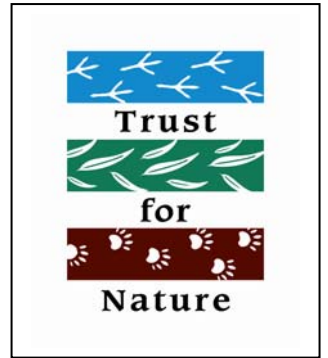




Trust for Nature in the Goulburn Broken region



Trust for Nature aims to conserve all significant natural areas on private land forever

Trust for Nature

Trust for Nature (the Trust) is a not for profit conservation organisation that protects high quality remnant bush on private property. The Trust runs a number of programs including: covenanting, stewardship, land purchase and re-sale, ecosystem services and conservation support.

The Trust was established under the Victorian Conservation Trust Act in 1972 to preserve significant natural areas and to conserve wildlife and native plants.. The Act was amended in 1978 to allow the Trust to enter into voluntary covenants on property title to help achieve these objectives.

Operation of the Trust

The Trust is governed by a board of trustees comprising 10 members sitting in a voluntary capacity. They sit for 4 years and approve all covenants. The Trust has 10 regions: Goulburn Broken, North East, East Gippsland, West Gippsland, North Central, Wimmera/Grampians, Corangamite, Port Phillip and Westernport, and the Mallee. The Trust is funded through government grants, donations from philanthropic organizations and the public.

Covenants

Protection is achieved by placing a voluntary conservation covenant on the title of the property. The covenant is a legally binding perpetual agreement between the owner and the Trust. The covenant is forever, as the covenant is attached to the title, not the owner.

There are over 900 covenanted properties across Victoria. Each covenant is different with the conditions being set by mutual agreement between the Trust and the owner. Covenants have been placed on working farms, eco tourism resorts,

Local Government properties, multiple occupancy communities, hobby farms, rural lifestyle properties and independent authority properties eg. Water boards.

The benefits from covenanting all or part of your property include: eligibility for government grants, expert land-management advice flora and fauna surveys, rate rebates from some councils and the community benefit of conserving biodiversity and genetic resources for future generations.

Covenants in Victoria

Currently in Victoria there are 903 registered covenants protecting 37,521 ha of native vegetation.

Covenants in the Goulburn Broken Region

Currently in the Goulburn Broken region there 107 registered covenants totalling 4017 ha.

Cost of Covenanting

Covenants are free. They cost the landholder nothing, but cost the Trust about \$3000 in legal costs and administrative fees.

Incentives for covenanting

In the Goulburn Broken region, covenants are linked to many incentives and benefits.

Fencing of the covenant can be fully funded through the Department of Primary Industry (DPI) incentive scheme, contact 57611 611 (dryland) or 58 335222 (SIR). Land protected with a covenant is also eligible for incentive funding for boundary fences.

The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority fully funds the cost of fencing off stream frontages that are to be covenanted contact 58201 100.

Revegetation of areas: incentives are available to assist with any revegetation works on your covenanted area, contact DPI.

Erosion Control works: incentives are available if the area is in a covenant, contact DPI.

Rate Rebates many Shires in the Goulburn Broken Catchment offer rate rebates for covenanted properties. The shires are: City of Greater Shepparton, Mansfield Shire, Mitchell Shire, Moira Shire and Wangaratta Rural City.

Income Tax Deductibility The Australian Tax office can grant income tax deductibility for income lost, due to the placement of a covenant over your property. Contact the Australian Tax Office.

Other incentives

Tax Deductibility for the Donation of Land Income tax deductibility can be granted for the value of land that is donated the Trust.

All donations to the Trust are tax deductible.

What we covenant

Primarily the Trust covenants high quality natural areas, including wetlands, waterways, native grasslands, spring soaks, bogs, forests and woodlands. We also covenant habitat links and corridors in the landscape, buffers to National Parks and reserves and modified areas that are known habitat for rare and threatened species.

Generally the land should be over 5 ha in size. It should be dominated by native species and in reasonable ecological condition. Weeds that are present should be controllable.

Requirements on landholders

Landholders entering into a covenant are obliged to comply with the conditions of the Deed of Covenant. These conditions generally include restrictions on destructive activities such as grazing, soil disturbance, timber removal and restrictions on particular activities such as keeping cats as pets or off-road vehicle use. Often however, the Trust agrees to covenant an area of land because we support the existing land-management practices and our covenant will try to reflect those practices in the wording of the deed. For more information, read our 'What is a Conservation Covenant? leaflet

Support for Covenanting

After the covenant is placed on title the Stewardship program begins. This involves a management plan being drawn up for the property by the Stewardship Officer in consultation with the covenantor. This plan outlines works that would improve the quality of the vegetation and habitat for fauna on the property. Each plan is different, as it is based on the characteristics of the property. Each plan is reviewed every three years.

Selling your property

The Trust has generally seen no decrease in sale price of properties due to the existence of a covenant on property title and, in fact, a covenant may attract like minded buyers. There is a niche market for bush properties and the Trust's website and "Conservation Bulletin" regularly advertise covenanted and non covenanted bush properties for sale.

Advertising your property.

Covenanted properties are advertised free of charge on the Trust website and in our magazine "The Conservation Bulletin".

Target areas for covenanting in the Goulburn Broken

The Trust is currently closely involved in the implementation of three conservation management networks in the region: the Longwood Plains, around Euroa, the Goldfields region and The Broken Boosey and Nine Mile Creeks system,. We are also targeting Spring soaks and Bogs in the Strathbogie and Warby ranges. These areas are being targeted as they have a high proportion of threatened vegetation types or habitat types which contain a high percentage of rare and threatened plants and animals, and have good community support.

If you would like to leave a legacy of your good land management and conservation vision, consider protecting your bushland with a conservation covenant.

For more information, contact.

Dr Doug Robinson Regional Manager

57611 558 0408 512441

dougr@tfn.org.au

Shelagh Curmi Conservation Officer

57611 525 0407 521 154

shelaghc@tfn.org.au

Lance Williams Stewardship Officer

57633315 0418 300959

lancew@tfn.org.au

www.tfn.org.au

