

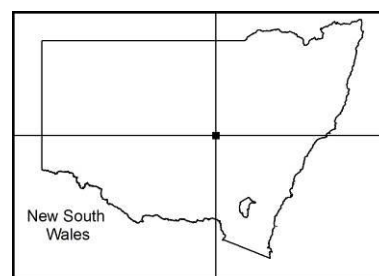


**NSW National Parks
& Wildlife Service**
Office of Environment & Heritage

Plan of Management



Snake Rock Aboriginal Area



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This plan of management was adopted by the Minister for the Environment on 10 October 2016.

Acknowledgments

OEH acknowledges that Snake Rock Aboriginal Area is in the traditional Country of the Wiradjuri People.

This plan of management was prepared by staff of the Western Rivers Region of NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), part of OEH. Special thanks are extended to the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee which provided valuable comments and assisted in the preparation of this plan. Their contribution and ongoing commitment to the management of Snake Rock Aboriginal Area has ensured that the issues affecting cultural values of the site have been addressed and the future aspirations for the site can be fulfilled.

For additional information or any inquiries about this plan of management or Snake Rock Aboriginal Area, contact the NPWS Central West Office at Camp Street Government Office Building, Forbes NSW 2871 (PO Box 774, Forbes NSW 2871) or by telephone on (02) 6851 4429.

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Welcome to Country

We would like to welcome you to Wiradjuri Country. Snake Rock is significant to us spiritually because it connects us to our Country and to our people who have gone before.

The Peak Hill–Bogan River Advisory Committee have been working with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service over several years to develop a relationship so that we can manage Snake Rock together. The two of us have just signed our third memorandum of understanding to commit each other to this relationship and to ongoing cooperation.

This plan of management is important to us because it recognises our long and ongoing association with Snake Rock. We hope that you will understand something about what is special to us at Snake Rock after reading this plan and we look forward to sharing our Country with you when you come to visit.



Photograph 1: Attending the signing of the third Memorandum of Understanding with members of the Peak Hill Aboriginal Advisory Committee in May 2016 are Frances Robinson, Councillor Louise O'Leary (Parkes Shire Council), Terry Robinson, Sarah Carr (NPWS), Ross McDonnell (NPWS), Jenny Robinson and Christine Peckham. Photo credit: S Woodhall, OEH

Foreword

Snake Rock Aboriginal Area is a small park of 61 hectares. It is located west of Peak Hill on the semi-arid plains of central west New South Wales in Wiradjuri Country.

The park is significant to Wiradjuri People and managed jointly between the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) under a memorandum of understanding. It derives its name from the Aboriginal artwork depicting a snake or river on the massive sandstone rock formation that dominates the park. The park protects other Aboriginal heritage sites and regionally significant vegetation in what is otherwise a cleared agricultural landscape.

This plan of management was prepared in consultation with the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee and represents an important achievement in the ongoing relationship between NPWS and the local Aboriginal community.

A draft version of the plan was placed on exhibition from 12 June to 25 September 2015. No submissions were received.

The plan contains a range of actions to protect the natural and cultural values of the park, including actions to support the local Aboriginal community in connecting to Country and actions to protect and improve the habitat of native plants and animals, including threatened species.

The plan also allows for low key recreation but, in order to provide adequate protection for this Aboriginal area, the plan puts in place a management approach which only allows people to visit the park with permission from the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee and NPWS.

This plan of management establishes the scheme of operations for the Snake Rock Aboriginal Area. In accordance with section 73B of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*, this plan is hereby adopted.



Mark Speakman
Minster for the Environment

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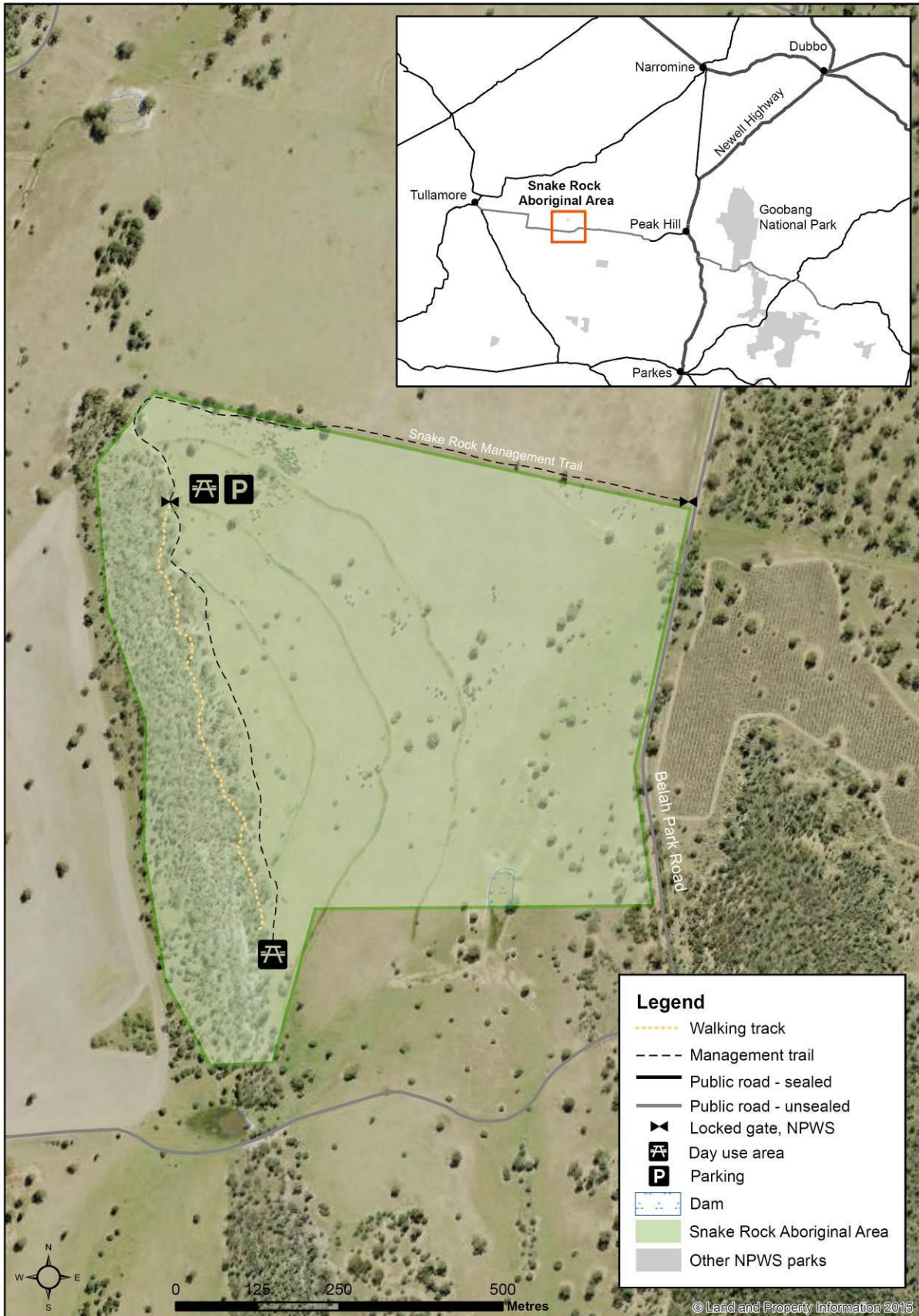
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Map 1: Snake Rock Aboriginal Area



1. Introduction

1.1 Location, reservation and regional setting

Features	Description
Snake Rock Aboriginal Area	
Location	Snake Rock Aboriginal Area (also referred to as Snake Rock or 'the park' in this plan) is located in central west New South Wales, approximately 30 kilometres west of Peak Hill (see Map 1).
Area	61 hectares.
Reservation date	Snake Rock was reserved as an Aboriginal Area on 13 January 2006 to protect the cultural values of the rock formations and Aboriginal artefacts.
Previous tenure	<p>Snake Rock was part of the original Curra Station run which dominated the area in the late 19th to early 20th century. Over subsequent years the area was subdivided and sold numerous times.</p> <p>Immediately prior to acquisition, the park was part of the sheep and cattle grazing property Belah Park. This property was held under a Crown Land Homestead Farm perpetual lease, until the land was subdivided to allow acquisition of Snake Rock by NPWS in 2003.</p> <p>The park derives its name from the Aboriginal artwork depicting a snake or a river on the sandstone rock formation which dominates the park.</p>
Regional context	
Biogeographic region	The park lies within the Central Western Slopes botanical subdivision and the NSW South Western Slopes Bioregion. This bioregion is an extensive area of foothills and isolated ranges comprising the lower inland slopes of the Great Dividing Range extending through southern New South Wales to western Victoria.
Surrounding land use	<p>The land surrounding and adjoining Snake Rock Aboriginal Area is predominantly freehold land. The park adjoins agricultural holdings managed for wool and meat production. To the south of Snake Rock are large areas of remnant native vegetation including Curra and Euchabil state forests. However, the majority of land in the area has been subject to extensive modification and is dominated by a mosaic of cleared lands interspersed with sparsely vegetated road corridors and windbreaks.</p> <p>The broader surrounding landscape includes scattered small areas of state forest and national park estate, including Strahorn State Forest, 10 kilometres to the northeast, South West Woodland Nature Reserve – Coradgery precinct to the south, and Goobang National Park, 45 kilometres to the east of the park.</p>
Other authorities	The park is located within the areas of the Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council, Central West Local Land Services, Parkes Shire Council and Mid Lachlan Valley Team Rural Fire Service.

1.2 Statement of significance

Snake Rock Aboriginal Area is significant because of its natural and cultural values including:

Aboriginal heritage

- Snake Rock is a visible symbol of the cultural values that are embodied in the broader cultural landscape of the area for the Wiradjuri People. The rock formation is a distinctive feature of the region's topography and forms part of a pathway that links to other sites in the surrounding area. In the past it was used as a campsite due to the presence of permanent water, and it is still used as an important teaching place for the sharing of knowledge by Aboriginal communities.
- The most visible cultural element of the park is the rock art site. Other Aboriginal cultural sites located within the area are an open campsite, axe grinding grooves, scatters of stone artefacts, water holes and scar trees.

Geological

- A prominent feature of the landscape is the linear sandstone ridge formation, running along the western boundary of the park. It is part of the Hervey Group, a conglomerate formation which can be seen to extend for approximately 24 kilometres to the north and 36 kilometres to the south.

Biological

- A number of native plant and animal species (including threatened species) and their habitat are protected within the park. The area provides suitable habitat for declining woodland birds, small mammals and micro-bats.

Research and education

- The park's proximity to the town of Peak Hill provides opportunities for use by local school groups and the broader community. It also provides opportunities for cultural education programs for Aboriginal people.

2. Management context

2.1 Legislative and policy framework

The management of Aboriginal areas in NSW is in the context of the legislative and policy framework of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), primarily the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and Regulation, the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* and NPWS policies.

Other legislation, strategies and international agreements may also apply to management of the area. In particular, the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* may require assessment of environmental impact of works proposed in this plan. The Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* may apply in relation to actions that impact matters of national environmental significance, such as migratory and threatened species listed under that Act. The NSW *Heritage Act 1977* may apply to the excavation of known archaeological sites or sites with potential to contain historical archaeological relics.

A plan of management is a statutory document under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act*. Once the Minister has adopted a plan, the plan must be carried out and no operations may be undertaken in relation to the lands to which the plan relates unless the operations are in accordance with the plan. This plan will also apply to any future additions to Snake Rock Aboriginal Area. Should management strategies or works be proposed in future that are not consistent with this plan, an amendment to the plan will be required.

2.2 Management purposes and principles

Aboriginal areas are reserved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act to protect and conserve areas associated with a person, event or historical theme, or containing a building, place, feature or landscape of natural or cultural significance to Aboriginal people, or of importance in improving public understanding of Aboriginal culture and its development and transitions.

Under the National Parks and Wildlife Act (section 30K), Aboriginal areas are managed to:

- conserve natural values, buildings, places, objects, features and landscapes of cultural value to Aboriginal people in accordance with the cultural values of the Aboriginal people to whose heritage the buildings, places, objects, features or landscapes belong
- conserve natural and other cultural values
- allow use of the Aboriginal area by Aboriginal people for cultural purposes
- promote public appreciation and understanding of the area's natural and cultural values and significance where appropriate
- provide for appropriate research and monitoring, in accordance with the cultural values of the Aboriginal people
- provide for sustainable visitor or tourist use and enjoyment that is compatible with the Aboriginal area's natural and cultural values and the cultural values of the Aboriginal people
- provide for sustainable use (including adaptive reuse) of any buildings or structures or modified natural areas having regard to the Aboriginal area's natural and cultural values and the cultural values of the Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal areas are places that have been identified as having special significance to Aboriginal people. The primary purpose of Aboriginal areas is the conservation of Aboriginal heritage.

2.3 Aboriginal joint management

As traditional custodians of the land, Aboriginal people have a unique role to care for and manage Country. This role overlaps with NPWS' legislative responsibilities to manage land for conservation. Partnerships recognise and capitalise on these mutual interests and responsibilities, including recognising that:

- All reserves are part of Aboriginal people's Country and are places where Aboriginal people can care for and access their Country and its resources. Given the history of dispossession in New South Wales, public lands and parks play an important role in the maintenance of Aboriginal culture and connection to Country. Meaningful engagement with Aboriginal communities on the management and use of parks is essential to ensure their needs in relation to their Country are met.
- Aboriginal communities obtain cultural, social and economic benefits through being involved in park management.
- NPWS, in partnership with the Aboriginal community, is better able to protect and interpret cultural heritage and to apply Aboriginal knowledge to land management and the conservation of cultural and natural values.
- Visitors to parks have an enriched experience through interaction with Aboriginal people and an understanding of Aboriginal cultural values.

Snake Rock Aboriginal Area lies within Wiradjuri Country. Within the park, there is abundant evidence of Aboriginal occupation and use over a period spanning at least several thousand years. Snake Rock is a significant part of the cultural landscape of the Peak Hill–Bogan River Wiradjuri People and continues to form an important part of their spiritual, economic and artistic life.

NPWS has been working with Aboriginal people to facilitate greater Aboriginal involvement in the management of the park. A principal outcome of this relationship has been the establishment of the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

The park is jointly managed by NPWS Central West Area and the Advisory Committee through a memorandum of understanding (MoU). The MoU formally acknowledges NPWS' commitment to working cooperatively with the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal community. It allows greater opportunity for access to the park and provides particular opportunities for Aboriginal people to sustain spiritual and cultural activities.

The MoU sets out the relationship between the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee and NPWS. It includes the structure and operation of the Advisory Committee. This provides the framework for consultation and cooperation with the Aboriginal community in the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation. The MoU will be periodically reviewed.

2.4 Specific management directions

In addition to the general principles for the management of Aboriginal areas (see Section 2.2), the following specific management directions apply to the management of Snake Rock:

- protection of Aboriginal sites in consultation with the Aboriginal community, including facilitating access to the sites by members of the local Aboriginal community; and
- provision of opportunities for educational and low-impact nature-based and culturally based recreation in consultation with the Aboriginal community.



Photograph 2: Eastern face of Snake Rock, showing tilted longitudinal ridges creating the overhangs and shelves which form and protect the Snake Rock art site. Peregrine falcon guano is evident in the left of frame. Photo credit: K Lawrie, OEH.

3. Values

This plan aims to conserve both natural and cultural values of Snake Rock Aboriginal Area. The location, landforms and plant and animal communities of the area have determined how it has been used and valued by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. These values may be attached to the landscape as a whole or to individual components, for example, to plant and animal species used by Aboriginal people. To make this document clear and easy to use, various aspects of natural and cultural heritage, threats and ongoing use are dealt with individually, but their inter-relationships are recognised.

3.1 Geology, landscape and hydrology

Snake Rock Aboriginal Area is dominated by a large sandstone outcrop, a prominent feature of the local landscape. Aboriginal people value the site not in isolation but rather as a significant part of their cultural landscape. The rock formation is a distinctive feature in the region's topography and is considered an important milestone in a traditional movement pathway used by Aboriginal people that links to other sites in the surrounding area.

As part of the Lachlan Fold Belt, which extends from the Queensland border, through mid-west NSW, to the eastern half of Tasmania, the 15-metre high folded and faulted rocks of Snake Rock are typically tilted, 'lifting' to the east and 'disappearing' downwards on an acute angle to the west.

Comprised of weathered late Ordovician sandstone, the 'front' or eastern face of this north-south linear ridge has eroded to form 'sculpted' overhangs and shelves. The largest of these supports the Snake Rock art site.

The rocks of the ridgeline are part of the Hervey Group, a conglomerate formation, which extends along a north-south trending alignment for approximately 24 kilometres to the north, and 36 kilometres to the south. At Snake Rock this formation has weathered to produce fine-textured, shallow to skeletal loamy sands, usually rocky and stony in consistency (Porteners 2005). Two other broken ridges run parallel to Snake Rock, approximately one and two kilometres to the east (Mjadwesch 2005).

Surrounding the outcrop is a flat plain of Late Devonian and Cainozoic sediments. The landscape is relatively flat and well-drained, consisting of highly permeable light to powdery orange sandy loams and sands and dark-brown to grey brown loamy sands. This light soil tends to accumulate against the western side of the outcrop under prevailing westerly weather conditions (Mjadwesch 2005).

The park is part of the Bogan River catchment and is relatively flat with no major creek lines or drainage lines traversing the area. It is unlikely that the area contributes to river flows. However, as the highest point in the surrounding landscape, Snake Rock does act as a small watershed, with any water falling on the rock running out of the park to the west.

To the east of the outcrop is a cleared area interspersed with a series of level and raised contour banks, which are a remnant of previous farming practices. The contour banks facilitate the filling of a small dam located on the southern boundary, which is shared with the adjoining neighbour. There are also several dams located on neighbouring property adjacent to the park.

An area along the eastern boundary adjacent to the road reserve is subject to ponding of surface water run-off, causing minor flooding during heavy rainfall events.

On the rock itself, some surface water ponds on the rocks after rain. However, this is short-lived due to the tilted nature of the rock faces and the exposed nature of the outcrop. A permanent spring also exists on the site, increasing its spiritual and practical significance to Aboriginal people.

Issues

- Snake Rock is a visually and culturally significant site within the landscape.
- Soils in the Snake Rock Aboriginal Area are highly susceptible to erosion if disturbed.
- The contour banks are an unnatural feature in the land and modify the natural flow of water.

Desired outcomes

- The visual and cultural values of Snake Rock are maintained or enhanced.
- Accelerated rates of soil erosion are minimised.
- The impact of modified water movements upon natural values is minimised.

Management response

3.1.1 Undertake all works in a manner that minimises erosion and water pollution.

3.2 Native plants

Although Snake Rock Aboriginal Area is small in comparison to other parks, it conserves an important area of remnant rocky outcrop vegetation and box woodland vegetation in a region that has been largely cleared of native vegetation for agricultural purposes (Porteners 2005). The NSW South Western Slopes Bioregion is the most cleared bioregion in New South Wales, with approximately 80% of native vegetation cleared.

The park is representative of the rocky outcrops that have retained vegetation in the local area while more productive and accessible sites have been extensively cleared. Approximately 80% of the land within the park has been cleared, however vegetation on the rock ridge and overhang has been retained. This area, and the adjoining north-south tending ridges, remain as some of the largest patches of remnant vegetation in the region providing linkages with surrounding areas.

A systematic vegetation survey of Snake Rock Aboriginal Area identified two remnant vegetation communities (broad vegetation class - Semi-arid Woodlands [Shrubby sub-formation], Keith 2004) and a previously cleared zone (Porteners 2005). In terms of the NSW Vegetation Information System Classification (OEH 2012a) the communities are:

Dwyer's Red Gum – White Cypress Pine – Currawang Shrubby Woodland mainly in the NSW South Western Slopes Bioregion

This community is located on the sandstone outcrop which lies to the south of the vegetated portion of the park and surrounding the Snake Rock Aboriginal Area art site. The main overstorey species are Dwyer's red gum (*Eucalyptus dwyeri*) and currawang (*Acacia doratoxylon*). Associated species include white cypress pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*), wilga (*Geijera parviflora*), wild lemon (*Canthium oleifolium*) and kurrajong (*Brachychiton populneus*). This community was described as Dwyer's Red Gum and Currawang Open Woodland (Porteners 2005).

Gum Coolabah – Mugga Ironbark – White Cypress Pine Woodland on granite low hills in the eastern Cobar Peneplain Bioregion and central NSW South Western Slopes Bioregion

This community occurs on the flats and lower undulating slopes surrounding the rock outcrop and comprises the majority of the vegetated portion of the park. The main overstorey species are gum coolabah or western red box (*E. intertexta*) and mugga ironbark (*E. sideroxylon*). Associated species include currawang, white cypress pine, bulloak (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*), Dwyer's red gum and wilga. Large trees within this community have been selectively logged. This community was described as Western Red Box and Mugga Ironbark Open Woodland (Porteners 2005).

Cleared area

Approximately 80% of the park has previously been cleared and now consists of open herbfield or derived grassland with scattered trees and shrubs. The area is characterised by small groves of regenerating mugga ironbark, western red box, bimble box (*E. populnea*), kurrajong, wilga, sandalwood (*Santalum lanceolatum*) and bulloak.

Fifty two native plant species were recorded during the 2005 survey. While none of the plant species recorded are listed under the Threatened Species Conservation Act or the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, seven species are considered to be regionally significant. These include species with restricted distributions, as well as those situated at the geographical limits of distribution within New South Wales (see Table 1). These species warrant particular attention in land management and conservation planning because they are at risk of at least regional extinction and are inadequately represented in the conservation reserve system (Porteners 2005).

Table 1: Regionally significant plant species recorded in Snake Rock Aboriginal Area*

Common name	Scientific name	Restricted distribution	Limit of distribution
Wild lemon	<i>Canthium oleifolium</i>	X	Eastern
Western red box	<i>Eucalyptus intertexta</i>		Eastern
Slender wire lily	<i>Laxmannia gracilis</i>		Western
Ruby urn heath	<i>Melichrus erubescens</i>	X	Western
Shrubby platysace	<i>Platysace lanceolata</i>		Western
Tall bluebell	<i>Wahlenbergia stricta</i> <i>subsp. alterna</i>		Eastern
Whorled zieria	<i>Zieria aspalathoides</i>	X	

*adapted from Porteners 2005.

The survey was conducted after a long period of drought and is likely to have missed many groundcover species. In a higher rainfall season, a greater number of herbs, forbs, twiners and annual species would be expected.

Vegetation in the park has been highly modified by past clearing, thinning and grazing. While natural regeneration of some native species is occurring, revegetation is proposed to rehabilitate some cleared areas. The original vegetation of the cleared area is likely to have been a mixed box woodland comprised of species of the Western Red Box – Mugga

Ironbark Woodland and potentially other box species such as white box (*E. albens*), yellow box (*E. melliodora*) and western grey box (*E. microcarpa*).

There is currently no documented information on the Aboriginal cultural significance of plant species identified in the Snake Rock area.

Strategies for the recovery of threatened species, populations and ecological communities have been set out in a state-wide *Threatened Species Priorities Action Statement* (DECC 2007, OEH 2013a). These actions are currently prioritised and implemented through the Saving our Species program, which aims to maximise the number of threatened species that can be secured in the wild in New South Wales for 100 years (OEH 2013b). Individual recovery plans may also be prepared for threatened species to consider management needs in more detail.

Issues

- Approximately 80% of the park has been previously cleared.
- Changes to vegetation dynamics through the introduction of weeds, changes to fire regimes, and isolation and fragmentation of vegetation communities negatively impact the viability of native plant species and communities.

Desired outcomes

- Plant species of Aboriginal cultural significance are identified.
- Populations of significant plant species and vegetation communities are conserved.
- Structural diversity and habitat values are restored in degraded areas.

Management response

- 3.2.1 Implement relevant recovery actions in the Priorities Action Statement and recovery plans for threatened plant species, populations and communities occurring in the park.
- 3.2.2 Restore structural diversity and habitat values in degraded areas by allowing natural regeneration and assist revegetation where appropriate using endemic native plant species.
- 3.2.3 Monitor and evaluate the success of revegetation of degraded and previously cleared areas. Monitor all areas for erosion and undertake soil conservation and restoration works if required.
- 3.2.4 In consultation with the Aboriginal community, encourage surveys for all plant species in particular threatened and culturally significant plants.
- 3.2.5 Work with neighbours and vegetation management authorities to encourage conservation of remnant native vegetation in the vicinity of the park.

3.3 Native animals

A fauna survey conducted in the autumn of 2005 found that the park supports a diversity of native fauna (Mjadwesch 2005). The fauna survey was undertaken during a prolonged drought and additional species are likely to be detected under more favourable conditions.

From the combined records of this survey and opportunistic sightings, the park is known to support 92 native vertebrate species. This includes 66 bird, 12 mammal, 12 reptile and 2 amphibian species. Five threatened species have been recorded in the park (see Table 2).

The park also provides important habitat for declining woodland birds such as the rufous whistler (*Pachycephala rufiventris*) and the eastern yellow robin (*Eopsaltria australis*). The maintenance of both grassy and shrubby woodland components with ground litter is important to the survival of these populations.

The range of ground habitat available in the park, especially rocky retreat sites, is reflected in the diversity and abundance of reptile species recorded. This includes species of geckoes, dragon lizards, skinks, and at least one species of snake.

Table 2: Threatened and significant animal species - Snake Rock Aboriginal Area

Common name	Scientific name	TSC Act status	EPBC Act status
Superb parrot	<i>Polytelis swainsonii</i>	V	V
Grey-crowned babbler (eastern subspecies)	<i>Pomatostomus temporalis temporalis</i>	V	
Rainbow bee-eater [^]	<i>Merops ornatus</i>		M
Barking owl*	<i>Ninox connivens</i>	V	
Little pied bat	<i>Chalinolobus picatus</i>	V	

[^]= migratory species under Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act; V=vulnerable; * Recorded within 2 kilometres of the park

Now synonymous with Snake Rock is a pair of peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) which nest along the sheltered ledge directly above the rock art site. Peregrine falcons are uncommon but internationally widespread and the extent of their guano (bird faeces) at this site is an obvious sign of long-term use. Although the droppings have partially obscured the rock art images, the local Aboriginal community views the falcons' association with the site as important, and their territorial behaviour during breeding season is considered by some as giving protection and significance to this place.

Mammal species present include ground-dwelling species such as the common dunnart (*Sminthopsis murina*) and short-beaked echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*). Seven bat species have been recorded including the vulnerable little pied bat.

Strategies for the recovery of threatened species, populations and ecological communities have been set out in a state-wide *Threatened Species Priorities Action Statement* (DECC 2007, OEH 2013a). These actions are currently prioritised and implemented through the Saving our Species program which aims to maximise the number of threatened species that can be secured in the wild in New South Wales for 100 years (OEH 2013b). Individual recovery plans may also be prepared for threatened species to consider management needs in more detail. Priority actions and recovery plans will be used to guide the management of threatened species in the park.

Issues

- Nesting peregrine falcons are susceptible to disturbance from human activity.
- Isolation and habitat fragmentation in the surrounding area are the greatest threats to the native fauna of the park.
- There are few large hollow-bearing trees remaining in the park as a result of clearing and selective logging.

Desired outcomes

- The full range of native animal species and ecological communities found in the park are conserved.
- The habitat and populations of all threatened fauna species are maintained or enhanced.

Management response

- 3.3.1 Implement relevant recovery actions in the Priorities Action Statement and recovery plans for threatened animal species and populations occurring in the park.
- 3.3.2 Minimise the impact of human activity on nesting peregrine falcons during the breeding season (August to November) by restricting visitor entry to the site during this period.

3.4 Aboriginal connections to Country

Snake Rock Aboriginal Area lies within the traditional Country of the Wiradjuri People. Wiradjuri Country has been described as the land of three rivers, the Macquarie (*Wambool* in the Wiradjuri language), Lachlan (*Kalare*), and Murrumbidgee (*Murrumbidgee*) and is the largest area shared by a common language group within New South Wales. The Murray River forms the southern boundary of Wiradjuri Country and the change from woodland to open grassland forms the eastern boundary. Ngiyampaa Country lies to the west and is similarly defined by the landscape. It is roughly bounded by the Darling, Barwon, Bogan, and Lachlan rivers.

The Bogan River Wiradjuri People are a subdivision of the Wiradjuri, both in the accounts of early explorers and in the configuration of the groupings as expressed by Wiradjuri today (Waters 2005). The Bogan River Wiradjuri recognise a further subdivision within their traditional area. Snake Rock is located within the area of the Upper Bogan River or Peak Hill People.

Aboriginal sites and rock art

Aboriginal sites are places with evidence of Aboriginal occupation or that are related to other aspects of Aboriginal culture. They are important as evidence of Aboriginal history and as part of the culture of local Aboriginal people. Snake Rock is of high cultural significance to Aboriginal people in central New South Wales. It is viewed as a communal site that has seen periods of special use and at these times assumed elevated importance.

The Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal community regards the whole place of Snake Rock to be significant and consider the artwork as only one component of the place. Snake Rock and other sites such as Bulgandramine Mission act as symbolic markers for the pathway network that Aboriginal people used in crossing Country in pre-European times and during the more recent past for resource gathering, trade, kinship and ceremonial activities (Waters 2005).

Snake Rock has been a camping and ceremonial area for many generations, used for various cultural activities at different times of the year. Visits to Snake Rock figure prominently in the childhood and young adult memories of the Peak Hill Aboriginal community. Visits to the site were conducted as community groups, with older relatives or in small family groups.

Snake Rock continues to be used by the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal community as a place to celebrate and share cultural knowledge. Snake Rock provides opportunities for the local Aboriginal community members to connect to Country and to promote and

communicate the values of their cultural landscape. The site provides a place for the process of passing on knowledge of Country and of the specific place to younger generations.

The rock art of the park is the focus of interest for both NPWS and community members, due to its cultural significance, its uniqueness and concerns with damage, graffiti and deterioration.

NPWS commenced photographic monitoring of the site in 1984 and has followed up with site inspections and monitoring in 1997, 2004 and 2011. Graffiti was successfully removed in 1984 and again in 2015 without damage to the artwork and there is no evidence of significant deterioration.

The art site is being impacted by salts leaching from the rock face through natural weathering processes and to a lesser extent, bird droppings (avian guano) from the nesting peregrine falcons (Gunn & Douglas 2014). This is restricted to a small area at the top of the art site. The combined effect of these processes is contributing to the fading of the art work. Bird spikes have been attached to the rock ledges immediately above the art site to discourage perching. While accumulation of the guano is an ongoing concern, the presence of the falcons is considered favourable by some community members and at no time has relocation of the falcons been recommended or considered desirable. Removal of the guano could also cause damage to the artwork and the rock face and it has been suggested that the guano may be forming a barrier or protection to underlying work. As a result the site is being monitored and no remedial actions are proposed.

There are few rock art sites in central west New South Wales. This rarity of art sites is not related to the lack of suitable geological formations in which rock art may be found. The lack of art sites may be a cultural phenomenon related to regional differences in the social systems of the various Aboriginal groups. Snake Rock is not only a regionally rare site type, it is also an excellent example of its kind.

Differences in the style and technique of the art, both within the assemblage and in comparison to other sites 40 kilometres away, also indicates that this site is culturally unique. The site has a combination of two art styles. The first of these is the Panaramittee, which comprises animal tracks (bird and kangaroo) and arrangements of dots and strokes. The second is figurative and contains hand prints and meandering and radiating lines suggestive of fire or sun arrangements.

Also located within Snake Rock Aboriginal Area are a number of individually recorded sites, such as open campsites, axe grinding grooves, scatters of stone artefacts, a water hole (spring) and scar trees. In conjunction with the individual elements, permanent water supply in the area and the rock art, this site provides for the observation of meaningful patterns of past habitation of the area.

Issue

- Guano from the nesting peregrine falcons and graffiti has obscured some of the artwork, and together with natural weathering, is contributing to fading of the artwork.

Desired outcomes

- Aboriginal communities are consulted and involved in the management, promotion and presentation of Aboriginal culture and history of Snake Rock Aboriginal Area.
- Cultural use of wild resources, such as medicinal plants and bush tucker, is supported and the sustainable use of these resources is facilitated with the community subject to NPWS policies and legislation.
- Aboriginal sites and places are identified, registered and protected from damage.

- Impacts on Aboriginal heritage values are minimised where possible and natural weathering processes monitored.

Management response

- 3.4.1 Continue to consult and involve the Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council and the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee in management of the park.
- 3.4.2 Register all Aboriginal sites including results and records from surveys undertaken with community. Obtain the agreement of the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee before the location of Aboriginal sites or places are made public.
- 3.4.3 Support the local Aboriginal community to undertake traditional cultural activities on the park to enhance links to Country in consultation with the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee.
- 3.4.4 Permit cultural resource use in accordance with NPWS policy and legislation.
- 3.4.5 Develop a rock art monitoring program and undertake regular monitoring of the art site.
- 3.4.6 Investigate measures to protect rock art from guano.
- 3.4.7 Undertake a cultural heritage assessment prior to all works with the potential to impact on Aboriginal sites, places or values.

3.5 Historic heritage

Heritage places and landscapes are made up of living stories as well as connections to the past, which can include natural resources, objects, customs and traditions that individuals and communities have inherited and wish to conserve for current and future generations. Cultural heritage comprises places and items that may have historic, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic significance. NPWS conserves the significant heritage features of the parks and reserves that it manages.

There is limited knowledge about the early interaction between Aboriginal people and Europeans in the area of the park. However, the area is typical of the region, with early European settlement resulting in the displacement of Aboriginal people, limitations on the ability of Aboriginal people to access Country, and diminished capacity to fulfil cultural obligations.

When the area was first settled, Snake Rock became part of the Curra Station in what was then the Wellington land district. In 1901, Curra Station was divided into smaller holdings and reserved for improvement leases. Such leases had conditions which included requirements on the leaseholder to clear, crop or cultivate land. Evidence of agricultural use of the site remains, including the contour banks and dam, old fence lines and strainer posts. These items are a reminder of the past land use and history prior to the proclamation of Snake Rock Aboriginal Area in 2006. The park is still surrounded by agricultural properties and activities and the land has a shared history between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Issue

- There are no items of heritage significance known to occur in the park and low potential for them to occur.

Desired outcome

- In the event there is information or physical evidence of historical significance, the historic items are managed appropriately.

Management response

3.5.1 In the event items of heritage significance are found, manage items or sites in accordance with their assessed level of significance.

3.6 Visitor use

NPWS parks provide a range of visitor opportunities. NPWS aims to ensure that visitors enjoy, experience and appreciate parks at the same time as conserving and protecting park values.

Access to Snake Rock is via a combination of sealed and unsealed roads approximately 35 kilometres to the west of Peak Hill and approximately 25 kilometres south of Bulgandramine Mission.

Prior to the NPWS acquisition of the park, public visitation to the site by the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community was restricted by private land tenure. Despite this limitation on access the cultural values of the site were impacted by uncontrolled vehicle movement, graffiti on the rock art, trampling, and climbing over the rock formation.

Since its reservation as an Aboriginal area in 2006, public access to the park has been by arrangement only and under the guidance of NPWS staff or a local Aboriginal community member. This has resulted in better management of visitor impacts.

In 2009, the Snake Rock Aboriginal Area Visitor Facility and Cultural Heritage Site Protection Project Plan was developed by NPWS and the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee (NPWS 2009). The plan provides for low level visitation, low-impact self-reliant nature-based recreation such as bushwalking and bird watching, and promotes the appreciation and understanding of the site's cultural values. The plan details the establishment of minor recreation and information facilities set within the natural environment and aimed at protecting the cultural and natural values of the area.

In accordance with this plan, two small day use areas have been developed. The first of these includes a picnic table, car park and interpretive information. The second location is adjacent to the art site, includes a large group picnic table and is accessed via a walking track. These facilities have been provided to help promote and support cultural conservation and to increase the enjoyment and satisfaction of visitors.

Today, community members visit the site to educate both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children about Aboriginal history and culture, and more frequently, to take their own family's children to share the place and its meaning with the next generation (Waters 2005). The continued use and promotion of Snake Rock as a place for the transfer of cultural knowledge is a theme strongly supported by the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal community. The Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal community also consider that increased visitation may negatively impact the site and will need to be carefully managed. Visitor use at Snake Rock is being monitored in order to minimise potential impacts on its cultural and natural values.

Recreation activities not consistent with the appreciation or study of cultural values are generally considered inappropriate uses of Aboriginal areas. At Snake Rock, visitor use and recreation activities focus on the education of visitors and appreciation of Aboriginal cultural heritage. For this reason, and given the small size of the park, horse riding and cycling are not considered appropriate activities.

A number of towns located on the Newell Highway and the nearby Goobang National Park provide for recreational opportunities such as bush walking, camping and caravanning.

Issues

- Inappropriate visitor use could negatively impact on the cultural values of Snake Rock.
- Increased visitation may adversely impact on nesting peregrine falcons and visitation may need to be restricted during the breeding season (see Section 3.3).

Desired outcomes

- Visitor opportunities encourage appreciation and awareness of the park's values and their conservation.
- Facilities and activities are planned and managed to provide a satisfying visitor experience.
- Opportunities exist for the continued use of the site by Aboriginal people for teaching, learning, enjoyment and renewal of cultural associations.
- Negative impacts of visitors on the park's natural and cultural values are minimised.

Management response

- 3.6.1 Permit visits by members of the public to the park by prior arrangement with NPWS and the approval of the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee.
- 3.6.2 Permit visitation by organised groups in consultation with the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee, subject to limits on numbers and other conditions if necessary to minimise impacts.
- 3.6.3 Provide opportunities in the park for cultural heritage education and awareness, traditional use and connection with Country by local Aboriginal people.
- 3.6.4 Involve the local Aboriginal community in developing material and programs for the interpretation of Aboriginal culture, including a cultural education package for Snake Rock.
- 3.6.5 Implement the Snake Rock Aboriginal Area Visitor Facility and Cultural Heritage Site Protection Project Plan.
- 3.6.6 Maintain the two existing day-use areas. No additional facilities will be provided.
- 3.6.7 Camping and fires are not permitted except for cultural or educational purposes and with the consent of the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee and NPWS.
- 3.6.8 Climbing of the Snake Rock outcrop is not permitted in the park.
- 3.6.9 Cycling and recreational horse riding are not permitted in the park.

4. Threats

4.1 Pests

Pest species are plants, animals and pathogens that have negative environmental, economic and social impacts and are most commonly introduced species. Pests can have impacts across the range of park values, including impacts on biodiversity, cultural heritage, catchment and scenic values.

NPWS prepares regional pest management strategies which identify pest species across that region's parks. These strategies also identify priorities for control, including actions listed in the *Priorities Action Statement* (see Sections 3.2 and 3.3), threat abatement plans and other strategies such as the *NSW Biodiversity Priorities for Widespread Weeds* (NSW DPI & OEH 2011) and the *NSW Biosecurity Strategy 2013-2021* (DPI 2013).

The NPWS regional pest management strategy for Western Rivers Region (OEH 2012b) identifies four pest species as having a negative impact upon park values: silver-leaved nightshade (*Solanum elaeagnifolium*), St John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), European red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), and rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*). Six additional introduced species have been noted within the park (see Table 3). The overriding objective of the pest management strategy is to minimise adverse impacts of introduced species on biodiversity and other park and community values while complying with legislative responsibilities. The strategy also identifies where other site- or pest-specific plans or strategies need to be developed to provide a more detailed approach.

Table 3: Weeds and pest animals recorded in Snake Rock Aboriginal Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	Comment
Weeds		
Saffron thistle	<i>Carthamnus lanatus</i>	
St John's wort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i> #	
African boxthorn	<i>Lycium ferocissimum</i> *#	Previously recorded
Silver-leaved nightshade	<i>Solanum elaeagnifolium</i> *#	
Pest animals		
Feral goat	<i>Capra hircus</i> ^	Transient population
Feral cat	<i>Felis catus</i> ^	
House mouse	<i>Mus musculus</i>	
Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i> ~^	Occasional and in low numbers
Feral pig	<i>Sus scrofa</i> ~^	Transient population
European red fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i> ~^	

* Weed of National Significance

Declared 'noxious' under the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993*

~ Declared 'pest' under the *Local Land Services Act 2013*

^ Declared a key threatening process under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act* and *EPBC Act*

There is an extensive recent history of grazing livestock within the park and the impacts of this were evident at the time of acquisition. Improved fencing, security and education of

neighbours about appropriate uses have reduced the incidents of grazing livestock in the park. The park contains large areas previously disturbed by clearing which are more likely to support weed species.

The impacts of some pest species have been declared as key threatening processes under the Threatened Species Conservation Act and Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. This includes the impacts of foxes (NSW SC 1998, DoE 2009), pigs (NSW SC 2004a, TSSC 2001a) and goats (NSW SC 2004b, DoE 2009). Foxes are known to frequent the small dam within the park. Feral pigs have been recorded within Snake Rock but are not thought to be residents. The most recent activity has been concentrated on the lower slopes along the western boundary of the park. This has resulted in some soil disturbance and has promoted weed invasion. Evidence of goats has been noted along the sandstone ridge and at the base of the rock art site. Their presence has been transitory but has had a negative impact on the cultural values of the site through soil disturbance.

Under the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993*, NPWS must control noxious weeds on its lands to the extent necessary to prevent their spread to adjoining lands. The Noxious Weeds Act will be repealed by the *Biosecurity Act 2015* when that Act comes into effect in 2017. The Biosecurity Act embeds the principle of shared responsibility for biosecurity risks (including weeds) between the government, community and industry; it will apply equally to both public and privately owned land. A new Regional Weed Strategy, which will be developed by the Local Land Services Regional Weed Committee, will describe what weeds will be prioritised for management action, investment and compliance effort within each Local Land Services region. These priorities will then be incorporated into and implemented via the relevant NPWS regional pest management strategy.

While few exotic plant species have been recorded within the park, several have the potential to become serious invaders. The main species of concern include saffron thistle (*Carthamus lanatus*), which already exists on site, white horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), and serrated tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*). These weeds are potential colonisers in the regenerating cleared area. However, introduced plants within the park are largely benign with most confined to management trails and the previously cleared area.

African boxthorn was recorded in the park in 2005 but it has since been eradicated. It is a declared Weed of National Significance, is widespread throughout New South Wales and is highly invasive. The park is regularly monitored for new outbreaks.

Due to the small size of the park, pest management control programs are more effective when conducted in cooperation with neighbouring properties. Pest management strategies will be designed to avoid the potential for damage to the rock based art-site and other cultural elements.

Desired outcomes

- Negative impacts of weeds and pest animals on park values are minimised.
- NPWS works closely with park neighbours and Central West Local Land Services in the management of weeds and pest animals.

Management response

- 4.1.1 Manage pest species in accordance with the regional pest management strategy and other strategies as relevant.
- 4.1.2 Seek the cooperation of neighbours and other authorities in implementing weed and pest animal control programs.

4.2 Fire

The primary objectives of NPWS fire management are to protect life, property, community assets and cultural heritage from the adverse impacts of fire, while also managing fire regimes in parks to maintain and enhance biodiversity. NPWS also assists in developing fire management practices that contribute to conserving biodiversity and cultural heritage across the landscape, and implements cooperative and coordinated fire management arrangements with other fire authorities, neighbours and the community (OEH 2013).

Fire is a natural feature of many environments and is essential for the survival of some plant communities. However, inappropriate fire regimes can lead to loss of particular plant and animal species and communities, and high frequency fires have been listed as a key threatening process under the Threatened Species Conservation Act (NSW SC 2000a). Due to the small size of Snake Rock Aboriginal Area, the greatest single threat to biodiversity within the park is a catastrophic fire event. Cultural values may be negatively impacted by fire and fire suppression activities.

A fire management strategy which defines the fire management approach for the park has been prepared (OEH 2014b). The fire management strategy outlines key assets within and adjoining the park, including sites of natural and cultural heritage value, fire management zones, and fire control advantages such as management trails and water supply points.

The strategy also provides fire regime guidelines for the conservation of the park's vegetation communities. For Semi-arid Woodlands (Shrubby sub-formation), an interval between fire events of less than 15 years should be avoided. A maximum interval between fire events has not been specified for this vegetation class, as there is insufficient data on which a definite interval can be based. The previously cleared area of the park, which is now a derived herb field or grassland with scattered trees and shrubs, should also be managed as for Semi-arid Woodland (Shrubby sub-formation) as this is the likely former vegetation type.

Management trails within the park will be maintained using chemical and mechanical means to provide a physical barrier to low-intensity fire. There are no trails along the western and southern boundaries of the park but if necessary, fuel loads can be maintained along boundary fence lines by slashing or trittering.

Wildfire and some methods of hazard reduction could permanently damage some of the cultural heritage values of the park. To minimise the risk of damage occurring, wildfire management and fuel reduction activities will be undertaken as set out in the fire management strategy. For example, there is to be no use of chemicals or fire retardants within 20 metres of art sites, and if windy, this distance is to be extended to 50 metres. A heavy machinery and moderate–high fire intensity exclusion zone has also been identified over the rocky outcrop area where rock art exists. Management actions have also been specified in the strategy for the protection of other Aboriginal heritage sites.

NPWS maintains cooperative arrangements with surrounding landowners and the Rural Fire Service and is actively involved with the Mid Lachlan Valley Team Bush Fire Management Committee. Cooperative arrangements include fire planning, fuel management and information sharing. Hazard reduction programs, ecological burning proposals, and fire trail works are submitted annually to the Bush Fire Management Committee.

Desired outcomes

- The risk of high intensity fire within the park is minimised.
- Negative impacts of fire on life, property and natural and cultural heritage values are minimised.

- The potential for spread of bushfires on, from, or into the park is minimised.

Management response

- 4.2.1 Implement the fire management strategy for Snake Rock Aboriginal Area and update as required.
- 4.2.2 Continue to be involved in the Mid Lachlan Valley Team Bush Fire Management Committee. Maintain cooperative arrangements with local Rural Fire Service brigades and fire control officers, other fire authorities and surrounding landowners in regard to fuel management and fire suppression.

4.3 Climate change

Human induced climate change is listed as a key threatening process on the Threatened Species Conservation Act (NSW SC 2000b) and the associated loss of habitat is listed under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (TSSC 2001b).

The latest information on projected changes to climate are from the NSW and ACT Regional Climate Modelling (NARClm) project (OEH 2014). The climate projections for 2020–2039 are described as ‘near future’ (or as 2030); and projections for 2060–2079 are described as ‘far future’ (or as 2070). The snapshot shown in Table 4 is for the Central West and Orana Region which includes Snake Rock Aboriginal Area (OEH 2014).

Table 4: Central West and Orana climate change snapshot

Projected temperature changes	
Maximum temperatures are projected to increase in the near future by 0.4–1.0°C	Maximum temperatures are projected to increase in the far future by 1.8–2.7°C
Minimum temperatures are projected to increase in the near future by 0.5–0.9°C	Minimum temperatures are projected to increase in the far future by 1.5–2.6°C
The number of hot days (i.e. > 35°C) will increase	The number of cold nights (i.e. < 2°C) will decrease
Projected rainfall changes	
Rainfall is projected to decrease in spring	Rainfall is projected to increase in autumn
Projected Forest Fire Danger Index changes	
Average fire weather is projected to increase in summer, spring and winter	Severe fire weather days are projected to increase in summer, spring and winter

Source: OEH 2014.

Projections of likely changes for the Central West and Orana Region include increases in minimum and maximum temperatures; decreases in spring rainfall; increases in autumn rainfall; increases in evaporation leading to drier soil conditions throughout the year; increases in the extremity of the impacts of the El Nino Southern Oscillation and a minor increase in run-off. These changes are likely to lead to greater intensity and frequency of fires, an extended fire season, more severe droughts, reduced water availability, regional flooding and increased erosion (DECCW 2010).

Reduced plant growth and cover, caused by poor growing conditions, including soil drying, is likely to leave many soils vulnerable to increased sheet, rill and gully erosion exacerbated by heavy downpours during more frequent intense storms. Wind erosion is also likely to increase. Changes to rainfall and run-off are likely to affect Aboriginal cultural heritage

values including damage to sites. Hotter and drier conditions are likely to impact on all biodiversity in central west New South Wales. The worst affected areas are likely to be those where existing threats are exacerbated. Pests, weeds and the occurrence of major wildfires are likely to have an increased impact on many ecological communities. Some native species are likely to be reduced in numbers, contract in range or be lost from the region altogether. Hardier species will persist. Some widespread common species are likely to be favoured.

The potential impact of climate change is difficult to assess, since it depends on the compounding effects of other pressures, particularly barriers to migration and pressure from feral animals. Species most at risk are those unable to migrate or adapt, particularly those with small population sizes or with slow growth rates.

The impact of climate change upon Snake Rock Aboriginal Area is likely to be significant due to the compounding effects of isolation and fragmentation.

Programs to reduce the pressures arising from other threats, such as habitat fragmentation, invasive species, bushfires and pollution, will help reduce the severity of the effects of climate change.

Desired outcome

- The effects of climate change on natural systems are reduced.

Management response

4.3.1 Continue existing fire, pest and weed management programs to increase the park's ability to cope with future disturbances, including climate change, and encourage research into appropriate indicators to monitor the effects of climate change.

4.4 Isolation and fragmentation

The area surrounding Snake Rock Aboriginal Area has been extensively cleared, which has resulted in a high loss of biodiversity and fragmentation of habitat in the region. The park itself is small and subject to edge effects making it more vulnerable to disturbances.

In addition to ongoing fire, weed, and pest animal management, long-term conservation of biodiversity depends upon the protection, enhancement and connection of remaining habitat across the landscape, incorporating vegetation remnants on both public and private lands. Nearby vegetated areas contribute to the habitat values of the park and provide ecological corridors to other forested areas. Maintaining the integrity of the remaining habitat within the park and, where possible, linking this to adjacent areas of bushland to facilitate wildlife corridors, is important in ensuring long term viability of the park's biological values.

Desired outcomes

- The negative impacts of isolation and fragmentation are reduced.
- Connectivity of the park to other natural areas is improved.
- The values of the park are recognised in a broader regional context and included in landscape-based planning processes where appropriate.

Management response

4.4.1 Maintain cooperative arrangements with nearby landholders regarding access, fire and pest management.

5. Management operations and other uses

5.1 Management facilities and operations

Management trails

The park management trail into Snake Rock is maintained by slashing and erosion and sediment control works.

Boundary fencing

NPWS takes a cooperative approach towards sharing fencing responsibilities. Existing fences are generally in good repair, however their stock-proof condition is monitored and assistance provided where appropriate, consistent with the NPWS Boundary Fencing Policy (OEH 2014a).

Unauthorised access and illegal activities

Boundary gates are located at strategic locations to allow for authorised access for park management activities such as fire management. Unauthorised access and vandalism to gates and the art site occur at Snake Rock.

Issues

- The park management trail requires routine maintenance for management purposes.
- Unauthorised access and illegal activities can negatively impact natural and cultural values.

Desired outcomes

- The access trail is maintained in a suitable condition.
- Illegal access and activity is minimised.
- Boundary fences are maintained to ensure that livestock are excluded from the park.

Management response

5.1.1 Maintain the park management trail for management purposes.

5.1.2 Confine vehicle use for management purposes to the existing park management trail and walking track.

5.1.3 Gate and lock all access points into the park to prevent unauthorised vehicle access.

5.1.4 In cooperation with park neighbours maintain boundary fences in a stock-proof condition. Cooperative fencing arrangements will be entered into with neighbours as per the NPWS Boundary Fencing Policy.

6. Implementation

This plan of management establishes a scheme of operations for the Snake Rock Aboriginal Area.

Activities identified in the plan are listed in Table 5. Relative priorities are allocated against each activity as follows:

- **High** priority activities are those imperative to achieve the plan's objectives and desired outcomes, and must be undertaken in the near future to avoid significant deterioration in natural, cultural or management resources.
- **Medium** priority activities are those that are necessary to achieve the objectives and desired outcomes but are not urgent.
- **Low** priority activities are desirable to achieve management objectives and desired outcomes but can wait until resources become available.
- **Ongoing** is for activities that are undertaken on an annual basis or statements of management intent that will direct the management response if an issue arises.

This plan of management does not have a specific term and will stay in force until amended or replaced in accordance with the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

List of management responses

Management response	Priority
3.1 Geology, landscape and hydrology	
3.1.1 Undertake all works in a manner that minimises erosion and water pollution.	Ongoing
3.2 Native plants	
3.2.1 Implement relevant recovery actions in the <i>Priorities Action Statement</i> and recovery plans for threatened plant species, populations and communities occurring in the park.	Ongoing
3.2.2 Restore structural diversity and habitat values in degraded areas by allowing natural regeneration and assist revegetation where appropriate using endemic native plant species.	Ongoing
3.2.3 Monitor and evaluate the success of revegetation of degraded and previously cleared areas. Monitor all areas for erosion and undertake soil conservation and restoration works if required.	Ongoing
3.2.4 In consultation with the Aboriginal community, encourage surveys for all plant species in particular threatened and culturally significant plants.	High
3.2.5 Work with neighbours and vegetation management authorities to encourage conservation of remnant native vegetation in the vicinity of the park.	Ongoing
3.3 Native animals	
3.3.1 Implement relevant recovery actions in the <i>Priorities Action Statement</i> and recovery plans for threatened animal species and populations occurring in the park.	Ongoing
3.3.2 Minimise the impact of human activity on nesting peregrine falcons during the breeding season (August to November) by restricting visitor entry to the site during this period.	Ongoing

Management response	Priority
3.4 Aboriginal connections to Country	
3.4.1 Continue to consult and involve the Peak Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council and the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee in management of the park.	Ongoing
3.4.2 Register all Aboriginal sites including results and records from surveys undertaken with community. Obtain the agreement of the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee before the location of Aboriginal sites or places are made public.	Ongoing
3.4.3 Support the local Aboriginal community to undertake traditional cultural activities on the park to enhance links to Country in consultation with the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee.	High
3.4.4 Permit cultural resource use where in accordance with NPWS policy and legislation.	Ongoing
3.4.5 Develop a rock art monitoring program and undertake regular monitoring of the art site.	High
3.4.6 Investigate measures to protect rock art from guano.	High
3.4.7 Undertake a cultural heritage assessment prior to all works with the potential to impact on Aboriginal sites, places or values.	Ongoing
3.5 Historic heritage	
3.5.1 In the event items of heritage significance are found, manage items or sites in accordance with their assessed level of significance.	Ongoing
3.6 Visitor use	
3.6.1 Permit visits by members of the public to the park by prior arrangement with NPWS and the approval of the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee.	Ongoing
3.6.2 Permit visitation by organised groups in consultation with the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee, subject to limits on numbers and other conditions if necessary to minimise impacts.	Ongoing
3.6.3 Provide opportunities in the park for cultural heritage education and awareness, traditional use and connection with Country by local Aboriginal people.	Ongoing
3.6.4 Involve the local Aboriginal community in developing material and programs for the interpretation of Aboriginal culture including a cultural education package for Snake Rock.	High
3.6.5 Implement the Snake Rock Aboriginal Area Visitor Facility and Cultural Heritage Site Protection Project Plan.	Ongoing
3.6.6 Maintain the two day use areas. No additional facilities will be provided.	Ongoing
3.6.7 Camping and fires are not permitted except for cultural or educational purposes and with the consent of the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee and NPWS.	Ongoing
3.6.8 Climbing of the Snake Rock outcrop is not permitted in the park.	Ongoing
3.6.9 Cycling and recreational horse riding are not permitted in the park.	

Management response	Priority
4.1 Pests	
4.1.1 Manage pest species in accordance with the regional pest management strategy and other strategies as relevant.	Ongoing
4.1.2 Seek the cooperation of neighbours and other authorities in implementing weed and pest animal control programs.	Ongoing
4.2 Fire	
4.2.1 Implement the fire management strategy for Snake Rock Aboriginal Area and update as required.	Ongoing
4.2.2 Continue to be involved in the Mid Lachlan Valley Team Bush Fire Management Committee. Maintain cooperative arrangements with local Rural Fire Service brigades and fire control officers, other fire authorities and surrounding landowners in regard to fuel management and fire suppression.	Ongoing
4.3 Climate change	
4.3.1 Continue existing fire, pest and weed management programs to increase the park's ability to cope with future disturbances, including climate change, and encourage research into appropriate indicators to monitor the effects of climate change.	Ongoing
4.4 Isolation and fragmentation	
4.4.1 Maintain cooperative arrangements with nearby landholders regarding access, fire and pest management.	Ongoing
5.1 Management facilities and operations	
5.1.1 Maintain the park management trail for management purposes.	Ongoing
5.1.2 Confine vehicle use for management purposes to the existing park management trail and walking track.	Ongoing
5.1.3 Gate and lock all access points into the park to prevent unauthorised vehicle access.	Ongoing
5.1.4 In cooperation with park neighbours maintain boundary fences in a stock-proof condition. Cooperative fencing arrangements will be entered into with neighbours as per the NPWS Boundary Fencing Policy.	Ongoing

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