

Book review

AUSTRALIAN VEGETATION, 3RD EDITION

By David Keith (Ed.)

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I was excited to hear of a new edition of *Australian Vegetation*, with the two previous editions having been out of print for some time. Previous editions edited by Richard Groves were published in 1981 and 1994 respectively. The 3rd edition is a complete reworking, with a new editor David Keith and little overlap in content contributors from previous editions. It has significantly expanded in both size and content, which is positive given the wealth of Australian flora knowledge that has been gained over the last 20+ years.

Although following a familiar theme to previous editions, there is one major change; the introductory section of the former editions has been replaced with a comprehensive section looking at the ecological processes which shape Australian vegetation. This is followed by a familiar core; the major vegetation types across Australia, again greatly expanded. Finally, the conclusion comprises of the conservation of Australian vegetation. The book is a comprehensive text with 27 chapters and 80 contributors, aiming to be an essential reference for students, researchers and managers.

This book is split into three parts. Part one, the new ecological processes section, is a great inclusion. Part one covers all the key processes shaping Australian vegetation well, and in an easily accessible manner. Part two, which forms the majority of this text, summarises the core information for the main vegetation types

found across Australia, with each chapter typically including as a minimum the structure/floristics, ecological processes and conservation/management issues. Part three, the conservation of Australian Vegetation chapter by David Keith and Tony Auld – the conclusion to this book – reviews the main threats for Australian vegetation, the assessment and monitoring of these risks, as well as planning and management responses. This final chapter is a nice capstone to this in-depth and interesting book.

For the most part, this book was an easy one to use and navigate, with two exceptions. At least in the version I reviewed, all figures were in black and white within the text. Some figures are difficult to interpret without colour, and although colour versions are provided in a plate layout in the middle of the book, this is not obvious and requires some flicking back and forth. The only other aspect that could have been useful would have been more consistency in the layout of the part two chapters, which would have made it easier to compare between vegetation types.

This book is an essential addition to the bookshelf of all those working on or learning about Australian vegetation. It's a handy reference, and I have already used concepts and explanations in my teaching. This book does a great job in encompassing the current research on all topics, giving a nice succinct snapshot of the body of knowledge. Given this, I can see this book being used easily as an initial text for students and/or a refresher for researchers and managers alike. I am sure I will be referring back to many of the pages in the future.

William Fowler

Environmental and Conservation Sciences,
Murdoch University, Perth, WA, Australia