The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment is developing a conservation plan for Western Sydney to protect threatened plants and animals, while supporting the delivery of housing, infrastructure and open and green spaces.

Strategic Conservation Planning

The population of the Western Parkland City is projected to grow from 740,000 in 2016 to 1.1 million by 2036, and to well over 1.5 million by 2056.

A thriving, liveable Western Sydney needs to include areas for the many native plants and animals in the region, and publicly accessible open and green spaces for local communities.

Strategic conservation planning is a landscape scale approach to assessing and protecting biodiversity upfront in planning for large scale development. It involves assessing potential impacts to biodiversity from future development and using that information to avoid and minimise impacts on threatened plants and animals.

In NSW, Strategic conservation planning describes the aligned delivery of strategic biodiversity certification under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and strategic assessment under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

The Plan will address impacts on biodiversity from urban growth through a Conservation Program that includes commitments and actions designed to improve ecological resilience and function over the long-term.

Scope of the Plan

The Plan covers an area of approximately 200,000 hectares across eight local government areas: Wollondilly, Camden, Campbelltown, Liverpool, Fairfield, Penrith, Blacktown, and Hawkesbury.

The Plan will support the delivery of the NSW Government Growth Areas program and the development of major transport corridors to meet the long-term transport needs of Western Sydney, as outlined in the Future Transport Strategy 2056.
The Growth Areas are:

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

Transport links are currently proposed across Western Sydney. These transport links include:

- rail (potentially passenger and freight rail)
- roads (including motorways).

A map of the Growth Areas, transport corridors and Plan Area is provided as a separate attachment.

Impact Assessment

An impact assessment is being undertaken to understand and identify the impacts of the proposed development on biodiversity and other values regulated under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

The Department is collecting data on biodiversity values including on-ground surveys for the preparation of the Cumberland Plain Assessment Report. The report seeks to meet state and federal statutory requirements and will be used to inform the development of the Plan. More information on Assessment Report can be found in the Impact Assessment fact sheet.

Avoidance of impacts

Avoiding and minimising impacts to biodiversity is a critical step in reducing the impacts of the proposed development and the need for commitments and actions to offset those impacts.

As part of developing the Plan, the Department is determining the urban capable footprints of the Growth Areas to avoid and minimise impacts on biodiversity values where possible.

Conservation Program

The Plan’s Conservation Program will include commitments and actions to help protect Western Sydney’s biodiversity. These may include establishing reserves or biodiversity stewardship sites, undertaking ecological restoration of native habitat, managing pest animals and weeds, and implementing a surveillance and compliance program. Some of the programs may operate over the life of the Plan, to 2056, while others could be more targeted in their operation.

Planning measures including environmental protection zoning, a biodiversity overlay and development controls would be used to protect areas that have strategic biodiversity value, for example potential conservation lands or areas where development will be avoided.

Monitoring the effectiveness of the Conservation Program would occur through a dedicated Evaluation Program. More detail is available in the Conserving Biodiversity and Habitat, Managing Threats and Building Capacity and Implementation and Delivery fact sheets.

Have Your Say

The NSW Government is currently engaging with the community and stakeholders in Western Sydney through a collaborative engagement process until December 2019.

We are now seeking your feedback during the collaborative engagement process to help shape the draft Plan. Statutory exhibition of the draft Plan and draft Assessment Report is proposed to follow in 2020. If you’d like to provide comments, or have any questions, please contact us at: 
biodiversity@planning.nsw.gov.au

If English isn’t your first language, please call 131 450. Ask for an interpreter in your language and then request to be connected to our Information Centre on 1300 305 695.