



Matt Kean
Minister for Energy and Environment

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW PROTECTIONS FOR HIGH VALUE CONSERVATION AREAS

The NSW Government has today announced the opening of nominations to identify and protect Areas of Outstanding Biodiversity Value (AOBVs) on both private and public lands across NSW.

Environment Minister Matt Kean said these new legal instruments will fill a gap in conservation measures in NSW by preserving key landscapes that protect a broad range of our natural heritage.

“I want to leave our planet in a better state for future generations and this is another tool to ensure areas of irreplaceable biodiversity on private and public lands across NSW can be protected,” Mr Kean said.

“Local communities or private landholders can now conserve areas that would otherwise not be captured or recognised through any other legal instrument, such as in National Parks.”

Once identified, AOBVs are an ‘automatic priority’ for investment by the Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT), meaning landholders can access funds to manage the land for conservation.

Chair of the BCT, the Hon Niall Blair said AOBV’s will help improve conservation especially on private land.

“The BCT already has a number of mechanisms that provide private landholders across the state a financial incentive to conserve biodiversity on their own properties,” Mr Blair said.

“This new mechanism will help us capture areas and pockets of high value biodiversity that otherwise may have slipped through the net.”

Identified by rigorous scientific assessment, AOBVs are designed to conserve high value conservation sites, threatened species or critical habitats. This includes climate refugia, migratory pathways or areas with a high variety of biodiversity values.

AOBVs can only be declared with landholders’ consent, with nominated areas assessed against key scientific criteria set out in the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. Further info available [HERE](#).

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Key Facts

- AOBVs are a new and innovative mechanism to protect special areas that contain irreplaceable biodiversity values important to the whole of NSW, Australia or globally
- AOBVs fill a gap in conservation measures in NSW. Unlike threatened species protections and the national park system, AOBVs can protect individual sites with significant biodiversity values on public or private land.
- AOBVs can preserve key landscape types that protect a broad range of biodiversity values.
- AOBVs are broader and more nuanced than similar conservation measures, identifying the special values or features in a landscape or on a site that should be preserved.

Four critical habitat declarations have been made under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*, which automatically became AOBVs when the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* commenced in 2017. More information is available [here](#).

- [Gould's Petrel – critical habitat declaration](#)
- [Little penguin population in Sydney's North Harbour – critical habitat declaration](#)
- [Mitchell's Rainforest Snail in Stotts Island Nature Reserve – critical habitat declaration](#)
- [Wollemi Pine – critical habitat declaration](#)