

Declared Rare Flora and road maintenance

What is Declared Rare Flora?

Declared Rare Flora, or DRF as they are commonly referred to, are native plant species that are rare, in danger of extinction or otherwise in need of special protection. They may also be referred to as 'Threatened Flora'.

Many DRF species are only known from a small number of mature plants and some only occur in one or two locations. Road verges often provide important habitats for rare flora, especially in shires where extensive clearing has occurred for agriculture, housing and industry. For example, a particular species of grevillea is known from only one roadside population of approximately 443 individual plants.

Declared Rare Flora and the law

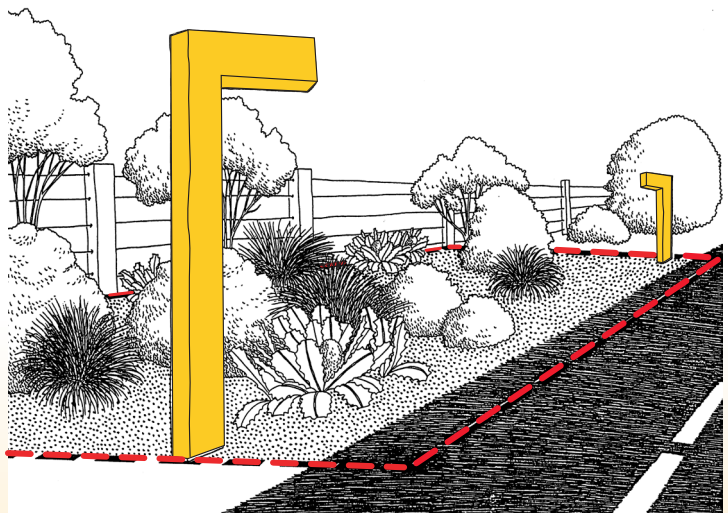
DRF is given special protection under State and Federal legislation to prevent extinction and to maintain biodiversity. The State legislation, the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, states that DRF shall not be taken unless with the written authorisation of the Minister for the Environment. For this purpose, the words 'to take' means 'to gather, pluck, cut, pull up, destroy, dig up, remove or injure the flora or to cause or permit the same to be done by any means'. For example, damage by grading or weed spraying constitutes 'taking', as does collecting seed or specimens.

Applications for permits to take DRF are arranged through the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC). Applications are assessed on their effect on the conservation of the species at a local and regional scale, and require at least six to eight weeks to be processed, depending on their complexity and the potential impact on the DRF. A penalty of up to \$10,000 applies to DRF that is taken without a permit. For more information, contact your local DEC office or DEC's Species and Communities Branch on (08) 9334 0455.

How do I know where Declared Rare Flora grows on roadsides?

To assist road managers, DRF sites on roadsides are generally marked with two standardised yellow markers at either end of a site, which are bent to face towards each other as shown in the illustration. These markers are commonly known as 'hockey sticks' or DRF markers. It is usually the road manager's (shire or Main Roads) responsibility to erect and maintain the markers in consultation with the local DEC Conservation Officer.

The markers indicate that DRF plants may occur anywhere between the markers, from the road's running surface to the fence. If work is proposed in the vicinity of, but particularly between, these markers road workers should check with their supervisor as to how the work may impact on any DRF, and change the work practice if necessary to avoid taking the DRF. Continuing road works without obtaining a permit may break the law and jeopardise a DRF population.



When new populations of DRF are found, formal notifications are sent to the appropriate landowners and managers. Road managers should maintain a register of DRF occurrences on their roadsides to ensure works are planned to avoid impacting DRF.

Everyone is responsible for protecting DRF for the future.