



ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

The NSW Roadside Environment Committee

The NSW Roadside Environment Committee (REC) was formed by the NSW Government in 1994 and is supported by the NSW Roads and Maritime Services.

The goal of the REC is to achieve the best possible environmental management of roadsides and other linear reserves (e.g. rail corridors, Travelling Stock Reserves, Crown Reserves, utility easements) in NSW. The involvement and co-operation of local councils, State Government agencies, utilities and other groups within the community is essential to achieve this goal. The objectives of the REC are to:

- achieve consistent, high quality of environmental management of NSW linear reserves
- engage with key stakeholders and communities to improve linear reserve environmental management in NSW
- address issues related to the management of linear reserve environmental management in NSW.

The REC currently comprises thirteen organisations with interests in the management of roadside and other linear reserves in NSW. The REC member organisations are:

Roads and Maritime Services (RMS)
Nature Conservation Council (NCC)
Essential Energy
Rural Fire Service (RFS)
Sydney Trains
Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia NSW (IPWEA NSW)
Local Government NSW (LG NSW)
Local Land Services (LLS)
Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH)
NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI)
Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC)
Country Regional Network (CRN) – John Holland Rail
Ausgrid

Strategic plan

To achieve its objectives, the REC developed a strategic plan for 2013-2016. The plan is found in Appendix 1.

The key strategies in the plan are to:

1. Support the development and implementation of best practice processes, systems and tools for the environmental management of linear reserves
2. Build the capacity and capability of key stakeholders in best practice environmental management of linear reserves
3. Increase awareness and promote adoption of consistent best practice in linear reserve environmental management
4. Facilitate discussion and develop approaches to address issues relating to the management of linear reserve environments
5. Promote the REC and its activities.

Achievements

In June 2016 the REC completed its 2013-16 Strategic Plan. In an evaluation of the Plan's progress, it found that the majority of the 29 actions had been completed (10) or progressed (13). This assessment will help inform the preparation of the 2016-19 Strategic Plan.

The REC developed a 2015-16 work plan to carry out actions related to the Strategic Plan. Actions completed from the work plan included:

- Supporting the establishment of the Linear Reserves Program by the NSW Environmental Trust (Action 2.7 in the 2013-16 Strategic Plan). The Linear Reserves Program consists of two programs:
 1. Managing Travelling Stock Reserves for Sustainable Conservation Outcomes to be managed by LLS in conjunction with OEH (\$4.75 million over three years)
 2. Council Roadside Reserves Project to be managed by LG NSW (\$2.08 million over three years).
- Sponsoring the Roadside Environmental Management Award as part of the 2015 Local Government Excellence in the Environment Awards initiated by Local Government NSW (Action 3.5). The Awards are open to all local councils in NSW and aim to recognise outstanding achievements by NSW Local Government in managing and protecting the environment.

The overall winner of the 2015 NSW Roadside Environmental Management Award was Wingecarribee Shire Council. The Award was announced at the 2015 Local Government Excellence in the Environment Awards held at Darling Harbour in December 2015.

Wingecarribee Shire Council's project involves a tool that helps to prioritise environmental weed management on the Shire's 1,150km of roadsides. The tool uses biodiversity rankings and GIS systems to highlight the roads with the highest environmental / biodiversity need. This approach ensures resources are being spent in the most strategic and beneficial way. Council also won Division B for councils with populations between 20,000-60,000 residents.

In Division A (population less than 20,000) the winner was Cowra Shire Council for its Roadside Vegetation Management Plan.



Ian Perkins of Wingecarribee Shire Council with the Division B and Overall Winner Awards

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- Providing guidance to land managers to access free data that could be used in the environmental assessment of linear reserves (Action 2.2). This was provided to land managers as an annotated list of data sources.
- Reviewing and providing comments on Roadside Vegetation Management Plans prepared by local councils during the year (Actions 1.1, 3.1).
- Compiling a bibliography of linear reserve environmental management handbooks (Action 3.4).
- Preparing a principles of best practice linear reserve environmental management statement (Action 2.3).
- Providing a submission to the NSW Government regarding the draft NSW Travelling Stock Reserve Planning Framework (Actions 4.1, 4.5).
- Implementing the REC Communication Plan (Actions 3.1, 4.1 and 5.2). During 2009, the REC developed its Communication Plan to better communicate the Strategic Plan actions and its role. The REC evaluated and refined the Communication Plan during 2015-16. Measures of the performance of the Communication Plan implementation in 2015-16 include:
 - Mailing list of stakeholders increased from 350 to 380 individuals/organisations during the year
 - Hits on the REC website averaged 140 per month
 - Four editions of the REC newsletter were produced and distributed electronically to stakeholders during the year as planned
 - The REC Speaker's Kit was used by the Executive Officer to promote best practices in linear reserve environmental management and the role of the REC.
- Actively continuing its Facebook and Twitter sites during 2015-16 (Action 5.3). The Facebook site had over 30 likes and the Twitter site has over 100 followers.
- Promoting linear reserve environmental management initiatives through the NSW Landcare Gateway. The REC page is found at <http://www.landcare.nsw.gov.au/groups/nsw-roadside-environment-committee>

The REC carried out a range of other activities in 2015-16 related to the Strategic Plan. The activities included:

- Receiving a presentation on the Connected Corridors Project run by Murray LLS
- Receiving a presentation on Travelling Stock Reserve management by Murray LLS
- Receiving a presentation on the multi-use values of roadsides in NSW by Dr Peter Spooner of Charles Sturt University
- Receiving a presentation on the NSW Biosecurity Act by DPI.
- Receiving a presentation on Moree Plains Shire Council's Roadside Environmental Management Plan
- Responding to a broad range of correspondence from the general community and other stakeholders about matters such as bushfire management, litter reduction, animal road kill and weed management.

Meetings

The REC met four times during 2015-16. Meetings were held at Albury hosted by Murray LLS (10 & 11 August 2015), Office of Environment and Heritage, Sydney (16 November 2015), John Holland Rail, Mayfield (8 February 2016) and Moree Plains Shire Council, Moree (10 & 11 May 2016).



REC members join Northern Region LLS and OEH staff on an inspection of Travelling Stock Reserves near Moree

The following persons represented the member organisations on the REC during 2015-16:

Martin Driver (NCC) - Chairperson
Steve Goldie (Essential Energy)
Julie Ravallion (RMS)
Sally Durham (RMS)
Lloyd Van Der Wallen (RFS)
Luke Durrington (Sydney Trains)
John Roydhouse (IPWEA NSW)
Kirsty McIntyre (LG NSW)
Stuart Gold (OEH)
Richard Denham (DPI)
Michelle Quinn (Ausgrid)
Amber Grant (CRN)
Helen Wilson (LLS)
Stuart Ross (ARTC)

The following persons acted as alternates to the above:

Brigid Dowsett (NCC)
Bruce Thompson (OEH)
Cassie Thompson (RMS)
Josie Stokes (RMS)
Karen Willows (RMS)
Mick Savage (IPWEA NSW)

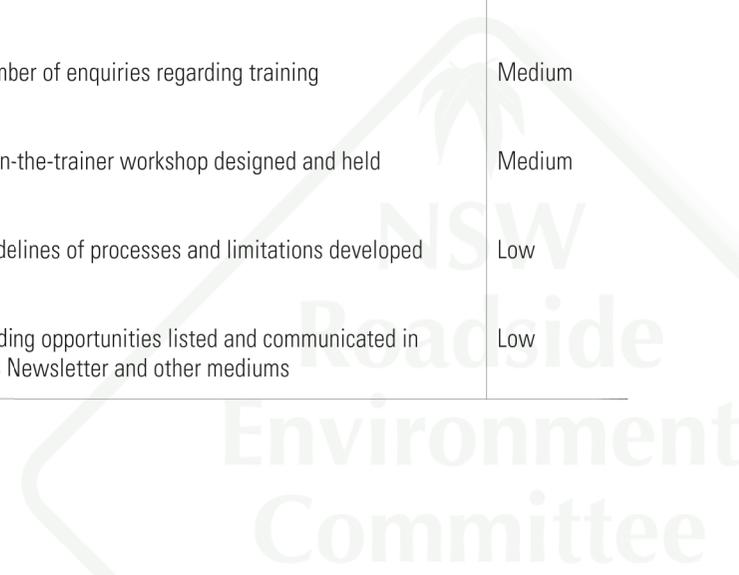
Molino Stewart Pty Ltd was contracted by RMS to provide secretariat services to the REC during 2015-16. Neil Dufty of Molino Stewart was the Executive Officer of the REC and was supported by Elise Armstrong and Kavita Vaid of the same company.

For more details about the REC go to the REC website

<http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/about/what-we-do/committees/roadside-environment-committee.html>



STRATEGY	ACTION	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PRIORITY
1. Support the development and implementation of best practice processes, systems and tools for the environmental management of linear reserves	1.1 Provide guidance and resources to encourage the development and update of RVMPs	Resources developed, client feedback	High
	1.2 Scope and identify processes to encourage further and standard mapping of roadside environmental assessments across NSW	Processes identified, evidence of further mapping	High
	1.3 Identify and invite strategic partners to participate in the REC	At least 75% of main stakeholders members of the REC	High
	1.4 Update best practice information on the REC website including fact sheets and case studies	Information updated and on REC website	High
	1.5 Review RVMP template in relation to tailoring for local councils	Revised RVMP template	High
	1.6 Develop an electronic interactive central point for discussion on best practice environmental management of linear reserves	Central point	Medium
2. Build the capacity and capability of key stakeholders in best practice environmental management of linear reserves	2.1 Identify new stakeholders that could be involved in linear reserve environmental management	Increase in the REC mailing list	High
	2.2 Encourage stakeholders in developing GIS capabilities for the assessment of linear reserve environments	GIS workshop for stakeholders held	High
	2.3 Provide details of factors to be considered for best practice environmental management of linear reserves	Information providing considerations developed	High
	2.4 Promote training packages that provide best practice outcomes in linear reserve environmental management	Number of enquiries regarding training	Medium
	2.5 Facilitate train-the-trainer workshops that provide best practice outcomes in linear reserve environmental management	Train-the-trainer workshop designed and held	Medium
	2.6 Provide details of processes and limitations for planting trees in linear reserves	Guidelines of processes and limitations developed	Low
	2.7 Identify funding opportunities in linear reserve environmental management and communicate this to stakeholders	Funding opportunities listed and communicated in REC Newsletter and other mediums	Low



STRATEGY	ACTION	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PRIORITY
3. Increase awareness and promote adoption of consistent best practice in linear reserve environmental management	3.1 Promote the use of REC guidelines for best practice in linear reserve environmental management in appropriate specifications	Evidence of REC guidelines used in Council specifications	High
	3.2 Promote the use of SREA signage by local councils	SREA signage increases and used in appropriate locations	High
	3.3 Implement regular forums on best practice in linear reserve environmental management	Regional or state-wide forums implemented annually	High
	3.4 Liaise with new NSW government agencies about their roles relating to best practice in linear reserve environmental management	Relevant new agencies are members of the REC	High
	3.5 Support awards that promote best practice in linear reserve environmental management	Roadside Environmental Management Award supported each year	High
	3.6 Develop and use a review system for RVMPs	A review system for RVMPs developed and used	Medium
	3.7 Showcase best practices in linear reserve environmental management through tourist drives and similar initiatives	Links to tourist drives added to REC website	Medium
	3.8 Explore the development of a NSW Linear Reserve Environment Strategy	Strategy possibility explored by the REC	Low
4. Facilitate discussion and develop approaches to address issues relating to the management of linear reserve environments	4.1 Identify and facilitate discussion on potential issues (e.g. bushfire management, weed management) for RVMPs and other plans/works	Discussion facilitated by REC included through forums, workshops	High
	4.2 Promote and acknowledge Indigenous perspectives relating to linear reserve environments e.g. in RVMP template	Liaison with LALCs and other Indigenous bodies, promotion of Indigenous perspectives	High
	4.3 Develop a checklist that provides a standardised approach for stakeholders for linear reserve environmental planning and management that covers relevant legislation, policies, plans and issues	Checklist developed and promoted to stakeholders	High
	4.4 Identify and communicate risks to linear reserve environmental management projects	Risks identified and communicate to REC stakeholders	Medium
5. Promote the REC and its activities	5.1 Deliver strategic presentations on the role and activities of the REC	At least one presentation delivered per year	High
	5.2 Review and then implement the amended REC Communications Plan	REC Communications Plan amended and reviewed	High
	5.3 Explore the use of social media in promoting the REC and its activities	Facebook and Twitter trialled for response	Medium
	5.4 Explore ways to educate stakeholders and community members about the REC and its activities	Education methods explored	Low