

TE.12

INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION/ PRESERVATION OF RURAL ROAD RESERVE REMNANT VEGETATION

Objective

1. To allow for the full construction of roads and public facilities while providing for protection and conservation of native and significant vegetation, particularly along defined Flora Roads.
2. To retain connection corridors or access paths for native fauna between strategic, State Forest, National Park and Sanctuary sites.

Policy

This policy recognises that in various areas of the Shire, road reserves constitute important sites of remnant flora and a habitat for native fauna.

The following points must therefore apply to earthworks relating to road construction, use of the road verge and treatment for uncleared road reserves.

This applies to Council's Flora Roads defined in Council's Policies and Procedures of Assessment.

Section A:

Road Reserves Containing Constructed Carriageways

1.0 Clearance for Road Safety on Constructed Roads

Although the conservation of roadside vegetation is the primary objective of this policy, road safety is a principal consideration for road managers.

Where visibility and general safety is likely to be impaired, trees and tall shrubs should be kept clear of road pavements, particularly at bridges, curves,

road junctions, farm entrances, school bus stops, guide posts and signs.

2.0 Clearing Width

2.1 Factors

The width required for clearing to accommodate the earthworks for the carriageway is influenced by many factors. Some of the factors to be considered are:

- design speed
- terrain and soil type
- drainage requirements
- vegetation type
- areas where special roadside vegetation exists
- road classification such as a scenic or tourist road

Many wide road reserves are created for the express purpose of protecting and conserving natural vegetation.

The width of clearing required to carry out the earthworks for the road must be based on engineering needs and not on the width of the road reserve.

2.2 Table Drains

The width on either side of the carriageway used to accommodate the table drain and batters requires careful site specific consideration to ensure that there is minimal disturbance to roadside vegetation.

To reduce clearing and earthworks, table drain width and depth may be reduced where drainage needs permit.

Construction of a table drain on the lower side of the road should be avoided.

2.3 Low Side Widening

Widen the carriageway on the low side of the road where appropriate to reduce the space required for earthworks. This will be achieved because the high side table drain will not have to be enlarged.

Where practical, fill should be imported for embankments to avoid excavation of fill materials from the road verge.

2.4 Batter Slopes

On wide excavation or 'batter' slopes, use a step slope technique to retain topsoil to assist regeneration and provide slope stability.

2.5 Road Widening.

Any widening of the carriageway shall be to one side of the road reserve where practical to enable a wider strip of vegetation to be retained rather than have two narrow strips.

Widening shall be carried out to the side where the vegetation is in the poorest condition. Where design and site conditions permit the carriageway alignment may shift from one side of the road reserve to the other to maximise the retention of well conserved vegetation.

Widening of road reserves for their conservation value shall be assessed at every opportunity especially when refencing is required or developmental conditions can be applied to save or establish a wider vegetation strip.

2.6 Preservation Planning

Flora roads and other roads identified as having special environmental values should be subjected to specific planning and management considerations to ensure conservation of their value.

2.7 Dieback

Where dieback areas have been identified in a works area, plant and vehicles should be thoroughly cleaned down prior to re-positioning on other work sites. The manner in which work is completed may require more careful consideration if dieback fungus is present. Consultation with CALM officers with regard to the presence of dieback in an area to be assessed.

2.8 Machine Techniques

Use machinery fitted with a blade rake to clear and stack vegetation for regeneration purposes.

If it is necessary to burn cleared vegetation, ensure that the flames do not damage flora to be retained.

Rather than clear a uniform and continuous width each side of the centreline, vary the clearing width to accommodate only that space required for earthworks.

Consider the effects on the remaining vegetation of the additional clearing width required to windrow topsoil and also the techniques used to return topsoil to areas disturbed by the roadworks.

Divert the line of a table drain to avoid disturbing valuable and unique flora in close proximity to the road.

Do not turn road machinery at locations where roadside flora is well conserved.

Prune offending branches rather than remove the whole tree. Remove branches close to the tree trunk.

3.0 Regeneration

Retain vegetation to avoid regeneration costs. Consider the method to be used to establish regrowth on areas disturbed during roadworks operations in erosion prone areas.

Time rehabilitation procedures to take advantage of weather conditions favourable to natural regeneration, direct seeding and/or roadside planting.

Cleared vegetation should be spread over areas disturbed by roadworks and borrow pits to assist regeneration. If possible do not burn cleared vegetation.

Retain topsoil from areas where well conserved vegetation has been cleared for respreading over areas to be regenerated.

4.0 Borrow Pits and Storage Areas

Plan the location of all borrow pits on cleared sites. Do not locate them in the road reserve.

Locate material stockpiles or compounds outside the road reserve. Where this is not possible select locations where flora is degraded.

Avoid the parking of construction equipment and vehicles under trees and over their root zones.

5.0 Storage Areas for Vegetation Debris, Spoil and Weed Contaminated Soils.

When vegetation debris such as tree limbs, unreclaimed timber, stumps and cleared shrubs are to be removed from site, this material must be stockpiled on sites which have little value for conservation. This includes worked out gravel pits with hard clay or rock floors or totally cleared areas.

These sites can also be used to stockpile poor quality rocks, clay and weed contaminated soils.

Such sites will be strategically placed and not allowed to expand beyond set perimeters. Where possible, vegetation debris will be 'tub ground' or chipped, for re-use on rehabilitation sites. The sites will be equipped with signs indicating their purpose, with no access to the general public.

When such sites are not available and no alternative environmentally sound treatment is obvious, then such materials will be taken to the Davis Road Waste Disposal Site.

Section B: Road Reserves Without Constructed Roads

6.0 Uncleared/Unused Road Reserves

Many road reserves exist within this Shire area which have not been cleared for any purpose, particularly road construction.

Many of these reserves contain un-disturbed remnant vegetation worthy of retention and protection.

These road reserves are to be viewed as a priority for retention and protection, with any proposal to close, develop or impact in any way on such a reserve to require the inspection and report to Council of the proposal and alternatives.

Impact on such uncleared road reserves can be in the form of road construction/extension, closure/deviation, closure in the form of amalgamation into private property or any use for private, Council and/or Government purposes.

The lowest level of protection of such areas would apply to totally cleared land or land only containing

