

Valley Grassy Forest

VULNERABLE in the Goulburn Broken Catchment



Photo: Mary Titcumb

Figure 1 A healthy example of Valley Grassy Forest on a roadside, with important diagnostic and habitat features noted.

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6% of this vegetation type remains uncleared, 88% (7,984ha) of which is on private land.

Description

Valley Grassy Forest occurs on broad, gently sloping valleys of the surrounding dry foothills at elevations of 150–400m, with an annual rainfall 650–800mm. It supports an **open forest** of White Box (northern regions of the Catchment) and Yellow Box, sometimes with Candlebark (southern half of the Catchment), Apple Box (eastern region of the Catchment) and Silver—leaf Stringybark (Swanpool and Lima regions of the Catchment). The **tall open shrub layer** is typically Silver Wattle, possibly with Indigo species and Slender Tick—trefoil. Characteristically the valley floor has a low, **dense grassy layer** of Weeping Grass with lilies and herbs such as Chocolate Lily, Kidney—weed, Ivy—leaf Violet, Stinking Pennywort and Austral Cranesbill.

Current Threats

- Loss of tree and ground **habitat** (through **timber harvesting**, “tidying—up”, and **firewood collection**), threatens associated native fauna.
- Inappropriate **grazing regimes** hinder native plant regeneration, cause loss of native species, compact the soil and increase nutrients (favouring weed species).
- **Weeds**, particularly Blackberries, English Broom and Phalaris, compete with native species.
- **Pest animals** defoliate vegetation, disturb the soil and threaten native fauna as predators and by competing for food.
- **Isolation** of remnants makes it difficult to maintain a healthy gene pool, recolonise with native species following disturbance, and restricts movement of native fauna.
- 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, which threatens the sustainability of the remnant.

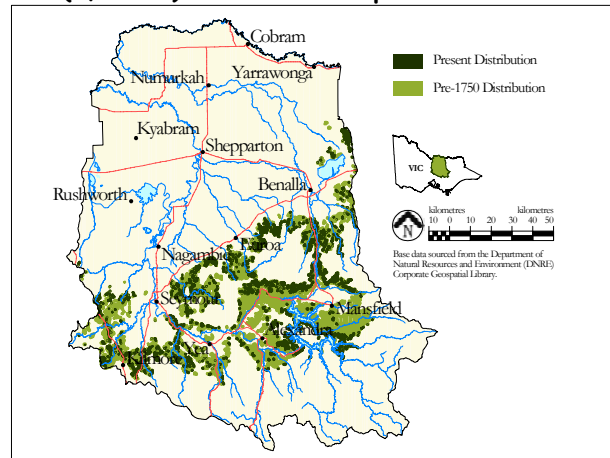


Figure 2 Distribution of Valley Grassy Forest in the Goulburn Broken Catchment.

Significant Species

Flora: Lima Stringybark, Slender Tick—trefoil and Apple Box (on the edge of its range).

Fauna: Long—nosed Bandicoot, Tuan and Barking Owl.

Management Tips

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

- **Fence** sites to **exclude grazing**, particularly over spring and early summer, to allow flowering and seed—set of native plants. Retain access for **controlled grazing** to manage weeds where necessary.
- **Develop and implement a plan to 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.
- **Plant understorey** for remnants with no native shrubs or ground layer.
- **Revegetate** around remnants to buffer from pasture, and link to other remnants.
- **Retain** dead & hollow—bearing trees and **leave** fallen timber and branches.
- **Monitor** your site and **adapt management** practices as required (help is available to assist and set up monitoring).