

Trends in Australian wetland rehabilitation

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Abstract

This paper summarizes trends in Australian wetland rehabilitation on the basis of responses to a questionnaire from sixty-nine rehabilitation projects and a literature review. Project sizes ranged from 0.4 to 110,000 ha. Costs ranged from A\$6 to 70,000 ha⁻¹yr⁻¹, with most projects costing less than A\$1,000 ha⁻¹ yr⁻¹ and with larger projects generally costing less per area than smaller projects. The oldest project began in 1963, but most projects began between 1990 and 1996. The most commonly cited dominant plant genera in rehabilitation projects were Eucalyptus, Melaleuca, Muehlenbeckia, Juncus, Avicennia, and Typha. Filling and draining and altered hydrology were the most commonly cited impacts that led to a need for rehabilitation, while excavation and planting were the most commonly cited rehabilitation methods. About 65% of projects undertake rehabilitation methods that address the causes of impacts. Habitat improvement was the most commonly stated objective in wetland rehabilitation. Of the projects that supported monitoring programs, fewer than 25% appeared to monitor variables that were closely linked to project goals. Thirty-six projects reported involvement in research other than monitoring, with vegetation research most frequently cited. Most projects encouraged some level of community involvement. Wetland rehabilitation in Australia could benefit from a centralized register of projects and a library of rehabilitation literature, including government and in-house reports.

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