

Caring for our Country Business Plan 2009-10

Glossary and acronyms

These pages have been extracted from the full document which is available at: www.nrm.gov.au/publications/books/business-plan.html

© Commonwealth of Australia 2008

Selected passages and maps may be reproduced provided due acknowledgement is made. Permission will be required for the reproduction of any photographs.

The Australian Government acting through the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has exercised due care and skill in the preparation and compilation of the information set out in this publication. Notwithstanding, the Australian Government, its employees and advisers disclaim all liability, including liability for negligence, for any loss, damage, injury, expense or cost incurred by any person as a result of accessing, using or relying upon any of the information in this publication to the maximum extent permitted by the law.

Glossary

Acid sulfate soils—Acid sulfate soil is the common name given to soils and sediments containing iron sulfides. When exposed to air through drainage or disturbance, these soils produce sulphuric acid, often releasing toxic quantities of iron, aluminium and heavy metals. Acid sulfate soils are formed when seawater or sulfate-rich water mixes with land sediments containing iron oxides and organic matter in a water logged situation in the absence of oxygen. They are often found in low-lying areas such as coastal plains, wetlands and mangroves.

Adequate—Under the National Reserve System, 'adequate' refers to how much of each ecosystem should be included within a protected area network in order to provide ecological viability, resilience and integrity of populations, species and communities.

Bioregions—Bioregions are large areas of similar climate, geology, hydrology, landform, soils and native ecosystems such as the Australian Alps, the Nullarbor Plain or the Wet Tropics. Under-represented bioregions are those bioregions that have less than 10 per cent of their area protected in reserves.

Comprehensive—Under the National Reserve System, 'comprehensive' refers to the inclusion within protected areas of samples of all the ecosystems discernable at a regional scale.

Condition of native vegetation—The capacity to support the full range of native species that might be expected to use a stand of vegetation of a particular type under natural circumstances. For a given patch, it can be assessed relative to the average characteristics of a mature and long-undisturbed patch of the same vegetation type.

Connectivity—The location and spatial distribution of natural areas in the landscape to provide species and populations with access to resources (food, breeding sites and shelter), increase habitat availability and facilitate population processes (dispersal, migration, expansion and contraction) and enable ecological processes (evolution, water, fire and nutrients). Connectivity is most likely to occur where there are a series of close habitat areas arranged like 'stepping stones'. Corridors of vegetation only provide connectivity where there is scientific proof that the width is sufficient to benefit specific species.

Ecological communities—Interacting organisms living together in specific habitat and listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)*.

Ecological character—The structure and inter-relationships between the biological, chemical and physical components of a wetland. These derive from the interactions of individual processes, functions, attributes and values of the ecosystems.

Ecosystem—A biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment. Ecosystems are identified at various scales.

Endemic species—Unique species not naturally found elsewhere.

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)—The Australian Government's central piece of environmental legislation. It provides a legal framework to protect and manage nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places. The Act focuses Australian Government interests on the protection of matters of national environmental significance, with the states and territories having responsibility for matters of state and local significance.

High conservation value aquatic ecosystems (HCVAE)—Includes rivers, wetlands, floodplains, lakes, inland saline ecosystems, groundwater dependent ecosystems and estuaries. These aquatic ecosystems include ecosystems in coastal areas, but do not include the marine environment. An aquatic ecosystem with high conservation values are those recognised through a number of key agreements and conventions at the national level including Ramsar Convention, United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, World Heritage Convention, Japan Australia Migratory Bird Agreement, Bonn Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals and China Australia Migratory Bird Agreement.

Matters of national environmental significance—Listed threatened species and ecological communities, Listed migratory species, Ramsar wetlands of international importance, World Heritage Areas, National Heritage places.

Natural resource management—The sustainable management of Australia's natural resources (our land, water, marine and biological systems) to ensure our ongoing social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

National Water Quality Management Strategy (NWQMS)—The strategy addresses recommendations outlined in a water quality improvement plan, Ramsar management plan, or ecological character description. More information is available at www.environment.gov.au/water/quality/nwqms/index.html.

Peri-urban—Peri-urban properties are those based on the perimeter of urban areas (hence the term 'peri') and can range from around 5 to 100 acres in size. These zones have often had a long history of agricultural and horticultural use and land settlement, and in some cases this means that natural resources have been degraded.

Ramsar—An intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

Regional natural resource management organisations—There are 56 of these organisations across Australia also known as regional NRM bodies, NRM Groups or in some cases Catchment Management Authorities. These are the organisations that undertake to plan, coordinate and support natural resource management at the regional level. The Australian Government recognises these organisations and their important role by allocating a level of guaranteed funding that must be used to deliver Caring for our Country targets.

Representative—Under the National Reserve System, 'representative' is comprehensiveness considered at a finer scale (Interim Bio-geographic Regionalisation of Australia subregion), and infers that the variability within ecosystems is sampled within the reserve system.

Resilience—The capacity of an ecosystem to tolerate disturbance without collapsing into a qualitatively different state that is controlled by a different set of processes. A resilient ecosystem can withstand shocks and rebuild itself when necessary. Resilience in social systems has the added capacity of humans to anticipate and plan for the future.

Traditional ecological knowledge—Refers to a cumulative body of knowledge, know-how, practices and representations maintained and developed by Indigenous peoples with extended histories of interaction with the natural environment. These sophisticated sets of understandings, interpretations and meanings are part and parcel of a cultural complex that encompasses language, naming and classification systems, resource use practices, ritual, spirituality and worldview.

Traditional fire regimes—Fire regimes that use traditional knowledge and management techniques by Indigenous people to burn their country early in the dry season. Traditional fire regimes create a mosaic of burnt and unburnt country and reduce the number of late season fires that are more damaging to native animals and productivity.

Value for money—All costs indicated in a project proposal must be justifiable and reasonable and demonstrate that the proposed methodology is the most cost-effective option.

Water for the Future—The Australian Government’s \$12.9 billion national plan for water. Under Water for the Future, the government has allocated \$3.1 billion to purchase water in the Murray–Darling Basin over 10 years.

Weeds of National Significance—In 1998, the Australian, state and territory governments endorsed a framework to identify which weed species could be considered Weeds of National Significance within an agricultural, forestry and environmental context. States and territories nominated 71 weed species to be assessed and ranked under this framework.

World Heritage Areas—World Heritage Areas are each listed for one or more specific outstanding universal values and represent the best examples of natural and cultural places in the world. These areas transcend national identities and include outstanding examples of major stages of the earth’s ecological, biological or geological processes, or contain important and significant natural habitats for biodiversity conservation, or are associated with unique, living cultural traditions.

Acronyms

ASRIS—Australian Soil Resource Information System database

ASS—Acid sulfate soil

CEO—Chief executive officer

CRC—Cooperative Research Centre

EPBC—*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)*

EVC—Ecological Vegetation Class

GBR—Great Barrier Reef

HCVAE—High conservation value aquatic ecosystems

IBRA—Interim Bio-geographic Regionalisation of Australia

IPA—Indigenous Protected Areas

MERI—Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement

NGO—Non-government organisation

NRM—Natural resource management

NRS—National Reserve System

NWQMS—National Water Quality Management Strategy

TRaCK—Tropical Rivers and Coastal Knowledge

WHA—World Heritage Area

WONs—Weeds of National Significance

