

THE MAJOR VEGETATION COMMUNITIES WITHIN IPSWICH

Alluvial flats, Watercourses, & Wetlands (refer to Guide No. 2)

The Bremer River Basin is an extensive area of alluvial flats, watercourses, and wetlands, west south-west of Ipswich City, bordered by the Little Liverpool Range, the Great Dividing Range, Flinders Peak and associated mountains, and the Brisbane River to the north.

Seven vegetation communities have been identified in the Bremer Basin, including:

- Swamp Tea Tree (*Melaleuca tamarascina* ssp. *irbyana*)
- Paperbark Tea Tree (*Melaleuca quinquinerva*)
- Queensland Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*)
- Riparian
- Freshwater Wetlands

Other vegetation communities may be locally dominant in some situations. Because of the close proximity of the alluvial soils to a watercourse, these complexes may contain riparian communities with some vine forest species. Examples of these complexes include vegetation in the alluvial areas of Amberley, Purga, Willowbank, Warrill View, Peak Crossing, Ripley, Karalee, Goodna, and Camira.

Dry Vine Forests (refer to Guide No. 3)

Dry Vine Forests are mostly found in the Rosewood, Tallegalla, Marburg areas and around Pine Mountain. Since European settlement those areas have been heavily cleared for agriculture, pastures and the valuable timber trees. Only small isolated patches of Dry Vine Forest remain within the region, totalling only 2.4% of the original area. These remnants are classified as *Endangered*. Dry Vine Forests have been referred to by a variety of names, including 'dry rainforest', 'softwood scrub', 'vine thicket', 'brigalow scrub' and 'hoop pine scrub'. The two predominant Dry Vine Forest types in Ipswich are:

• Vine Thickets

The Vine Thickets that occur around 'The Bluff' (west of Rosewood), the eastern slopes and crest of the Marburg Range and around 'Perry's Knob' (north of Rosewood) and are generally found in the higher elevations on dry rocky slopes. Other remnants of Vine Thicket occur around Flinders Peak and Spring Mountain. The Brigalow dominated Dry Vine Thickets are found lower down and are characterised by a dense canopy of Brigalow, with very few other canopy species. They are generally found on gently undulating land with grey cracking clay soils, under 150m in elevation.

• Hoop Pine Scrubs

The Hoop pine scrubs are only found in two areas in the region. The Pine Mountain community contains the largest single remnant of lowland 'dry rainforest' in Southeast Queensland and is classified as *Endangered*. Other remnants of Hoop pine scrub occur around Flinders Peak and Spring Mountain.

Open Forests & Woodlands (refer to Guide No. 4)

These vegetation complexes are extremely variable with numerous community types. The Flinders Peak / Greenbank area, contains the largest remaining lowland eucalypt forest in south east Queensland. The area is characterised by the volcanic remnants of Flinders Peak through to the sandstones of White Rock and Spring Mountain. The vegetation in this region is predominantly mixed eucalypt forest, dominated by Spotted Gum and Narrow-leaved Ironbark. Small patches of rocky Heathland and Vine Forests also occur throughout the area, primarily at White Rock, Spring Mountain, Mt Goolman, Ivorys Rock, Flinders Peak, Mt Blaine and Mt Welcome.

Patches of Gum-Topped Box occur sporadically throughout the region extending from Collingwood Park / Redbank Plains to Borallon, with the gently undulating crests and slopes dominated by a mix of species such as Spotted Gum and Ironbark.

Several vegetation complexes are confined to the foothills of the Great Dividing Range in the south-western extremities of the city, and to a number of small ranges and peaks of higher elevation in the mid west of the Bremer Basin. The vegetation complexes include Yellow Box, Forest Red Gum and Ironbark associations at higher altitudes. Other vegetation complexes are confined to the Sandy Creek area to the east of Ipswich. The vegetation complexes include Broad-leaved Ironbark, Scribbly Gum and Rusty Gum.

For more information contact
Ipswich City Council, Conservation Parks and Sport Department
Telephone 3810 6810

REMNANT VEGETATION VALUES

What is remnant vegetation?

Remnant vegetation is a term used to describe those patches of native trees, shrubs, grasses, etc, which now remain following the widespread clearance of native vegetation across the region.

Remnants can be of any shape or size, and occur on all land tenures, both privately and publicly owned. Approximately 90% of remnant bushland in Southeast Queensland is privately owned and managed.

What is the value of remnant vegetation?

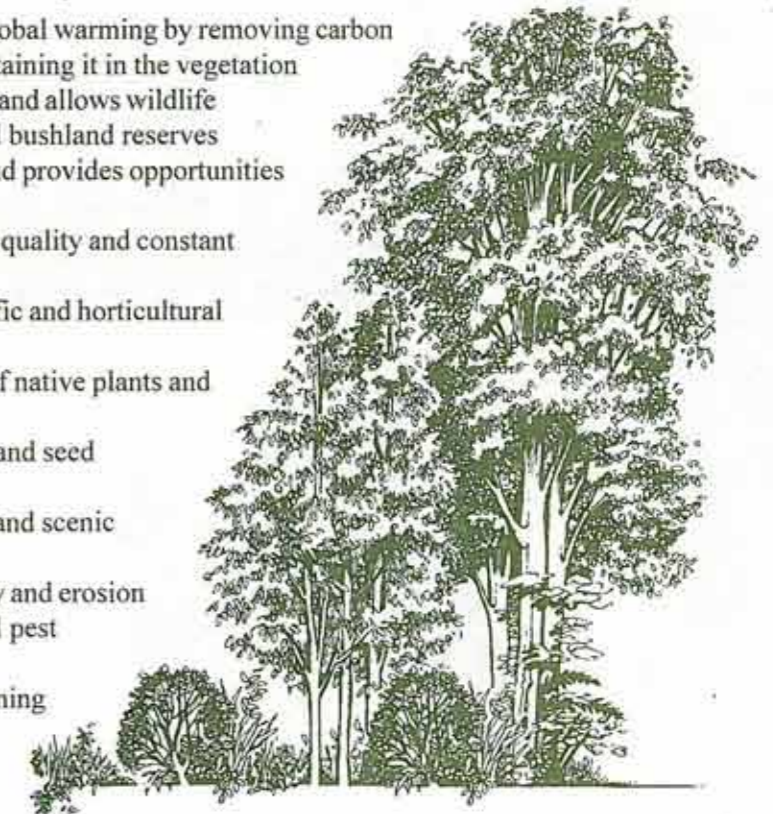
Remnant vegetation is very significant for many different reasons, including the aesthetic value, recreational value, and most importantly, the conservation value. Without remnant bushland the balance of nature ceases to exist. This balance provides for all living things, including us. The plants in these remnants are the basis of life on earth, absorbing the energy from the sun to generate oxygen, and providing nourishment and other essential life-giving requirements to almost all forms of life.

The historical perspective

The arrival of European settlers brought a new culture to the land. The traditions of land management and uses based on European experience have proven to be inappropriate to the Australian environment. To encourage settlement, the government of the day introduced schemes and incentives that involved vegetation clearing. The clearing of large tracts was encouraged in property development plans. Few foresaw the possible environmental implications of uncontrolled vegetation clearing during the early history of Ipswich. As the result of this lack of awareness, approximately 70% of the original vegetation in Ipswich has now been cleared for urban, rural, commercial, or industrial development.

Benefits of retaining remnants of bushland

- assists in the reduction of global warming by removing carbon from the atmosphere and retaining it in the vegetation
- provides habitat for wildlife and allows wildlife movement between isolated bushland reserves
- enhances property values and provides opportunities for diversification
- assists in maintaining water quality and constant water flow in streams
- provides a venue for scientific and horticultural research
- contributes to the survival of native plants and animals
- refuge for plant pollinators and seed dispersers
- provides places of solitude and scenic beauty
- helps protect against salinity and erosion
- provides a source of natural pest control
- supports natural air conditioning
- maintains rainfall patterns



How good is that patch of bush?

Not every patch of vegetation has the same conservation value. This value is often based on the habitat it provides for native wildlife. Native animals rely on the remnant vegetation for food, shelter and breeding sites. Much of the habitat is in the understorey, or the shrub and groundcover plants beneath the trees. The understorey is often overlooked, and referred to as *scrubby rubbish*, to be cleared out. Hollow branches and logs are collected for firewood.

Healthy remnant vegetation providing good habitat has the following elements:

- regeneration of trees and understorey
- no sign of dieback of vegetation
- free of weeds and exotic grasses
- fallen logs and branches
- old trees with hollows
- a range of biodiversity
- the natural tree cover remains
- abundant native wildlife

Why are we losing our native plants and animals?

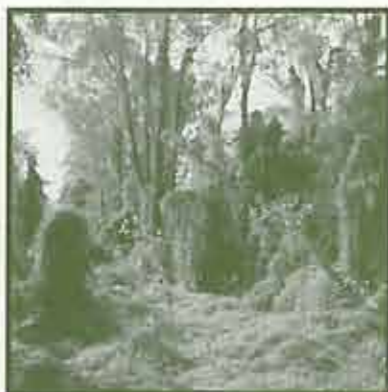
In Ipswich, 275 plant, and 45 wildlife species are classified as *Regionally Significant*. A further 14 plant species and 10 wildlife species are classified as *Rare*. A further, 9 plant, and 6 wildlife species are classified as *Vulnerable* and, a further 4 plant species are classified as *Endangered*; that is, they may become extinct if current threats continue. There are three main processes causing this decline; habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, and habitat degradation.

- Habitat loss is when the native vegetation disappears, along with the animals that live there.
- Habitat fragmentation is when the remnants are so small, and so far apart that the wildlife cannot move between them. Ultimately populations of plants and animals become inbred and die out.
- Habitat degradation is most commonly an invasion by weeds, removal of understorey, or modified nutrient levels in the soil.

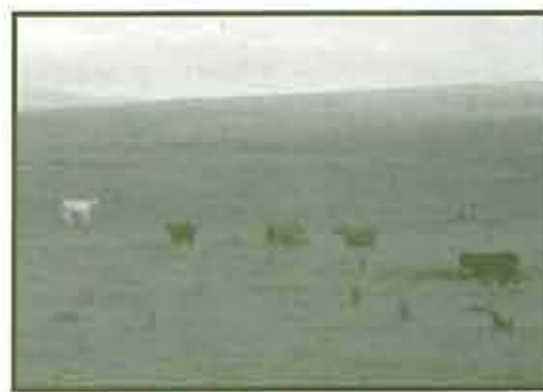
Major Threats to Natural Ecosystems



Land Clearance



Weeds



Over Grazing

Major Threats to Natural Ecosystems



Residential Development



Illegal Dumping



Fire

What is the status of remnant vegetation in Ipswich?

The conservation status of remnant vegetation is defined by the Vegetation Management Act of 1999, as; *Endangered* – less than 10%, and *Of Concern* – less than 30% remaining.

Ipswich has three broad vegetation types. These are dry vine forest communities; open forests & woodland communities; and the diverse vegetation of the alluvial flats, watercourses and wetlands. Within these are eighteen distinctly different community sub-types, making a total of twenty-one Regional Ecosystems.

What is a regional ecosystem?

The State Government recognises a Regional Ecosystem as a vegetation community in a bioregion that is consistently associated with a particular combination of geology, landform, soil type, and vegetation. Of the 21 Regional Ecosystems in Ipswich, 11 are classified as *Endangered*, 9 are classified as *Of Concern*, and 1 is as yet unclassified. If these remnants are lost, a huge portion of other living organisms will disappear too.

With 70% of the original remnant vegetation of the Ipswich area already cleared, and much more degraded, the 'greener quality lifestyle' of future generations is very much the responsibility of the present generation.

Ipswich Enviroplan, through the components of Securement, Education & Awareness, Management, and Development, aims to: *'...promote important environmental issues and provide innovative and effective programs for the safe keeping and management of the City's natural resources.'*

Support for conservation initiatives is available through a number of programs

- Volunteer Greening Program
- Environmental Weed Control Rebate Program
- Voluntary Conservation Agreements Program
- Land for Wildlife Program

For further information obtain your free copy of the following

- 'Ipswich Enviroplan' brochure
- 'A Guide to Greening Ipswich using Native Plants' booklet
- 'Ipswich City Council - Conservation Partnerships' fact sheet
- 'Environmental Weeds of Ipswich' booklet
- 'Vegetation Communities Rehabilitation Guide' No. 2-4
- Wildlife series No.1, Habitat/Nestboxes

