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 **endangered** category

> Coolibah – Black Box Woodlands of the Darling Riverine Plains and the Brigalow Belt South Bioregions

as described in the Schedule to this instrument.

Dated this….....Tenth.....day of….....February.....2011.

signed

TONY BURKE
Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

s181/EPBC/2011/02

SCHEDULE

Coolibah – Black Box Woodlands of the Darling Riverine Plains and the Brigalow Belt South Bioregions

The Coolibah – Black Box Woodlands of the Darling Riverine Plains and the Brigalow Belt South Bioregions is a broad-scale ecological community that ranges from western New South Wales through to eastern Queensland. The ecological community typically occurs on the inland floodplains of northern NSW and southern Queensland that are associated with the Darling River system and the southern part of the Fitzroy River system. This eucalypt woodland is typically found on the grey, self-mulching clays of periodically waterlogged floodplains, swamp margins, ephemeral wetlands and stream levees.

The typical structure of the Coolibah – Black Box Woodlands of the Darling Riverine Plains and the Brigalow Belt South Bioregions is a open woodland to woodland with a tree canopy layer dominated by eucalypts, a sparse to absent mid (or shrub) layer and a variable ground layer.

The main tree species in the canopy of the woodland are Coolibah (*Eucalyptus coolabah* subsp. *coolabah*) and/or Black Box (*Eucalyptus largiflorens*). Other trees that may be present include: *Acacia salicina* (Cooba), *Acacia stenophylla* (River Cooba), *Casuarina cristata* (Belah), *Eremophila bignoniiflora* (Eurah), *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (River Red Gum) and *Eucalyptus populnea* (Bimble Box, Poplar Box).

Medium to tall shrubs are typically sparse to absent in many areas of this ecological community, or may form clumps. Shrubs that may be present include: *Acacia cambagei* (Gidgee), *Alectryon oleifolius* subsp. *elongatus* (Western Rosewood), *Alstonia constricta* (Bitterbark), *Apophyllum anomalum* (Warrior Bush), *Capparis mitchellii* (Wild Orange), *Chenopodium nitrariaceum* (Nitre Goosefoot), *Eremophila mitchellii* (Budda), *Exocarpos aphyllus* (Leafless Ballart), *Geijera parviflora* (Wilga), *Muehlenbeckia florulenta* (Lignum) and *Rhagodia spinescens* (Spiny Saltbush).

The composition of the ground layer will vary depending on past and present grazing pressure as well as the drought and water regime. The ground layer is mainly grasses, other herbs, chenopods (e.g. salt bush) and other small shrubs. The native species present may include the graminoids: *Astrebla lappacea* (Curly Mitchell Grass), *Cyperus victoriensis* (Yelka), *Dactyloctenium radulans* (Button Grass), *Dichanthium sericeum* (Queensland Bluegrass), *Eleocharis* spp. (Spike-rushes), *Eragrostis setifolia* (Neverfail), *Panicum decompositum* (Native Millet), *Paspalidium distans* and *Paspalidium jubiflorum* (Warrego Summer Grass); and the herbs: *Daucus glochidiatus* (Native Carrot), *Marsilea drummondii* (Common Nardoo), *Plantago cunninghamii* (Sago-weed), *Portulaca oleracea* (Pigweed), *Pycnosorus globosus* (Drumsticks), *Tetragonia tetragonioides* (New Zealand Spinach) and *Tribulus* spp. (Caltrop). Chenopods include *Atriplex* spp., *Einadia nutans* subsp. *nutans* (Climbing Saltbush) and *Sclerolaena* spp.

The key diagnostic characteristics for the Coolibah – Black Box Woodlands of the Darling Riverine Plains and the Brigalow Belt South Bioregions are:

- Distribution is limited to the Darling Riverine Plains and the Brigalow Belt South bioregions (IBRA v6.1).
- It typically occurs on the grey, self-mulching clays of periodically waterlogged floodplains, swamp margins, ephemeral wetlands and stream levees.
- A tree canopy layer is present that shows these features:
  - *Eucalyptus coolabah* subsp. *coolabah* (Coolibah) must be present in the tree canopy;
  - Coolibah typically is dominant (≥50% of tree crown cover);
  - Where Coolibah and *E. largiflorens* (Black Box) co-occur, together they make up the dominant species in the tree canopy layer (≥50% of tree crown cover);
  - Hybrids of Coolibah or Black Box with each other and other *Eucalyptus* species (typically Bimble Box) are included as dominant tree species.
- The mid or shrub layer may or may not be present. When present it is typically sparse or clumped and is of variable composition.
- The ground layer is of variable composition and cover ranging from sparse to dense. Ground cover lifeforms typically comprise native graminoids, other herbs, chenopods and other low shrubs that are typically under 50 cm tall.