

## What is native grassland?

Native grasslands include local indigenous grass species, as well as mosses, lichens, fungi, native lilies, orchids, daisies and other plants. They are habitat for many species of native animals, including threatened species, such as the Striped Legless Lizard (*Delma impar*).



PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY



Adapted, with thanks, from the *Native Grasslands and our Roadsides* brochure, CFA South West Area.

### REFERENCE MATERIAL

Crosthwaite, J. 1997. The Economic Benefits of Native Grassland on Farms. Environment Australia – Biodiversity Group. Grassland Ecology Program Project Number GEP 017.

Williams, N. S. G. 2007. Environmental, landscape and social predictors of native grassland loss in western Victoria, Australia. *Biological Conservation* 137, 308-318.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

[www.geelongaustralia.com.au/environment](http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/environment)

[www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)

[www.delwp.vic.gov.au](http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au)

[www.environment.gov.au](http://www.environment.gov.au)

# NATIVE GRASSLANDS AND OUR ROADSIDES

Frequently asked questions about native grasslands and roadside management



## Why all the fuss about native grasslands? They've been there all my life.

Less than 0.1% of the native grasslands at European settlement are left. Grasslands are now listed as a threatened community under both State (*Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*) and Federal Legislation (*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*).

## How does the fire hazard of native grasses compare to introduced grasses?

Well managed native grasslands have:

- Lower flame heights
- Slower flame speed
- Slower rate of spread
- Lower radiant heat
- Fewer embers

## Why are roadsides important for native grasslands?

In Western Victoria about 30% of known native grasslands are on roadsides. Roadsides support some of the most intact and diverse patches of native grassland. They have survived partly because of past management including burning by the CFA. The Old Melbourne Road between Lara and Little River is Geelong's largest roadside grassland reserve.

## What do CFA brigades do for native grasslands in our area?

Local CFA brigades burn approximately 400km of native grasslands on roadsides and railway lines each year in the CFA Barwon South West region, in accordance with a fire prevention plan.

## Why is burning native grasslands at particular times important?

Regular burning can reduce invasion of trees and weeds. It reduces fuel load and makes 'spaces' for a diversity of plants to seed and grow.

## Native grasslands are tough aren't they? What can hurt them?

Although native grasslands are well adapted to the local climate and conditions, they are vulnerable to soil disturbance, herbicide spraying, trampling, wheel marks, inappropriate grazing or mowing and fertiliser. Over one third of native grasslands surviving on roadsides in the 1980s were destroyed by 2004.

## What else are native grasslands good for?

Agriculture has relied on native grasslands for many decades. Native grasslands may:

- Require lower inputs (e.g. no fertilisers)
- Respond better to summer rain
- Reduce the need for supplementary feeding
- Reduce drought risk
- Reduce fire risk
- Enhance land and water protection
- Provide opportunities for new farming enterprises such as seed collection and native plant harvesting

## What can I do to help?

If you have native grassland on roadsides adjacent to your property, contact the City of Greater Geelong Planning Department before doing any works.

If you have native grasslands on your property, you may be eligible for funding to help preserve or restore it. Contact the City of Greater Geelong on 5272 4785.

