

# Cowra Shire Council Small Environmental Projects Scheme



## Final Report

Recent funding provided by Cowra Shire Council's Small Environmental Projects Scheme has enabled Mid Lachlan Landcare to develop and install an interpretive sign at Belleview Hill Reserve (Billy Goat Hill). The Reserve supports a threatened grassy woodland vegetation community and associated fauna, including a number of declining woodland birds. Mid Lachlan Landcare is currently engaged in on-ground habitat restoration works that have a long-term focus on restoring and protecting the site.

The 'Conserving Grassy Woodlands' interpretive sign provides information about grassy woodland ecosystems and why it's important to restore and protect them for future generations, and also acknowledges other groups that are providing assistance with the restoration project. Successful local bird photographer Warren Chad, kindly donated his image of a Grey-crowned Babbler, one of Cowra's most threatened bird species.



It is anticipated that the sign will further enhance visitor experience within the Peace Precinct by providing an informative and educational display on the natural features within the Reserve, while raising awareness of threatened species. The positioning of the sign is also designed to encourage use of a walking trail that joins the lookout above the picnic area. Mid Lachlan Landcare is currently designing a brochure that will be provided to Cowra Tourism to promote the site to visitors.

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# Conserving Grassy Woodlands

Grassy woodlands are unique ecosystems dominated by widely spaced eucalypts with a sparse understorey of shrubs including wattles, and a diverse ground layer of grasses, orchids, lilies and forbs but also logs, fallen branches, leaf litter and piles of rocks. They provide habitat for many species of insects, frogs, reptiles, birds and mammals.



The Grey-crowned Babbler is a gregarious woodland bird that lives in family groups. It forages for insects on the ground in leaf litter, fallen branches and from the bark of trees and shrubs. Now listed as a threatened species, it is declining across its range due to fragmentation and loss of woodland habitat, and removal of fallen timber.

Once the original vegetation of the wheat and sheep belt that covered large areas of south-eastern Australia, grassy woodlands are now one of the most threatened ecosystems in Australia, and the areas that remain are often degraded due to weed invasion, salinity and soil erosion, over-grazing and the effects of feral animals.

Better management of remnant woodland patches is important so that woodland species of plants and animals can persist but also for agricultural productivity and ecosystem services such as clean water and air, pollination and control of insect pests. Improved management of this site using bush regeneration and planting will help to improve vegetation condition and habitat into the future.

Take a walk along this track and enjoy the view surrounding Cowra. Look and listen carefully for woodland birds that live in the reserve including finches, honeyeaters, thornbills and wrens, and keep your eyes peeled on the granite boulders for Cunningham's Skinks.



Acacia species provide important food resources and shelter for woodland birds and animals



Grassy woodlands have a species-rich ground layer that provides habitat for reptiles such as Cunningham's Skink (above). Wildflowers visible during spring include the Vanilla Lily (left) and Bluebell (below).

