



Hunter & Central Coast  
Regional Environmental  
Management Strategy

Hunter, Central Coast and Lower North Coast of New South Wales

# Benefiting from biodiversity

An investment guide for property owners



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# Which section of this guide is right for me?

Find out why investing in biodiversity is good for your property.

**Go to section 1**  
BENEFITING FROM BIODIVERSITY

I own or manage private land and I want to generate an income from the natural assets on my land whilst also maintaining biodiversity.

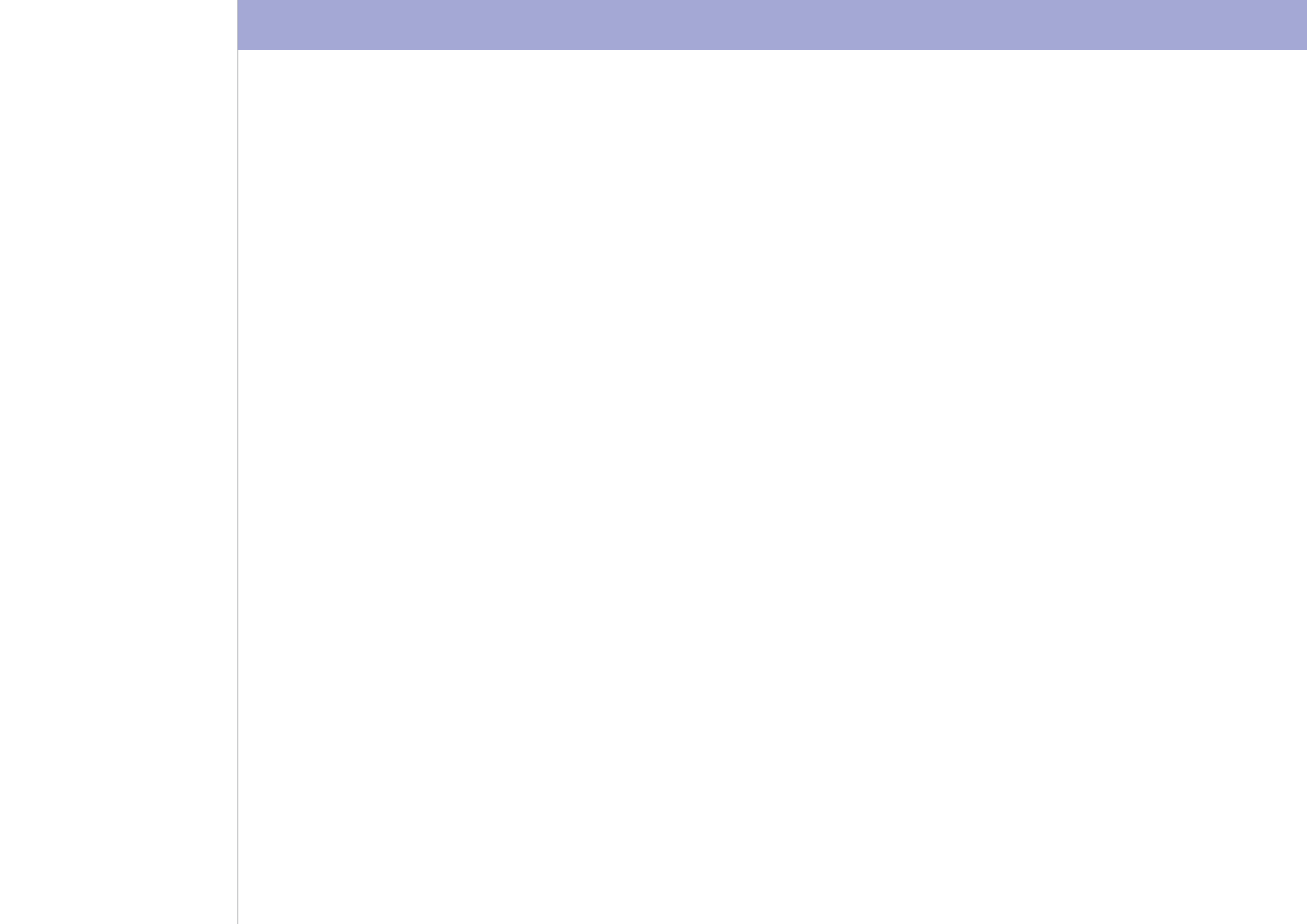
**Go to section 2**  
COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

I own or manage private land and I want to supplement my income from the natural assets on my land whilst also maintaining biodiversity.

**Go to section 3**  
INCOME-SUPPLEMENTATION OPPORTUNITIES

I own or manage private land and I'm keen to learn more and access support for maintaining its biodiversity values.

**Go to section 4**  
SUPPORT PROGRAMS



# 1. Benefiting from biodiversity

With a significant proportion of bushland managed for purposes other than wildlife conservation, private landholders play an important role in preserving our region's unique wildlife. Retaining bushland on private property can contribute to the survival of plants and animals and provide important corridors for wildlife movement. It can also offer production benefits by reducing erosion, providing shade and shelter for stock, and controlling salinity.

Private landowners care for and control a large proportion of the land in the Hunter, Central Coast and Lower North Coast region of New South Wales. Much of this land is used for productive commercial activities, from farming to tourism and recreation. Private land also contains a wide range of natural assets with important biodiversity values: stands of native vegetation, habitats for native fauna, and riverine corridors that connect ecosystems and plant and animal communities. Making the most of this type of land comes with many challenges, not just the expense of management and maintenance, but also in meeting the legislative obligations and constraints that governments apply.

This publication provides a guide to the opportunities available to the owners and managers of private land with biodiversity values. These opportunities are grouped into three types of opportunity:

1. **Commercial activities** that offer the potential for landowners and managers to generate ongoing financial returns on their investment whilst also maintaining biodiversity values on site.
2. **Income-supplementation** activities that offer ways to supplement a property owner's income (either financially or through in-kind assistance) whilst also maintaining biodiversity values on site.
3. **Support programs** which offer ways for the landholder or manager to maintain biodiversity values on site without incurring significant personal expense.

*Benefiting from biodiversity* has been created to help you navigate the government policies and programs that offer support to maximise your biodiversity asset and attract financial return opportunities.

Importantly, it summarises the answers to key questions a landowner might ask:

- What financial return is potentially available from managing the natural assets on my land?
- What types of activities qualify for support?
- What land types and land values qualify for support?
- What amount of effort is needed for the amount of return?
- Who can I contact, and what resources exist, if I want to explore a proposal further?

As with any publication dealing with investment and financial commitments, it is important that you understand its limits. At the time of publication (mid 2015) the NSW Minister for the Environment appointed an independent panel to undertake a comprehensive review of the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*, *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* and related biodiversity legislation. It is expected that significant changes to these legislative instruments will occur following the completion of the review. This publication will be updated when this occurs.

## Biodiversity: The key to everything

**B**enefiting from biodiversity is not a prospectus or investment guide in the traditional sense. Rather, it focuses on the ways in which landowners and managers can maximise the value of the natural assets under their control in order to maintain and enhance biodiversity values, whilst at the same time generating an income or receiving financial or in-kind support for this important work.

So what are these biodiversity values?

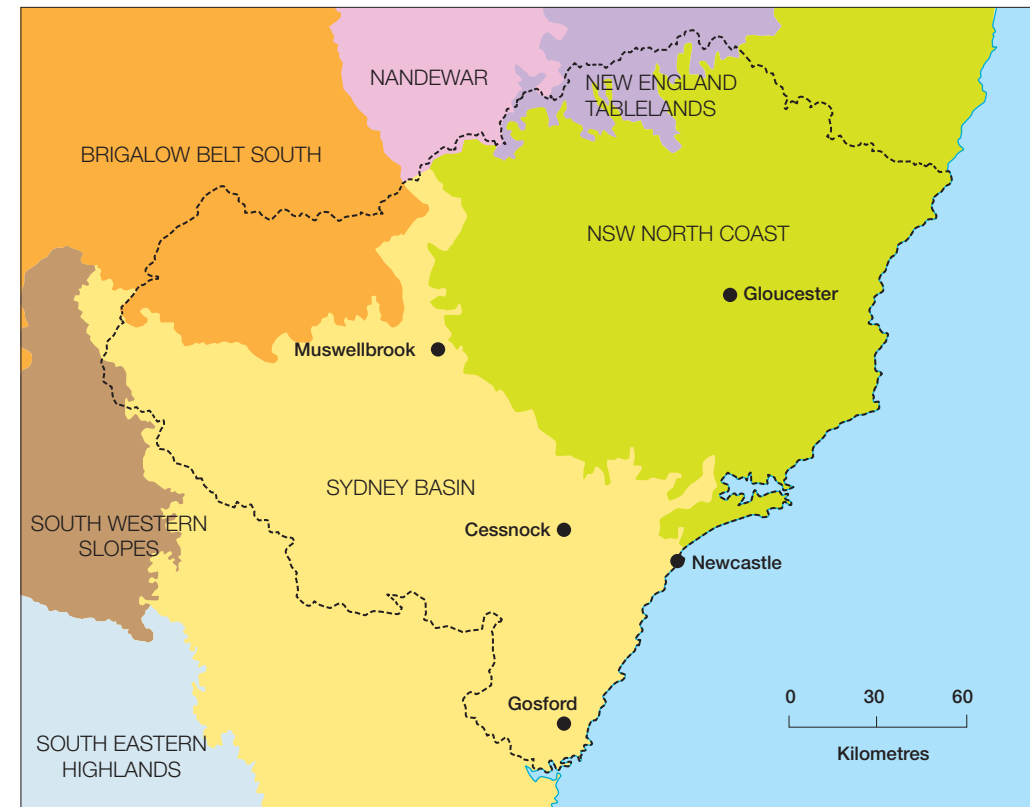
Biodiversity is the variety of life and its interactions. It includes plants, animals, fungi and micro-organisms, the genetic information they contain, and the ecosystems that they form in terrestrial, marine or aquatic environments. In short, biodiversity is life on Earth. Biodiversity offers many essential ecosystem 'services': the pollination of crops; the provision of medicines, food and clothing; and the support systems we need to sustain human life. Biodiversity also contributes to the fulfilment of people's cultural, spiritual, and intellectual needs.

To understand biodiversity at a local level, it's useful to think of it as being characterised by 'bioregions' – the broad biophysical features that link flora and fauna assemblages and processes. These bioregions are a way of simplifying and describing complex biological patterns and interactions. The Hunter, Central and Lower North Coast of NSW straddles five bioregions. They are:

- NSW North Coast
- Sydney Basin
- Brigalow Belt South
- New England Tablelands
- South Western Slopes.

The conservation of our biodiversity and ecosystems is therefore vital as they underpin human prosperity. However, the dependence is mutual as some level of

prosperity is required to enable biodiversity protection and the maintenance of ecosystems services in the face of human wants and needs. From climate regulation and pollination services to dependency on ecosystems for food, materials for construction, and cultural or spiritual fulfillment, human prosperity is indivisible from the fate of the natural world.



The vast majority of the Hunter, Central and Lower North Coast region occurs within three bioregions: the North Coast (50%), the Sydney Basin (39%), and to a lesser extent the Brigalow Belt South (10%).

The Australian and NSW governments have recognised the need to protect biodiversity and have enacted a number of legislative mechanisms to enshrine a regulatory process to assess losses of biodiversity and to provide incentives to private landowners to conserve biodiversity on their land.

The natural environment of our region (the beaches and bays, lakes and rivers, mountain ranges, rainforests, and fertile rural landscapes) is a key reason why people decide to live here, and why our tourism industry is so strong. We cannot take for granted that the environmental values we enjoy today will always be here without actively working to ensure this is the case. Strategic investment in biodiversity conservation will ensure we leave an enduring legacy for future generations.

For more information on biodiversity in the Hunter, Central Coast and Lower North Coast region, see the back of this publication.

We cannot assume that national parks can provide the necessary protection for our biodiversity as only 20% of the Hunter landscape is included in the reserve system. The vast majority of the Hunter region is under private ownership, and therefore the responsibility for conservation falls to landowners and businesses.



## How to identify biodiversity/bushland values on private property

Understanding the type of bushland and habitat values present on your property will assist you to identify which investment opportunities best suits your needs.

The following table poses a series of questions to help you assess the extent of biodiversity values you may have on

your property, and the management activities and threats that may impact on these values. Keep the answers to these questions in your mind as you read this guide so you can easily identify which of the investment opportunities is suitable for use on your property.

**Please note:** Even if you think you have little biodiversity value present due to past or current management activities, there are a number of investment opportunities that will assist you to generate biodiversity values and increase the productivity of agricultural lands.

Biodiversity attribute	What is important to know about this attribute on my property?	Where to go for more information or assistance with answering these questions
<b>Vegetation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do you have native vegetation present on your land (canopy trees, shrubs, grasses, ferns grasses, shrubs, trees, etc.)?</li> <li>2. Is the vegetation in a large continuous patch, a number of smaller patches, or a single small patch?</li> <li>3. How large are the vegetation patches (less than 1 ha, less than 10 ha, greater than 10 ha)?</li> <li>4. Are the vegetation patches continuous native vegetation containing different types of: tree species, shrubs, ferns, grasses and wildflowers, ground layer of leaves, twigs and branches, soil moss and lichen?</li> <li>5. Are the vegetation patches close enough together to be connected through natural generation or restoration planting?</li> <li>6. Are the vegetation patches impacted by environmental disturbances, including weed invasion, grazing, fire, pest animal species?</li> <li>7. Are there isolated trees throughout the property (in the production area not covered by large patches of native vegetation)?</li> <li>8. Is there evidence of natural regeneration (e.g. seedlings of trees and shrubs)?</li> <li>9. Are there Myrtaceous plants present (oil-bearing for essential oils)?</li> <li>10. Are there any native bush foods present (typically herbs and seeds)?</li> </ol>	<p><b>Hunter Local Land Services:</b>  <a href="http://hunter.lls.nsw.gov.au/">http://hunter.lls.nsw.gov.au/</a></p> <p><b>Office of Environment &amp; Heritage:</b>  <a href="http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/contact/">http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/contact/</a></p> <p><b>The Atlas of Living Australia:</b>  <a href="http://www.ala.org.au/">http://www.ala.org.au/</a></p> <p><b>Your local council</b></p> <p><b>Australian Native Plant Society:</b>  <a href="http://www.anpsa.org.au">www.anpsa.org.au</a></p> <p><b>Hunter Region Botanic Gardens:</b>  <a href="http://www.huntergardens.org.au">www.huntergardens.org.au</a></p> <p><b>Australasian Native Orchid Society:</b>  <a href="http://www.anos.org.au">www.anos.org.au</a></p> <p><b>Hunter Wetlands Centre:</b>  <a href="http://www.wetlands.org.au/page4906/Ecology-at-HWCA.aspx">www.wetlands.org.au/page4906/Ecology-at-HWCA.aspx</a></p>



Biodiversity attribute	What is important to know about this attribute on my property?	Where to go for more information or assistance with answering these questions
<b>Fauna</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does your property support a variety of fauna species such as birds, ground-dwelling animals, tree-dwelling animals, reptiles?</li> <li>Have you seen the presence of animals, but not actually seen the animal (scats, scratches, nests, wallows, etc.)?</li> </ol>	<p><b>Hunter Local Land Services:</b>  <a href="http://hunter.lls.nsw.gov.au/">http://hunter.lls.nsw.gov.au/</a></p> <p><b>Office of Environment &amp; Heritage:</b>  <a href="http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/contact/">http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/contact/</a></p> <p><b>The Atlas of Living Australia:</b>  <a href="http://www.ala.org.au/">http://www.ala.org.au/</a></p> <p><b>BirdLife Australia:</b> <a href="http://www.birdlife.org.au">www.birdlife.org.au</a></p> <p><b>Hunter Bird Observers Club:</b> <a href="http://www.hboc.org.au">www.hboc.org.au</a></p> <p><b>Hunter Wetlands Centre:</b>  <a href="http://www.wetlands.org.au/page4906/Ecology-at-HWCA.aspx">www.wetlands.org.au/page4906/Ecology-at-HWCA.aspx</a></p>
<b>Threatened flora and fauna</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you have any threatened plant species on your property?</li> <li>Do you have any threatened animal species on your property?</li> <li>Does your property support any migratory species?</li> </ol>	<p><b>Office of Environment &amp; Heritage:</b>  <a href="http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/contact/">http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/contact/</a></p> <p><b>The Atlas of Living Australia:</b>  <a href="http://www.ala.org.au/">http://www.ala.org.au/</a></p> <p><b>Your local council</b></p> <p><b>Australian Native Plant Society:</b>  <a href="http://www.anpsa.org.au">www.anpsa.org.au</a></p> <p><b>Hunter Region Botanic Gardens:</b>  <a href="http://www.huntergardens.org.au">www.huntergardens.org.au</a></p> <p><b>Australasian Native Orchid Society:</b>  <a href="http://www.anos.org.au">www.anos.org.au</a></p> <p><b>Hunter Wetlands Centre:</b>  <a href="http://www.wetlands.org.au/page4906/Ecology-at-HWCA.aspx">www.wetlands.org.au/page4906/Ecology-at-HWCA.aspx</a></p>
<b>Habitat</b>	<p>Does the property have any of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tree hollows</li> <li>hollow logs</li> <li>rocky areas</li> <li>highly fertile soils</li> <li>native mistletoes</li> <li>flowering plants producing nectar</li> <li>different vegetation types e.g. rainforest, open woodland, hanging swamps?</li> </ol> <p>Is your property adjacent to other patches of vegetation or national parks or state forests?</p>	<p><b>Hunter Local Land Services:</b>  <a href="http://hunter.lls.nsw.gov.au/">http://hunter.lls.nsw.gov.au/</a></p> <p><b>Office of Environment &amp; Heritage:</b>  <a href="http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/contact/">http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/contact/</a></p> <p><b>The Atlas of Living Australia:</b>  <a href="http://www.ala.org.au/">http://www.ala.org.au/</a></p> <p><b>Your local council</b></p>

## 1. BENEFITING FROM BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity attribute	What is important to know about this attribute on my property?	Where to go for more information or assistance with answering these questions
<b>Heritage issues</b>	<p>Does your property have any of the following features:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. World Heritage areas</li> <li>2. National Heritage areas</li> <li>3. cultural heritage sites (Aboriginal or European)?</li> </ol>	<p><b>World Heritage Listing:</b>  <a href="http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/parktypes/WorldHeritageListedAreas.htm">http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/parktypes/WorldHeritageListedAreas.htm</a></p> <p><b>National Heritage Listing:</b>  <a href="http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/parktypes/NationalHeritage.htm">http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/parktypes/NationalHeritage.htm</a></p> <p><b>Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System:</b>  <a href="http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/licences/AboriginalHeritageInformationManagementSystem.htm">http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/licences/AboriginalHeritageInformationManagementSystem.htm</a></p>
<b>Waterways</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are there any waterways present on you property (creeks, streams, rivers, swamps, wetlands, dams)?</li> <li>2. Are there any ephemeral waterways present during high rain events?</li> </ol>	
<b>Landscape features</b>	<p>Does your property have any of the following features:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. alpine environments</li> <li>2. ridgeline or rocky outcrops</li> <li>3. steep slopes</li> <li>4. riparian areas</li> <li>5. wetlands</li> <li>6. caves</li> <li>7. sand dunes?</li> </ol>	
<b>Threats / disturbances</b>	<p>Does your property suffer from any of the following threats:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. noxious or environmental weeds</li> <li>2. feral animals</li> <li>3. fire</li> <li>4. erosion/sedimentation</li> <li>5. bank erosion</li> <li>6. salinity</li> <li>7. tree dieback?</li> </ol>	
<b>Production activities</b>	<p>Is your land (or parts of your land) currently being used for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. agricultural lands supporting cattle grazing</li> <li>2. broadacre agriculture</li> <li>3. viticulture or fruit growing</li> <li>4. cleared/degraded agricultural lands?</li> </ol>	

For further assistance in quantifying and understanding the biodiversity values of your land it is recommended you contact Hunter Local Land Services and / or the Office of Environment & Heritage in Newcastle to access information on your locality or to arrange a site inspection.

#### **HUNTER LOCAL LAND SERVICES**

Address: 816 Tocal Road  
Paterson NSW 2421  
Phone: (02) 4930 1030  
Website: <http://hunter.lls.nsw.gov.au/>

#### **OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENT & HERITAGE**

Address: 117 Bull Street  
Newcastle West 2300  
Phone: (02) 4908 6800  
Website:  
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/>

Once you've established whether your land contains biodiversity values, use the following information to help you decide how best to sustain those values in a way that provides you, the landowner or manager, with financial or other support.

This guide outlines three major types of investment:

- 1. Commercial opportunities.** There are a number of opportunities for private landowners to attract income through sustainable commercial harvesting of native forest or plant products.
- 2. Income-supplementation opportunities.** There are a number of mechanisms available that may provide supplementary income for land management or biodiversity conservation activities.
- 3. Support programs.** There are a number of programs available that may not provide direct monetary returns but may provide access to specialist resources, expert advice, small grants and relevant landowner networks.



## 2. Commercial opportunities

There are a number of opportunities for private landowners to attract a commercial income through sustainable commercial harvesting of native forest or plant products.

Details on the various opportunities are contained in the following section.





## Private native forestry

<b>What is the opportunity?</b>	Through investment in private native forestry, income may be generated from the market sale of timber products.
<b>What are the benefits?</b>	It is also possible to get financial support through the development of a Private Native Forestry Property Vegetation Plan.
<b>What kind of land is suitable?</b>	This type of activity becomes economically viable on properties larger than 10 ha which are already vegetated with mature native vegetation.
<b>Who do I contact?</b>	NSW Environmental Protection Agency. Hunter Farm Forestry Network. Australia Master Tree Growers Program (See page 14 for contact details)

### Opportunity and benefits

Farm forestry enables farmers and landholders to incorporate tree growing and management into their farming systems for a range of commercial production and natural resource management objectives.

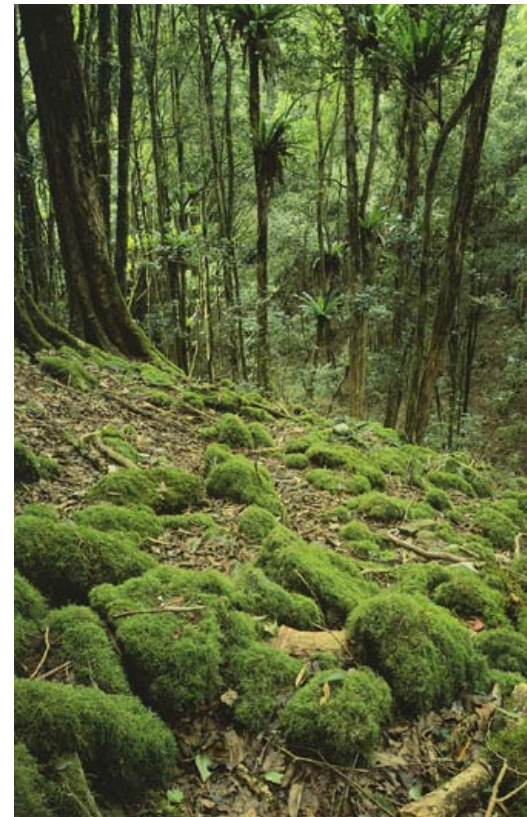
Farm forestry broadly incorporates commercial trees and shrubs, except for horticultural species, into farm operations. It takes many forms, including timber belts, alleys and revegetation projects, and timber production, as well as a wide and diverse range of products such as oils, flowers and fodder, and agricultural productivity. It also helps tackle land degradation and encourages wildlife to occupy and move through the landscape. There is no doubt that establishing trees on farms and effectively managing private native forests delivers sustainable natural resource management outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Farming, 2002, 'Australian Farm Forestry: A special supplement produced by the Australian Farm Journal', Canberra.

The economic viability of private native forestry (PNF) is dependent on the characteristics of the landscape. Large land parcels with a high density of saleable timber will likely generate higher returns than similar parcels that are more sparsely vegetated, although there may be greater investment expense to develop access roads and other infrastructure.

To gain an understanding of the potential viability of undertaking PNF, we recommend that you contact the Environmental Protection Agency's Native Forestry Officer and review the PNF Code of Practice (see details overleaf). This will help you to gain a better understanding of forestry operations, harvesting timeframes, and the investment required to undertake forestry activities.

As with any business operation, a reasonable amount of planning must be undertaken to establish a PNF operation involving the harvesting and sale of any timber products. An initial investment will be required by the



landowner to undertake the appropriate site assessments, develop a Property Vegetation Plan (PVP) and develop a business plan and Forestry Operations Plan. The PNF Code of Practice provides details on the requirements needed, including:

- mapping of boundaries, infrastructure, threatened species locations, landform features, etc.
- a description of the forest type, disturbance history and vegetation condition
- details of the stand height and basal areas
- details of the proposed forestry operations and methods, including flora and fauna management, regeneration activities and environmental protection methods.

To determine exactly what harvesting operations would be allowable on your parcel of land (and therefore to gain an understanding of potential outlays and returns) the Code of Practice sets out the requirements for land management.

It is highly recommended that any proposed forestry activities on vegetated blocks take place only after specialist advice from the NSW EPA and specialist forestry professionals has been obtained.

### **Landscape types best suited to private native forestry**

When we discuss private native forestry in this guide we are describing an activity that supports biodiversity conservation: we are not referring to a plantation activity that would lead to an entire land parcel being cleared and prepared for replanting and harvest. The PNF Code of Practice is designed to ensure

that core environmental values are protected during harvesting operations, and specific areas of environmental importance are protected.

Environmental features that would be protected if present inside the forestry activity include:

- threatened species and endangered ecological communities
- riparian zones (the land alongside a river, creek or waterway)
- habitat and biodiversity protection (hollow-bearing trees and logs and other areas of key habitat necessary to maintaining species mix)
- protecting catchments and minimising soil erosion and reducing contamination of waterways
- maintaining the forest structure
- protecting Aboriginal and cultural heritage values.

The amount of biomass able to be removed from a forestry activity is dependent upon the stand height, basal area, vegetation type and canopy cover. The Code of Practice enforces management of the stand to ensure it is optimal for rehabilitation and supports habitat for flora and fauna present. A strong understanding of the environment is required prior to undertaking forestry activities to determine suitability and economic viability of forestry activities

## **Where to go for further details**

### **NSW EPA:**

#### **Hunter, Central Coast and Lower North Coast Region Forestry Officer**

98 Victoria Street  
Taree NSW 2430  
(02) 6552 2788

Website: <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/vegetation/nativeforestry.htm>

Code of Practice: <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/pnf/CoPNthnNSW.htm>

### **Hunter Farm Forestry Network:**

Website: <http://hffn.org.au/>

### **The Australian Master Tree Grower Program:**

Website: <http://www.agroforestry.net.au/main.asp>



# Plants and plant product production

What is the opportunity? What are the benefits?	Through investment in native plants and plant product production, income may be generated from the market sale of products.
What kind of land is suitable?	Areas of native vegetation or that support the growth of plants such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Myrtaceous plants (oil-bearing for essential oils)</li> <li>• native vegetation (for honey production through apiary activities and/or native seed production)</li> <li>• native bush foods (typically herbs and seeds).</li> </ul>
Who do I contact?	No facilitating authority, but there are a number of industry associations for bush foods, honey essential oils, native seed, etc. (See page 17.)

## Opportunity and benefits

Driven by the significant investment of early industry leaders, commercially viable harvesting of native plants and plant products is a growing industry in Australia as export markets continue to expand. Opportunities for growing, harvesting, and selling native plant products – such as bush foods, native honey, oils and seeds – are increasing annually.

The exact income that may be generated from any of these activities will be determined by the quality of the product, market demand, yield of harvest, and business model, and is therefore specific to each operation. An overview of some common plant and plant product industries is provided below to offer an insight into each industry.

## Bush foods

Native culinary seeds, herbs, plants and fruit can be sold in a variety of forms: fresh, dried, frozen and made into sauces and other products for the culinary, medicinal and fragrance markets. With careful planning and

thorough market research, the commercial growing of herbs and plants offers an opportunity to manage land effectively and derive a profit from these management activities.

The majority of bush foods are used as ingredients in chutneys, preserves, sauces, bread, flour and condiments. Many specialty restaurants are thriving, thereby putting pressure on the production and provision of bush tucker products.

## Honey

Honey production is an industry with a long history in Australia. A wide variety of honey flavours and characteristics can be created depending upon the plant types from which the bees gather pollen. In 2014, the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) determined the gross value of production (GVP) of the beekeeping industry in 2012–13 was \$88 million, with a forecasted GVP of \$92 million in 2013–14. The relatively small beekeeping industry GVP understates

the industry's value to agriculture and the economy in general through pollination services and, potentially, the value of honey and honey products in medical uses.

Honey production provides a viable income for landowners, and is a perfect fit to other native plant production activities such as bush foods and essential oils as the bees can act as plant pollinators and produce a saleable product in addition to the bush foods or oils. Private Native Forests, or properties adjacent to state forests or national parks are suitable for the apiary industry as these forests provide most of the floral resource required for bees to make honey.

## Essential oils

Australia is the home of several well known essential oils, notably eucalyptus oil and tea tree oil, both of which have become household names the world over. The production of essential oils may be a suitable business in native forests. Australia (specifically the east coast of Australia) provides perfect growing conditions for

Myrtaceous trees and shrubs – all of which are oil bearing.

Typically, the essential oil industry exists through plantations and coppice harvesting practices, neither of which will provide ongoing biodiversity conservation outcomes. However, wild harvesting of native trees is possible, although it is more labour intensive and therefore provides less return on investment. Cottage-level industry for essential oil production, operating in conjunction with bush food production and honey production, may well provide a viable income for lands with native vegetation present.

**Native seed**

The sustainable collection, storage and sale of native seed is becoming vitally important to meet increasing market demands in response to:

- community and government rehabilitation and restoration projects
- environmental protection legislation requirements (development offsets, management/protection mandates, enforceable undertakings, etc.)
- growth in urban and domestic native plantings (water-sensitive urban design, low maintenance, hardy, drought resistant, habitat enhancing, etc.)

Greening Australia has developed a code of practice to assist landowners who want to collect and sell native seeds. The code is generally well regarded, and seeks to institute standards for the collection and storage of seeds to ensure seed viability and a robust industry.

**Landscape types best suited to plant and plant production**

The table below provides some insight into the landscape attributes that would support the plant and plant product industries.

Landscape attribute	Bush foods	Essential oils	Honey	Native seeds
<b>Native vegetation</b>	Bush foods are natives, so vegetation communities supporting the growth of these plants is required.	Myrtaceous plants are typically native. Planting of introduced oil-bearing plants (lavender) would likely require land clearing and is not supported by this guide.	Requires native flowering vegetation to create the unique flavours possible from native vegetation sources.	Require native vegetation to propagate the seeds.
<b>Access to water</b>	As the bush foods are generated by native plants there should be little need to vary the watering regime.	If the essential oil operation is utilising existing natural tree stands, then altering the natural watering regime is unnecessary.	No altering of the natural water regime is required.	No altering of the natural water regime is required.
<b>Access roads</b>	Access roads may be required to support machinery. Dependent upon size of industry.	Access roads will be required.	No additional access should be required.	No additional access should be required.
<b>Proximity to stands of native vegetation (national parks, state forests, etc.)</b>	May benefit from close proximity to provide genetic diversity in plants.	May benefit from close proximity to provide genetic diversity in plants.	Required to provide pollen to create honey.	May benefit from close proximity to provide genetic diversity in plants.

Note that apiary activities provide positive outcomes for all other plant production activities through pollinating activities.

## Where to go for further details

### USEFUL PUBLICATIONS

*Bush sensations: Starting a herb or bush tucker business?:*

[http://bushfoodsensations.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Final\\_Herb\\_Guide\\_2006.pdf](http://bushfoodsensations.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Final_Herb_Guide_2006.pdf).

Lake Macquarie Landcare: *Bushfood plants:*

[http://www.lakemacquarielandcare.org/Files/Uploads/File/Resources/5\\_Local%20Bushfood%20Plants%20-%20Final%202013.pdf](http://www.lakemacquarielandcare.org/Files/Uploads/File/Resources/5_Local%20Bushfood%20Plants%20-%20Final%202013.pdf).

Jennifer Wightman & Lachlan Anderson:

*Common bushfoods of the Hunter:*  
<https://hunterindigenousplants.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/common-bushfoods-of-the-hunter-2009-11.pdf>.

*Trees in Newcastle: Bushfood gardens:*

[http://www.treesinnewcastle.org.au/SiteFiles/treesinnewcastleorgau/Trees\\_In\\_Newcastle\\_Bush\\_Food\\_Garden\\_web.pdf](http://www.treesinnewcastle.org.au/SiteFiles/treesinnewcastleorgau/Trees_In_Newcastle_Bush_Food_Garden_web.pdf).

NSW Department of Primary Industries: *Bee ag skills:*

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/resources/bookshop/bee-agskills>.

The New South Wales Apiarists'

*Association: Apiary sites on public lands position paper:*

<http://www.nswaa.com.au/assets/Uploads/Apiary-Sites-On-Public-Lands-Position-Paper.pdf>.



IMAGE COURTESY OF SCREEN HUNTER



# Ecotourism

<p><b>What is the opportunity? What are the benefits?</b></p>	<p>Through investment in ecotourism, income may be generated from consumers visiting and staying at ecotourism facilities.</p>
<p><b>What kind of land is suitable?</b></p>	<p>Areas of natural bushland or iconic features (wetlands, rainforests, sand dunes, caves, habitat or ecosystems supporting interesting native animals, etc.) that would attract travellers and people that appreciate the natural environment.</p>
<p><b>Who do I contact?</b></p>	<p>No specific facilitating organisation in the region, but support may be offered by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecotourism Australia</li> <li>• Hunter Development Corporation</li> <li>• Tourism Hunter</li> <li>• Destination NSW.</li> </ul> <p>(See page 20 for details.)</p>

## Opportunity and benefits

The early profile of the 'ecotourist' was that of a person who chose to visit exotic locales, but increasingly the term has taken on greater meaning and applies to all manner of socially and environmentally curious, adventurous, escapist and/or responsible people. Ecotourism, once a niche market for a limited number of individuals, has come to conservatively represent an estimated quarter of the world's travel and tourism market. The growing appreciation of locally, responsibly and sustainably resourced goods and services has opened up new opportunities to the hospitality and tourism businesses.

Ecotourism is an important economic driver for many communities, as seen by the \$6 million investment made by the NSW Government in North Coast NSW Tourism early in 2015. The industry is already substantial in the region, with Destination



NSW providing the following statistics for the 2014 calendar year:

- 3.1 million domestic overnight visitors spending \$1.4 billion. This is an 11.1% increase on visits and an 8.2% increase on expenditure when comparing to the 2013 calendar year.
- 5.6 million day trips, spending some \$636 million in the region, an increase of 1.7% on visitors and 8.4% increase in expenditure.
- A total of 8.6 million overnight visits were spent in the region, an increase of 19.4% on the 2013 calendar year.
- 16.2% of all visitors to NSW spent time in the region.

An increase in environmental requirements and the prominence of the region's tourism appeal suggests that ecotourism is a lucrative undertaking given the diversity of region's natural assets.

## Landscape types best suited to ecotourism

The region has a diversity of important and interesting natural landscapes and assets that are highly conducive to associated ecotourism ventures:

- high quality coastal assets including beaches and bays, rocky cliffs and outcrops, islands and estuaries, marine reserves
- rugged mountain ranges, rainforests and alpine environments
- World Heritage areas, iconic national parks, reserves, and stock routes
- international RAMSAR sites, wetlands and major river systems
- rich and fertile floodplains, valleys, rural landscapes and villages.



## Where to go for further details

**Hunter Development Corporation**  
<http://www.hdc.nsw.gov.au/>

**Ecotourism Australia:**  
<http://www.ecotourism.org.au>

**Tourism Hunter:**  
<http://tourismhunter.com.au>

**Destination NSW:**  
<http://www.destinationnsw.com.au>

# 3. Income-supplementation opportunities

There are a number of opportunities available to private landowners that may supplement income for land management or biodiversity conservation activities.

Details on the various opportunities are outlined in the following section.







# BioBanking

<b>What is the opportunity?</b>	Agreement to undertake biodiversity protection and landscape management will generate ecosystem and species credits available for trading (also called BioBanking).
<b>What are the benefits?</b>	Income generated through the sale of credits will offset 'not developing' the land and pay for the in-perpetuity management of the biodiversity values of the land under the BioBanking agreement.
<b>What type of land is suitable?</b>	BioBanking can occur on any land that has native vegetation present. The best returns will come from land that has one or a combination of the seven values that the BioBanking methodology uses: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. state and national biodiversity priorities</li> <li>2. regional value</li> <li>3. 'landscape value'</li> <li>4. 'site value' (an assessment of the vegetation type and condition)</li> <li>5. threatened species presence</li> <li>6. management actions required</li> <li>7. the area (hectares) of the land to be managed for biodiversity.</li> </ol>
<b>Who do I contact?</b>	NSW Office of Environment & Heritage. BioBanking Team. (See page 27 for details.)

## Benefits of BioBanking

Landholders anywhere across NSW can voluntarily establish a BioBank site to generate ecosystem and/or species credits for sale on the open market. Landowners can decide which areas of their land they will include as the BioBank site, allowing different economic activities (such as primary production) to continue on other parts of their land. Landowners can also decide who they will sell their credits to, the price of their credits, and the timing of the sale.

BioBanking provides a secure investment in conservation by providing both the legal and financial mechanisms to ensure the long-term conservation of biodiversity values at BioBank sites. By purchasing credits, buyers are providing the upfront capital needed for the long-term



IMAGE COURTESY OF SCREEN HUNTER

funding of conservation on BioBank sites. These funds are used to manage the site and improve the biodiversity values on that site, and in so doing increasing the viability of threatened species populations and improve the quality of habitat and the condition of native plant communities.<sup>2</sup>

With the introduction of BioBanking and BioCertification, the NSW Government created Biodiversity Credits and Species Credits. These are commodity credits that have a value and can be traded to fund the biodiversity protection works necessary to protect biodiversity values on parcels of land, as an offset for development, or as an altruistic purchase and retirement of credits.

Under BioBanking, the active management of BioBank sites is required through activities such as revegetation, strategic grazing, and control of weeds and feral animals. In return for actively managing their land, BioBank site owners receive funds.

### Credit generation

The value of any credits generated through the establishment of a BioBanking site is determined by a site assessment (conducted by an accredited BioBanking assessor). The value of credits is created by the equation below using the information gathered by the assessor.

As can be seen from the equation, a site that holds a number of high value items (such as

<sup>2</sup> Department of Environment & Climate Change, 2007, 'Biobanking: Scheme Overview', Sydney.

threatened species or important habitats) but may not be in the best condition will generate the highest value of credits. Theoretically, the value of the credits should pay for the ongoing maintenance and management activities in perpetuity, but (depending on the market value of specific species or ecosystem credits) there may be the ability for landholders to generate substantial income over and above the revenue needed to implement the required management activities.

It should be noted that the creation of credits does not mean that the landowner instantly has access to money to undertake the management activities stated in the BioBanking agreement. Once created, the credits must then be placed on the Biodiversity Credit Register and sold prior to any money flowing to the landowner.

### Credit trading

Anyone is able to potentially buy your credits, subject to the regulations. A typical purchaser could be a developer seeking to offset their project's impacts on biodiversity. Other buyers could be government bodies using the market to achieve conservation outcomes, or philanthropic organisations using the scheme's robust structure to ensure the benefits of their endowments are maintained in perpetuity.

Ultimately, the market will determine the overall price paid for each credit. The landowner and credit purchaser will be free to negotiate any price

as long as the Total Fund Deposit is deposited in the BioBanking Trust Fund.

### Cost-benefit analysis

The establishment costs of a BioBank site can be significant as the landholder must pay for a BioBanking assessor to assess the site to determine how many and what types of biodiversity credits can be issued. The NSW Government's Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) also charges a number of fees for establishing and administering a BioBank site. Fees are adjusted for CPI at 1 August each year and are listed on the OEH website. Landholders will also incur costs of obtaining financial and legal advice before entering into a BioBanking agreement.

There are also some risks associated with BioBanking:

- **Sale of credits:** the landholder may be unable to generate a return on their investment if they are unable to sell some or all of the biodiversity credits.
- **Management costs:** if management costs are underestimated, the BioBanking Trust Fund payments will not cover the costs of all management actions. The landholder will still be required to undertake all management actions under the BioBanking agreement regardless of the amount of the BioBanking Trust Fund payments. There may also be unexpected management costs, such as a new invasive

$$\text{Number of ecosystem/species credits created*} = (\text{Improvement in Site Value} \times \text{Area}) + (\text{Improvement in Landscape Value} \times \text{Area})$$

\*The specific details of formulas and calculations can be found in the BioBanking Methodology from the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage website: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/biobanking/assessmethodology.htm>.

species that is difficult and costly to control.

- **Market variability:** if there is a fall in the market price of biodiversity credits due to oversupply or lack of demand for biodiversity credits, the landholder may be unable to get an adequate price for their biodiversity credits.
- **Pricing credits:** the price should include the cost of ongoing management actions of the BioBank site (this will be the amount of the Total Fund Deposit), the establishment costs of the BioBank site, opportunity cost and the value of the land. Landholders might also want include in the price a profit margin and the possibility of an increase in the costs of future management actions. Landholders will not receive any payments from the BioBanking Trust Fund unless at least 80% of the Total Fund Deposit has been paid into the BioBanking Trust Fund. If landholders have not made enough money from the sale of their biodiversity credits to pay 80% of the Total Fund Deposit, then they will only be required to undertake passive management actions but will still have to complete the annual reporting requirements. If all credits have been sold and the 80% threshold has not been met, the landholder will be required to pay the outstanding amount.
- **Reporting activities:** landholders must prepare an annual report describing the management actions undertaken for the year and provide details of any events that had an impact on the BioBank site, such as bushfire. The annual report must be lodged with OEHL with a prescribed fee.
- **Land values:** the value of the land may also be affected, although this is hard to predict and will depend on what buyers in the property market

are prepared to pay.

Taxation issues are complex and the effect they will have financially will depend on the landholder's personal circumstances. The information below broadly discusses the various tax treatments of BioBanking agreements:

- **Income tax.** On the sale of biodiversity credits, the portion of the proceeds that is deposited directly into the BioBanking Trust Fund is not treated as assessable income. However, the remaining portion is treated as ordinary assessable income. The annual payments from the BioBanking Trust Fund are treated as ordinary assessable income. Bonus payments from the BioBanking Trust Fund are also treated as ordinary assessable income.
- **Capital gains tax.** Entering into a BioBanking Agreement *may* result in a capital gain or loss. Additionally, the disposal of biodiversity credits is a capital gains tax event so when landholders sell or retire biodiversity credits, a capital gain or loss may arise.
- **Goods and services tax.** Three BioBanking transactions involve a goods and services tax (GST) liability for landowners who are registered for GST, the:
  - creation of biodiversity credits on entering into a BioBanking Agreement
  - sale of credits
  - annual payment.

There will also be GST implications for registered landowners for other related transactions such as the acquisition of goods or services when performing management actions. It is important that landholders obtain advice from a lawyer or accountant about how the BioBanking agreement will be assessed for taxation purposes.

## Landscape types best suited to BioBanking

BioBanking is governed by the *Threatened Species Conservation Act* and is considered a key tool of the NSW Government to 'maintain and enhance' the state's biodiversity values. As such, the methodology used to determine suitability for BioBanking requires these values to be present for the mechanism to be used.

At least one of the following values must be on site for the mechanism to be available:

- The presence of state or national biodiversity priorities (usually threatened species, but the assessor would be aware of any specific priorities).
- Native vegetation and vegetation communities; where communities are known to have been cleared by more than 70% of their pre-1750 distribution, the value of credits will increase.
- Moderate quality condition: if condition improvement is possible through management actions then greater value of credits will be generated. High quality sites could still be included as a BioBanking site, but fewer credits will be generated as there are less management activities required to improve the quality of the landscape.
- Presence of threatened species (if not already considered as part of the state and national priorities).

## CASE STUDY

### Wallarah Peninsula: development approval supporting environmental protection

Wallarah Peninsula is approximately 600 ha of near undisturbed bushland. Its natural beauty and easy access to beach and lake, and its close proximity to Newcastle and Sydney, make it an attractive place to live.

The landowner gained rezoning approval to develop the land as a residential area by working with stakeholders to preserve the natural environment and maintain biodiversity which led to the establishment of a BioBank site.

#### THE LAND DETERMINES DEVELOPMENT

After negotiations, stakeholders agreed on issues concerning biodiversity, social equity, public access and commercial land development. A memorandum of understanding was drafted to define roles, recognise different interests and agree to transparency.

The developer's vision was to create a collection of villages where the lifestyle of residents and the health of the environment had equal priority. The principles guiding development were ecological health, sustainable settlement, community lifestyle and environmental stewardship.

Planning was dictated by the landscape rather than by a master planning document. The site was assessed to determine its capability to support different forms of development. Planning was literally from the ground up.

The environmental, geophysical and visual assets of the site were evaluated and development scenarios constructed. Maps were created, showing areas where critical vegetation corridors and threatened

species were located, areas that were suitable for development, and areas that were unsuitable for development.

While there were patches of critical habitat across the site, a boundary was defined that would consolidate a sustainable habitat. OEH officers evaluated the site and agreed that there was a long-term biodiversity outcome that could be protected in perpetuity within the boundaries.

#### DEVELOPMENT WITH CARE

After the conservation area was identified and set aside, there was a need to establish conservation principles so the rest of the land would be treated equitably. A local environmental plan was prepared to set out subdivision planning. Ecologically significant areas, threatened species and habitat protection areas were mapped to determine where development could occur. A Conservation Land Use Management Plan was attached to the land. All requirements were in a statutory package, giving the Council and the community certainty about development outcomes.

#### WORKING TOGETHER

While the development provided clear environmental benefits, it also protected the interests of the landowner. The developer carefully researched comparable developments and consumer choices to establish the commercial value of Wallarah Peninsula.



The rezoning negotiations took three years and the final agreed land use outcomes, captured in the statutory master plan, took another two years. Although the planning process was costly, the developer recognised that the land included valuable assets from which to build commercial value.

Through collaboration, the stakeholders demonstrated that both development and conservation outcomes can be achieved and support each other. Together, the stakeholders created a niche development to generate acceptable returns.

Source: Department of Environment and Conservation NSW (DEC), 2006, *Avoiding and offsetting biodiversity loss: Case studies*.

## Complexity of the BioBanking system

BioBanking is a complicated, commercially focused scheme and as such, landholders are encouraged to obtain independent legal advice prior to entering into a Biobanking agreement.

To be eligible to enter into a BioBanking agreement to establish a BioBanking site a landholder must pass a character test (the 'fit and proper person test') to determine if they will abide by their obligations under the agreement.

## Landholder obligations

Landholder obligations will be set out in the BioBanking agreement, which outlines the activities that must be undertaken to protect and conserve the biodiversity values of the BioBank site. These are called 'management actions'. There are two types of management actions under a BioBanking Agreement:

- Passive management actions include refraining from conducting in activities that will harm biodiversity and native vegetation, such as leaving fallen timber and maintaining low stock levels.
- Active management actions are more costly and include removing invasive weeds, controlling feral animals and carrying out fire risk management. Landholders are obliged to protect the BioBank site from any environmental damage that reduces the biodiversity values of the BioBank site.

Due to the complexities of assessment and credit calculation, if a landholder decides to establish a BioBank site they must engage an accredited BioBanking assessor. The assessor must use the approved BioBanking assessment methodology

and the BioBanking credit calculator to assess the land and determine how many and what types of biodiversity credits can be issued. The results of the assessment by the accredited assessor will then inform preparation of one or more management plans.

## Biodiversity credit sales

When a biodiversity credit is sold, part of the sale price must be paid into the BioBanking Trust Fund. The money in the fund is invested and the income generated is used to make scheduled payments to landowners to help them meet the costs of maintaining the conservation values of the BioBank site in perpetuity.

## Cancellation of a BioBank Agreement

A landholder can unilaterally terminate their BioBanking Agreement under the following circumstances:

- within the first three months, as long as they still hold all the biodiversity credits
- after five years, if the landholder has still not sold any credits.

Where BioBanking Agreements are terminated or varied with consent, the negative impacts of terminating the BioBank site must be offset. This could include the cancellation of credits related to the site, or entering into another BioBanking Agreement to replace the terminated agreement.

## Where to go for further details

### NSW Office of Environment & Heritage:

Website: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/biobanking/index.htm>

### Biodiversity Credit Calculator:

Website: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/biobanking/tools.htm>

### BioBanking Team:

Office of Environment and Heritage  
PO Box A290  
Sydney South NSW 1232

Phone: 131 555

Fax: (02) 9995 6795

Email: [biobanking@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:biobanking@environment.nsw.gov.au)



# Carbon credit generation and trading

<b>What is the opportunity?</b>	Carbon credit creation and trading through the Carbon Farming Initiative.
<b>What are the benefits?</b>	Income is generated through the sale of the created carbon credits.
<b>What type of land is suitable?</b>	Carbon credits can be generated from numerous activities or by not carrying out common activities; as such, there are numerous property characteristics that may be suitable for carbon farming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agricultural lands supporting cattle grazing</li> <li>• cleared agricultural lands</li> <li>• natural wetlands</li> <li>• forested lands.</li> </ul>
<b>Who do I contact?</b>	Carbon Farming is an Australian Government program administered by the Department of the Environment through the Emissions Reduction Fund.

## What is carbon farming?

The phrase 'carbon farming' means using farming methods that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and/or capture and hold carbon in vegetation and soils. It involves managing land, water, plants and animals in a way that meets the triple challenge of landscape restoration, climate change and food security. It seeks to reduce emissions in its production processes, while increasing production and sequestering carbon in the landscape.

Carbon farming can range from a single change in land management, such as introducing no-till cultivation or grazing management, to a whole-of-farm integrated plan which maximises carbon capture and emissions reduction.

## Benefits of carbon farming

Carbon which is stored in soil is an incredibly important part of the wider carbon cycle which is a fundamental part of life on earth. 'Soil organic carbon' – the amount of carbon stored in the soil – is a component of soil organic matter (plant and animal materials in the soil that are in various stages of decay). Soil organic carbon is

the basis of soil fertility. It releases nutrients for plant growth, promotes the structure, biological and physical health of soil, and is a buffer against harmful substances.

Carbon farming can cover small changes in land management – like introducing no-till cropping, stubble retention, agroforestry, or methane-reducing feed supplements. At the other end of the scale, it can mean developing an integrated whole-farm plan to reduce emissions and maximise carbon capture. Benefits to farmers and landowners to undertake carbon farming include:

- the generation of Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) which can be sold to create additional income
- improved farm productivity
- farming efficiency gains
- better soil health and decreased salinity
- more efficient water use
- lower greenhouse gas emissions
- healthier forests
- cleaner waterways

- improved and resilient biodiversity
- improved air quality.

Monetary value from carbon farming is derived from the generation and trading of carbon credits. A carbon credit represents 1 tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (that have not been generated). A carbon credit only counts as a true offset when it is formally retired, and cannot therefore be on sold.

## Emissions Reduction Fund

The carbon credit market is reasonably complex due to legislative changes over the past five years, and it is advisable that anyone seeking to begin carbon farming and credit trading seek professional advice from a registered trading entity. It should be noted that many carbon farmers will need to use a carbon trading partner to have their units 'aggregated' as the minimum trading value is 25,000 tonnes (CO<sub>2</sub> abatement value).

The Carbon Farming Initiative is now managed under the Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF), which formally commenced on 12 December 2014.

The ERF seeks to fund emissions reductions by establishing a reverse auction process through which project proponents or aggregators can bid to supply emissions reductions to the government from pre-approved emission reduction projects. Based on the Carbon Farming Initiative, the ERF proposes to build on the existing approved methodologies for emissions reductions and expand them beyond the land sector.

The Clean Energy Regulator invites bids from proponents of projects already approved under the CFI (or aggregators of ACCUs from such projects) to offer to supply emissions reductions in the form of these credit units. Potential bidders will need to obtain pre-approval from the Clean Energy Regulator to participate in the auction.

The average value of credit units following the first reverse auction was \$13 per tonne.

### Voluntary carbon market

Rather than producing credit units, landowners may establish appropriate abatement projects and generate voluntary carbon units (VCUs), which are a tradable unit on the voluntary carbon market. The creation of VCUs is managed via the Voluntary Carbon Standard, and once verified VCUs can be traded on an open market and retired once used as an offset. The value of VCUs is market dependent.

### Cost-benefit analysis of the Carbon Farming Initiative

The Clean Energy Regulator advises that, prior to investing in a CFI project, landholders should obtain independent legal and financial advice.

Transaction costs associated with establishing projects may be large and much of this risk must be borne up front, with no certainty of later return on investment. In addition to the costs of establishing carbon farming projects, landholders

are encouraged to obtain expert advice on the project design and likely returns.

As a market-based mechanism, the price received by the provider will be based on the level of demand for offsets. Providers need to ensure that the price that they receive for the credits are sufficient for the ongoing maintenance costs. The Clean Energy Regulator specifically recommends that landholders 'anticipate modest returns from environmental planting projects'.

Taxation issues are complex and the effect they will have on landholders financially will depend on personal circumstances. Some issues to be aware of are:

- **Income tax:** the value of credit units may be considered accessible income. Some expenses relating to the issuing of credit units may be deductible.
- **Tax deductions for carbon-sink forests:** Carbon Farming Initiative projects may qualify as carbon-sink forests; that is, forests that are grown for the dedicated purpose of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and are therefore eligible for a tax deduction for the expense of establishing trees in a carbon-sink forest under the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.
- **Local Land Services rates:** participating in a Carbon Farming Initiative does not entitle a landholder to an exemption from rates payable to Local Land Services. However, a landholder may be able to have the carrying capacity of their property reassessed to take account of any land-use changes resulting from a carbon farming project. In this case, they would still need to pay the base rate that is applicable to all properties over a certain size but would not be liable to pay the rates based on the carrying capacity of the land. Such a rates reduction is not an entitlement; rather, it is at the discretion of the relevant authority.

### Landscape types best suited to carbon farming

Landscape characteristics that are suitable for carbon credit generation is dependent upon which approved methodology will be used to generate credits. As all methodologies seek abatements, agricultural lands are likely to be the most suitable for creating credit units or VCUs as:

- agricultural practices can be modified to generate credits through reduction in emissions from agricultural activities
- replanting cleared agricultural lands
- re-establishing wetland areas
- avoiding deforestation (not undertaking approved clearing activities).

To determine exactly what projects are suitable for your circumstances, please view the detailed methodologies included on the ERF website.

### Complexity of the Carbon Farming Initiative

The Carbon Farming Initiative is a complicated, commercially focused scheme. Landholders are encouraged to obtain independent legal and expert advice before beginning a carbon farming project.

Due to the complexities of assessment and credit calculation, if a landholder decides to establish a carbon farming project they are encouraged to engage appropriate expert advice to ensure that the final project appropriately follows the approved methodology and establishes the necessary monitoring and report regime.

To generate carbon credits individuals or business must undertake the following steps:



Steps	Description
<b>Step 1:</b> Become a Registered Offsets Entity (ROE) and open a registered account.	An applicant can be an individual, body corporate, a trustee, a corporation sole, a body politic or a local governing body, but must pass a 'fit and proper' person test.
<b>Step 2:</b> Have the project approved.	<p>To be approved, sequestration projects must be the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The landholder must be the project proponent and be a Registered Offsets Entity.</li> <li>• The landholder must hold the exclusive legal right to obtain the benefit of sequestration of carbon created under state and territory legislation for all the relevant project areas.</li> <li>• The landholder must obtain the consent of anyone with an interest registered on the land title, including a bank if a mortgage exists over the land. If the project is on Crown Land, the landholder may need the consent of the relevant state government minister. If there is a native title determination with respect to the land, the landholder will need to obtain consent from the registered native title body corporate.</li> <li>• The landholder must have any necessary regulatory approvals.</li> <li>• The landholder must provide a statement of consistency with the relevant Catchment Action Plan.</li> <li>• The landholder must use an approved Carbon Farming Initiative methodology (see below).</li> <li>• The project must meet the additionality requirements and the proposed project must be on the 'positive list' of allowable projects.</li> <li>• The proposed activity must not be on the list of projects that will not be approved (known as the negative list). 'High risk activities' such as planting weed species, the clearing of native forest or the use of material obtained as a result of clearing or harvesting of native forests, are excluded from the program.</li> <li>• The landholder can ask to have the project recognised as providing co-benefits (such as biodiversity benefits) which may create a premium on the price of the carbon credits.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 3:</b> Undertake the project.	Reporting requirements are outlined in the relevant legislation and the relevant project methodology. It is important to understand these reporting requirements up front to ensure that appropriate measurements are taken at the beginning of the project. The length of reporting required is based on how long credits are generated (the crediting period). Sequestration offset projects based on native forestry projects generally lasts 20 years but the proponent can apply for a subsequent crediting period or request the commencement of the maintenance phase if the costs of reporting outweigh the benefits of additional credits. Once the project enters the maintenance phase it is no longer sequestering additional carbon, this may occur for example once forests are fully grown, meaning further project reports are not necessary. Project reports must be independently audited.
<b>Step 4:</b> Report on the project.	A certificate of entitlement for credits from the project will be issued if all the above requirements have been met and if the landholder is not required to pay any penalties and does not have an outstanding obligation to relinquish carbon credits. When a landholder has received a certificate of entitlement, credit units will be issued into the registry account listed on the certificate of entitlement. The landholder may choose to hold the credit units, exchange or convert them to another type of unit (see the Handbook for more detail), cancel them and/or exchange them for another domestic or international units (rules permitting).
<b>Steps 5 and 6:</b> Receiving credits for a CFI project.	A landholder can withdraw from the Carbon Farming Initiative at any time. However, in the case of sequestration offset projects, all carbon credits issued will need to be returned (meaning alternative carbon credits must be sourced). An offset project can also be transferred to another ROE.
<b>Step 7:</b> Project transfer and closure.	A landholder can withdraw from the Carbon Farming Initiative at any time. However, in the case of sequestration offset projects, all carbon credits issued will need to be returned (meaning alternative carbon credits must be sourced). An offset project can also be transferred to another ROE.

## CASE STUDY

### Three Bridges carbon farming case study

Three Bridges spans 1,600 acres along the Loddon River in Victoria. A paradise for horses, Three Bridges breeds some of the nation's most prized thoroughbreds, and has created an environment that, in the words of owner Toby Liston, 'introduces horses back to nature and lets horses be horses'.

Since 2006, Three Bridges has partnered with Greenfleet to plant more than 60,000 native trees.

According to Toby, the Greenfleet project has helped Three Bridges revegetate more than 80 acres of forest. 'While we've given up this land for conservation, it has increased our farm's productivity – and ultimately our farm's value,' Toby says.

'We've planted a 30-metre windbreak around the entire property that provides shelter for our horses. The thoroughbreds raised at Three Bridges now have ample shelter around their paddocks from wind, rain and heat – which ultimately means we spent less money on food and have top-quality horses that are achieving some of the best sales in the world.'

Three Bridges boasts some of the highest purchase prices for horses in Australia – including



the record \$5 million sale achieved in 2013, and impressive average sales of \$135,000.

The project has also helped to combat soil erosion, improve the health of the river and enhance biodiversity.

As Toby says, 'We now have one of the best farms in Victoria, but probably the biggest gain has been the personal satisfaction of doing the right thing for future generations.'

'One of the best things we've done for our farm is plant trees. We're a family run farm and we couldn't afford to do the planting ourselves, but with the help of Greenfleet, we've invested in the land in a way that will pay us back for decades to come.'



### Where to go for further details

#### Verified Carbon Standard:

<http://www.v-c-s.org/>

#### Department of Environment

<http://www.environment.gov.au/climate-change/emissions-reduction-fund/cfi/about>

#### Clean Energy Regulator

<http://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/ERF/About-the-Emissions-Reduction-Fund/How-does-it-work>

#### Emissions Reduction Fund

<http://www.environment.gov.au/climate-change/emissions-reduction-fund>

# Australian Government (Federal) Conservation Covenant

<b>What is the opportunity?</b>	Legal protection of land through the application of a Federal Conservation Covenant under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (the EPBC Act 1999), Part 14.
<b>What are the benefits?</b>	Legal protection of landscape and biodiversity values present; financial benefits through possible tax exemptions, rate reductions and capital gains tax deduction; also, through financial support and technical assistance.
<b>What type of land is suitable?</b>	Private land; council community land.  Land that includes designated Matters of National Environmental Significance, including nationally listed threatened species and ecological communities, migratory species protected under international agreements, wetlands of international importance (Ramsar wetlands), National Heritage places and World Heritage areas.
<b>Who do I contact?</b>	Australian Government Department of Environment. (See page 34.)

## Benefits of Australian Government Conservation Covenants

Application of a Federal Conservation Covenant provides effective legal protection of lands covered by the agreement. Federal Conservation Covenants are designed to support (through either financial or legal means) activities that will protect and conserve Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) and biodiversity.

The use of a Federal Conservation Covenant to provide legal protection on land is enacted through a contract between the landowner and the Federal Minister for the Environment. A Conservation Covenant is developed individually for each site and landowners therefore have the ability to negotiate what activities they would undertake, and what level of financial support they would like the government to provide as their component of the Covenant (although it should be noted that financial support is not guaranteed).

There is no set application process to seek an Australian Government Conservation Covenant over land, so direct contact with the Australian

Government Department of Environment is required. Given this lack of process it may be relatively straightforward to progress the granting of a covenant, although there is very little support available or provided.

It should be noted that the Australian Government does not provide any funding assistance to establish a covenant (legal advice), nor have they recently provided any funding assistance to undertake any required management actions related to the covenants they have enacted, although scope does exist for this to occur.

Applying a covenant to your land may affect the land's value. In some cases, land may increase in value because the use of superior land management practices may improve the quality of the land. Further, a prospective purchaser may acknowledge the conservation value of the land and be willing to pay a premium for a property with high conservation values. In other cases, a covenant may reduce the value of the property.

Landowners may receive financial benefits through taxation rebates. Taxation issues are

complex and will depend on the personal circumstances of each landowner. The information below broadly discusses the various tax treatments of covenants:

- **Income tax:** landholders may be able to get an income tax deduction if their land reduces in value (that is, produces a capital loss) as a result of entering into a covenant. There are special tax concessions available to landholders entering into covenants where a capital loss arises in certain circumstances.
- **Capital gains tax:** entering into a covenant is a capital gains tax event. For concessional capital gains tax treatment, a landholder must have entered into the covenant within 12 months of acquiring the land; or the land must have reduced in value by more than \$5,000 as a result of entering into the covenant. The tax deduction may be spread over five years. To benefit from the concessions, a landholder must have entered into the covenant for no material benefit (that is, they must not have received money, property or something else of value for

entering into the covenant). Any capital profit or loss that arises at the time of entering into a covenant will need to be accounted for on the landholder's tax return. The landholder has to determine whether entering into the covenant triggers a capital profit or loss. Before entering a covenant, landholders are advised to seek the opinion of an expert valuer on the question of whether entering the agreement has changed the value of the property.

- **State land tax:** land within the conservation area under a covenant *may* be exempt from state land tax. The value of land for the assessment of land tax may be reduced by the value of the proportion of the land that is included in the conservation area. For example, if 60% of a property is included in the conservation area, the land tax liability may be reduced by 60%.
- **Local council rates:** local councils *may* provide landowners with covenants a rate exemption for land included in the conservation area. Rate liability, if provided, will be reduced by the proportion of the property that is included in the conservation area; thus, if 70% of the property is included in the conservation area then the rates will be reduced by 70%.
- **Local Land Services rates:** a covenant does not entitle landholders to an exemption from rates payable to Local Land Services. However, a landholder *may* be able to have the carrying capacity of their property reassessed to take account of any restrictions imposed by the covenant. In this case, they would still need to pay the base rate that is applicable to all properties over a certain size but would not be liable to pay the rates based on the carrying capacity of the land. As such, a rates reduction

is not an entitlement; rather it is at the discretion of the relevant authority.

### Landscape types best suited to Australian Government Conservation Covenants

Covenants seek to enhance the conservation of biodiversity and heritage. They can be for variable lengths of time and relate to designated MNES. If a property includes, or impacts on any of the following, a covenant may be appropriate:

- World Heritage values of a declared World Heritage property
- National Heritage values of a National Heritage place
- Commonwealth Heritage values of a Commonwealth Heritage place
- ecological character of a declared Ramsar wetland
- the environment, in respect of the impact of a nuclear action
- the environment in a Commonwealth marine area
- a water resource, in respect of the impact of an action involving coal seam gas development or large coal mining development
- the environment on Commonwealth land.

The intent of entering into a covenant would be to protect MNES from harm or development; as such, a covenant will typically include restrictions on activities that can occur on lands and include requirements for management activities.

Covenants can cover a wide range of actions, including but not limited to:

- controlling or prohibiting actions that may adversely affect one of the matters listed above
- requiring access by an authorised person for the

- purpose of monitoring compliance
- requiring an owner to give such an authorised person information that is within their control and is relevant to compliance
- requiring the Commonwealth to provide financial, technical or other assistance
- requiring the owner to carry out specified activities, or do specific things, that promote the conservation of one or more of the listed matters
- restricting the use of the place to actions or processes that will not adversely affect one or more of the listed matters
- requiring the owner to permit access to the place by specified persons
- requiring the owner to contribute towards costs incurred in implementing the agreement
- specifying the manner in which any money paid to the owner is to be applied
- requiring the repayment of any monies paid to the owner if a breach is committed
- providing for other conservation matters, including a plan of management.

### Where to go for further details

#### Australian Government Department of the Environment:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/protection/environment-assessments/conservation-agreements>

GPO Box 787  
 Canberra ACT 2601  
 Ph: 1800 803 772

# NSW Government Conservation Agreement

<b>What is the opportunity?</b>	Legal protection of land through the application of a Voluntary Conservation Agreement under the NSW Government's <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i> (NSW), Part 4, Division 12.
<b>What are the benefits?</b>	Legal protection of land; potential tax deductions; capital gains tax deduction; state land tax exemption; local government rates exemption; reduction in Local Land Services rates; biodiversity surveying and assessment assistance; supporting information and community engagement.
<b>What type of land is suitable?</b>	A Voluntary Conservation Agreement may be entered into on properties with areas containing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• scenery, natural environments or natural phenomena worthy of preservation</li> <li>• special scientific interest</li> <li>• sites of buildings, objects, monuments or events of national significance</li> <li>• Aboriginal objects, or Aboriginal places of special significance are situated</li> <li>• the subject of study, preservation, protection, care or propagation of fauna or native plants or other flora</li> <li>• or areas requiring the conservation of critical habitat, or the conservation of threatened species, populations or ecological community, or habitat.</li> </ul>
<b>Who do I contact?</b>	NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. (See page 37 for details.)

## Benefits of a Voluntary Conservation Agreement

The potential investment return for entering into a Voluntary Conservation Agreement (VCA) includes access to information, networks, funding and tax rebates and concessions.

By entering into a VCA, landholders become part of the OEH Conservation Partners Program. The program provides property signage, subscription to the *Bush Matters* newsletter, and access to a network of like-minded people.

OEH may provide funding to help meet the cost of works, such as fencing the conservation area, clearing weeds and controlling feral animals. Properties that have VCAs may be eligible for other grant programs (from organisations such as Local Land Services) to help meet the costs of



IMAGE COURTESY OF SCREEN HUNTER



carrying out specific conservation works.

A VCA may affect the value of land. In some cases, land may increase in value because the use of superior land management practices may improve the quality of the land. Further, a prospective purchaser may acknowledge the conservation value of the land and be willing to pay a premium for a property those values. In other cases, a VCA may reduce the value of the property.

Taxation issues are complex and will depend on the personal circumstances of each landholder. The information below broadly discusses the various tax treatments of VCAs:

- **Income tax:** landholders *may* be able to get an income tax deduction if their land reduces in value (that is, produces a capital loss) as a result of entering into a VCA. There are special tax concessions available to landholders entering into VCAs where a capital loss arises in certain circumstances.
- **Capital gains tax:** entering into a VCA is a capital gains tax event. For concessional capital gains tax treatment, a landholder must have entered into the VCA within 12 months of acquiring the land; or the land must have reduced in value by more than \$5,000 as a result of entering into the VCA. The tax deduction may be spread over five years. To benefit from the concessions, a landholder must have entered into the VCA for no material benefit (that is, they must not have received money, property or something else of value for entering into the VCA). The Australian Taxation Office has ruled that grants for fencing and weed clearing are not a material benefit and will not affect the concessional treatment of land or income tax deduction. Any capital profit or loss that arises

at the time of entering into a VCA will need to be accounted for on the landholder's tax return. The landholder has to determine whether entering into the VCA triggers a capital profit or loss. Before entering a VCA, landholders are advised to seek the opinion of an expert valuer on the question of whether entering the VCA has changed the value of the property.

- **State land tax:** land within the conservation area under a VCA *may* be exempt from state land tax. The value of land for the assessment of land tax may be reduced by the value of the proportion of the land that is included in the conservation area (for example, if 60% of a property is included in the conservation area, the land tax liability may be reduced by 60%).
- **Local council rates:** local councils provide to landowners with VCAs a rate exemption for land included in the conservation area. Rate liability will be reduced by the proportion of the property that is included in the conservation area. So if 70% of the property is included in the conservation area then the rates will be reduced by 70%.
- **Local Land Services rates:** a VCA does not entitle landholders to an exemption from rates payable to Local Land Services. However, a landholder *may* be able to have the carrying capacity of their property reassessed to take account of any restrictions imposed by the VCA. In this case, they would still need to pay the base rate that is applicable to all properties over a certain size but would not be liable to pay the rates based on the carrying capacity of the land. As such, a rates reduction is not an entitlement; rather it is at the discretion of the relevant authority.

## Landscape types best suited for a VCA

A VCA is a formal agreement between a landholder and the NSW Minister for the Environment to protect and conserve land in perpetuity. As such, the NSW Government would only seek to sign an agreement over land that includes some, or all of the following features:

- areas containing scenery, natural environments or natural phenomena worthy of preservation
- areas of special scientific interest
- areas that are the sites of buildings, objects, monuments or events of national significance
- areas in which Aboriginal objects, or Aboriginal places, of special significance are situated
- areas that can support the study, preservation, protection, care or propagation of fauna or native plants or other flora.

VCAs can protect freehold and leasehold land and land that is in private or public ownership. OEH will only enter into a VCA over land of high conservation value, which it defines as land that:

- has a range of natural and cultural attributes
- is in a native condition
- is not environmentally degraded.

## Complexity of VCAs

The process for developing and executing a VCA on a property usually takes between six and 12 months, but can take more or less time depending on the landholder's particular circumstances. The following steps outline the typical process for establishing a VCA:

1. A landholder must apply for a VCA application form with the OEH Conservation Partners Program.

2. An OEH officer will assess the property to determine if it is suitable.
3. If the property is suitable, and OEH has agreed to establish a VCA, an OEH officer will carry out a biodiversity survey and identify the boundaries of the conservation area.
4. The OEH officer will prepare the VCA, including a Management Scheme. A landholder can review the documents and propose changes (with independent legal advice at this stage of the process).
5. Once a landholder and OEH have agreed to the terms of the VCA, all parties will sign the agreement.
6. OEH arranges for the VCA to be registered on the certificate of title to the property, leaving the landholder to manage the land for conservation.

## Considerations prior to signing a VCA

- Landowners should seek independent legal advice before entering into a VCA. OEH may provide some financial support to pay for independent legal advice; alternatively, a landholder can access the Private Conservation Pro Bono Referral Service.
- Consent is required from all landowners and entities that have an interest in the land; for example, a mortgage provider will need to co-sign the VCA.
- Legal obligations on the landowner will be set out in the VCA. Obligations are likely to include the restriction of activities that will harm the land (e.g. intensive agriculture) and management activities to be undertaken (e.g. noxious weed management).
- The VCA will be registered on the title of the property, thereby binding future owners of the



land to the conditions of the VCA. If there is a change of ownership or control, OEH must be informed within 28 days.

## Where to go for further details

**Office of Environment & Heritage:**  
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/cpp/ConservationAgreements.htm>

**NSW Office of Environment & Heritage**  
 117 Bull Street  
 Newcastle West NSW  
 Ph: 4908 6800  
 Fax: 4908 6810  
 Email: [info@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environment.nsw.gov.au)





# Nature Conservation Trust Covenant

<b>What is the opportunity?</b>	Legal Protection of land through the application of a Nature Conservation Trust Covenant under the <i>Nature Conservation Trust Act 2001</i> (NSW)
<b>What are the benefits?</b>	Potential tax deductions; capital gains tax deduction; state land tax exemption; government rates exemption; reduction in Local Land Services rates; monetary support for legal fees related to signing covenant; monetary support for undertaking conservation activities; support for management activities through the NCT Stewardship Program; support for sale of property.
<b>What property characteristics are suitable?</b>	Well-vegetated lands with native vegetation, and important habitat for a range of species or threatened species. Can also have important strategic connectivity values.
<b>Who do I contact to learn more?</b>	Nature Conservation Trust of NSW (See page 42 for details.)

## Benefits of Nature Conservation Trust Covenants

Investment return for establishing a Nature Conservation Trust (NCT) Covenant includes potential tax deductions or rebates; government rates exemption; potential reduction in Local Land Services rates; monetary support for legal fees related to signing covenant; potential monetary support for undertaking conservation activities; support for management activities through the NCT Stewardship Program; and support for sale of property with an NCT Covenant in place.

The NCT provides ongoing support to the network of people with NCT Covenants. The NCT has developed an ongoing support program, the Stewardship Program, for landowners entering into NCT Covenants. The Stewardship Program helps landowners manage their conservation areas, and offers the following features:

- regular contact between landowners and the NCT, including a yearly phone call from NCT and a site visit at least every five years

- land management advice
- notification of various grants and agencies that may be able to fund conservation works on the property
- notification of conservation and land management workshops.

The NCT may also provide funding to carry out required conservation works on the land subject to the covenant.

Taxation issues are complex and the effect they will have on landholders financially will depend on personal circumstances. The information below broadly discusses the various tax treatments of NCT agreements:

- **Income tax:** Landholders *may* be able to get an income tax deduction if their land reduces in value (that is, produces a capital loss) as a result of entering into an NCT Covenant. There are special tax concessions available to landholders entering into NCT Covenants where a capital loss arises in certain circumstances.

- **Capital gains tax:** entering into an NCT Covenant is a capital gains tax event. For concessional capital gains tax treatment, a landholder must have entered into the NCT Covenant within 12 months of acquiring the land; or the land must have reduced in value by more than \$5,000 as a result of entering into the NCT Covenant. The tax deduction may be spread over five years. To benefit from the concessions, a landholder must have entered into the NCT Covenant for no material benefit (that is, they must not have received money, property or something else of value for entering into the Agreement). The Australian Taxation Office has ruled that grants for fencing and weed clearing are not a material benefit and will not affect the concessional treatment of land or income tax deduction. Any capital profit or loss that arises at the time of entering into an NCT Covenant will need to be accounted for on the landholder's tax return. The landholder has to determine whether entering into the NCT Covenant triggers a capital profit or loss. Before

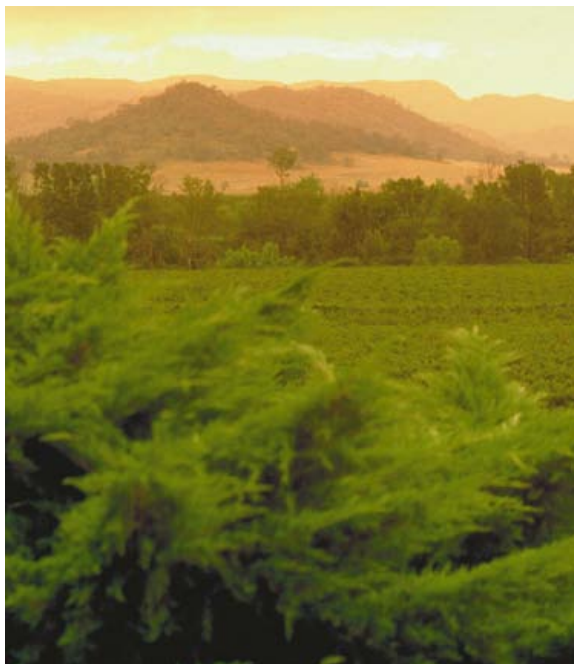


IMAGE COURTESY OF SCREEN HUNTER

entering an NCT Covenant, landholders are advised to seek the opinion of an expert valuer on the question of whether entering the NCT Covenant has changed the value of the property.

- **State land tax:** land within the conservation area under an NCT Covenant *may* be exempt from state land tax. The value of land for the assessment of land tax may be reduced by the value of the proportion of the land that is included in the conservation area (e.g. if 60% of a property is included in the conservation area, the land tax liability may be reduced by 60%).
- **Local council rates:** there is no automatic exemption from rates where a landholder has an NCT Covenant. However, local shires and councils *may* choose to grant rates exemptions for the land that falls within the conservation area. If a local council does grant a rate exemption, the rate liability can be reduced by the proportion of the property that is included in the conservation area. So if 70% of a property is included in the conservation area then rates can be reduced by 70%. The NCT can assist in contacting local councils to make a request for rate exemption.
- **Local Land Services rates:** an NCT Covenant does not entitle a landholder to an exemption from rates payable to Local Land Services. However, a landholder *may* be able to have the carrying capacity of their property reassessed to take account of any restrictions imposed by the NCT Covenant. In this case, they would still need to pay the base rate that is applicable to all properties over a certain size but would not be liable to pay the rates based on the carrying capacity of the land. Such a rates reduction is not an entitlement; rather it is at the discretion of the relevant authority.

## Landscape types best suited to NCT Covenants

The NCT runs a targeted covenanting program in particular areas of the state. At the time of writing this guide, *Benefiting from biodiversity*, the NCT was operating a covenanting program in the Lower Hunter which seeks to protect core woodland habitat for threatened native birds (e.g. the regent honeyeater).

Based on the current NCT funding program (at time of publication) they are primarily focusing on covenanting lands within the scope of existing target programs. Lands falling outside these requirements can still seek NCT assistance and a covenant, but would most likely need to bear the cost associated with the development and application of the covenant on the land.

The NCT will consider applying a covenant to any land that (i) has high biodiversity value in the local, regional or national context, and (ii) is able to provide access to specialist assessors to visit your land to determine the value and possibility of having an NCT Covenant applied to the land. NCT properties therefore might include properties with:

- unusually high biodiversity or that support regional vegetation communities in good condition
- ecological communities that are poorly represented in existing public reserve systems
- critical habitats or populations of threatened species
- ecosystems that play a key role in the interconnected nature of the environment; for example, wildlife corridors, communal roosting and nesting sites or migratory bird habitat – also, properties that provide protection from soil erosion or water pollution.

## Complexity of NCT Covenants

The application of an NCT Covenant is not overly complex. The basic procedure is described below.

1. A landholder applies for an agreement with the NCT. The NCT will then assess the property's suitability.
2. If an application is successful, a meeting will be held between the landholder and the NCT to discuss management options for the conservation area and what is to be achieved.
3. NCT staff will conduct biodiversity surveys of the property and establish monitoring points.
4. The NCT will prepare a draft covenant and draft plan of management. Landholders can propose changes to the documents and discuss the terms with the NCT (it is recommended that independent legal advice is sought at this stage in the process).
5. Once the documents are agreed to and finalised, a surveyor is engaged to survey the conservation area and prepare a survey diagram.
6. The NCT Covenant and plan of management are signed by both parties.
7. The NCT Covenant is lodged with the Department of Finance and Services and registered on the certificate of title to the property.
8. The landholder will be included in the NCT Stewardship Program.
9. The plan of management is reviewed within five years.

## CASE STUDY

### Eagles Drift: using a Nature Conservation Trust Covenant

The owners of the 576 ha property Eagles Drift placed a Nature Conservation Trust Covenant over the woodland areas of their property, an area of around 90 ha. The NCT agreement provided the owners with incentive payments that funded weed and feral animal control activities and fencing off the woodland from the operational areas of the farm.

The NCT Covenant allows cattle grazing to occur on the site via a commitment to only graze areas around the woodland for a maximum of three months every year and for no more than two weeks at any one time.



### Considerations prior to signing an NCT Covenant

- Landowners should seek independent legal advice before entering into an NCT Covenant.
- Consent is required from all landowners and entities that have an interest in the land; for example, a mortgage provider will need to co-sign the NCT Covenant.
- An NCT Covenant is applied to the land title and will bind future landowners to the conditions of the covenant.

### Strategic considerations for the support of NCT Covenants on private land

It is important to note there is flexibility in the application of an NCT Covenant as a landholder can choose areas of a property that will be included in the conservation area. It is common to exclude areas occupied by homes and domestic animals. This mechanism can therefore be used on commercial farms by identifying a specific section as the conservation area, with commercial farming continued on the remainder of the property. The NCT Covenant will only apply to the conservation area and will not affect the other parts of the land.

### Where to go for further details

**Nature Conservation Trust:**

<http://nct.org.au/supporting-land-owners/legal-protection-for-land/>

**Hunter Local Land Services:**

Paterson Office  
816 Tocal Road (Private Bag 2010)  
Paterson NSW 2421  
Ph: 4930 1030  
Fax: 4930 1013

<http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/>



# Property Vegetation Plan

<b>What is the opportunity?</b>	Landscape protection through the application of a Property Vegetation Plan under the <i>Native Vegetation Act 2003</i> (NSW) and the <i>Native Vegetation Regulation 2005</i> (NSW).
<b>What are the benefits?</b>	Returns may include direct financial support, rates reduction and access to technical experts and resources.
<b>What land types are suitable?</b>	Property Vegetation Plans can be applied to any land with native vegetation present. A PVP is typically used to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protect native vegetation from development</li> <li>• gain approval to harvest native vegetation as part of private native forestry activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Who do I contact to learn more?</b>	Hunter Local Land Services. (See page 44 for details.)

## Benefits of Property Vegetation Plans

Landowners may choose to implement a Property Vegetation Plan (PVP) on at least part of their property for a number of reasons, including being able to:

- undertake private native forestry activities (see Section 2: Commercial opportunities)
- secure offsets associated with that development and clearing
- apply for native vegetation incentive funding
- protect native vegetation for future generations.

As such, there is often a monetary incentive for a landholder to seek a PVP. There are no costs to a landholder to prepare a PVP as the assessment is done by Local Land Services (LLS), unless a landholder chooses to get independent legal advice first. However, the PVP must be undertaken with consideration for the ongoing protection of biodiversity values.

Landholders with approved PVPs are given a free high-resolution satellite image of their property, and may be eligible for financial assistance to help

with conservation initiatives such as revegetation plans, maintenance plans, fencing and soil erosion control.

A PVP sets out land management requirements to be undertaken on the land, and landowners should ensure they are financially able to undertake the required actions for the term of the PVP (often in perpetuity), although costs may be offset through grants from LLS.

There are no tax exemptions or concessions, and no local government rate reductions available for entering into a clearing PVP.

## Considerations prior to executing a PVP

- Landowners may wish to seek independent legal advice.
- Consent is required from all landowners and entities that have an interest in the land; for example, a mortgage provider will need to co-sign the PVP.
- A PVP is listed on the title of the property and will therefore bind any future landowners to the terms of the PVP.

## Landscape types best suited to PVPs

PVPs are a key mechanism under the native vegetation laws in NSW and are designed to provide protection of native vegetation across the NSW landscape. As such, a minimum requirement for land to have a PVP executed is the presence of native vegetation.

The process for developing a PVP is based on the application of an objectively based scientific tool – the environmental outcomes assessment methodology (EOAM) – that assesses a range of relevant variables. This ensures that the PVP is based on relevant ecological data and the offsets meet certain scientific criteria.

The EOAM draws information from the datasets listed below to determine any impact and necessary offset or protection of native vegetation:

- threatened species profile database
- vegetation benchmarks database
- over-cleared landscapes database
- over-cleared vegetation types database

## CASE STUDY

### Stewarts Brook PVP

Terry O'Brian is a Stewarts Brook landholder who joined forces with his neighbours to protect an ecologically significant bushland corridor joining Woolooma National Park with Mount Royal National Park in the Upper Hunter.

In 2012, Terry entered into a Property Vegetation Plan under the *NSW Native Vegetation Act 2003*. The plan covered a 310 ha area of snowgum, mountain gum woodland, grassy box woodland, subalpine grassland and riparian vegetation.

With funding through an incentives program from Local Land Services (the administering body of the Act) Terry was able to fence off the area from stock and commit resources for ongoing weed and pest animal control for the 15-year term of the PVP.

'I had no intention of using the area for primary production so I decided to fence it off for regeneration, and to simply enjoy it,' explained Terry, who often spends time away from his Gundy home to camp on the property with his family. 'There are plenty of animals up there, including wombats, quolls and many species of native birds, wallabies and kangaroos.'

Among the various vegetation communities, the PVP area contains remnants of endangered grassy box woodland, a vegetation type that has historically suffered from land clearing and grazing pressures across the Hunter.

Terry currently runs a herd of 40 cattle on other paddocks on his property and will undertake occasional controlled grazing in the PVP area to manage weeds. PVPs give landholders a unique opportunity to participate in nature conservation alongside grazing practices on their land.



- coastal thinning general database
- major rivers database
- important wetlands database
- soil subregions database
- invasive native scrub species database.

### Strategic considerations for the support of PVPs on private land

A PVP is an agreement between a landholder and Hunter LLS. As such, Council will be notified when a PVP is executed so this can be included on the property s149 certificate so that it binds future landowners.

### Where to go for further details

#### Hunter Local Land Services:

<http://hunter.lls.nsw.gov.au/land-and-water/native-vegetation/property-vegetation-plans>

#### Office of Environment & Heritage:

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/vegetation/pvp.htm>

#### Environmental Outcomes Assessment Methodology (EOAM):

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/vegetation/130788EOAMNVR13.pdf>

#### Hunter Local Land Services

Paterson Office

816 Tocal Road (Private Bag 2010)

Paterson NSW 2421

Ph: 4930 1030

Fax: 4930 1013

# Landholder Management Agreement

<b>What is the opportunity?</b>	Financial support to undertake the actions included in a Landholder Management Agreement (LMA). This is a contractual arrangement allowed under the <i>Local Land Services Act 2013</i> (NSW).
<b>What are the benefits?</b>	Direct funding to undertake contracted activities. Technical support, resources and advice.
<b>What land types are suitable?</b>	Rural land holdings that would provide outcomes that support the objectives and outcomes of the Catchment Action Plan. Lands most suitable for an LMA would have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• native vegetation present – provide protection and conservation</li> <li>• adjacent to state lands or farm lands – actively manage pest incursions</li> <li>• adjacent to waterways – reduce erosion and maintain water quality.</li> </ul>
<b>Who do I contact to learn more?</b>	Hunter Local Land Services. (See below for details.)

## Benefits of Landholder Management Agreements

Landholder Management Agreements (LMA) provide support to landholders to voluntarily protect and manage native vegetation, wildlife habitat, geological features, historic heritage and Aboriginal cultural heritage on their properties. The agreement is designed to clearly state the land management activities to be undertaken, typically these activities would seek to protect lands (e.g. fencing off priority areas, undertaking weed and pest eradication activities, etc.), or enhance areas of habitat (e.g. rehabilitation and restoration activities). The agreement is also the mechanism through which landowners identify and receive the funds required to undertake the stated management activities.

Entering into an LMA will also enable landholders to access specialist advice and resources related to the management actions included in the agreement.

It is worth noting that often the use of an LMA will not include the transfer of money from Hunter LLS to a landowner, but Hunter LLS will typically pay for a particular conservation activity to be undertaken; for example, a landholder may receive a one-off \$10,000 grant for fencing off a riparian zone and installing a water trough in paddocks to keep stock away from a river. Hunter LLS will be invoiced for the cost of the fencing, whether it is done by the landholder or by a contractor.

LLS provides a number of grant programs each year which properties under an LMA may be able to access. Details of regular grant opportunities are included in Section 4: Support programs.

## Landscape types best suited to LMAs

Hunter LLS will enter into an LMA with landholders related to a specific funding program included in their scope of works; as such, the LMA will focus on the issues of relevance to the LLS program

and will not have a specific set of landscape requirements associated with its use.

Hunter LLS will typically only use LMAs on private land to achieve positive outcomes associated with issues such as:

- landscape protection (e.g. installation of fencing)
- pest species management
- noxious and environmental weed management
- water quality (e.g. plantings to reduce erosion and sedimentation, installation of cattle watering stations rather than allowing access to riparian zones).

## Where to go for further details

**Hunter Local Land Services:**  
<http://hunter.lls.nsw.gov.au/>





# Wildlife Refuge

<b>What is the opportunity?</b>	Legal protection of land through the establishment a Wildlife Refuge on your property under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i> (NSW), Part 4, Division 11.
<b>What are the benefits?</b>	Support and advice on property management and planning, access to information and education sessions, contact with like-minded landowners.
<b>What type of land is suitable?</b>	Any property with habitat for native flora and fauna, natural landscape features such as rivers, wetlands, forests, ridges.
<b>Who do I contact?</b>	NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. (See page 48 for details.)

## Benefits of registering a Wildlife Refuge

A Wildlife Refuge declaration is free and flexible, enabling landholders to change the Wildlife Refuge status as required.

Landholders who declare a Wildlife Refuge join the Conservation Partners Program, which aims to encourage, support and assist landholders to manage areas for wildlife on their property. It also provides opportunities for landholders to share their experiences with other landholders and partner organisations, through:

- property management planning advice
- biodiversity surveying and assessment assistance
- information about wildlife management
- information about the role of wildlife and native vegetation in sustainable agriculture to control pest species, provide shade and shelter, manage salinity and control wind and water erosion
- links and contacts with like-minded people
- notes and news on particular management issues and ecology
- signs for landholders who have properties

- registered with the scheme
- access to education programs and activities
- assistance programs to support implementation of management plans.

Wildlife Refuge status is noted on the certificate of title to land and may affect the value of the land, although this can vary widely depending on the property, the market and the purchaser. Land valuation may increase because land management practices improve the quality of the land or a prospective purchaser may be willing to pay a premium for a property with high conservation values. In other cases, restrictions on the property – even when they can be revoked – may reduce the value of the property.

Please note that landholders may incur costs for obtaining independent legal advice before the refuge's establishment.

## Taxation

Taxation issues are complex and will depend on personal circumstances of each landholder but landholders *may* be able to get an income tax deduction if their land reduces in value (that is, produces a capital loss) as a result of registering a

Wildlife Refuge.

There are no tax concessions or local government rate reductions for Wildlife Refuge status.

## Support

The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) provides support and advice on property management and planning for owners of land with a registered Wildlife Refuge. It also provides access to information and education sessions, contacts with like-minded people, and helps keep landholders up to date on the latest in ecological property management news through the *Bush Matters* newsletter.

## Landscape types best suited for registering a Wildlife Refuge

Councils and private landowners can apply to the OEH to register a Wildlife Refuge on their land to:

- assist with the recovery of local wildlife species
- restore natural environments
- study wildlife and natural environments
- create a simulated natural environment.

As such, Wildlife Refuges may contain remnant native vegetation as well as habitat provided by

wildlife corridors, windbreaks, woodlots or farm dams.

Wildlife refuge declarations enable landholders to nominate part or all of a property where the land has native wildlife values and will be managed for this purpose. With whole-property management, landholders can continue to include agricultural and other land uses with the conservation of wildlife.

### Complexity related to registering a Wildlife Refuge

It is a relatively simple process to register a Wildlife Refuge, and OEH provides support throughout the process. The following steps outline the typical process for establishing a Wildlife Refuge:

1. Landholders apply for a Wildlife Refuge with the OEH Conservation Partners Program.

2. OEH assesses the property to determine its suitability.
3. If OEH agrees to establish a Wildlife Refuge they conduct a biodiversity survey which identifies the boundaries of the Wildlife Refuge.
4. OEH and the landholder will prepare a scheme of operations and property management objectives.
5. The Minister for the Environment and the Governor of NSW sign these documents and a notice of declaration of the Wildlife Refuge is published in the NSW Government Gazette.
6. Copies of the scheme of operations and other documents are provided to the landholder after the gazettal.
7. OEH arranges for the Wildlife Refuge to be registered on the certificate of title to the property, leaving the landholder to manage the land for conservation.

The time that it takes to set up a Wildlife Refuge will depend on how much information a landholder has about the conservation values of their land and how high the demand is for Wildlife Refuge declarations in the area.

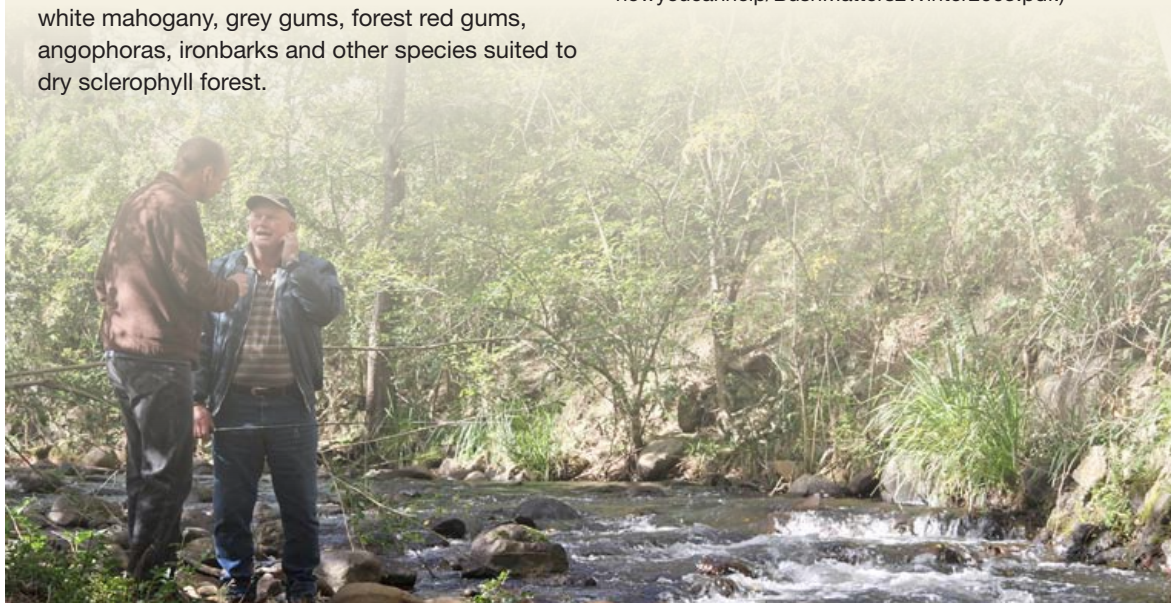
## CASE STUDY

### ‘Yeranda’: conservation and tourism

A 57 ha bush property, ‘Yeranda’ near Dungog, used both a Wildlife Refuge status and a Voluntary Conservation Agreement to successfully marry a small business with effective conservation activities. This approach protects the heavily timbered property’s tall stands of white mahogany, grey gums, forest red gums, angophoras, ironbarks and other species suited to dry sclerophyll forest.

The conservation activities of weed control and fire protection are funded through the tourism business operation.

(Courtesy *Bush Matters* newsletter, Winter 2003: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/howyoucanhelp/BushMatters2Winter2003.pdf>.)



### Where to go for further details

NSW Office of Environment & Heritage:  
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/cpp/wildliferefuges.htm>

# 4. Support programs

There are a number of programs available to private landowners that may not provide direct monetary benefits from being a member, but may provide access to funding opportunities as well as specialist resources, expert advice and access to landowner networks. The details follow in this section.





# Wildlife Land Trust

<b>What is the opportunity?</b>	Support to manage and protect land through joining the Wildlife Land Trust.
<b>What are the benefits?</b>	Access to advisory services, sanctuary and habitat design/property management advice; access to grant funding as a Wildlife Land Trust member.
<b>What type of land is suitable?</b>	Properties eligible for Wildlife Land Trust recognition need to be larger than 1 ha, have native vegetation present, and provide potential habitat and connectivity for fauna species.
<b>Who do I contact?</b>	Humane Society International. (See page 52 for details.)

## Benefits from registering a Wildlife Land Trust

The Wildlife Land Trust is designed for those landowners with an interest in, commitment to, conservation land management practices and biodiversity conservation on their property.

There is no cost to become a Wildlife Land Trust member, and membership provides access to information and resources to undertake conservation and management activities. Landholders also receive free signage to display on their gates, as well as access to networks of like-minded landowners, field days and events.

It should be noted that undertaking management actions in a sanctuary is voluntary, although membership does require the agreement that the following activities will not be undertaken:

- hunting of any animals
- commercial removal of timber products
- the use of pesticides or herbicides (except where used to eradicate invasive weeds)
- any other activity that is incompatible with the ongoing protection of wildlife and habitats.

Membership also provides the opportunity to apply for small grants from Australian and international sources.

The Wildlife Land Trust is a partner of the Private Land Conservation Grants program, which provides grant opportunities of up to \$2,000 per year to Trust members.

The Wildlife Land Trust network is one of the few international forums for landowners concerned with wildlife protection that exchanges experiences, advice and news with others around the world. Members can access an advisory service for biodiversity conservation, as well as sanctuary and habitat management advice. Members also receive access to advice on:

- implementing additional protective measures
- protecting the fauna or flora on the property from development or other threats
- managing the legal and ecological integrity of the property
- managing threats caused by development proposals in adjacent properties.



## CASE STUDY

### Wildlife Land Trust at Cedar Creek Wombat Hospital

The owners of Cedar Creek Wombat Hospital have been members of the Wildlife Land Trust since 2008, being just the 25th of the now 325 sanctuaries throughout Australia. During this time their efforts have been internationally acknowledged and celebrated through a feature in *Wildlife Lands*, and they have inspired many others to either join the program or get involved in wildlife care. Their WLT membership also meant they were eligible for funding through the NSW Private Land Conservation Grants program, and Cedar Creek Wombat Hospital will now feature on an educational wombat documentary.

Roz Holme, from the Cedar Creek Wombat Hospital commented, ‘We particularly enjoy the support the Wildlife Land Trust provides to wildlife carers, it’s something that you just don’t see with other programs. There’s always a strong WLT presence at wildlife rehabilitation conferences, and our property is one of several that is set to be featured in a wombat educational documentary thanks to our WLT membership and a Private Land Conservation Grant.’



PHOTO COURTESY ???

## CASE STUDY

### Wildlife Land Trust at Wattle Brae, Bocoble

Since Wattle Brae became a Wildlife Land Trust member sanctuary in 2013 the program has helped the owners realise their intentions for their land through in-perpetuity binding protection. Its high biodiversity values are now on the verge of permanent protection.

Owner Tjoan Lie says, ‘I joined the Wildlife Land Trust after reading about it in Humane Society International newsletters – it was very quick and easy. I had always intended to dedicate my property to conservation but signing up to the WLT really kicked things off, and with their support I’m now in the final stages of having my sanctuary protected forever through a Voluntary Conservation Agreement.’



### Landscape types best suited for registering a Wildlife Land Trust

Wildlife Land Trusts encourage stewardship of the land and can be applied to land parcels that have over 1 ha of native vegetation, even if they are a working farm, small hobby farm or dedicated purely to conservation.

The WLT is designed not to conflict with any other existing or future conservation mechanisms.

Participants in the Wildlife Land Trust program may be eligible for a number of grant opportunities through their efforts to protect areas of habitat and native bushland. Advice on various grant opportunities is included in the Common Grant Programs section on page 55.

### Where to go for further details

**NSW Office of Environment & Heritage:**  
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/cpp/wildliferefuges.htm>

**Wildlife Land Trust:**  
<http://www.wildlifelandtrust.org.au>

## Land for Wildlife

<b>What is the opportunity?</b>	Land for Wildlife is a voluntary property registration scheme.
<b>What are the benefits?</b>	Provision of site assessments, signage, information, regular newsletter and technical advice; central maintenance of records and data related to the property. Membership is free.
<b>What type of land is suitable?</b>	Land with areas of biodiversity importance and/or wildlife habitat.
<b>Who do I contact?</b>	Central Coast and Lower Hunter Regional Coordinator. Local Land Services. Community Environment Network. (See below for details.)

### Benefits from joining Land for Wildlife

Land for Wildlife is suitable for those landowners with an interest in contributing to nature conservation in their local area, but not wanting to enter into a binding legal agreement to do so. The Land for Wildlife program is free to join and is not legally binding and offers free land management advice, workshops, field days, regular newsletters and opportunities to meet other like-minded landholders.

Benefits and assistance to Land for Wildlife participants include:

- free environmental property assessments
- advice on how to manage environmental issues including wildlife habitat and weeds
- advice on integrating wildlife conservation with other land management practices, including farming (Land for Wildlife members on the Central Coast have access to the Regional Seed Bank)
- newsletters and information about wildlife and management for conservation
- support to undertake management and conservation activities
- signage to display on their property.

It should be noted that increased management activities may, in some cases, increase the land value. Furthermore, a prospective purchaser may acknowledge the conservation value of the land and be willing to pay a premium for a property with these values.

Participants in Land for Wildlife may be eligible for a number of grant opportunities through their efforts to protect areas of habitat and native bushland. Advice on various grant opportunities is included in the Common Grant Programs section on page 55.

There are no tax concessions or local government rate reductions for Land for Wildlife.

### Landscape types best suited for Land for Wildlife

Land for Wildlife is primarily a non-binding support program for landowners with vegetated landscapes, habitat for a variety of species, and an interest in conserving wildlife on their property. As long as properties have these attributes, they will likely be eligible to become members.

Once an application to join has been received by the Community Environment Network (the group

facilitating Land for Wildlife in the region), a site assessment will be undertaken to determine site suitability and to commence the development of specific land management advice that matches the land parcel in question. The landowner will also receive newsletters, alerts to field days, technical advice and information on grant funding.

### Where to go for further details

**Community Environment Network:**  
<http://www.cen.org.au/projects/land-for-wildlife-topmenu-233>





## Common Grant Programs

There are a number of common grant programs available to private landholders to support land management activities and biodiversity activities, details of these opportunities are below.

Grant purpose	Fund name	Funding organisation	Details
<b>Restoration and rehabilitation</b>	Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation	NSW Environmental Trust	<p>The aim of the Restoration and Rehabilitation program is to facilitate projects run by community organisations and government entities working to prevent or reduce environmental degradation of any kind. Through these projects, we also aim to improve the capacity of communities and organisations to protect, restore and enhance the environment.</p> <p>The objectives of the Restoration and Rehabilitation program are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• restore degraded environmental resources, including rare and endangered ecosystems</li> <li>• protect important ecosystems and habitats of rare and endangered flora and fauna</li> <li>• prevent or minimise future environmental damage</li> <li>• enhance the quality of specific environmental resources</li> <li>• improve the capacity of eligible organisations to protect, restore and enhance the environment</li> <li>• prevent or reduce pollution.</li> </ul> <p>Grant applications for projects from \$5,000 to \$100,000 are accepted.</p>

Link to fund website: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/restoration.htm>

Grant purpose	Fund name	Funding organisation	Details
<b>Land management</b>	Biodiversity Program	Hunter Local Land Services (LLS)	<p>The Hunter LLS Biodiversity Program is an on-ground works program designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• address key threats to biodiversity habitat connectivity, quality and condition in targeted areas adjoining the Barrington Tops World Heritage Area</li> <li>• increase landscape connectivity and enhance biodiversity habitat in targeted corridors across the Hunter LLS region as part of a response to climate change.</li> </ul> <p>This program will provide incentives for landholders to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protect and enhance native vegetation by addressing key threats to biodiversity in areas adjacent to the Barrington Tops World Heritage Area</li> <li>• protect, enhance and establish native vegetation in key strategic biodiversity connectivity corridor areas in the Hunter LLS region.</li> </ul> <p>Hunter LLS will consider providing financial support through this program for the following works in identified key strategic areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing threats to existing native vegetation such as stock grazing, weeds, fire and pest animals.</li> <li>• Protection and enhancement of existing native vegetation, including terrestrial, riparian and wetland vegetation. Projects greater than 50 hectares in size are preferred.</li> <li>• Protection and enhancement of native vegetation regrowth. Projects greater than 20 hectares in size are preferred.</li> </ul> <p>Revegetation of native vegetation through planting or increasing the rate of natural regeneration. Projects greater than 10 hectares in size are preferred.</p>
Link to fund website: <a href="http://hunter.lls.nsw.gov.au/our-region/grants-funding-scholarships">http://hunter.lls.nsw.gov.au/our-region/grants-funding-scholarships</a>			
<b>Protecting threatened species</b>	Saving Our Species	NSW Environmental Trust	<p>The Saving our Species Partnership Grants program is a contestable grants program seeking to achieve long-term outcomes for threatened species in NSW.</p> <p>Funded by the NSW Environmental Trust, the program will encourage partnerships between government, the community, non-government organisations and corporations to protect and conserve our most vulnerable plants and animals.</p> <p>Individual grants of between \$300,000 and \$1,000,000 are available</p>
Link to fund website: <a href="http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/savingourspecies/about.htm">http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/savingourspecies/about.htm</a>			
<b>Protecting Aboriginal places</b>	Protecting Our Places	NSW Environmental Trust	<p>The aim of the Protecting Our Places program is to protect land that is culturally significant to Aboriginal people and to support education projects about the environment and its importance in Aboriginal life.</p> <p>The objectives of the program are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to restore or rehabilitate Aboriginal land or land that is culturally significant to Aboriginal people</li> <li>• to educate Aboriginal and other communities about the local environment and the value Aboriginal communities place on their natural environment.</li> </ul> <p>Grants of between \$2,000 and \$35,000 are offered.</p>
Link to fund website: <a href="http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/pop.htm">http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/pop.htm</a>			

Grant purpose	Fund name	Funding organisation	Details
<b>Manage risk to farming enterprises</b>	Farm Innovation Fund	NSW Government's Rural Assistance Authority	<p>The Farm Innovation Fund is an incentive-based initiative to assist farmers within NSW to identify and address risks to their farming enterprises, improve permanent farm infrastructure, ensure long term productivity and sustainable land use plus aiding in meeting changes to seasonal conditions.</p> <p>Typical environmental activities loans are provided for include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• soil conservation</li> <li>• erosion control</li> <li>• woody / noxious weed / serrated tussock control</li> <li>• solar power conversions.</li> </ul> <p>A loan of up to 100% of the net, GST exclusive cost of the works to a maximum of \$250,000, with a total of \$250,000 outstanding at any one time.</p>
Link to fund website: <a href="http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/assistance/farm-innovation-fund">http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/assistance/farm-innovation-fund</a>			
<b>Tree planting</b>	20 Million Trees Competitive Grants	National Landcare Program	<p>The Australian Government has committed to working with the community to plant 20 million trees by 2020 to re-establish green corridors and urban forests. This initiative will deliver real environmental benefits at the local level through community participation in re-establishing native vegetation, providing habitat to support our threatened species and sequestering carbon from the atmosphere. These in turn will help to create greener spaces to improve the liveability of our cities and towns.</p> <p>Applications for grant funding between \$20,000 and \$100,000 are accepted.</p>
Link to fund website: <a href="http://www.nrm.gov.au/national/20-million-trees/competitive-grants">http://www.nrm.gov.au/national/20-million-trees/competitive-grants</a>			
<b>Community involvement in the local environment</b>	SUEZ environnement Community Grants program	SUEZ Environnement	<p>The SUEZ environnement Community Grants program will partner with organisations that fit with our core philosophy of supporting local participation in social and environmental projects which help create a more sustainable future.</p> <p>Two core objectives of the funding program are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encourage community involvement and improve the quality of the local environment</li> <li>• develop environmental awareness and inspire participation in sustainable activities through education.</li> </ul> <p>Grants offered are for any amount between \$500 and \$5,000.</p>
Link to fund website: <a href="http://suez-envcommunitygrants.com.au/apply">http://suez-envcommunitygrants.com.au/apply</a>			
<b>Biodiversity conservation</b>	Small Environmental Grant Scheme	Norman Wettenhall Foundation	<p>The objectives of the Small Environmental Grant Scheme is to support biodiversity conservation projects in Australia that are concerned with one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitoring, collecting, and recording data</li> <li>• community education</li> <li>• community capacity building (training)</li> <li>• research and science</li> <li>• sustainable land management.</li> </ul> <p>Grants for up to \$10,000 are typically awarded, but more funding may be granted at the discretion of the Foundation.</p>
Link to fund website: <a href="http://nwf.org.au/grants/small-environmental-grants/">http://nwf.org.au/grants/small-environmental-grants/</a>			

Grant purpose	Fund name	Funding organisation	Details
<b>Biodiversity conservation</b>	Community Grants	Australian Ethical Investment	Australian Ethical Investment donates 10% of its profits to charitable, benevolent and conservation projects through its Community Grants program. They seek applications from organisations seeking full or partial funding for specific projects that will efficiently deliver tangible outcomes that help the planet, people and/or animals. No grant limits are provided.
Link to fund website: <a href="https://www.australianethical.com.au/community-grants/">https://www.australianethical.com.au/community-grants/</a>			
<b>Eucalypt establishment and conservation</b>	Small Grants Program	Bjarne K Dahl Trust	Through its Small Grants Program the Trust provides support to individuals, organisations and the community for the undertaking of eucalypt education, promotion, cultivation, establishment and conservation activities. Grants are capped at \$15,000 and are generally made for up to a 12-month period – timeframes may be flexible depending on grantseekers needs and the approval of the Board of Managing Trustees.
Link to fund website: <a href="http://dahltrust.org.au/grants/">http://dahltrust.org.au/grants/</a>			
<b>Private conservation</b>	Private Land Conservation Grant Program	Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife	This grant opportunity provides small grants to support NSW landowners who have a conservation protection mechanism on their land, and for education and training in conservation. funds can be used to buy equipment and/or materials to protect or improve the conservation value of land covered by a conservation mechanism. Grants of between \$1,000 and \$55,000 are available depending on the type of conservation mechanism applied to the land in question.
Link to fund website: <a href="http://www.fnpw.org.au/foundation-grants/private-land-grants-nsw">http://www.fnpw.org.au/foundation-grants/private-land-grants-nsw</a>			
<b>Connectivity</b>	Great Eastern Ranges (GER) Grants Program	The Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife	The grants program supports the delivery of projects that will contribute to the success of the continental-scale GER Program. Projects must contribute to one or more of the objectives of the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect Landscapes and ecosystems – Improve the connectivity, condition and resilience of landscapes and ecosystems and halt further decline and loss of species.</li> <li>• Linking landscapes and people – People working together in locally organised and managed regional partnerships to improve the connectedness and resilience of landscapes.</li> <li>• Communicate effectively – Improve the transfer of knowledge, skills and practices through community engagement, involvement and education.</li> <li>• Apply knowledge – Improve understanding of species, ecosystems and local landscapes and their requirements for long term health.</li> </ul> Funding amounts are variable.
Link to fund website: <a href="http://www.fnpw.org.au/foundation-grants/great-eastern-ranges-grants-program">http://www.fnpw.org.au/foundation-grants/great-eastern-ranges-grants-program</a>			

Grant purpose	Fund name	Funding organisation	Details
<b>Protection of the natural environment</b>	Purves Environmental Fund	Purves Environmental Fund	<p>The charitable purposes of the Fund are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protect and enhance the natural environment</li> <li>• enhance the protection of Australia's unique biodiversity for the benefit of future generations through the protection of native species and the ecological processes that support them, particularly in the primary production landscape</li> <li>• provide information and education about the natural environment and to improve the Australian community's understanding of the urgent need for greater sustainability</li> <li>• support scientific research and field projects that are aimed at supporting catalytic work to find solutions for important environmental issues that are not currently supported by environmental groups or government.</li> </ul> <p>Funding amounts are variable.</p>
Link to fund website: <a href="http://www.purvesenvirofund.org.au/apply-for-funding.html">http://www.purvesenvirofund.org.au/apply-for-funding.html</a>			
<b>Paddock rehabilitation</b>	Whole of Paddock Rehabilitation	Greening Australia	<p>The Whole of Paddock Rehabilitation (WOPR) scheme helps farmers restore the productivity of degraded or cleared farmland while creating large areas of new habitat for native wildlife. The whole paddock is rested from grazing and revegetated with little or no fencing. Stewardship payments are made to farmers to compensate for some loss of production while the trees and shrubs are growing. When they are big enough, stock can be reintroduced to enjoy better pasture as well as shade and shelter. The new vegetation also provides homes and food for wild species.</p> <p>Funding amounts are variable.</p>
Link to fund website: <a href="http://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/project/whole-of-paddock-rehabilitation">http://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/project/whole-of-paddock-rehabilitation</a>			
<b>Conservation</b>	Grant Program	N Kirby Foundation	<p>Provides grants to charitable, educational and technical bodies throughout Australia in the areas of health, education, technology and science, art, literature, and the conservation, management and development of Australia's natural resources.</p> <p>Grants range from \$500 to \$100,000 and the average grant is around \$4,000.</p>
Link to fund website: <a href="http://www.kirbyfoundation.com.au/about-us/index.php">http://www.kirbyfoundation.com.au/about-us/index.php</a>			



# Further reading

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**Disclaimer**

This document is intended to provide landholders in the Hunter Region with information on the various opportunities available in the region to conserve biodiversity on their properties. While all care has been taken in the development of the booklet, any landowner considering utilising any conservation mechanism is recommended to seek legal advice to ensure they undertake appropriate due diligence. It should also be noted that at the time of publication the NSW Government is undertaking a review of all state biodiversity legislation. Hence, during 2015–16 there may be significant changes to the mechanisms discussed in this booklet.

This document has been compiled in good faith, exercising all due care and attention. Hunter Councils does not accept any responsibility for inaccurate or incomplete information. Readers should seek professional advice when applying information in their specific circumstances.

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