

# Critical Threats to Native Vegetation



*Woody debris provides valuable habitat for native species such as this Goanna*

## Threats to native vegetation

Critical threats to our native vegetation include:

- Clearing, degradation and fragmentation of remnants for agricultural, forestry, infrastructure and residential development
- Continuous heavy grazing and trampling of remnants by grazing stock, resulting in losses of plant species through simplification of the understorey and ground layer, and suppression of overstorey. Other impacts include erosion and other soil changes, such as increased nutrient status
- Untimely grazing that does not allow plants to complete their life cycle and set seed
- Invasion of remnants by non-native plant species, including noxious weeds, environmental weeds and pasture species
- Invasion of remnants by feral animals, resulting in the loss or modification of habitat
- Disturbance of remnants during road, rail and infrastructure maintenance or upgrades, removing habitat and escalating weed invasion
- Removal of habitat timber, both dead and alive
- Collection of all on-ground woody debris (habitat) in the guise of a 'clean-up'
- Nutrient increases from fertiliser runoff, providing a competitive advantage to invasive species over natives
- Removal of bush rock, that provides valuable habitat.



*Native flowers provide a valuable food source for many animal species*

## Actions to help protect native vegetation

Actions which landholders can take to help protect native vegetation on farming properties include:

- Maintain and improve all existing areas of remnant vegetation, including corridors and landscape linkages to allow for dispersal of pollen and seed, as well as providing for fauna movement
- In areas of native vegetation that are of low to moderate condition, focus on controlling introduced annual pasture grasses and weeds
- In areas of native vegetation that are of high condition, focus on maintaining diversity by reducing thatch and maintaining inter-tussock spaces
- Utilise relatively short but intensive grazing periods
- Undertake weed control, taking care to minimise spray flow onto native species (if necessary, hand spray or dig out target weed species)
- Control feral animals, using appropriate methods
- Be careful to avoid transfer of weeds or other contaminants through movement of contaminated equipment or vehicles
- Retain all dead and alive timber, including standing and fallen trees. Timber collection for on-farm use should focus on younger solid trees, that do not contain habitat hollows

*"Sticks and leaf litter provide essential habitat for many fauna species"*

- Sticks and leaf litter provide essential foraging and nesting habitats for many fauna species, and should be left in situ
- Prevent fertiliser drift and nutrient runoff into areas of native vegetation
- Retain, and avoid disturbance to, all rocks and rock features, as these provide valuable micro-climates and protection for many species.



*Tree hollows provide valuable habitat  
(Photo by John Holstein)*

## Landcare - Working together

Murrumbidgee Landcare is working together with landholders to link properties, communities and native habitat.

Cross-property conservation planning aims to increase native vegetation connectivity, improve habitat for native flora and fauna, and improve soil and water for ecology and production.

Reducing critical threats is at the heart of balancing production and conservation.

This Fact Sheet is one of a series produced through the Murrumbidgee Landcare project "Cross Property Planning to Balance Production and Conservation". This project was assisted with funding from the NSW Environmental Trust's "Community Bush Regeneration" program, and the Australian Government.



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