



# Premier & Cabinet



Document Ref: 2010/62

Mr Russell D Grove  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly  
Parliament of New South Wales  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Grove

I refer to your correspondence to the Premier, the Hon Kristina Keneally MP, of 17 December 2009. The Premier has asked me to provide the NSW Government's response to Report No. 5/54 of the Standing Committee on Natural Resource Management (Climate Change), *Return of the Ark: The Adequacy of Management Strategies to Address the Impacts of Climate Change on Biodiversity*. This response encompasses the advice sought from respective Ministers on specific recommendations contained within Report 5/54.

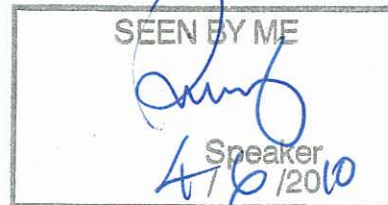
A detailed response to each of the 30 recommendations is provided at Attachment 1.

Should you require any further information please contact Mr Ian Hunter, Assistant Director, Infrastructure, Environment and Economic Development Branch, Department of Premier and Cabinet on 9228 3498.

Yours sincerely

Brendan O'Reilly  
Director General

3 JUN 2010



Seen & read by 3/6/2010

RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE
<p>1 The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) reviews the current goals, objectives and priorities for biodiversity conservation and facilitates the community and scientific debate necessary to identify a new approach to biodiversity management.</p>	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <p>Priority setting to support conservation goals is DECCW's core business. Two major initiatives currently being finalised are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A consultation draft <i>NSW Biodiversity Strategy 2010-2015</i>. The draft Strategy identifies state-wide objectives and priorities for biodiversity conservation in NSW. A major component is the mapping of state-scale priorities by ecosystem and Catchment Management Authority (CMA) area, enabling a more consistent and cost effective approach to investment by all stakeholders involved in biodiversity conservation (including government, business and local communities).</li> <li>2. <i>Statement of Intent for Anthropogenic Climate Change</i>. The impetus for developing the Statement of Intent (Sol) was the listing of anthropogenic climate change as a Key Threatening Process under the <i>Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995</i> (TSC Act). The Sol also supports key directions relating to climate change that will be identified in the draft NSW Biodiversity Strategy.</li> </ol> <p>DECCW utilises extensive engagement across government, industry and the wider community to develop and implement innovative biodiversity management mechanisms with a strategic focus. Recent examples include the Biobanking scheme and the Great Eastern Ranges initiative.</p>
<p>2 All natural resource management agencies adopt adaptive management frameworks for plans dealing with biodiversity management.</p>	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <p>NSW Government agencies currently adopt adaptive management frameworks, as per the following examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industry and Investment NSW (I&amp;I NSW) is a partner in the National Climate Change Research Strategy for Primary Industries, a collaborative program between industry and government aimed at facilitating sound adaptation and mitigation responses and avoiding duplication of costs for research investment.</li> <li>• I&amp;I NSW is involved in studies under the NSW Government Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation Research Program. Projects include examining the impacts of climate change on biodiversity, invasive species and aquatic ecosystems. These projects will help the NSW</li> </ul>



		<p>Government to set biodiversity conservation management priorities for NSW.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I&amp;I NSW has developed the NSW Invasive Species Plan 2008-2015, to ensure a consistent approach to invasive species management across the State. The Plan directs resources in a way that will ensure weeds that are not present are prevented, new incursions are eradicated and priority weeds likely to spread are contained. The Plan also recognises the need to protect vulnerable assets such as alpine ecosystems.</li> <li>• The NSW Biosecurity Strategy, developed by I&amp;I NSW, aims to prevent the entry of biosecurity threats to NSW, and to contain, manage and eradicate existing threats. The Strategy sets out a framework for NSW state government agencies to work cooperatively with other federal agencies, industry and local communities to achieve biosecurity objectives.</li> <li>• The Land and Property Management Authority (LPMA) will soon formally adopt a program of Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of its land management program on Crown lands. This process will ensure adaptive management is in place as all activities will be reviewed and evaluated within the framework of the State Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting (MER) Strategy.</li> </ul>
3	<p>All natural resource management agencies identify and overcome barriers (such as through the provision of relevant training) to the effective implementation of adaptive management.</p>	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DECCW is addressing barriers by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ supporting a range of staff development programs, internal and external management development programs and training courses; and</li> <li>○ prioritising review and adaptive management in all major programs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• An I&amp;I NSW funded program 'Applying socio-economic approaches to advance sub-catchment decisions beyond the biophysical' trains resource managers in socio-economic monitoring, evaluation and reporting. This enhances understanding of the implications of natural resource decisions in a complex and dynamic environment, which then supports adaptive management.</li> <li>• The I&amp;I NSW training and education program, PROfarm, is a training program developed to meet the needs of farmers, primary industries, agribusiness and the community. Around 100</li> </ul>

		<p>short courses are offered on a wide range of subjects, including courses that educate participants in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ conservation farming;</li> <li>○ farming in a changing climate;</li> <li>○ introduction to organic farming; and</li> <li>○ introduction to environmental management systems.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Forests NSW has Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management (ESFM) Plans in place for each forestry region in NSW. Biodiversity considerations and enhancement strategies are incorporated into each ESFM Plan. Staff are professionally trained, and also receive ongoing training in aspects of forest management affecting biodiversity.</li> </ul>
4	<p>DECCW ensures that strategies regarding biodiversity and climate change focus on ecosystems rather than just on threatened species.</p>	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <p>There is an increasing emphasis on management strategies for ecosystem and landscape-scale conservation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Amendments to threatened species legislation in 2004 and subsequent years have established a number of statutory mechanisms to support these approaches, including the Priorities Action Statement, biodiversity certification of environmental planning instruments and the Biobanking Scheme.</li> <li>● The State Plan commits the new NSW Biodiversity Strategy to protecting threatened native species and ecosystems and addressing the impacts of climate change.</li> <li>● The Great Eastern Ranges initiative aims to maintain and improve long-term connectivity conservation of mountain ecosystems running the length of eastern Australia. The 1,200 km New South Wales section of the Great Eastern Ranges is the current area of focus and draws together the efforts of the various communities, industry, government and non-government groups working in the area. Six Partnership organisations have taken on leadership of the Great Eastern Ranges initiative. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bush Heritage Australia;</li> <li>○ Greening Australia;</li> <li>○ National Parks Association of NSW;</li> <li>○ Nature Conservation Trust of NSW;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ DECCW; and</li> <li>○ OzGREEN.</li> </ul> <p>DECCW will continue to fulfil its statutory obligations relating to the protection and recovery of individual threatened species.</p>
5	<p>All natural resource management agencies identify specific measures to increase the health of all ecosystems and reduce impacts on ecosystems as an effective means of protecting biodiversity under the impacts of climate change.</p>	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The draft <i>Statement of Intent for Anthropogenic Climate Change</i> (SOI) outlines a five year program of actions to improve the ability of species and ecosystems to cope with climate change impacts. However, climate change is a landscape scale issue operating across all tenures, and ultimately the maintenance of ecosystem function will necessitate involvement of both government and non-government land managers. The GER initiative being led by DECCW in NSW responds to this imperative by seeking to link intact natural ecosystems across 1200km of the Great Divide and Eastern escarpment of NSW through a range of mechanisms involving both government and non-government stakeholders.</li> <li>• I&amp;I NSW is engaged in strategic partnerships to restore woody habitat, restore riparian areas by removing weeds, replanting native plants, fencing riparian zones, improving fish passage by installing fishways, making roads more fish friendly, removing weirs and actively managing floodgates. These activities contribute to the ecosystem's resilience to climate change.</li> <li>• I&amp;I NSW is developing, breeding, and testing new plant varieties and other species for agriculture and forestry. This work aims to identify species with a wider tolerance of climate variability such as warmer and drier conditions, shorter seasons, increased rainfall intensity and reduced frosts.</li> <li>• Through its extension programs, industry partnerships and grants, I&amp;I NSW is promoting sustainable production systems that improve biodiversity values and are more likely to be adaptive and resilient to climate change. This includes support for a growing organics market.</li> <li>• Forests NSW is developing a Forest Health Strategy that will identify ecosystems under threat, including climate change, and that will be used to prioritise responses.</li> <li>• Forests NSW has developed, Forest Management Zones, which creates a landscape-scale mosaic of harvest zones and exclusion</li> </ul>

		<p>zones. Exclusion zones are specifically managed for habitat diversity and linkages to facilitate persistence and dispersal of species in response to changing circumstances, such as climate change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance and enhancement of environmental values is key to successful stewardship and management of Crown land. A number of programs are being actively pursued (e.g. the control of noxious weeds and feral animals in partnership with the broader community and other agencies such as DECCW). The current program of attachment of perpetual land management covenants to the title of converted perpetual leases has the potential to make significant environmental gains.</li> </ul>
6	<p>The Minister for Climate Change and the Environment nominate an agency or establish a taskforce to develop an overarching NSW framework for connectivity conservation, including the identification of key corridors across New South Wales and mechanisms for their protection and/or restoration.</p>	<p><b>Partially supported.</b></p> <p>The NSW Government will implement the recommendation using existing agencies and programs.</p> <p>Corridor mapping has already been undertaken at the regional scale across most of NSW, and is informing key biodiversity planning mechanisms such as Biodiversity Management Plans and Regional Conservation Plans. At the same time, the Great Eastern Ranges initiative has established a model for connectivity conservation management across tenure using a variety of mechanisms, and has produced a significant amount of supporting information including technical reports and a business plan.</p>
7	<p>All natural resource management agencies prioritise the collection of baseline data.</p>	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DECCW continues to gather baseline data through a range of scientific activities including natural resource monitoring, evaluation and reporting, the development and implementation of decision support tools, and state-wide mapping projects. Science activities are driven by the agency's corporate plan and the goals and priorities identified in the State Plan.</li> <li>• Forests NSW routinely collects baseline data and contributes to inter-agency data collections. Specifically in relation to biodiversity, FNSW is developing a Landscape Biodiversity Monitoring Program that will collect baseline data and will monitor change over time.</li> <li>• I&amp;I NSW is undertaking research into the sustainable development of marine and freshwater ecosystems, to ensure that they are ecologically healthy, as well as economically</li> </ul>



		<p>productive, under the predicted impacts of climate change. This research will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Evaluate the impacts of alternative management and harvest strategies using large-scale biogeochemical ecological models</li> <li>○ Develop a robust monitoring systems to aid understanding of the impacts of climate change, especially on recreationally and commercially harvested fish and invertebrates</li> <li>○ Research the impacts of climate change on ecological health</li> <li>○ Evaluate proposed adaptation strategies for marine and freshwater fisheries</li> <li>○ Research the impacts of increasing acidity of the oceans</li> <li>○ Research the impacts of sea level rise on estuarine salt marsh communities.</li> </ul>
8	<p>All natural resource management agencies monitor management actions and feed the results into their adaptive management frameworks.</p>	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <p>An adaptive management framework has been established under the <i>Native Vegetation Act 2003</i> and others are being either developed or refined across the range of conservation planning activities undertaken by DECCW. These frameworks are supported by a comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and reporting system. A monitoring program explicitly addressing the outcomes of biodiversity management actions is being considered under the draft Biodiversity Strategy.</p> <p>Forests NSW's adaptive management framework is implemented through its regional ESFM Plans. Environmental values are also protected in State forests by Codes of Practice and by environmental protection prescriptions contained in the licences and general conditions which form the Integrated Forestry Operations Approval, granted under the <i>Forestry and National Parks Estate Act 1998</i>. These licences are regularly audited by DECCW and cover many aspects relating to biodiversity, including protection of: soil and water values and fauna habitat and native species. Changes to licence conditions are negotiated in response to monitoring and management actions and are adapted accordingly.</p> <p>All the relevant agencies and CMAs will develop a new NSW MER Strategy and NRM Framework. This will now see NRM and land management agencies involved with the CMAs in the coordinated</p>

		development of Catchment Action Plans and importantly the adoption of consistent monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes which can be collectively considered across jurisdictions.
9	DECCW consult with a range of natural resource managers to identify on-ground research needs with respect to climate change impacts on biodiversity, and incorporate these needs into the Department's research agenda.	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <p>This work is already underway. DECCW has prepared a draft Climate Impact Profile, a biophysical assessment that provides insight into the likely threats to biodiversity values in NSW. The Profile is based on a series of assessments undertaken by regional expert panels (comprising scientists and regional natural resource/ biodiversity conservation managers). In addition to informing DECCW's planning and response strategies, the assessment has also informed the draft Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation Research Plan, which establishes state-wide research priorities for the next 5 years – including priority research needs for biodiversity and climate change.</p>
10	DECCW clearly identifies the specific climate change and biodiversity research it is undertaking and ensures that the findings of all research are disseminated to relevant natural resource managers in a format that identifies the key management implications of the research.	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <p>State-wide priorities for climate change adaptation research for the next five years (including for biodiversity and climate change) will be identified in the Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation Research Plan and are outlined in the draft SOI. Reports of major biodiversity and climate change research projects are being released on the DECCW website: for example, reports on climate change and invasive species and bushfire risk are already available on DECC website. The Climate Impact Profile will also be released during 2010. The Profile outlines the likely regionally significant impacts for biodiversity in a format useful for conservation management. DECCW will be working with CMAs over the next two years to help them incorporate this information into their Catchment Action Plans, and to design programs for minimising these impacts.</p>
11	The revised goals, objectives and priorities for biodiversity management are reflected in all relevant NSW Government agency plans and strategies.	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <p>See responses to Recommendations 1, 6 and 10. DECCW utilises extensive engagement across government, industry and the wider community to develop and implement innovative biodiversity management mechanisms with a strategic focus.</p>



12	The Minister for Climate Change and the Environment and Minister for Planning nominate an agency or establish a taskforce to identify mechanisms to align Catchment Action Plans and local environmental plans.	<p><b>Partially supported.</b></p> <p>The NSW Government supports appropriate alignment of Catchment Action Plans with Local environment plans and will utilise existing inter-agency processes to achieve this.</p>
13	All natural resource management agencies identify mechanisms and procedures to increase on-ground officer level coordination of biodiversity management across different agencies and levels of government.	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <p>Greater coordination is being achieved through the increasing use of landscape scale, cross tenure conservation initiatives such as regional strategies and Catchment Action Plans.</p> <p>The draft NSW Biodiversity Strategy will prioritise terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity to improve biodiversity outcomes. These State level priorities will guide CMAs and land managers in their investment in biodiversity management at the local level.</p>
14	The CMA model should continue to be supported for the delivery of natural resource management projects and all CMAs should work to improve relationships and links with other regional natural resource management agencies and organisations such as local governments and Landcare groups.	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <p>The Government supports the continued role of CMAs in natural resource management.</p>
15	All natural resource management agencies identify priority projects that require long term and ongoing funding and incorporate these into their budget requests.	<p><b>Partially Supported.</b></p> <p>Specific projects are identified in the Statement of Intent for Anthropogenic Climate Change. Agencies will align their existing work programs with identified priorities and projects.</p>
16	All natural resource management agencies review their communication and community education programs and identify opportunities for improving communication to enable more effective implementation of biodiversity management programs.	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <p>Government continually reviews the effectiveness of its extensive communication and community education programs, maintaining close relationships with national and international agencies, industry groups and businesses, community and environment groups, local councils, Aboriginal land councils, landowners, research and education institutions and many other organisations.</p> <p>DECCW will continue to promote community awareness through ongoing improvements to its website, and by continuing to issue a diverse range of e-newsletters, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate of Change – a popular quarterly publication that highlights the latest environment</li> </ul>

news and events across a broad range of topics;

- Environmental Trust Connections – provides information on Environmental Trust programs and showcases some outstanding projects taking place across NSW;
- Explore – showcases sustainable tourism activities in parks and reserves, profiles successful tourism products and partnerships, and communicates events, visitor trends and general visitor news;
- Living Sustainably – focuses on how to live sustainably at home and at work, and features Our environment – it's a living thing projects that people can get involved with;
- Naturescapes: NSW national parks visitor newsletter;
- Working with Local Government – keeps local councils informed of DECC initiatives, activities and programs; and
- Bushmatters.

Other ongoing initiatives include:

- periodic and targeted community education programs;
- periodic workshops and training events for landholders involved in conservation action on their properties;
- promoting volunteering and partnering with volunteer organisations; and
- the National Parks Discovery – Walks Talks and Tours program, which provides community education and interpretation to bring natural and cultural heritage themes alive. Discovery employs local people with appropriate backgrounds to deliver tours and events in national parks and reserves, and through outreach programs in schools.
- LandLearn NSW - an initiative of I&I NSW, NSW Farmers, and Royal Agricultural Society of NSW. LandLearn NSW is an interactive internet-based education tool that provides an introductory overview of primary industries and natural resource management in NSW. It provides access to information on climate change as well as the production, consumption and management of primary products and natural resources in NSW, and links to national and global information;



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I&amp;I NSW 'Future Landscapes' is an education program that assists CMAs to plan for landscapes which are resilient to change.</li> </ul>
17	<p>All natural resource management agencies increase their extension efforts and staffing to maximise implementation of biodiversity conservation programs.</p>	<p><b>Partially Supported.</b></p> <p>Government natural resource management agencies work in tandem to maximise implementation of biodiversity conservation programs, within existing resource availability. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I&amp;I NSW will continue to undertake its extension efforts relating to biodiversity conservation within its recurrent budget and through its programs previously noted. Any additional activities will be based on successful external funding made available through Caring for Our Country, NSW Catchment Action funds, etc.</li> <li>• Forests NSW undertakes numerous activities to enhance and complement the biodiversity values of the forests. Some examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An effective long term fox predation control program within the Eden sub-region for the specific benefit of listed priority species impacted by fox predation: Southern Brown Bandicoot, Long-footed Potoroo and Smoky Mouse.</li> <li>○ The fencing off and revegetation of areas in the Central Murray to provide additional foraging habitat for a number of threatened bird species such as the Gilbert's Whistler and Superb Parrot.</li> <li>○ A Mallee Fowl protection project in conjunction with Dubbo Zoo.</li> <li>○ Harvesting of Carp in Moira State forest in order to reduce numbers and breeding numbers of Carp in the Murray River and reduce competition with native fish species.</li> <li>○ Managing environmental flows and/or rehabilitation programs to restore the ecology of significant wetlands including Moira Lake, to enhance bird breeding, fish breeding and revegetation and Edward River, environmental water flow regulators managed to protect the nesting habitat of the Superb Parrot.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The LPMA has the advantage of a decentralised model for program delivery across NSW, including extension in land and environmental management of Crown lands. This permits good local interface between officers skilled in land</li> </ul>

		management, with those individuals and organisations who manage Crown lands through tenure or trustee arrangement.
18	The NSW Government continues to invest in the expansion of the reserve system in line with the established CAR objective and targets as a key strategy to protect biodiversity under the impacts of climate change.	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <p>This recommendation is consistent with existing commitments, which are subject to availability of funding for reserve acquisition and management. The National Parks Establishment Plan identifies priorities for building DECCW's terrestrial park and reserve system in each biogeographic region of NSW over the next 10 years.</p> <p>The plan outlines the following future directions for building the public reserve system over the next decade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishment of new reserves in many parts of far western and central western NSW, where reservation currently protects less than 5% of the landscape</li> <li>• a building-up of existing reserves on the western slopes and tablelands</li> <li>• fine-tuning of existing reserve boundaries along the coast and coastal ranges, where nearly 30% of the landscape is presently protected.</li> </ul>
19	The National Parks and Wildlife Service seeks additional funding for increasing the resilience of the reserve system in light of the increasing impacts and management costs that will be experienced under climate change.	<p><b>Partially Supported.</b></p> <p>This has been undertaken as part of the reserve acquisition program and by adjusting park management priorities and practices to enhance resilience.</p>
20	The National Parks and Wildlife Service ensures that systems are in place to identify, minimise and manage the impacts of tourism and recreation on the reserve system by fully implementing the endorsed actions within <i>Living parks</i> to monitor visitation impacts and develop management strategies to address these impacts.	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <p>DECCW has already commenced implementation of actions. In November 2008, the NSW Government received the final report from the Taskforce on Tourism and National Parks in NSW and agreed to support the key findings. The report confirmed that while national parks should continue to contribute to nature based tourism in NSW, conservation must remain a priority. An inter-agency group made up of Tourism NSW and DECCW was established in February 2009 to oversee implementation of the report's recommendations.</p> <p>In 2008-09 DECCW implemented a new system of estimating visitor numbers to parks across the state. Using this new, more robust method, DECCW estimated that NSW national parks received 38 million visits in 2008. Further research will explore</p>



		<p>the demand for outdoor nature-based recreation across the state.</p> <p>Through the NSW State of the Parks program, park managers monitor and evaluate the condition of protected areas, identify pressures in national parks and reserves, and find ways of managing these areas more efficiently.</p>
21	<p>The NSW Government encourages nature tourism outside the reserve system on areas such as private land, state forests or Crown land and identifies and addresses any barriers to the development of nature tourism outside the reserve system.</p>	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <p>The final report of the joint Ministerial Taskforce on Tourism and National Parks endorsed a regional planning approach to sustainable nature tourism, including tourism development on private land outside parks. The report recognised that there are opportunities for nature based tourism development which can facilitate visitation to parks and reserves. The Taskforce recommended that such development be encouraged. An inter-agency group made up of Tourism NSW and DECCW was established in February 2009 to oversee implementation of the report's recommendations.</p>
22	<p>Those agencies (such as the Land and Property Management Authority or the National Parks and Wildlife Service) that are given additional lands for ongoing management as a result of the review of travelling stock reserves be given commensurate additional resources to adequately manage and maintain the values of the reserves.</p>	<p><b>Partially Supported.</b></p> <p>The Government is committed to managing travelling stock reserves for their full range of existing values, including biodiversity values.</p>
23	<p>All natural resource management agencies consider the use of reintroduction programs in the control of pest species.</p>	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <p>The NSW Invasive Species Plan provides the framework for the coordinated management of pest animals and weeds that occur over varying land tenures and will guide invasive species management in NSW to 2015.</p> <p>The NSW Invasive Species Plan's four goals are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prevent the establishment of new invasive species;</li> <li>• eliminate or prevent the spread of new invasive species;</li> <li>• reduce the impacts of widespread invasive species; and</li> <li>• ensure NSW has the ability and commitment to manage invasive species.</li> </ul> <p>DECCW manages pest animals and weeds on its</p>

		<p>estate (such as national parks and nature reserves), and also develops and implements strategies for invasive species that threaten biodiversity. DECCW pest animal and weed management is focused in areas where native animals and plants are the most threatened, other park values are affected, or where pests and weeds are likely to affect neighbouring lands.</p> <p>Pest and weed management on DECCW estate is coordinated through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the NSW Threatened Species Priorities Action Statement;</li> <li>• threat abatement plans such as the Fox TAP and the Bitou TAP;</li> <li>• regional weed management priorities for biodiversity conservation; and</li> <li>• regional pest strategies and other management plans.</li> </ul> <p>I&amp;I NSW administers the Dollar for Dollar Native Fish Stocking Program that was introduced in 1998 to enable community groups to apply to the NSW Recreational Fishing (Freshwater) Trust (funded by the recreational fishing fee) for matching funds to purchase native fish from licensed commercial hatcheries in NSW, for the stocking of rivers and dams across the State. The program has been extremely well received by the public. To date, around 5.4 million golden perch, 2.2 million Murray cod, and 1.4 million Australian bass have been stocked since the program commenced.</p>
24	<p>All natural resource management agencies continue to offer a range of conservation incentive schemes to ensure there are schemes available for all landholders regardless of their level of environmental knowledge or commitment.</p>	<p><b>Partially Supported.</b></p> <p>Private landowners wanting to protect and manage conservation values on their land have access to a range of options including the following offered by DECCW:</p> <p><i>The NSW Conservation Partners Program</i></p> <p>Options under this program include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Conservation Agreements.</i> Voluntary agreements between landholders and the Minister for the Environment that provide permanent protection for identified conservation values. The agreement is registered in perpetuity on the title of the land;</li> <li>• <i>Wildlife Refuges.</i> Enable landholders to nominate part or all of a property where the land has native wildlife values and will be managed for this purpose. A wildlife refuge declaration is free</li> </ul>



and has flexibility. There are options for landholders to change the wildlife refuge status when required; and

- *Property Registration.* Landowners seeking to conserve their property's special features, but not wanting to sign a legal agreement, can register their property with DECCW. Two property registration schemes are available; Land for Wildlife and Conserve Wildlife.

#### *Property Vegetation Plans*

A PVP is a voluntary but legally binding agreement between a landholder and their local CMA. A PVP may be entered into for any of the following purposes:

- when applying for native vegetation incentive funding (incentive PVP);
- when seeking to utilise offsets associated with clearing (offsets PVP);
- to confirm whether any native vegetation meets the definition of regrowth so that a landholder can be confident they will not need future clearing approval;
- to change the regrowth date of native vegetation to an earlier date, under certain circumstances; and
- to confirm whether existing rotational farming, grazing or cultivation practices meet the definitions of these in the Native Vegetation Act so that future clearing approvals will not be required.

Farmers who enter into PVPs are eligible for funds to help with conservation initiatives such as revegetation plans, salinity strategies and soil erosion control.

#### *Biobanking*

The NSW BioBanking and Offset Scheme commenced on July 1 2008. The Scheme aims to reduce cumulative biodiversity losses caused by population growth and development pressures around urban areas, along the coast and at major inland development sites. Landowners may enter into a BioBanking agreement with the Minister to establish a BioBank site on their land and generate credits that they can sell to provide income and fund the future management of the site. BioBanking agreements are registered on the land and exist in perpetuity.

The Rural Assistance Authority's Special Conservation Scheme is an incentive-based initiative to assist farmers within NSW to protect the State's biological and physical resource base by completing

		<p>certain conservation works on their property which they may not have otherwise undertaken. Funding by way of a loan is available to carry out those works that will have a significant beneficial impact on the land, the local community and the environment and are not purely productivity based.</p> <p>Through education and extension work I&amp;I NSW staff contribute to a variety of conservation incentive scheme outcomes. For example the Australian Government, through its Water for the Future Program, has funded a Hawkesbury Nepean River Recovery Package to improve the health of the river. I&amp;I NSW staff are working with the Hawkesbury Nepean CMA to implement two components the Nutrient Smart Farms and the Water Smart Farms project. Both projects are working with landholders in the Hawkesbury Nepean catchment to improve nutrient management and water use efficiency. The projects aim to help landholders improve production efficiency, reduce costs, reduce the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus entering waterways and achieve water savings.</p>
25	All natural resource management recognise the importance of regionally-based staff to liaise with landholders and encourage uptake of the schemes.	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <p>This is consistent with current program delivery arrangements. See above recommendations.</p>
26	DECCW expands the practice of having dedicated regionally-based officers working with landholders to encourage the uptake of Conservation Agreements.	<p><b>Partially Supported.</b></p> <p>DECCW already has staff in offices in Broken Hill, Tumut, Bombala and Queanbeyan specifically tasked to encourage interest in and negotiate Conservation Agreements. These staff complement DECCW regional staff who negotiate conservation agreements as part of their core responsibilities and partnerships with other organisations such as Western and Border Rivers Gwydir CMAs.</p>
27	The Department of Industry and Investment and DECCW consider providing funding for the wide spread implementation of the Whole of Paddock Rehabilitation initiative.	<p><b>Partially Supported.</b></p> <p>DECCW and CMAs are already working with landholders on a variety of stewardship schemes tailored to regional needs. For example the NSW Biobanking and Offset Scheme provides an opportunity for rural landowners to generate income by managing land for conservation.</p> <p>The Whole of Paddock Rehabilitation initiative is a grant funded program administered by Greening Australia with two priority projects, co-funded by the Lachlan CMA in the Upper Lachlan and Lachlan Catchment, and by DECCW as part of the Kosciusko to coast program in the upper Murrumbidgee</p>



		Catchment.
28	DECCW continues funding for the Great Eastern Ranges initiative beyond its current funding cycle.	<b>Partially Supported.</b> DECCW remains committed to the Great Eastern Ranges initiative and has engaged external partners in its delivery.
29	DECCW negotiates with the Federal Government for better tax incentives for conservation works.	<b>Supported.</b> DECCW is currently working on a project with the Commonwealth Government called the National Conservation Lands Database. The database supports accreditation arrangements under the <i>Income Tax Assessment Act 1997</i> .
30	All natural resource managers ensure that landholders who have already been involved with a conservation incentive scheme are not disadvantaged by better incentives attached to new agreements and that any new benefits are retrospectively applied to those with existing agreements.	<b>Partially Supported.</b> Arrangements are being put in place to manage equity issues for participating landholders with existing conservation commitments.