

Ku-ring-gai Council

POLICYFauna Management Policy

Version Number 3

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Fauna Management Policy

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Related	Commonwealth
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	 Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 Biosecurity Act 2015 Companion Animals Act 1998
	 Crown Land Management Act2016 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 Fisheries Management Act 1994
	 Local Government Act 1993 National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 State Environment Planning Policies SEPP 19 Bushland in Urban Areas Vegetation SEPP (Vegetation in Non-Rural Areas) 2017 Koala SEPP 2020 Sydney Regional Environmental Plan 20 – Hawkesbury Nepean River;
Related	 Sydney Regional Environment Plan (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005 (and associated DCP). Supporting this policy is Council's:
Policies (Council & Internal)	 Biodiversity Policy (2016) Climate Change Policy (2020) Companion Animal Management Plan (2020-2025) Ku-ring-gai Biodiversity & Riparian Lands Study Ku-ring-gai Development Control Plan (DCP) Ku-ring-gai Local Environmental Plan 2015 (KLEP) Ku-ring-gai Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020) Natural Areas Plan of Management (Draft) Recreation in Natural Areas Strategy (2020) Urban Forest Policy (2020)
	 KFFR PoM St Ives Showground and Precinct Lands PoM (draft)

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Version History

Version Number	Version Start Date	Version End Date	Author	Details and Comments
1	2007	09/08/2016	Peter Davies	First version
2	10/08/2016	16/11/2021	Marnie Kikken	Policy scope has been reduced to focus on the management of native and non-indigenous pest fauna within the Ku-ring-gai Local Government Area (LGA), with the management of companion and domestic animal management addressed in Council's Companion Animal Management Plan 2010.
3	16/11/2021		Jacob Sife	Policy scope has been updated to address legislative changes and Council policies and plans

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Policy Statement

The Ku-ring-gai Local Government Area (LGA), situated approximately 16 kilometres from the city of Sydney and covering an area of 85 km², is bound by Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park to the north, Garigal National Park to the east, Lane Cove National Park to the west and spans three major catchments (Middle Harbour, Lane Cove River and Cowan Creek).

Council manages over 1,160 ha of land identified as natural areas covering a diverse and unique landscape due to its elevation, high rainfall, alluvial soils, deep gullies, and 177 km of waterways and creeks. Ku-ring-gai's natural areas are associated with 24 vegetation communities which includes seven threatened ecological communities listed under the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) and four listed under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. These vegetation communities provide habitat for more than 700 native plant species and over 300 vertebrate species, including 18 threatened flora species and 30 threatened fauna species (13 mammal, 14 bird, two amphibian and one reptile species). Many more are considered likely to occur based on the habitat and vegetation types within Ku-ring-gai.

Taxon / Group	Numbers of species found in the Ku-ring-gai LGA ¹
Reptiles	~54
Amphibians	~18
Birds	190+
Mammals	~49
Invertebrates	170+

Table 1: Fauna species in the Ku-ring-gai LGA

The mosaic of bushland and urban forest in the LGA includes habitat within protected reserves as well as public parks, golf courses, sports fields, streetscapes and private gardens, providing important corridors for biodiversity. Both large areas of bushland and isolated patches of habitat, including individual trees with hollows and roosting sites, all contribute to the total habitat within the LGA and form Council's Greenweb, Ku-ring-gai's biodiversity reservoir.

Australia's biodiversity is under increased threat and has continued to decline since European colonisation² with more than 1,700 species and ecological communities known to be threatened and at risk of extinction³. The key threats to species are loss, degradation and fragmentation of habitat, invasive species and altered fire regimes. In NSW, invasive species have been identified as a threat to 70% of the species, populations or ecological communities listed under the BC Act. This is second only to clearing of native vegetation in terms of the number of species affected.

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¹ BioBase (2020), Ku-ring-gai Council's flora and fauna database

² Australian Government (2016), State of the Environment Report.

³ Australian Government, Threatened species and ecological communities (2020) www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/species

There are a range of key threatening processes identified at both a national and state level that are, or are likely to, affect fauna species and populations in Ku-ring-gai. These include:

- Invasive species such as the European rabbit and red fox, can prey on native fauna and compete for resources.
- Weeds which aggressively invade areas displacing native animals. Weeds, however, can also provide fauna habitat.
- Diseases exotic fungal infections, viruses and other pathogens can weaken and kill native species.
- Habitat loss or change from clearing of native vegetation and inappropriate fire regimes, to the loss of hollow bearing trees, and the gathering of bush rock for suburban gardens.
- Climate change changes to rainfall or fire regimes and alterations to the natural flow regimes of
 rivers and streams and their floodplains and wetlands can impact on species directly through loss
 of climatic habitat or indirectly through changes to species composition or ecological
 communities.

All native birds, reptiles, amphibians and mammals (except the dingo) are protected in NSW under the BC Act. Hundreds of these species are listed as threatened, affording them additional protection under state legislation. Some fish species are also protected and listed as threatened under the *Fisheries Management Act 1994*. Ecosystems rely on complex interactions between species of plants and animals, bacteria, fungi and the abiotic environment. The existence of one species may depend on the health of another.

Native fauna are highly valued within the Ku-ring-gai community. They play a significant role in ecological processes and maintaining ecosystem function through the pollination of plants, the dispersal of seeds, insect control, recycling of nutrients and many other essential ecosystem services, as well as contributing to human culture, wellbeing and quality of life. However, in managing fauna habitat (including Ku-ring-gai's Urban Forest), Council recognises the need to balance and manage potential risks to life, property, infrastructure and the environment.

Purpose and objectives

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a framework for Council to manage native and invasive species within the Ku-ring-gai Local Government Area (LGA).

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- Maintain, protect and enhance Ku-ring-gai's diverse native fauna and their habitat;
- To identify, protect and enhance biodiversity corridors and green infrastructure within Ku-ringgai's Green Grid;
- Assist the community to positively co-exist with native fauna on public and private land;
- Control the population and spread of invasive species, reduce their impacts and prevent the establishment of new invasive species;
- Stop the decline of and support the recovery of listed threatened fauna species and populations and to manage key threatening processes associated with these species;

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- Implement a fauna monitoring and research program, which incorporates on ground surveys and seeks to support and integrate research from other organisations, to inform Council's fauna management program;
- Form collaborative partnerships with a range of stakeholders to facilitate positive fauna management outcomes.

Scope

This Policy focuses on the management of native and invasive species on public and private land within the Ku-ring-gai LGA. Council's Companion Animal Management Plan supports this Policy and provides the framework for the management of companion and domestic animals within the Ku-ring-gai Local LGA, in accordance with the *NSW Companion Animals Act 1998* and supporting Regulation 2018.

This Policy supports, and should be implemented in accordance with the national, state and regional legislation, policies and strategies listed in this Policy.

Responsibilities

Council's Manager Environment and Sustainability has overall responsibility for compliance with this Policy.

Implementation of this Policy is the responsibility of the General Manager and all Directors, Managers, Supervisors and Council Staff.

Implementation program

The importance of protecting and enhancing Ku-ring-gai's native fauna and their habitat, as well as managing impacts of invasive species, is reflected in the long-term objectives of Council's Community Strategic Plan, namely:

- A community empowered with knowledge, learning and information that benefits the environment
- Our bushland is rich with native flora and fauna.

Implementation framework

Council will adopt the following management principles in the implementation of this Policy:

Precautionary principle

Under the *Local Government Act 1993*, Councils are required to manage the local environment with consideration to the principles of ecologically sustainable development, including the precautionary principle. Management decisions will be guided by "careful evaluation to avoid, wherever practicable, serious or irreversible damage to the environment, and an assessment of the risk-weighted consequences of various options."

Evidence based management

Sound underlying scientific principles together with the most up to date science, research and effective management practices will inform decision-making and enable best practice.

Adaptive management

Biodiversity management must incorporate an adaptive approach that is flexible and inclusive, and continually improves by testing, monitoring and applying evidence-based management.

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Enhance ecosystem resilience

The diversity of structure and the maintenance of ecological processes are critical for fauna habitat requirements. Biologically diverse ecosystems have greater adaptability to changing environments making them more resilient to external threats.

The more diversity there is within an ecosystem, the more resilient it is to external threats and changes. Some ecosystems are more dependent upon ecosystem services (e.g. pollination) provided by selective species, supporting that some species play a larger role in ecosystem maintenance.

In-situ conservation

Biodiversity is best conserved in-situ where landscapes, ecosystems and ecological processes maintain species in their natural habitats. Complementary ex-situ conservation activities should support in-situ conservation.

Natural disturbance

Restoring natural disturbance regimes, including fire (frequency, intensity and season) and hydrological flow patterns, and natural herbivory processes at local and regional scales is important for fauna species reliant on these environments.

Landscape management

Landscape-level assessments of conservation priorities and development should inform the application of the mitigation hierarchy. They should be conducted in advance of project decisions and investments and should identify important conservation values and potential direct, indirect and cumulative impacts to these values.

Implementation activities

To meet the objectives of this Policy, the following activities will be implemented across a number of sections of Council:

Management activity		Strategy & Environment			Development & Regulation		Operations				Community	
		Urban & Heritage Planning	Property	Development Assessment	Compliance & Regulation	Infrastructure Services	Traffic and Transport	Waste & Cleaning Services	Technical Services	Visitor Experience & Events	Corporate Communications	
Invasive Species												
Implement an invasive species control program in accordance with relevant legislation and current best practice.						√						
Encourage new and upgraded infrastructure design that restricts use by invasive species, for example, bird proof bins and appropriate entry design for artificial hollows, where appropriate.	V	√				V			V			

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		trategy vironm		Development & Regulation		Operations			Community		
Management activity	Environment and Sustainability	Urban & Heritage Planning	Property	Development Assessment	Compliance & Regulation	Infrastructure Services	Traffic and Transport	Waste & Cleaning Services	Technical Services	Visitor Experience & Events	Corporate Communications
Community Engagement											
Provide educational information to residents on their responsibilities and the best methods to minimise impacts of invasive species as well as nuisance native fauna species on private property (such as magpies, brush turkeys and possums).	V					V					
Deliver community programs to increase the community's connection with and understanding of native fauna and to enhance urban wildlife and its habitat, primarily through Council's: • Environmental Volunteering, Environmental Programs, Fauna monitoring and Smart Schools • Visitor and Wildflower garden education programs	٧									٧	V
Provide educational information to residents on living with and protecting native fauna (such as feeding, handling, habitat creation and impacts such as fence design and lighting).	√									V	√
Native Fauna Protection	I.									I.	ı
Utilise statutory planning documents to protect native fauna (such as Biodiversity and Riparian controls within Council's LEP and DCP).	V	V		V	V	√					
Implement Council's fauna monitoring program (such as Eastern Pygmy-possum nest box monitoring and Grey-headed Flying-fox counts and extent mapping).	V					√					
Recognise and protect native fauna – including "nuisance" native fauna e.g. magpies, brush turkeys, arboreal and terrestrial termites etc (subject to extreme circumstances).	√	√	√	√	√	√			√		
Maintain and update Council's BioBase and Habitat Assets register to support education and land management.	V										
Provide information to ensure the appropriate capture or relocation of any protected fauna (that is, a referral to the relevant authority for issuing of a licence).	√					V					

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		trategy vironm		Development & Regulation		Operations				Community	
Management activity	Environment and Sustainability	Urban & Heritage Planning	Property	Development Assessment	Compliance & Regulation	Infrastructure Services	Traffic and Transport	Waste & Cleaning Services	Technical Services	Visitor Experience & Events	Corporate Communications
Implement and making decisions that are consistent with federal or state recovery plans and the NSW Threatened Species Priorities Action Statement (PAS). Including participation in the NSW Government's Saving our Species program.	√			V	√	√				√	
Assess and where relevant design planning proposals, development applications, complying development and Council works giving full regard to fauna and their habitat, including threatened species, populations or ecological communities, in accordance with the provisions of relevant legislation.	√	√		√	√	√	√		√		
Consider the provision of Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design (BSUD) elements within upgraded infrastructure projects, such as roads or sports fields, and in all components of the built environment.	V	V		√		√	V		V		
Installation of lights by or on behalf of Council are to minimise impacts to fauna with consideration of Council's Artificial Light Pollution Guidelines and other best practice documents.	√					√	√		√		
Integrate fauna habitat protection, enhancement and movement into Council's urban forest, bushland, fire and catchment management programs; including the retention of non-native flora species and the construction of artificial habitat, where appropriate.	√	√		V		√			V		
Create and expand Wildlife Protection Areas / formal reserves / Conservation Agreements, Biodiversity Stewardship sites and biodiversity corridors, where appropriate: To secure / improve habitat; Increase ecosystem resilience; and To promote the genetic diversity of native fauna	V					V					
Minimise disturbance to and protect areas of fauna significance (for example, the Ku-ringgai Flying Fox Reserve) by restricting access to these identified areas.	√					V					

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		trategy vironm		Development & Regulation		Operations			Community		
Management activity	Environment and Sustainability	Urban & Heritage Planning	Property	Development Assessment	Compliance & Regulation	Infrastructure Services	Traffic and Transport	Waste & Cleaning Services	Technical Services	Visitor Experience & Events	Corporate Communications
Implement broad scale habitat management for specific species.	√								√		
Record incidences of road kill and seek to implement best practice mitigation strategies to improve fauna road crossings / Green Grid connections.	√						V				
Consider innovative and new approaches to	√										
combat recognised threats to local fauna. Investigate opportunities and implement actions to improve fauna movement throughout the LGA; including: • Road crossings; • Green Grid; • Biodiversity corridor improvements; • Lighting solutions	V	V		V		V	V		V		
Report to relevant authorities, as appropriate, persons or circumstances causing harm to protected fauna where no licence has been granted or where an activity is going to have a significant effect on a threatened species or their habitat.	1			√					√		
Refer enquires regarding injured native fauna to wildlife care and rehabilitation organisations, licensed by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.	√					V					√
Domestic pets are to be managed in accordance with the <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i> and Council's <i>Companion Animal Management Plan.</i>	V			√	V	V					
Climate Change											
Implement actions to address climate change, such as: • Identification and promotion of ways to increase landscape permeability for fauna species range shifts (identification of species and ecosystems most at risk) • Strengthening the resilience and connectivity of existing protected areas by identifying strategic future habitats and corridors	V	V			٧	V					

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Management activity		Strategy & Environment			Development & Regulation		Operations				Community	
		Urban & Heritage Planning	Property	Development Assessment	Compliance & Regulation	Infrastructure Services	Traffic and Transport	Waste & Cleaning Services	Technical Services	Visitor Experience & Events	Corporate Communications	
Partnerships and Advocacy												
Proactively engage with State and Federal Government and other relevant agencies to influence policies and reforms that affect Council's fauna management program.	√	√				√						
Actively seek out opportunities to support and /or participate in regional and collaborative fauna management and research programs (conducted by universities and other institutions).	√					V						
Implement an annual fauna monitoring program, in partnership with the community, government agencies and other councils (where appropriate); to improve management and knowledge of species distribution, trends, threats and habitat.	1				V							
Partner with relevant rescue organisations to support efforts to reduce roadkill and respond to injured native species.	√					V	√					
Work with organisations/ agencies to improve domestic pet management in relation to impacts on native fauna.	√	V		V	V				V			

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Monitoring and evaluation

Council will monitor and report against this Policy as follows:

Objectives	Data application / indicator	Data collection / measurement
To maintain, protect and enhance Ku-ring-	Improvement in bushland condition rating for areas actively managed through	Bushland prioritisation matrix monitoring implemented.
gai's diverse native fauna and their habitat.	bushland site management plans. Maintain or improve the area of Council	Area of bushland actively managed by Council.
	bushland regenerated (annually).	Area of bushland actively managed by volunteers.
	Maintain and improve in-stream and	Number of creek bank restoration projects.
	riparian corridor health. Water quality maintained or improved.	Number of stormwater improvement devices installed.
		Macroinvertebrate sampling.
		Water quality monitoring.
	Improved bushland (habitat) condition as	Number of eco-burns conducted
	observed through the abundance of desirable species post burn and comparisons of changes in flora species	Burn history mapped (including season and intensity where possible)
	richness and composition before and after burning.	Lineal metres of protective fencing.
	Applied in environmental and development assessments and to inform management activities for positive fauna outcomes.	Species presence and distribution mapping regularly updated and made available to Council staff.
	Maintain or increase the number and / or extent of bushland reserves and their	Number and hectares of bushland reserves.
	protection status.	Greenweb mapping reviewed and updated.
	Greenweb extent maintained or increased.	Number of Wildlife Protection Areas / formal reserves / Conservation Agreements, Biodiversity Stewardship sites and biodiversity corridors created or expanded.
	Maintain or increase Ku-ring-gai's urban forest canopy (as informed by the Urban Forest Strategy).	Area of urban forest canopy.
To identify, protect and enhance biodiversity corridors	Greenweb biodiversity corridors reviewed, promoted, maintained or improved.	Canopy extent within biodiversity corridors improved or maintained.
and green infrastructure within Ku-ring-gai's Green Grid.	Green Grid Strategy created and implemented.	Number of Green Grids, including infrastructure, improved.

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Objectives	Data application / indicator	Data collection / measurement
To assist the community to positively co-exist	Community participation in native fauna educational events and programs.	Number of and attendance rates at native fauna educational events and programs.
with native fauna on	Downloads of online educational material.	Number of visits to Council website and
public and private land.	Council website and social media visits to native fauna information.	social media information on native fauna.
	Online educational materials.	Number of active Environmental Programs volunteers.
	Distribution of native fauna through Council's Environmental Programs (also known as WildThings)	Number of habitats/ fauna distributed through Environmental Programs.
To control the population and spread of invasive species, reduce their impacts and prevent the establishment of new invasive species.	Implement Council's pest management programs.	Number of actions within the targeted pest species programs implemented.
To stop the decline of and support the recovery of listed threatened fauna species and populations and to manage habitat and key threatening processes associated with these species.	Participation in the NSW Government Saving our Species programs for fauna. Participation in Federal threatened species recovery programs for fauna.	Number of Saving our Species programs activities, grants and/ or partnerships relating to fauna. Number of successful Saving our Species programs activities, grants and/ or partnerships relating to fauna. Number of Federal threatened species recovery program activities, grants and/ or partnerships relating to fauna.
To implement a fauna monitoring and	Participation in research projects.	Number of research projects delivered.
research program,	Research results inform fauna	Number of fauna monitoring sites.
which incorporates on ground surveys and seeks to support and integrate research from other	management activities (analysis of species and population trends). Implement Council's fauna monitoring	Number of fauna monitoring projects (such as Eastern Pygmy-possum nest box monitoring, Grey-headed Flying-Fox counts and extent mapping).
organisations, to inform Council's fauna management program.	program.	Maintenance of Council's fauna database (BioBase) and habitat mapping.
To form collaborative partnerships with a range of stakeholders	Saving our Species projects programs activities, grants and/ or partnerships relating to fauna delivered.	Number of Saving our Species programs activities, grants and/ or partnerships relating to fauna delivered.
to facilitate positive fauna management	Grant programs delivered.	Number of grants procured
outcomes.	Participation in partnership projects.	Number of partnership projects delivered. Number of community grants awarded.
	Community projects delivered.	

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Definitions

Term / Abbreviation	Definition
Adaptive management	Adaptive management is environmental management practice that accommodates uncertainty and responds to events as they unfold. It includes monitoring change over time, so that the results of management choices can be assessed and changes made if needed to improve future management.
BioBase	Ku-ring-gai Council routinely captures threatened species data and maintains it in a customised in-house database known as BioBase. Data is exchanged biannually between the NSW BioNet Atlas and BioBase so as to ensure the dataset is complete and up to date.
Biodiversity corridor	An area to facilitate the connection and maintenance of native flora and fauna habitats. Within the urban landscape, biodiversity corridors may be broken by roads and other urban elements and may include remnant trees and associated native and exotic vegetation. For further information, see the Ku-ring-gai Biodiversity & Riparian Lands Study (available on Council's website).
Biodiversity Stewardship Site	Council has adopted the creation of Biodiversity Stewardship Sites (previously known as BioBanking sites) within Council owned or managed land, in accordance with the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme (NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016). A Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement is the highest level of conservation agreement in NSW, enabling the landowner to manage and conserve a site in perpetuity.
Conservation Agreements	A Conservation Agreement is a joint agreement between landholders and the Minister for the Environment. Registered on the title of the land, the voluntary agreement provides permanent protection for the sites special features. Agreements are made under Division 12 in Part 4 of the NSW <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974.</i>
Fauna	All animal life (mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, fish and invertebrates).
Formal reserves	Formal reserves include:
	• Office of Environment and Heritage protected areas (e.g. Nature Reserves and National Park listed under the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974
	Ku-ring-gai Natural Areas as categorised under the NSW Local Government Act 1993
Invasive species	A non-indigenous species occurring, as a result of human activities, beyond its accepted normal distribution and which has an adverse effect on the environment, economy, or the community.
Key threatening process	The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 both provide for the identification and listing of key threatening processes. A key threatening process is a process which threatens or may threaten the survival, abundance or evolutionary development of a native species or ecological community.
Native fauna	Any animal-life that is indigenous to New South Wales or is known to periodically or occasionally migrate to New South Wales, whether vertebrate or invertebrate and in any stage of biological development.
NSW Threatened Species Priorities Action Statement	The NSW Threatened Species Priorities Action Statement (PAS) identifies strategies to help recover threatened plants and animals; establishes priorities to implement these strategies; identifies actions for all listed species, populations and ecological communities; and identifies actions to manage key threatening processes.
Nuisance	Fauna that although native, in certain circumstances has an adverse effect on the environment, economy, or the community.
Population	A group of organisms, all of the same species, occupying a particular area.
Precautionary principle	A principle of ecologically sustainable development whereby if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.
Recovery plans	A plan prepared for a species, a group of species, or for part of the range of a species under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> or NSW <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> . Recovery plans outline: the threatened species' critical habitat; the threats to the species; and detailed actions that will be undertaken, including the cost, timeframe and agency responsible for carrying out each action.
Saving our	The NSW Government conservation program that aims to maximise the number of threatened species that can be secured in the wild in NSW for 100 years and control the key threats facing our threatened plants

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Term / Abbreviation	Definition
Species	and animals.
Species	A level of biological classification comprising one or more populations of individuals capable of interbreeding to produce fertile offspring.
Threatening process	A threatening process is something that threatens, or could potentially threaten, the survival or evolutionary development of a species, population or ecological community.
Threatened (species, populations or ecological communities)	Flora or fauna species, populations or ecological communities found to be at risk of extinction as determined by the NSW Threatened Species Scientific Committee.
	Listed as threatened under State (<i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i>) and/or Commonwealth (<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>) legislation, under the following categories:
	presumed extinct
	critically endangered
	endangered
	• vulnerable
Urban Forest	All of the trees, other vegetation as well as the soil and water that support these. It includes the network of vegetation within both public and private ownership, encompassing the spectrum of vegetation growing within:
	Natural soils that exists independent of human involvement;
	Altered soils, including gardens, bioretention basins, raingardens;
	Engineered structures such as tree cells / vaults, vertical and roof top gardens.
Vegetation community	A group of plants occurring together to form a characteristic vegetation type.
Wildlife Protection Areas	Wildlife Protection Areas are declared under the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 for the protection of our unique native animals and their habitats. Domestic cats and dogs are restricted from entering a Wildlife Protection Area.

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