MERIT STAGE SUMMARY

Stage 1 : 01 Feb 2018 - 30 Jun 2018

Project Name	Grassy Woodland Connectivity Enhancement
Recipient	Molonglo Catchment Group Incorporated
Service Provider	
Funded by	National Landcare Programme
Funding	
Project Start	01 Feb 2018
Project finish	30 Jun 2020
Grant ID	4100001833
External ID	20MTR3-300

Summary

Number of activities:

Planned	0
Started	0
Finished	9
Deferred	0
Cancelled	0

Supporting Documents Attached During This Stage

Document name
Project Risk Management Plan
Project WHS Management Plan
Project Fire Management Plan

Outputs: Targets Vs Achieved

Output type	Output Target Measure	Output Achieved (project to date)	Output Target (whole project)
Revegetation Details	Area of revegetation works (Ha)	27.0	97.7
Revegetation Details	No. of plants planted > 2 metres in height	2740.0	7800
Plant Propagation Details	Total No. of plants grown and ready for planting	0.0	7800

Project Outcomes

Outcomes	Project Goals

By 30 June 2020, this project will improve the condition, extent and connectivity of White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland by conducting invasive weed control and establishing 7,800 trees (species > 2 Metres when mature), on 97.7 Hectares of Land.	"Threatened Ecological Communities"
By 30 June 2020, improve the condition, extent and connectivity of habitat over 97.7 hectares for the focus species of swift parrot (Lathamus discolour), koala (Phascolarctos cinereus) and other threatened woodland birds listed under the Commonwealth and NSW legislation by planting 7,800 trees (species > 2 Metres when mature).	"Threatened Species"
By 30 June 2020, increase the participation and involvement of 15 local community members in landcare activities, such as planting and weed control activities.	"Community awareness/participation in NRM"

Summary of Project Progress and Issues

Overview of Project Progress:

Progress against planned activities and outcomes::- A total of 2750 plants of diverse species were planted over the winter 2018 period for this project as had been planned for this stage. This leaves approximately 7000 plants remaining to plant in 2019.

Successes, challenges and adaptations:- The digging of planting holes has taken longer than anticipated due to rockier, harder and drier soil due to the very dry conditions. The six months before planting had only between 40% and 60% of mean rainfall. We have budgeted enough days for planting and planting maintenance and will still be able to deliver all the plantings in this project. We had planned to have students from Australian Defence Form Academy participate on one large planting day based on their interest in participating in similar previous events. They did not respond to our requests. We will communicate with them much earlier in 2019 to have a greater chance of getting their assistance.

Environmental, Economic and Social Outcomes:

Environmental outcomes of the project for this stage::- A diverse mix of Eucalyptus, Acacia and other shrub species were planted that will provide regeneration for species that are not present or currently regenerating at the sites. The plant regeneration will ensure long term viability of the endangered ecological community at this location. The plant regeneration will also in the long term provide habitat for threatened species, including koala and swift parrot and other threatened woodland birds.

Social outcomes of the project for this stage::- The local community was involved in one community planting day where landcare groups, conservation volunteers Australia, rotary groups, scouts, local council and Molonglo Catchment Group participated. The event was successful with thirty people attending the day and participants reporting they were happy with the event. This project is leading to an increase in local community and environment groups collaborating and working together. The project is also increasing the engagement of local people in their local environment and increasing numbers of people involved in Queanbeyan landcare activities. 125 volunteers from the Canberra-Queanbeyan Region (NSW Southern Tablelands) participated in the Conservation Volunteers Australia managed work team's planting and weed control. They learnt about the project and actions being taken locally to conserve biodiversity and some volunteers have now participated in further projects.

Economic outcomes of the project for this stage::- A project manager is employed part time with funding from this project. Funding from this project is also employing multiple staff from Conservation Volunteers Australia part time (regional manager, conservation officer, team leaders). Plants have been sourced from local suppliers (all within 100 km). Materials have been sources from a large landscaping supplier in Victoria.

Implementation Update:

Activity implementation for this stage::- A total of 2750 plants of diverse species were planted over the winter 2018 period for this project as had been planned for this stage. This leaves approximately 7000 plants remaining to plant in 2019. Plants were successfully planted in the previously determined sites using hand tools, water crystal placed in the hole due to the dry conditions, guarded with corflute guards and watered after planting. Plants were planted at five sites, all owned by the local council (Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council). Four of these sites have had planting fully completed. Council has been pleased with the planting. Prior to planting occurring, a cultural survey was conducted by a local Ngunawal traditional custodian and culturally important artefacts were found (culturally modified trees, stone artefacts) that have been protected during the planting. Planting was conducted by one large community planting day and 14 Conservation Volunteers Australia managed work team days. Three days of CVA managed weed control was conducted prior to planting. CVA managed work teams worked effectively. The plantings at some sites are adjoining plantings completed in a previous conservation project (Stringybark to Environa landscape link for small birds, funded by the NSW Environmental Trust) therefore complementing and increasing the conservation benefit of both projects (See photo attached showing 2-

year-old revegetation in foreground and on right and recent 20 million trees project planting in background and on left).
Details of adaptations and variations from the plan::- There was a slight increase in the number of days needed to plant compared to planning due to harder soil and dry conditions.
Have you had any notifiable Workplace Health and Safety incidents during the reporting period?::- No

Lessons Learned and Improvements:
Lessons learned for this stage::- Planting activities require greater time for ground preparation, in particular in dry periods. Engagement with landcare and other community groups for good collaborations and events requires a lot of time.
Improvement actions to be implemented::- None
Comments / Notes::- The project is progressing well and is on track. Good engagement with local council, community groups and landholders has occurred. These relationships will be useful for the implementation of the majority of plantings in 2019.

Project Risk

To help anticipate and determine management and mitigation strategies for the risks associated with delivering and reporting the outcomes of this Regional Delivery project, complete the table below. Risks identified should be those that the project team consider to be within the reasonable influence of the project team to anticipate and manage.

Risk/Threat Description	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Current Controls/Contingency	Residual Risk

Climatic Conditions	Possible	Major	Significant	Plant when good soil moisture conditions occur (autumn or winter in this region)Dig deep holes prior to plantingEnsure plants are in good health at plantingWater after planting and during hot and dry conditions (plants watered minimum of twice during first summer)Protect plants from wind damage with corflute tree guard staked into ground with wooden stakes	Medium

Fire (risk to property, human wellbeing)	Unlikely	Major	Medium	Do not work when fire danger is above moderate rating published by NSW Rural Fire ServiceDo not drive or park a vehicle over tall grass when fire danger is above moderateNo machinery to be used in dry conditionsNo smoking on siteCarry fire extinguisher in vehicle and train staff in use Carry mobile phone to call emergency servicesDevelop fire evacuation plan and communicate to all people presentEnact fire plan if fire is nearby or detected	Low

Fire (damage to Project site)	Unlikely	Major	Medium	Seek information from NSW Rural Fire Service during summer on nearby fires and respond accordinglyDevelop property fire plan including consideration of protecting project siteDo not drive or park a vehicle over tall grass when fire danger is above moderateNo machinery to be used in dry conditionsNo smoking on siteCarry fire extinguisher in vehicle and train staff in use Carry mobile phone to call emergency servicesEnact fire plan if fire is nearby or detected.	Low

Lower than expected survival rate of plantings	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Protect plants from wind and animal browsing with corflute tree guards staked into ground with wooden stakePlant when good soil moisture conditions occur (autumn or winter in this region)Dig deep holes prior to plantingWater after planting and during hot and dry conditions (minimum twice during first summer)Plant 33% more trees to allow for 25% mortality rateIf plant mortality greater than 25% after one year, plant new tubestock to reach required number of trees	Medium

Biosecurity (damage from invasive species and/or pathogens)	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	Inspect tubestock for plant diseases, invasive plants and animals before bringing to siteClean equipment and clothing that touches soil after use and between sitesDo not bring soil or mulch to sites from other locations except from plant nurseryCheck if nursery has had biosecurity issues in the pastSelect nursery to supply plants that has had no biosecurity issues in the past 5 years	Low

Plant mortality due to herbicide spray drift	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	Provide locations of planting to land managers and to persons conducting herbicide spraying Spray herbicide in light wind and suitable weather conditions onlyMonitor wind and weather conditions during spray operationsLeave significant buffer zone between herbicide spraying and planting sitesSpray appropriate herbicide specific to the plant targeted and does not affect broadleaf plants planted during project	Low

Plant mortality or poor condition due to animal/herbivore browsing	Possible	Major	Significant	Ensure fences preventing livestock from accessing planting sites remain in good conditionProtect plants from kangaroo and rabbit browsing with 600 mm corflute tree guard Peg tree guard into the ground with wooden stakeInspect planting sites every 4 months following planting to check tree guard is in place and replace stake or guard if necessaryAssess level of exotic herbivore grazing (mainly rabbits) annually, determine if population control measures or exclusion.	Medium

Damage to Aboriginal cultural heritage that stops project	Unlikely	Major	Medium	Traditional custodians to conduct cultural surveyAdopt appropriate cultural protocols where broad landscape features identified to have level of cultural sensitivityInduct staff about cultural sensitivitiesContact traditional custodians and heritage authorities if suspected Aboriginal cultural heritage is found and stop work in the areaMinimal ground disturbanceComply with requirements of Due Diligence Code of Practice for Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW	Low

Vandalism of plants or site	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	Conduct community engagement prior to planting and communicate benefits of project to local communityOrganise large planting days with existing community organisations: Queanbeyan Landcare, Jerrabomberra Residents Association, Jerrabomberra Bushcare Group, Googong Bush on the Boundary GroupInvite local community members to large community planting daysDevelop signage at reserve entry points explaining the projectPublicise the	Low

				project and provide project updates	
Plants not delivered on time or in poor condition	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Submit tubestock plant order to nursery 5 months before the required date Contact nursery 3 months before delivery of plants to confirm satisfactory progress of orderSource plants from reputable nursery with past projects completed to high standard	Low

Staff change in organisations managing the project	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Engage with landholders in project planning to gauge their interests and concerns regarding the project Work only with landholders committed to conservation land management practices, as evidenced by conservation covenants, previous environmental projects and current land usePlan all on-ground work in collaboration with landholdersMaintain good communication with landholders throughout project	Low

Trips and Falls	Possible	Minor	Medium	Avoid obvious hazards such as logs, loose rocks, steep banksRemove trip hazards from worksite by filling holes, removing unnecessary objectsFlag or cordon off obvious immovable trip hazardsAllow 2m visibility space between team members when walkingEnsure boots are firmly lacedExercise additional caution when walking downhillAvoid carrying heavy or awkward objects on uneven ground, or reduce the load carriedClosely supervise workers with pre-existing inj	Low

Road Travel – to and from sites	Unlikely	Major	Medium	Undertake pre-departure vehicle check prior to departingComply with all speed limits and road rules (eg seatbelts)Drive in a manner that ensures that all occupants are safe and feel safeDo not carry chemicals, unsecured tools, equipment or baggage in team vehiclesMaintain conditions which optimise the comfort and concentration of the driverAppoint navigator to assist with directions	Medium

Manual Handling	Possible	Minor	Medium	Use gentle warm up stretches before commencing workUse mechanical aidsHave heavy materials delivered close to the work-siteMonitor loads carried are appropriate to individual team membersEncourage testing of weights before any lift attemptedReduce weights carried on uneven terrainDemonstrate proper lifting techniquesAvoid of, tasks that involve twisting, bending or over reachingRotate tasks frequentlyCheck equipment used is appropriate and well maintained	Low

Bites and Stings	Unlikely	Minor	Low	Redeploy to another task or location any team members who have known allergiesConduct a visual inspection of the worksite to identify and flag high risk areas eg ant nests, stinging plantsEnsure that all team members are appropriately dressedTuck trousers into socks, and wear gloves, when working in areas where there is a known, or suspected, higher risk of spider/insect bitesProvide insect repellent	Medium

Sun and Heat Stress	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Limit work in high risk hot periodsUse or create shaded rest areasProvide water and make sure workers maintain an intake of fluids sufficient to offset body fluid lost through sweating Wear sun protective long clothing and hatProvide and apply sunscreenSet realistic work targetsEducate all on signs of heat stress and monitorRotate heavy strenuous tasksCease work if conditions become unsafe to continue	Medium

Snake Bite	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	Do a 'heavy line walk' through the area before commencing workDo not work in a circular or 'surrounding' formation that prevents a snake from escapingUse lifting aids when lifting objects that might hide snakesIf a snake is seen, stay clear and point out locationWear boots, long trousers and thick socks. Gloves also must be worn.Regularly revise snakebite first aidEnsure that the emergency response plan understood by all	Medium

Working with Chemicals	Remote	Moderate	Low	Read, retain and comply with the relevant MSDSCheck that there are no leaks in containersExplain and demonstrate how to use, carry and store correctlyProvide adequate washing facilities as directed by the MSDSWear appropriate PPE as advised on the MSDS (note that the use of certain PPE may accelerate the onset of heat stress)Make sure no one operates outside of training	Medium

Swinging tools - Impact/soft tissue Injury	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Encourage gentle warm up stretches before commencement of workMaintain safe working distancesDemonstrate how to use, carry and store tools correctlyMaintain tools in good conditionEstablish a firm footing before swinging toolsRaise tools no more than shoulder heightRotate tasksAdjust work periods to take account physical capacities of the team membersWear appropriate PPE eg high visibility vest, hard hat, glasses and gloves, suitable shoes	Medium

Soil Borne Diseases and Infections	Remote	Moderate	Low	Prior to project commencement, check with local health authorities about areaIdentify any team member in higher risk categories and deploy them on an alternate taskAvoid skin contact with wet soil or muddy waterCover any minor cuts or scratchesAvoid activities that produce dustWear appropriate PPE eg. glasses, respirators, glovesProvide adequate washing facilities and ensure team members wash thoroughly before eating or drinking	Low

Adverse Impact from Working in Cold Conditions	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	Make ample food and fluids available, including warm drinksEncourage gentle warm up stretches before commencement of workRotate tasks to avoid prolonged exposureIdentify shelter area and use this during periods of inactivity Structure work to avoid the coldest times of the dayEncourage team members to wear layered clothing that enables adjusting their body temperature Wear a warm hat (the head is a major heat loss area)	Medium

Working with Power Tools	Remote	Moderate	Low	Explain and demonstrate how to use, carry and store toolsMaintain strict supervision and buffer zonesMake sure tools are maintainedEnsure all equipment have been tested and taggedEmergency shutdown procedures in placeStart/stop switches clearly marked, in easy reach of operatorClear trip hazards from the work siteCheck that the team members have lose items securedWear appropriate PPE as recommended by the manufacturer	Medium

Progress Against Each Activity

1. Activity Type	**Site Preparation**
Status	finished
Activity Description	Ground preparation works including weed treatment works objective (species targeted)
Major Theme	
Start Date	13 Feb 2018
End Date	29 Jun 2018
2. Activity Type	**Plant Propagation**
Status	finished
Activity Description	Selecting appropriate nursery, ordering and purchasing tubestock plants for planting in 2018 and 2019.
Major Theme	
Start Date	13 Feb 2018
End Date	29 Jun 2018
3. Activity Type	**Flora Survey - general**
Status	finished
Activity Description	Baseline data- including monitoring points/photos
Major Theme	
Site	QPRC Balcombe Park
Start Date	13 Feb 2018

End Date	29 Jun 2018
4. Activity Type	**Project Administration**
Status	finished
Activity Description	Meetings, site managements plan preparation, governance establishment
Major Theme	
Start Date	13 Feb 2018
End Date	29 Jun 2018
5. Activity Type	**Progress, Outcomes and Learning - stage report**
Status	finished
Activity Description	Progress, Outcomes and Learning- Lessons learnt
Major Theme	
Start Date	31 May 2018
End Date	29 Jun 2018
6. Activity Type	**Revegetation**
Status	finished
Activity Description	Revegetation - Planting diverse local trees and shrubs tubestock to conserve patches of critically endangered box gum grassy woodland and improve connectivity between woodland remnants and other native vegetation. Mature plant heights have been taken from NSW PlantNET, The NSW Plant Information Network System.

Major Theme	
Start Date	13 Feb 2018
End Date	30 Jun 2018
7. Activity Type	**Indigenous Knowledge Transfer**
Status	finished
Activity Description	A preliminary site survey suggests the area has the potential to contain sites or landscape features with some level of Aboriginal cultural sensitivity, and so a cultural survey at all planting sites will be conducted by Ngunawal traditional custodians prior to commencement to identify and where necessary, report any culturally significant features or objects as required by NSW Aboriginal cultural heritage laws. Findings from the survey will inform on-site activities and ongoing project management.
Major Theme	
Start Date	13 Feb 2018
End Date	29 Jun 2018
8. Activity Type	**Community Participation and Engagement**
Status	finished
Activity Description	Participation of local landcare groups (Jerrabomberra and Queanbeyan Landcare), other community groups (schools, scout groups) and landowners in project activities including planning, promotion, planting, maintenance and survey.
Major Theme	

Start Date	13 Feb 2018
End Date	29 Jun 2018
9. Activity Type	**Management Plan Development**
Status	finished
Activity Description	This activity has been completed. Documents have been uploaded under the documents tab. Management Plan development (as per Clause 23 of funding Agreement) for the development of the projects risk, fire and WHS plans. Documents to uploaded under the documents tab - once uploaded mark finish.
Major Theme	
Start Date	13 Feb 2018
End Date	29 Jun 2018

Summary generated by:	**Benjamin Huttner-Koros(ben.hk@molonglocatchment.org.au)**
Position/Role	MERIT Project Administrator and authorised representative of Molonglo Catchment Group Incorporated
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