

# Cessnock Biodiversity Strategy



Biodiversity Strategy  
Cessnock City Council  
2013-2017

Part 2 Implementation Plan

Natural Environment Planning  
Planning & Environment

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### Version History

V1.0 Presented to CCC Environmental Strategy & Management Committee for Comment 8 May 2013.

V2.0 – Amended version post Public Exhibition

V3.0 – Adopted Cessnock City Council 17 September 2014

## 1 Aim

The aim of Part 2 of the Cessnock Biodiversity strategy is to provide the action plan for Cessnock City Council to strategically maintain and improve biodiversity values across the LGA for future generations.

## 2 Objective

### 2.1 Overall Objective

The overall objective of the Cessnock biodiversity strategy is to set in place a number of processes, mechanisms and initiatives which will lead to improved biodiversity protection and resilience for future generations through:

1. The adequate identification, protection and enhancement of areas of biodiversity value on all land tenure.
  - a. This can to be achieved by addressing threats and providing incentives.
  - b. Increasing community perception and engendering a value for biodiversity and environmental assets.
2. Council compliance with all state and federal legislation in relation to biodiversity in its own operations in order to limit our exposure to liability for breach of environmental laws and to set a standard for our community and lead by example.
3. When development occurs there is no net loss to biodiversity – ideally “maintain or improve” the biodiversity assets (in accordance with state legislation).
4. Implementation of planning directives which have been adopted through the Cessnock 2020 integrated planning process.

Overall the Biodiversity Strategy seeks to find a balance between the competing demands on the resources available in our local government area to ensure that future generations have the opportunity to experience the benefits of a biodiverse environment.

### 2.2 Partners

Partners in the delivery of the action plan are those who will be providing direct input or expertise into the action. An appendix identifies them as acronyms and these are used throughout the Action table.

## **3 Rationale**

This action plan has been developed taking into consideration a number of key issues, many which have been identified in the accompanying Part 1. For clarity they are summarised as follows;

### **3.1 Key Regional Strategies**

The reviews of the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy and Regional Conservation Plan are currently underway and are due late in 2013 and early 2014 respectively. These strategies are tied to the Regional Sustainability Plan (RSP) which is being driven by the Australian Government. The outcome of this plan will be a Strategic Assessment under the federal Environment Act which will prioritise and offer protection to identified areas for their biodiversity values.

In addition the development and adoption of the revised Catchment Action Plan and the development of actions to deliver on this plan are currently underway. This will provide further clarity to CCC on the priority areas for biodiversity management

### **3.2 Key Legislative Reviews**

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and the Local Government Act are currently being reviewed. The EP&A Act will, if the direction given in the white paper comes to fruition, have a much greater strategic role and will see significant changes to Local Environment Plans and Development Control Plans. Issues with these plans in the Cessnock LGA were listed as a key driver for the development of a strategic biodiversity plan.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

The above processes, especially the Regional Strategic Plan, have seen a significant investment from government in the collection of biodiversity focussed data, and the analysis of this data to determine priority areas. This will provide very clear direction for CCC in relation to the future management of biodiversity within the coming 12 months.

It is with the above considerations that this Action plan is restricted to a four year timeframe as at its completion the strategic management of biodiversity within the LGA will have the benefit of much greater information from which more robust decisions can be made and made in a way that fits the emerging legislative framework. In addition the action plan is somewhat reflective of the resources available within the organisation to deliver on the plan considering the quantum of inputs to be assessed.

## 4 Implementation Plan

### 4.1 Identification of Cessnock LGA's Biodiversity Assets

Code	Action	Priority	Timeframe	Lead/ Partners	Funding required?	Linkage
A 1	Develop inventory of biodiversity assets within Cessnock LGA	High	1yr	CCC	Nil	
A 2	Maintain inventory as part of Council's information systems (records and GIS)	High	1yr	CCC	Nil	
A 2.2	Determine usability and accessibility of a range of data as identified in background paper.	High	6 Months	CCC , Aus Gov		
A 2.3	Investigate HCCREMS as a repository for regional scale biodiversity information	Med	1 year	CCC	Nil	
A 3	Ensure updated data is available from relevant sources	High	6 months	CCC, HCCREMS, LPI, NSW Gov, Aus Gov.	In House	
A 4	Identify data gaps and develop action plan to acquire data	High	1yr	CCC, NSW Gov, Aus Gov	Unknown	
A 5	Develop Community Engagement Plan to facilitate improved community perception and value of biodiversity assets.	High	6 Months	CCC, community	Unknown	
A 6	Make information available to community, where appropriate.	Med	2yr	CCC	Nil	
P 1	Identify spatially, preliminary priority areas for Council consideration and recommendation into planning processes (eg Lower Hunter Regional Strategy/ Growth Plan)	High	2 months	CCC	Nil	This will give an initial indication of CCC's priority sites for protection within future regional plans.

BFT 1	Develop in partnership a biodiversity prioritisation process for identifying highest priority biodiversity sites across the LGA	High	1yr	CCC DoPI	Unknown	BFT utilised in RCP 2006. Outcome of RSP will strongly influence
BFT 2	Ensure consideration of HCCRCMA Biodiversity focus areas as identified in the 2013-2013 CAP.	High	1 yr	CCC, HCCRCMA		
BFT 3	Ensure inclusion of data from RSP SEWPac studies are included in the BFT process if adopted	High	1yr	CCC, OEH		
WP 1	Ensure future zones within the planning framework are truly reflective of land capability and biodiversity values	High	2 years	CCC DoPI, community	Nil	Planning Act review

#### 4.2 Protection and enhancement of areas of biodiversity value – addressing threats

Code	Action	Priority	Timeframe	Lead/ Partners	Funding required?	Linkage
T 1	Undertake risk assessment on potential threats to CCC LGA biodiversity, identify knowledge gaps.	High	1 year	CCC, community	In house	
TF 1	Ensure environmental assets are fully included in revised Bushfire Risk Management Plans and that treatment strategies are appropriate.	High	1 yr	CCC, RFS	In House	
TF 2	Promote the development of Hotspots training in areas where appropriate	Med	2 years	CCC, RFS, Community	Unknown	
TF 3	Identify areas with increased bushfire risk due to climate change and integrate results into TF 1.	Med	2 years	CCC, RFS,	Unknown	
ISP 1	Review and update CCC Weeds Strategy and Weed Action Plan.	Med	2 years	CCC, Hunter Central Coast	Nil	

				Weeds		
ISP 2	Review regional vertebrate pest management plan and identify Council actions.	Med	2 years	CCC, OEH, LLS	Nil	
TCC 1	Review for currency and Council adoption of Cessnock Climate Change Adaptation report (2010).	High	1 year	CCC, Consultant	\$10K	HCCRCMA CAP Strategy 1.5
TCC 2	Implement Cessnock Climate Change Adaptation Plan Actions (6.3 Environmental Management and Protection).	High	1 year	CCC, HCCREMS	Nil	
CSG 1	Inform CCC of CSG developments and potential impact upon biodiversity.	High	As required	CCC	Nil	
Bios 1	Review NSW Biosecurity Strategy for applicability to CCC	Moderate	2 Years	CCC, DPI		

#### 4.3 Protection and enhancement of areas of biodiversity value - incentives

Code	Action	Priority	Timeframe	Lead/ Partners	Funding required?	Linkage
IP 1	CCC strengthen its partnership with CMA (LLS)	High	1 year	CCC	Nil	HCCRCMA CAP Strategy 2.1
IP 1.1	CCC make strong representation to CMA when they develop their action plan for CAP	High	1 Year	CCC	Nil	
IP 2	CCC investigate and where appropriate enter partnerships with others (eg GERI, CEN)	High	1 year	CCC	Nil	
IP 3	CCC investigate incentives and promote to community – Biobanking, carbon sequestration	Moderate	2 year	CCC, Aus Gov, NSW Gov.	Nil	
IP 4	CCC determine position on receiving and managing land that has BioBanking agreement	Moderate	2 years	CCC, NSW Gov	Nil	

IP 5	CCC actively promote, and where feasible, apply for biodiversity related grants to undertake key projects.	High	When available	CCC, community	Nil	
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#### 4.4 Council taking the lead by setting environmental standards

Code	Action	Priority	Timeframe	Lead/ Partners	Funding required?	Linkage
EMS 1	Council review its current Environmental Management System	High	1 Year	CCC	Yes	
EMS 2	Council undertake Environmental Risk Audit of practices (operational and advice/regulation provision)	High	1 Year	CCC, EPA	Yes	EMS 1
EMS 3	CCC integrate best practice environmental management into its engineering guidelines.	High	1 Year	CCC	Nil	
EMS 4	Council staff trained in undertaking Review of Environmental Factors for maintenance works.	High	1 Year	CCC, NSW Gov	Yes - unknown	
EMS 5	Data collected through REF processes (either internal or outsourced) be fed into biodiversity assets register.	Moderate	2 Year	CCC	Nil	
RM1	Develop implementation plan for Roadside Environment Program	High	1 year	CCC, HCCREMS	Yes	

#### 4.5 Mechanisms for “maintain or improve” biodiversity assets

Code	Action	Priority	Timeframe	Lead/ Partners	Funding required?	Linkage
OFF 1	Council adopt standard brief for rezoning proposals to comprehensively assess biodiversity impacts	High	1 year	CCC	In House	
OFF 2	Council ensure environmental assessment is	High	1 Year	CCC	In House	



	undertaken to a industry recognised standard.					
OFF 3	Council to review and develop policy that gives direction on environmental issues with relation to land use planning (including offsets).	High	1 Year	CCC/OEH	In House	

#### 4.6 Integrating with other programs for value adding.

Code	Action	Priority	Timeframe	Lead/ Partners	Funding required?	Linkage
C 1	Link with existing KOB / Tidy Towns to encourage increased biodiversity elements in activities.	Moderate	2 years	CCC, KOB	Unknown	
C 2	Strengthen partnerships with CMA/LLS Officers undertaking projects within Cessnock LGA	Moderate	2 Years	CCC		
C 3	Strengthen the existing partnerships with Hunter Council's on common biodiversity management issues.	Moderate	1 year	CCC	Nil	

## 4.7 Acronyms

Aus Gov	Australian Government –primarily the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Populations and Community (SEWPaC)
CCC	Cessnock City Council
DoPI	NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure
EPA	NSW Environment Protection Authority
HCRCMA	Hunter Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority
HCCREMS	Hunter Central Coast Regional Environment Strategy
KOB	Keep Australia Beautiful
LGA	Local Government Area
LLS	Local Land Services
LPI	Land & Property Information - NSW Government
NSW Gov	NSW Government – may be a range of agencies
OEH	NSW Office of Environment and Heritage
RFS	NSW Rural Fire Service