

FACT SHEET: Biodiversity in the Camden LGA

Biodiversity refers to the variety of all life forms, the different plants, animals, microorganisms, the genes they contain, and the ecosystems they form.

Why is biodiversity important?

Biodiversity is critical for the survival of all the earth's species, including the human race, for the provision of resource services such as clean air and clean water. On a local scale, biodiversity is important for community wellbeing in terms of aesthetics, science, recreation, culture, health and spirit.

Biodiversity of the Camden LGA

The Camden Local Government Area (LGA) lies within the Cumberland Plain, and has rich Nepean River flats and undulating Wianamatta Shale hills. The main vegetation community is Cumberland Plain Woodland which is a Critically Endangered Ecological Community under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999* and the *NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. There are five other endangered ecological communities under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* found in the Camden LGA, being River Flat Eucalypt Forest, Cumberland Swamp Oak Riparian Forest, Moist Shale Woodland and Elderslie Banksia Scrub Forest, Western Sydney Dry Forest.

Cumberland Plain Woodland contains two prominent Eucalypts, Grey Box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*) and Forest Red Gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*) which typify the remaining natural landscape of Camden. The ground layer in Cumberland Plain Woodland is typically made up of grasses such as Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) and Weeping Meadow Grass (*Microlaeana stipoides*).

The Camden LGA has approximately 2033ha of remnant good quality vegetation which includes 1366.5 ha of Cumberland Plain Woodland. This means that approximately 90% of vegetation across the LGA has been cleared and degraded since European settlement.

Population growth and development is placing enormous pressure on our natural areas and biodiversity due to habitat clearing, degradation of waterways, and spread of pest animals and weeds.

Cumberland Plain Land Snail

(*Meridolum corneovirens*)

In New South Wales, only six invertebrate animals have been listed as endangered, three insects and three land snails. One of these snails, *Meridolum corneovirens* or the Cumberland Plain Land Snail, is found only in western Sydney in the Cumberland Plain Woodland ecosystem under logs and debris and around bases of trees or clumps of grass, burrowing into loose soil and has been found in bushland within the Camden area.

The presence of Cumberland Plain Land Snail is an indicator of a healthy ecosystem. However the habitat of the snail has been drastically reduced with clearing of bush for agriculture and development and continues to be subjected to development pressures. This clearing will impact on remaining populations because the composition of the leaf litter that grows the fungi on which it feeds is altered or lost.

In listing the Cumberland Plain Land Snail on the endangered list in 1997, the NSW Scientific Committee was of the opinion that the numbers of this species had been reduced to such a critical level and its habitats have been so drastically reduced that it is in immediate danger of extinction and that *Meridolum corneovirens* is likely to become extinct in nature in New South Wales unless the circumstances and factors threatening its survival cease to operate.



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How does Council protect and enhance biodiversity?

Local Biodiversity Strategy for the Camden LGA

At the Council meeting on 8 October 2013, Council adopted the Local Biodiversity Strategy for the Camden LGA. This strategy provides the framework for Camden Council and the community to achieve the vision for biodiversity as expressed in the Community Strategic Plan. It brings together the available information about biodiversity within the LGA, and provides a clear and practical approach to guide future management of biodiversity that is consistent with legislation, plans and policies.

Bushcare

Bushcare is an environmental volunteer program run up by Council to provide an opportunity for residents and visitors to actively participate in managing and maintaining the remnant urban bushland areas in the Camden LGA.

Current locations include:

- Hayter Reserve: Wire Lane, Camden South. First Friday of the month from 9am to 12pm.
- Kings Bush Reserve: Chellaston Street, Camden. Every Tuesday from 9am to 12pm and the first Sunday of the month from 9am to 12pm.
- Parrotts Farm: Richardson Rd, Narellan (next to RFS). Second Friday of the month from 9am to 12pm.
- Ron Dine Reserve: McCrae Dr (and Cowper Dr), Camden South. Third Friday of the month from 9am to 12pm.
- Sickles Creek Reserve: Sickles Drive, Grasmere. Last Sunday of the month from 9am to 12pm.
- Spring Farm: Hampshire Boulevard, Spring Farm. Second Saturday of the month from 9am to 12pm.
- Harrington Forest: Scanlon Crescent, Harrington Park. Every third Saturday of the month from 9am to 12pm.

Management of Australian White Ibis

In an effort to manage the population and the overall impacts that the Australian White Ibis has on residents and the local environment, in 2013 Council adopted a Management Plan for the Australian White Ibis at Lake Annan. This species is protected in NSW and as a result, Council has obtained licenses from NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to enable some of the management strategies such as egg oiling and

burning of a portion of abandoned Australian White Ibis nests to be implemented.

Natural Resource Projects

As funding and resources allow Council implements natural resource projects to maintain and enhance our local biodiversity. In the past 12 months, Council has recently been successful with a number of grant applications including:

- **Camden Town Farm 20 Million Trees Program - Creating Habitat for Camden White Gum**
The project will undertake the staged removal of 4 ha of woody weeds along a portion of the Nepean River at the Camden Town Farm. This will allow replacement planting of 22,000 trees and shrubs to extend the Endangered Ecological Community 'River-flat Eucalypt Forest' and create habitat for the Nationally Threatened plant, Camden White Gum (*Eucalyptus benthamii*). The community of Camden will be involved through a Bushcare group and community planting events.
- **Spring Farm Bush Reserve Saving Our Species Program: Elderslie Banksia Scrub Forest**
Council has also received funding from the NSW Government's Office of Environment and Heritage's Saving Our Species Program to enhance Elderslie Banksia Scrub Forest.

Pest species removal strategies are being used to control the population of rabbits in the area and Prickly Pear infestations have also been removed. A dedicated Bushcare program is currently working on the site to maintain the ecological health of the area.

For more information, or to register your interest in participating in these projects, please phone Camden Council's Sustainability Team on 4654 7777.



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