



**FLORA & FAUNA
GUARANTEE**

FLORA AND FAUNA GUARANTEE - SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FINAL RECOMMENDATION ON A NOMINATION FOR LISTING

Rocky Chenopod Open-Scrub Community

Date of receipt of the nomination: 20 February 1991
Date of preliminary recommendation: 2 December 1993
Date of final recommendation: 27 January 1994

File No.: 91/2041

Validity:

The nomination is for a valid item and the prescribed information was provided.

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. Upon the request of the nominator, the subject of this nomination was altered from Long Forest Mallee Community to Rocky Chenopod Open-Scrub Community.

A number of authors have discussed this community as though it was an outlier of mallee shrublands from north-western Victoria (eg. Blackburn 1964, Myers 1986), however it is very distantly related to these communities. Although the nominated community is described by Cheal *et al.* (in prep) as two separate sub-communities, subsequent analysis supports the inclusion of these sub-communities as one community; the Rocky Chenopod Open-Scrub Community.

The canopy of this community is an open, frequently stunted and multi-stemmed, stand of Bull Mallee (*Eucalyptus behriana*), Yellow Gum (*E. leucoxylon*), Grey Box (*E. microcarpa*) with occasional Red Box (*E. polyanthemus*). Examples of the community near Djerriwarrh Creek may be dominated by Bull Mallee. The shrubby understorey is dominated by Gold-dust Wattle (*Acacia acinacea*), Golden Wattle (*A. pycnantha*), tall Cassinia spp. (*Cassinia longifolia* and *C. arcuata*), and shrubby chenopods, notably Fragrant Saltbush (*Rhagodia parabolica*) and Barrier Saltbush (*Enchylaena tomentosa*).

The field layer is characteristically open and supports a high proportion of ephemerals and several drought-tolerant perennial dwarf shrubs and herbs, including Inland Pigface (*Carpobrotus modestus*), Saloop Saltbush (*Einadia hastata*) and Nodding Saltbush (*E. nutans*) and *Sclerolaena* spp. Although not a dominant feature of the open field layer, tussock grasses (notably *Danthonia* spp., *Poa* spp. and *Stipa* spp.) are scattered throughout. Box Mistletoe (*Amyema miquella*) is common in the canopy and the Small-leaf Clematis (*Clematis microphylla*) is found throughout the medium and low shrubs. Abundant bryophytes and soil lichens are also present.

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 1991*.

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:

It is estimated that approximately 25% of the total area has been cleared or damaged for urban development, agriculture, grazing and some timber cutting for firewood and fenceposts.

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

Evidence:

Remnants of the community are threatened by habitat destruction and modification primarily through land subdivision for urban development. Potential threats associated with such development include the introduction of, and competition by, exotic species of flora and fauna, as well as alteration of water and nutrient regimes.

Criterion 2.2.1 *The community is very rare in terms of the total area it covers or it has a very restricted distribution or it has been recorded from only a few localities.*

Evidence:

The community is restricted in distribution and it is estimated that less than 200 hectares currently exist. The largest remnant of about 150 hectares occurs in the vicinity of Djerrivarrah Creek including the Long Forest area. Additional localities for this community are beside Plenty River near Janefield and beside Jacksons Creek between Sunbury and Diggers Rest.

The data presented on distribution and abundance are the result of comprehensive surveys and provide clear evidence that the community is very rare in terms of abundance and distribution.

Background Information

- The Long Forest Mallee area is classified by the National Trust and is listed on the National Estate.
- *Myrmecia* sp. 17 occurs in the Long Forest Mallee area (Gell *et al.* 1988).
- The Tuan (*Phascogale tapoatafa*) categorised as "rare" (DCE 1991) has previously been recorded in the Long Forest Mallee area.
- Taxa categorised as threatened by Gullan *et al.* (1990) have been recorded within the community:
 - Brittle Greenhood *Pterostylis truncata* (endangered) Kidney Saltbush *Atriplex stipitata* (vulnerable)
 - Fragrant Saltbush *Rhagodia parabolica* (rare) Spreading Eutaxia *Eutaxia diffusa* (rare)
 - Leafy Templetonia *Templetonia stenophylla* (depleted)
 - Turkey-bush *Eremophila deserti* (depleted)
 - Cane Spear-grass *Stipa breviglumis* (rare in Victoria and Australia)

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 15 December 1993
- "The Weekly Times" - on 15 December 1993
- "The Melton/Bacchus Marsh Mail Express" - on 15 December 1993
- "The Diamond Valley News" - on 14 December 1993
- "The Sunbury Telegraph" - on 14 December 1993
- Government Gazette* - on 16 December 1993

Submissions closed on 21 January 1994.

Further evidence provided:

No public comments were received by the Scientific Advisory Committee.

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 and research data provided to the SAC have been assessed. To the best of their knowledge, 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 are satisfied.

The SAC also concludes that sub-criterion 2.2.1 has been satisfied and that no evidence exists to suggest that primary criterion 2.2 cannot be satisfied as a consequence of sub-criterion 2.2.1 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:

- Baker, R (1984) Long Forest Mallee. *Parkwatch* No. 139. Victorian National Parks Association, Melbourne
- Barnett, J. M. (1974) Ecology and general biology of five sympatric species of *Myrmecia* (Hymenoptera-Foremicidae) An unpublished report for the Department of Zoology, Monash University.
- Blackburn, G. (1964) The other Mallee in Victoria. *Vict. Nat.* 81: 160-163.
- Cheal, D. C., Lau, J. A., Robinson, R. W., Ellis, J. E. and Cameron, D. G. (in prep) *Vegetation survey and sites of botanical significance in the Melbourne area.*—Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands, Melbourne.
- Department of Conservation and Environment (1991) *A list of threatened wildlife in Victoria in 1991.* Procedural Document 02-20-0543-1. Department of Conservation and Environment, Victoria.
- Friends of Werribee Gorge and Long Forest Mallee (1987) *Long Forest Mallee Resource Manual.*
- Gell, P. (1988) *The Long Forest Mallee: A Case study in reserve viability.* Flora and Fauna Guarantee Task Force, Department of Conservation and Environment, Melbourne.
- Gullan, P. K., Cheal, D. C. and Walsh, N. G. (1990) *Rare or Threatened Plants in Victoria.* Department of Conservation and Environment, Melbourne.
- Hewish, M. (1986) The birds of the Long Forest Mallee. *Geelong Naturalist* 23(2 & 3)
- Mc Dougall, K. (1987) *Sites of botanical significance in the western region of Melbourne.* Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands, Melbourne.
- Myers, B. A., Ashton, D. H. and Osborne, J. A. (1986) The ecology of the Mallee outlier of *Eucalyptus behriana* F. Muell. near Melton, Victoria. *Australian Journal of Botany* 34: 15-39.

Endorsement by the Convenor of the Scientific Advisory Committee

Date



Dr. Malcolm Calder
Convenor

5 December 1994