planning provisions were amended to facilitate a broad range of roadside works to reduce bushfire risk, if municipal councils received better guidance to help them resolve competing

environmental and bushfire management objectives, and if VicRoads implemented a systematic statewide assessment of bushfire risk for all roads.”

Of the 67 recommendations made, several relate to roadside management including:

RECOMMENDATION 60:

The State amend the exemptions in clause 52.17-6 of the Victoria Planning Provisions to ensure that the provisions allow for a broad range of roadside works capable of reducing fire risk and provide specifically for a new exemption where the purpose of the works is to reduce bushfire risk.

RECOMMENDATION 61:

The State and Commonwealth provide for municipal councils adequate guidance on resolving the competing tensions arising from the legislation affecting roadside clearing and, where necessary, amend environment protection legislation to facilitate annual bushfire-prevention activities by the appropriate agencies.

RECOMMENDATION 62:

VicRoads implement a systematic statewide program of bushfire risk assessment for all roads for which it is responsible, to ensure conformity with the obligations in s. 43 of the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 and with the objectives expressed in the VicRoads 1985 Code of Practice.

For further information and to download the report go to:

www.royalcommission.vic.gov.au/Commission-Reports

Local Roadsides the Next Frontier for Glyphosate Resistant Weeds



MEDIA RELEASE: 23 June 2010

Source: Australian Glyphosate Sustainability Working Group

Local communities throughout Queensland are being urged to help prevent the development and spread of glyphosate-resistant weeds which pose a threat to Australian primary industries and the environment.

Photo: Roadside glyphosate resistant weeds.

Glyphosate resistant annual ryegrass has recently been confirmed along several kilometres of roadside in semi-rural South Australia. This roadside, like much of Australia's 810,000 kilometres of roads, has a 20 year history of using glyphosate alone for weed control. More cases of glyphosate resistance are likely if management practices don't change. This is the first recorded case in Australia of a weed becoming resistant to glyphosate due to roadside management practices and is a highly significant discovery. The infestation was first observed in 2008 and seed was collected and tested for resistance at the University of Adelaide.

The herbicide glyphosate plays a critical weed control role in all parts of Australian agriculture as well as other sectors of the community including roadsides, railways, parks and gardens and environmentally sensitive areas.

Over-reliance on glyphosate for control leads to weed populations being dominated by resistant individuals, with the herbicide no longer effective. Weed seeds then spread to other areas by water, wind and machinery creating problems for roadside management and adjacent landholders. Currently there are glyphosate resistant populations of annual ryegrass, awnless barnyard grass, and liverseed grass in Australia. Overseas there are another 4 grasses and 8 broadleaf weed species that have developed resistance to

glyphosate.

"Although the South Australian infestation was first noticed in 2008 it had clearly been there for some time for it to have spread so far," said Associate Professor Chris Preston, Chair of the Australian Glyphosate Sustainability Group. "Roadsides are routinely treated with glyphosate herbicide alone with few other effective weed control techniques being used, which should be ringing alarm bells with roadside managers."

Associate Professor Preston says authorities, councils and communities must start looking at a range of roadside weed management techniques to prevent the development and spread of glyphosate resistant weeds along roadsides and movement into other sectors of the community. Associate Professor Preston believes more planning needs to go into roadside vegetation management to prevent the development of glyphosate resistant weeds, while meeting road safety requirements.

"Preventing the seed set of those weeds surviving the herbicide application is critical to the management of herbicide resistance," stated Professor Preston. "This applies as much to roadside weed management as it does in farming."

Anyone suspecting glyphosate resistant weeds should contact their state expert with details available from the Australian glyphosate Working Group web site:

www.glyphosateresistance.org.au/suspect%20glyphosate.htm

The Australian Glyphosate Sustainability Working Group, which is supported by the Grains Research & Development Corporation and sponsored by Syngenta, has a web site with all the information you wanted to know about glyphosate resistance including a register of glyphosate resistant weed populations as well as guides and links for management of glyphosate resistance in different industries.

Go to: www.glyphosateresistance.org.au for more information.

ANPC 8th National Conference



The Australian Network for Plant Conservation Inc (ANPC) is holding its 8th National Conference: Planning Conservation to Achieving Restoration: a conference for everyone involved in conserving Australia's unique flora and native vegetation.
28 Sept – 1 October 2010, Perth WA.

Photo: *Banksia brownii*, David Coates

This conference is for practitioners, researchers, governments, community groups, non-government organisations and anyone else interested in plant conservation.

The keynote speakers are:

Prof Richard Hobbs – University of Western Australia

Dr Kingsley Dixon – Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority Perth

Important dates at a glance:

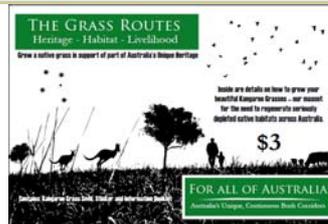
- ❖ Registration open until 13 September
- ❖ Welcome reception 27 September
- ❖ Conference 28 and 29 September
- ❖ Mid-conference field trips 30 September

- ❖ Workshops 1 October
- ❖ Post conference field trip 2 – 4 October

Further information can be found on the ANPC website:
www.anpc.asn.au/conferences/2010/ or contact the ANPC office (anpc@anpc.asn.au; ph: 02 6250 9509)

Watch this space: The next edition of the ANPC Journal is sponsored by the REC and will focus on linear reserve management. More details will follow in the November REC Newsletter.

The Grass Routes Initiative



The Grass Routes is an initiative working for the creation of a unique Australia-wide network of bush corridors. These 'grass routes' are essential to protecting our heritage and native habitats, as well as providing areas for sustainable livelihoods.

Article supplied by the Grass Routes Initiative

According to Grass Routes, "To achieve this vision it requires a ground swell of action from all Australians – citizens, organisations, businesses, scientists, drovers, politicians – to collaborate and contribute towards the conservation, regeneration and sustainability of our unique bush corridors. It needs a new network to form and build a common ground for the shared and sustainable use of these habitats."

"In short, we need your help to create a truly Australian grass routes movement! Please consider joining in. You can buy (and sell!) Kangaroo Grass Seed Packs, promote Showpiece Stretches of existing bush corridors or make a tax deductible donation. You may have other brilliant ideas about how we can achieve this vision and we would welcome hearing from you."

The Grass Routes work is being led by a network of partners and is sanctioned by the NSW National Parks Association in close collaboration with the NSW and Qld Travelling Stock Route (TSR) Coalitions. The original idea for The Grass Routes grew from a desire to increase the level of public awareness and support for the retention and sustained management of the TSR network. During this work it became clear that there was both a need to protect the unique TSR network and an opportunity to link and extend it right across Australia.

The Grass Routes is "about supporting the choice for all Australians to retain, extend and sustain our native habitats, and so create a globally unique network and resource of connected bush corridors for habitat, heritage and livelihoods."

"This vision is far from fancy. There are significant sections of TSR and other landscape already being used in this shared and integrated way – some of which are being funded and resourced by private citizens and local community groups. Plus there are three large scale efforts being The Great Eastern Ranges, Gondwana Link and the Trans-Australia Eco Link."

"We believe that a connected Australia-wide network of bush corridors is a critically essential piece in the long term sustainability of Australia – culturally, socially, financially and environmentally."

"We have chosen Kangaroo Grass as our mascot for the need to regenerate seriously

depleted native habitats across Australia. Proceeds from these Seed Packs are being invested equally towards:

- ❖ Work on local bush corridors;
- ❖ Building support, partnerships and shared resources like our website; and,
- ❖ Reinvesting into future awareness and fund raising initiatives."

For more information about The Grass Routes, to buy or sell Seed Packs, help us with a Showpiece Stretch of corridor, or get involved in some other way contact:

Adam Blakester on 02 6775 2501 or 0419 808 900 or email: adam@paradigmplay.net

PLEASE NOTE: There are many sub-varieties of Kangaroo Grass. The seed provided is for use in gardens, rockeries, etc. Regeneration of grass lands should always use the appropriate local sub-species of Kangaroo Grass.

Funding Opportunities

Community Action Grants are now open for projects between \$5 000 and \$20 000. The grants are targeted towards **established community based organisations** which have sustainable farming or protecting and enhancing the natural environment as their principal objective.

Examples of eligible projects include those that aim to:

- ❖ "reduce the impact of invasive species, particularly rabbits, feral pigs and wild dogs, and Weeds of National Significance" (serrated tussock)
- ❖ "increase the uptake of sustainable farm and land management practices"
- ❖ "increase the number of farmers adopting activities that contribute to ongoing conservation and protection of biodiversity"

For more information on Caring for Our Country Community Action Grants please visit: www.nrm.gov.au. Applications close Tuesday 31 August 2010.

Do you have an article on Linear Reserve Environmental Management for us?

The REC encourages readers to share ideas and information through 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 Councils, CMAs, industry and NGOs from around the State, we would love to hear from you. Email your ideas or articles to akarwaj@molinostewart.com.au

For more information contact:

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Links:

[REC Website](#)

[Molino Stewart](#)