



## Environment and heritage

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The Eden RFA region's 800,000 hectares contain a range of ecosystems, from temperate eucalypt forest and temperate rainforest to salt marsh and floodplain wetlands. About two thirds of the area is forested, with most forest on public land.

### The CAR Reserve System

The RFA establishes a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR) Reserve System that is based on nationally agreed criteria for the protection of forest biodiversity, old-growth and wilderness values.\* The CAR Reserve System includes:

- **Dedicated reserves (national parks, nature reserves);**
- **Informal reserves on State Forests;**
- **Forest management prescriptions under Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals.**

During the RFA process the reserve system was extended twice, bringing the total dedicated reserve system in the Eden region to 255,300 hectares. With the inclusion of informal reserves on State forest (4,600 hectares), areas reserved by management prescriptions (7,900 hectares), special prescription zones and Crown leaseholds (managed by the NPWS), the CAR Reserve System covers approximately one third of the entire region and about 56 per cent of the region's public land. Significant additions to dedicated reserves include:

- Eastern Coolungubra State Forest;
- The link between Tantawanglo and Yurammie State Forests which provides a corridor from the escarpment to the coastal forests;
- Murrabrine State Forest including an addition to the Brogo Wilderness;
- important long footed potoroo habitat in the former Bondi and Nungatta State Forest areas; and
- important koala habitat in Murrumbidgee State Forest.

### Wilderness

Almost all (99 per cent) of wilderness, as defined in the JANIS Reserve Criteria, in the Eden region is protected within dedicated reserves. A total of 7,750 hectares of additions to the Brogo Wilderness and the new 15,950 hectare Yowrie Wilderness has been declared under the NSW *Wilderness Act 1987* bringing the total area of the region's wilderness in national parks to 80,681 hectares.

### Ecosystems

Of the 73 forest ecosystems identified in the region, 38 (53 per cent) have had their JANIS targets met within the CAR reserve system. Another 25 are protected to the maximum extent practicable through forest management prescriptions on State forests. These include rare non-

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\* The JANIS criteria are the 'Nationally Agreed Criteria for the Establishment of a Comprehensive Adequate and Representative Reserve System for Forests in Australia', aiming to protect 15 per cent of each forest type as existed before European arrival, at least 60 per cent of old-growth forest and 99 per cent or more of high quality wilderness. 'JANIS' stands for the Joint ANZECC/MCFFA National Forest Policy Statement implementation Subcommittee, which developed the criteria.

commercial forest ecosystems and non-forest ecosystems (eg rainforest, grassland, wetland, heath). Ten ecosystems have been identified as priorities for voluntary conservation on private land.

## **Old-Growth**

The RFA protects at least 80 per cent of the region's old-growth forest on public land within CAR reserves. While most old-growth is protected in dedicated reserves, for reasons of management practicality, some fragmented areas of old-growth within State forests will be managed by prescriptions.

A total of 47 old-growth ecosystems were identified in the Eden region, 26 of which (55 per cent) have had their JANIS targets met within reserves. Also, all nine rare old-growth forest ecosystems in stands greater than six hectares will be fully protected from harvesting under NSW Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals (IFOA) for the Eden region. (IFOAs set out the terms and conditions under which forestry operations may occur and provide the prescription component of the CAR Reserve System.)

## **Threatened species and forest communities**

More than 150 threatened and/or forest dependent flora and 55 fauna species were assessed for the RFA, including the greater glider, the long footed potoroo and the stuttering barred frog.

Under the RFA, these species will be protected within the reserve system and through prescriptions. For example, the region contains the northern-most occurrence of the endangered long footed potoroo. The Recovery Plan for this species was recently approved under the Commonwealth's *Endangered Species Protection Act 1992*. The RFA has assisted in the protection of the long footed potoroo by including almost all of its known habitat within dedicated reserves. Priorities for developing Recovery Plans for threatened forest dependent flora and fauna are provided in Attachment 2 of the RFA.

## **National Estate**

The RFA has added to our knowledge of the region's national estate values and improves their protection and management through a combination of reservation (both dedicated and informal) and management prescriptions off reserve. See Attachment 3 of the RFA.

## **World heritage**

Two World Heritage themes were identified as being potentially significant in the Eden region - Australian eucalyptus-dominated vegetation and Aboriginal dreaming sites. The State and Commonwealth governments have agreed to participate in a World Heritage assessment of both, potentially leading to a World Heritage nomination. Both governments agree that nomination if required will come from within the CAR Reserve System.

## **Non-Indigenous heritage**

The RFA has greatly improved our knowledge of places in the region's forests with historic, social or aesthetic values. Forestry, mining, pastoralism and other activities have left their mark on the landscape with sawmills, sleeper cutter sites, gold mines and bullock tracks. The region also has many places of social and aesthetic importance, such as waterfalls and old growth forest. NSW will prepare Statewide Guidelines for the Management of Cultural Heritage Values and Places which will be the framework for management, identification and protection of cultural values. Indigenous heritage is addressed in the fact sheet, Indigenous Interests.