



AUSTRALIAN NETWORK for PLANT CONSERVATION INC

ANPC submission on the draft Green Army Programme Statement of Requirements

Dear Green Army team,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the proposed Green Army programme. It has great potential to make a positive contribution to the conservation and restoration of Australia's native vegetation.

Introducing the Australian Network for Plant Conservation Inc. (ANPC)

The Australian Network for Plant Conservation Inc. (ANPC) is a national not-for-profit organisation which aims to promote and develop plant conservation in Australia and provides a forum for the exchange of information and ideas between researchers and on-ground practitioners. We achieve this through publishing a quarterly bulletin, plant conservation guidelines, a monthly newsletter, social media updates and a website, as well as holding the biennial Australasian Plant Conservation Conference.

The ANPC has also delivered around 50 workshops relevant to the conservation of native vegetation, both nationally and internationally, over the past 16 years. Reports on past ANPC workshops can be found at: <http://www.anpc.asn.au/courses.html>

Comments on the proposal

The paragraph starting at line 312 includes the following activities as examples of types of Green Army projects:

- propagation and planting of native seedlings;
- weed control;
- re-vegetation and regeneration of local parks and reserves; and
- habitat protection and restoration, including cleaning up waterways, re-vegetation of sand dunes and mangroves, and creek bank regeneration.

To achieve the best environmental outcomes for all these activities and to reduce any negative impact on native vegetation, it is important that participants know how to distinguish between a weed and a native plant and have some basic plant identification skills.

Recommendation 1: We recommend participants (and especially Team Supervisors) receive training in plant identification and in particular how to distinguish between a native and weed species before on-ground work commences.

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It is also important that all revegetation works use appropriately sourced local indigenous plant species. Successful propagation of native plants and the use of native seed in restoration is dependent upon seed that is collected, stored and used appropriately. An adequate supply of good quality local provenance seed will need to be available. Insufficient supply of such seed has been an issue in similar national programs in the past when demand was high, with seed of poor quality or questionable provenance sometimes being used.

Recommendation 2: Participants (and especially Team Supervisors) receive training in seed collection, storage and use for both plant propagation and direct seeding activities, to supplement other supplies.

Recommendation 3: Credible seed suppliers be used to ensure the local provenance and high quality of the seed.

Recommendation 4: Consideration be given to using seed production areas (e.g. native seed orchards) to decrease the impact of seed collection on native vegetation and to increase the supply of appropriate seed.

Recommendation 5: Seed harvesting be undertaken in a sustainable way to reduce impacts on threatened plants and endangered ecological communities.

It is also vital that any on-ground works are preceded by an appropriate and thorough site assessment to identify whether any matters of national environmental significance or other significant vegetation are present.

Recommendation 6: Participants (and especially Team Supervisors) receive training in undertaking a pre-work site assessment.

A brief overview of relevant training the ANPC has the capacity to deliver

The ANPC has the experience, expertise and capacity to design and deliver appropriate training for Green Army Project participants, particularly in the areas of (i) plant identification, (ii) the collection, storage and use of native seed, and (iii) conducting a pre-work site assessment. A brief outline of these workshops is provided below and further information can be found at <http://www.anpc.asn.au/courses.html>.

Plant Identification training: The ANPC has delivered numerous workshops across Australia in Plant Identification. Most recently, in 2012-14, the ANPC delivered three two day workshops on Plant Identification for specific geographic regions or vegetation community types. These workshops were well received. Each workshop follows a standard program and was delivered in partnership with the local herbaria and flora experts. The ANPC has the capacity and expertise

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to develop and deliver a similar workshop targeted specifically at Green Army participants and supervisors.

Seed Use for Native Vegetation Restoration training: The ANPC has developed and delivered a one day workshop on the collection, storage and use of seed for native vegetation restoration in collaboration with the Australian Seedbank Partnership and botanic gardens staff. This workshop aims to provide participants with the knowledge needed to effectively collect, store and use seed in native vegetation restoration. The ANPC has the capacity and expertise to develop and deliver a similar workshop targeted specifically at Green Army participants and supervisors. We also have the capacity and networks to deliver training in the establishment and maintenance of seed production areas.

Site assessment training: The ANPC's Plant Identification workshops include content on how to undertake a pre-survey site assessment. Training is provided in using online resources such as the Atlas of Living Australia to identify plant species likely to be encountered and also using the Protected Matters Search Tool to identify any Matters of National Significance that need to be considered. We also deliver training in undertaking a targeted survey for threatened plants and identifying threatened ecological communities. The ANPC has the capacity and expertise to develop and deliver a similar workshop targeted specifically at Green Army participants and supervisors.

Although the ANPC is not currently a Registered Training Organisation, there is potential for us to undertake all these courses in collaboration with a Registered Training Organisation for Green Army Service Providers, with the course content modified to suit the diverse backgrounds and education needs of the participants.

I look forward to hearing about the next stage of the Green Army programme.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. David Coates
President