

## TOWARDS A NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR DESCRIBING AND MAPPING VEGETATION CONDITION: OBSERVATIONS FROM TEMPERATE WOODLANDS

Richard Thackway

1. Develop nationally consistent terms and practical tools to compile spatial vegetation condition datasets at various scales.
2. Promote collection of new site-based vegetation condition data relative to a benchmark.
3. Use nationally consistent vegetation and land use information systems to provide context.
4. Recognise how land management practices can be used to change vegetation condition.
5. Develop a hierarchy of scales for mapping and monitoring – patch, surrounds and landscape.

### Introduction

The development of a consistent national framework for describing and mapping the condition of Australia's vegetation has its roots in the development of several national information systems including the Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia, National Vegetation Information System and the Australian Collaborative Land Use and Management Program. These national information systems have involved extensive collaboration and research across Australia's bioregions extending well beyond the area defined by Australia's temperate woodlands. The compilation of nationally consistent data and information on vegetation and land cover management is used to support the development of policy and programs in natural resources management and sustainable agriculture.

Australia's temperate woodlands are the areas where much of our agricultural production and urban areas occur (see map on next page). It is estimated that 80–90% of temperate woodlands have been removed from major agricultural regions since the European settlement of Australia due to those activities and other factors, such as changes in grazing and fire regimes