

Ecology and Construction: A Report Card from Civil Construction on their Ecological Cousins

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Increasingly construction companies around Australasia are being asked to take on the risk of open ended restorative ecological work as part of their contracts to produce infrastructure projects. The value and complexity of this work, and associated risk to a contractor in a competitive tendering environment, is 'snowballing' with each project. Also growing is the level of frustration by contractors at the ecological community's lack of consistent standards, approaches and understanding of how ecological restoration work should be approached and completed in conjunction with construction time frames, and processes. At times the construction companies feel as though they have been dragged into ecological research projects due to the lack of understanding on what is the best practice in completing restorative work.

No one disagrees with the need for better environmental performance and outcomes; in fact Australasia's leading construction companies continually strive to improve performance in this area. In the spirit of good, honest, constructive criticism it is healthy for the ecological community to receive a report card from their engineering cousins. In delivering this 'warts and all' appraisal it is hoped that the ecological community evolve themselves. The aim is to create an ecological community that is more self-aware, user-friendly, practical, open minded and generally better team players.

This paper will discuss resource consent and designation condition development, management plan and design development and approval, policy decisions and restorative ecological implementation against a back ground of a \$458 Million infrastructure design and build project. This presentation will challenge all those with an ecological focus as part of their career to work more closely with other industries within New Zealand and Australia and will provide excellent examples using early contractor involvement on how all parties, contractors and ecologists, can benefit from closer working relationships to deliver a truly integrated environmental outcome.