

# COVENANTING CELEBRATION MORNING TEA - MERREDIN

A great celebration took place on the property of Pep, Jules, Tony and Grace Alvaro at Merredin on the 11th February to recognise their contribution to the management and maintenance of remnant vegetation. A National Trust covenant has been placed over a patch of woodland, which is also a *LFW* site. After morning tea a number of short talks were given, followed by a walk through the bush.

This event proved to be an ideal way of expressing appreciation for the efforts of farmers in managing their remnants and especially to the Alvaros for their voluntary commitment to the long-term

preservation of the bush by negotiating a covenant to protect it in perpetuity.

The speakers emphasised the importance of management of remnant vegetation, initially by fencing, and then by control of weeds and feral animals. The value of this work was demonstrated during the bush walk when at least five different species of trapdoor spiders' burrows were seen. This is very encouraging as the trampling of sheep and cattle threaten the survival of these species in a remnant. Also very noticeable was the regeneration of the native flora and the presence of a good soil

surface bio-crust indicating that the exclusion of stock is having a beneficial effect.

The Department of Environment and Conservation, the National Trust of Australia (WA) and the Department of Agriculture and Food all have covenanting schemes (see page 8 for contacts).

Voluntary covenants do not involve any expense to the landholder and the terms of the agreement can be negotiated between the parties. In some instances the covenanting organisation can assist with the financing of fencing and pest or weed control.

*Mal Harper*