

# WALGA Event: Management of Roadside Vegetation



**Date:** Friday, 12 April 2019  
**Time:** 10:00am – 3:30pm (Registration from 9:30am)  
**Venue:** Margaret River Council Chambers, 41 Wallcliffe Road, Margaret River  
**Cost:** \$88.00 (Incl GST)

## FORUM OVERVIEW

Please join us for this fantastic opportunity to hear about the management of roadsides to better protect vegetation, and improve vegetation condition and resilience. Case studies from land managers will provide examples of how the conservation of vegetation has been supported during road planning and maintenance works, whilst ensuring road safety and transport efficiency objectives are not compromised.

## PROGRAM

- 10:00am**      **Welcome and introduction**  
*Melanie Davies, Biodiversity and Sustainability Project Officer, WALGA*
- 10:05am**      **Local road networks – challenges and opportunities for Local Government**  
*Mark Batty, Executive Manager Environment and Waste, WALGA*
- 10:15am**      **Regulation of roadside clearing**  
*Samara Rogers, Acting Manager, Native Vegetation Regulation, DWER*
- 10:40am**      **Managing roadside vegetation for competing values in Southern Western Australia**  
*Greg Keighery, former Senior Principal Research Scientist, DBCA*
- 11:05am**      **Morning Tea**
- 11:25am**      **Protection of Conservation Significant Roadside Vegetation**  
*Kay Lehman, Environmental Officer, City of Busselton*
- 11:50pm**      **Risk and liability in roadside management**  
*Paul McBride, Senior Risk Consultant – Legal, Local Government Insurance Scheme*
- 12:15pm**      **Pruning, trimming and spraying maintenance and the roadside conservation zone**  
*Nick Casson, Executive Officer, Roadside Conservation Committee*
- 12:40pm**      **Panel question and answer session**
- 1:00pm**        **Lunch**
- 1:40pm**      **Management and maintenance of road reserves in the Shire of Jerramungup**  
*Murray Flett, Manager of Works and Steve Elson, Environment Officer; Shire of Jerramungup*
- 2:10pm**      **Assessing the conservation value of roadside vegetation**  
*Renata Zelinova, EPT Business Development Officer, WALGA*
- 2:35pm**      **Revegetation of degraded roadsides in the Shire of Kojonup**  
*Jane Kowald, NRM Officer and Marina Murray, Senior Horticulturalist, Shire of Kojonup*



- 3:05pm**      **Widening of North Walpole Road – a case study**  
*Michael Leers, Director Works and Services, Shire of Manjimup*
- 3:30pm**      **Close of Event**

## PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

**Mark Batty, Executive Manager Environment and Waste, WA Local Government Association (WALGA)**, will discuss how roads dominate the asset portfolio of most Local Governments in Western Australia, with \$904 million invested by the sector on the local road network in 2016/17. Mark will discuss external drivers that impact changes to the road network, and the challenges they may present for Local Governments in the maintenance and renewal of existing roads, or construction of new roads. Mark will also discuss WALGA's advocacy work to ensure that the road network is safe and efficient, and how roadside vegetation is considered as part of road asset management. Initiatives include the recent establishment of a Roadside Clearing Regulations Working Group, to work with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation on roadside clearing regulation and issues.

**Samara Rogers, Acting Manager, Native Vegetation Regulation, Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER)**, will discuss the approvals process for clearing of native vegetation in road reserves as per the provisions of the *Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004*, exemptions that may apply, and timelines for a decision and appeals. Mathew will discuss what information is required to be submitted in support of a clearing permit application. The Department is also working with WALGA and Main Roads WA to facilitate a more strategic approach to clearing requirements. Mathew will outline the benefits of a strategic approach to assessments of clearing permit applications.

**Greg Keighery, former Senior Principal Research Scientist, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)**, will discuss how Western Australia is a vast and highly biodiverse state, where the highly cleared road verges in the southern area provide a variety of uses, often seen as conflicting. They are corridors for the movement of wildlife between reserves and in some areas the only remaining habitat for native plants and animals. Greg will discuss how fine-scale biodiversity differences due to a high rate of species turnover are common along roadsides, and the implications of continued incremental losses. Importantly, roadside vegetation also gives an area its landscape character and 'sense of place' for both tourists and local communities. Greg will also outline how roadsides are the places readily seen by tourists and are a mirror to our treatment of the land and our sense of being a West Australian.

**Kay Lehman, Environmental Officer, City of Busselton**, will detail a recent project the City of Busselton undertook to protect conservation significant values of three sections of roadside vegetation, funded through a NRM Action Grant. Threats to the roadside vegetation in these sections included access by stock and vehicles, and impacts from feral animals and weed invasion. Working in partnership with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, management measures have included fencing, weed and feral animal control, revegetation works and collection of seed from threatened flora.



**Paul McBride, Senior Risk Consultant – Legal, Local Government Insurance Scheme (LGIS)**, will discuss how Local Government and road agencies have a duty of care to provide for safe travel, and are guided by recommendations from Austroads that cover the design, construction and maintenance of the road network in Australia. In instances where the recommended guidelines are difficult or unable to be achieved, a risk-based approach may be applied, which determines the engineering and safety treatments in areas of inherently higher risk. This approach can ensure safety is a priority but also accommodate the conservation of vegetation in areas shown to have low risk, or where the risk has been suitably mitigated by management actions. Paul will outline the liability context in WA in respect to roads, the preferred risk management approach, and highlight the reasonable steps local governments need to consider to reduce the risk of negligence claims against the sector. Paul will provide some case studies that illustrate how Local Governments have applied this approach in practice.

**Nick Casson, Executive Officer, Roadside Conservation Committee (RCC)**, will discuss what is meant by biodiversity, and the ecological values of remnant roadside vegetation. Natural systems differ from cultivated ones, and Nick will explain why it helps to support such differences. Maintenance works in roadsides, whether mechanical or chemical treatments, must be constrained and carefully targeted to protect remnant vegetation and avoid off-target impacts. Beneficial works practices include having the leeway to be able to switch or separate tasks to suit conditions. Ideally, having buffers in place can help retain natural assets and their services. Nick will provide examples of best practice pruning, trimming and herbicide spraying activities and their optimal scheduling, for vegetation in the road maintenance and conservation zones.

**Murray Flett, Manager of Works, and Steve Elson, Environment Officer, Shire of Jerramungup** will focus on past and present work practices in the Shires road reserves. They will outline the processes involved in the implementation of current work methodologies to minimise environmental impacts and maintain the ecological integrity of the road reserves and associated ecosystems. Improvements include the adoption of a Roadside Vegetation Policy, improved roadside vegetation mapping, and qualification of works crews in Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management. Murray and Steve will also explain that while providing safe roads is a priority, the Shire's approach to road design and maintenance takes into account the local context of each road and environmental values present.

**Renata Zelinova, EPT Business Development Officer, WA Local Government Association (WALGA)**, will demonstrate ways to use WALGA's Environmental Planning Tool (EPT) in planning and delivery of road projects. The EPT allows for identification of matters subject to environmental regulations within local road reserves or defined road sections (e.g. by SLK numbers). Through its unique reporting functions and tools, the EPT can help increase efficiency in meeting regulatory requirements and facilitate strategic approaches to roadworks planning.

**Jane Kowald, Natural Resource Management Officer and Marina Murray, Horticultural Officer, Shire of Kojonup**, will discuss how grass weed suppression and maintaining native biodiversity both along roadsides and in bushland has been a focus for the Shire during the past few years. The Shire is currently investigating rehabilitating degraded roadsides with native, local provenance species that assist with weed suppression and reduction of fire risk. This approach takes into account farmers fence assets and road visibility, and also aims to reduce the use of chemicals in weed control.



**Michael Leers, Director Works and Services, Shire of Manjimup**, will provide a case study on the staged widening of North Walpole road. Main Roads provided funding for an upgrade of the road based on road safety, due to the heavy haulage vehicles utilising the road, and use by cyclists and pedestrians accessing the Bibbulmun Track and Munda Biddi Trail. Stage One of the upgrade received community objections to the clearing of trees, and the Shire has worked collaboratively with the local community to redesign the road to minimise impacts to vegetation. Michael will discuss the Shire's learnings, from the impacts of the appeal process for the Vegetation Clearing Permit, to an engaged community that works with the Shire to achieve a balance of outcomes.