



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

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Dookie Campus



Dookie Bushland Reserve >

Background

The Dookie Bushland Reserve is a nationally significant area of 270 ha, comprised of mainly white box and grey box grassy woodland. It is rare to find these vegetation types in South Eastern Australia, particularly of this size and quality. Whilst these vegetation types were once very common across the Riverine Plains of Northern Victoria and Southern New South Wales, more than 98% of the original distribution has been cleared or modified for agriculture.

The Reserve

Since declaration of the reserve in 1992, there have been fundamental changes in the management of the reserve, resulting in major achievements. These achievements include the completion of a 7.5 km feral animal fence surrounding the reserve in 1995. This fence is less than 1.5 metres high, allowing kangaroo passage, whilst still providing significant deterrent to a range of introduced animals including rabbits, foxes, hares and cats.

Management strategies have included a concerted effort to manage pest animals within the reserve, as well as campaigns against major weeds including Horehound, European Olive, Spear Thistle, Pattersons Curse and St. Johns Wort. These efforts have been successful to date with significant reductions in numbers.

Dookie Bushland Reserve provides an excellent medium for education programs, for Melbourne University students and lecturers. The reserve facilitates a practical insight into natural resource management issues including fuel reduction, pest, animal and plant management along with vegetation and fauna surveys. The Reserve also provides excellent resources for artistic endeavours including sketching and painting of natural landscape.

Many challenges for management lie ahead in the reserve including ongoing issues such as pest and weed management. Areas that have not regenerated naturally since declaration require some active re-vegetation assistance to fulfill the major objective in the future - the connection of the reserve with continuous vegetation along the Broken River and Mt. Major.

By controlling the Eastern Grey Kangaroo population and limiting grazing stock access to the reserve, the 1992 management plan combined with the wet summer seasons of 1991, 1992 and 1993, resulted in massive regeneration of native plants.

A mature woodland environment now exists in the central regions of the reserve. Typified by mature trees, a sparse shrub layer and a ground layer dominated by grasses of a tussock nature, this type of habitat provides many opportunities for native fauna. Typical of vegetation that once covered the northern plains of Victoria, the reserve is one of the few places where such bushland can be seen.

Flora and Fauna

The Bushland Reserve boasts an impressive array of native flora and fauna providing excellent diversity and species habitats. Over 166 native and 80 introduced species of plant are present in the bushland reserve. Of the native species present, nine are classified as rare, endangered or vulnerable.

The number of species of fauna inhabiting the Bushland Reserve is extensive. These include:

- 111 native and 5 introduced species of birds
- 5 frog species
- 15 reptile species
- 26 native and 4 introduced mammals

Of these, 7 birds, 3 reptiles, and 2 mammals have been classified as rare, threatened or vulnerable. These fauna include Squirrel Gliders, Swift and Turquoise Parrot, Bush Stone Curlews, Blind Snakes, Bandy Bandy Snake and Brush Tailed Phascogales. Rare birds such as the Regent Honey Eater and Grey Crowned Babbler have been sighted in the past however have not been seen for some time.

Due to the complex and diverse ecosystem and in recognition of the reserves importance the reserve is now nationally significant and has been listed on the register of the national estate as a result. Dookie Campus is currently working with Trust for Nature to place a bush covenant over this precious resource.

