

HFNC Report on Kanawalla Rail Flora Reserve works 2017

Rod Bird

Background

HFNC applied to VicTrack in 2004 to manage the Kanawalla section of the disused Hamilton-Cavendish rail reserve. Despite a history of grazing after the line closed in the 1970s and this reserve contained valuable remnants of the basaltic plains woodland/grassland of which less than 0.2% remains in the public domain. HFNC worked from 2004-08 with various funding bodies to remove 200 pines (100 of which were from 30-150 cm diam.) and 41 large cypress from the reserve. In 2006-8 HFNC planted 850 shrubs and trees indigenous to the area on degraded parts of the reserve. The grants received for the project totalled \$17,700 and HFNC contributed \$8,300 'in-kind'. Environmental weeds such as Briar Rose, Sparaxis, Oxalis purpurea and Phalaris were attended to and the rail bed was also cleared of Black Wattles to aid management along the 1.5 km reserve.

Kanawalla Rail Flora Reserve Trail Improvement Grant

In June 2016 HFNC submitted to the Southern Grampians Shire Council a Greater Grants Program Pitch Form for trail works on this disused rail reserve. The application was for a Community Sustainability project. The proposed works were to grade the trail on the old rail line bed to improve public access, allowing cyclists and walkers to enjoy this interesting reserve. The present surface in some sections is rutted where the sleepers were removed.

The grant sought was for \$2,500 to clear overhanging branches from the line and grading of the trail. HFNC was to provide labour for 'in-kind' contribution of approximately \$1000 to include clearing of some branches and removing Black Wattle stumps from the line to be graded, applying herbicide to the 3 m trail strip in order to facilitate grading, and removal of any large stones from the graded surface.

Preliminary work in 2016 has been reported – the work included 24 hrs of 'in-kind' work spraying the trail line, trimming branches and removal of stumps from the line.

The main work on the line by the contractor was done in April-May of 2017 and details can be seen in the appended [Acquittal Report](#). We spent time rolling the graded track, picking larger rocks from the surface, re-trimming branches that were poorly cut by the contractor and smoothing off graded soil on the margins of some parts of the trail.

We were a little disappointed that the contractor failed to carry out all of the track clearance and grading work according to our wishes. We specified that a maximum width of 3 m be graded, to minimise impacts on the vegetation, but the work crews cleared a greater width of branches and trees to enable a 4-m width to be graded on much of the trail. Unfortunately we were not present when the work began. However, the impact on the vegetation is not critical and the negative visual effect will soon be lost.

Other works on the reserve

- **18 June 2017** (12 hrs) – 7 members checked for fauna under tiles set at both ends of the reserve by Gary Petersen (DELWP) about 10 years ago. We found 6 skinks and 4 frogs and signs of Swamp Rat. We also shifted 7 wire guards from big trees to small browsed trees and hand-weeded *Fumaria* from beneath fallen branches of a large Cherry Ballart at the rail siding.
- **21 Sept. 2017** (3 hr) – RB treated weeds on the reserve & cleared a fence line
 - Sprayed glyphosate/pulse mix (5 L) on Phalaris clumps at McFarlanes Rd and 20 m inside
 - On west side 15 m from the end, wiped dozens of Wild Gladiolus with metsulfuron methyl/glyphosate/pulse mix.
 - On east side, starting 20 m from the end and up to the dam wall, sprayed 8-10 large spots of *Oxalis purpurea* with 5 L of metsulfuron methyl (1 g/10 L) + pulse solution.
 - Cleared branches off the fence line and put them in the gutter.
- **22 Sept. 2017** (2.5 hr) – RB treated weeds on the reserve & cleared a fence line
 - Sprayed metsulfuron methyl/pulse mix (1 L) on 2 *Oxalis purpurea* patches on west side opposite start of Dam fence.
 - Spot-sprayed metsulfuron methyl/glyphosate/pulse mix (4 L) on Phalaris clumps just south of Dam fence on east side (and some spots on west side) to the start of the wider Station Ground.
 - Spot-sprayed metsulfuron methyl/glyphosate/pulse mix (5 L) on at least 12 patches of *Oxalis purpurea* on the east side from the Dam to the start of the wider Station Ground.

- Cleared branches off the fence line and put them in the gutter.
- **27 Sept 2017** (6 hr) – RB treated weeds on the reserve.
 - Herbicide-wiped (metsulfuron methyl/glyphosate/pulse) 2 dense spots (~50 cm diam.) of *Oxalis purpurea* south and north of the south end of the ramp.
 - Cleared out dead sticks from beneath the fallen Cherry Ballart at the south end of the ramp and hand-weeded out all of the Cleavers and *Fumaria* from there and the fringe.
 - Spot-sprayed glyphosate/pulse mix (30 L) on Phalaris from near the Hensley Park Rd end on both sides of the trail and small spots back on east side to near the north end of the ramp.
 - Herbicide-wiped (metsulfuron methyl/glyphosate/pulse) 5 spots of *Sparaxis* with from 10-30 plants present in the area east of the ramp.
 - Herbicide-wiped (metsulfuron methyl/glyphosate) on many small Briar Rose bushes
- **03 Oct. 2017** (3 hr) – RB treated weeds
 - Sprayed 2 m width of trail (1.5 km) with glyphosate/pulse mix (30 L), using a mini-boom.
 - Sprayed clumps of Phalaris on both sides of south end of Station Ground, using glyphosate/pulse mix (3 L).
 - Herbicide-wiped (metsulfuron methyl/glyphosate/pulse) 3 spots of *Sparaxis* near the ramp and some of a patch of Wild Gladiolus found near the east fence, 100 m south of the ramp.
 - Inserted white-tipped bamboos to mark treated *Sparaxis*, *Oxalis* and Wild Gladiolus spots
- **08 Oct. 2017** (5 hr) – RB put wire tree guards onto browsed Banksia, Bursaria and Sheoak
 - Re-set 30 wire guards around diminutive, heavily browsed trees in the old cypress site.
 - No *Sparaxis* or *Oxalis purpurea* found at this northern end but rampant Phalaris and Cocksfoot is a problem on the area where fertiliser spillage and other usage occurred.
- **31 Oct. 2017** (4 hr) – RB put wire tree guards on browsed trees and sprayed weeds
 - Fitted 4 more guards on browsed trees in the cypress area.
 - Fitted 6 guards to Banksia and Sheoak at SW corner of Station Ground.
 - Sprayed 5 L metsulfuron methyl/pulse mix on 2 patches (6 m² & 40 m²) of Wild Gladiolus near the east fence, 100 m south from the ramp.
 - Herbicide-wiped (metsulfuron methyl/glyphosate/pulse) a few more *Oxalis purpurea* missed last time plus about 25 small Briar Rose from behind the ramp area.
 - Hand-weeded another 20 Cleavers and 50 *Fumaria* from the Cherry Ballart area.
 - Five African Weed Orchids were seen and dug up but more are expected to be found.
- **08 Nov. 2017** (4 hr) – RB put wire tree guards onto browsed trees & sprayed Phalaris
 - Sprayed Phalaris at the Hensley Park Rd end with glyphosate/pulse mix (10 L).
 - Put wire guards on more browsed trees in the old Cypress area, on 4 Bursaria near the road and 10 Banksia and 4 Sheoak at the SW end of the Station Ground.

A total of 57 wire guards have been relocated to protect heavily browsed little trees – mainly *Banksia marginata* and *Bursaria spinosa*, with 8 *Allocasuarina verticillata*, 3 Tree Everlasting and 2 eucalypts.

During the visits, surface stones on the trail that are likely to cause problems for cyclists have been moved off the trail. However, it is likely that more will emerge so perhaps that exercise is pointless.

Bird sightings – the list in 2016 was 47 species and 3 recent additions take it to 50.

- Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo (26/09/2017)
- Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (31/10/2017)
- Fan-tailed Cuckoo (31/10/2017)

Reptile sightings – no snakes have been seen on the reserve but both Shingle-back (*Tiliqua rugosa*) and Common Blue-tongue (*Tiliqua scincoides*) were seen on 21 Sept. 2017. On 18/06/2017 skinks were found under tiles in grassland. These may have been Grass Skink (*Lampropholis guichenoti*), Southern Grass Skink (*Pseudemoia entrecasteauxii*), or Bougainville's Slider (*Lerista bougainvillii*).

Mammal sightings – a large mob of Eastern Grey Kangaroos inhabit the adjacent Blue Gum plantation and were seen in the Kanawalla Reserve on 31/10/2017. Black Wallabies (*Wallabia bicolor*) have been present in the reserve since at least 2004 and were seen on most visits this year. A Ring-tailed Possum (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*) was found in a small pine tree in 2004 and Swamp Rat (*Rattus lutreolus*) trails were evident in June 2017.

Frog sightings - Spotted Marsh Frog (*Limnodynastes tasmaniensis*) were seen under tiles on 18/06/2017.



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GREATER GRANTS ACQUITTAL REPORT

1. **Grant Program Name:** SGSC Community Sustainability Grant

2. **Name of Group:** Hamilton Field Naturalists Club

3. **Date of Report:** 04/09/2017

4. **Contact Person:** Rod Bird
Phone #: 55723639
Email: rod.bird@bigpond.com

5. **Project Title:** Kanawalla Rail Reserve Trail Improvement

6. **Amount Funded:** \$2500

7. Project Completion & Promotions

Have you completed the project for which you applied for funding under this program? **Yes** **No**

Have you attached any photographs or associated media for the project to this report? **Yes** **No**

8. Outcomes of Project

What are the main benefits/outcomes that you have seen from the project so far? Outline any unexpected outcomes.

The trail has been graded and surface cleared of loose stone and thus made suitable for cyclists and walkers to comfortably go along the 1.5 km length of the reserve. The preparation for grading, involving trimming of some branches and removal of old stumps and fallen timber on the line, has also made it possible for management vehicles to have clear access along the trail.

9. Future outcomes

What future outcomes do you expect (if any)?

It is anticipated that visitors will be encouraged to walk or cycle through the reserve now that access has been improved. This reserve contains a significant remnant of basalt plains flora

It will also be much easier for Hamilton Field Naturalist Club members to carry out management work (control of pest plants) and the strategic planting of local indigenous trees and shrubs (such as the basalt plains form of Silver Banksia).

The work on the reserve trail also provides a safe pathway for emergency vehicles that may, at some future time, need to have access.

10. Evaluation

a) How did you find out about the Greater Grants program?

Advertisement Direct Mail Out **Word of Mouth** Other, Please specify

b) Did you find the Application and Guidelines provided easy to follow? **Yes** **No**

If no, comments:

This Acquittal report is required to:

- provide Council with important information to account for your use of public funds and demonstrate that the funding has been used for the purpose for which it was provided.
- assist Council in assessing how successful funding programs are in meeting the needs of the community.

Acquittal reports for the program are due 60 days after the completion of the funded activity. Failure to satisfactorily acquit funding will make you ineligible for future Southern Grampians Shire Council funding.



McFarlanes Rd end of the rail reserve before rolling



Rock-clearing in June 2017 in the mid-section

In-kind works:

3 Nov 2016 (1 person x 2 hr) = 2 hr

4 Nov 2016 (1 person x 6 hr) = 6 hr

10 Nov 2016 (2 people x 6 hr) = 12 hr

22 Nov 2016 (2 people x3 hr) = 6 hr

15 May 2017 (2 people x 1 hr) = 2 hr

21 May 2017 (1 person x 3 hr) = 3 hr

18 June 2017 (7 people x 3.4 hr) = 24 hr

Total 55 hr x \$18/hr = \$990

Statement of Expenses

In-Kind Amount \$990

Grant Amount \$ 2,500

Total Project Cost \$3,490

IMPORTANT: Please list the items/components that you spent funds on during your project. Attach a copy of paid invoices and a copy of bank account details reflecting expenditure to this Acquittal Report.

Budget Item Description incl. contractor name & invoice number (if applicable)	Amount Spent
<i>Eg. Galvanised iron for shelter, Walkers Engineering, #305678</i>	<i>Eg. \$2,000</i>
Hamilton Bobcat Contracting, Lot 2 Sth Boundary Rd - Invoice No. 1532	\$2,500
TOTAL	\$2,500

Declaration

I certify that:

- the funds received through the Southern Grampians Shire Council Greater Grants Program have been used for the purposes for which they were awarded - as outlined in our application;
- all original receipts relating to expenditure have been recorded and retained as required under the Southern Grampians Shire Council Greater Grants Program conditions; and
- this Project Acquittal Report and Statement of Expenditure are accurate and true records of our grant use.
- agree to provide Southern Grampians Shire Council with additional information on the funded activity if so requested.

Signed for and on behalf of the organisation that received the grant. Only the **Chairperson, President or CEO** (or another officer, formally delegated such authority) of the organisation should sign.

Patrick Rodney Bird Full name of Grant Recipient/President/Chairperson/CEO (circle one) **Secretary**
Signature 04/09/2017 Date