



# Protected areas and conservation



**Building a network of terrestrial protected areas across NSW is key to securing and conserving our diverse ecosystems, and the plants and animals they support.**

Terrestrial protected areas are clearly defined areas of land that are formally managed to conserve or improve natural and cultural heritage, biodiversity, plant and animal habitat, and resilience to climate change.

For Aboriginal peoples, colonisation has resulted in dispossession of their traditional lands and prevented access to Country, especially on private lands. Opportunities are now emerging for Aboriginal peoples and communities to access, protect and manage Country through formal and informal agreements on both public and private lands.

## At a glance

### How NSW is tracking

- About 10.4% (or 8.3 million hectares) of NSW are formal protected areas that contribute to Australia's National Reserve System.
- Most protected areas fall within the public reserve system (almost 7.7 million hectares or 9.7% of NSW).
- Much of the remaining area is protected through private conservation agreements managed by the Biodiversity Conservation Trust.
- About 30% of the NSW national parks estate is jointly managed with Aboriginal custodians under 34 agreements.
- Pressures on, and threats to, protected areas continue to include climate change, invasive pests and weeds, and fragmentation and habitat loss from land use changes and clearing.

### The big picture

The indicator 'total area of the NSW terrestrial protected areas network' aligns to the 'Land system change' planetary boundary. Globally, this boundary has been crossed.

### Protected areas network

The protected areas network covered **10.4%** of NSW as at 30 December 2023.



### Public protected areas

Public protected areas made up **93%** of the protected areas network in NSW as at 30 December 2023.




















# Protected areas and conservation






## NSW status and trend indicators

These indicators assess the status of protected areas and conservation in NSW.

Indicator	Environmental status	Environmental trend	Information reliability
Total area of the NSW terrestrial protected areas network	 <b>MODERATE</b>	 Getting better Stable Getting worse	 Good
Growth in public protected areas	 <b>MODERATE</b>	 Getting better Stable Getting worse	 Good
Growth in private protected areas	 <b>MODERATE</b>	 Getting better Stable Getting worse	 Good
Protected areas owned or jointly managed by Aboriginal people	 <b>MODERATE</b>	 Getting better Stable Getting worse	 Good
Coverage of regional ecosystems in NSW protected areas network	 <b>POOR</b>	 Getting better Stable Getting worse	 Reasonable

### Indicator table scales

- **Environmental status:** Good, moderate, poor, unknown
- **Environmental trend:** Getting worse, stable, getting better, unknown
- **Information reliability:**  Good  Reasonable  Limited

### Indicator definitions

**Total area of the NSW terrestrial protected areas network** – total of public and private land areas in the NSW protected areas network, including land permanently protected under legal mechanisms (in perpetuity).

**Growth in public protected areas** – changes in area and number of national parks and reserves.

**Growth in private protected areas** – changes in area and number of private land protected in perpetuity under agreements administered by the Biodiversity Conservation Trust.

**Protected areas owned or jointly managed by Aboriginal people** – as described.

**Coverage of regional ecosystems in the NSW protected areas network** – new indicator assessing progress towards a ‘comprehensive, adequate and representative’ protected areas system in NSW.