

OUR PROJECTS



NORTH CENTRAL
Catchment Management Authority
Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People

EMPOWERING LOCAL LANDHOLDERS

The North Central Catchment Management Authority's (CMA) Box-Gum Grassy Woodlands project aims to empower landholders within the project area to protect and enhance Box-Gum Grassy Woodland remnants on private land.

North Central CMA is the lead agency in North Central Victoria coordinating and monitoring natural resource management programs for the region. The North Central CMA applies the principle of 'protecting the best first' when deciding where money will be spent.

WHY?

Box-Gum Grassy Woodlands are ecological communities listed under national legislation as 'critically endangered'. Each community comprises key indicator species of White Box (*Eucalyptus albens*), Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) or Blakely's Red Gum (*Eucalyptus blakelyi*) as an open canopy over a ground layer of native grasses and herbs, and sparse, scattered shrubs.

Once widespread as a virtually continuous band, now only 6 per cent remains in Victoria, mostly as isolated remnants on private land. Derived grasslands, where the trees have been cleared but a native grassy ground layer is left, are also important Box-Gum Grassy Woodland remnants.

ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

Box-Gum Grassy Woodlands supported a diverse range of fauna and flora, many of which are also now threatened, such as the Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot. Large old trees provide habitat and shelter for native species and contribute to healthy soils and water tables.

SOCIAL & ECONOMICAL VALUES

Grassy woodlands are an iconic part of the Australian landscape and were a significant resource for local Indigenous people as well as early settlers. Indigenous people managed grassy woodlands through hunting, food gathering and fire stick burning.

THREATS

Invasive weeds and farming activities of clearing, cultivation and overgrazing are the main threats as Box-Gum Grassy Woodlands typically occur on the soils preferred for agriculture. Today, we understand how important it is to protect and enhance the best of what we have left – for our communities, for our environment and for our children.

BOX-GUM GRASSY WOODLANDS



Box-Gum Grassy Woodlands remnant vegetation at Glenlyon
Photo: Courtesy Robyn McKay, North Central CMA

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- **Engagement:** Assisting landholders and involving and educating the community
- **Covenants:** Management agreements to protect remnants against future threats
- **Fencing:** Protecting remnant vegetation through grazing management to allow native plants to regenerate naturally
- **Revegetation:** Protecting and enhancing remnant vegetation by providing buffers to farming activities and restoring the original range and balance of native plants. Revegetation areas can act as corridors to wildlife by linking remnants

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- **Covenants:** The North Central CMA will work in partnership with Trust for Nature to offer covenanting opportunities to landholders. Covenants allow landholders to protect their own slice of Victoria's heritage forever by ensuring remnants will be retained by future property owners.
- **Fencing of remnant vegetation:** Unrestricted access by stock damages young and regenerating native plants. Stock can also damage soil, resulting in erosion, and transport weeds. Stock camping under trees contributes to tree decline. Controlling grazing pressure and timing can allow native species to recover and regenerate naturally. Experts predict that paddock trees are in decline and most could be gone within the next century without careful management. Wildlife depends on mature trees with hollows for homes, food and breeding.
- **Revegetation:** Planting missing or under represented species ensures plant communities are "complete". A diverse range of plants provide the best possible food, shelter and breeding places for the largest variety of wildlife. Revegetation can expand or link remnant areas and shield against threats of weed invasion, wind erosion and farming activities.

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MAKING IT HAPPEN

Eligible landholders apply for grants to implement nominated onground works of fencing and revegetation on private property. Grants may be used to undertake works themselves, or employ a contractor to do so. Landholders willing to enter into a covenant agreement are eligible for additional grants for onground works.

PROJECT FUNDING

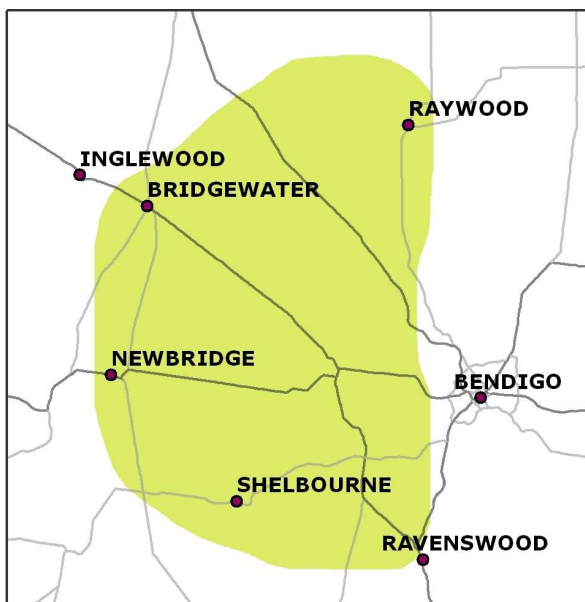
The project is planned to be carried out over three years, subject to funding availability and approval, and is currently funded through the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country (CfOC) natural resource management initiative. This is complemented by many thousands of dollars worth of labour and in-kind support provided by landholders, agencies and volunteer community groups.

OUR VALUED PARTNERS

"Farmers have the control over the decisions they make on their landscape. Most people value their remnants and want to protect them – this project is about North Central CMA helping to fund that",
ROBYN MCKAY - Project Officer

The North Central CMA could not achieve its project objectives without the invaluable support of its project partners. It acknowledges significant support and involvement of landholders, Landcare and other volunteer groups (in particular the Mid-Loddon Sub Catchment Group), Parks Victoria, the Department of Sustainability and Environment, the Department of Primary Industries and Trust for Nature.

PROJECT AREA



GETTING INVOLVED

If you are a landholder within the project area with a Box-Gum Grassy Woodland remnant area on your property, you may be eligible for funding support. A site assessment can be arranged to determine eligibility.

IN OUR COMMUNITY



Marg and Peter Dack's property, overlooking the Coliban River Valley, near Redesdale
Photo: Courtesy Robyn McKay, North Central CMA

MEET: MARG AND PETER DACK

"We got involved (in the Box-Gum Grassy Woodlands project) as a means of getting our scarp revegetated – to improve the habitat and the woodlands."

"If the grant hadn't come up I'd be doing little bits each year. The grant is letting us do it in one hit – the grassy layer, the tree recruitment and the shrub layer that's been eaten by sheep."

"The block was baked and parched – windswept – now it's comfortable. The bird life has come back. It's been really interesting being able to get your eye in to what's appropriate for the environment. It's good to see the results."

"We wanted our boys to be aware of the country and experience the difference – what's environmentally appropriate. They've seen what's worked and what hasn't. It's given them a practical grounding in how to look after the country."

For full story please see: www.nccma.vic.gov.au



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CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY

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