

Plains Grassy Woodland

ENDANGERED in the Goulburn Broken Catchment

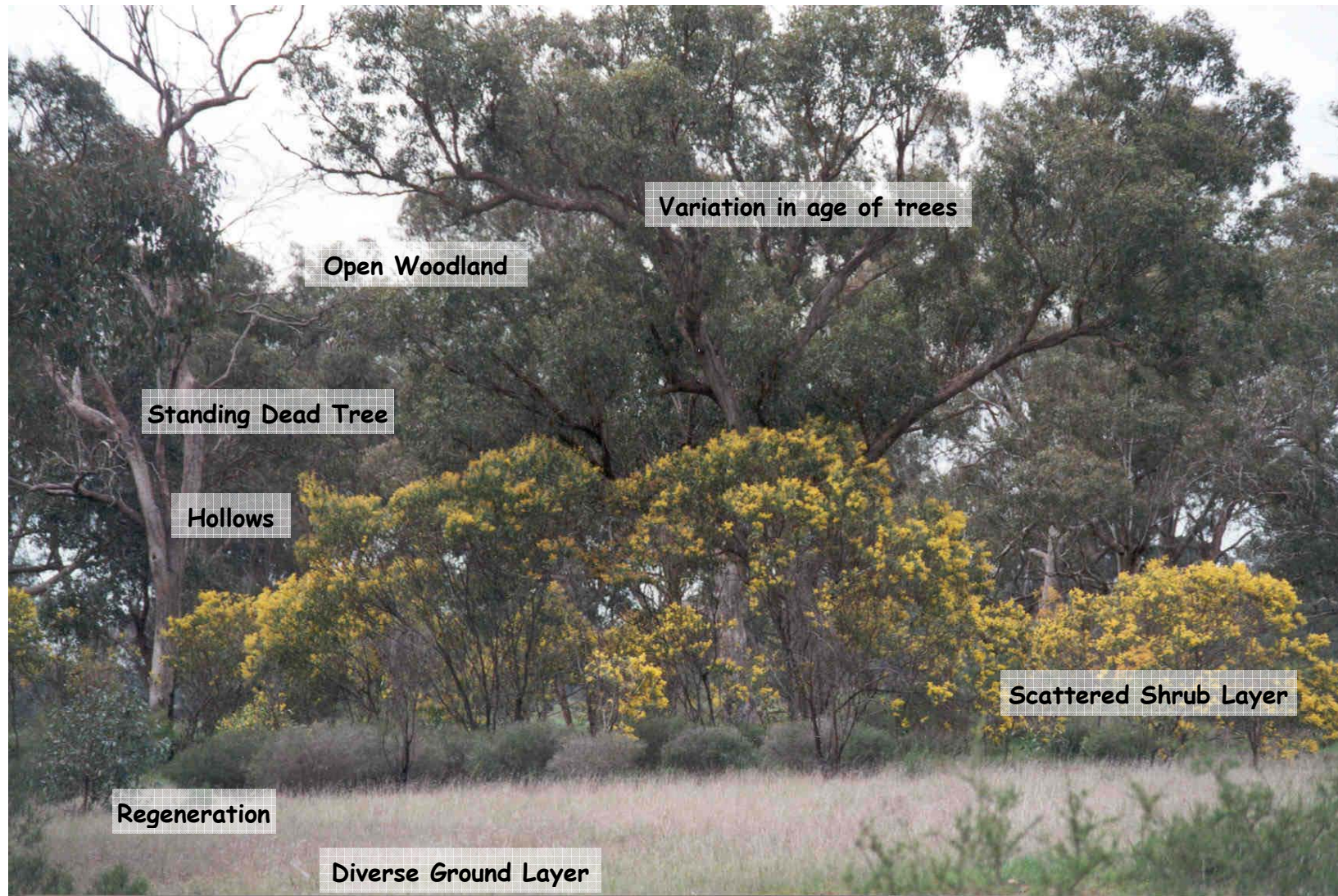


Photo: Martin White

Figure 1 An example of Plains Grassy Woodland in good condition, with important diagnostic and habitat features noted.

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1% of this vegetation type remains uncleared, 68% (4,538ha) of which is on private land.

Description

Plains Grassy Woodlands predominantly occur on the secondary or non-active alluvial terrace (as opposed to the floodplain), as well as on basalt plateaus in the south west of the Goulburn Broken Catchment. They are predominantly **open woodlands** with a dense suite of grasses, sedges, lilies, orchids and herbs in the **ground layer**. These include Kangaroo Grass, Spear-grasses, Common Wheat-grass, Lemon Beauty-heads, Chocolate Lilies, Milkmaids and Yellow Rush-lily. The scattered wattle and pea **shrub layer** includes Gold-dust Wattle, Spreading Wattle, Golden Wattle and Showy Parrot-pea. The **overstorey** can range from Red Gum and Grey Box dominated woodlands (southern region of Catchment) to Yellow Box, White Box, Grey Box, Yellow Gum and Buloke woodlands (northern region of Catchment).

Current Threats

- Inappropriate **grazing regimes** cause loss of native species, hinder native plant regeneration, disturb the soil and increase nutrient levels.
- Lack of native **understorey** and **groundlayer** plants, which: attract insect eating birds, helping keep the overstorey healthy; and improve soil health through fixing nitrogen.
- Lack of natural regeneration of plants threatens the viability of the remnant.
- Too frequent / infrequent **burning** can result in structural changes and loss of species that require fire to open up the grass layer, or require fire to regenerate.
- Loss of tree and ground **habitat** (through **timber harvesting**, "tidying-up" and **firewood collection**) threatens associated native fauna.
- **Isolation of remnants** makes it difficult to maintain a healthy gene pool and to recolonise with native species following disturbance, and restricts the movement of native fauna.
- **Weeds**, particularly by Phalaris, Paspalum and Wild Oats, compete with native species.
- **Soil disturbance** encourages invasion by exotic weeds, particularly competitive grasses (see above).
- **Pest animals** cause defoliate vegetation, disturb the soil and threaten native fauna.

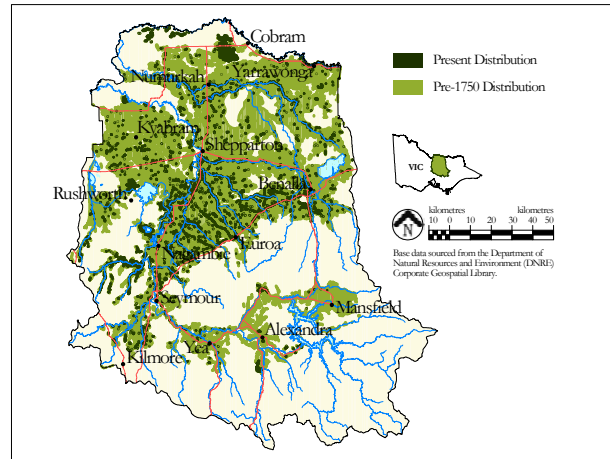


Figure 2 Distribution of Box-Ironbark Forest in the Goulburn Broken Catchment

Significant Species

Flora: Buloke, Buloke Mistletoe, Spreading Eutaxia, Broom Bitter-pea, Northern Plains Leek-orchid, Glandular Early Nancy and Spurred Spear-grass.

Fauna: Grey Crowned Babbler, Bush Stone-Curlew, Long-nosed Bandicoot, Squirrel Glider and Tuan.

Management Tips

Management which **maintains** and **enhances** the remnant vegetation / habitat, including:

- **Fence** sites to **exclude grazing**, particularly in spring and early summer, to allow flowering and seed-set of native plants. Retain access for **controlled grazing** to manage weeds, such as Phalaris, where necessary.
- **Control** weeds and pest animals.
- Encourage **natural regeneration** by **controlling rabbits**, **reducing competition** with grasses prior to seed fall, and **removing stock** until seedlings are well established.
- **Revegetate** areas to buffer remnants from pasture and link to other remnants.
- **Retain** dead & hollow-bearing trees, and leave fallen timber and branches.
- **Maintain natural drainage** through wetlands and protect them from stock grazing.
- **Plant understorey** for remnants with no native shrubs or ground layer.
- **Monitor** your site and **adapt management** practices as required (help is available to assist and set up monitoring).