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# *Functional dynamics, stability and resilience in temperate grassy ecosystems, and the role of fire in restoration*

## Paul Foreman

La Trobe University and Blue Devil Consulting

*Transcript edited by Dr Peter Mitchell and Ann McGregor, Biolinks Alliance*

Aboriginal burning explains the historical distribution of native grasslands, and burning rather than grazing may be an efficient long-term way to restore the quality of these grasslands .

## Summary

*Historical surveys have allowed mapping of the original extent of native grasslands in northern and north-central Victoria. “New” sites in the eastern Riverina (not identified by EVC modelling) are different from sites further west such as Terrick Terrick. Records from early pioneers document how these grasslands have changed; they have become dominated by native and exotic grasses with declines in other species. These grass-dominated systems are functionally unstable; after heavy rains, the grass biomass increases and other species disappear. Strategic grazing has successfully reduced this biomass but many other species have not returned and grazing may not lift sites to a better-quality state. Aboriginal burning may explain the distribution of the historical grasslands and is now being looked at for long-term restoration. There are risks, but burning is simple and cost-effective and may expedite the restoration of native grasslands.*