



## Strange Times

COVID-19 has brought some significant changes to the way we live and work, and how we can deliver our projects as planned. Like a lot of organisations, DELWP has needed to be adaptable and creative.

The Linear Reserves Project has continued as normally as possible. Our weed control contractors have adopted increased hygiene measures, social distancing and other COVID safety protocols to be able to continue work and keep staff safe.

Other events and workshops have been postponed or cancelled. This includes a Cultural Burn that we had been planning with the Wadawurrung on a reserve in Teesdale. Many people and organisations, such as Golden Plains Shire, the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and DELWP had been working with Wadawurrung to lead the Cultural Burn. We are hoping that we can reschedule later in the year, however this is a very weather dependent activity.

## Grassland Burning

Several Linear Reserves sites have been successfully burnt during the 2019/20 fire season, thanks to the efforts of CFA Vegetation Management Officers and volunteer firefighters across the districts.

At the start of the fire season, our Linear Reserves working group identifies the priority sites for burning for

that financial year, based on grassland values and years since previous burn. We then work with the relevant brigades to communicate the importance of grassland burning and identify any ways that the Linear Reserves Project could assist their brigade to achieve a planned burn.

An example of this working successfully was a burn at Forest Lane, near Dunkeld. Much planning and preparation was required and 22 personnel from four local brigades attended the burn in February. With funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, we were able to contribute a small payment of recognition to the brigades involved.



Figure 1: Successful grassland burn at Forest Lane, near Dunkeld.



We also saw a successful burn at the Cressy Flora Reserve (Trotting Track) this year, led by Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic).

The ecological burn has the dual benefit of reducing fuel loads and improving the condition of native grassland vegetation. As part of FFMVic's program, Cressy is scheduled for a 3-year burning regime.



Figure 2: FFMVic crews conducting a planned ecological burn at the Cressy Flora Reserve.

## Grasslands on Roadsides Flyer

Although the work we do is focussed on public land, we recently identified the need to engage with private land managers with significant grassland vegetation on their adjoining road reserves.

The 2-page flyer was developed in conjunction with the Corangamite and Glenelg Hopkins CMA's, with the intention of making landholders aware of the project – our aims and actions, and the importance of the native grasslands adjacent to their properties.

This flyer will be distributed to landholders on roads that weed control contractors are working on. The flyers also have contact details so people with further inquiries can contact us.

**Native Grasslands on Roadsides  
The Linear Reserves Project**

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) manage the Linear Reserves Project with support from a wide range of agencies and stakeholders including CFA, Catchment Management Authorities, Local Government Authorities, Regional Roads Victoria, Rail Authorities, and Traditional Owners.

The project commenced in 2014 and aims to enhance the condition and resilience of native grasslands and associated flora and fauna species through weed control and prescribed burning.

The Natural Temperate Grasslands of the Victorian Volcanic Plain were once widespread and common in this region. Today they are critically endangered, less than 1% of their original extent remains, and are protected by Federal and State Government legislation. They are also home to many unique and threatened plants and animals, many of which are found nowhere else in the world let alone Australia.

Some of the best areas of remnant native grassland vegetation remaining are restricted to narrow strips of public land on roadsides such as those adjacent to your property. The Linear Reserves Project engages specialist weed control contractors with grasslands experience to selectively spray high threat weeds within these road reserves. We also look to coordinate works to follow recent burns by local CFA to maximise weed control effectiveness.

Current extent of Native Grasslands indicated in yellow. Grassy Woodland in green.

Featherheads and Chocolate Lilies

Native herb, Blue Devil

Logos: Victorian Government, Natural Heritage Victoria, Glenelg Hopkins CMA, CFA, CORANGAMITE CMA, VICTORIA Government, Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

**Native Grasslands on Roadsides  
The Linear Reserves Project**

This project is supported by the Glenelg Hopkins and Corangamite Catchment Management Authorities through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program and the State Government's Biodiversity Response Planning and Biodiversity on Ground Actions funding programs.

Specialists Weed Control contractors controlling pasture grasses in roadside grassland reserves.

You might see our Project Officers or Spraying Contractors working on the roadside near your property.

Blue Pin cushion

Basalt Rustyhood Orchid

Some of the threatened species in grasslands exist in just one known population making them highly vulnerable.

Significant Native Vegetation signage

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Figure 3: Information Flyer for landholders.



## New Grassland Signage

In addition to the on-ground enhancement work we focus on, engagement and education are a large part of the work we do to conserve native grasslands. With funding through the State Government's Biodiversity On-ground Action grants, we were fortunate enough to develop some grassland signage.

An existing sign at the Cressy Flora Reserve was badly aged and weathered, so we took the opportunity to update and replace it. The information in the new sign includes insights into an iconic and rare grassland inhabitant, the Striped Legless Lizard, and highlights the past and ongoing commitment by CFA volunteers to manage roadside grasslands through planned burning.

A significant improvement to the signage is the inclusion of traditional names in Aboriginal language, uses of the native species and the Aboriginal language boundaries map. Thank you to the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation for their information and assistance.



Figure 4: Before – old grassland signage.



Figure 5: After – updated grassland signage.

We also consulted with community members in Woorndoo to determine the best outcome for new signage at the Woorndoo Common Grasslands.

The signage project came at the perfect time, as plans had just been made to restore and relocate the existing hand-painted sign to inside the Woorndoo Hall.

Visitors to Woorndoo can see additional grasslands signage on the Woorndoo Streatham Road. The Woorndoo Land Protection Group produced the sign to provide information on the grassland restoration project.

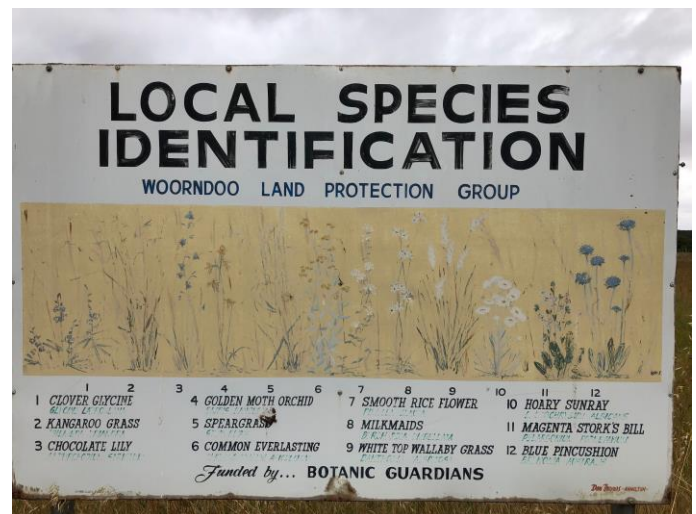


Figure 6: Historic hand-painted sign at Woorndoo Common.



Figure 7: Woorndoo Common sign.

We've also been busy investigating the effectiveness of existing "Significant Vegetation Signage" on roadsides and locations where they currently exist. This allowed us to determine where new signage would be most beneficial.

The old signage design was adapted with current information and logos, and updated signage installed at 18 new locations across Moyne, Corangamite, Colac Otway and Golden Plains Shires.





Figure 8: New roadside signage.



Figure 9: Lismore grasslands.

## Lismore Artwork

A fantastic new artwork has appeared on the Lismore water tower courtesy of Warrnambool artist, Jimmi Buscombe.

The painting features the iconic brolga and sheep. But if you look a bit closer at the detail, you'll see that Buscombe has gone to the extra effort of researching and including native grassland species in the foreground - Chocolate Lilies, Lemon Beauty-heads, Featherheads and Blue Devils.



Figure 10: Lismore Brolgas.

## Weed Control

This financial year we completed 1,354 ha of weed control over 29 linear reserve sites. The herbicide weed control is very selective and carried out by specialist contractors with a high level of grassland experience. It's a pretty difficult job to cover that much area and that many weeds while trying to fit in with seasonal conditions and funding cycles.

The work is made easier for contractors when the sites have been recently burnt and biomass is low.

We are planning and prioritising the next round of weed control sites with recently burnt sites being our top priority. Thanks to everyone involved.



Figure 11: An example of selective herbicide spraying in recently burnt grasslands.