Commonwealth of Australia

Inclusion of ecological communities in the list of threatened ecological communities under section 181 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

I, TONY BURKE, Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, pursuant to paragraph 184(1)(a) of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, hereby amend the list referred to in section 181 of that Act by:

including in the list in the critically endangered category

New England Peppermint (Eucalyptus nova-anglica) Grassy Woodlands

as described in the Schedule to this instrument.

Dated this............Fourth .......................day of.........February......................2011.

signed

TONY BURKE
Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
The New England Peppermint (Eucalyptus nova-anglica) Grassy Woodlands ecological community is a temperate grassy eucalypt woodland to open forest with a typically sparse to absent mid (or shrub) layer and a mostly grassy ground layer. It is restricted to northeastern NSW and the far south of Queensland and generally occurs on valley flats and lower slopes subject to cold air drainage.

The tree canopy is dominated or co-dominated by Eucalyptus nova-anglica (New England Peppermint). Other tree species may be present, depending on the characteristics of the site, and may include: Eucalyptus pauciflora (Snow Gum), E. stellulata (Black Sallee), E. dalrympleana subsp. heptantha (Mountain Gum), E. blakelyi (Blakely’s Red Gum), E. radiata subsp. sejuncta (Narrow-leaved Peppermint) and E. rubida (Candlebark). Hybrids of some eucalypt species may also be present in the canopy layer.

Shrubs are typically sparse or absent in the ecological community. When shrubs are present, typical species that may occur include: Leucopogon fraseri (Sharp Beard-heath), Melichrus urceolatus (Urn-heath), Lissanthe strigosa (Peach Heath), Rubus parvifolius (Native Raspberry) and Bursaria spinosa (Blackthorn). Acacia dealbata (Silver Wattle) sometimes occurs.

The ground layer is usually dominated by a range of native grasses and other herbs. These typically form a dense cover, though this may vary depending on seasonal conditions and past management history. The number of ground layer species across the range of this national ecological community is considerable. However, many species are present at only a limited number of sites, or in very small numbers at a site. Ground layer species are mostly not confined to just the national ecological community – they are widespread in other vegetation communities as well.

The grass layer is usually continuous, with Poa sieberiana (Grey Tussock Grass) dominant and Themeda triandra (Kangaroo Grass) a common species. Other native grasses in the ecological community may include: Austrodanthonia racemosa var. racemosa (Clustered Wallaby-grass), Bothriochloa macra (Red-leg Grass), Cymbopogon refractus (Barbed-wire Grass), Dichelachne micrantha (Short-hair Plume Grass), Echinopogon mckiei, Echinopogon nutans var. nutans (Nodding Hedgehog-grass), Elymus scaber (Common Wheat-grass), Imperata cylindrica var. major (Blady Grass), Lachnagrostis filiformis and Poa labillardieri var. labillardieri (Common Tussock-grass).

Native ground layer herbs that may commonly be present in the ecological community include: Acaena novae-zelandiae (Bidgee-widgee), Acaena ovina (Sheep’s Burr), Asperula conferta (Common Woodruff), Carex inversa (Knob Sedge), Desmodium varians (Slender Tick-trefoil), Dichondra repens (Kidney Weed), Geranium solanderi var. solanderi (Native Geranium), Glycine clandestina (Glycine), Hypericum gramineum (Small St John’s Wort), Juncus filicaulis (Rush), Luzula densiflora (Wood-rush), Rumex brownii (Swamp Dock),
*Scleranthus biflorus* (Knawel) and *Viola betonicifolia* (Native Violet). The large ground fern, *Pteridium esculentum* (Austral Bracken) may also be present at some sites.

The key diagnostic characteristics of the New England Peppermint (*Eucalyptus nova-anglica*) Grassy Woodlands ecological community are:

- Distribution limited to the tablelands and slopes of northeastern NSW, extending into southeastern Queensland;
- An overstorey dominated, or co-dominated by *Eucalyptus nova-anglica* (New England Peppermint);
- The shrub layer is typically sparse or absent; and
- The ground layer vegetation is usually dominated by native grasses and herbs. Cover is typically dense, though this may vary in response to seasonal conditions and management history.