

Glenelg Highway (Hamilton-Streatham) Roadside Reserve revegetation project

Rod Bird

In 1991 Telecom installed many hundreds of optic fibre cable along roadsides in Western Victoria. Inevitably that process resulted in the loss of many native trees along the route and Telecom had to offset such losses by revegetation of some sections of the route.

In 1992, Telecom invited HFNC to tender for 'Tree Restoration along the Optic Fibre Cable Route Hamilton-Glenhompson-Streatham'. We submitted a tender for 475 trees at \$5 per seedling grown, planted and guarded along the route. The tender was successful and we grew the trees and shrubs required, using seed collected from areas adjacent to the sites identified.

In September 1993 we planted the required number of trees for the contract plus an extra 120 to complete the planting to our satisfaction. The work was performed over 3 weekends. In all we planted 20 sites, from just east of Hamilton at Robsons Rd to Howlett Rd, east of Wickliffe.

The route diverted down Nagorckas Rd and Shultzes Rd – and there our planting 'failed' entirely. An adjacent landholder drove down to see what we were doing, then drove away without stopping to speak with us. The guards and the 30 seedlings we had planted vanished the next day. Elsewhere we had no problems of that nature.

We had developed a policy for revegetation that relied on five major factors:

- Using provenances of trees and shrubs local to the site
- Selecting planting spots that did not displace or degrade the native vegetation
- Adequate site preparation, particularly weed control before planting
- Planting in clumps wherever possible, rather than in lines or as isolated plants
- Avoiding the need for future watering of any planted material by selecting an appropriate time of planting for the site, correct planting technique, and follow-up weed control, where needed.

We chose sites along the road reserve that were degraded, usually spoil dumps infested with pasture weeds. Native grassland areas were avoided. We did not rip or mound the sites. On hard sites we used a crow-bar to loosen the earth at the planting spot. We sprayed the areas before planting and planted trees/shrubs in a clump of 20 or more seedlings. Each plant was given a little water at planting. This planting was very successful and the trees have generally flourished.

The species planted were:

Acacia mearnsii (37)

Acacia pycnantha (134)

Allocasuarina verticillata (184)

Acacia melanoxylon (96)

Allocasuarina muelleriana (95)

E. camaldulensis (50)

Much of the revenue from this project was donated to the conservation groups engaged in the acquisition of Lake Wyn Wyn in the Wimmera and the expansion of Pallisters Reserve near Orford.