

S-O6-P Roadside and Reserve Vegetation Management Procedure

Department	Works and Services
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1 Objective

To provide the guidelines by which Council will implement the Roadside and Road Reserve Vegetation Management Policy, that aims to maintain optimum driving conditions for user safety and protect road surfaces.

2 Island Conditions

Roadside vegetation management practices recognise that environmental and road conditions on Flinders Island may differ from other areas in the following ways:

- 2.1 An abundance of native wildlife and the high incidence of roadkill present a very real danger to motorists. When vegetation is kept low and away from road edges, visibility improves, collisions can be reduced and damage to persons and vehicles is minimised.
- 2.2 In most instances, the width of road reservations is 20 metres; in some areas it can be as little as 10 metres. This is an important factor when deciding which method of vegetation control is used, as it restricts the ability of certain types of machinery to operate effectively and safely.
- 2.3 The types of soils and materials used in road making activities make it necessary for road surfaces to be kept as dry as possible. Control of vegetation is important to allow ample ventilation and sunlight to penetrate road surfaces.
- 2.4 Native tree species that occur within road reservations grow extremely quickly and require regular, and often severe, trimming. Financial constraints prohibit "light pruning" on an annual basis. The most prolific species include Acacia, Melaleuca, Eucalypt and Casuarina.
- 2.5 Low summer rainfall and strong dry winds, combined with a high incidence of native bush, create a significant fire danger each year. A roadside, free of laden vegetation, can act as a good firebreak in the event of a wildfire.

3 Herbicide Spraying / Steam Weeding

- 3.1 While herbicide spraying is recognised as an effective and economical method of controlling vegetation, it is only undertaken after all economic, environmental and health and safety factors to the operator and the public have been considered and usage is kept to a minimum.
- 3.2 Herbicide sprayed areas will be identified with signage while spraying is underway and for at least 24 hours after an area has been sprayed.
- 3.3 Herbicide spraying is not to occur in the vicinity of properties that are Organic Certified. A list of such properties is kept at the Works Depot.
- 3.4 Steam weeding is used by Council in areas more frequented by the public, being:

- Playgrounds
 - Townships
 - Walking path between Whitemark Township and the School
 - Public access areas at the Airport
- 3.5 In the above areas, herbicide will only be used when steam weeding is not successful, and a dye will be added to the herbicide to serve as a warning to the public.
- 3.6 Council will place a notice in the Island News biannually to advise the public that grass areas stained with coloured dye have been treated with a herbicide.
- 3.7 The shoulder areas of gravel roads are sprayed to maintain weed-free ground to enable machinery access for road maintenance. For bitumen roads, spraying reduces shoulder build-up and allows water to run off the road surface. In worn areas it allows material to be brought up to the bitumen edge to prevent edge breaks.
- 3.8 Culverts and drains are sprayed as required to prevent vegetation blockage and maintain hydrological efficiency.
- 3.9 Exotic weed species which inhabit road reservations are periodically identified and sprayed in recognition of Council's obligation to adjoining landowners to reduce the incidence of weed spread.

4 Slashing

- 4.1 Low trees and vegetation will be slashed to give good lines of sight on road corners, to allow guideposts to be easily seen and to allow maximum visibility of wildlife.
- 4.2 Slashing is used to provide light and ventilation to road surfaces and to prevent trees from growing to a size which would require pruning.
- 4.3 Slasher blades are set at a minimum height (50mm) to prevent damage to vegetation root structure.

5 Pruning of Trees

- 5.1 All efforts are taken to ensure that trees are maintained to a height which precludes the necessity for pruning as pruning is a labour intensive and expensive exercise.
- 5.2 In areas where mature, established trees are present, trimming takes place on an as-needs basis.

6 Bulldozing of Trees and Clearing of Roadsides

- 6.1 The bulldozing of trees and clearing of roadsides is only carried out when all other methods have been considered. This may be necessary in situations where drains are blocked or if an adjoining landholder wishes to clear fence lines. It may also

be necessary where new road surfaces need to be constructed or rehabilitated and attention needs to be given to drainage.

6.2 Options for cut or pruned vegetation:

6.2.1 Mulched on-site if possible.

6.2.2 Burnt when and where it is safe to do so.

6.2.3 Chipped on-site for removal if possible.

6.2.4 Removed from the road reservation to a disposal site within 30 days of the vegetation management activity.

6.3 A Contractor, or other service provider proposing to do vegetation control within a road reservation is required to discuss methods of working and timeframes with the Manager Infrastructure and Airport prior to any work commencing.

7 Register of Rare and Endangered Species

7.1 A Register of Rare and Endangered Species is kept at the Works Depot Office. The Register lists and describes species, their habitats and occurrence and is updated as required.

7.2 All outdoor staff members are aware they have an obligation in their work practices to ensure, as far as practicable, that these species are protected.

7.3 Staff members are also obliged to avoid as much as possible any disturbance of vegetation in identified areas.

8 Related Legislation and Documents

Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1995
and regulations under this Act.

The Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994
and regulations under this Act.

The Dangerous Goods Act 1998
and regulations under this Act.

The Workplace Health and Safety Act
and regulations under this Act.

The Code of Practice for Ground Spraying.

Flinders Council Procedure

General 12 - Herbicide Spraying

9 Responsibilities

The responsibility of this procedure rests with the Infrastructure Manager.