

PREVENTING ROADKILL

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Who Are We?

Once a week from April to November 2005 and again from February to April 2006, a local doctor rode her push bike along the Wakehurst Parkway, an arterial road on Northern Beaches of Sydney. Over that period she recorded 82 dead native animals. Together we then did an audio-visual presentation on the roadkill problem to Warringah Council. A reporter was in the audience, and as a result the local State member and Warringah Council supported us by holding a public meeting to look at ways to stop native animals becoming roadkill.

The Northern Beaches Roadkill Prevention Committee was then formed after this first public meeting

The Original committee (2006) was chaired by the then local member of State Parliament for Pittwater, the Administrator of Warringah Council,



Figure 1- Public meeting

Roads And Traffic Authority (RTA) and members of the local Police Area Command, wildlife carers from two organisations - Sydney Wildlife and WIRES, National Parks and Wildlife NSW (NPWS) representatives, and academics with background in research into wildlife roadkill and community members.

The Committee was asked to record all roadkill for 6 months to ensure that the data was correct. In 2006, for six days a week I drove or rode my pushbike along the Wakehurst Parkway and recorded all native roadkill found. As a result of this research and other's work, we were able to record where hotspots occur and what species were being killed at each hotspot.



We had been lent a Garmin GPS which greatly sped up the mapping of fatalities. We had a problem accurately recording on maps, the position of each hotspot. Fortunately one of the committee members was able to organise a copy of *OziExplorer* a piece of mapping software for us to use. Being able to use professional maps which accurately records positions of roadkill ‘hotspots’ and have detailed counts of each species, made us far more professional than the original hand drawn maps that we had used. The RTA finally took us seriously.

The Royal Zoological Society, of which I am also a member, also requested a paper on roadkill in the Northern Beaches. This added to our professional presence.

Figure 2 - The Wallaby roadkill Wakehurst Parkway 2004

As a result of the data collected, the RTA and Warringah Council co-funded 500 hundred metres of fencing along the Wakehurst Parkway between two bridges/culverts, of a 1.8 m exclusion fence. The fence prevents animals accessing the roadway. It funnels them to use the creek lines away from the cars and under the roadway. We monitored the culvert with sand traps to assess footprints of animals and determined that wallabies and other animals did indeed use the culverts to move between areas.

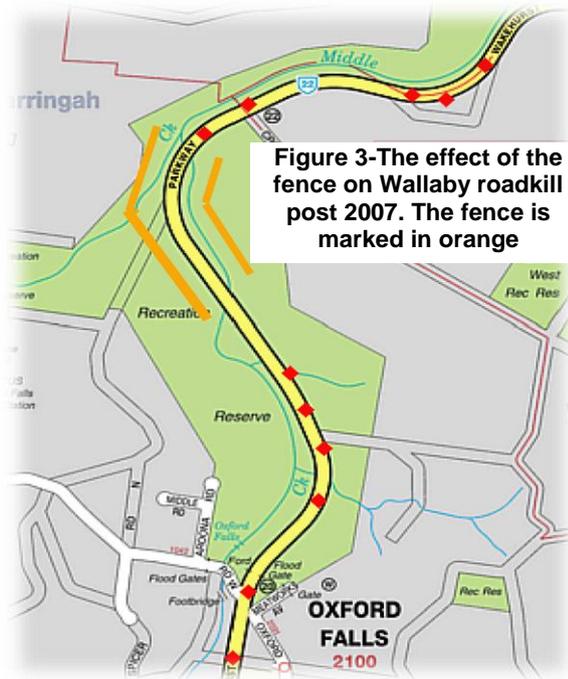


Figure 3-The effect of the fence on Wallaby roadkill post 2007. The fence is marked in orange



Figure 4 - The roadkill prevention fence on the Wakehurst Parkway 2007



Figure 5 -The underpass at one end of the fence on the Wakehurst Parkway

The fence has been very successful, with only one exception where the fence was damaged and a hole made. There have been no dead wallabies in that section of the road. Four possums have been killed in the area since 2007, as they unfortunately can drop out of trees above the roadway onto the road.



Figure 6 - Local member and WIRES with orphaned wallabies

Eira has kept a barrage of letters going to the local press but more importantly to State government ministers and departments. There is nothing like a Ministerial for getting results from government agencies such as the RTA or the Police.

We were fortunate that two members of the committee are radio producers. They have been an outstanding in obtaining ongoing media coverage. Eira and I have been interviewed on Sydney radio 2UE. I have been interviewed by Alan Jones and Dan Ramp, our academic has been interviewed by Clive Robertson and Tim Webster on radio 2UE.

ABC Stateline New South Wales did an eight minutes section on the roadkill in the Northern Beaches. We also gained an item on ABC 24hr and a Channel 7's news item – as used to open our presentation.



Figure 7- Filming Stateline NSW

The committee has continued to meet regularly and has evolved. Although we no longer have the local member or Council representatives, we continue with 6 of the original members plus the NPWS representative and the academic.

What Are Our Aims?

Our aims are to:

Prevent ongoing wildlife roadkill on arterial roads of the Northern Beaches of Sydney.

Monitor fauna mitigation methods by separation of animals from roads by:

- Fencing along main roads
- Underpasses & culverts
- Overpasses
- Small mammal bridges

We have experimented with effectiveness of other fauna mitigation measures such as variable message signs.



Figure 8-Variable Message Sign during the day



Figure 9-Variable Message Sign during the night

We continue to collect data both individually and with the help of a group of volunteer, spotters, who record roadkill along the arterial roads and other local roads, to and from work. This data is then entered onto the *Australian Wildlife Carers Network Mapping website* so that we have an accurate record of dates, position, species and sex of roadkill animals. <http://awcn.org/mapping/>

The data is useful in helping raise awareness of animals killed or injured It also records the threatened species that have been killed such as two birds out of total population of 120 Osprey for NSW and Eastern Pygmy possums which were thought to be locally extinct until one became roadkill. An Eastern Quoll was killed on the northern part of the Wakehurst Parkway

We use the media, both print and electronic. The local press such as the Manly Daily and Sydney Morning Herald have been extremely supportive of our campaigns during periods of increased amount of roadkill. This helps concerned locals keep abreast of our latest research results and statistics regarding roadkill while we gain membership

We continue to hold large public meetings which are supported by local mayors, councillors and the media.

The previous one in 2010 resulted in the roads authority undertaking a study into options for preventing roadkill on Northern Beaches

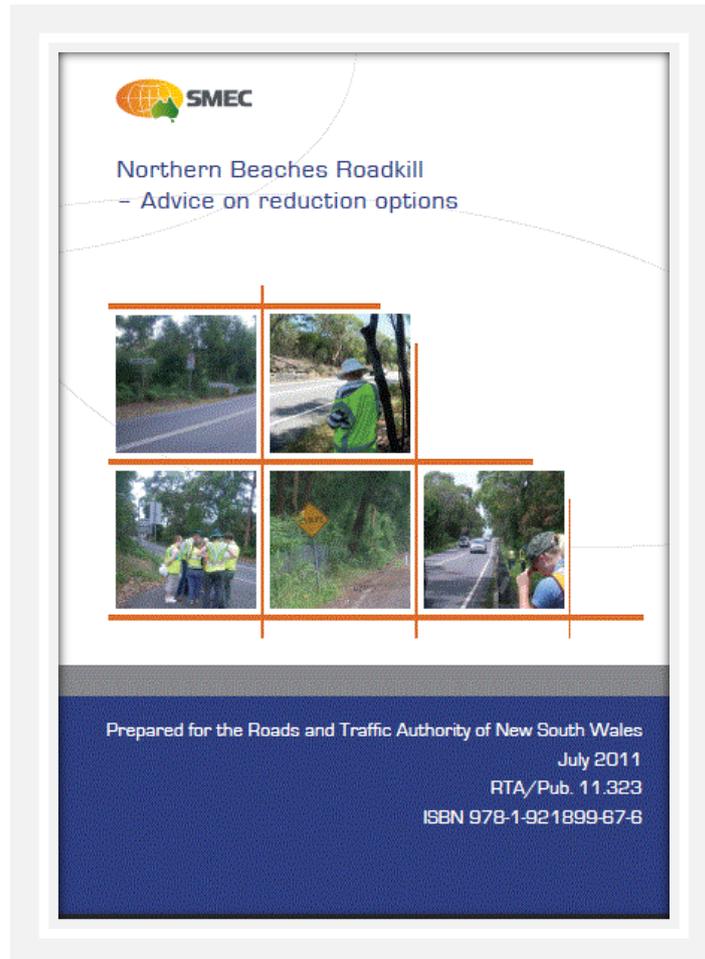


Figure 10- SMEC Report

http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/roadprojects/projects/sydney_region/northern_sydney_region/nth_beaches_roadkill_study/documents/nth_beaches_roadkill_report.pdf

We continue to educate the public by having

- Information stands at shopping malls and local sustainability/environmental expos promoting our cause.



Figure 11- Eira presenting at a roadkill talk

- Website which we updated regularly with information on roadkill
www.wildliferoadkill.org
- A social network eg Facebook

We print fliers that have information on dealing with animal killed or injured as well as contact information for wildlife rescue organisations

We continue to lobby State and Local Government Agencies

Our local members of parliament Mr Rob Stokes MLA has raised the issue of roadkill in State Parliament

http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parliament/hansart.nsf/V3Key/LA20100922042?open&refNavID=HA8_1

We regularly contact the Roads and Maritime Services (formerly RTA)

We keep abreast of planned extensions of the arterial roads in our area, as it is far less expensive to incorporate animal mitigation in road design than to add them to an existing road

We petition state ministers such as the Minister for Roads and the Minister for the Environment to ensure that these animal mitigation measures such as under or overpasses are incorporated at the design stage of new roads. Our new Facebook page will be able to collect signatures electronically and be a useful tool to show the state government how serious we are in gaining more fauna mitigation measures.

We continue to attend both national and international conferences on roadkill prevention to keep up to date with the latest information on roadkill prevention and methods for increasing permeability for wildlife through the landscape

I attended the national conference in 2009 in Brisbane, *Breaking the Barriers* about reducing roadkill and increasing connectivity and the international ICOET Conference 2009 in Minnesota, USA

There are international conferences that include a roadside ecology held in the USA on alternate years. The next one is in 2013 <http://www.icoet.net>

This year there will also be one in Germany in October. <http://www.iene-conferences.info>

We continue to gain funding for fauna mitigation measures and ongoing research.

We plan on adding further sections to the fencing on the Wakehurst Parkway in 2012.

We have been instrumental in gaining funding for a genetics study by our academic representative into the amount of wallabies killed on the Northern Beaches: - Is it faster than they can reproduce? We hope to have some answers by the middle of 2012. We are very concerned about the number of wallabies in the Garigal National Park and whether their population is sustainable at the current rate of roadkill.

In conclusion, we may only be a small committee but we have achieved several changes in the few years that we have been operating and intend to achieve a great deal more in the future

References

Northern Beaches Roadkill Prevention Committee website
<http://wildliferoadkill.org>

Australian Wildlife Carers Network Mapping Website
<http://awcn.org/mapping/>

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