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ROADSIDES A COMMUNITY RESOURCE

*Contrast — weeds and dieback... the beauty of
undisturbed bush.*





Sherbrooke Road Kallista was reconstructed in harmony with the surroundings, following concern for the environment expressed by local residents.

ROADSIDES BELONG TO ALL OF US

Much of the beauty of Victoria's landscape is dependent on trees and plants along road reserves. Roadsides are accessible and visible to more people than other aspects of our natural environment.

The diverse character of the Australian bush is there to be enjoyed by all those who walk or drive along a road where the indigenous vegetation has been allowed to remain undisturbed. The larger trees might be interspersed with a variety of wattles flowering through winter and spring, pink and white heath, banksias, purple harden bergia or countless small flowering plants.

Perhaps this experience of roadside bush is the most frequent opportunity the majority of people have of enjoying nature. But..... the need for enlightened conservation of existing roadside vegetation is important for more reasons than just having areas that are pleasing.

THE BALANCE OF NATURE WHY SAVE THE SCRUB?

The so-called 'scrub' is often scorned because at many times of the year it appears drab and grey and there are no plants which have large or brilliantly coloured flowers. Yet every plant has a function in the ordered world of nature. Even the lowly grasses and herbs provide a wealth of food for small seed and insect-

eating birds such as wrens and finches whereas the tall stringybarked eucalypts provide nectar for honeyeaters, seed for parrots and insects are found under the bark.

A widespread plant of local poorly drained soils is Gahnia or sword grass. It is a good example of a plant commonly scorned.

However it is the host plant for caterpillars of beautiful and much admired Swordgrass Brown butterflies. Because of this inter-relationship of plants, insects, birds and animals, our roadside vegetation should be treasured as a precious heritage.

Maintaining the natural balance is important because a diverse, balanced environment is a legacy of the evolution of countless thousands of years.



Swordgrass brown butterfly.

WILDFLOWERS

There are species of plants which are now uncommon or even rare due to development of adjacent land.

Development and agriculture often result in clearing right to the fence line. Among the groups of plants that disappear first are the interesting and beautiful native orchids and lilies.

BIRDS AND ANIMALS

The roadside vegetation provides bird and wildlife habitat and also provides movement corridors for small animals and birds from one patch of bush to another.



Banksia marginata — provides food for honey-eaters and other birds.

ROADSIDES UNDER THREAT

Road reserves are coming under continuous pressure from public utilities such as the S.E.C. with their tree cutting programs, power-lines, gas mains, water mains, telephone lines, drains, firebreaks.....

ROADS

Road improvements often involves cut-and-fill, clearing and wide barren shoulders. Many people prefer travelling on scenic winding roads, even if it takes a little longer.



Patersonia occidentalis — once common in low lying areas.

