

ROADSIDE MANAGEMENT PLANS

Guidelines for Authorities

This package covers management of 'linear reserves' – public land contained in long, narrow stretches like rail and road corridors and travelling stock routes. For convenience we have used 'roadsides' to cover all these. The package, however, can be used to better manage all forms of linear reserves.

Introduction

Roadside vegetation is a core community asset – in regions which have been subjected to extensive clearing, it can be Council's most valuable asset. Like all assets it must be managed and maintained.

There are three aspects to best practice management of vegetation on roadsides:

1. assessment – documenting roadside vegetation communities and rare flora, dividing roadside remnants into high, medium and low conservation value, and recording the results so they are accessible
2. planning – setting out Council policy on use, access, management, maintenance and harm to roadsides
3. training – for Council staff, subcontractors, utilities and community groups

The NSW Roadside Environment Committee (REC), funded by the RTA, is the peak advisory body balancing roadside protection and public safety. The REC recommends that Councils adopt these model guidelines.

We also recommend that Councils consider incorporating an appropriate form of the guidelines within an LEP, in order to set out clear rules covering their roadside assets, and to avoid having to deal with requests and proposals on an ad hoc basis. Having guidelines with no enforcement provisions means that Council is still obliged to deal individually with every issue or proposal affecting roadsides - maintenance, utility operations, fire prevention, hazard reduction, landcare projects, and damage to flora or fauna.

The model guidelines assume that Council has carried out assessments sufficient to categorise roadside vegetation as of high, medium or low conservation value. If this has not been completed, it is still open to a Council to adopt guidelines based on the model, with all roadside vegetation defined as 'high conservation value' unless otherwise stated. This will put the onus on agencies, groups or individuals wishing to carry out works on roadsides to obtain specific Council approval for their actions.

The REC can assist Councils to carry out inexpensive assessment of their roadside vegetation, supply the necessary forms and examples, source vegetation mapping within government agencies, and refer Councils to consultant assessors where necessary.

In terms of Council spending, both capital and recurrent, REC research shows conclusively that funds should be allocated in the following order:

- to ensure that areas of high conservation value vegetation and special management areas (heritage sites, cultural icons, locations for rare and threatened species) are able to continue as self maintaining – weed and pest free, protected from road or utilities works, supplied with appropriate grazing and fire regimes
- to improve medium conservation value areas towards high quality, self sustaining areas
- finally, to ensure that low conservation value areas are maintained so as to ensure safety of road users, avoid weed spread, assure fire control and not become eyesores for the travelling public

Model guidelines must be adapted to apply to local conditions. It is perfectly acceptable to add further sections, delete irrelevant provisions, insert penalties, lay down rules for revegetation or rehabilitation after unauthorised interference with roadsides, or work with other authorities and Catchment Management Authorities to prepare multi-Council and regional plans.

The REC can provide advice on plan preparation, or can supply a register of consultant assessors and planners experienced in the subject.

Please contact the REC for more information on issues such as

- stock control on roads, grazing duration and density
- weed control, spraying methods, chemical prohibitions
- control burns, acceptable levels of fuel, placement of firebreaks
- fauna on roadsides

Annexure 2 refers to legislation affecting roadside management, works, vegetation protection and safety of the travelling public. These Acts contain provisions which can require consents or assessments prior to any actions affecting native vegetation, irrespective of its classification or location.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR ROADSIDES WITHIN

These guidelines refer to all public roads and roadsides within other than those for which the RTA is responsible.

In all circumstances safety of the travelling public is a prime objective of Council policy.

1. Classification of roadsides
2. Collection of firewood
3. Collection of rocks, soil and sand
4. Collection of wildflowers and seed
5. Fire control
6. Grazing
7. Roadside construction and maintenance
8. Erosion Control
9. Vegetation enhancement and revegetation
10. Waste and litter
11. Weed management

1. Classification of roadsides

Roadsides within Shire have been classified within the following four categories – as marked on the attached plan.

- High Conservation Value (HCV) areas are in a relatively undisturbed state, contain a range of vegetation communities with regrowth and minimal weeds, requiring low maintenance. Can contain good wildlife habitat.
- Medium Conservation Value (MCV) areas are in a semi-natural condition. They have been modified, with weed incursion and loss of one or more storeys of vegetation. Provide a good opportunity for revegetation.
- Special Management (SM) areas contain heritage sites, rare and endangered species, rare fauna or culturally important plantings.
- All other areas are of Low Conservation Value (LCV) and are to be maintained to minimise the spread of weeds and exotics, fire and erosion.

In no circumstances can any work be carried out on or affecting SM or HCV areas without specific written approval from Council.

2. Collection of firewood

Firewood collection is expressly prohibited on all roads without specific approval from the Council.

Or

Firewood collection is expressly prohibited from all SM, HCV and MCV areas without specific written approval from Council.

3. Collection of rocks, soil and sand

Removal of rocks, soil or sand from any road is expressly prohibited without specific

approval from the Council.

4. Collection of wildflowers and seed

Department of Environment and Climate Change permits are required for collection of rare and threatened species. Seed collection must take place in accordance with the National FloraBank guidelines after consultation with the Council. No collection of seed or wildflowers from SM, HCV and MCV areas is permitted without specific written approval from Council.

Or

Department of Environment and Climate Change permits are required for collection of rare and threatened species. Seed collection must take place in accordance with the National FloraBank guidelines after consultation with the Council.

5. Fire control

- No firebreak is to be constructed or maintained other than in accordance with the Bushfire Risk Management Plan.
- No landowner or contractor is permitted to plough roadside reserves
- No firebreak is to be constructed or maintained within a SM or HCV area without specific written approval from Council.

and optionally

- Neighbouring landowners may create a chemical firebreak up to 0.5m wide along fence lines provided they do the same on their own property.

6. Grazing and travelling stock

No grazing or travelling stock are permitted within SM and HCV areas other than in accordance with a specific management plan for that area.

7. Roadside construction and maintenance

- No works of construction, maintenance, provision of utilities, erosion control or extension of existing facilities are to take place on SP, HCV or MCV areas without specific written approval from Council.
- All maintenance and construction works must be carried out following the guidelines within the REC 'Roadside Handbook – environmental guidelines for road construction and maintenance workers', available from Council.
- No maintenance or construction works may be commenced or signed off without a completed maintenance checklist – see attachment 3.

8. Erosion Control

Any works affecting Council roads, roadsides or reserves must adhere to erosion control measures signed off by Council (*insert responsible section*). Unless otherwise agreed, erosion control measures must remain in place until the completion of works and their removal is the responsibility of the contractor or person carrying out works.

9. Vegetation enhancement and revegetation

Any landcare or other community group wishing to carry out work on or affecting a SM, HCV or MCV area must obtain specific written approval from Council. Council may impose conditions relating to safety management, insurance cover and programming of work, as it deems necessary.

10. Waste and Litter

Travellers or residents dumping waste or litter on any roadside other than in Council provided waste containers will be prosecuted.

11. Weed Management

No landowner or contractor is permitted to plough roadside reserves, or to carry out any other form of weed control within SM, HCV or MCV areas without specific written approval from Council.

or

Any weed control on or affecting a SP, HCV or MCV area requires specific written approval from Council.

Annexure 1

Map of Shire showing roads and conservation value areas

Annexure 2

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

Local Government Act 1993

National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974

Native Vegetation Act 2003

Noxious Weeds Act 1993

Roads Act 1993

Rural Fires Act 1997

Rural Lands Protection Act 1998

Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)

Annexure 3: SITE MANAGEMENT ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

To be used for all rural roadside works.

Please note requirements for roadside managers to protect / maintain environmental assets - NPWS Act 1974, Local Government Act 1993, Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.
All works to be performed in accordance with the NSW Roadside Environment Roadside Handbook - Environmental Guidelines for Road Construction & Maintenance Workers 1996

Project Activity		
Road Name	From:	To:
Other Details		

Pre Works Checklist	Checked
Site inspection and approved vegetation pruning and removal marked	
Assess work area for possibility of significant vegetation, native fauna, and cultural or historical sites - consult appropriate agency	
Designated stock pile sites marked	
Provision for skimming, storage and return of topsoil to site	
All approved machinery turn around, parking and storage areas marked	
Spoil disposal site marked (include vegetation, soil or rubble)	
Limit of work site / construction zone marked	
Provision for machine and vehicle cleaning prior to entering works	
Road making materials free of weeds and weed seeds	
Exclusion zone, sensitive areas barricaded (significant vegetation / cultural site marked) - including within tree drip zone	
Staff (in house and contractor) briefed on work site operations and boundaries	
Noxious and pest plant removal	
Erosion /sediment/drainage and other pollutant control measures in place	
Survey significant plant, animal, cultural, historic and archaeological relics	
Vegetation disturbance outside table drain reviewed and minimised	
Entire site photographed	

Comments

Pre works checklist completed		
Overseer/Contractor		Date
Supervisor/Contract Supervisor		Date

Close Down Checklist	Checked
Machine and vehicle clean down of soil and plant debris on site implemented	
Work site litter removed	
Completed works photographed	
Reinstatement & rehabilitation works (including revegetation) completed	
Final inspection undertaken and approval provided	

Comments

Close down procedure completed		
Overseer/Contractor		Date
Supervisor/Contract Supervisor		Date

Compliance at construction site?

- Site boundaries clearly marked**
- Wheel tracks restricted**
- Fuel store bunded**
- Gravel heaps retained**
- No site vehicles under trees**
- Rubbish in bins**
- Trees fenced off**
- Tree trunks undamaged**
- Branches undamaged**
- Healthy vegetation protected**
- Site draining into holding pond**
- Site protected from the road**