ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

NSW
Roadside
Environment
Committee

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:

* NSW Roads and Maritime Services (RMS)
* Nature Conservation Council (NCC)
* Essential Energy
* Rural Fire Service (RFS)
* Sydney Trains
* Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (IPWEA)
* Local Government NSW (LGNSW)
* 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)
* 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.

The REC developed a 2014-15 work plan to carry out actions related to the Strategic Plan. Actions completed from the work plan included:

- Providing detailed input to the review of the Roadside Vegetation Implementation Project (RVIP) conducted by the Natural Resources Commission (Actions 1.1, 3.1, 3.2 in the REC Strategic Plan). The RVIP was funded by the NSW Environmental Trust and managed by the Local Government NSW – a member of the REC. The objectives of the RVIP were to:
  - Allow for the protection, revegetation and regeneration of large areas of linear reserves across the State.
  - Improve environmental conditions and enhance ecological corridors in NSW.
  - Add value to a considerable investment already made by the NSW Environmental Trust which funded councils to prepare roadside vegetation management plans (RVMPs) in 2005 (a project managed by the REC).

A total of $1,286,428 was distributed across 28 projects and 31 local councils from across NSW for Round 1 of the RVIP in 2012. For Round 2 (2013), a total of $396,110 was distributed to ten individual projects across NSW.

- Exploring ways to share GIS environmental data across linear reserve land managers (Actions 1.2 and 2.2 in the REC Strategic Plan). This included organising a workshop to examine options presented by Land and Property Information (LPI) including cloud-based platforms.

- Promoting four new guides for local councils relating to Roadside Vegetation Management Plans (RVMPs) (Actions 1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 2.3 and 4.1 in the REC Strategic Plan). The guides were funded by the NSW Environmental Trust under the RVIP. The four guides cover:
  - Assessment
  - Planning
  - Implementation
  - Monitoring and Evaluation

The RVMP guides are available at the REC website
http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/environment/roadsideenvironcommittee/managing_roadsides.html

The promotion of the guides included presentations by the REC Executive Officer at a meeting of Central West councils at Orange and at the IPWEA conference for works staff held in Parramatta.

- Sponsoring the Roadside Environmental Management Award as part of the 2014 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 winners of the 2014 Roadside Environmental Management Award were:

- Winner – Division A Glen Innes Severn Council
  Restoration of Medium and High Conservation Value Road Corridors
- Winner – Division B Kempsey Shire Council
  Rehabilitation and weeding specific priority Kempsey Roads
- Highly Commended – Division C Sutherland Shire Council
  Green Streets - Realising the biodiversity value of roa   across Sutherland Shire
- Highly Commended – Division C Central West Region – 10 Councils: Bathurst, Blayney, Cabonne, Dubbo, Gilgandra
  Mid-Western, Orange, Parkes, Warrumbungle and Wellington
  Central West Councils Salinity & Water Quality Alliance Roadside Vegetation Management Implementation Project
- Winner – Division C and Overall Winner Riverina and   Regional Organisation of Councils (RAMROC)
  Linking, Thinking and Acting: Roadside Vegetation in the Murray Catchment

Natasha Lappin (RAMROC) accepts the overall 2014 Roadside Environmental Management Award

- Implementing the REC Communication Plan (Actions 3.1, 4.1 and 5.2 in the Strategic Plan). 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 2014-15. Measures of the performance of the Communication Plan implementation in 2014-15 include:
    - Mailing list of stakeholders increased from 310 to 350 people 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 several member organisations to promote best practices in linear reserve environmental management and the role of the REC
    - The REC website was updated to include examples of RVMPs and the RVMP guides.

- The REC commenced its Facebook and Twitter sites during 2014-15 (Action 5.3 in the Strategic Plan). The Facebook site had over 30 likes and the Twitter site has 100 followers.

- The REC also promoted linear reserve environmental 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 2014-15 related to the Strategic Plan. The activities included:
- Participating in a review of the REC undertaken by RMS
- Preparing a bibliography of linear reserve environmental management handbooks used by REC member organisations
- Preparing a brief statement outlining best practices in linear reserve environmental management
- Receiving a presentation from Hunter and Central Coast Regional Environmental Management Strategy (HCCREMS) on roadside environmental initiatives in the Hunter and Central Coast regions
- Receiving a presentation on Saving our Species Program by OEH
- Receiving a presentation on Biodiversity and Vegetation Information systems run by OEH
- Receiving a presentation on risk-based wildlife signag   ewilding Inc
- 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.

The REC met four times during 2014-15. Meetings were held at East Maitland hosted by HCCREMS (25 August 2014), Local Government NSW office, Sydney (3 November 2014), RMS office, North Sydney (23 February 2015) and Local Government NSW office, Sydney (11 May 2015).

REC members on an inspection of an electricity easement near Maitland

The following persons represented the member organisations on the REC during 2014/15:

Martin Driver (NCC) - Chairperson
Vince Kelly/Steve Goldie (Essential Energy)
Julie Ravallion/Ron Haering (RMS)
Sally Durham (RMS)
Lloyd Van Der Wallen (RFS)
Luke Durrington (Sydney Trains)
John Roydhouse (IPWEA)
Kirsty McIntyre (LGNSW)
Stuart Gold (OEH)
Richard Denham (DPI)
Diana Charteris (Ausgrid)
Amber Grant (CRN)
Peter Sparkes/Brett Miners (LLS)
Stuart Ross (ARTC)

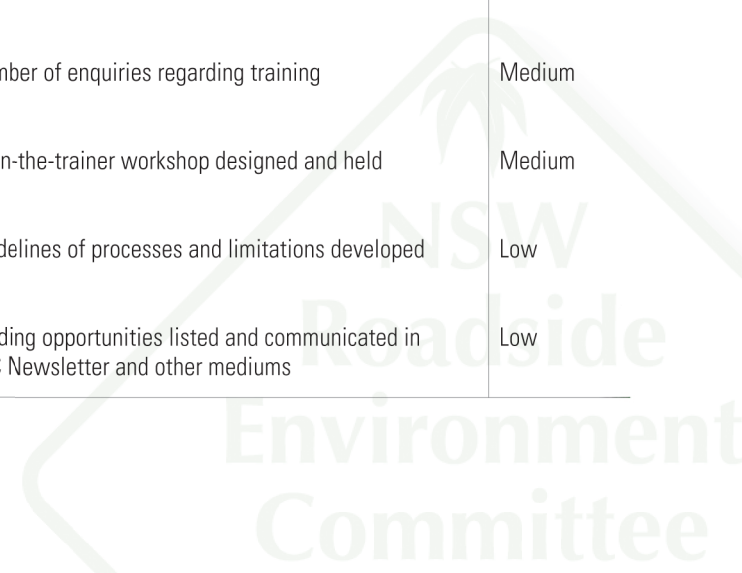The following persons were alternates to the above:

Anne Miehs (RFS)
Brigid Dowsett (NCC)
Bruce Thompson (OEH)
Richard Connors (Local Government NSW)
Leanne Cross (ARTC)

Molino Stewart Pty Ltd was contracted by RMS to provide secretariat services to the REC during 2014-15. 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