

## **Connecting Country Background**

### **Friends of the Box-Ironbark Forests Inc. (Mount Alexander Region) and the Norman Wettenhall Foundation Project**

Norman Wettenhall Foundation is a philanthropic trust whose objectives are to support and encourage research, education and recording of all aspects of Australia's natural environment.

[www.nwf.org.au](http://www.nwf.org.au)

Recently a phone call to FOBIF from the Executive Officer, Beth Mellick, of the Norman Wettenhall Foundation (NWF) led to an initial meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2007 of some local environmental groups with Beth seeking an expression of interest from the local community in future landscape restoration.

This then led to FOBIF being provided with a set of maps of Mount Alexander Shire (MAS) showing Native Vegetation Conservation Significance and Threatened Species, Current Land Use, Planning Scheme Zones and a relief map.

The need to collect information about the current status of the environment in the shire became obvious and the first steps could be to:

- record environmental projects- who is doing/has done what, where and when (perhaps using overlays?)
- access current status of Vegetation Protection Overlays and Environmental Significant Overlays from MAS
- record historical overlays of conservation efforts
- record a recreation use overlay (including GDTA/shire/CDNHP tracks)
- record indigenous perspective and cultural values
- record areas of natural regeneration (blind boundaries?)
- access MAS's Road Management Strategy (when completed) in terms of roadside values.

Where do we go from here?

A public meeting is being organised for interested groups/people to be part of the next stage of the process - this stage of information gathering is an interesting and involved process and would form a project on its own. A steering committee/reference group could oversee the development of a working document using overlays showing what needs to be done where and who can do it!!