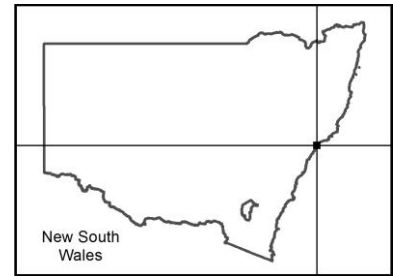


Statement of Management Intent



Awabakal Nature Reserve

1. Introduction

This statement outlines the main values, issues, management directions and priorities of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) for managing Awabakal Nature Reserve. This statement, together with relevant NPWS policies, will guide the management of the park until a plan of management has been prepared in accordance with the [National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 \(NPW Act\)](#). The NPWS [Managing Parks Prior to Plan of Management Policy](#) states that parks and reserves without a plan of management are to be managed in a manner consistent with the intent of the NPW Act and the ['precautionary principle'](#) (see [Principle 15](#)).

2. Management principles

Nature reserves are reserved under the NPW Act to protect and conserve areas containing outstanding, unique or representative ecosystems, species, communities or natural phenomena. Under the NPW Act ([Section 30J](#)), nature reserves are managed to:

- conserve biodiversity, maintain ecosystem functions, and protect geological and geomorphological features and natural phenomena
- conserve places, objects, features and landscapes of cultural value
- promote public appreciation, enjoyment and understanding of the reserve's natural and cultural values
- provide for appropriate research and monitoring.

The primary purpose of nature reserves is to conserve nature. Nature reserves differ from national parks in that they do not have the provision of visitor use as a management purpose or principle.

3. Context

Reservation details: Awabakal Nature Reserve was reserved on 27 January 1978.

Size: 228 hectares.

Awabakal Nature Reserve is located on the NSW Central Coast approximately 15 kilometres south of Newcastle between the beach suburbs of Dudley and Redhead. The reserve lies within the Sydney Basin Bioregion. It also falls within the administrative areas of Lake Macquarie City Council, Hunter Local Land Services and Bahtabah Local Aboriginal Land Council.

Crown tenure and high density private residential land borders the south, west and northern boundaries, while the sandstone cliff line of the Pacific Ocean forms the eastern boundary. Following its reservation, Newcastle Glass Works was allowed to continue sand mining for silica

and sand deposits within the northern section of the reserve until the 1980s under conditional approval by NPWS. Awabakal Nature Reserve surrounds a permanent freshwater lagoon called Redhead Lagoon and the reserve contains one of the largest remaining coastal heath communities in the region. The reserve also protects a diversity of ecosystems, including intertidal rock platforms, coastal cliffs and cliff-top sand dunes that contain a number of endangered ecological communities and provide habitat for a variety of threatened flora and fauna species.



4. Values

- Awabakal Nature Reserve protects habitat for the threatened powerful owl (*Ninox strenua*), masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*), squirrel glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*) and eastern bentwing-bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii oceanensis*).
- The reserve protects a range of endangered ecological communities, including Sydney Freshwater Wetlands in the Sydney Basin Bioregion; Swamp Sclerophyll Forest on Coastal Floodplains of the New South Wales North Coast, Sydney Basin and South East Corner Bioregions and Themeda grassland on seacliffs and coastal headlands in the NSW North Coast, Sydney Basin and South East Corner Bioregions.

- The reserve provides important habitat for threatened and regionally endemic shrub and mallee species including black-eyed Susan (*Tetralochea juncea*) and Camfield's stringybark (*Eucalyptus camfieldii*).
- Redhead Lagoon provides one of the most important sources of information on the vegetation history of eastern Australia through the last full glacial–interglacial cycle.
- While Awabakal Nature Reserve is set aside for conservation, scientific and educational purposes, regular daily visitation and recreational use is permitted within the reserve. This includes walks along the popular Awabakal Coastal Walk, which extends from Dudley in the north, through the nature reserve to Redhead in the south.
- Awabakal Field Studies Centre and Discovery for Schools run programs within Awabakal Nature Reserve to promote engagement with children learning about national parks and protected area conservation. University groups and field naturalists also frequent the reserve.
- The area surrounding the coastline around Lake Macquarie and Newcastle forms part of the traditional area of the Awabakal people. The area provided abundant food supplies and held strong ceremonial and trading ties. A number of artefacts have been recorded in the nature reserve.
- In addition to the sand mining that occurred in the area, coal was discovered in Dudley in the early nineteenth century. Historic heritage items within the reserve include remnants of a coal mine in operation from 1840, chitter coal mine dump, and a historic sand quarry and associated fence line constructed out of railway lines.
- Redhead World War II Complex was recently discovered within Awabakal Nature Reserve following a wildfire event. This site includes remnants of a coastal defence system consisting of kitchen and toilet block foundations, a septic tank, gun emplacement and trigonometric station.

5. Issues

- The reserve contains a number of pest animal and weed species, including bitou bush (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera* ssp. *rotundata*).
- A range of recreational activities that are inconsistent with the management principles of a nature reserve and NPWS policy regularly occur.
- There are occurrences of rubbish dumping and arson, the latter greatly increasing the risk of exceeding the fire thresholds appropriate for the reserve's vegetation.
- Access to the reserve via Ocean Street relies on a mixture of council road and Crown land. The access has poor amenity, with incidences of antisocial behaviour occurring in the area.

6. Key management directions

- Manage fire in accordance with the Glenrock State Conservation Area and Awabakal Nature Reserve [Fire Management Strategy](#).
- Pest management programs will be implemented in accordance with the priorities of the NPWS [Regional Pest Management Strategy](#): Central Coast Hunter Region.
- Continue to undertake actions, including law enforcement, against inappropriate and illegal activities that occur within Awabakal Nature Reserve.
- Investigate options to address access issues to the reserve via Ocean Street.

- All management activities will be preceded by the preparation of an environmental assessment or heritage assessment where this is a requirement of NPWS policy or legislation.
- Environmental repair and threat management programs, such as erosion mitigation measures, pest management, and activities arising from threatened species requirements may be implemented in accordance with NPWS policies and procedures.
- Non-intrusive works may be undertaken where necessary to protect cultural heritage items from further deterioration, to ensure the safety of visitors, to protect wildlife or to prevent damage to park assets.
- A plan of management will be prepared to set out the ongoing management objectives for the reserve. The plan of management is a statutory document under the NPW Act which will be available for public comment. NPWS will also encourage the community to contribute to the ongoing conservation of the reserve by promoting and raising public awareness of its values.

For additional information or enquiries about any aspect of this reserve or this statement, contact the NPWS Newcastle Office on 02 4946 4100 or at Hunter Wetland Centre, Sandgate Road, Shortland NSW.

Disclaimer: This is a statement of intent to guide the management of the reserve prior to the development of a plan of management. Any statements made in this publication are made in good faith and do not render the Office of Environment and Heritage liable for any loss or damage. Provisions in the final plan of management may vary from those identified in this document as a result of new information and community consultation. The maps in this statement are intended to show the reserve's location and basic features only, and are not suitable for use when navigating to or exploring within parks.

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