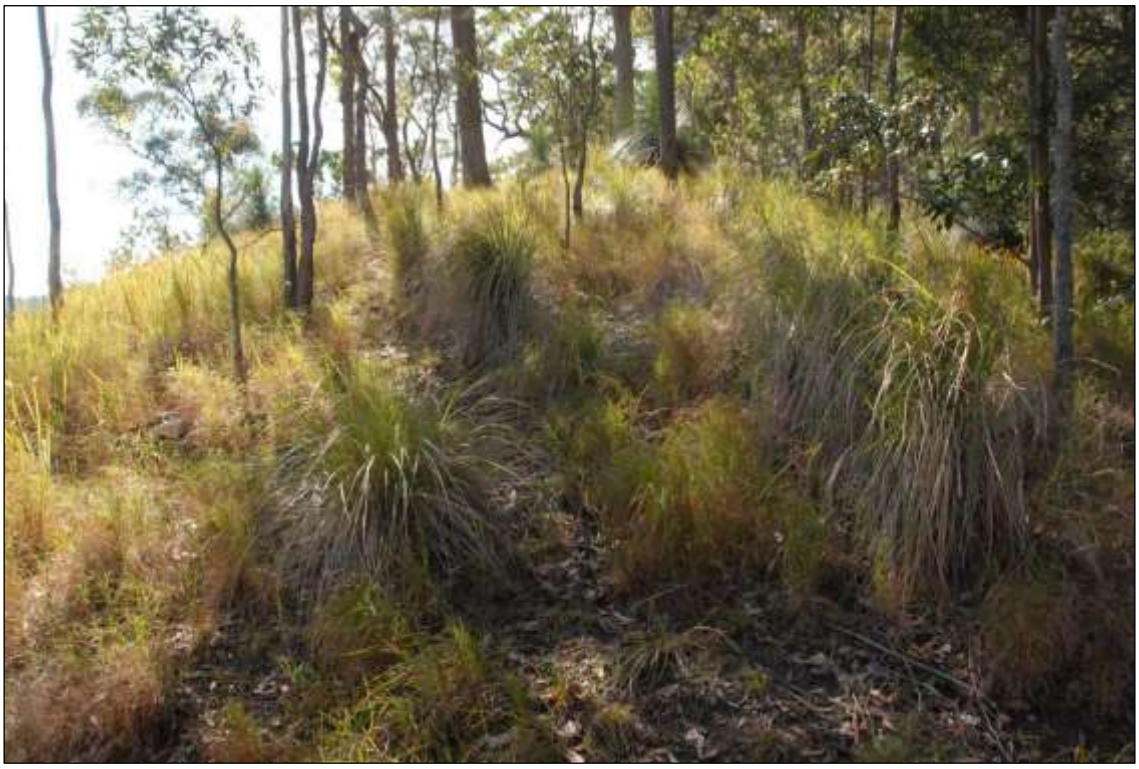
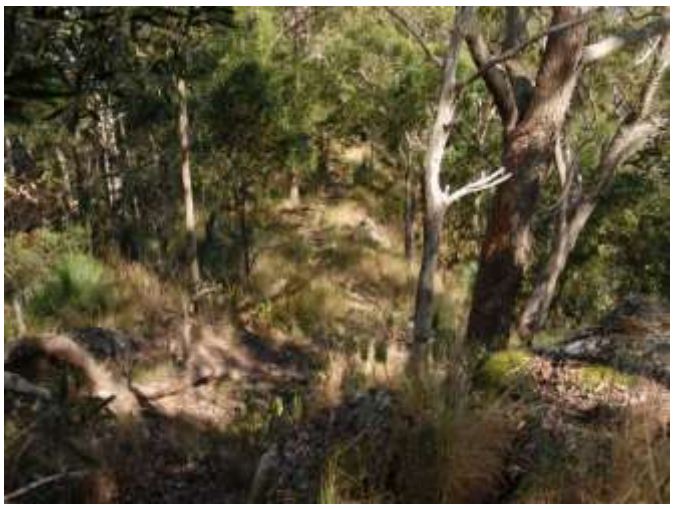
Regenerating grassy habitat for Eastern Bristlebird and other fauna species in the Border Ranges using fire and integrated weed management

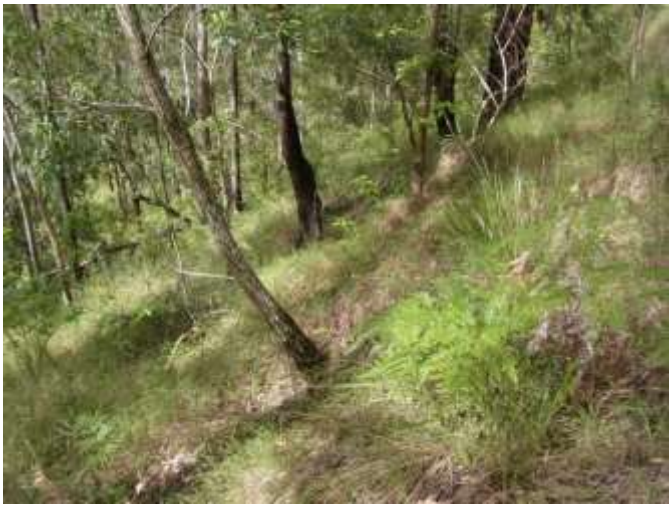
The story so far, in photos

Before the fire

The site, which before about 1990 was frequently burnt for green pick, has been unburnt for 13 years. While grasses are still abundant, they now contain considerable dead material and do not provide the continuous, thick grassy habitat that Bristlebirds require. Shrubs have proliferated, shading out grasses – shrub species include lantana, crofton weed, wattles and rainforest pioneers. In preparation for the burn, pre-fire weed management has been undertaken, with a focus on lantana and crofton weed.

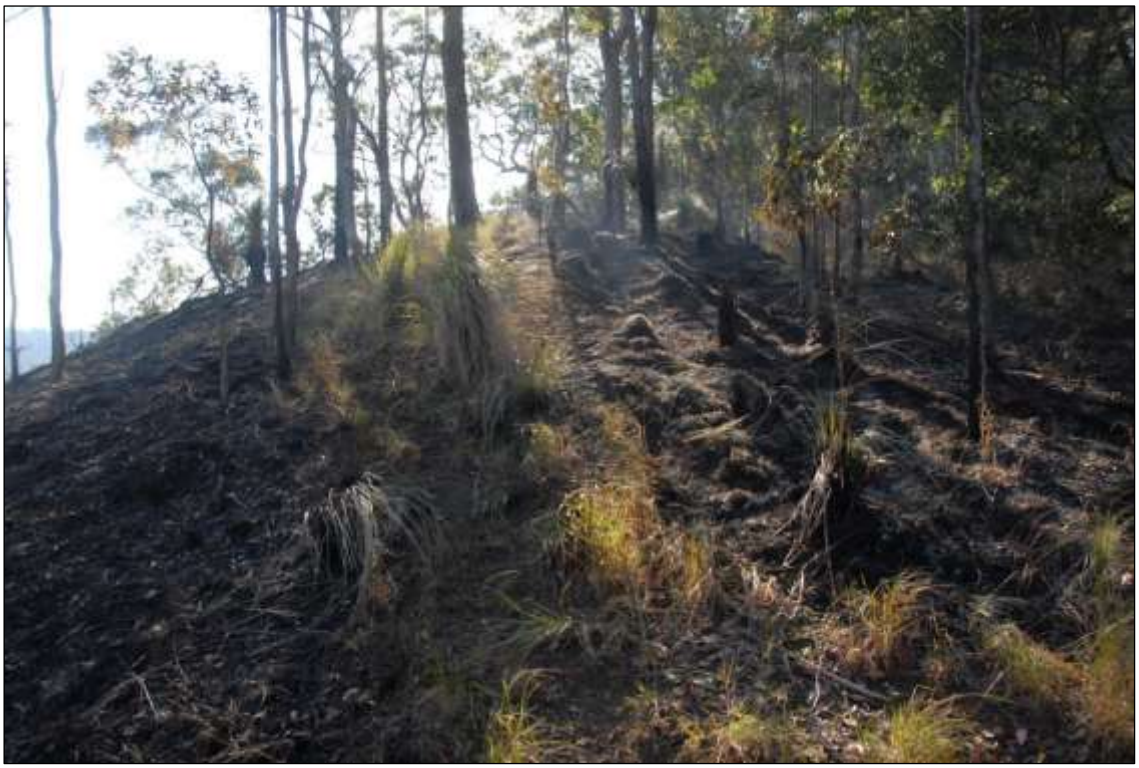






The fire (5 – 6 September 2013)

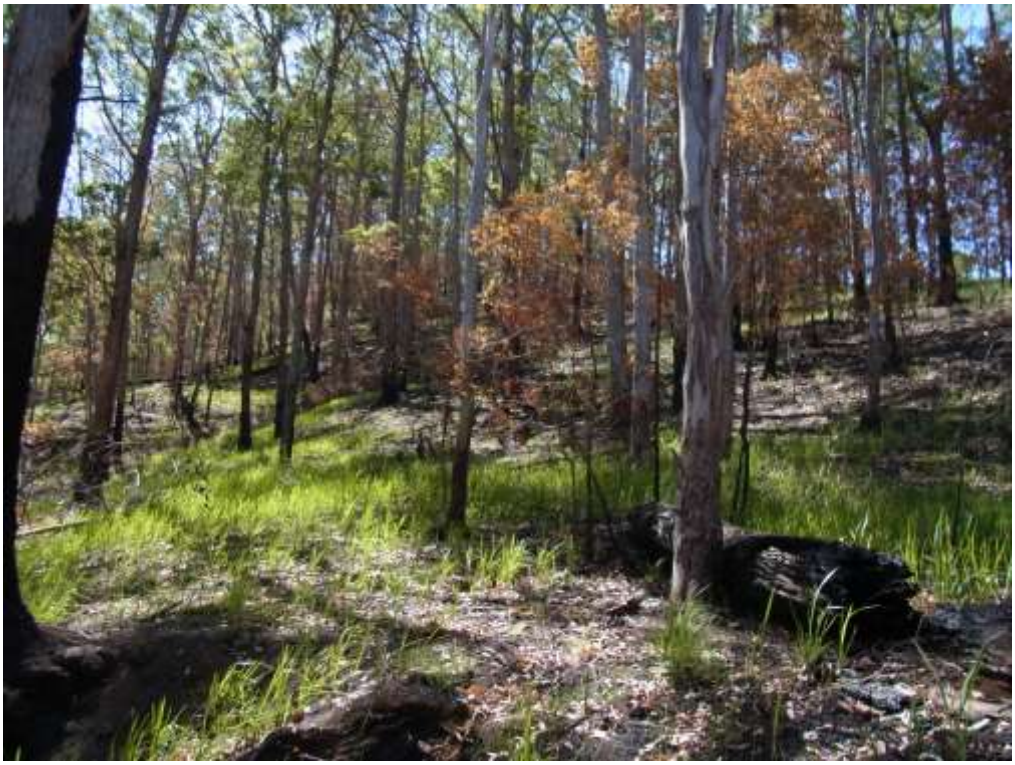
Immediately post-fire (6 September 2013)

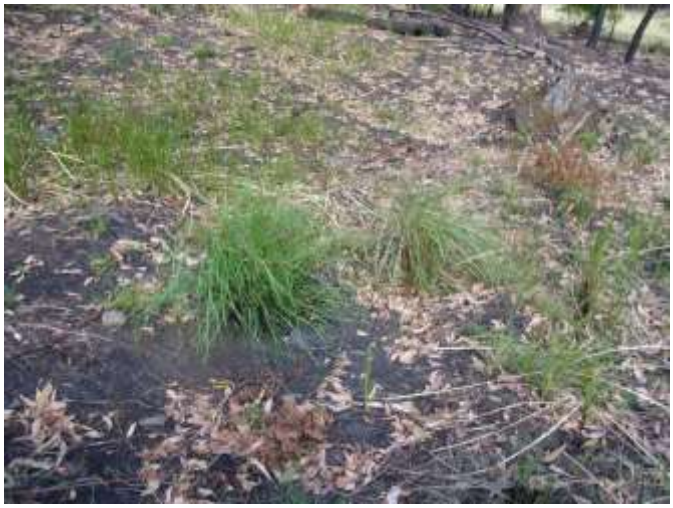


Compare photo 1, page 1.

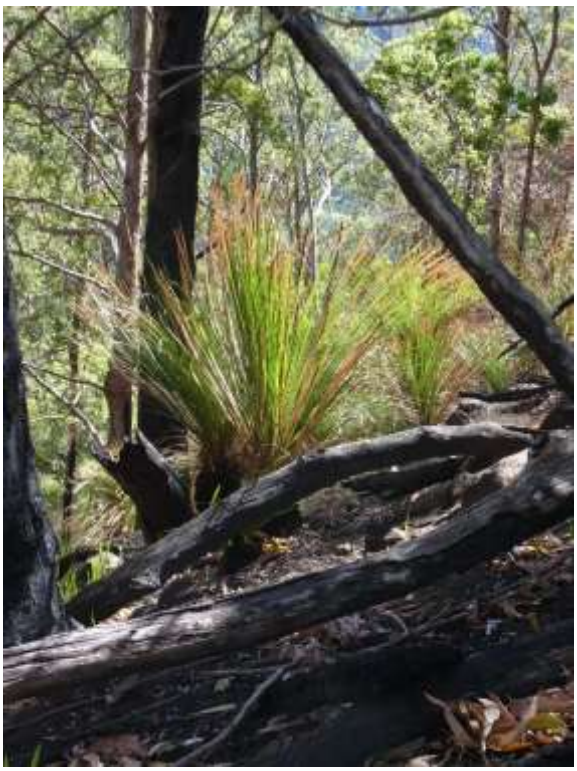
Six weeks post-fire (17 October 2013)

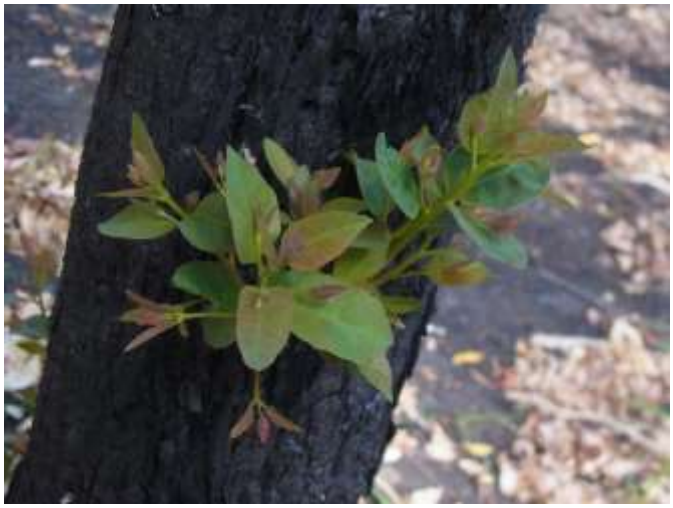
Regeneration begins



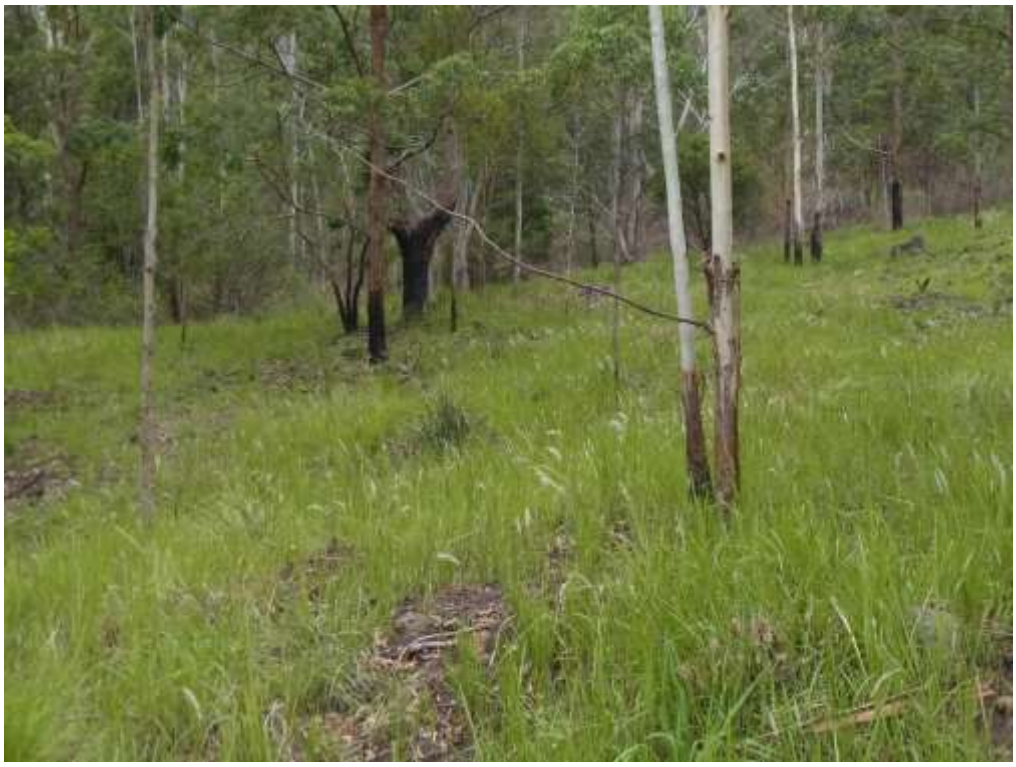


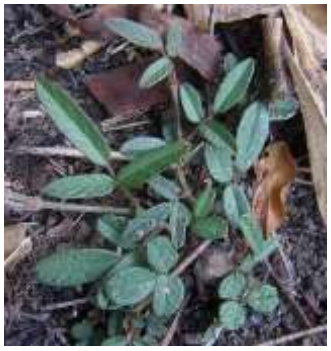
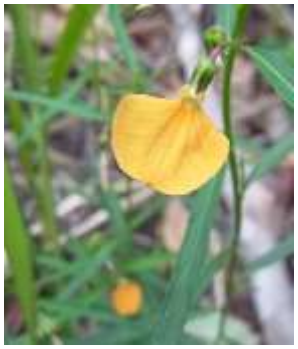
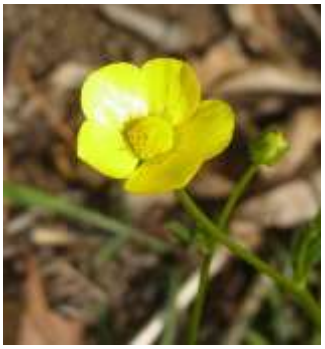
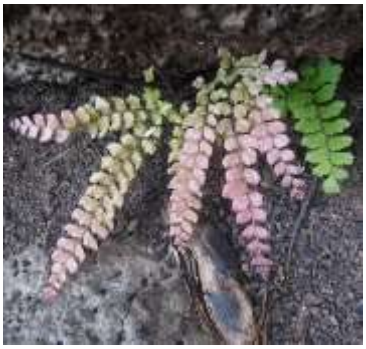
Native Sorghum, a key resource for Bristlebirds, resprouting



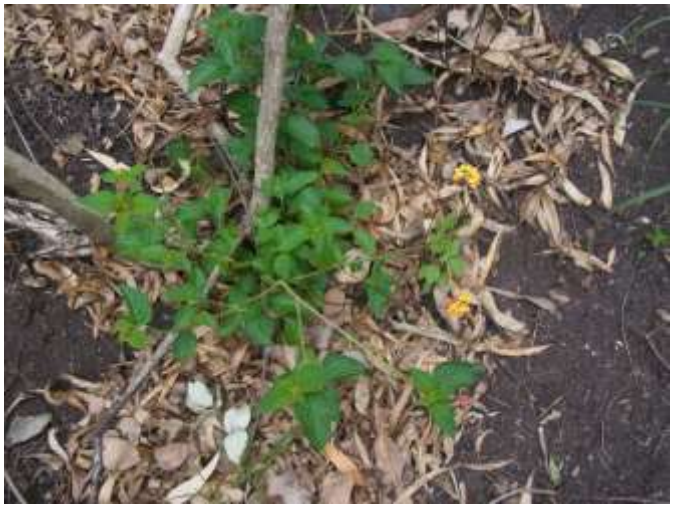
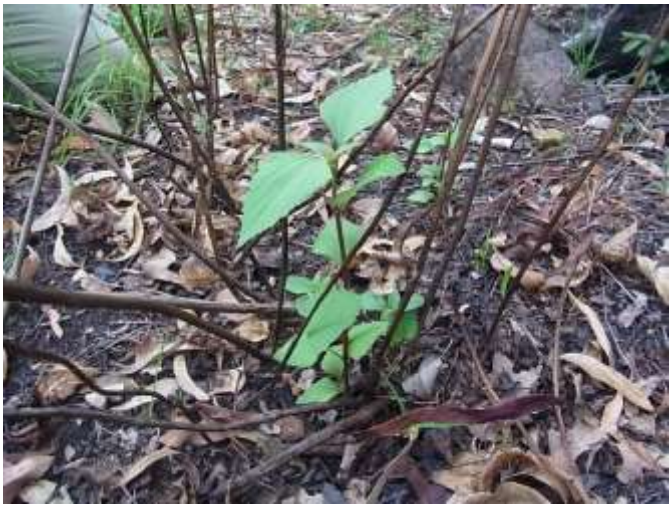


Three months post-fire (5 December 2013)



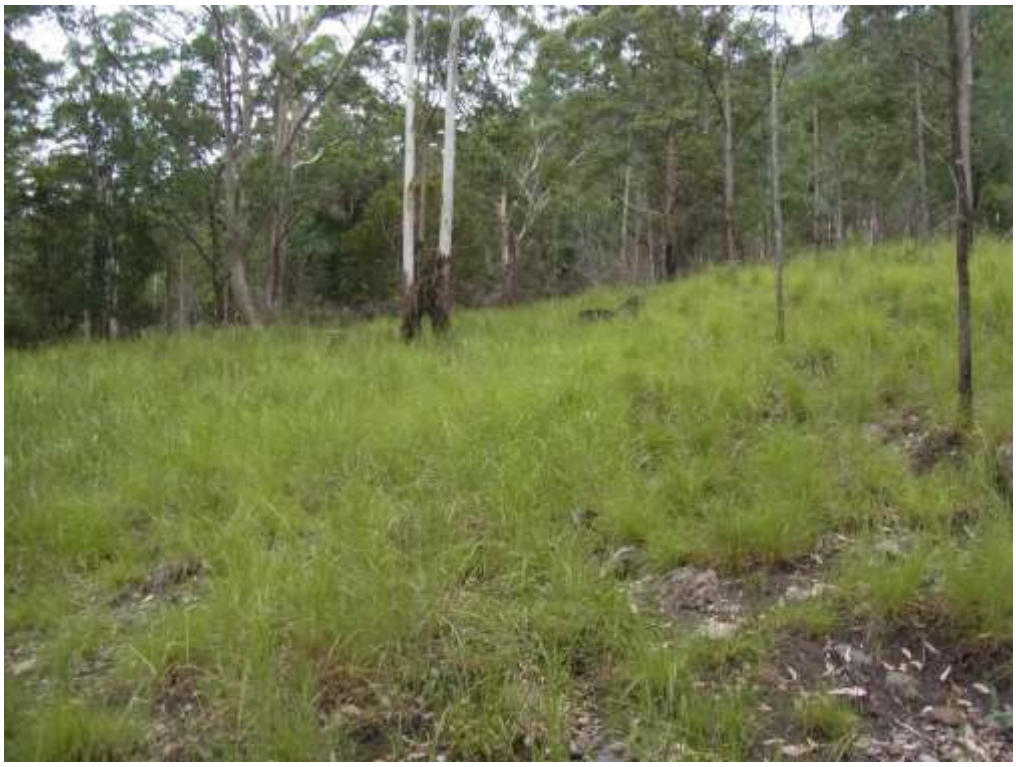





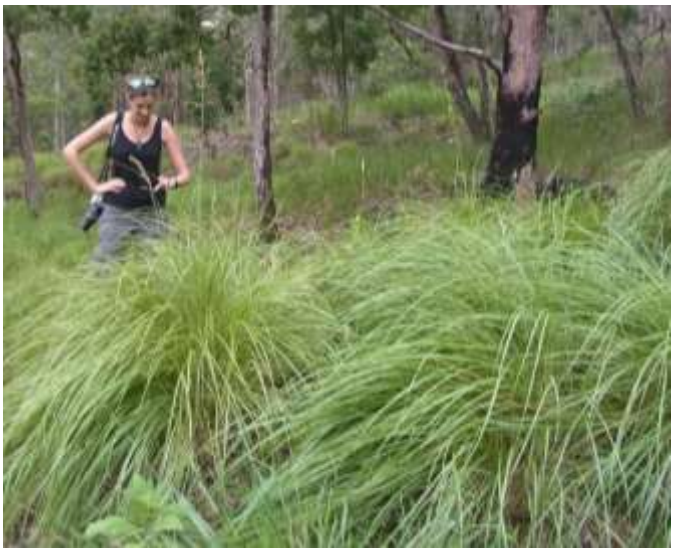
Native plants are resprouting, with herbs and grasses beginning to flower.

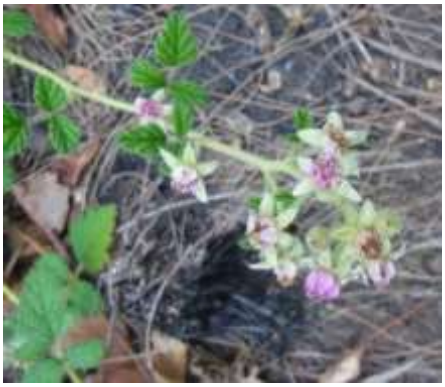
Lantana and crofton plants which escaped the pre-fire weed control are also resprouting; with some lantana already in flower! Post-fire weed control is implemented. The fire has opened access to lantana-invested gullies, which are thus now more amenable to herbicide control.

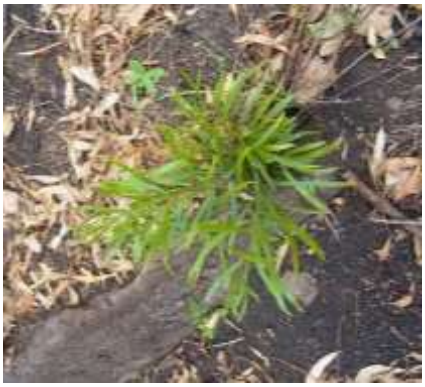
Five months post-fire (21 February 2014)





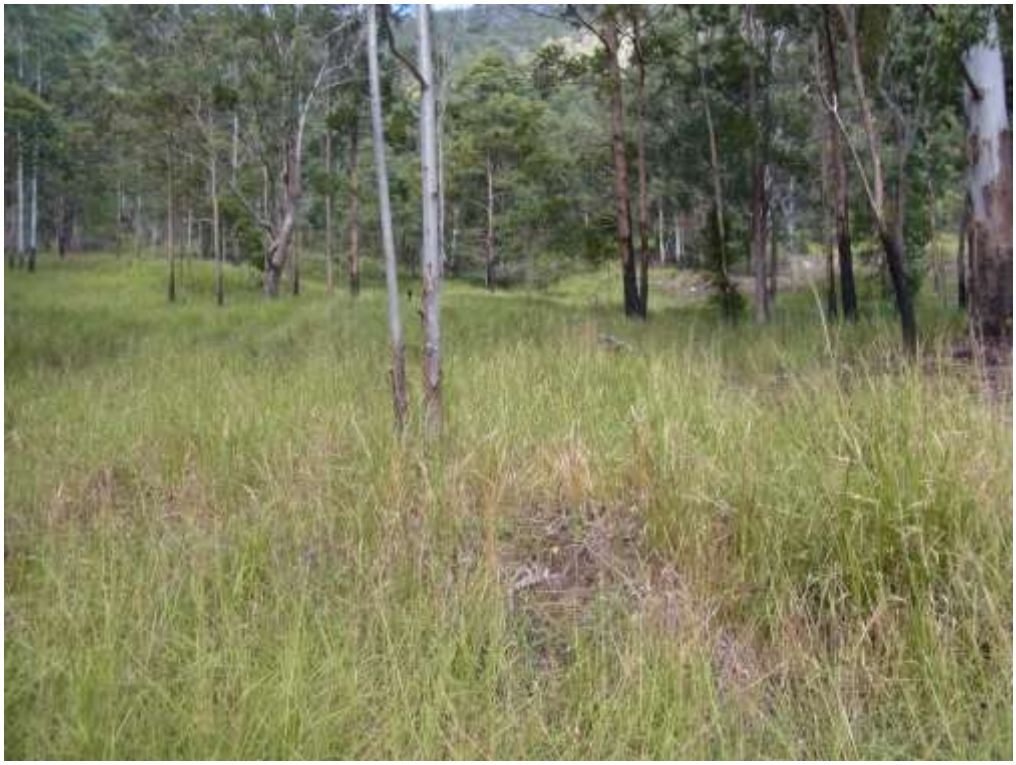
Sorghum clumps are becoming quite large, and are flowering, along with other native grasses, sedges and herbs.

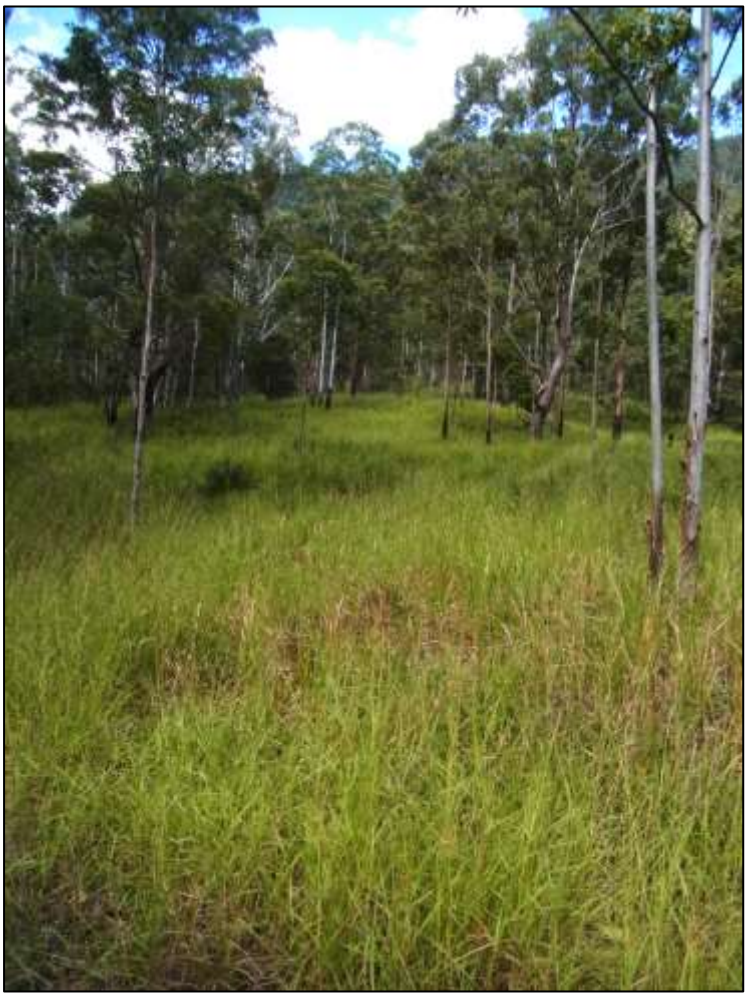




By this time-since-fire, regeneration of native shrub and vine species with potential to outcompete grasses is also apparent. Weed control measures are extended to cover this regrowth.

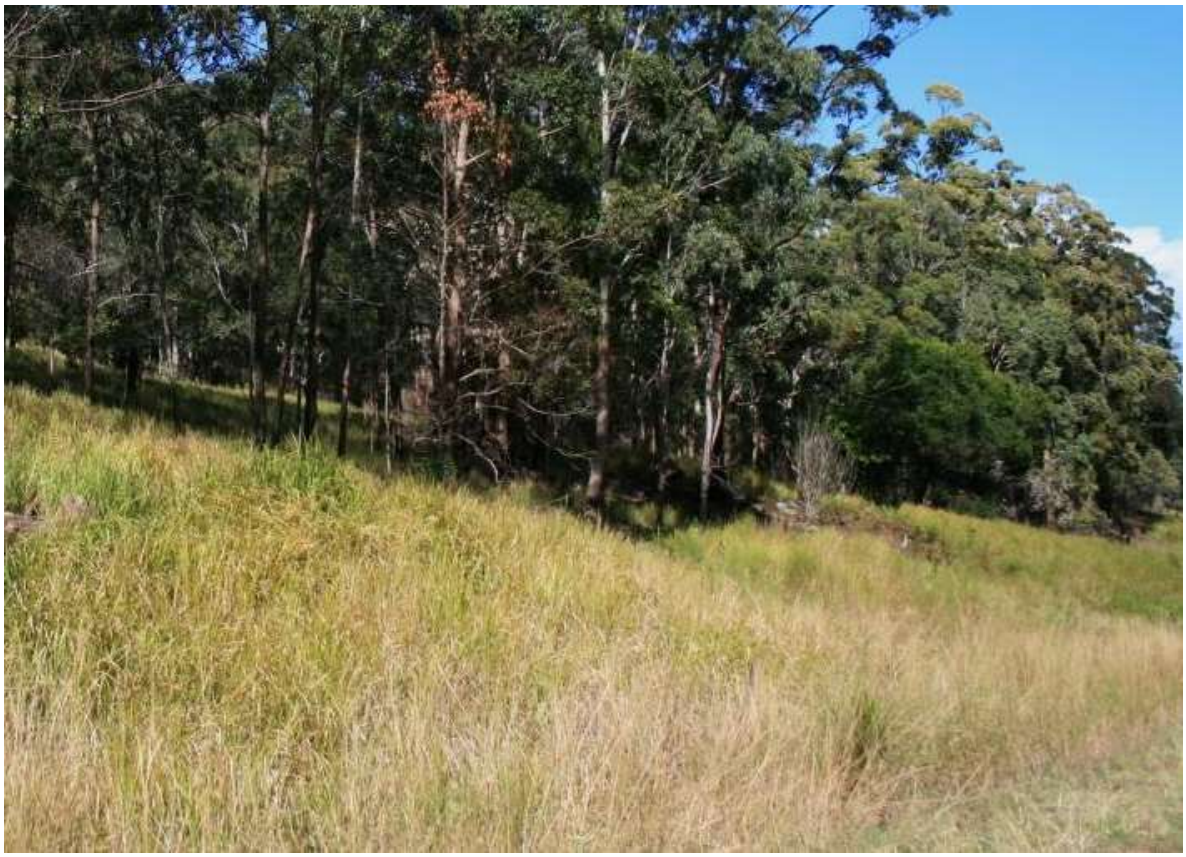
Eight months post-fire (21 May 2014)

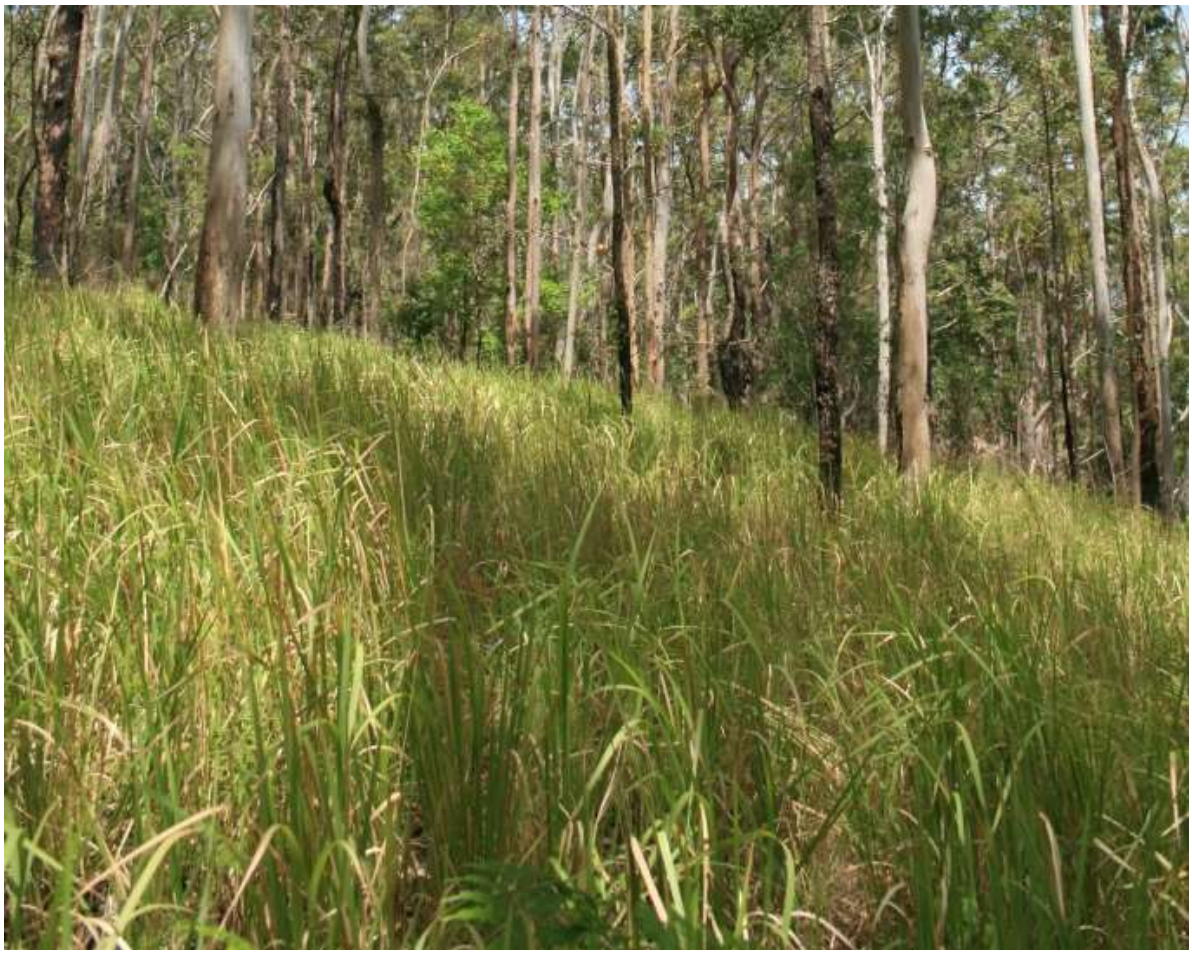




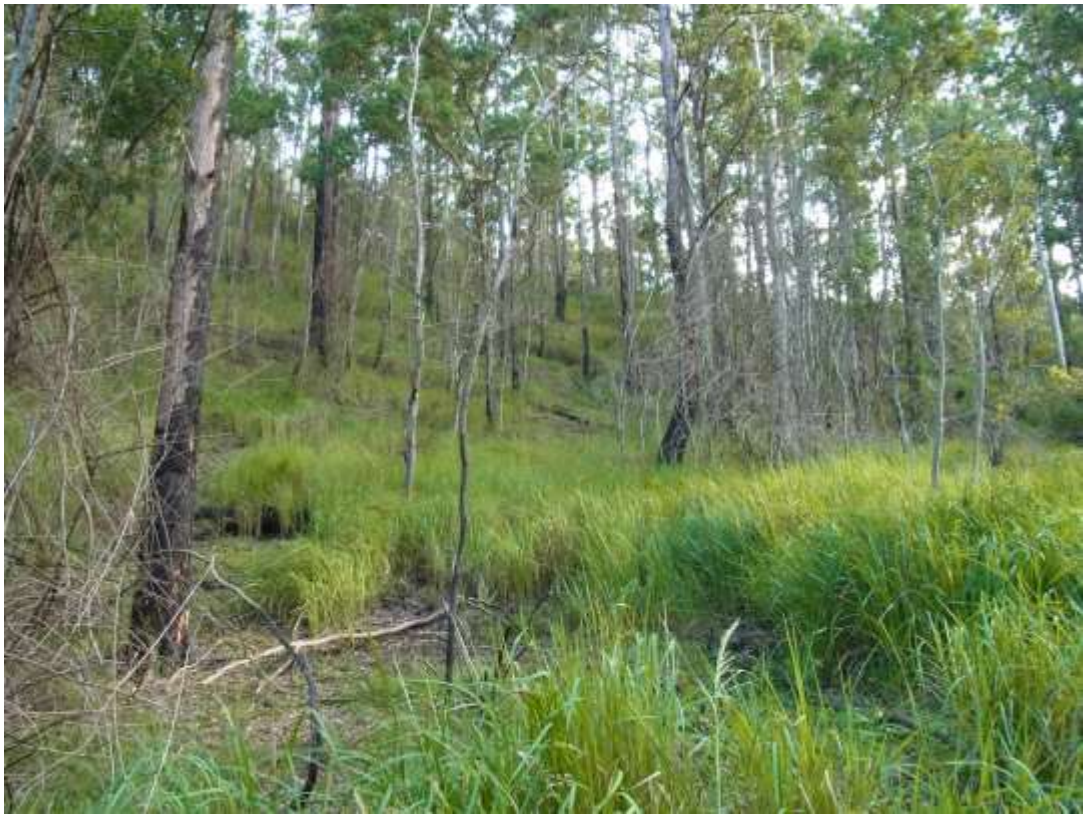
Previous research has found that by this post-fire age, grasses are thick enough to allow bristlebirds to forage.

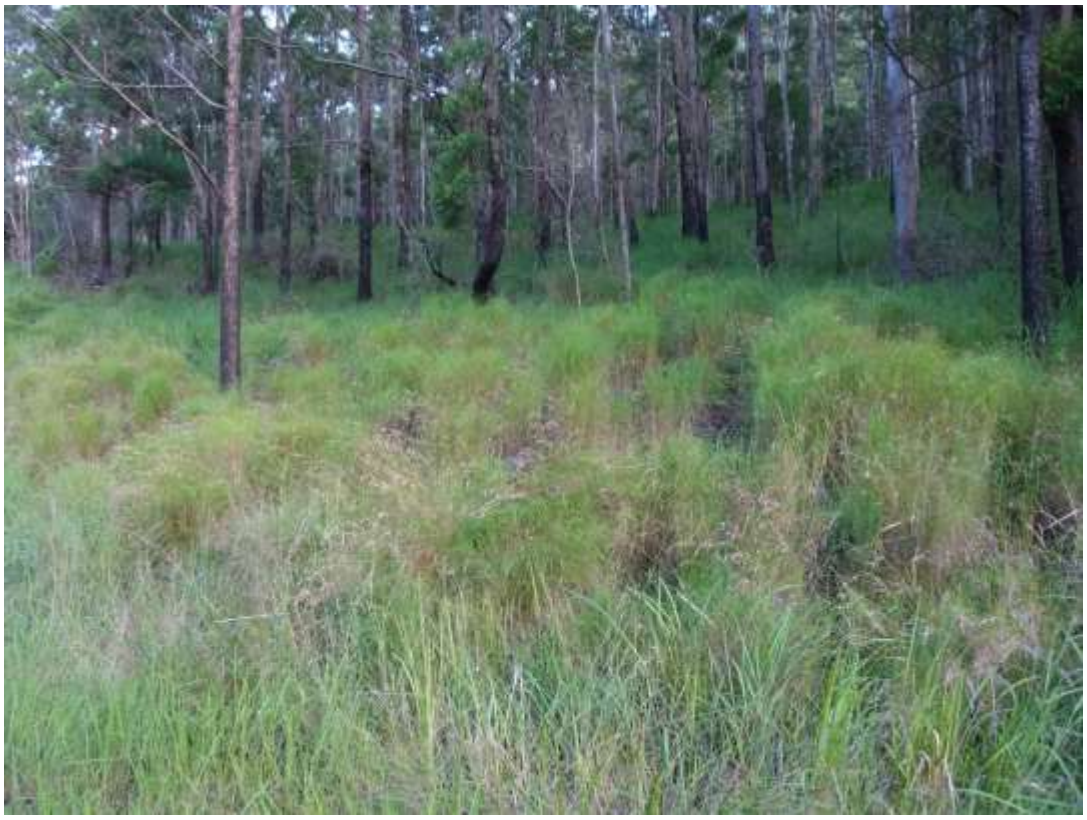
Twelve to thirteen months post-fire (September – October 2014)





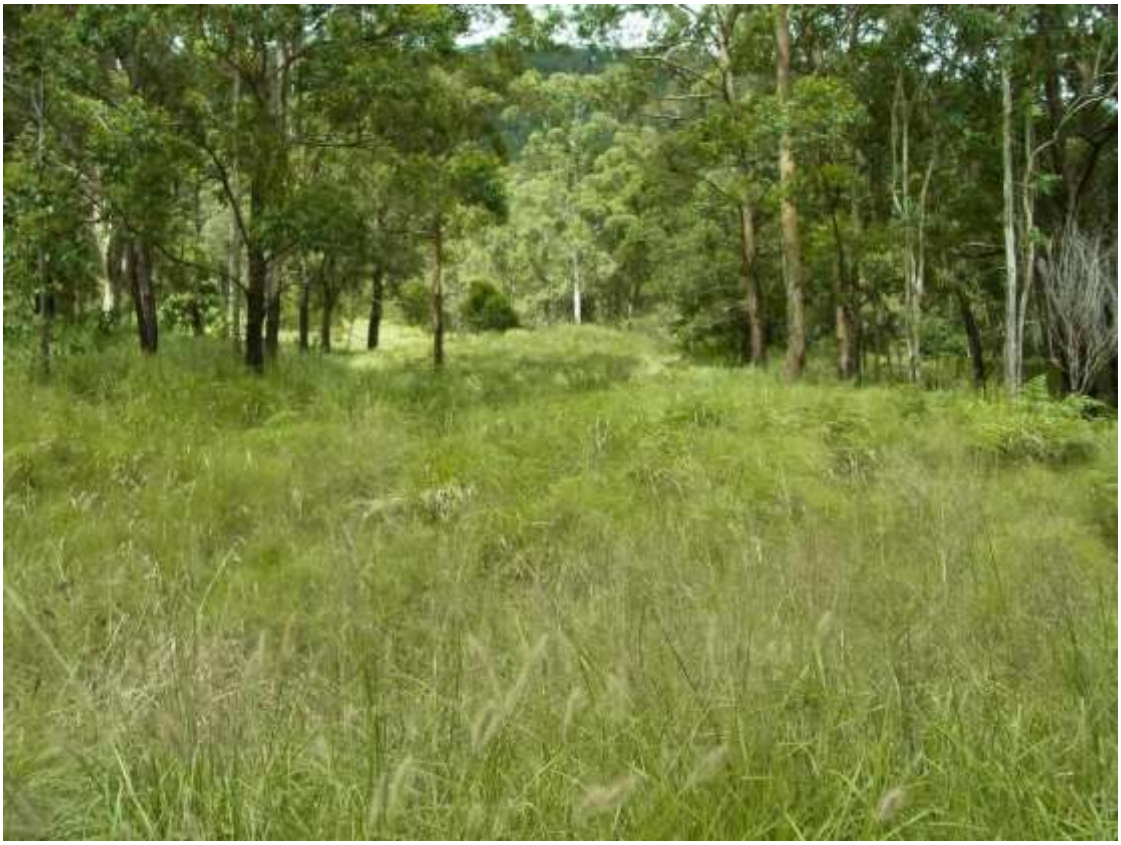
Seventeen months post-fire (February 2015)

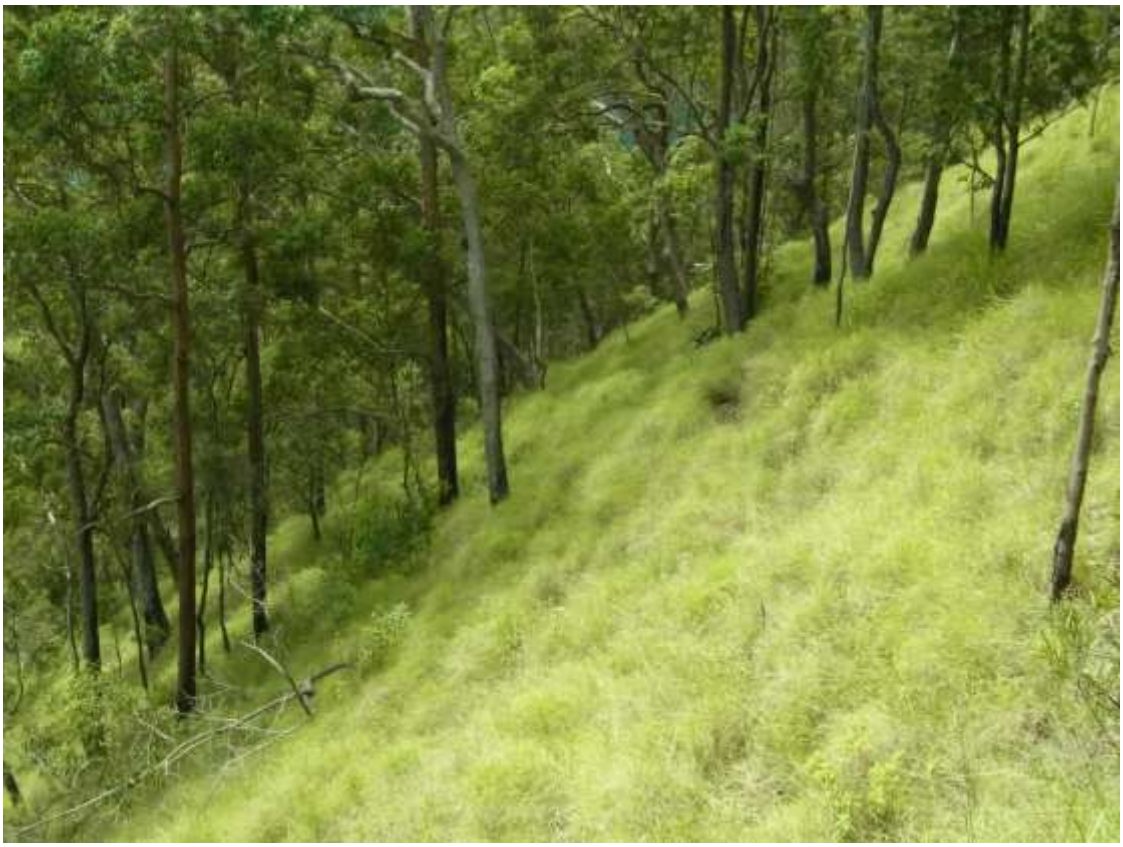




Grasses continue to thicken, particularly in spots where canopy cover is minimal. By two years post-fire, habitat should be suitable for Bristlebirds to breed.

2.5 years post-fire (March 2016)





Regrowth at the bottom (top photo) and at the top of the hill. As of 2020, I understand Bristlebirds have once again occupied territories near this second patch.

Photos courtesy of: David Milledge (pp.1, 2), Zoe Stone (p.7), Penny Watson (pp. 1, 3-6, 8, 9).