

# Conservation Action Plan

## *Prostanthera gilesii*

This plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of s.78C of the National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2019 (Reg.) in relation to an Asset of Intergenerational Significance (AIS) as declared under s.153G of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

## Site details

AIS site	AIS-ES-137
Site location	An area of 432 hectares in Mount Canobolas State Conservation Area
NPWS contact	Manager, Central West Area, West Branch

## Environmental values

This table sets out the environmental values for which the land was listed as an AIS (Reg. 78C(3)(a)).

Identified value(s)	Value description
Important habitat for <i>Prostanthera gilesii</i>	<i>Prostanthera gilesii</i> is a critically endangered plant that is endemic to Mount Canobolas in New South Wales. It is a small, compact, spreading shrub, up to one metre high growing as a tangle of plants (genets). It grows at two sites: one is in a shrubby open forest on a protected slope above a creek, while the other is in a rock cleft in a rocky outcrop heathland.

## Key risks to environmental values

This table sets out the key risks to the environmental values of the land (Reg. 78C(3)(b)).

Key risk(s)	Description
Inappropriate fire regimes	Too frequent fire can cause mortality of shrubs and be detrimental to <i>Prostanthera gilesii</i> . A minimum fire interval of 10 years is proposed and likely to be longer. This species was severely damaged in a 2018 wildfire and has resprouted from rootstock. Further investigation is required into the fire ecology of this species. Severe fire can also remove groundcover, leading to soil erosion and habitat degradation.
Pathogens, diseases and microorganisms	Infection by <i>Phytophthora cinnamomi</i> can result in mortality of individual plants.
Feral herbivores and pigs	Damage to individual plants, and degradation of habitat, by feral pigs through rooting, digging and eating vegetation.
Weeds	Habitat degradation by invasion of weeds (e.g. blackberry), to the extent that the recruitment or establishment of plants is prevented. Weed biomass may also increase fuel load and flammability of the site.
Disturbance	Damage to individual plants and habitat degradation from unauthorised visitor access and use of the site.
Anthropogenic climate change	A combination of increased maximum temperatures and decreased rainfall may exceed the species adaptive capacity, reduce survivorship of individual plants and increase the likelihood of high intensity and high frequency fires. This risk is exacerbated by the small population size at this site.

## Conservation activities

This table sets out the conservation activities required to:

1. control, abate or mitigate the key risks and
2. maintain, restore and remediate the environmental values of the land (Reg. 78C(3)(c)).

Key risk(s)	Impacted site(s)	Conservation activities
Inappropriate fire regimes	All sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop guidance on the appropriate fire management for the habitat of the <i>Prostanthera gilesii</i> by 30 June 2022 and update as required. This guidance must provide for:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- maintenance of an appropriate fire regime by developing and implementing a site-specific burn plan for the declared areas.</li> <li>- implementation of any required fire protection and response measures in the declared areas</li> <li>- integration of site-specific requirements into NPWS and NSW Government bushfire planning, risk management and operational response arrangements.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Pathogens, diseases and microorganisms	All sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement hygiene protocols as outlined in the DPIE Hygiene Guidelines (as published at 25 October 2021), as varied by any written advice from the Secretary from time to time for the purposes of this declared area.</li> <li>• Develop an emergency response plan by 30 June 2022 and update the plan, as required.</li> <li>• Implement the emergency response plan in the event of an outbreak or evidence of serious impact of pathogenic phytophthora.</li> </ul>
Feral herbivores and pigs	All sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce feral pig densities as far as practicable, and maintain densities as low as practicable, by trapping, baiting and shooting.</li> </ul>
Weeds	All sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove weed species e.g. blackberry, that negatively impact on areas occupied by <i>Prostanthera gilesii</i>, such as preventing the recruitment or establishment of plants, by targeted application of physical and chemical weed control.</li> </ul>
Disturbance	All sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where required and appropriate, delineate sites by signs, threatened species marker posts or barriers and install structures around juvenile plants to avoid significant impacts from unauthorised visitor access and use of the site.</li> </ul>
All risks	All sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultivate and maintain a genetically representative collection at the PlantBank in Mount Annan and/or Orange Botanic Gardens to maintain an ex-situ population.</li> </ul>

## Other land management activities

Within the declared land there are existing assets and infrastructure of NPWS and other external service providers, including public utilities.

Maintenance operations (including inspection, emergency works and routine and standard maintenance) that are exempt development in accordance with the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, and which are performed on and around existing assets and infrastructure, are authorised under this conservation action plan (CAP) provided such operations are taken in a manner that aims to minimise the risk to the declared environmental values of the land and with any other required consents or approvals.

All maintenance operations on the declared land are to be undertaken in accordance with this CAP.

## Measuring and reporting

This table sets out the requirements for measuring and reporting on health and condition (Reg. 78C(3)(d)).

Attribute	Metric	Method
Health and condition of the <i>Prostanthera gilesii</i> population	Population estimate: number of plants/size of clumps	Design, and implement annually, or as required, a survey to estimate the number of plants/size of clumps in the population.  The first survey is to be conducted by 30 June 2022.

A report on the health and condition of the value for which this AIS was declared will be prepared and published on the Department of Planning and Environment, [Environment, Energy and Science website](#). The report will summarise the baseline and current health and condition of the value of the declared land and its overall trajectory.

## Evaluation of conservation action plans

This CAP will be amended or replaced as new information becomes available that helps improve our management of the identified asset (Reg. 78H).

The Secretary must appoint a scientist, or a panel of scientists, to conduct a review, as soon as possible after the period of five years from the first approval of a CAP, to examine whether CAPs have been effectively implemented (Reg. 78J(1)).

Date prepared	November 2021
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Approved by	Atticus Fleming, Deputy Secretary NPWS
Due for review	February 2027

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