

## Lockyer Uplands semi-evergreen vine thicket connectivity project -

*protecting, improving and connecting patches of Endangered semi-evergreen vine thicket vegetation communities in the Lockyer Uplands.*

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In 2019, a University of Queensland research project found evidence of the presence of Black-breasted Button-quail (BBBQ) in Dwyers Scrub Conservation Park in the Lockyer Uplands and on four private properties in the immediate vicinity of the park.<sup>1</sup> The BBBQ is listed nationally as *Vulnerable*.

The [National recovery plan for the black-breasted button-quail \*Turnix melanogaster\*](#) identifies habitat protection and enhancement as key to the recovery of this quail species. Semi-evergreen vine thicket (SEVT) vegetation communities provide critical habitat for the BBBQ and are listed as *Endangered* in Queensland.

Dwyers Scrub Conservation Park contains 40ha of SEVT areas considered to be a key priority value in the park management plan. Several private properties within a two-kilometre radius of Dwyers Scrub contain patches of SEVT and a number of these landholders are committed to the protection and improvement of these patches on their land.

LUCI has developed a strategy and plan of action to assist landholders to (a) undertake onground work to improve the condition of SEVT patches on their land, (b) to enhance connectivity between SEVT patches in the landscape and (c) monitor the presence of BBBQ as an indicator of SEVT habitat health.

The goal is to improve the condition of and connectivity between the 40ha of SEVT areas in Dwyers Scrub Conservation Park and SEVT patches across a network of private properties within a two-kilometre radius of the park. LUCI's landholder network has developed a strategic plan for long-term action to achieve this goal.

The SEVT Connectivity Plan (the Plan) integrates with ongoing LUCI projects such as our volunteer weed control work in the SEVT areas of Dwyers Scrub Conservation Park and our ongoing monitoring of threatened species project which records the presence of BBBQ along with the Glossy Black Cockatoo and Koala. This Plan has been developed consistent with the objectives outlined in the BBBQ Recovery Plan. It also aligns with actions identified in the draft Lockyer Valley NRM Action Plan.

The Plan addresses the following major threats to SEVT vegetation patches in the Lockyer Uplands:

- feral pigs, deer and cats which threaten BBBQ survival;
- weed infestation which threatens SEVT habitat integrity;
- fire impacts from encroaching fires in adjoining areas which threatens SEVT habitat integrity;
- and
- fragmentation of SEVT patches and clearing of SEVT patches which threaten BBBQ dispersal and survival.

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<sup>1</sup> The research was undertaken by Patrick Webster and his research assistant Reisuke Shimomura. Camera trapping recorded sightings of a male and female BBBQ in the park, a single male on one of the private properties and BBBQ scrapes on all properties. The records have been submitted to WildNet.

**Semi-evergreen vine thicket (SEVT) Connectivity Project Strategy and Actions**

**GOAL**

Improve the condition of, and connectivity between, SEVT areas on private properties in the LUCI network.

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Time frame</b>	<b>Resources required</b>
Establish presence of BBBQ in the landscape and location of SEVT habitats occupied	Annual distribution map of the BBBQ in the LUCI landscape  Description of the SEVT habitat occupied by the BBBQ	Annual camera trapping surveys on landholder network properties.  Map patches of SEVT in the LUCI landscape and assess condition of habitat patches.		
Improve the condition and integrity of SEVT vegetation in the LUCI landscape	Presence and extent of pest weed and animals in SEVT patches decline annually.  Surveys indicate continuing presence of BBBQ in SEVT patches in the LUCI landscape.	Control of pest animals  Control of weeds <sup>2</sup>  Fire management  Strategic fencing <sup>3</sup>		
Enhance the connectivity between SEVT areas in Dwyers Scrub Conservation Park and SEVT patches on private properties in the surrounding landscape.	Connections between SEVT patches are restored and enhanced on an ongoing basis.	Assessment of connectivity needs  Implement connectivity plan  Promotion of connectivity to wider audience		

<sup>2</sup> Actions to date include LUCI's ongoing weed control work in Dwyers Scrub SEVT areas and 2016 release of 450 jewel beetles in SEVT area on one private property funded by HL&W National Landcare grant.

<sup>3</sup> Actions in 2016 include 2km of fencing of SEVT on two private properties adjoining Dwyers Scrub funded by HL&W National Landcare grant.