

CLAYTON DRIVE RESERVE, SPREYTON

***ENGAEUS GRANULATUS* MONITORING PLAN** **JUNE 2015**



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Summary

An assessment was made of the Clayton Reserve at 39 Clayton Drive Spreyton which contained the area of land designated as the Offset Site for project EPBC 2011/6095 approved by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities on 7 June 2012.

The project included –

- The translocation of *Engaeus granulatus* from an area of roadworks on Sheffield Road to Clayton Reserve; and
- Habitat improvement works at Clayton Reserve to increase the number of *Engaeus granulatus* at that location.

The following observations were made in the May 2015 assessment -

- *Engaeus* burrows/chimneys were recorded across all areas where habitat had been created and/or improved;
- Most *Engaeus* burrows were well hidden by the dense grass – sedge – rush ground layer;
- There is **no** evidence of erosion occurring from the reserve and, in particular, from those areas of created and improved *Engaeus* habitat;
- There is evidence that the areas of created habitat remain wet and/or have surface water for sufficiently long periods of time to support the presence of an aquatic water milfoil species (*Myriophyllum* sp.);
- Plantings have grown very well, and losses had been low – losses are localised to those areas where the soil dries quickly and was highest in those species which have less tolerance to dry conditions; and
- Natural seedfall and subsequent recruitment of trees and shrubs has been sporadic across the reserve, with the most obvious species being *Acacia dealbata*, *Acacia melanoxylon*, *Eucalyptus ovata* and *E. viminalis*.

It is recommended that –

1. the tree guards and bamboo stakes associated with larger trees and shrubs be removed; and
2. weed spraying works be conducted in Spring 2015 to target blackberry and thistles.

1. SCOPE OF REPORT

This report compiles the monitoring results from a survey conducted in May 2015 for project EPBC 2011/6095 which was approved by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities on 7 June 2012.

The Offset Management Plan (OMP) prepared and approved for 39 Clayton Drive [Clayton Reserve] outlines the monitoring program.

The project included –

- The translocation of *Engaeus granulatus* from an area of roadworks on Sheffield Road to Clayton Reserve; and
- Habitat improvement works at Clayton Reserve to increase the numbers of *Engaeus granulatus* at that location.

The objectives of the OMP were to;

1. Protect existing Central North burrowing crayfish in the Offset Site;
2. Translocate Central North burrowing crayfish to the Offset Site from the Activity Site to increase the overall number of Central North burrowing crayfish at the Offset Site;
3. Create new habitat for Central North burrowing crayfish within the Offset Site to increase the carrying capacity of the site to accommodate enough animals to compensate for the loss of Central North burrowing crayfish at the Activity Site;
4. Create a geographic area of new habitat for Central North burrowing crayfish within the Offset Site to compensate for the loss of habitat at Sheffield Road;
5. Provide a practical opportunity to investigate the merits and methods of habitat creation and translocation for Central North burrowing crayfish, including information on the techniques to create habitat and the rate of population expansion into created habitats, and the techniques and success of translocation;
6. Improve habitat condition and landscape connectivity in the Offset Site for Central North burrowing crayfish and other species of conservation significance, including Tasmanian devil, swift parrot and eastern barred bandicoot;
7. Manage non-native areas of the site for fuel reduction purposes and passive recreational activities without impacting on the natural values in the Offset Site; and
8. Provide a 'nature conservation' educational resource for community groups, land managers, school groups, visitors and the broader community.

The OMP committed to providing progress reports to DSEWPaC and the Policy and Conservation Assessment Branch (DPIPWE) every:

- 6 months from the commencement of the project for 2 years (4 reporting periods); and then
- annually for the next 8 years (8 reporting periods).

Table 1. Monitoring regime for the Offset Site based on project phase

Items in Yellow have reached the Completion Criteria for the project but still require annual assessment until October 2022. Items highlighted in Orange have been completed.

Parameter	Tasks	Zone and frequency	Responsible
Translocation			
Survivorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Burrow Count ▪ Photopoints 	Zone 4; 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 24, 36 and 52 weeks from translocation (1 year monitoring total)	Suitably qualified ecologist
Habitat Creation			
Burrow increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Burrow Count ▪ Photopoints 	Zone 4; 4, 8, 12, 36 and 52 weeks from translocation then every 12 months (timed for October - November) which is after the breeding and dispersal period of CNBC) for a further 9 years	Suitably qualified ecologist
Erosion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Photopoints 	Zone 4; 4, 8, 12, 36 and 52 weeks from translocation then every 12 months for a further 9 years	Suitably qualified ecologist
Wetness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Observation of surface flow areas ▪ Auger to water table 	Zones 1-4; Every 6 months from planting for 5 years, then every 12 months for a further 5 years	Suitably qualified ecologist
Plant survival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Count Losses ▪ Photopoints 	Zones 1-4; Every 6 months from planting for 10 years	Suitably qualified ecologist
Habitat Improvement			
Burrow increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Burrow Count ▪ Photopoints 	Zones 2 and 4; 4, 8, 12, 36 and 52 weeks from translocation then every 12 months (timed for October - November) for a further 9 years	Suitably qualified ecologist
Plant survival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Count Losses ▪ Photopoints 	Zones 1-4; Every 6 months from planting for 10 years	Suitably qualified person
Other Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Den and Nest Search ▪ Swift parrot survey* 	Zones 2/3; Every 12 months from planting for 10 years (*during peak breeding period for swift parrot; Nov - Feb)	Suitably qualified person

2. SITE INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING

2.1 SIGNAGE AND SITE ACCESS

Signage and site access were reported in the 12 month report and there have been no changes since then.

2.2 SITE INFRASTRUCTURE

No infrastructure has been established in the reserve.

2.3 PLANNING

THE OMP stated –

The offset site will be appropriately re-zoned (as Environmental Management Zone or similar) for the conservation of fauna at the site under the new planning scheme to be submitted for approval by the Tasmanian Minister for Planning in August 2012.

The site will be managed as Public Open Space in accordance with the DCC Public Open Space Service Level 2011/12 Plan and this Plan. The DCC Public Open Space Service Level 2011/12 (POSSL) Plan is reviewed annually and outlines the type of land and its function; Section 3 Asset Inventory can include the primary function of the Conservation of Flora and Fauna (code CFF in the Function column), such as the Mary Street Wetland and Bridge Road Reserve. A description of CCF is in section 3.3 of the DCC Public Open Space Service Level 2011/12 Plan.

Compliance for DCC Public Open Space Service Level 2011/12 Plan is outlined in Section 9 of the POSSL, whereby legislation and other documents of DCC need to be applied and also the existing Plans for key sites, such as the Don Reserve and Kelcey Tier. The Plan for this project will be added to this list and related to the approvals (conditions etc.) given by the State and Commonwealth Governments.

The site will be added to the GIS layer maintained by Council and Council staff will be advised of the conservation importance of the site and this Plan. DCC is to ensure that no unauthorised DCC works occur at the site. Active management of the site will be performed by the DCC Works Crew in accordance with the OMP with funding and other resources provided through the DCC Annual Works Program.

The Devonport City Council Interim Planning Scheme came into force on 19 October 2013. The reserve is zoned 'Environmental Management' which is consistent with the commitment made by the Devonport City Council during the assessment process under the EPBC Act.

Management of the site, and its associated management plan, were added in to the list of reserves managed by DCC under the DCC Public Open Space Service Level 2014/15 (the current version of the SL) Plan prior to the 6 month monitoring event. Compliance for DCC Public Open Space Service Level 2014/15 Plan is outlined in Section 11.13. The management of the reserve has been in accordance with the OMP.

There has been no change to the zoning of the reserve and it remains on the DCC Public Open Space Service Level Plan. The management of the reserve has been in accordance with the OMP.

2.4 COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND ADJOINING LANDS

There have been ongoing discussions between DCC staff and adjacent landowners as to the works being undertaken at the site for the CNBC. The Council has discussed with new owners of properties adjacent to the reserve its' management intent such that they are aware of the values present in the reserve.

School groups and 'care' groups continue to be involved in the planting of trees and shrubs at the site, building close links with members of the broader community.

Locals continue to frequent the site for recreational activities and are aware of the sites' natural values and significance for *Engaeus granulatus*.

3. CENTRAL NORTH BURROWING CRAYFISH TRANSLOCATION

3.1 HABITAT CREATION

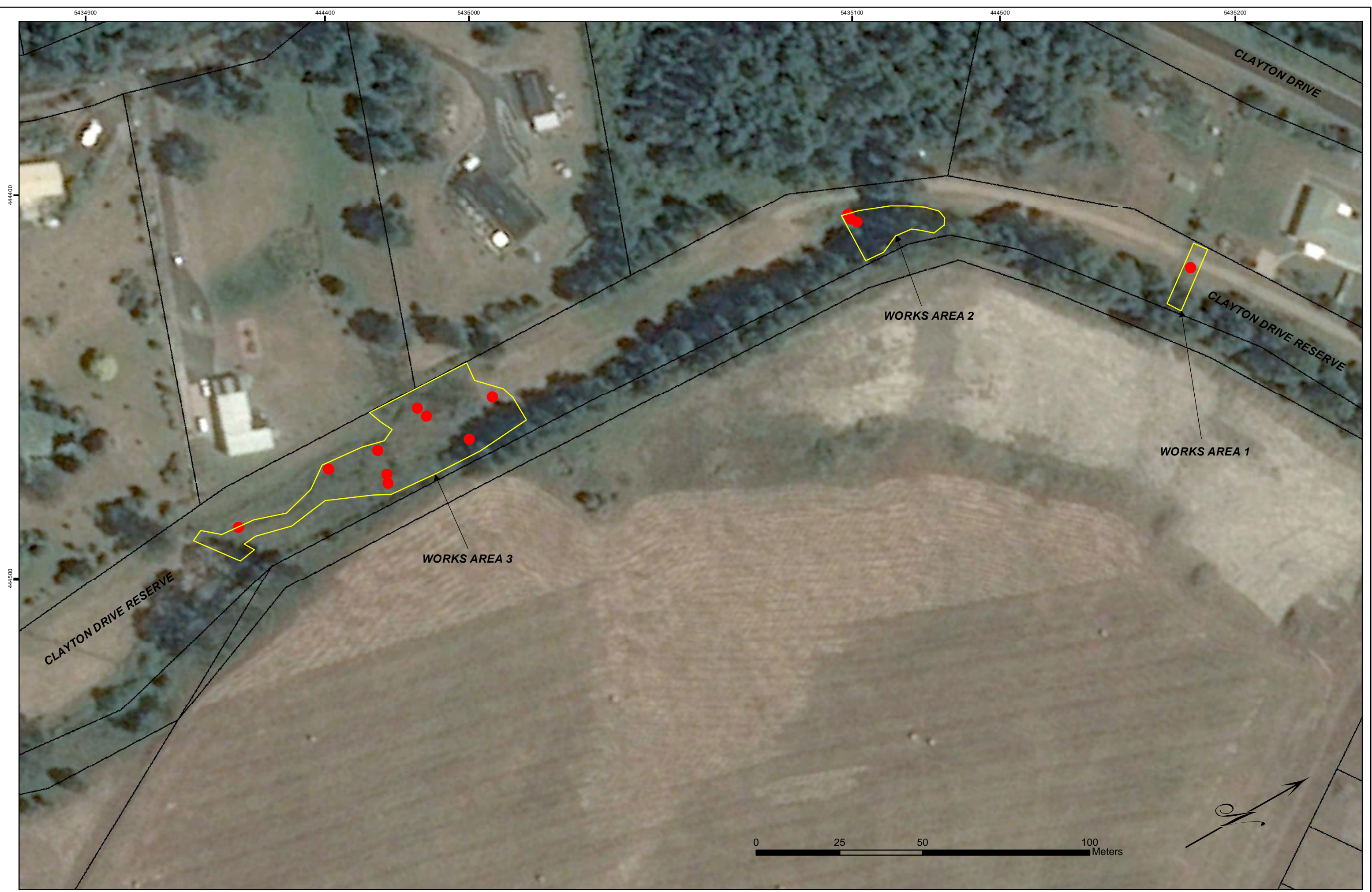
The habitat created from the on-ground works associated with the project was mapped using a GPS in 2013. Created habitat was assessed (being 15 months from when the site was 'modified' to create habitat) as being 6,046 square metres. This is more than double the required amount of created habitat by the Completion Criteria (which requires 3,000 square metres).

Engaeus burrows were observed in early 2014, and again in 2015 (Figure 1), in all of the areas of created habitat which confirms the view that the areas are now suitable habitat for the species as no *Engaeus* were present in these areas prior to the habitat creation works (mostly drainage works to create wet areas) in mid-2012.

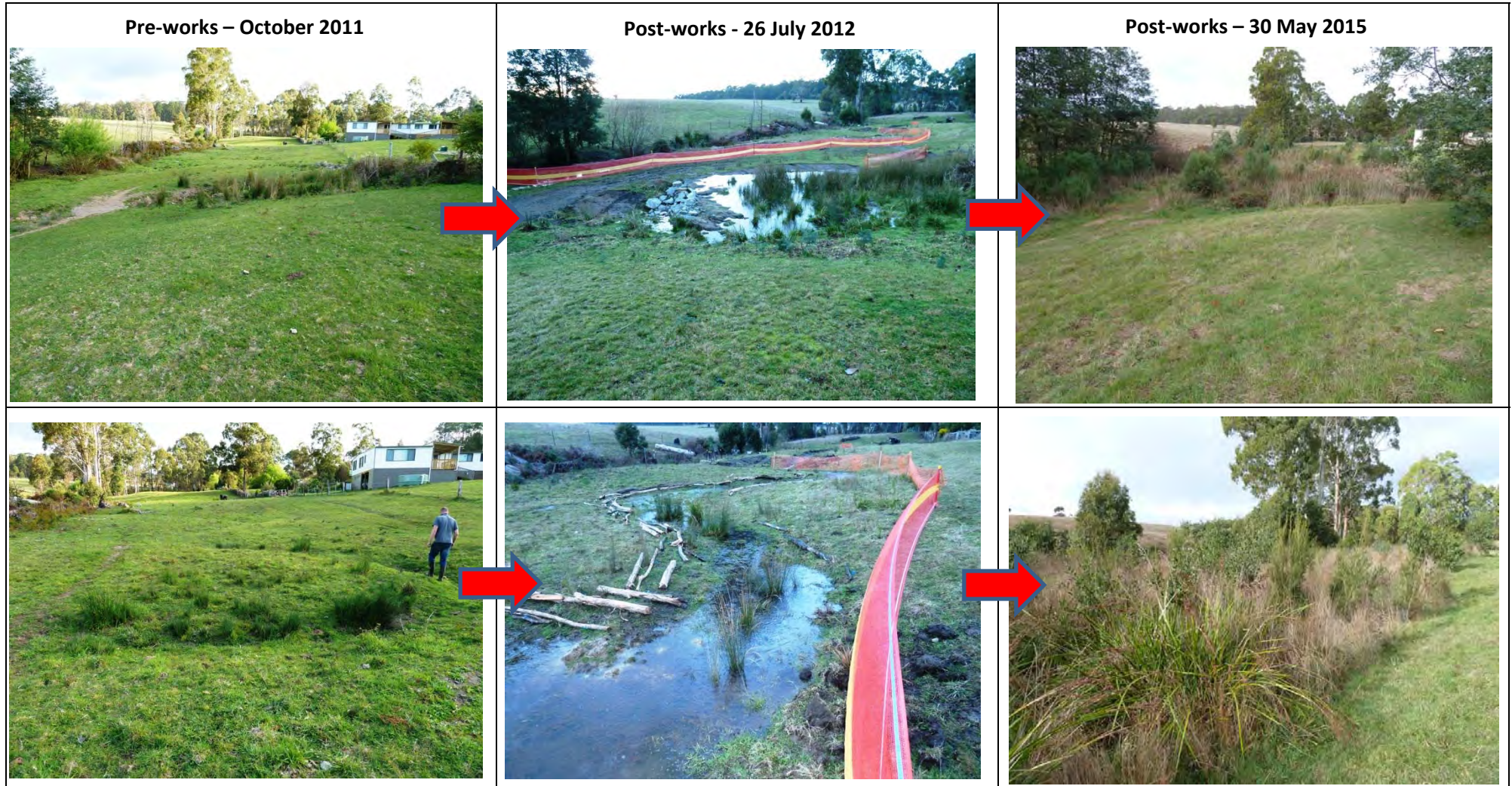
The following images show various stages of rehabilitation since the on-ground works were completed. There has been considerable improvement in the quality and quantity of habitat available for *Engaeus* and for other native fauna, such as bandicoots. In effect what was pasture in the habitat creation/improvement areas has become, in most parts, damp to wet *Engaeus* habitat areas dominated by native plant species. These areas should continue to improve over time with little intervention or remedial works.

Translocation Area 2 (Works Area 2 on Figure 1)





Translocation Area 1 and 3 Images from 2011, 2012 and 2015 (Works Areas 1 and 3 on Figure 1)





3.2 ASSESSMENT AGAINST TARGETS

It is important that the success or otherwise of the project be assessed against key criteria. These are:

- No Declared Weeds* or Weeds of National Significance present in or adjacent to the habitat created for CNBC;
- More than 3,000 m² of created habitat (potential or actual);
- More than 430 additional *Engaeus* burrows present in the created habitat**; and
- No moderately to highly erosive surfaces present in the created habitat (indicated by areas of recent sediment accumulation, or sediment removal).

* As defined by the Tasmanian *Weed Management Act* 1999.

** based on the assumptions of survivorship outlined in the Preliminary Documentation for the project.

As the project has been successful in achieving the required *Engaeus* survival target and offset number of new burrows (to offset the losses incurred in the translocation process) within the allocated timeframe, a passive approach to locating burrows was adopted in this monitoring event; a search was conducted for chimneys/burrows without removing much if any of the grass/sedge vegetation cover.

The assessment proved extremely difficult to locate burrows due to the dense grass – sedge sward that covered most of the areas of habitat created. The images below highlight the dense nature of the sward and the hidden nature of the burrows/chimneys. It quickly became apparent during searching that no matter how much care was applied, damage was being caused to the chimneys that had been built underneath or inter-twined with the sward.

On this basis, and in the interest of maintaining chimneys intact and the keep the site as ‘functional’ as possible as habitat areas were selected to locate burrows to determine the spatial extent of burrows (‘presence’) within the areas of habitat created as opposed to trying to generate a number of ‘abundance’. Figure 1 shows the areas where burrows were located during the searching, which shows that *Engaeus* are widespread across the site which is comparable to the results from the previous annual monitoring event.



An *Engaeus* burrow discovered underneath a dense sedges – grass sward



The same burrow pictured above but with the dense sedge – grass sward placed back in its natural location - the burrows are well hidden by the vegetative cover, which provides wind protection and shade as well as cover from predators when they emerge from their burrows

4. PLANTINGS

A visual assessment was made of the number of plant losses for each species that has been planted. There have been several mortalities since the last assessment. These losses include for example native pepper (*Tasmannia lanceolata*), hopbush (*Dodonaea viscosa*) and dogwood (*Pomaderris apetala*) – with most losses occurring in localised areas that were perhaps too dry or have dried quickly after the planting occurred. Areas where the most losses have occurred have experienced natural recruitment of blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), silver wattle (*Acacia dealbata*) and eucalypts (mainly *E. ovata*). Some paperbark and blackwood are now over 1.5 m tall and will within the next 1-2 years start to form a closed canopy which will further create a micro-climate within which the *Engaeus granulatus* at the site should thrive.



Healthy strong growth in *Cassinia aculeata* was observed in areas where it has been planted



Vigorous growth in *Cassinia aculeata*, *Acacia melanoxylon* and *Melaleuca ericifolia* has occurred in most parts of the created habitat and 10m buffer strip to Figure of Eight Creek – the sedges, rushes and rank grasses has provided habitat for terrestrial mammals as well as provide shade and wind protection to crayfish habitat

5. EROSION

A visual assessment was made of the channels and watercourses that flow through areas of created and improved habitat before entering the main watercourse that flows into Figure of Eight Creek. Erosion has virtually ceased in the main channel and associated pooling areas as a grass and herb cover has formed which stabilises the surface over which water is flowing. Those areas where grass has not been able to grow are relatively flat and areas where water ponds, enabling sediment to drop out and accumulate – these areas in particular have accumulated silt which has enabled aquatic species to take root and grow, such as water milfoil (*Myriophyllum*).



Water is ponding in the deepest parts of the drainage system which supports aquatic species such as water milfoil (*Myriophyllum*)



Water was free flowing in May 2015 through the main channel of the central portion of the reserve where habitat was created – sediment release has been stopped due to the dense coverage of vegetation such as grasses, herbs and semi-aquatic species

6. WATER TABLE

Visual assessments have been made of the approximate water table across those areas where *Engaeus granulatus* were translocated. To date no auger samples have been necessary as all monitoring events except for 28 January 2013 have had surface water present in the main pools and channels between pools. The water table on 28 January 2013 was assessed as being 'just below the surface' as the burrows along the edge of the pools and channels retained water just below their level with natural ground level. Water was flowing well throughout the channels and pools on 30 October 2013 because of good spring rains.

Water was abundant in the watercourses flowing through the created habitat areas, and along Figure of Eight Creek itself. During the May 2015 monitoring event. In some locations water milfoil (*Myriophyllum*) has established which demonstrates that water is present for long periods of time within the system and that even if it dries out (ie no visible surface water) it is not for long periods of time.

7. OTHER FAUNA

No nests of terrestrial mammals or dens have been observed within the site to date. A search was undertaken during the May 2015 assessment of the site and none were observed.

Numerous bandicoot (possibly eastern barred bandicoot as this species has been observed in the reserve) diggings were observed in the reserve in May 2015, especially in the frequently mown areas of grass and moss on slightly elevated areas of the reserve. Furthermore, numerous animal 'runs' were observed through the sedge – rush dominated areas of the created habitat – demonstrating that there are native animals in the area.



The sedges and rushes that have grown in the areas of created habitat provide shelter for bandicoots and other wildlife – several 'runs' are present through these areas (see arrow in adjacent image)

8. WEEDS

Blackberries remain the dominant weed along fencelines and in some areas of pasture regrowth. They have also started to become locally dominant in areas of created habitat due to the high rainfall and warming temperatures throughout spring.

Montpelier broom has grown near the property boundary which will need to be controlled via cutting and pasting the stem.

A weed spraying program should be done in spring 2015 to further target thistles and blackberry.

9. REMEDIAL ACTIONS

Plant guards and bamboo stakes should be removed from those plants which no longer require them.

10. CONTINGENCY

Given the success of the project in terms of survivorship, creation of habitat and recruitment of enough animals to offset the translocated losses a contingency is not needed for the project.

Van Diemen Consulting Pty Ltd

PO Box 1
New Town, Tasmania

T: 0438 588 695 E: rwbarnes73@gmail.com

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