# Foreword

Managing native vegetation and improving catchment health are key environmental objectives that have been targeted under the Howard Government's National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality, and the Natural Heritage Trust. Through these programs the Commonwealth is providing over $3 billion to address environmental issues, more resources than has ever been invested by an Australian Government on the environment. The Howard Government's approach is also a cooperative effort with state governments and local communities. This not only extends the financial resources available for projects, but perhaps even more importantly, engages the expertise and energy of the people on the ground at the community level.

This Native Vegetation Guide is an excellent example of what is needed to encourage better stewardship of our nation's land. It is also a case in point of how Government can help build capacity within communities to address the environmental management challenges that they face. Looking through the Guide, it is tremendous to see such a diversity of expertise – from conservation agencies, through to academics, land users and other experts, being pulled together to produce this publication.

With this Guide, the communities of the Riverine plains of Southern NSW have taken an important first step to provide a platform for consistent and effective approaches to vegetation management in the Riverina. I hope it acts as a catalyst for community action.

I commend the Native Dog Working Group and Berrigan Shire Council for their efforts in producing and mobilising the resources that went into this Guide. I look forward to seeing its recommendations and data being put to use and hope that it will form the spring board for many new initiatives under the recently extended Natural Heritage Trust.

DAVID KEMP

Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage