

CASE STUDY

“Old Hidden Vale”

Broad-scale Environmental Offset Tree Planting

by Landscape Conservation

“Old Hidden Vale” is a 4,858ha working cattle and eco-tourism property in the Grandchester area of southeast Queensland. It consists primarily of open Eucalypt forests on undulating hills and ranges with some areas of cleared lower slopes and alluvial flats.

Spicers Hidden Vale property management engaged Landscape Conservation to undertake the necessary ground preparation, planting and maintenance of 30,000 trees across several portions of “Old Hidden Vale” with a total planting area of 60ha.

This particular operation was an offset planting of koala habitat trees with funding provided from the Department of Environment and Resource Management. Funds originated from developments within southeast Queensland that triggered offsetting obligations under the Queensland Government “Offsets for Net Gain of Koala Habitat in South East Queensland Policy”

Site preparation and planting was undertaken over a 4 month period and watering occurred every 2 weeks over the first 2 months of establishment. An additional 2 years of follow-up maintenance including slashing and spraying was also scheduled to ensure long term viability of the planted trees.

Survival rate is approximately 85% across the planting with up to 95% in some areas.



Initial 30ha planting area (yellow outline) with highlight of ground preparation in one portion.



Preparation, planting and maintenance schedule:

Soil testing – Soil samples taken from each revegetation block were analysed with the results used to develop a suitable fertiliser program for the establishing trees.

Tractor slashing – Slashing of all revegetation areas was carried out to improve access and to reduce competition from existing tall grass and weeds.

Deep ripping – Revegetation areas were then deep ripped with a “Yeomans Keyline” plough. This method of ploughing gently lifts and loosens the soil with very little profile disturbance, leaving well prepared ground in which to plant. Ripping occurred along existing natural contours to minimise overall landscape disturbance, reduce erosion potential and to give the revegetated zones the most “natural” look possible.

Weed treatment along planting rows - Immediately following the ploughing, a non-residual knockdown herbicide (Round-up Power Max) was applied in a 1 meter strip along each planting line.

Supply, plant and fertilise native trees – Planting occurred in March when the prevailing weather conditions and available soil moisture were most suitable. Plants were dipped in “Envy” anti-transpirant prior to planting. The seedlings were then planted at 4m spacing within rows 5m apart to achieve the required planting density of 500 stems per hectare.

Initial watering – Each seedling was initially watered in with 3-4 litres of water sourced from the property. “Seasol” was added to each 2000L tank of water at a rate of 1:500 to help minimise transplant shock, encourage early root development and help in quick plant establishment.

Follow up watering - Each seedling was watered several times as required with 3-4 L of water sourced from the property during a two month early establishment phase.

Site maintenance – Weeds and grasses were sprayed or otherwise controlled directly around the trees to minimize competition. It is especially critical that this is carried out well during the first six months to maximise soil moisture available to the developing trees.



- ✓ Attention to all necessary ground preparation
- ✓ Experienced and qualified personnel
- ✓ Extensive range of specialised plant and equipment
- ✓ Commitment to follow-up maintenance
- ✓ Recognised track record

Other recent broad-scale environmental plantings that Landscape Conservation has undertaken with exceptional survival rates:

- * 50ha environmental offset planting at Amberley
- * 50ha habitat reinstatement at Larapinta
- * 16km of fencing, planting and direct seeding at Cedar Grove
- * 9ha environmental offset planting and direct seeding at Peachester
- * 12ha environmental offset planting at Gympie

For further information please contact us on (07)3395 4176 or visit us at www.landscapeconservation.com.au