

What We Heard Report

Early engagement on the
Draft Cumberland Plain
Conservation Plan

August 2020

Find out more

www.dpie.nsw.gov.au

Title: What We Heard Report

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Acknowledgement of Country

The development of the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan acknowledges more than 60,000 years of continuous Aboriginal connection to the land that makes up NSW.

This Plan recognises that, as part of the world's oldest living culture, traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owners and custodians of the Australian continent and adjacent islands share a unique bond to Country—a bond forged through thousands of years of travelling across lands and waterways for ceremony, religion, trading and seasonal migration.

Aboriginal peoples maintain a strong belief that if we care for Country, it will care for us. The area covered by the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan is cared for by three Aboriginal groups: the Darug, Dharawal and Gundungurra. Others, such as the Eora, Darkinjung, Wiradjuri and Yuin maintain trade or other obligatory care relationships with the area. The Deerubbin, Gandangara and Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Councils also have local land holdings and responsibilities towards Aboriginal peoples living in the area.

This significant connection to Country has played an important part in shaping this Plan.

For Traditional Owners, Country takes in everything within the physical, cultural and spiritual landscape—landforms, waters, air, trees, rocks, plants, animals, foods, medicines, minerals, stories and special places. It includes cultural practice, kinship, knowledge, songs, stories and art, as well as spiritual beings, and people: past, present and future.

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Top: *Pimelea spicata*
(Photography:
Joshua Tredinnick/
DPIE)

About this report

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment completed six months of early engagement from July to December 2019. The feedback helped shape the draft Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan (the Plan).

The purpose of this engagement was to:

- inform the community, local councils, industry, landholders and other key stakeholders about the Plan
- seek early feedback to incorporate local knowledge and stakeholder input into the Plan before its public exhibition.

This report summarises opinions voiced by members of the community and stakeholders during various engagements and feedback processes, including workshops, meetings and community drop-in sessions, and through an online survey and interactive map. Although it does not list these responses in detail, it acknowledges the views and suggestions collected and outlines how they were incorporated into the Plan.



Photography:
Joshua Tredinnick/DPIE

Introduction to the Plan

The department is developing a conservation plan for Western Sydney that will help to protect threatened plants and animals, and support the creation of housing, infrastructure and green spaces. It is projected that the [Western Parkland City](#) will be home to more than 1 million people by 2036 and more than 1.5 million by 2056. The Plan will address the effect of urban growth and transport corridors on biodiversity through a long-term conservation program. The Plan includes a strategy for protecting the region's unique and threatened plants and animals, while ensuring local communities have access to nature and green, open spaces.

The Plan covers an area of around 200,000 hectares and will support the delivery of housing and infrastructure across four areas, which are collectively referred to in this report as 'nominated areas':

- Greater Macarthur Growth Area
- Wilton Growth Area
- Western Sydney Aerotropolis
- Greater Penrith to Eastern Creek Growth Investigation Area.

The Plan spans eight local government areas (LGAs). It also includes parts of Western Sydney's major transport corridors to allow for the future construction of road and rail infrastructure.

Avoiding and minimising the impact on biodiversity is a critical step in reducing the environmental effects of future urban and transport developments. The Plan incorporates a strategic approach to conservation planning in which biodiversity is assessed and protected upfront when planning for large-scale development. This streamlines the development process, allowing development to proceed in certified areas without the need for further biodiversity approvals.

The Plan's conservation program includes commitments and actions designed to address the impacts on biodiversity from development in the nominated areas. These include establishing reserves and stewardship sites, restoring native habitat, managing pest animals and weeds, and supporting biodiversity conservation through research and education programs.



Photography:
Joshua Tredinnick/DPIE

Summary of feedback



Biodiversity

The Cumberland Plain contains threatened and unique ecological communities and species.

You told us you want to protect Cumberland Plain Woodland and other remnant vegetation and wildlife habitat, and provide connecting corridors.



Waterways

Waterways and riparian zones provide crucial habitats for native animals and plants.

You told us that protecting rivers, creeks, wetlands, dams and riparian corridors was important for biodiversity habitat, water quality and recreational enjoyment.



Green infrastructure

We want everyone to be able to enjoy attractive, safe and accessible open spaces.

You told us you want to see more green spaces for relaxation and recreation, and the use of sustainable principles in new urban developments.



Koalas

Western Sydney is home to the only chlamydia-free koala population in NSW, which is highly valued by the community.

You told us you want to protect koala habitat and movement corridors, and reduce the number of animals killed by vehicles along major roads.



Engagement and partnerships

The Plan will be implemented in partnership with the government, council stakeholders and the community. You told us you would like opportunities to engage with the Plan and its implementation, throughout the life of the Plan.

The community and businesses have a strong desire to help achieve conservation outcomes, especially through restoration work and a community education and engagement program.



Urban growth and development

Western Sydney is growing, with new development and infrastructure planned.

You told us you are concerned about over-development and its impact on the region's plants and animals; that we need to locate urban growth where it is appropriate; and provide infrastructure in new developments.



Other values

Recreation, heritage and aesthetics promote physical and mental wellbeing, and opportunities for ecotourism.

You told us that you want to protect rural heritage, Aboriginal culture and aesthetic landscape values.

Support for



Protecting Cumberland Plain Woodland and associated ecological communities



Preserving unique woodland and aquatic habitats



Maintaining and enhancing corridors



Providing more open space and recreational opportunities



Connecting with local communities and groups for conservation efforts



Providing green infrastructure to support Western Sydney's quality of life



Concerns about

Too much urban development



Impacts on the Southern Sydney koala population



Development at the expense of the environment



Need to improve communication and engagement with the community



Loss of amenities and rural landscapes



Management of environmental threats and natural disasters

Feedback from our stakeholders



Aboriginal community and Local Aboriginal Land Councils

- Protect Aboriginal heritage and culture
- Create economic opportunities for Aboriginal communities



Local government

- Use appropriate planning mechanisms to protect conservation areas
- Ensure appropriate data is shared with councils



Environment groups

- Focus on protecting remnant vegetation rather than planting saplings
- Create overpasses for wildlife movement across transport corridors



Developers and major landholders

- Create certainty in relation to biodiversity approvals
- Allay concerns about the implications of zoning



Peak industry bodies

- Support a strategic approach to balancing development and biodiversity

Engagement approach

Talking and listening

The department established a community panel (the Western Sydney People's Panel) and an expert panel (the Community Reference Group) in 2018. Information about the Plan was presented to these groups for their input throughout the Plan's development.

From July 2019, the department began actively engaging with the community and stakeholders in Western Sydney. This involved informing people about the Plan and proposed development in Western Sydney over the next 30 to 40 years and giving them opportunities to provide feedback that helped shape key elements of the Plan for public exhibition.

Western Sydney People's Panel

We formed the Western Sydney People's Panel as a way of engaging with local residents. We wanted to understand their priorities for managing biodiversity, and their level of awareness and knowledge of biodiversity and biodiversity certification. Based on a deliberative democracy model¹, 16 randomly selected community members were chosen from the eight local government areas covered by the Plan.

The panel members participated in discussions and surveys during four workshops and a bus trip around Western Sydney. The workshops explored their social, environmental and economic values in relation to the Cumberland subregion. Their feedback was collated into a final report that informed early development of the Plan and methods of communicating its benefits.

Community Reference Group

The Community Reference Group was composed of 12 non-government organisations, academic and key industry stakeholders in the biodiversity conservation sector with longstanding involvement with the Cumberland subregion. The Community Reference Group met nine times and provided expert advice to the NSW Government to review the strategic conservation planning process and provide input in the development of the Plan.

Meetings with stakeholders

In September 2019, the department held events for local stakeholders, which included:

- two workshops for staff from all eight councils
- a workshop for local environment and community groups
- a business breakfast for representatives of peak industry groups.

These events included a presentation to introduce the Plan, question time and short workshop exercises that sought feedback on opportunities available through the Plan.

We also met individually with stakeholders from local councils, state and Commonwealth government agencies, community groups, developers and landholders during the community sessions.

¹ The deliberative democracy model engages citizens, including residents and affected individuals, with government policy and decision-making. It encourages people to critically engage with issues from multiple points of view and discuss their perspectives and opinions with others to enlarge their understanding.

Engagement snapshot

6 months of early engagement

Engagement approaches

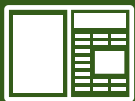
Feedback received



15,083
emails to
subscribers



5
community
drop-in sessions



14
days of advertising in
four local newspapers



8
Aboriginal
engagement
events



16,496
views on social
media posts



10
workshops or briefings
with councils, industry
and environment
groups



10,354
website visits



More than **25**
individual
meetings



943
maps, fact sheets and
FAQs downloaded



246
comments on the
social pinpoint map



428
online surveys
completed

Community drop-in events

In September 2019, the department ran five community drop-in sessions across Western Sydney. The locations for these sessions were chosen to target communities either in or close to the four nominated areas and the Western Sydney transport corridors included in the Plan's scope. Sessions were held at Penrith, Campbelltown, Luddenham, Menangle and Picton. A total of 124 people registered their details at these events. Participants were shown an introductory video and information about the Plan, and could ask questions and participate in activities designed to gather feedback on biodiversity values.

Aboriginal engagement

The department ran eight engagement events in October to meet with Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) and community members. These included consultation with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council and the three LALCs in the Plan Area (Gandangara, Tharawal and Deerubbin), two community workshops and a drop-in session. Their purpose was to inform the community about the Plan and identify linkages and opportunities for Aboriginal communities to participate in and benefit from its implementation.

Digital feedback

Website

The project's webpage had several resources that could be viewed or downloaded during the early engagement period. These included a video, a map of the Plan Area, frequently asked questions and a series of six fact sheets.

Survey

A survey was open for 80 days from September to early December 2019. It provided information on how people use green spaces, which parks and reserves are important to the community, and the biodiversity values that people wanted protected. It also asked for ideas on how to involve the community in the Plan's delivery, as well as an opportunity to provide any other feedback on the Plan.

In total, we received 428 responses. The survey reached communities across the Greater Sydney region, where most of the respondents lived.

Social pinpoint map

A social pinpoint map was also open for 80 days from September to early December 2019. The map allowed people to leave comments and nominate sites for important natural areas, green spaces and native species across the Plan Area. The map was visited more than 4,000 times, attracting 246 comments from the 81 people who chose to interact with it.

Social media

Posts about the Plan were shared on the department's social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. This involved sharing the video and promoting the survey and pinpoint map. These posts were viewed 16,496 times across the three channels, with Facebook and LinkedIn providing the best outcomes in terms of engagement.

Informal submissions

As our engagement was not a statutory process, we did not call for formal submissions. However, we encouraged people to provide their views in whatever way they felt comfortable doing. In addition to the feedback received through the above channels, the department also received 19 written submissions, with most representing the views of individual community members or developers.

Conservation priorities

The Plan will apply a landscape approach to protecting biodiversity in Western Sydney. During the early engagement period, we asked the community what parks, reserves and biodiversity values in Western Sydney were important to them, and the areas they thought needed protection due to their biodiversity values. This helped us to consider how conservation sites identified in the Plan aligned with the community's own priorities for conservation, biodiversity and green spaces.

Sites important to the community

The online survey and the pinpoint map were used to collect information on biodiversity sites that are important to the community. Sites valuable due to their biodiversity or other reasons were spread across the Plan Area. The highest number of identified sites were in the Hawkesbury City local government area (LGA) and Wollondilly Shire LGA, followed by Campbelltown City and Penrith City LGAs.

The infographic on page 14 shows the most frequently nominated sites, including existing parks, reserves and other locations with high biodiversity value.

Many people nominated existing national parks and reserves in Western Sydney as being valuable conservation areas, emphasising the importance of maintaining and restoring these already protected lands. The reasons people nominated them as valuable include:

- their importance for corridor preservation
- their role in supporting wildlife resilience to climate change, flood and bushfires
- their role in providing green and open space, which residents of surrounding housing developments can use for recreation.

The community uses Scheyville National Park for recreation and horse riding, while Wianamatta Regional Park is important for its role in maintaining biodiversity. The Western Sydney Parklands is valued for its open space and recreational uses.

Values important to the community

A common theme in the feedback we received was the protection of the region's key waterways. People believe the rivers and creeks in the Plan Area are important for biodiversity and want to see their water quality maintained.

The township of Appin, the Georges River and Mount Gilead were frequently mentioned in the survey and pinpoint map. This indicates the community's concern for koalas in this area and their desire to see these areas protected from further development.

Conserving rural landscapes, and European and Aboriginal heritage, is seen as important, particularly for the communities of Camden and Wollondilly. In the Hawkesbury region, people value the bushland at the foothills of the Blue Mountains and the habitat it offers to wildlife, particularly Little Wheeny Creek. Remnant bushland at Agnes Banks and Riverstone is considered important due to its biodiversity value, while the wetlands on the Hawkesbury floodplain are a valued wildlife habitat, particularly for migratory waders.

Conservation sites in the Plan Area important to the community



Our response

Our conservation approach

We applied a rigorous and systematic analysis of biodiversity values and constraints to identify and prioritise important areas that could be protected to support an ecologically functioning, connected landscape in Western Sydney. This 'strategic conservation area' consists of priority lands that the Plan's conservation program will consider when selecting offsets.

The conservation program includes a commitment to protect at least 5,475 hectares of threatened ecological communities by:

- establishing new parks and reserves (or adding to existing reserves)
- establishing new biodiversity stewardship sites
- restoring up to 1,370 hectares of degraded ecological communities.

Many biodiversity sites nominated by the community lie within the strategic conservation area. This means they meet the criteria for the Plan's conservation program and can be considered for future protection.

Existing parks and reserves are excluded from our strategic conservation area as they are already under some form of protection. Our conservation program seeks to secure new areas not already protected.

Small, fragmented parcels of land are difficult to protect. Larger and connected biodiversity conservation areas are less exposed to the risks of edge effects and are easier and more efficient to manage. Therefore, the focus of the Plan is on securing large parcels of land with good quality, remnant vegetation. Important habitat on small private lots is best conserved through other conservation mechanisms, such as voluntary conservation agreements.

North West and South West growth areas

Some biodiversity locations valued by the community lie within the [North West Growth Area](#) (formerly known as the North West Growth Centre). These include Shanes Park bushland, and wetlands and remnants of Cumberland Plain woodland at Riverstone.

This growth area, along with the [South West Growth Area](#) (formerly known as the South West Growth Centre), are under a separate biodiversity certification order and do not form part of the Plan. All biodiversity and planning matters within these two growth areas are addressed through the State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP), which focuses on the Sydney Region growth areas.

The Plan does not affect the conservation commitments already made through the original growth centres' approval.

Right: A diverse range of protected plants and animals make up Cumberland Plain Woodland

Far right: The Plan will result in new parks and reserves that will protect biodiversity and provide



The importance of biodiversity to the community

Through the survey, we sought information on how the community uses reserves, why they are considered valuable, and what types of actions should be prioritised during future conservation efforts.

Many people regularly use parks and reserves, with most visiting weekly or monthly (Figure 4). When asked why reserves were important, most people said they should be maintained and protected for future generations, and to safeguard biodiversity and ecological function (Figure 5).

The survey results indicate a strong community preference for creating reserves, as well as general support for using ecological restoration and biodiversity stewardship as mechanisms for biodiversity conservation (Figure 3).

Participating in outdoor activities, including recreation and conservation work, has important health and wellbeing benefits. The survey asked the community how the conservation actions proposed in the Plan may contribute to their wellbeing. Most respondents indicated that reserves were extremely important for contributing to wellbeing (Figure 4).

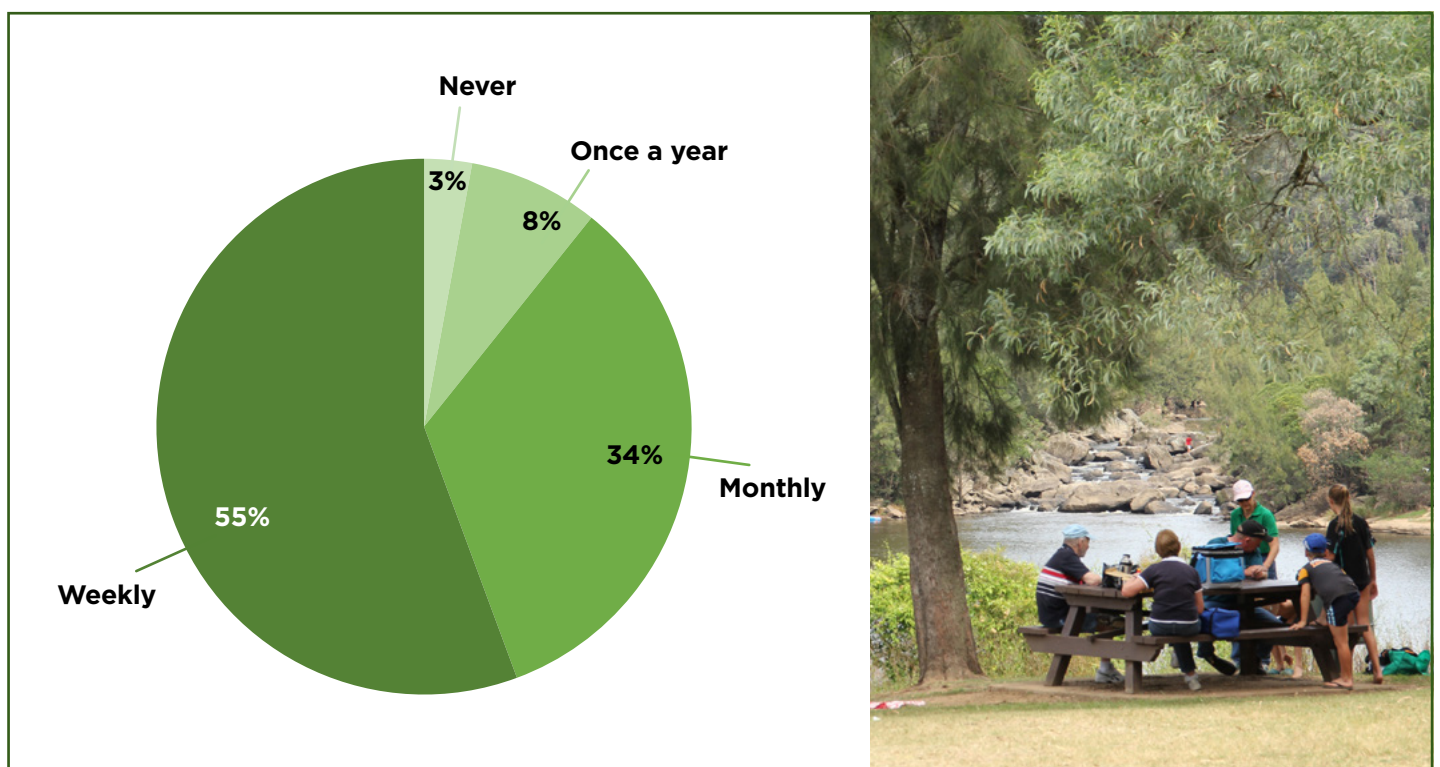


Figure 1. Survey responses to how often reserves are used by the community

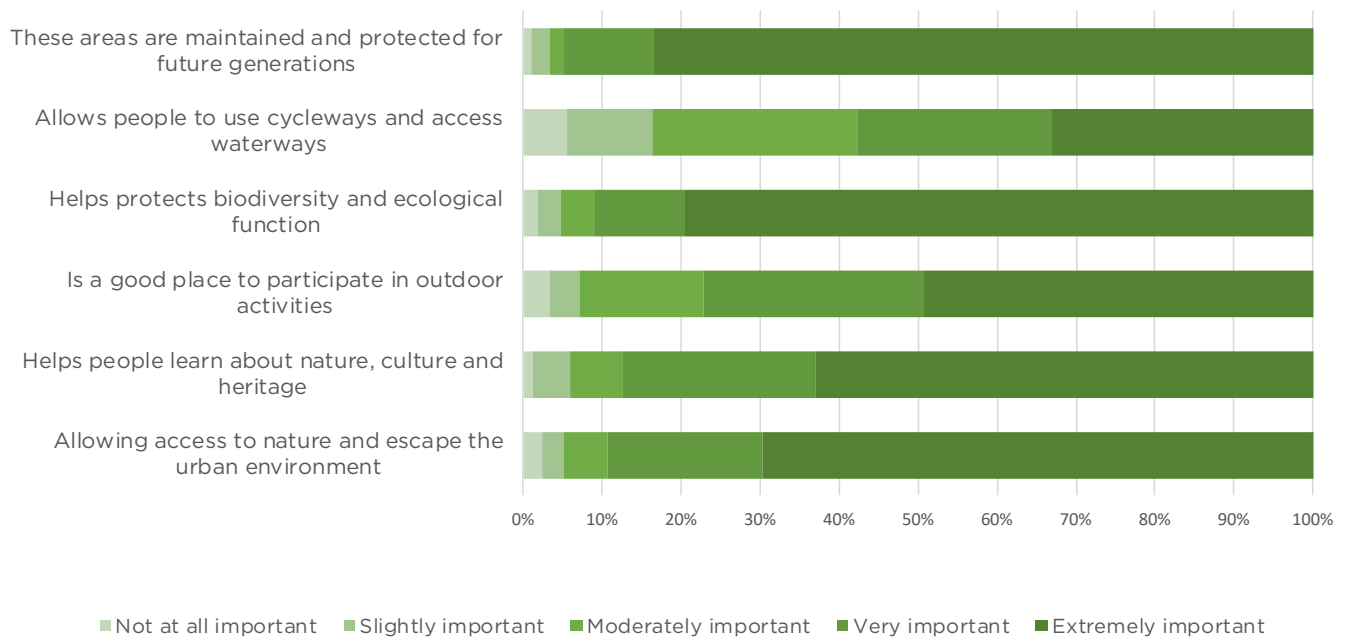


Figure 2. How the community values public reserves

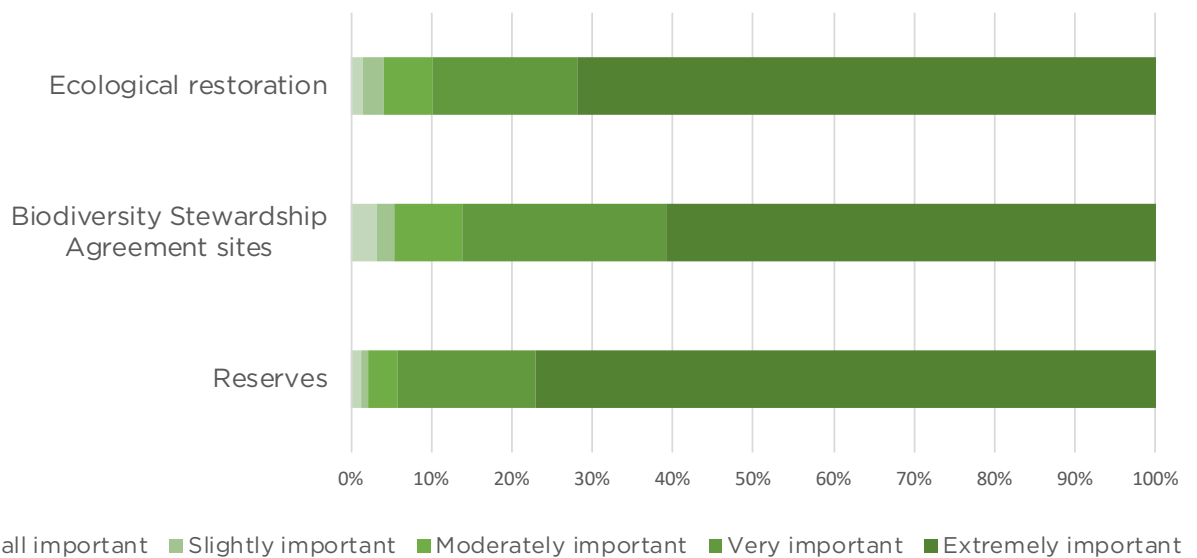


Figure 3. How the community rates different ways of protecting biodiversity in Western Sydney

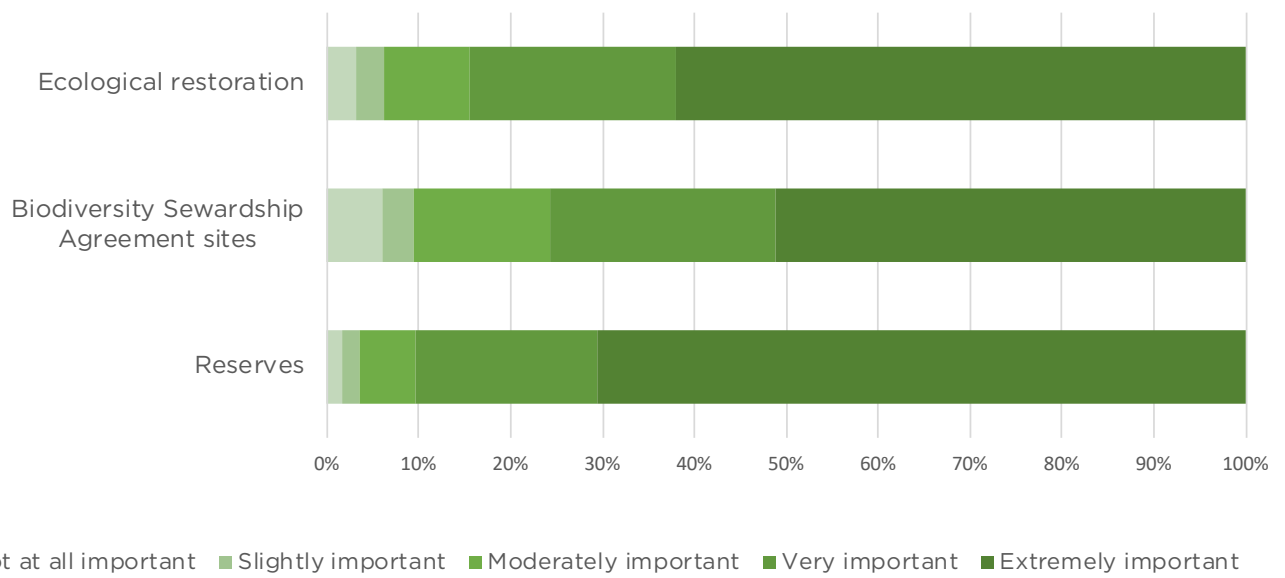


Figure 4. How the community rates different ways of protecting biodiversity for personal wellbeing



Photography:
Joshua Tredinnick/DPIE

Key themes

Feedback collected from the survey, pinpoint map and informal submissions was analysed to assign one or more themes to each comment. This provided an overarching view of people’s feedback.

The prevalence of certain themes is related to the type of questions asked in the survey and the types of comments that were dropped on the social pinpoint map. For example, people dropping pins on the map to list the wildlife they have seen makes ‘wildlife’ a common theme.

Figure 5 shows the top 20 themes.



Figure 5.
Themes emerging
from community
feedback

Top 20 themes recorded from feedback

**Native
vegetation**

Wildlife Urban growth

Koalas Waterways

Conserve parks/reserves

Engagement/consultation Corridors

Recreation | Wetlands

Business sponsorship *Horse riding*

Riparian zones **Land use planning**

Offsetting | Greenspace

Invasive species | **Youth engagement**

Pollution/environmental harm **Restoration**

Biodiversity

What we heard

There is strong support for the conservation of the Cumberland Plain woodland, a critically endangered ecological community native only to Western Sydney.

'Cumberland Plain Woodland (CPW) is irreplaceable. It is such a beautiful and special vegetation community, with plants found nowhere else. Let yourself understand it before you make an irreversible decision. All remaining CPW must be protected and enhanced. Wildlife need corridors and connections. CPW cannot survive as isolated pockets.' Survey respondent.

Native vegetation

- The Western Sydney community places value on the unique plants and animals found in the region and wants to conserve the vulnerable and threatened native species.
- Native vegetation is vital to the sustained health and viability of native wildlife and ecological function in Western Sydney.
- Mature trees are important habitat and we need to retain some large trees in urban environments.
- Remnant vegetation in Western Sydney is becoming increasingly fragmented and is at risk of further degradation.
- Protecting remnant bushland should be a priority rather than trying to reconstruct communities through replanting.

'Estates should be planned around bushland. It is important for new residents to have a connection to the land and waterways that were there before—rather than it being re-sculpted, cleared and new trees planted. This is also essential to connect remaining reserves and pockets of vegetation especially for wildlife corridors.' Survey respondent.

Wildlife

- People value the native wildlife in Western Sydney. Many people used the pinpoint map and survey to tell us the location of wildlife that is important to them, including native birds, platypuses, echidnas, wallabies, kangaroos and lizards.
- The community wants to protect koalas in South Western Sydney. This is considered separately because of the high proportion of feedback on this issue.
- Places identified as being of value for wildlife include Agnes Banks/Londonderry, Shanes Park and Kurrajong in the north, and the Georges River koala corridor in the south.

'In the tree-based habitats live plenty of microbats, king parrots, black cockatoos, koalas and feathertail gliders. Ground-dwelling spotted pardalotes (birds) can be found here as well as an array of frog species and echidna.' Kurrajong resident via pinpoint map.

Corridors

- The value of connected vegetated corridors was frequently mentioned. The community considers these corridors essential to protecting native vegetation from degradation and allowing wildlife to move safely across the landscape.
- There is a very strong desire to protect and enhance existing corridors of vegetation. Restoration and enhancement practices can be used to link existing reserves and biobanking sites and reduce the risk of isolating habitat



Our response

Native vegetation

Maintaining and restoring native vegetation is critical to ensuring that Western Sydney's native plants and animals survive and thrive into the future.

The Plan commits to avoiding and minimising impacts to native vegetation from urban, transport and agricultural development on at least 3,670 hectares of native vegetation. This is to meet the requirements under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW) and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999* (Cwlth).

The Plan will protect up to 5,475 hectares of native vegetation, including up to 3,170 hectares of Cumberland Plain Woodland and other threatened ecological communities.

Native vegetation will be protected in perpetuity by establishing new reserves or creating additions to existing reserves; establishing Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements with private landholders; and restoring remnant and over-cleared vegetation. For more detail, see [Sub-Plan A: Conservation Program and Implementation](#).

Wildlife

The Plan includes species-specific conservation actions that will address the impacts to wildlife from urban and transport development.

Development controls will apply to all new developments in the nominated areas to protect threatened ecological communities and threatened species habitat. Examples of these controls include:

- retaining large trees in urban areas to provide habitat for threatened birds and mammals that depend on hollows
- providing ecological setbacks to areas containing threatened ecological communities and threatened species
- conducting pre-construction surveys for the translocation of animals, including microbat species, before construction.

For more detail, see [Sub-Plan A: Conservation Program and Implementation](#).

Corridors

A major objective of the Plan is securing key habitat corridors to ensure connectivity across a fragmented Western Sydney landscape. Corridors identified in the strategic conservation area have the potential to connect large areas of protected vegetation and provide movement for specific species such as koalas.

The conservation program will establish new reserves and stewardship sites to preserve important wildlife movement corridors in perpetuity. This includes the Georges River Koala Reserve, which will secure the primary north-south koala movement corridor along the Georges River between Appin and Kentlyn. The Plan also identifies important east-west koala corridors for protection, such as along Ousedale Creek near Appin.

For more detail, see [Sub-Plan B: Koalas](#).

Urban growth and development

What we heard

There are deeply divided opinions about expanding urban growth in Western Sydney. While some feel we need to focus on providing infrastructure and new jobs, many others feel that current development does not adequately consider the environment and its biodiversity.

'Maximise the protection of remnant biodiversity and habitat areas while still possible. Opportunities to do this have decreased alarmingly over the last 10 years as urban development has mushroomed on the Cumberland Plain. Opportunities to protect what is left need to be seized.' Survey respondent.

Urban growth

- Some people expressed concerns about overdevelopment in Western Sydney because of the impact on remaining biodiversity and rural landscapes. Some called for a limit on development or stopping development entirely.
- Development in Western Sydney over the previous decade has resulted in significant damage to threatened ecological communities and wildlife.
- Many new residential developments comprise small lot sizes with no backyards, resulting in a dense urban landscape, which adds to the urban heat effect.
- New housing developments in the nominated areas need to be accompanied by supporting infrastructure and commercial development.
- Many people move to outlying semi-rural areas to enjoy the surrounding bushland and wildlife.

'I am concerned about housing development in these areas and the impact on koala populations and other native animals, which are already under pressure.' Blue Mountains resident via pinpoint map.

Western Sydney Aerotropolis

- People are concerned that threatened ecological communities in the Cumberland Plain are being cleared to construct the airport.
- Bird strikes are a risk to wildlife and a safety risk to airport operations.
- There is concern about the Aboriginal heritage sites within the aerotropolis and a desire to see these protected.
- Landholders are concerned about land zoning in the aerotropolis and how this will affect property values.

Land use planning

- Opportunities exist to align the Plan with the [Sydney Green Grid](#) and [Ochre Grid](#).
- Current planning controls do not adequately ensure that high-value biodiversity matters are preserved or offset.
- Some people suggested that an increase in medium- and high-density housing is needed to prevent the effects of urban sprawl on biodiversity.

'Conservation planning for the Cumberland Plain has been well and truly outpaced by development planning, and most of the rural land in the Campbelltown LGA and the north-eastern part of Wollondilly LGA is now owned or under option by developers.' Survey respondent.



Our response

Urban growth

Future growth in Western Sydney is guided by the Greater Sydney Commission's [A Metropolis of Three Cities](#) and the [Western City District Plan](#). These documents set out the planning priorities and actions as the district grows and changes over the next 20 years. The Western City District Plan recognises that the district's natural landscape is a great asset, sustaining and supporting a thriving parkland city.

The Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan provides a mechanism for managing future development in a controlled way by avoiding and minimising impacts on biodiversity during the planning stage and supporting permanent conservation of the region's remnant bushland and wildlife through its offset program.

For more detail, see [Sub-Plan A: Conservation Program and Implementation](#).

Western Sydney Aerotropolis

Delivery of the Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport is the responsibility of the Australian Government, which will implement a range of measures designed to mitigate impacts on biodiversity. The airport's offset program aims to restore at least 900 hectares of native vegetation, including the Cumberland Plain Woodland on the defence base at Orchard Hills.

The Western Sydney Planning Partnership is responsible for planning the Western Sydney Aerotropolis. This includes preparing the [Draft Western Sydney Aerotropolis Plan](#) (exhibited in early 2020), a new SEPP and a new Western Sydney Aerotropolis Development Control Plan.

Updates on the planning for the Western Sydney Aerotropolis can be found at www.planning.nsw.gov.au/aerotropolis

Land use planning

The Plan is an important part of delivering the Western Parkland City. The [Sydney Green Grid](#) has been considered while mapping urban capable land and the strategic conservation area, to ensure they align where possible.

Structure plans are guiding precinct development in each of the nominated areas. Precinct plans help identify the land uses, associated development and infrastructure proposed for each area at a finer scale. This includes the location and density of new homes, shops, services and public transport.

New planning instruments will be introduced to give effect to the Plan and will require development in nominated areas to be consistent with the commitments and actions of this Plan. For more detail, see the [Explanation of Intended Effect](#).

Waterways

The community expressed a desire to protect waterways, major rivers and creeks, and critical habitats provided by riparian corridors and wetlands.

'Waterways need to remain clean as sources of hydration for animals and habitat for amphibians and native flowering plants for bees. Waterways must be free from industrial and urban pollution.' Survey respondent.

What we heard

Rivers and creeks

- The community places importance on the major rivers of the Cumberland subregion for their role as habitat, places of recreation, and their aesthetic value. These include the Hawkesbury, Nepean and Georges rivers.
- People are concerned about the effects of new developments on the water quality of waterways and groundwater resources; for example, the effects of stormwater runoff from new residential areas on steep slopes or of clearing riparian vegetation for development.
- Some people were disappointed that the Plan does not specifically protect rivers.

'This is a beautiful walkway/cycleway in a natural bush area surrounded by residential houses. There is also a gorgeous creek/river that runs through and gives a tranquil relaxing vibe to the entire cycleway and surrounding bushy area.' Werrington resident via pinpoint map.

Riparian zones

- Riparian zones are important wildlife habitat and provide opportunities to link biodiversity sites.
- Adequate riparian setbacks are needed for the Nepean River and the Wianamatta (South Creek) and its tributaries to support wide and viable green corridors.
- Some people questioned how riparian zones would be defined and mapped.

'Blaxland Creek is the most pristine example remaining on the Cumberland Plain. It is a vital east-west link from conservation lands on the defence base at Orchard Hills through to South Creek Corridor.' Western Sydney resident via pinpoint map.

Aquatic habitat and wetlands

- Threatened species make their home in riparian habitat. For example, quolls live along Eagle Creek near Werombi.
- Platypus colonies live in the Nepean River and its tributaries, including Bargo River, Eagle Creek, Myrtle Creek and Allens Creek.
- Concerns were raised about dewatering of dams and how this loss of aquatic habitat will affect aquatic wildlife, particularly turtles.
- The wetlands on the Hawkesbury floodplain, including Bakers Lagoon, Bushells Lagoon, and Pitt Town Lagoon, are important for waterfowl and migratory birds, and need to be protected.



Our response

Rivers and creeks	<p>A healthy river system is vital for supporting biodiversity and liveable, sustainable communities. For this reason, all riparian land on second-order streams or higher has been excluded from the urban-capable land, and most will be protected through environmental conservation zoning.</p> <p>For more detail, see Sub-Plan A: Conservation Program and Implementation.</p>
Riparian zones	<p>The Plan will seek to conserve some major riparian corridors, including the Georges River, for its primary koala habitat; Wianamatta (South Creek), for its riparian and floodplain habitat; and bushland adjoining the Nepean River.</p> <p>The Plan will require major infrastructure in transport corridors to maintain connectivity between riparian habitat, so animal movement is not impeded.</p> <p>For more detail, see Sub-Plan A: Conservation Program and Implementation.</p>
Aquatic habitat and wetlands	<p>As noted above, all second-order or higher streams (including any dams present) have been avoided as part of the criteria for mapping the urban capable land. Dams that are high in the catchment on first-order streams may be subject to development if they fall within urban-capable land. In this case, approval for dewatering dams is managed through the <i>Water Management Act 2000</i> (NSW). Approval conditions and protocols are in place to protect aquatic wildlife.</p> <p>Wetlands are not a common feature within the nominated areas and have largely been avoided from development in planning urban-capable land. This means we do not need to find much of this community as an offset.</p> <p>The Hawkesbury wetlands are included in our strategic conservation area but are not a high priority for protection under this Plan. This is because land ownership is fragmented, and they don't support native vegetation likely to be impacted from urban development.</p>

Right: The Nepean River supports undisturbed bushland and platypus habitat, Photography: Dayle Green /DPIE.



Koalas

There is a very strong community desire to protect the Southern Sydney koala population and its habitat in the Campbelltown, Camden and Wollondilly LGAs.

What we heard

Protecting koala habitat

- The community believes it is important to preserve koala habitat and movement corridors, especially along the Georges River and Nepean River.
- There is also a strong view that conserving east-west corridors, such as Ousedale Creek, Mallaty Creek and Woodhouse Creek, is important for protecting koalas in the region.
- There is concern about the survival of the population in the Mount Gilead area as a result of urban growth and planned development for this area.
- Community members also informed us of the presence of koalas at Kurrajong, Grose Vale, Mulgoa and Noorumba Reserve.

'The Appin and Gilead areas should be protected from development to conserve the rich biodiversity here. Our koala colonies are healthy and successful here. Why should we allow development of houses to be more important than our national treasure, the koala?' Survey respondent

Koala welfare

- We heard concerns about koalas being killed by vehicles, especially along major roads like Appin Road and Picton Road.
- There is debate over the use of koala-exclusion fencing along major roads and around urban development.
- We need to ensure the resilience of the Southern Sydney koala population and koalas in general, because of the effects of urban development, climate change and natural disasters.

'Improve the education of the community to stop the numbers of wildlife being killed on roads. Decrease speed limits and improve the road calming features in these areas to slow down traffic, or put in wildlife bridges so that animals can cross thoroughfares safely.' Survey respondent



Our response

Protecting koala habitat

The Plan's conservation program includes specific commitments and actions to protect and manage koalas and their habitat. The conservation program for koalas is a key component of the Plan, designed to ensure the Southern Sydney koala population continues to thrive while urban development near their habitat persists.

The Plan's conservation program for koalas has been developed in consultation with other government agencies and has been designed to align with existing programs, including the NSW Koala Strategy and the NSW Saving our Species Iconic Koala Project.

The Plan contains a commitment to establish the Georges River Koala Reserve, which will protect up to 1,885 hectares of koala movement corridors along the Georges River.

The proposal for Mount Gilead Stage 2 is excluded from the Plan as the developer is seeking its own certification and approvals.

For more detail, see [Sub-Plan B: Koalas](#).

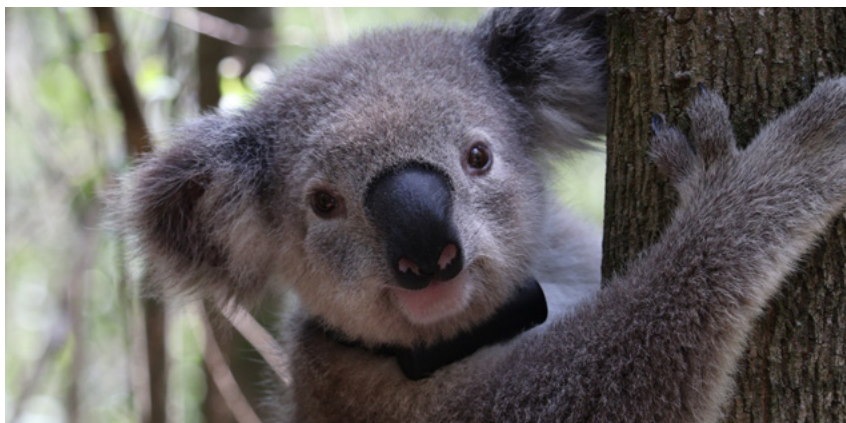
Koala welfare

The Plan will install koala-exclusion fencing between important koala habitat and urban-capable land within Greater Macarthur Growth Area and Wilton Growth Area, except where exclusion fencing is not feasible because of slope, heritage or water courses. The Plan will also support the NSW Koala Strategy to deliver research and monitoring for koalas in line with the NSW Koala Strategy Research Plan and NSW Koala Strategy Monitoring Framework.

The department is working with Transport for NSW to explore opportunities for safe crossing for koalas at Appin Road as part of the future road upgrade. We are investigating the feasibility of a crossing to the north of Appin village, which will support east-west movement of koalas along the Ousedale Creek corridor.

For more detail, see [Sub-Plan B: Koalas](#).

Right: A tagged Koala being monitored in the Wollondilly area



Green infrastructure

One of the department's goals is for everyone to enjoy attractive, safe and accessible parks and open spaces. Green space in Western Sydney has multiple functions, including habitat for plants and animals, spaces for recreation, places to socialise with family and friends, and places to relax and enjoy scenic views.

What we heard

Green space

- New developments in Western Sydney must have open, green spaces.
- Large areas of biodiversity and green space in Wilton should be protected.
- Questions were asked about the timing of development in the Wianamatta (South Creek) green corridor.
- Maintaining green spaces and old-growth trees inside nominated areas is important when developing new suburbs.
- There are varying ideas about green space and its functions. Some people enjoy open spaces and rural views, while others believe recreational parks and playgrounds have no value for biodiversity.

'All of the remaining open space of the Cumberland Plain is important to conserve as there is too much rapid growth and not enough reserves and open spaces. We want to ensure the preservation of wildlife and habitats for future generations. They are our support systems and we need them to survive.' Survey respondent

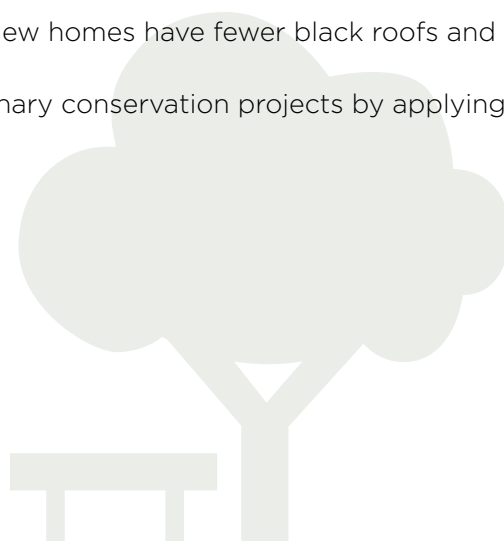
Urban canopy

- There are concerns about the lack of trees and green space in new developments, which is often caused by small lot sizes.
- Native species need to be incorporated into street tree plantings throughout the nominated areas.
- More trees in the landscape will provide habitat for wildlife and help cool the suburbs.

'Penrith is hot and getting hotter. More native local trees, shrubs and grasses are needed. More green spaces for recreation and rejuvenation are needed. Create habitat for our local animals and birds.' Survey respondent

Sustainable development

- Governments and developers need to consider sustainable design, such as having permeable edges and water-sensitive urban landscapes, in new suburbs.
- We need to reconsider building styles and materials so that new homes have fewer black roofs and use more solar electricity.
- There is an opportunity for landscape architects to lead visionary conservation projects by applying best-practice green infrastructure.



Our response

Green space

The Plan aims to balance urban growth in Western Sydney with biodiversity conservation. By taking a strategic approach to landscape planning, the Plan will outline areas where future development can proceed while avoiding critical habitat for threatened ecological communities and species.

We acknowledge that urban bushland is highly valued for its social and recreational benefits, and we want to provide publicly accessible natural spaces that the residents of Western Sydney can nurture and enjoy. This is why public reserves are an important part of our conservation program.

In addition to these natural areas, the Plan facilitates the creation of open space for playgrounds and sporting facilities during the precinct planning process.

The [Sydney Green Grid](#) is an integral part of the Greater Sydney Region and District Plans. Our Plan identifies the Wianamatta (South Creek) corridor and its confluence with Eastern Creek as part of our strategic conservation area and a reserve investigation area for the Plan. A potential reserve along this corridor could protect and restore riparian habitat while providing public open space for recreation.

Urban canopy

Precinct planning for each nominated area determines the preparation of a development control plan and informs its implementation.

New development control plans specifically prepared for a nominated area, such as Wilton Growth Area, integrates development controls to address the Plan's commitments and actions. These planning policies will require that new urban areas comply with a range of controls, including the preservation of large trees with habitat value and provide recommended lists of trees and shrubs to guide street plantings.

Urban greening will be facilitated through related green infrastructure programs within the department that are being delivered as part of the NSW Premier's Priorities. The Premier's Priority for Greener Public Places commits to increasing the proportion of homes in urban areas within 10 minutes' walk of a green and open space by 10% by 2023. The Greening our City Premier's Priority commits to increase urban tree canopy across Greater Sydney by planting one million trees by 2022.

Sustainable development

Development in each nominated area is being guided by a land use and infrastructure implementation plan (LUIIP), which provides a comprehensive framework for creating new urban areas. The LUIIP sets out the long-term vision for the area that aims to develop liveable communities with access to regional open space. An infrastructure masterplan will help coordinate the creation of essential infrastructure that supports new homes and jobs.

In Wilton, for example, the draft LUIIP proposes the protection of the region's valuable bushland along the Nepean River and other watercourses. The LUIIP balances the need to protect important biodiversity with the requirement to provide a range of affordable housing styles for future residents.

Other values

Parks, reserves and open space are important for more than just biodiversity values. The survey showed that many people value these areas for recreation, relaxation, as an escape from suburbia or simply as a place that is beautiful to look at. Another common theme was the protection of Aboriginal heritage and cultural values, and rural heritage.

What we heard

Recreation

- We need to ensure that parks and reserves have walking and cycling paths, as well as areas for horse riding and outdoor sports.
- Exercising in green and open spaces is important to the health and wellbeing of Western Sydney communities.
- Some people moved to Western Sydney so they could easily access and enjoy parks and nature reserves, especially those with walkways and cycleways.
- Recreation needs to be appropriate to the location—some people were concerned about the effects of uncontrolled access, such as trail bikes in reserves and speed boats in rivers and creeks.

'It is very important that nature reserves are kept not only for parks and wildlife, walks, exercise and health and wellbeing, but also for horse riding and outdoor sports—exercise is very important to the health and wellbeing of the Cumberland communities.' Survey respondent

Heritage value

- We need to preserve Aboriginal sites of historical and cultural significance in areas of new development and conservation lands.
- Many suburbs have heritage value, including historical buildings and rural landscapes, and need to be preserved. This sentiment is especially strong in the southern part of the Plan Area, such as in Camden, Picton, Luddenham and Mulgoa.
- Heritage sites are often greener than contemporary developments, meaning they play a role in conserving biodiversity values.

'An important part of the Mulgoa Valley and appreciating its landscape is the drive along Mulgoa Road. Roadside vegetation, hills, gullies, bends and the changing views of heritage items and the landscape are the main attributes, as well as the trees of the Cumberland Plain.' Western Sydney resident via pinpoint map.

Aesthetic value

- Biodiversity has aesthetic value—remaining areas of biodiversity value should not be cleared as they contribute to the region's natural beauty.
- The aesthetic value of the environment in Western Sydney contributes to the health and wellbeing of local communities and provides opportunities for ecotourism.
- Many people move to more rural areas of the region to enjoy the scenery and open views.

'Engage the community with the natural environment and encourage a healthy family lifestyle while educating people about the amazing plants, animals and birds that exist so close to where they live. Engaging with nature relaxes people and helps their mental and physical wellbeing.' Survey respondent

Our response

Recreation	<p>To deliver the vision for the Western Parkland City, our Plan will provide a range of new, publicly accessible parks and reserves. Recreational use will be encouraged if it does not harm the biodiversity values being protected.</p> <p>We received numerous comments about the importance of Scheyville National Park for horse riding. This park is an established conservation area under the control of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and our Plan does not seek to change any of the current arrangements for this park.</p>
Heritage	<p>Strategic conservation planning facilitates development in areas where it will have the least ecological impact. By forward planning open spaces and avoiding sensitive bushland, some of the rural character that people value will be preserved.</p> <p>We agree that there is an opportunity to achieve both heritage and biodiversity outcomes at some sites. The historic Fernhill Estate at Mulgoa is an example of how the NSW Government is looking at ways to restore and use the property while protecting its biodiversity values through a stewardship agreement.</p> <p>The protection of Aboriginal and European heritage and cultural values will be considered on a site-by-site basis for all new conservation lands established through this Plan. We are committed to working with the Aboriginal community and landholders to protect Aboriginal heritage on new reserves and stewardship sites and using them to raise awareness of Aboriginal culture and connection to Country.</p>
Aesthetic	<p>We have planned our future urban-capable land to avoid as much existing bushland as possible. This will ensure that large areas of bushland remain a part of the landscape, adding to scenic vistas and fostering a sense of being part of a natural environment.</p> <p>New development control plans specifically prepared for a nominated area, such as the Wilton Growth Area, will require that new urban areas comply with a range of controls, including the preservation of large trees with habitat value. Development control plans will also provide recommended lists of trees and shrubs to guide street plantings. These controls will promote greener and healthier neighbourhoods, and contribute to calming and visually pleasing urban areas.</p>

Community consultation and involvement

What we heard

We received both positive and negative feedback about our consultation approach. Some people liked that they could provide early feedback and showed overall support for the Plan's intended outcomes. Others were disappointed that the engagement events did not occur over a broader geographic area or a longer timeframe.

The survey asked people to suggest ways that the community and businesses could be involved in the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan. We received several responses that suggest a strong desire to involve community and businesses at a grassroots level so they could contribute to conservation outcomes, with a focus on restoration work.

Improved engagement and partnerships

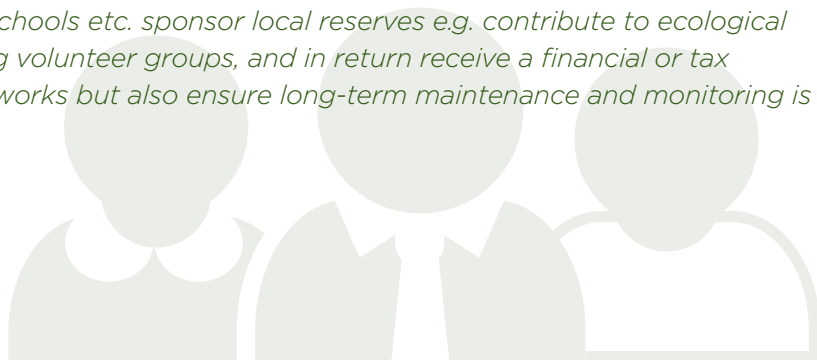
- Communities want continual communication throughout the drafting and implementation period, rather than a one-off consultation to 'tick the box'. The feeling is that consultation needs to be a process of continual dialogue.
- Some communities felt they were left out of the consultation process, and that events such as workshops and drop-in sessions should have been held more widely. The decision not to hold any events in the Hawkesbury and Liverpool LGAs was a concern to those communities.
- It was felt that increased engagement with the Aboriginal community, and especially making use of their expert knowledge, would benefit conservation in Western Sydney.
- Consultation with other NSW Government agencies and with other levels of government will be critical to achieving the Plan's outcomes.

'Involve key stakeholders throughout the whole process (beginning, implementation and 2056). Ensure that the community, businesses and organisations are being kept up to date and engaged throughout the process.' Survey respondent

Involving the community and business

- Local community and environmental groups should be consulted to make use of local knowledge of biodiversity in the Plan Area.
- Citizen science programs could be helpful in implementing the Plan; for example, helping collect biodiversity data for long-term surveys.
- Many people want to see community organisations, such as landcare, bushcare and wildlife advocacy groups, involved in the Plan's implementation.
- Several people suggested involving young people and volunteering programs in the restoration efforts to promote awareness of environmental values.
- Many people suggested a sponsorship role for local businesses, giving them opportunities to adopt or sponsor entire reserves and bushland, or components, such as benches or walking tracks. They also suggested focusing corporate volunteering on restoration efforts.

'Create a program whereby businesses, schools etc. sponsor local reserves e.g. contribute to ecological restoration work by raising funds, forming volunteer groups, and in return receive a financial or tax incentive. This could not only fund initial works but also ensure long-term maintenance and monitoring is carried out.' Survey respondent



Our response

Improved engagement

The purpose of this early engagement was to provide multiple pathways and opportunities for communities to have their say. This was to ensure that we consider and address the views of the community and stakeholders at an early stage. The locations of community drop-in sessions were based on their proximity to the nominated areas where future development will occur.

All residents and stakeholders are encouraged to review the Plan during the public exhibition period and provide feedback through a formal submission.

In response to the community desire for ongoing engagement, we are considering how to directly involve the community in the ongoing reviews of the Plan, to ensure that the conservation outcomes meet community expectations.

Involving the community and business

A key commitment of the Plan is to build knowledge and capacity among residents of Western Sydney and our stakeholders. We have proposed an education and engagement program, which will be delivered through the creation of roles for three Biodiversity Education Officers and two Aboriginal Education Officers. These roles will be hosted in local councils and provide a range of biodiversity education and engagement activities, including school programs. They will also raise awareness of the cultural significance of biodiversity to Aboriginal people.

Our community engagement activities will promote established citizen science monitoring programs to help involve residents in observing and protecting local plants and animals.

For more detail, see [Sub-Plan A: Conservation Program and Implementation](#).



Photography:
Dayle Green/DPIE

What we heard from our stakeholders

Aboriginal community

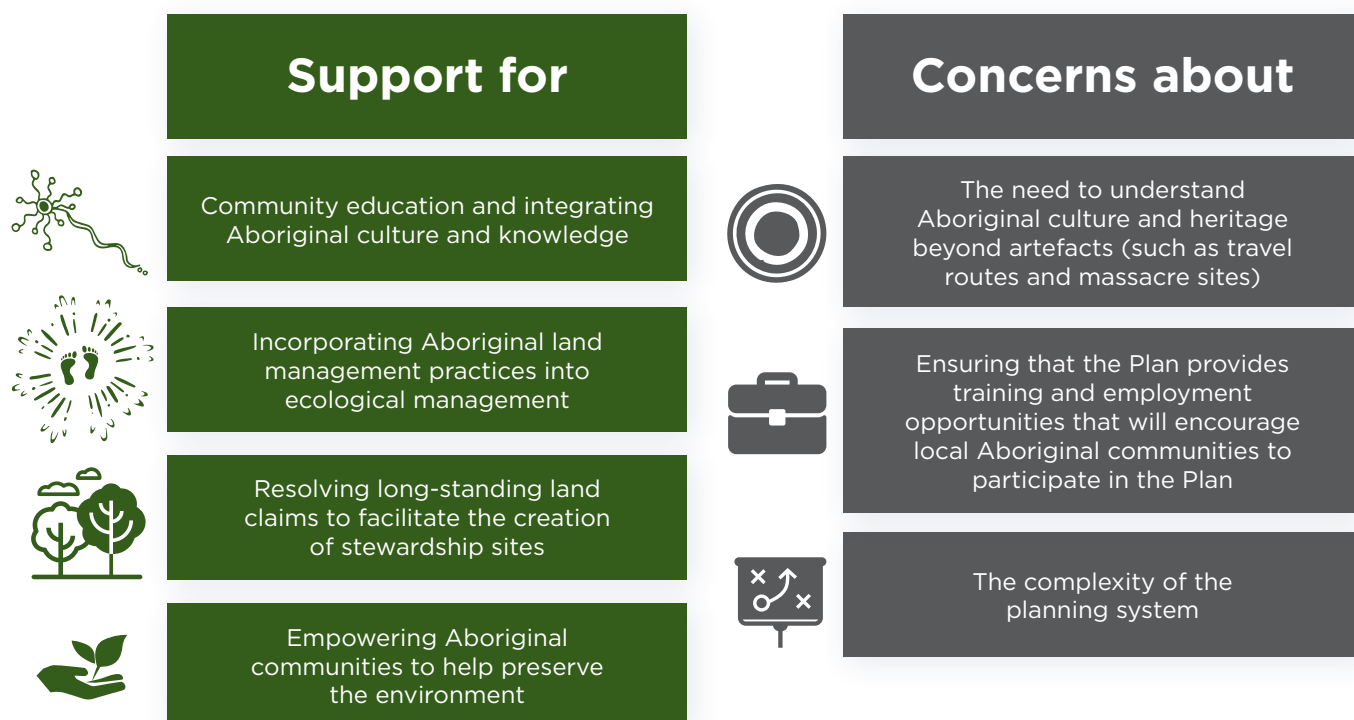
Our willingness to consult the Aboriginal community in the early stage of the Plan's development was appreciated. There was also appreciation for having engagement events exclusively for, and specifically tailored to, the Aboriginal community.

The community recognises that the Plan presents an opportunity to deepen Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities' connection with Aboriginal culture and heritage by fostering an understanding and appreciation of cultural value and practices.

Feedback on the Plan covered three key themes:

- culture and heritage
- country and environment
- social and economic opportunities

These themes are not discrete but interconnected issues, particularly for Aboriginal people. More information on these themes and our engagement with the Aboriginal community in Western Sydney to support the development of the Plan is provided in a [separate report](#).



Our response

Culture and heritage	<p>We have engaged with the Aboriginal community to prepare the Plan. While our Plan is primarily a biodiversity conservation plan, there are many ways in which we can work with Aboriginal people to enhance understanding and awareness of Aboriginal culture through the conservation program.</p> <p>We are keen to work with LALCs and the community to include cultural signage and traditional land management practices in conservation lands, where possible.</p>
Country and environment	<p>Two Aboriginal education positions will be established through the Plan's education and engagement program. These positions will work with schools and the broader community to help raise awareness of the cultural connection that Aboriginal people have to Country and biodiversity in Western Sydney.</p> <p>The conservation program includes an action to partner with LALCs and the Aboriginal community to learn about traditional land management techniques, including fire management.</p> <p>The department will work with Aboriginal land councils and Western Sydney's Aboriginal community to collaboratively develop a 10-year Aboriginal engagement and implementation strategy. The strategy will outline opportunities for targeted and ongoing engagement with the local Aboriginal community to promote and support opportunities arising from the Plan.</p>
Social and economic	<p>We are committed to providing opportunities for the Aboriginal communities of Western Sydney to participate in biodiversity conservation and related economic opportunities. One of the objectives of developing a 10-year Aboriginal engagement and implementation strategy is build capacity in Aboriginal businesses and organisation to help deliver the Plan.</p>

Right: Working together with the Aboriginal community on cultural connections to biodiversity



Local government

Generally, councils support the Plan and are keen to be involved in its implementation. They believe the Plan will lead to higher quality biodiversity data, opportunities for collaboration, such as in threat management, and potential funding for on-ground restoration and conservation work.



Our response

Buffers and zoning	Environmental conservation zoning will apply to land that has been avoided to preserve biodiversity within nominated areas. Planning provisions will minimise development effects in buffer areas around conservation lands.
Climate change	The Plan will support new or existing research programs to help threatened species and ecological communities in the Cumberland subregion to adapt to the effects of climate change.
Mapping and data	We will work with local councils to integrate mapping of the strategic conservation area into local and regional planning. This will be done through local strategic planning statements.
Private land conservation	We will be partnering with the Biodiversity Conservation Trust to promote conservation opportunities on private land and provide benefits to landholders in strategic conservation lands

Our response

Funding and compliance	Special Infrastructure Contributions are being considered to help fund the Plan. We will work with councils and other stakeholders to develop a compliance strategy that will be funded for the life of the Plan.
Education	The Plan's community education and engagement program will provide opportunities for residents to learn about biodiversity and participate in conservation activities. The Plan will fund education officers who will work closely with existing council engagement programs.



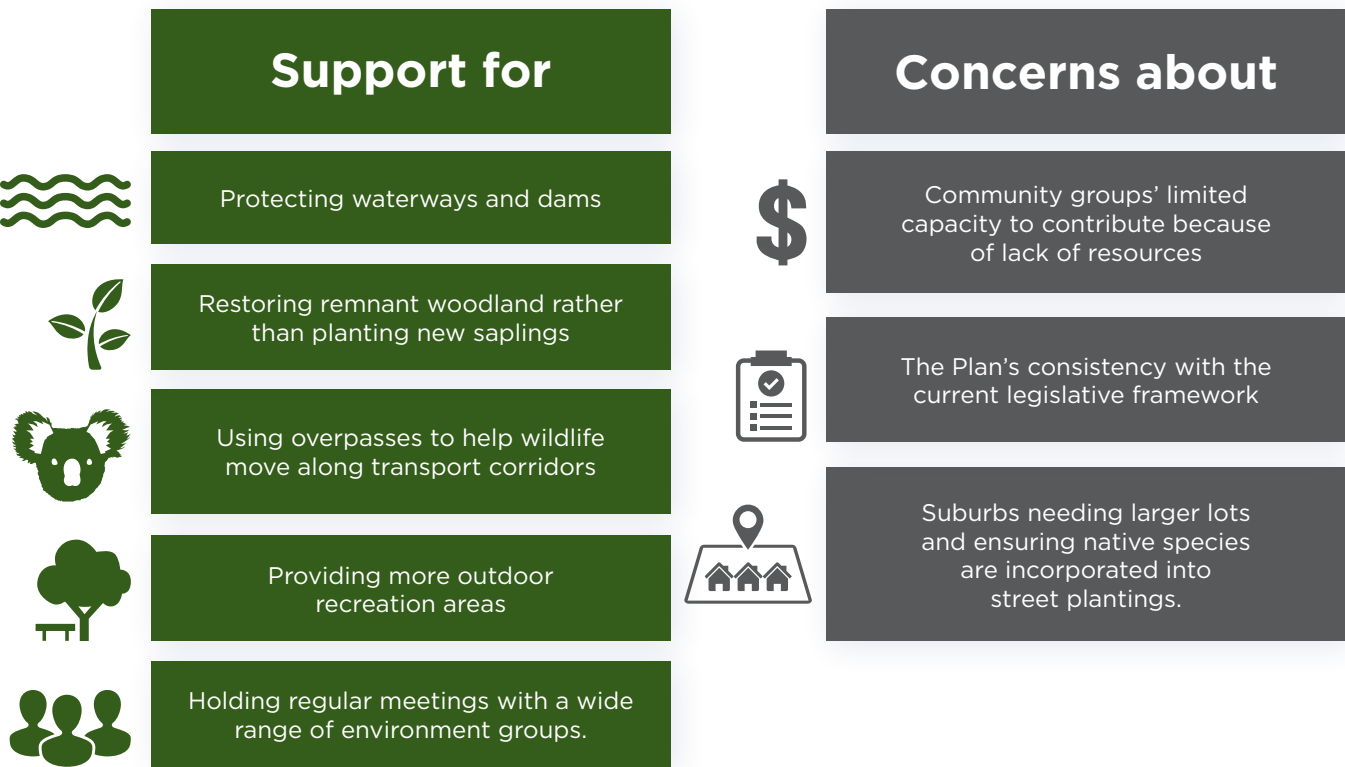
Photography:
Joshua Tredinnick/DPIE

Environment groups

What we heard

We talked to a range of local environment groups and they expressed broad support for the Plan’s objectives. Some groups felt overwhelmed and ‘fatigued’ by the number of environmental issues they were dealing with and felt they do not have the capacity to play a significant role in the Plan’s implementation.

Most groups agreed they could best support the Plan by providing local knowledge and data, and facilitating positive relationships with the community.



Our response

Waterways	Riparian land on second-order streams or higher will be protected through land use zoning (environmental conservation zoning). It is intended that the conservation program will protect major areas of bushland along the Nepean River and Georges River to safeguard important biodiversity habitat.
Restoration	The conservation program allows up to 25% of the Plan’s conservation target to be achieved through restoration. This will include a range of actions, such as bush regeneration and threat management, as well as replanting or reconstruction.

Our response

Wildlife corridors	The conservation program will establish new reserves and stewardship sites to preserve wildlife movement corridors. A range of actions are proposed to reduce the impacts on koalas, including creating crossing points and installing fencing to reduce the number of koalas killed by vehicles, and introducing controls on urban development.
Urban design	New development control plans will require that new urban areas comply with a range of controls, including the preservation of large trees with habitat value and provide recommended lists of trees and shrubs to guide street plantings. Planting a prescribed list of native plants will contribute to the urban canopy and preserve biodiversity-rich urban areas.
Engagement	We will continue to communicate with community groups and the broader community. The Plan will support the work of community groups by creating grant programs for restoration and wildlife rehabilitation work.

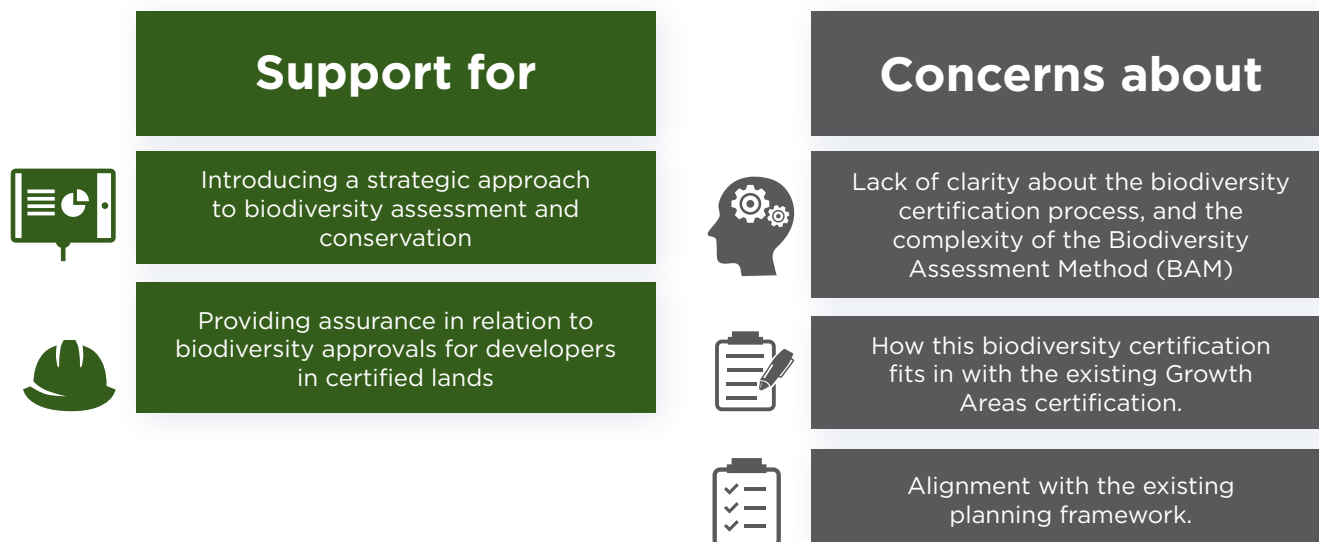


Photography:
Joshua Tredinnick/DPIE

Peak industry groups

What we heard

Peak industry groups include overarching organisations such as the Urban Development Institute of Australia, the Property Council of Australia and the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects. We engaged with these groups individually as well as through a breakfast forum. Generally, all groups broadly support the Plan but want to ensure that it aligns with the existing planning framework in Western Sydney.



Our response

Strategic conservation approach	Strategic conservation planning provides the best outcome for biodiversity protection at a landscape scale. It allows for upfront planning and assessment during large-scale development. Potential impacts on biodiversity and threatened species can be assessed and avoided where possible and the assessment process for developers will be streamlined.
Biodiversity certification	The Biodiversity Assessment Method is a rigorous method for assessing the biodiversity of a proposed development or project site. Based on feedback, the department is considering some changes to make the method easier to understand and apply. These changes were open for public comment in October 2019.
Growth centres	Biodiversity in the North West and South West growth areas (formerly the growth centres) is managed through a separate biodiversity certification order. This will remain as a separate offset program to our Plan. All biodiversity matters within these growth areas are addressed through the Sydney Region Growth Centres SEPP.
Planning framework	The Plan is aligned with existing planning regulations and initiatives, including the Western Sydney Parkland City and the Sydney Green Grid.

Next steps

Public exhibition

The Plan is now on public exhibition. We invite the community and stakeholders to make a submission on the Plan and other documents on exhibition.

We will consider all submissions when preparing the final Plan and publish a report summarising the feedback from the public exhibition.

Approval of the Plan

The department will review and, where necessary, update the mapping of urban-capable land and strategic conservation areas following feedback from the exhibition. We will then complete the final impact assessment to quantify the biodiversity impacts associated with the final urban-capable land.

We will submit the Plan and its associated documents to the NSW Minister for Environment for approval under the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* and to the Commonwealth Minister for Environment for approval under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999*.

How to contact us

The department is committed to engaging with the community and industry as we continue to deliver the Plan for protecting Western Sydney's biodiversity.

If you have any questions, you can email

CPCP@planning.nsw.gov.au

or call **1300 305 695**.



dpie.nsw.gov.au