

Why is it so special?



NATIVE GRASSLANDS AND OUR ROADSIDES

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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.



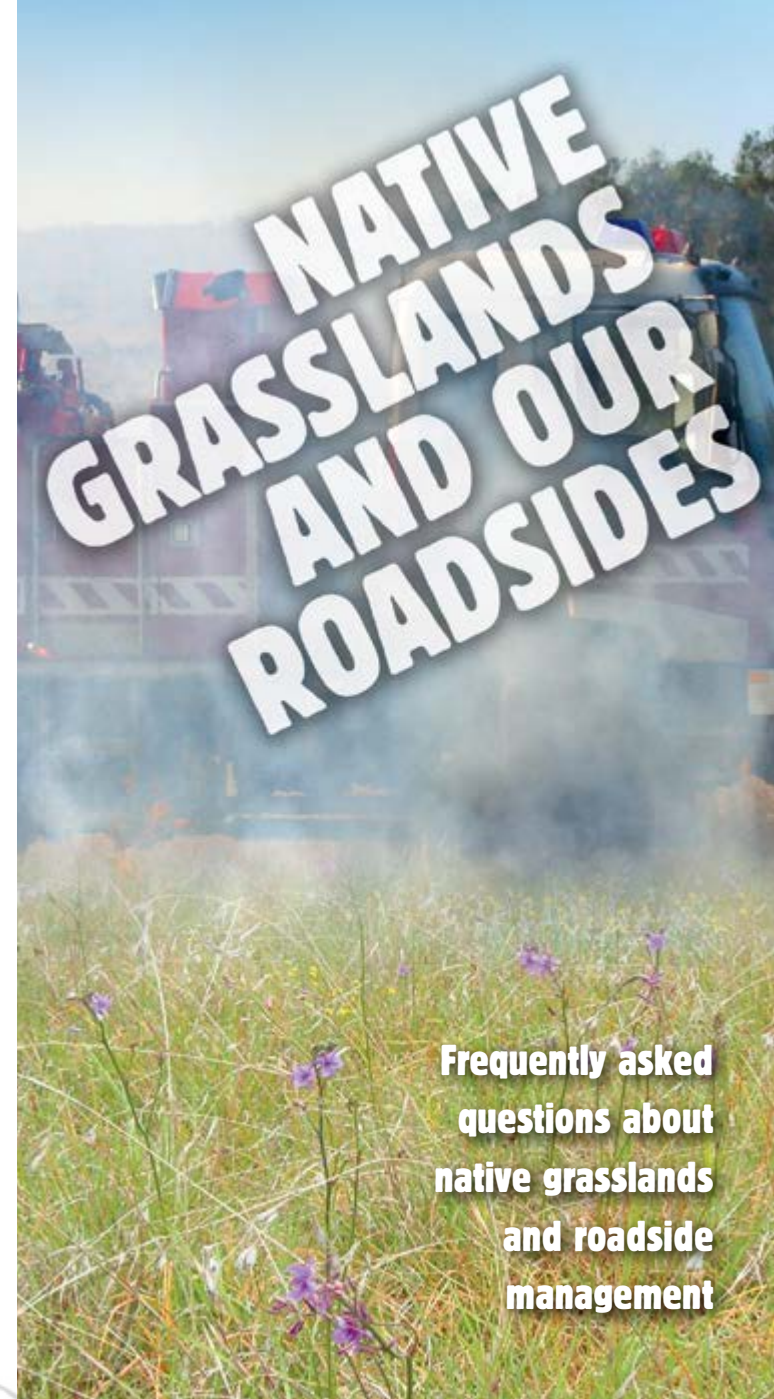
FOR MORE INFORMATION

CFA, Community Safety, SW Area

Tel: 03 5551 1500

www.cfa.vic.gov.au

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Frequently asked
questions about
native grasslands
and roadside
management

ECOLOGICALLY RESPONSIBLE
ROADSIDE FIRE MANAGEMENT



Q. What is native grassland?

A. 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.

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

A. Less than 0.1% of the native grasslands at European settlement are left.

Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain is now listed as a threatened community under State and Federal Legislation.

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

A. Under similar weather conditions, well managed native grasslands have:

- lower flame heights
- lower radiant heat
- slower flame speed
- fewer embers
- slower rate of spread

Q. Why are roadsides important for native grasslands?

A. In Western Victoria about 30% of known native grasslands are on roadsides.

Native grasslands survive on roadsides because of past management including burning by the CFA.

Q. What do CFA brigades do for native grasslands in their area?

A. For many years, communities in south-west Victoria have burned native grasslands on roadsides and railway lines.

Local volunteer CFA brigades burn over 2,600 km of roadsides each year for land managers in accordance with the Integrated Fire Management Plan.

Q. Why is burning native grasslands at particular times important?

A. Regular burning can reduce invasion of trees and weeds.

It reduces biomass (and fuel load) and makes 'spaces' for a diversity of plants to seed and grow.

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

A. 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.

Q. What else are native grasslands good for?

A. Agriculture on the Victorian Volcanic Plain has relied on native grasslands for many decades. Native grasslands may:

- require lower inputs (e.g. no fertilisers)
- respond better to summer rain
- improve animal health
- reduce the need for supplementary feeding
- produce finer wool
- reduce drought risk
- reduce fire risk
- enhance land and water protection
- improve human health through reduced use of chemicals
- provide opportunities for new farming enterprises such as seed collection and native plant harvesting
- enhance opportunities for recreation, tourism and personal satisfaction.

Q. What can I do to help?

A. If you have native grassland on roadsides adjacent to your property, check the brochure 'Fire and our Roadsides' and talk to your local CFA brigade before doing any works.

If you have native grassland on your property you may be eligible for funding to help preserve or restore it. Contact your local DELWP office.