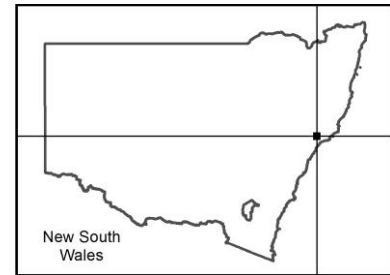


Statement of Management Intent



Columbey 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 Columbey State Conservation Area (SCA). This statement, together with relevant NPWS policies, will guide the management of the park 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

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: Columbey SCA was reserved on 25 February 2011.

Size: 250 hectares.



Columbey SCA is located approximately 17 kilometres north-east of Maitland. It falls within the NSW North Coast Bioregion and within the administrative areas of Port Stephens Council, Hunter Local Land Services and the Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council.

Columbey SCA adjoins the western section of Columbey National Park further contributing to the biodiversity of the region and increasing the diversity and range of habitats in the reserve system. It forms part of a climate change corridor that links the Williams River to the east and the Hills area to the west. Other nearby parks and reserves are situated primarily to the south and east. These include Wallaroo National Park and Wallaroo State Forest.

Columbey SCA is former freehold land that was transferred to the NPWS reserve system as a biodiversity offset to compensate for the impacts from the development of the Williamstown Defence

and Airport Related Employment Zone (DAREZ) lands. Further offset proposals may see more land added to the SCA.

The surrounding land uses are predominantly agricultural activities, and rural residential lands. A residential subdivision is in close proximity to the western boundary of the SCA.

4. Values

- Wildlife Atlas records indicate that Columbey SCA protects habitat for a variety of threatened species, including the koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*), glossy black-cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami*), little lorikeet (*Glossopsitta pusilla*), brush-tailed phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*) and varied sittella (*Daphoenositta chrysoptera*). A powerful owl (*Ninox strenua*) has also been recorded adjacent to the SCA.
- Columbey SCA is dominated by dry sclerophyll forests and wet sclerophyll forests, and protects several poorly reserved vegetation communities within the Lower Hunter. Vegetation communities that occur in the SCA include Seaham Mahogany Forest, Lower Hunter Spotted Gum–Ironbark Forest, Seaham Spotted Gum–Ironbark Forest, Patterson Peppermint–Apple Forest and Gully Rainforest.
- Lower Hunter Spotted Gum–Ironbark Forest in the Sydney Basin Bioregion is an endangered ecological community. This community is dominated and characterised by red ironbark (*Eucalyptus fibrosa*), spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*) and broad-leaved white mahogany (*Eucalyptus umbra*). In places, grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*) can also be present. The presence of this community (about 494 hectares in size) within both Columbey National Park and Columbey SCA is considered significant in conserving the endangered ecological community near its northern limit of distribution.

5. Issues

- Pest animal species occurring in the reserve include wild dogs (*Canis lupus* spp.), European foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) and feral cats (*Felis catus*).
- Weed species occurring in the reserve include lantana (*Lantana camara*), invasive pasture grasses, crofton weed (*Ageratina adenophora*) and blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.).
- Cattle entering from neighbouring properties have been recorded within Columbey SCA.
- Illegal dumping of inert and hazardous waste is a significant management issue that threatens the values of the park. Materials that have been dumped include hazardous asbestos, garden waste, building materials and general household waste. Illegal dumping can result in the introduction of weed species, increase risk of wildfire and impact the visual amenity of the reserve.
- Columbey SCA has been subject to wildfires and requires management of bushfire risks. The terrain, adjoining land uses and tenure near the western boundary of the reserve pose some bushfire management challenges.

6. Key management directions

- Manage fire in accordance with the Columbey National Park [Fire Management Strategy](#).
- Pest management programs will be implemented in accordance with the priorities of the NPWS [Regional Pest Management Strategy](#): Lower North Coast Region.
- Continue to undertake actions, including law enforcement, against inappropriate and illegal activities that occur within the reserve as required.

- 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 SCA. 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 SCA by promoting and raising public awareness of its special values.

For additional information or enquiries about any aspect of this SCA or this statement, contact the NPWS Gloucester Office on 02 6538 5300 or 59 Church Street, Gloucester NSW.

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

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