



2019 > 20 ANNUAL REPORT



The NSW Roadside Environment Committee

The NSW Roadside Environment Committee (REC) was established in 1994 by the NSW Government in recognition of the environmental values of linear reserves. The REC is an umbrella body of state agencies and environment groups that promotes and coordinates leading practice in linear reserve environmental management across the State.

**The vision of the REC is:
Environmental values of linear corridors are actively managed in
balance with other functional needs.**

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

- > Ausgrid
- > Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC)
- > Country Regional Network (CRN) – John Holland Rail Ltd
- > Essential Energy
- > Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia NSW (IPWEA NSW)
- > Local Government NSW (LGNSW)
- > Local Land Services (LLS)
- > Nature Conservation Council (NCC)
- > NSW Department of Industry – Lands & Water
- > NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE)
- > Rural Fire Service (RFS)
- > Transport for NSW (RMS)
- > Transport for NSW (Sydney Trains)

The REC is funded by Transport for NSW. Member organisations provide in-kind support.

Strategic plan

To work towards its vision, the REC developed a strategic plan for 2016-2019. The plan is provided in Appendix 1.

There are three outcomes in the strategic plan:

1. Projects delivered and assistance provided to improve linear corridor management
2. REC members understand and share good practices
3. Stakeholders aware of REC's key initiatives

Key issues

In developing its 2016-19 Strategic Plan, the REC identified the following key issues that it will focus on.

Environmental management issues

Weed and biosecurity management

Natural vegetation (including hazard trees)

Wildlife including road kills

Firewood collection

Bushfire management and fire regimes

Heritage (indigenous and non-indigenous)

Illegal dumping & litter (waste management)

Scenic amenity

Erosion & sediment control

Contaminated land

Noise

Water quality

Contaminants

Rest areas

Signage

Acid sulphate soils

Livestock management

Corporate issues

Safety (of personnel conducting works in the corridor as well as travelling public)

Planning

Data management

Training

Compliance

Community expectations

Incident response

Regulator relationships

Community education

Communications

Disaster management

Achievements

In 2019-20, the REC carried out actions related to the 2016-19 Strategic Plan which was extended to cover this financial year. These actions included:

- Organising and running a forum showcasing environmental management of linear reserves (Action 3.4 in the Strategic Plan). The one-day forum was held in August 2019 for land managers and others interested in linear reserve environmental management.

The theme of the forum was 'Linear Reserves: Linking People, Nature and Infrastructure'. Keynote speakers had a mix of research and practical linear reserve experience and included Dr Peter Spooner of Charles Sturt University, a leading researcher into the environmental history and management of linear reserves in Australia and Mr Pat Connor, a civil engineer with a background in gas pipeline and road construction.

The forum included presentations on improving practices and case studies on themes including 'Taking Stock', 'Systems and Data', and 'Innovation'. An interactive panel session at the end of the forum allowed participants to ask questions to the experts in the field.

Information/Content



Participants' feedback on the forum information and content

The forum was attended by 98 representatives from local councils, government agencies and other organisations. A further 20 presenters attended.

Overall, participants' evaluation of the forum was very positive, and several requested that another forum be run within the next two years.

- Supporting and promoting the Linear Reserves Program funded by the NSW Environmental Trust (Action 1.1). The Linear Reserves Program consists of two programs:
 1. Managing Travelling Stock Reserves for Sustainable Conservation Outcomes managed by LLS in conjunction with OEH (\$4.75 million over three years).
 2. Council Roadside Reserves Project managed by LGNSW (\$2.08 million over three years).
- Sponsoring the Roadside Environmental Management Award as part of the 2019 Local Government Excellence in the Environment Awards initiated by LGNSW (Action 3.5).

The Awards are open to all local councils and council organisations in NSW and aim to recognise outstanding achievements by NSW Local Government in managing and protecting the environment.

The REC has sponsored the Roadside Environmental Management Award for the past nine years.

The Winner Division A (councils with smaller populations) and Overall Winner of the NSW Roadside Environmental Management Award was Griffith City Council for its project 'An innovative solution to measuring and revaluing Griffith's roadside reserves'. Bellingen Shire Council was highly commended in Division A for its project 'Bellingen Roadside Environmental Management Plan'.

The winner of Division B (councils with medium-sized populations) was Wingecarribee Shire Council for its 'Integrated Roadside Environmental Management Framework'. The Division C (councils with larger populations) winner was Coffs Harbour City Council for 'Roadside vegetation as a natural asset - a pilot'.



Coffs Harbour City Council receives the Division C winner award from REC Executive Officer, Neil Dufty

- Sharing and learning more about aspects of linear reserve management including new biosecurity and biodiversity conservation legislation, review of crown lands, the review of travelling stock reserves, and new methods for environmental management (Actions 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5).
- Implementing the REC Communication Plan (Action 3.2). Measures of the performance of the Communication Plan implementation in 2019-20 include:
 - > Mailing list of stakeholders increased from 400 to 420 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
- Actively continuing the REC Facebook and Twitter sites during 2019-20 (Action 3.2). The Facebook site has 69 likes (up from 60 in June 2019) and the Twitter site has 167 followers (up from 160 in June 2019).
- Responding to numerous stakeholder enquiries via the REC Secretariat (Action 1.2).
- Promoting linear reserve environmental management initiatives through the NSW Landcare Gateway (Action 3.2). 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 2019-20 related to the Strategic Plan. The activities included:

- Discussing and sharing ways to manage linear reserve environments after the devastating 2019-20 bushfires. This included the post-fire management of hazardous trees.
- Receiving a presentation on the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan by DPIE
- Receiving a presentation on ARTC environmental management
- Reviewing the 2016-19 Strategic Plan to prepare the 2020-23 REC Strategic Plan
- Holding interagency sharing sessions to improve linear reserve environmental management practices across NSW.

Meetings

The REC met three times during 2019-20. The November 2019 meeting was held at Sydney ARTC office and February 2020 meeting held at the Chatswood Transport for NSW office.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the May 2020 was a virtual meeting using Microsoft Teams.

The following persons represented the member organisations on the REC during 2019-20:

- > Martin Driver (NCC) - Chairperson
- > Chris Dunn (Essential Energy)
- > Julie Ravallion (Transport for NSW)
- > Lloyd Van Der Wallen (RFS)
- > Luke Durrington (Transport for NSW)
- > Mark Roebuck (IPWEA NSW)
- > Kirsty McIntyre (LGNSW)
- > Lucian McElwain (DPIE)
- > Paul Harper (DoI – Lands & Water)
- > Eve Bleuel (Ausgrid)
- > Bridget Boreham (LLS)
- > Stuart Ross (ARTC)

The following persons acted as alternates to the above:

- > Brigid Dowsett (NCC)
- > Jane Gye (NCC)
- > Kathy Godfrey (LGNSW)
- > Kris Le Mottee (Transport for NSW)
- > Sally Durham (Transport for NSW)
- > Cassie Thompson (Transport for NSW)

Molino Stewart Pty Ltd was contracted by Transport for NSW to provide secretariat services to the REC during 2019-20. Neil Dufty of Molino Stewart was the Executive Officer of the REC and was supported by Rebecca O'Rourke and Ruth Fernando of the same company.

For more details about the REC please visit
www.rms.nsw.gov.au/about/what-we-do/committees/roadside-environment-committee

Front cover photograph by Shireen Baguley

Appendix 1 > NSW Roadside Environment Committee Strategic Plan 2016 - 2019

Outcome 1 > Projects delivered and assistance provided to improve linear corridor management

| Action | Measure of Success | Priority | Timing | Responsibility |
|---|---|----------|----------|--|
| 1.1 Support and disseminate the Travelling Stock Reserve (TSR) and Council Roadside Reserves (CRR) projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Participation of REC members in Advisory Committees > Progress disseminated via REC communications strategy | H | Jun 2019 | LLS LGNSW REC rep Secretariat |
| 1.2 Develop ways to manage priority issues and communicate those to stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Key environmental issues promoted to at least one regional forum per year > Hold at least one regional meeting to discuss local issues | H | Annual | REC members Secretariat |
| 1.3 Investigate and encourage use of available spatial layers relevant to corridor management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Investigation of Transport for NSW and other platforms > Know status of RVMP GIS data | M | Dec 2017 | REC members Secretariat |
| 1.4 Promote and support grants and relevant funding opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Opportunities are shared | M | Ongoing | Secretariat |
| 1.5 Promote management systems and operational tools to manage weeds and other issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Tools shared > Presentations at regional meetings | M | Ongoing | REC members Secretariat |
| 1.6 Build industry capacity for better biodiversity outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Accredited training developed and implemented | H | Jan 2018 | RMS, other REC members |

Appendix 1 > NSW Roadside Environment Committee Strategic Plan 2016 - 2019

Outcome 2 > REC members understand and share good practices

| Action | Measure of Success | Priority | Timing | Responsibility |
|---|--|----------|----------|-----------------------------------|
| 2.1 Share improved environmental control procedures | > Information supplied | L | Dec 2017 | Infrastructure members of the REC |
| 2.2 Share tools and approaches to manage all vegetation for environmental and transport safety objectives | > Information supplied | M | Jun 2017 | Infrastructure members of the REC |
| 2.3 Share rapid assessment tools and spatial products | > Information supplied | M | Jun 2017 | LLS LGNSW |
| 2.4 Focus REC meetings on key issues and share policies, procedures, learnings etc. | > Year 1 meetings on Weeds, Firewood, Safety Trees, Rehabilitation | H | Annual | REC members Secretariat |
| 2.5 Brief each REC member on all relevant major government reforms and changes to legislation | > Briefings occur on new reforms and legislation | M | Ongoing | REC members |

Outcome 3 > Outcome 3: Stakeholders aware of REC's key initiatives

| Action | Measure of Success | Priority | Timing | Responsibility |
|---|---|----------|----------|----------------------------|
| 3.1 Review the REC communications strategy | > Strategy reviewed and published | M | Dec 2017 | REC members Secretariat |
| 3.2 Communicate the REC's purpose and activities | > Speaker's Kit updated > REC communications strategy used | M | Jun 2018 | REC members Secretariat |
| 3.3 Provide case studies of good practices | > Case studies prepared and located on REC website | L | Ongoing | REC members Secretariat |
| 3.4 Organise a state-wide linear corridor forum | > Forum successfully held | H | Dec 2019 | REC members Secretariat |
| 3.5 Sponsor the NSW Roadside Environmental Management Award | > Award sponsored annually | M | Annual | RMS |