
NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust



Business Plan

2025-2026 to 2028-2029

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of NSW and recognise their ongoing connection to land, waters, biodiversity, and culture.

Aboriginal cultural values are connected to Country and are found in waterways, mountains, wetlands, floodplains, hills, sandhills, rock outcrops and within the biodiversity of these geological features.

These cultural values are often present on privately-owned land and are associated with ongoing cultural practices and learning.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and future and commit to genuinely collaborate and partner with Aboriginal people in private land conservation.

COVER

Murray Riverina Regional Team Leader Matt O'Connell discusses conservation plans with landholder David Sloane. Credit: Vince Bucello.

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Minister's foreword

Biodiversity in NSW is facing many pressures, with climate change, habitat loss and invasive species named by the *2024 NSW Biodiversity Outlook Report*¹ as among the most significant.

The NSW Government recognises our state's biodiversity is in crisis and urgent action must be taken to put nature on a path to recovery.

The *NSW Plan for Nature*², delivered by the NSW Government in July 2024, outlines a response to turn around the stresses on nature and leave a legacy future generations can continue to enjoy. We will follow that plan with the *NSW Nature Strategy* to guide public and private investment and action to protect, connect and restore ecosystems and landscapes across NSW.

Nationally, targets have been set in *Australia's Strategy for Nature 2024-2030*³ in response to the Global Biodiversity Framework's⁴ aims of halting and reversing biodiversity loss by 2030. These targets look to key drivers of biodiversity decline in Australia and include efforts to protect and conserve 30 per cent of Australia's land mass by 2030 and bring priority degraded areas under effective restoration by 2030.

The NSW Government has ambitions to better protect and restore the environment so current and future generations can prosper, and the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust is uniquely positioned to help meet such ambitions.

Through private land conservation agreements, it protects and enhances areas significant for the conservation of biodiversity and protects more than half a million hectares, in perpetuity, with private landholders who share a commitment to care for the land they are on and for the local habitat and species.

With more than 80 per cent of the state's land privately managed, the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust is well-placed to expand the National Reserve System's (NRS) comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) network of protected areas, protect threatened species and habitat and connect landowners with opportunities to manage and monitor conservation areas so biodiversity values are protected and enhanced.

Over the four years of this plan the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust will continue to deliver its highly sought-after conservation programs; monitor and support existing agreement holders to help them protect and enhance biodiversity; expand its work with Aboriginal landholders to embed cultural biodiversity knowledge, principles and practices into program design and delivery; and, source new investment and ideas to protect, connect and restore biodiversity on private land.

Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage

The Hon. Penny Sharpe, MLC

- 1 www.environment.nsw.gov.au/news/nsw-biodiversity-outlook-report-2024
- 2 www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/cabinet-office/resources/nsw-plan-for-nature
- 3 www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/biodiversity/conservation/publications/australias-strategy-for-nature
- 4 www.cbd.int/article/cop15-final-text-kunming-montreal-gbf-221222



How we align to state, national and global biodiversity goals

This Business Plan sets strategic priorities consistent with the *Biodiversity Conservation Investment Strategy (BCIS) 2018*⁵, and objects of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (NSW)*⁶, including our role in the NSW Biodiversity Offsets Scheme⁷, administered by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

Our plan extends our capacity to support the biodiversity conservation goals of the *NSW Plan for Nature*⁸, forthcoming NSW Nature Strategy, *Australia's Strategy for Nature 2024-2030*⁹ and Global Biodiversity Framework¹⁰.

Our expertise and market understanding will contribute to the NSW Nature Strategy, and this Business Plan will be reviewed against its goals when released.

By 2029 we will:

- Progress toward the BCIS target to protect 90 landscapes not represented, or inadequately represented, in Australia's protected area system.
- Ensure agreements managed with an agreed plan and annual payments are protecting BCIS conservation targets.
- Progress a target of 120,000 hectares of new in-perpetuity agreements and 200,000 hectares of private land under active management.
- Demonstrate monitoring biodiversity condition at funded agreement sites is being maintained or enhanced against baseline, or control, biodiversity data.
- Ensure agreements managed with an agreed plan and annual payments are meeting the conditions of their annual plans.
- Train a proportion of agreement-holders to monitor biodiversity on their conservation areas.
- Increase land manager skills and knowledge to identify and protect threatened species and habitats on their land and local environment.
- Increase the number of landholders and educators taking up our conservation education opportunities.
- Maintain the total number of offset obligations secured at between 70 to 80 per cent of all obligations ever paid into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund.
- Ensure fewer than 5 per cent of offset obligations, held by us, are older than three years.

5 www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/biodiversity/biodiversity-conservation-investment-strategy
6 legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-2016-063

7 www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/biodiversity/offsets-scheme

8 www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/cabinet-office/resources/nsw-plan-for-nature

9 www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/biodiversity/conservation/publications/australias-strategy-for-nature

10 www.cbd.int/gbf



The snow gums and grasslands of this Snowy Monaro property are protected forever by landholders who secured annual payments to manage what they know is a precious and special landscape.

How private landholders protect our biodiversity

Landholders across NSW have a deep affinity with the land they steward and a strong drive to protect it now and for future generations.

Formalising that stewardship extends to protecting or enhancing nature on their properties and creating habitat for species preservation. Their private land conservation efforts are an antidote to biodiversity decline, ease the pressures of habitat loss and contribute to Australia's National Reserve System (NRS) of public, indigenous and privately protected areas.

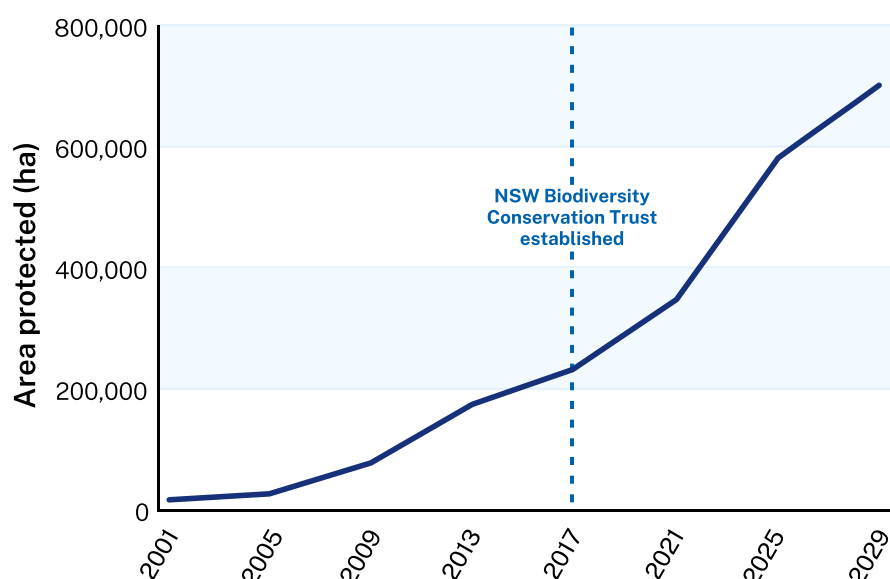
Through the period of the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust's last four-year business plan, covering the financial years 2021-2022 to 2024-2025, the organisation met and surpassed its goal to secure 200,000 hectares of new conservation areas.

Overall, since the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust started operations in 2017, landholder agreements have doubled the area of permanently protected private land conservation in NSW.

By the end of this business plan, landholders will expand the private land conservation community's efforts to permanently protect an area equal to Kosciusko National

Park – our state's largest publicly protected area and one of the largest conservation areas in Australia.

30 years of permanently protected private land in NSW



How we work with private landowners

We are trusted

Our private land conservation community expects us to be:

- reliable, fair and consistent.
- a responsible and efficient manager of funds.
- focused on securing best value for money conservation outcomes.



We are on-ground

We serve our private land conservation community by:

- ensuring we have staff near them who understand their local conditions.
- listening to, and valuing, the experiences of landholders and offering to engage honestly and directly.
- establishing relationships that support conservation goals.



We act with integrity

We meet expectations to improve our state's environment by:

- monitoring the ecological condition of privately managed conservation areas to a globally-recognised standard.
- setting clear and consistent assurance standards with agreement-holders.
- supporting agreement-holders to confidently meet these standards and realise their conservation goals.



We are here for the long-term

We put nature in the hands of future generations by:

- offering in-perpetuity land covenants with invested funds to manage conservation forever.
- building the capacity of the private land conservation community in NSW.
- building a bank of information about threatened species and habitat that will add value to future conservation planning.
- looking ahead to manage the climate and other impacts our agreement-holders may face.



Conservation agreement-holder Judy Frankenberg shares maps and plans of her conservation efforts with Regional Manager Dieuwer Reynders.



How we operate to protect and enhance biodiversity

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust operates under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (NSW) and is tasked with protecting and enhancing biodiversity on private land; promoting public knowledge and an appreciation of biodiversity; and, delivering a Biodiversity Offsets Program.

Our activity to protect biodiversity on private land across NSW:

- secure, long-term, agreements to protect threatened species and habitats.
- contribute to national efforts to establish a comprehensive, adequate and representative National Reserve System, and global efforts to protect 30 per cent of nature by 2030.
- assist landholders manage threats, such as invasive species.
- offer conservation education and guidance and worldclass ecological monitoring.

Our activity to enhance biodiversity on private land across NSW:

- enhance resilience to Climate Change by prioritising sites that improve landscape connectivity.
- offer education to support active management of local biodiversity.
- promote public knowledge of threatened species and habitats.

Our activity to deliver the Biodiversity Offset Program specifically:

- manage a Biodiversity Stewardship Payments Fund to secure biodiversity offsets using funds paid into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund.
- offers education and guidance to owners of Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement sites to manage and monitor their agreements.



Barbara Evison sits with NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust officer Adam Hook on the conservation area she and husband Thomas Evison manage.

NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust 2025-2026 to 2028-2029 Business Plan

Vision

Thriving private land conservation areas protecting our unique and diverse plants and animals.

Purpose

Partnering to protect and enhance biodiversity on private land.

Goals

Protect

An additional 120,000 hectares of privately-owned NSW land placed into permanent conservation agreements.

Enhance

An additional 200,000 hectares actively managed by private land conservation agreement-holders, inclusive of the 120,000 permanently protected.

Strategic priorities

Protect and enhance the natural environment in areas significant for the conservation of biodiversity.

- Innovative programs to protect, connect and restore priority conservation assets on private land.
- Amplify private land conservation through impactful partnerships, philanthropic investment and identified market opportunities.
- Support NSW landholders to maintain and enhance biodiversity.

Increase public knowledge about, and participation in, biodiversity conservation.

- Target promotion to influence NSW landholders to participate in private land conservation.
- Educational programs for identified landholding communities and future generations of environmental stewards to raise knowledge of, and an understanding for, biodiversity conservation on private land.

Secure strategic biodiversity offset outcomes.

- Drive biodiversity conservation outcomes to offset the impacts of development.
- Ensure developer payments into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund are invested in conservation outcomes.

Business enablers

People

Staff with purpose, direction, and a safe and collaborative work environment.

Data and science

Data and science to underpin rigorous ecological and program monitoring and to guide evidence-based decisions.

Collaboration

A culture of collaboration to maximise program outcomes.

Funds management and governance

Effective and transparent management of funds and programs.

Strategic priorities in focus

Strategic priority 1

Protect and enhance the natural environment in areas significant for the conservation of biodiversity.

Opportunity	By 2029 we will:
1.1. Innovate our programs to protect, connect and restore priority conservation assets on private land.	1.1.1. Deliver evidence-based private land conservation programs and mechanisms to achieve cost-effective, targeted and complementary conservation outcomes to increase the area protected by conservation agreements. 1.1.2. Enable restoration of degraded ecosystems through program innovation, building relationships, leveraging investment and aligning with emerging NSW Government restoration frameworks. 1.1.3. Include Aboriginal cultural biodiversity values as well as cultural land management principles and practices into all relevant program design and delivery. 1.1.4. Further embed climate scenarios and adaptation responses into the organisation's program design and delivery, and risk frameworks.
1.2. Amplify private land conservation through impactful partnerships, philanthropy and leveraging markets.	1.2.1. Increase awareness of private land conservation opportunities among stakeholders and target audiences. 1.2.2. Enter new partnerships and secure donations to scale conservation outcomes. 1.2.3. Innovate delivery mechanisms to secure large-scale conservation outcomes with partners.
1.3. Support our landholders to maintain and enhance biodiversity.	1.3.1. Support conservation-minded and motivated landholders with expert regional knowledge, grant opportunities, technical and educational resources, learning opportunities and other outreach activities, including citizen science projects. 1.3.2. Promote two-way learning and foster collaborative relationships with Aboriginal organisations and communities. 1.3.3. Implement adaptive management to ensure agreements remain fit for purpose and enable activity that could support transitions in a changing climate. 1.3.4. Build capability to resource customers with the tools to manage their agreements and achieve conservation outcomes. 1.3.5. Maintain the integrity of the organisation's protected area estate through agreement assurance processes.

SUCCESS FOR STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 LOOKS LIKE:

- Progress toward a BCIS target to protect 90 landscapes not represented, or inadequately represented, in Australia's protected area system.
- 100 per cent of agreements, managed with an agreed plan and annual payments, protect BCIS conservation targets.
- Progress toward a target of 120,000 hectares of new in-perpetuity agreements and 200,000 hectares of private land under active management.
- The biodiversity condition at funded agreement sites is monitored and reported to have been maintained, or enhanced, against baseline, or control, biodiversity data.
- Ensure agreements managed with an agreed plan and annual payments are meeting the conditions of their annual plans.
- A proportion of agreement-holders trained to monitor biodiversity on their conservation areas.

Australia's Strategy for Nature 2024-2030 alignment



Global Biodiversity Framework alignment



Strategic priority 2

Increase public knowledge about, and participation in, biodiversity conservation.

Opportunity	By 2029 we will:
2.1. Focused promotion to influence more landholders to participate in private land conservation.	2.1.1. Provide clear and concise information to those interested in NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust programs. 2.1.2. Improve and expand our digital communications, including the promotion of our landholder conservation achievements and program outcomes.
2.2. Provide targeted education to raise knowledge and understanding about the importance of biodiversity, and biodiversity conservation, on private land.	2.2.1. Deliver public education initiatives, including: • online adult learning opportunities. • a targeted school's program. • field-based learning opportunities. • community outreach and education projects. 2.2.2. Two-way learning opportunities between Aboriginal landowners and communities, and non-Aboriginal landowners.

SUCCESS FOR STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 LOOKS LIKE:

- Increasing numbers of land managers and other community members accessing our biodiversity education resources and demonstrating increased knowledge and skills.
- Increasing numbers of educators using our biodiversity education teaching resources.

Australia's Strategy for Nature 2024-2030 alignment



Global Biodiversity Framework alignment



Strategic priority 3

Secure strategic biodiversity offset outcomes.

Opportunity	By 2029 we will:
3.1. Deliver biodiversity conservation outcomes to offset the impacts of development.	3.1.1. Maximise the number of credits met on a timely like-for-like basis through credit purchase programs for obligations transferred to the Biodiversity Conservation Fund. 3.1.2. Secure credits through other statutory mechanisms where meeting timely like-for-like credit obligations is not practical. 3.1.3. Efficient handling of applications to establish conservation agreements that satisfy historical offset obligations. 3.1.4. Collaborate with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water on reforms and improvements to the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme.
3.2. Manage developer payments into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund.	3.2.1. Implement and maintain the statutory Biodiversity Offsets Payments Calculator. 3.2.2. Efficient handling of requests for information about, or to pay into, the Biodiversity Conservation Fund.

SUCCESS FOR STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 LOOKS LIKE:

- The total number of offset obligations secured is maintained between 70 to 80 per cent of all obligations ever paid into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund.
- Achieve and maintain 100 per cent of offset obligations being secured (and ideally purchased) within three years of being paid into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund.

Australia’s Strategy for Nature 2024-2030 alignment



Global Biodiversity Framework alignment



Business enablers in focus

Enabler 1	People
Provide staff with purpose, direction and a safe and collaborative work environment through leadership and investment in enabling practices.	1.1. Fulfil our health and safety duties and manage workloads to ensure the wellbeing of our staff. 1.2. Invest in training to maintain staff engagement, performance, and professionalism. 1.3. Continually improve the cultural competency of our Board, staff and contractors to ensure cultural knowledge, conservation values, principles and practices are understood and integrated in all we do. 1.4. Support effective workforce planning and recruitment at all levels.
Enabler 2	Data and Science
Data and science will underpin evidence-based decisions.	2.1. Drive strong data capability, culture, governance and integrity to ensure high quality data. 2.2. Ensure our data and information is secure, accessible, timely, reliable and supports decision-making. 2.3. Support the delivery and application of best practice science and research in the delivery of our conservation efforts. 2.4. Implement and refine our science-based value-for-money Biodiversity Assessment Metric to prioritise investment. 2.5. Implement and report on ecological outcomes through our rigorous and Accounting for Nature® accredited Ecological Monitoring Module.
Enabler 3	Collaboration
Collaborate to maximise program outcomes.	3.1. Target outreach to build relationships and support for our programs. 3.2. Leverage relationships and collaborations to amplify the impact of our strategic priorities. 3.3. Implement a co-investment model specific to our vision, purpose and goals. 3.4. Collaborate with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, and other government and non-government organisations to deliver our Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy.
Enabler 4	Funds Management and Governance
Our governance approach will ensure effective and transparent management of the assets we control and deliver high integrity programs that report clearly and efficiently.	4.1. Deliver prudent, long-term management of money and other assets held and invested to support program delivery for our landholders. 4.2. Uphold a culture of continuous improvement through audit and evaluation practices. 4.3. Comply with a comprehensive governance framework. 4.4. Ensure the efficient design and delivery of business processes.

Appendix 1

Alignment to Australia's Strategy for Nature 2024-2030

Aligned objectives	Aligned progress measures
Goal 1: Connect all Australians with nature	
Objective 2: Empower Australians to be active stewards of nature.	2B Number of people contributing information through citizen science programs. 2C Number and extent of terrestrial, aquatic and marine ecosystems managed for conservation such as privately managed protected areas, covenants or stewardship agreements. 2D Number and scope of public-private partnerships and cross-sector collaborations to look after nature.
Objective 3: Increase Australians' understanding of the value of nature.	3A Extent of activities to increase awareness of the importance of nature, including to human health and wellbeing. 3C Extent of funding delivered nationally for biodiversity from both private and public sector finance.
Objective 4: Respect and maintain Indigenous Ecological Knowledge and First Nations stewardship of nature.	4A Number of programs working with First Nations communities to support the appropriate protection, documentation and retention of Indigenous Ecological Knowledge. 4B Number of conservation and land, water and ocean management plans that have appropriately and equitably integrated First Nations peoples, partnerships, perspectives and Indigenous cultural knowledge. 4C Extent of recognition and use of Indigenous cultural knowledge in interpretation, practices and decisions relating to environmental management. 4E Number and extent of terrestrial and marine areas managed by First Nations peoples as part of Indigenous Protected Areas or other management or co-management arrangements.
Goal 2: Care for nature in all its diversity.	
Objective 5: Improve conservation management of Australia's landscapes, waterways, wetlands and seascapes.	5C Number and extent of areas, including significant ecosystems, protected and conserved by private landowners through stewardship or other arrangements. 5D Number of protected areas that include explicit consideration of future climate scenarios and adaptation responses in their planning and management. 5F Extent of effective restoration efforts underway in priority degraded areas across terrestrial, marine, coastal and inland water areas.
Objective 6: Maximise the number of species secured in nature.	6C Number of populations of threatened or near-threatened species protected through reserves or safe havens or by private landowners through stewardship or other arrangements. 6E Number and extent of natural habitat areas managed to support threatened species.
Objective 7: Reduce threats and risks to nature and build resilience.	7A Explicit consideration of climate change risks, adaptation and resilience in the management of species, ecosystems and landscapes. 7C Extent and success of management programs for established invasive species that pose a significant threat to native species and/or ecosystems that are vulnerable to this threat. 7D Extent and success of management programs to minimise incursion and spread of new and emerging invasive species. 7E Extent of retention, protection and/or restoration of landscape-scale native vegetation corridors. 7F Extent of retention, protection and/or restoration of native vegetation in urban, peri-urban and agricultural contexts.
Goal 3: Share and build knowledge.	
Objective 11: Share and use information effectively.	11A Accessibility of information to the public on Australia's nature, through a variety of platforms. 11B Extent of robust data on Australia's nature provided by citizen science programs to public information sets. 11C Extent of collaboration and coordination between jurisdictions and research agencies in the collection, collation and publication of data about Australia's nature.



The snow gums and grasslands of this Snowy Monaro property are protected forever by landholders who secured annual payments to manage what they know is a precious and special landscape.

Appendix 2

Alignment to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

Aligned objectives	Aligned activity
Reducing threats to biodiversity	
Target 2	Restore 30 per cent of all degraded ecosystems.
Target 3	Conserve 30 per cent of land, waters and seas.
Target 4	Halt species extinction, protect genetic diversity, and manage human-wildlife conflicts.
Target 6	Reduce the introduction of invasive alien species by 50 per cent and minimize their impact.
Target 8	Minimize the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and build resilience.
Tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming	
Target 19	Mobilize \$200 billion per year for biodiversity from all sources, including \$30 billion through international finance.
Target 21	Ensure that knowledge is available and accessible to guide biodiversity action.
Target 22	Ensure inclusive, equitable, and gender-responsive participation in biodiversity decision-making, respecting the rights and cultures of indigenous peoples.



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*Look to the ground, to the air around you. Listen for that gentle hum.
Notice the movement close by. Feel the light touch of tiny legs or antennae.*

*They're the smallest of creatures, and a sign of a biodiverse environment,
and without them we'd not have the rich flora and fauna of our celebrated
Australian landscapes.*

Artist and Wiradjuri/Birpai man Wayde Clarke created an artwork, placing insects in plain sight across layers of cultural knowledge and experience from the coast, across the ranges and deep into the desert country of the far west. It uses colours and symbols that speak to a diversity of kin, habitats and species.

