



**FLORA & FAUNA
GUARANTEE**

FLORA AND FAUNA GUARANTEE - SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FINAL RECOMMENDATION ON A NOMINATION FOR LISTING

Floristic Community 55-04 Western Basalt Plains (River Red Gum) Grassy Woodland

Date of receipt of the nomination: 11 May 2004

File No.: FF/54/0391

Date of preliminary recommendation: 2 June, 7 September 2004

Date of final recommendation: 7 September 2004

Validity: The nomination is for a valid item.

Prescribed Information: The prescribed information was provided.

Name of the Nominator is adequately provided.

Name of the Item is adequately provided.

The nominated community is Floristic Community 55-04 Western Basalt Plains (River Red Gum) Grassy Woodland.

The nominated community is accepted by the SAC as a valid community because it is adequately defined and described according to accepted practice, and it is described in such a way as to be distinguished from all other communities.

Description of the community

Floristic Community 55-04 Western Basalt Plains (River Red Gum) Grassy Woodland is an endemic Victorian community restricted to an area approximately bounded by Whittlesea, Craigieburn and Epping. It forms part of the Plains Grassy Woodland Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC 55), but is distinguished ecologically by its occurrence on fertile clay soils derived from Quaternary basalts. It is floristically characterised by an overstorey of River Red-gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) with various wattles (eg. *Acacia implexa*, *A. pycnantha*). The ground layer is dominated by grasses *Themeda triandra* and/or *Poa labillardierei* with occasional other grasses such as *Dichelachne crinita*, *Elymus scaber* and *Austrodanthonia* spp. Common forbs include *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*, *Microseris scapigera* spp. agg., *Leptorhynchos squamatus* and *Eryngium ovinum*.

Eligibility for listing as a community under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee

The nominated item satisfies at least one criterion of the set of criteria prepared and maintained under Section 11 of the **Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988**, and stated in Schedule 1 of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Regulations 2001.

Evidence that criteria are satisfied:

Criterion 2.1 *The community is in a demonstrable state of decline which is likely to result in extinction.*

Evidence:

There has been very severe decline and fragmentation of this community to the extent that, in the near future, restoration of this community is not likely to be possible. Associated with the decline of the community, there has been loss of integrity of remnant examples of the community across most of its geographic range. Only about 3.7% of the community's estimated pre 1750 extent remains.

Criterion 2.2 *the community is significantly prone to future threats which are likely to result in extinction.*

Evidence:

Floristic Community 55-04 Western Basalt Plains (River Red Gum) Grassy woodland occupies approximately 4 682 ha within which most examples of the community are degraded. Little or none of this area is included within a conservation reserve

Sub-Criterion 2.2.2 *the threat is currently operating and is expected to operate at a level in the future which is likely to result in the extinction of the community.*

Evidence:

The community is facing decline because of past clearing for agriculture and current and proposed future clearing for housing. Existing remnants are highly fragmented. Weed invasion poses a major threat to temperate grassy (including grassy woodland) communities occurring on relatively fertile soils (Davies 1997).

Additional Information

- River Red Gum Plains Grassy Woodland is classified as 'Endangered' by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (Oates and Taranto 2001).

Advertisement for public comment

In accordance with the requirements of Section 14 of the **Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988**, the preliminary recommendation was advertised for a period of at least 30 days.

The preliminary recommendation was advertised in:

'The Age' - on 14 July 2004

'The Weekly Times' - on 14 July 2004

The *Government Gazette* - on 15 July 2004

Submissions closed on 27 August 2004.

Further evidence provided:

No submissions were received on this item and no evidence was provided to warrant a review of the Scientific Advisory Committee's preliminary recommendation that the community is eligible for listing.

Documentation

The published information provided to the SAC has been assessed. Based on the available evidence, the SAC believes that the data presented are not the subject of scientific dispute and the inferences drawn are reasonable and well supported.

Final Recommendation of the Scientific Advisory Committee

The Scientific Advisory Committee concludes that on the evidence available the nominated item is eligible for listing in accordance with Section 11(1) of the Act because primary criteria 2.1 and 2.2 and sub-criterion 2.2.2 have been satisfied.

The SAC also concludes that no evidence exists to suggest that primary criterion 2.2 cannot be satisfied as a consequence of sub-criteria 2.2.2 being satisfied.

The Scientific Advisory Committee recommends that the nominated item be supported for listing on Schedule 2 of the **Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988**.

Selected references:

- Davies R.J-P. (1997) *Weed Management in Temperate Native Grasslands and Box Grassy Woodlands in South Australia*. Botanic Gardens of Adelaide and State Herbarium.
- Natural Resources and Environment (1998) *Comprehensive Regional Assessment - North East: Biodiversity Assessment*. Environment Australia: Canberra & Department of Natural Resources and Environment: Melbourne).
- Oates A. & Taranto, M. (2001) *Vegetation mapping of the Port Phillip and Westernport Region*. Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research. Department of Sustainability and Environment: Melbourne.

Endorsement by the Convenor of the Scientific Advisory Committee

Date



Dr Mike Clarke
Convenor

2/9/04