

PROJECT UPDATE REPORT

Project: Hanson - Brandy Hill Koala Habitat Corridor
Project Manager: Phil Milling

Date: 13.6.2023
Report by: Pauline Sykes

Notes: Notes for Community Consultative Committee meeting, 18th June 2024

Report:

Notes for Community Consultative Committee re direct seeding for Koala corridor establishment.

Slideshow

- Images of a trial direct seeding project in the Central West, comparing seeding day December 2020 to the most recent monitoring April 2024 - 3.5 yrs. Aimed to be a grassy woodland, so not the same density as HBH. Full community including native grasses. 35 spp.
- Images of a quarry in Lake Macquarie, new rehab and after 12 months of growth. Note plants within guards were planted as tubestock. Seeding undertaken at the same time and seeded plants are largely taller and healthier after 12 months than the tubestock.
- Images of newly germinated seedlings at Hanson's Somersby quarry where previous efforts at planting had been unsuccessful and the whole site was reworked and direct seeded this year.

Why direct seed vs planting tubestock?

- More cost effective on many levels.
- Lowered ongoing maintenance costs - watering, guard management, replacements.
- Native seed can be expensive and hard to source, hence site collection ongoing for this and future stages. Quality assurance testing for germination and viability.
- Can direct seed species not easily grown in nursery, increases diversity of planting
- Limited effect on natural revegetation from physical damage/soil compaction/introduce pathogens
- Establishment is better without transplant shock (setback from each transplanting)
- Can easily tailor mix to different areas (doing this for Stage 1vs Stage 2 but can do within stage areas too)
- More natural effect – humans vs natural establishment and randomness/straight lines
- Overseed if need be – monitoring will speak to that
- Succession planting – grasses to be added in future stages once tree and shrub species established. Aerial application again limits trampling/soil compaction for future seeding

Site and process

- Rested from grazing, limiting compaction and allowed natural regeneration to grow away without repeated damage from stock
- Access limitations, able to be seeded in conditions too wet for normal access

Actual seeding was done over two separate days under quite wet conditions. Vehicle and foot access was very limited for this so definitely would have hindered planting. (Planting would have taken several weeks to plant and water in, and multiple vehicles traversing the site, increasing compaction and deteriorating soil health.)

Stage 1 includes partial sections of Stage 4-designated area where this was more practical (Croft Rd end).