

Waste Less, Recycle More – A NSW EPA Market Development Grant

Understanding Compost Blankets:

While there has been extensive research into compost blankets both nationally and globally, understanding how to specify compost for this use (and how successful it can be) is not well known to many industry professionals. These site-based learning events are designed to educate and showcase best practice when applying compost blanket.

CASE STUDY PROJECT: Billy's Lookout, Teralba

APPLICATION: Ecoblanket® Application to cut batter

APPLICATION DATE: July 2016

TOTAL AREA TREATED: Approx 2,000m² @ 50mm application depth (100 Cubic Metres)

Partnerships to increase awareness:

In 2015, Scapeworks Australia (in conjunction with Roads and Maritime Services and Penelope's Garden), were awarded a grant from the NSW EPA to run educational events to demonstrate the benefits of using compost blankets to control erosion and revegetate areas disturbed by construction work. Four site-based learning events were held across NSW on both newly constructed and existing roadways to encourage an environmentally sound way of carrying out successful erosion control and revegetation.

Billy's Lookout, a new estate in Teralba NSW was chosen to demonstrate the application of Ecoblanket® to a sandstone batter. Professionals from Lake Macquarie and the Hunter region were able to see first-hand how the product is installed and can now return to the site anytime to see the successful and outstanding results.

The following case study gives an insight on how the site has progressed over the past 2 years.



A simple four-step process ensures you gain maximum value and adhesion from your Ecoblanket, with minimal direct input into the process. Immediate results are guaranteed.

- 1. Research and preparation** – specially trained project managers assess the site, run soil and other environmental tests, and tailor Ecoblanket® to your unique site and requirements. The process does not require topsoil or any geotextiles to be spread first. In fact, for best results, this is actively discouraged. Your project manager will work with you to save you thousands of dollars on unnecessary site preparation.
- 2. Seed selection** – your project manager will consult with you and our native seeds expert to develop the ideal seed blend to achieve your revegetation goals. Our seed expert has been working with Ecoblanket® and its unique application process for almost a decade and offers a wealth of knowledge of the species best suited to various conditions to ensure success.
- 3. Application** – Ecoblanket® is applied via a hose-on, low impact pneumatic process with specialized machinery that can treat thousands of square metres per day. This means minimal on-site work, a high quality, uniform blanket, and fast results. Importantly, it can be applied to remote and difficult to reach areas. Once installed, your project manager will either arrange initial watering or provide a free schedule with guidelines for your water cart operator. Following this advice gives you the best results from Ecoblanket®.
- 4. Monitoring** – Ecoblanket® guarantees more than 90% germination rate of the cover crop within a few days when instructions are followed. As this germination process takes place, Ecoblanket® goes through a phase where the groundcover transitions from green shoots to what appears to be burnt, or 'dead', ground. This is a vital part of the process, with significant soil regeneration happening beneath the surface. It supports the remarkably fast and sustainable growth rates and before long converts to a sea of native seedlings.

Once the site had been prepared appropriately, application of Ecoblanket® commenced to the cut batter bordering the main entrance road to the new estate, Billys Lookout.

The compost was applied at a specified depth of 50mm, generally starting at the high ridge point of the batter and working our way down to the base. (See Below)





Throughout the application process, our staff were constantly checking the depth of the compost to ensure sufficient material is being applied.

The site-specific native seed mix, seasonal cover crop (Ryecorn), wetting agent and microblend tackifier are all pre-blended, and injected into the compost as it's fed into our 5 inch hose and pushed along via compressed air to the desired application area.



Note: Where possible the Ecoblanket® should be applied beyond the crest of the batter. This can prove pivotal in controlling excessive sheet water after a substantial rainfall event, preventing any early damage (i.e. rutting) to the newly laid compost blanket.



August 2016:

4 weeks post application, the cover crop (Ryecorn) was germinating well and displayed an even and dense coverage over the batter surface.

Wimmera Ryecorn will generally establish itself to a height of between 500mm and 1 metre. Being a sterile cover crop, germination will occur once only and will not regenerate the following season.



The cover crop establishment is crucial in the immediate success of the Ecoblanket® process, stopping erosion in its tracks. Germinating quickly and densely, it assists in creating a secure and stable compost blanket via the vigorous root system, providing a perfect bed for the native seed to germinate.

Tip: For immediate and optimal results, the freshly laid Ecoblanket® requires approx. 5L/m² of water daily for the first 4 weeks.



Once established the cover crop has done its job. As a change in season begins to occur, it will commence its dieback and will slowly thin out due to the change in temperature. During this period is generally when we see the native seedlings begin to thrive.

You can see left, an abundance of native shrub species starting to power along and establish themselves in their own microclimate.

January 2018:

“And that’s a Win”

Approx 18 months post application, we can see the amazing results and the success of the Ecoblanket® Process.

Of the 27 Native species included in the original seed list, we had observed 21 of them well established with successful germination throughout the batter. As Autumn approached, we expect to see the remaining species appear.



July 2018:

“Phenomenal”

Two years on almost to the day, and to say how pleased both ourselves and the customer were is an understatement.

With all bar two of the included species present, the result is an amazing, natural and aesthetically pleasing border along the main entrance road of the new estate which blends in perfectly with the surrounding bushland.





It is important to notice the rate of growth which can be achieved when following the 4 vital steps involved in the Ecoblanket® process. You may have observed in earlier photographs, tube stock had been hand planted along the base and flat area of the batter .

The difference in growth of these plants in comparison to those grown from seed via our method is quite evident.

During the initial site visit and site assessment, soil samples up to 200mm in depth were taken from the batter area and sent off for specific testing in relation to the Ecoblanket® process. These tests determine what ameliorants are required to be added to our compost prior to application to ensure that optimal results are obtained, and the species of plant selected were given the best possible opportunity to thrive over a long period of time.

The seed species are also specifically selected for each site, taking into consideration height restriction where applicable, and are usually endemic to the local area of the project.



While each native plant variety will have a different growth cycle, you can expect a healthy crop of seedlings within the first few months and a relatively thick covering of shrubs by the end of the first year. Within two years the site will barely be recognizable after once being disturbed by previous construction, mining or other infrastructure work.



Native Species Seed List: Billy's Lookout, Teralba NSW

Acacia binervata	Acacia elongate	Acacia falcata	Acacia fimbriata
Acacia floribunda	Acacia implexa	Acacia myrtifolia	Allocasuarina littoralis
Alphitonia excelsa	Angophora costata	Bossiaea rhombifolia	Cymbopogon refractus
Daviesia ulicifolia	Dodonaea viscosa	Eucalyptus fibrosa	Eucalyptus teriticornis
Gahnia aspera	Hakea sericea	Indigofera australis	Kennedia rubicunda
Kunzea amigua	Jacksonia scoparia	Lomandra longifolia	Leptosermum trinervum
Podolobium ilicifolium	Pultenaea spinosa	Themeda triandra	

SCAPEWORKS AUSTRALIA CONTACT DETAILS:

Chris Natrass
General Manager
Mob: 0409 780 870
EMAIL: chris@scapeworksaustralia.com.au

Office Details

PH: 02 9654 2288 or 1300 BLOWIT
FAX: 02 9654 2329
EMAIL: admin@scapeworksaustralia.com.au
WEB: www.scapeworksaustralia.com.au
ABN: 12 075 880 652

Association Memberships

International Erosion Control Association Member
Green Roofs Australia Association Major Sponsor/Member
Waste Management Association Member
Compost NSW Member
Landscape Contractors Association Member