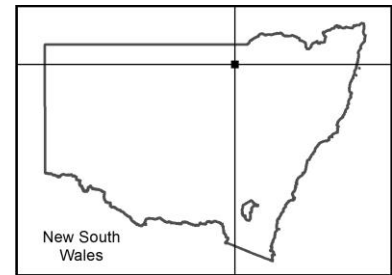


Statement of Management Intent



Barwon Nature Reserve and Barwon State Conservation Area

1. Introduction

This statement outlines the main values, issues, management directions and priorities of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) for managing Barwon Nature Reserve and Barwon State Conservation Area (SCA). This statement, together with relevant NPWS policies, will guide the management of the parks 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.

State conservation areas are reserved under the NPW Act to protect and conserve areas that:

- contain significant or representative ecosystems, landforms or natural phenomena or places of cultural significance
- are capable of providing opportunities for sustainable visitor or tourist use and enjoyment, the sustainable use of buildings and structures, or research
- are capable of providing opportunities for uses permitted under other provisions of the NPW Act.

Under the NPW Act ([section 30G](#)), state conservation areas are managed to:

- conserve biodiversity, maintain ecosystem functions, protect natural phenomena and maintain natural landscapes

- conserve places, objects and features of cultural value
- provide for the undertaking of uses permitted under other provisions of the NPW Act (including uses permitted under section 47J such as mineral exploration and mining), having regard to the conservation of the natural and cultural values of the state conservation area
- provide for sustainable visitor or tourist use and enjoyment that is compatible with conservation of the area's natural and cultural values and with uses permitted in the area
- provide for sustainable use (including adaptive reuse) of any buildings or structures or modified natural areas having regard to conservation of the area's natural and cultural values and with other uses permitted in the area
- provide for appropriate research and monitoring.

Land is reserved as a state conservation area primarily where mineral values preclude reservation as another category. The NPW Act requires a review of the classification of state conservation areas every five years in consultation with the Minister administering the *Mining Act 1992*.

3. Context

Reservation details: Barwon Nature Reserve and SCA were reserved on 6 August 2010.

Size: Barwon Nature Reserve is 4048 hectares and Barwon SCA is 5243 hectares.



Barwon Nature Reserve and SCA are located midway between Walgett (45 kilometres south-west) and Collarenebri (35 kilometres north-east) on the north-west plains of New South Wales. They fall within the Darling Riverine Plains Bioregion and within the administrative areas of Walgett Shire Council, North West Local Land Services and Walgett and Collarenebri local Aboriginal land councils.

Barwon Nature Reserve has 2 kilometres of frontage to the Barwon River and double frontage to Thalaba Creek. The nature reserve comprises the former properties 'Ivanhoe' and 'Bonnie Doon'. Barwon SCA has 30 kilometres of Barwon River frontage and includes sections of Thalaba and Pagan creeks. The SCA comprises the former properties 'Coolabong North' and 'Euralah', excluding the 'Euralah' irrigation block.

These private properties were managed for cattle and sheep production and the area has been continually grazed for at least 100 years. Approximately 450 hectares of the SCA was used for dryland cropping prior to reservation. These cleared areas are now regenerating to naturalised grassland/low chenopod shrubland. A derelict homestead precinct remains on the former 'Ivanhoe' portion of Barwon Nature Reserve, as well as a shearing shed and quarters used during mustering, shearing and other livestock work up until the land was transferred to NPWS. A homestead precinct on 'Euralah', part of Barwon SCA, had been lived on continuously from circa 1890 up until transfer to NPWS. Disturbances from grazing and ringbarking have resulted in some areas of degradation in both parks, although clearing has been limited for at least 30 years and much of the land is largely unmodified and in good condition with mature trees.

All ecosystems in the Darling Riverine Plains Bioregion are of the highest priority for reservation in western New South Wales because they are so poorly reserved and because they are highly modified by extensive agricultural development.

4. Values

- The parks represent a substantial area of protected remnant woodland and grassland in a highly modified and fragmented landscape, with less than 5 per cent of the Darling Riverine Plains Bioregion protected in conservation reserves.
- The landscape of the parks is gently undulating within the Barwon River floodplain. Local tributaries of the river and creeks form ephemeral lagoons. Barwon Nature Reserve and SCA protect extensive, high-quality riverine ecosystems.
- Barwon Nature Reserve is almost entirely comprised of the endangered ecological community Coolibah – Black Box Woodland in the Darling Riverine Plains, Brigalow Belt South, Cobar Penepplain and Mulga Lands Bioregions. The park also protects small pockets of the endangered ecological community Myall Woodland in the Darling Riverine Plains, Brigalow Belt South, Cobar Penepplain, Murray-Darling Depression, Riverina and NSW South Western Slopes Bioregions.
- Barwon Nature Reserve contains ephemeral grassland communities dominated by rats tail couch (*_____*). This is a restricted community that occurs in patches across New South Wales. It is considered near-threatened and is not known to occur in any other conservation reserve.
- The critically endangered ecological community Natural Grasslands on Basalt and Fine-textured Alluvial Plains of Northern New South Wales and Southern Queensland may occur in the SCA.
- In both parks there are some areas of gilgai associated with ephemeral swampy depressions. These gilgai provide important habitat for wildlife such as frogs and are rich food sources, with species such as the nardoo (*Marsilea drummondii*) occurring.

- The Barwon River is a major regional habitat pathway and climate-change corridor because it links with other inland rivers in New South Wales and interstate. While the river is not reserved as part of the parks, the SCA has extensive river frontage. The river is habitat for the nationally vulnerable Murray cod (*Maccullochella peelii*) and potential habitat for four aquatic species that are threatened in New South Wales under the Fisheries Management Act 1994: the endangered river snail (*Notopala sublineata*) and purple spotted gudgeon (*Mogurnda adspersa*), the endangered western NSW population of the olive perchlet (*Ambassis agassizii*), and the vulnerable silver perch (*Bidyanus bidyanus*).
- These parks protect woodland and riverine habitat for threatened woodland and grassland birds. The threatened glossy black-cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami*), little lorikeet (*Glossopsitta pusilla*), brown tree creeper (eastern subspecies) (*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*), hooded robin (south-eastern form) (*Melanodryas cucullata cucullata*) and grey-crowned babbler (eastern subspecies) (*Pomatostomus temporalis temporalis*) have been recorded in the parks.
- The endangered forb species, *Phyllanthus maderaspatensis* has been recorded in the parks.
- The Ivanhoe Shearing Shed Precinct and Ivanhoe Homestead Precinct in Barwon Nature Reserve have heritage value. Conservation management strategies found that Ivanhoe Hut has exceptional conservation value; Ivanhoe Homestead has high to moderate conservation value as a ruin or archaeological site; and Ivanhoe Shearers' Quarters has high to moderate conservation value and is recommended for adaptive reuse for visitor accommodation.
- Both 'Coolabong North' and 'Euralah' that make up Barwon SCA were once a part of the large 'Mercadool Run', broken off the original run for soldiers returning from the Boer War in 1907. Euralah Homestead is listed on the National Trust Register and is listed as an environmental heritage item under the *Walgett Local Environmental Plan 2013*. A portion of the current homestead was the original Mercadool Inn, built before 1890, that serviced travellers between Walgett and Collarenebri. It is a good example of a small inn from the mid to late 19th century, built of solid slabs of cypress pine, and used as a homestead since 1907. The conservation management strategy assessed that Euralah Homestead has moderate to little conservation significance, despite the Euralah site being significant as the former location of the Mercadool Hotel. The strategy recommended that a brick feature, possibly from the hotel, should be preserved.
- The Glengarry Hut on 'Coolabong North' is also potentially of heritage value.
- There are a number of Aboriginal sites known to occur within the parks including modified trees and stone flakes. The parks also have an abundance of food resources such as native spinach and native passionfruit.
- Visitors use the nature reserve to access the Barwon River for picnicking, camping and fishing.

5. Issues

- Pest fauna species occurring within the parks include European foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), feral pigs (*Sus scrofa*) and feral goats (*Capra hircus*). Feral cats (*Felis catus*) have also been sighted in Barwon Nature Reserve.
- Weed species known to occur within the parks include common prickly pear (*Opuntia stricta*) and isolated infestations of Noogoora burr (*Xanthium occidentale*) and Bathurst burr (*Xanthium spinosum*).
- There is potential for livestock to stray on to Barwon Nature Reserve as significant portions of the reserve boundary border the Mercadool Road Travelling Stock Reserve.

- Illegal activities taking place in the parks include hunting, bringing dogs into the parks, vehicle-related offences, animal poaching and property damage. Unauthorised access and vehicle use in the parks affects neighbours, who have also suffered property damage and theft.
- During low and moderate river flow, riparian vegetation is affected by off-park water extraction from the Barwon River and altered flows from Thalaba Creek.
- Given the subsequent acquisition of extensive quarters at nearby Gwydir Wetlands and Warrambool SCAs, and the capital and maintenance requirements of these facilities, the use of 'Ivanhoe' facilities for visitor accommodation is unlikely.
- There are over 50 kilometres of management trails and various asset protection zones to be maintained within the parks.

6. Key management directions

- Fire is managed in accordance with the Barwon Nature Reserve and proposed Barwon State Conservation Area [Fire Management Strategy](#).
- Pest management programs will be implemented in accordance with the [NPWS Regional Pest Management Strategy](#): Northern Plains Region.
- Aerial shooting and ground baiting programs targeting feral pigs are being implemented in both parks to reduce damage to surrounding agricultural properties.
- Bores within the parks will be closed and bore infrastructure removed.
- The effects of altered water flows on the health and distribution of native vegetation will be monitored, and liaison with relevant authorities such as the NSW Office of Water will continue.
- Law enforcement programs will be undertaken in partnership with the NSW Police.
- In consultation with stakeholders, minor visitor infrastructure will be provided adjacent to the Barwon River for day visitors and bush campers, including information for interpretation, education and appreciation.
- Promote community access and visitation to the nature reserve for nature appreciation through the Ivanhoe management trail.
- 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 parks. 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 parks by promoting and raising public awareness of their special values.

For additional information or enquiries about any aspect of these parks or this statement, contact the NPWS Narrabri Office on (02) 6792 7300 or 1/100 Maitland Street, Narrabri NSW 2390.

Disclaimer: This is a statement of intent to guide the management of the parks 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 parks' location and basic features only, and are not suitable for use when navigating to or exploring within parks.

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