



Consultation draft

Native vegetation policy

for Western Australia

August 2021

Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

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Minister's foreword



I am pleased to invite your feedback on this consultation draft of the first ever *Native vegetation policy for Western Australia*. It is informed by the valued feedback of more than 1,000 participants, during statewide consultation on native vegetation in 2019–20.

This is the next step in the McGowan Government's commitment to improve the management and protection of native vegetation. With the right strategies, protecting and enhancing native vegetation can contribute to a strong economic outlook for the state. Through investments like the State Government's \$60 million Green Jobs plan, caring for native vegetation can create employment, support Aboriginal connection to country and bolster regional prosperity, while sequestering carbon and protecting biodiversity.

Western Australia's native vegetation and iconic landscapes are unique, biodiverse and internationally renowned. They are worth protecting, now and for future generations. This policy will lay the foundations for enduring reforms to ensure native vegetation is managed strategically, transparently and with a clear view to the future.

The draft policy proposes strategic direction to modernise native vegetation management in Western Australia. For example, regionalised, strategic planning for native vegetation will involve local stakeholders, promoting clarity, accountability and strategic coordination. A more strategic, flexible approach to offsets will improve certainty, ensuring offsets meet

regional environmental priorities and maximise co-benefits, including jobs. Agencies will be prompted to pursue modern systems and practices, in particular for data capture and sharing, in line with community expectations of a contemporary, transparent government.

The policy will improve agency collaboration to address the challenges that result in cumulative loss of important native vegetation and regulatory delays. Together with better mapping and monitoring, these steps will provide an evidence-based foundation for further well-planned reforms. Many of the improvements sought by stakeholders across sectors can be achieved within the existing frameworks – and that is why the work can start now.

The McGowan Government acknowledges the challenges of caring for the state's unique native vegetation, given competing priorities and the complexity of its management. This policy will prompt collaboration, innovation and forward planning to ensure Western Australians continue to enjoy and value our native vegetation, while supporting ongoing prosperity for the state's agriculture and development sectors.



Hon. Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA BA
Minister for Environment

Have your say

The State Government welcomes your review and feedback on this consultation draft of the *Native vegetation policy for Western Australia*.

This consultation draft reflects feedback shared during extensive public consultation on the [Native vegetation in Western Australia issues paper](#), involving more than 1,000 participants through workshops and meetings across the state, and via written submissions. It is also informed by feedback and analysis on the current practice and systems for native vegetation management across State Government. A consultation summary and the submissions on the issues paper are available at wa.gov.au/nativeveg.

How has the issues paper feedback been used?

What did we hear?

Broad support for initiatives in the issues paper, across sectors	
Native vegetation policy To drive better coordination, consistency and transparency across State Government in protecting native vegetation	Better information To support evidence-based policy and practice, and information sharing
Better regulation To ensure regulatory effort is well-founded, efficient, effective and complementary	A bioregional approach To leverage local knowledge and underpin coordinated efforts across sectors

What else did we hear?

	How is it addressed in the draft policy?
The need for more clarity on how a bioregional approach will be implemented, including how boundaries will be set.	The policy prompts the use of existing mechanisms for strategic environmental planning, and for spatial boundaries to be set through those planning processes. See Explanatory Notes .
The policy could include targets, thresholds, outcome-based objectives and a means for addressing cumulative impacts.	The policy sets a framework to establish regionally tailored objectives and priorities, including targets and thresholds where they are warranted (see policy statement and roadmap actions 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3). Improvements in native vegetation mapping and monitoring are crucial as the foundation for evidence-based targets and thresholds, and to understand cumulative impacts.
Broad support for rewarding native vegetation stewardship.	The need for support of native vegetation stewardship is reflected in the principles, approaches and roadmap actions 4.1 and 4.2.
Calls for State of the Environment reporting.	The policy drives the data collection and sharing across government (roadmap action 2.2), and investment in a new tool to map and monitor native vegetation coverage roadmap (action 3.1), which will enable reporting on status and trends.
The urgency of reform – there is no time to lose.	Native vegetation reform can be contested, so it must be defensible and based on robust data. The policy's staged approach is designed to gather the information base and build stakeholder readiness to ensure reforms are well-planned and enduring.

More detail on stakeholder feedback and how it is addressed in the policy is available at wa.gov.au/nativeveg.

What is the role of this policy?

Strategic outcomes through better coordination and collaboration

The policy aims to drive better strategic outcomes for native vegetation using the tools already available, through improved collaboration and coordination across State Government functions. It proposes measured, step-wise reforms to ensure change is enduring.

Consistency, transparency and contemporary practices

The policy aims to promote a modern, whole-of-government approach to managing native vegetation through individual State Government agencies' functions. Simple changes to practice are expected to build transparency and deliver solutions now; and clarify what may need to be done in future. It assumes that targets and thresholds are best tailored to specific parts of the state, underpinned by better data and locally focused stakeholder engagement.

What will change as a result of the final policy?

Stakeholders can expect to experience improved strategic alignment across the State Government's existing responsibilities. There are no direct changes to regulatory arrangements. Instead, the roadmap lays a plan for developing and consulting on regionally tailored objectives and priorities for native vegetation. These will support business certainty, outcome-based regulation and potential for streamlining assessment processes. They will also ensure that the State Government's regulatory decision-making is aligned with, and complements, its land management, land planning and funding decisions.

Who should read this consultation draft?

Submissions are welcomed from all interested parties, which may include private citizens, Aboriginal people, farmers, pastoralists, foresters, land managers, researchers and consultants; members of conservation groups and Aboriginal groups; and members of the local government, mining, construction and development sectors. Importantly, all Western Australians have a potential role to play in the ecologically sustainable management of our native vegetation, and so we welcome all feedback.

What should I comment on?

We encourage you to focus your feedback on the five consultation questions via the online survey available at the website in the box on the next page. However, freeform submissions will also be accepted.

Consultation questions

1. Has the policy's context adequately covered native vegetation values, opportunities and challenges?
2. How suitable are the guiding principles in providing a contemporary foundation for managing native vegetation?
3. How well do you support the strategies and outcomes?
4. How suitable are the goals and approaches in guiding implementation of the policy?
5. Which roadmap actions are most important?

How to have your say

Written submissions

Visit wa.gov.au/nativeveg to:

- make your submission in the online survey, via Consultation Hub
- find out about or register for public webinar sessions
- view Explanatory Notes on how issues paper feedback was used, regional planning and frequently asked questions.

If you need more information, or to discuss other submission options, please contact the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (the department) and **direct your query to Native Vegetation Strategy Branch.**

Phone: 6364 7000

Email: nvs@dwer.wa.gov.au

Mail: Native Vegetation Strategy Branch,
Department of Water and
Environmental Regulation,
Locked Bag 10,
Joondalup DC, WA 6919

How will my feedback be used?

The department will collate and analyse the feedback on behalf of the State Government. The feedback will inform adjustments to the consultation draft, to prepare a final policy for the State Government's consideration. A consultation summary will be released along with the final policy.

Your legal rights and responsibilities

In the interests of transparency, all submissions will be published on the department's website unless we receive other instructions from you. Your contact details will be redacted for privacy.

If you wish to remain anonymous, or if you do not wish your submission (or parts of it) to be published, please advise the department in writing when making your submission. You may mark your name, the entire document, or specific parts of your submission as confidential, and include an explanation.

Even if your submission is treated as confidential by the department, it may still be disclosed in accordance with requirements of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*, or any other applicable written law. The department reserves the right not to publish any particular submission and to redact any content that could be regarded as derogatory, defamatory or racially vilifying.

Draft policy

We acknowledge the **traditional owners** of the land upon which we live and work, and pay our respects to their elders past and present.

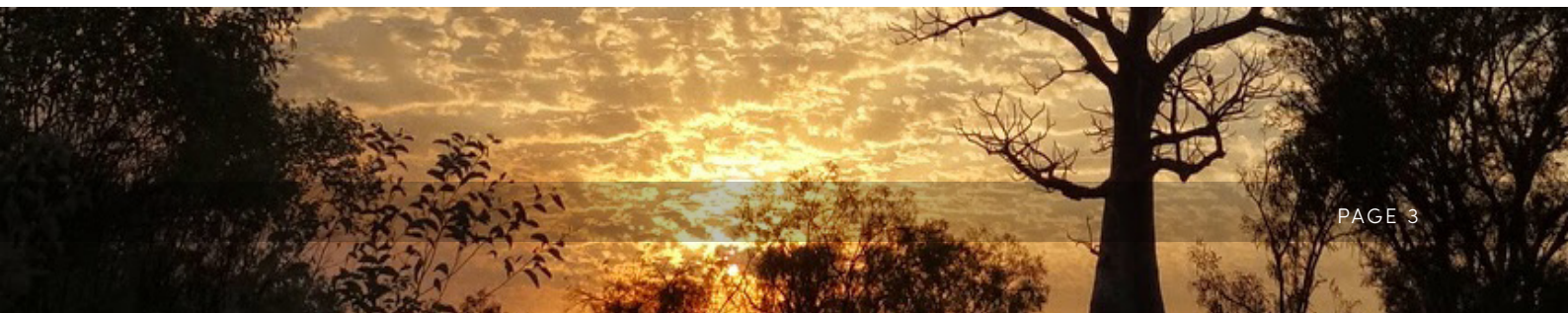
We recognise the intrinsic connection and cultural responsibility to country that **Aboriginal people** have developed over more than 40,000 years in Western Australia, and the value of this relationship, both for Aboriginal people and for Western Australia's native vegetation.

We seek to understand the impact of changed landscapes, changed access and traditional practices in relation to native vegetation for Aboriginal people of Western Australia, and acknowledge previous and ongoing impacts of colonisation for Aboriginal people and Aboriginal culture. In implementing this policy, we recognise the expertise, capacity and interest of Aboriginal people in native vegetation. We aim to involve and provide opportunities for Aboriginal people in its management.

In this policy, the terms **indigenous** and native refer only to vegetation. We acknowledge that these terms were historically applied to Aboriginal people, and we recognise the historical and ongoing impacts of previous government policy.

Table of Contents

Purpose	4
Scope	4
Policy statement	5
Context	6
Guiding principles	8
Strategies and outcomes	10
Roadmap: Priorities and opportunities	13
Acronyms	18
Glossary	19



Purpose

To protect and enhance Western Australia's native vegetation, the *Native vegetation policy for Western Australia* (the policy) promotes a contemporary, whole-of-government approach to steering the complex system of organisations and individuals involved in native vegetation policymaking and management.

The policy:

1. initiates a regionally tailored approach to setting objectives and priorities for native vegetation, guided by statewide outcomes and goals
2. promotes consistent, transparent consideration of native vegetation across State Government functions
3. provides for improved data capture, sharing and reporting, to support evidence-based policy and practice.

The State Government recognises the need to:

- prevent the extinction of threatened species;
- protect areas of high conservation value; and
- achieve a nett gain in native vegetation extent.

This policy is a necessary first-step in building the systems, frameworks, data and awareness required to achieve this through future reforms.

Scope

This policy sets strategic direction for the State Government. It applies to all State Government **agencies** with responsibilities that influence Western Australia's native vegetation. **State Government boards and commissions** (as defined in the Glossary) are encouraged to apply the policy, where relevant.

The policy commits agencies to work collaboratively together and with stakeholders to improve consistency and strategic coordination across relevant State Government functions. It will be implemented via a roadmap of actions by agencies, to achieve the policy's outcomes.

This policy applies to **native vegetation** (as defined in the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*, see Glossary), with the exclusion of **marine vegetation**. In addition, this policy applies to indigenous aquatic or terrestrial vegetation that has been voluntarily restored, since it aims for strategic coordination across all State Government functions.



Policy statement

Western Australia's native vegetation is of great value – ecologically, socially, culturally and economically. To protect and enhance it now and for the future, State Government agencies will ensure that their decisions on native vegetation are coordinated, deliberate, well-informed and transparent – whether the decision is to protect it, to **restore** it, or to accept impacts to it in favour of other priorities.

Through their existing responsibilities, agencies covered by the policy will collaborate to design and apply whole-of-government **policy settings** which:

- achieve conservation and restoration of native vegetation while also delivering other state priorities like regional prosperity, Aboriginal wellbeing and a strong economy
- maximise the **co-benefits** of sustainable native vegetation management, for ecological, community and economic outcomes
- inspire and support various **sectors** to **conserve** and restore native vegetation, complementing the state's conservation estate and regulatory functions
- support coordinated, outcome-based and risk-based decision-making across all the State Government's regulatory, land management, land planning and funding functions that affect native vegetation, including through approaches which:
 - are tailored to bioregional differences or specific challenges
 - include targets and thresholds where they are warranted and achievable
 - leverage environmental offsets and other funding streams to address impacts at a **landscape-scale**.

Within agencies' regulatory, land management, land planning and funding functions; and in developing and implementing policies, plans, programs, projects, processes and systems; agencies will identify and progress reforms to:

- consider and transparently account for the values of native vegetation in decision-making that affects it, based on the best information available at the time
- apply the **mitigation hierarchy** steps to any planned impacts on native vegetation at both strategic and project scale – avoid, minimise then rehabilitate, before offsets are considered
- improve the spatial capture of their regulatory, land management, land planning and funding decisions that affect native vegetation, applying common data standards to facilitate data sharing
- work together and with stakeholders to improve the mapping and monitoring of native vegetation extent, condition and type, and the availability of spatial data.

Context

Western Australia's native vegetation is internationally renowned for its biodiversity and gives character to the state's unique and iconic landscapes. It provides habitat for native animals, supports soil health, cleanses water, prevents erosion, controls salinity, binds carbon, provides oxygen, cools cities and towns, feeds livestock and provides timber and **bush products**. It is culturally and spiritually significant to Aboriginal people, underpins community wellbeing and supports important sectors of the state's economy.

Activities that sustain people's livelihoods and the economy – like agricultural production and urban development – can compete with the protection and enhancement of native vegetation. Since European settlement, there has been ongoing loss and degradation of Western Australia's native vegetation – resulting in impacts to biodiversity along with costly damage to our landscapes, like salinity of lands and water supplies, erosion and the loss of urban tree canopy. In some areas, what remains is rare, significant and fragmented, and under threat from climate change. This impacts both ecological sustainability and the ability to gain approvals and acceptable offsets for proposed developments.

Managing native vegetation is complex. There are many organisations and individuals involved in conserving, restoring, utilising and clearing native vegetation in Western Australia, including various State Government agencies. In line with the many purposes for managing native vegetation, various legislative and other frameworks apply to its management at international, national, state, regional and local levels (Table 1). They balance priorities such as development, community safety and

traditional practices with the need for ecological sustainability, and reflect the complexity of the challenge in managing native vegetation.

Adding to this complexity, across Western Australia there is a great diversity of vegetation types on various land tenures, which face a number of threats. A regionally tailored approach to planning for and coordinating native vegetation management is needed – to account for this diversity, and to provide the consistency, transparency and clarity that stakeholders are seeking. A coordinated approach to offsets, revegetation, threat management and cumulative impacts would maximise the benefits of investments across sectors. A broad review of offsets and pricing could lead to new policy settings – helping build the restoration economy and providing clarity and solutions for proponents.

As the state's population and economy grows, pressures on Western Australia's native vegetation resources will continue. A whole-of-government, industry and community approach is needed to achieve positive environmental, social, cultural and economic outcomes from native vegetation management. The policy guides collaboration across State Government portfolios. It will foster protection and enhancement of the state's native vegetation together with **ecologically sustainable development**.



Table 1. The policy supports Western Australian organisations, businesses and individuals in contributing to international and national ecological sustainability goals, through efforts across a broad range of State Government functions.

Organisations, businesses and individuals	
<p><i>State Government policy settings will aim to enable and support organisations, businesses and individuals to manage Western Australia's native vegetation in an ecologically sustainable way:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local governments • Proponents of development (including State and local governments) impacting native vegetation • Natural resource management and environmental groups • Non-government organisations • Landholders and land managers (including State and local governments) 	
Areas of State Government responsibility	
<p><i>The policy will support agencies to contribute to international and national ecological sustainability goals, through native vegetation management. It will be implemented through collaborations and actions primarily across the following areas of State Government responsibility and their existing legislation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal affairs and engagement • Aboriginal heritage and heritage regulation • Agriculture • Aquatic resources and ecosystem planning and management • Biodiversity and conservation reserve planning and management • Climate change • Environmental regulation • Emergency services planning • Forestry planning and management • Mining and petroleum regulation • Natural resource management funding • Pastoral lands management • Regional and state development • Road safety • Transport planning and delivery • Tourism • Urban and land use planning • Water regulation, planning and management 	
International obligations	National frameworks and strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Convention on Biological Diversity • Convention on Migratory Species • World Heritage Convention • Ramsar Convention on Wetlands • Sustainable development goals • UN Framework Convention on Climate Change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia's Strategy for Nature • Australia's Native Vegetation Framework • Threatened Species Strategy • Australian Pest Animal Strategy • Australian Weeds Strategy • Australia's Strategy for the National Reserve System

Guiding principles

This policy is underpinned by the following principles.

Values

1. Native vegetation is vital for life on earth and is worth protecting and enhancing. All Western Australians depend in some way on the **ecosystem services** and co-benefits it provides.
2. Western Australia's unique flora and iconic ecosystems are nationally and globally significant for biodiversity conservation. Ensuring their protection and sustainable use is an obligation of all levels of government.
3. Native vegetation is of cultural value to Aboriginal people, who have a long history of sustainable management and use of native vegetation.
4. Native vegetation sustains community health and wellbeing and provides a unique sense of place.
5. Native vegetation is of economic value. It sustains important sectors of the economy and provides valuable ecosystem services that are costly to replace.

Practice

6. Conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be fundamental considerations in managing native vegetation.
7. **A comprehensive, adequate and representative** (CAR) reserve system is an important mechanism for conserving native vegetation, species and communities.
8. Stewardship of native vegetation by all land managers is vital to ensure landscape health – including through its integration with other productive land uses (e.g. agriculture, mining), or through its ecologically sustainable use (e.g. beekeeping, pastoralism).
9. Maintaining the ecosystem services and co-benefits of native vegetation is a shared responsibility. The health, diversity and productivity of native vegetation must be maintained or enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations.
10. Decision-making for vegetation must be underpinned by sound science, reliable information on its ecological, social, cultural and economic values, and understanding of cumulative impacts. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.

Opportunities and challenges

11. Ecologically sustainable development is essential to the wellbeing and prosperity of Western Australians, now and into the future, and requires balancing environmental, economic and social considerations in decision-making.
12. Traditional owners with their rich cultural knowledge of ecosystems have roles to play in co-managing, conserving and restoring native vegetation, and in planning for its management.
13. Native vegetation can help mitigate global climate change by sequestering carbon. Conversely climate change, including its impacts on water, fire and temperature regimes, poses a major risk to the health of native vegetation.
14. The condition and extent of Western Australia's native vegetation is declining. Addressing the decline requires coordinated management across all land tenures, supporting connectivity and maintenance of ecosystem function.
15. In the **intensive land use zone**, in particular the **Swan Coastal Plain** and the **Wheatbelt** (as defined in Figure 1 and Glossary), historic clearing has been extensive. A net improvement in the condition and extent of native vegetation can be achieved through strategic coordination and stewardship across sectors, and will restore landscape and ecosystem functions.
16. In the **extensive land-use zone** (Figure 1), native vegetation is subject to a range of degrading processes. Coordinated management of the threats to native vegetation is needed to maintain and enhance the condition and ecosystem function of native vegetation.

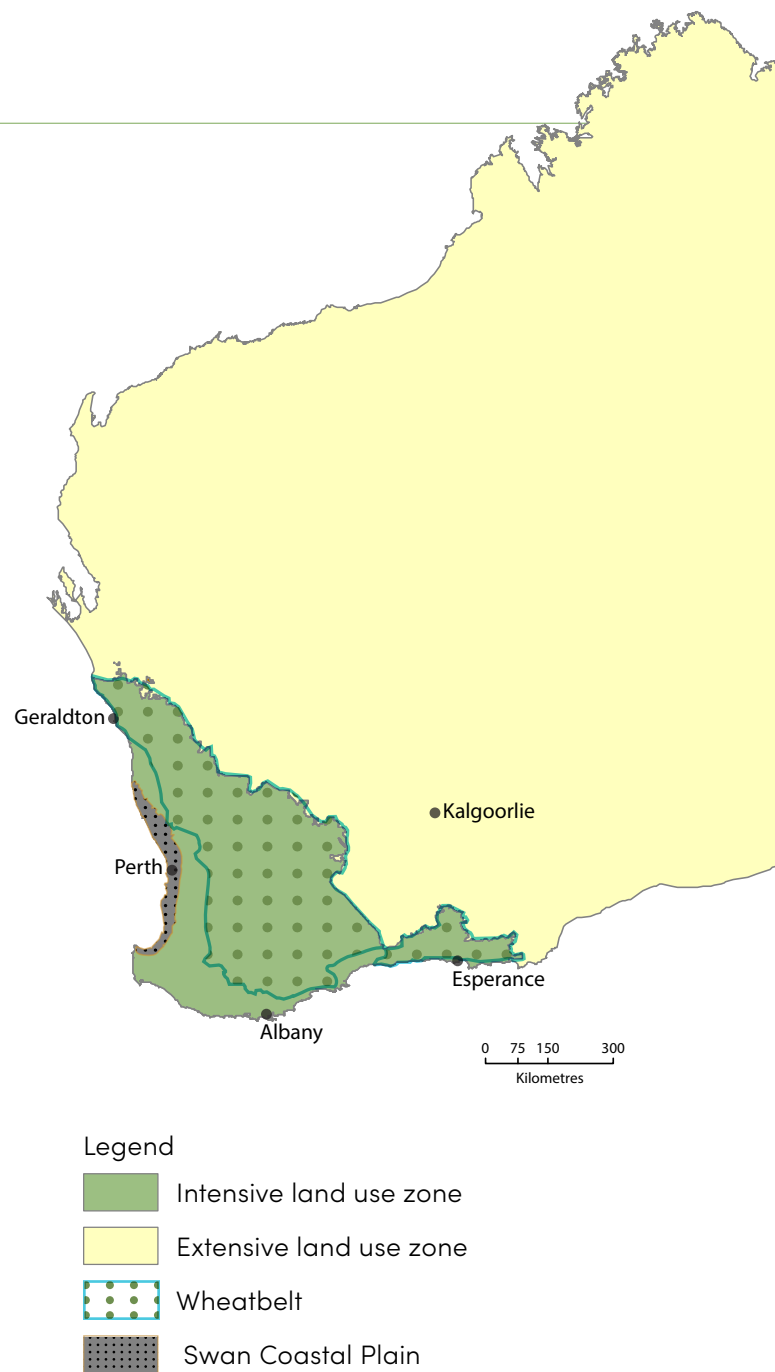


Figure 1. Intensive and extensive land use zones, Swan Coastal Plain and Wheatbelt (see Glossary)

Strategies and outcomes

The intended outcomes of this policy and the strategies to achieve them are laid out in Figure 2. Together, the strategies provide for policy evaluation and improvement, to support a contemporary policy cycle to achieve the outcomes.

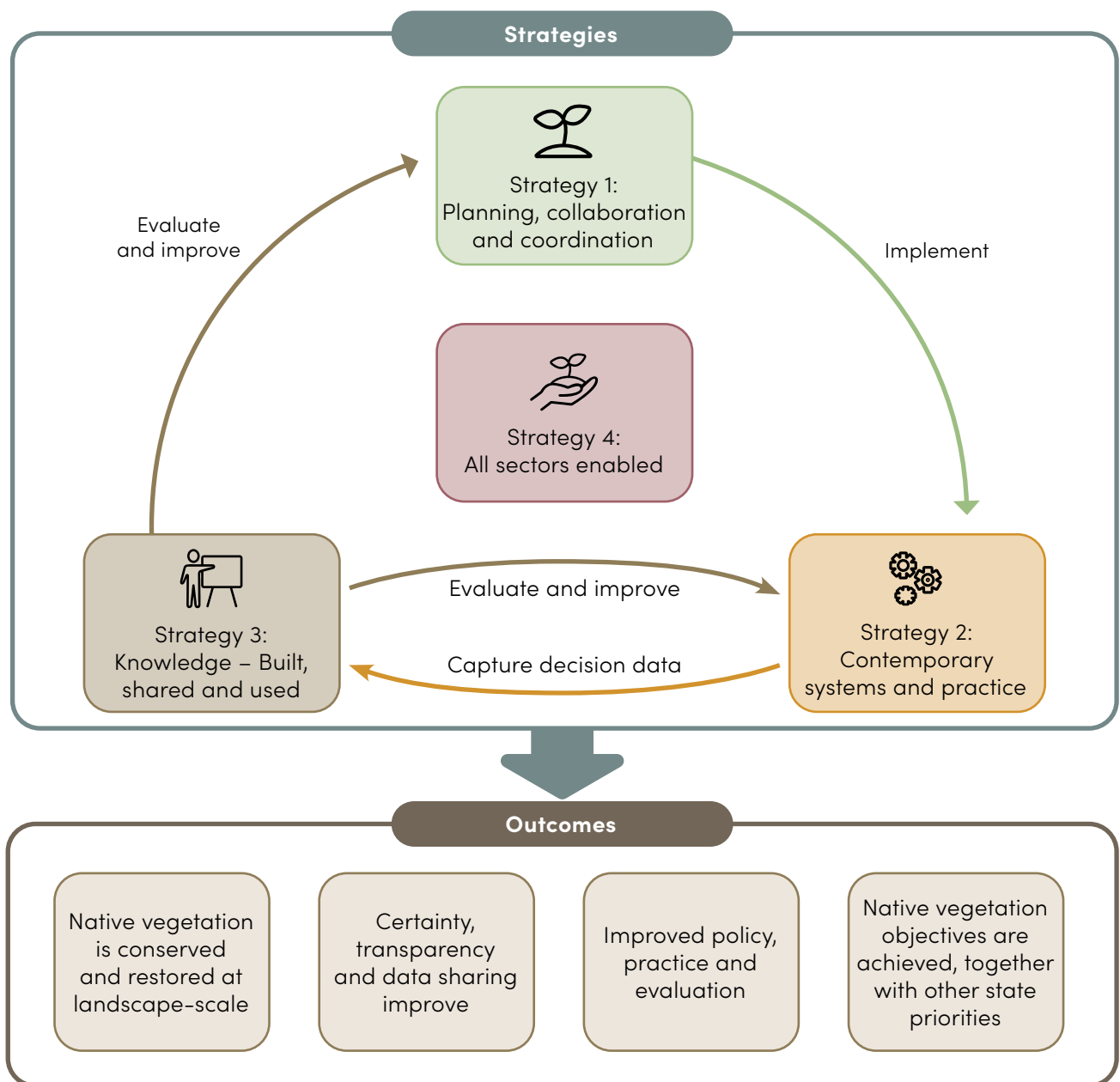




Figure 2. Together, the strategies will provide for a contemporary policy cycle of evaluation and improvement, to achieve the outcomes

Goals and approaches

The following goals and approaches will guide implementation of the strategies, through applying to relevant actions in the roadmap. The goals provide for evaluation of this policy and its implementation.

Strategy 1: Planning, collaboration and coordination 	
Goals	Approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Clear, regionally tailored objectives and priorities promote strategic coordination across State Government functions. b. Native vegetation values and competing issues are transparently addressed in deriving objectives and priorities. c. Stakeholders and relevant agencies contribute innovative solutions which empower good practice across sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Leverage existing mechanisms for strategic environmental planning and for coordinating native vegetation management across government. ii) Develop clear, regionally tailored objectives and priorities to guide and align State Government functions. iii) Consult with local people and traditional owners on the native vegetation values that underpin management. iv) Transparently address competing priorities and cumulative impacts in setting objectives and priorities. v) Acquire and effectively manage a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system for terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. vi) Identify lands with strategic value to inform investment in restoration and conservation. vii) Manage vegetation to maintain ecosystem services and their co-benefits (e.g. habitat provision, soil health, carbon storage, flood, salinity and erosion mitigation, water provision, temperature control, human health, sustainable grazing, timber and bush products). viii) Improve the condition of native vegetation by identifying and addressing threats and threatening processes (e.g. climate change, inappropriate fire regimes, inappropriate water regimes and quality, pests and unsustainable use).
Strategy 2: Contemporary systems and practice 	
Goals	Approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Clear, regionally tailored objectives and priorities provide certainty, transparency and strategic coordination. b. Collated data on decisions allows an overarching view of impact pathways and rates, to inform evidence-based decisions and policy. c. Opportunities to publish decisions and share data on decision-making are identified and pursued. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Apply regionally tailored objectives across State Government functions to ensure action and investment is coordinated and strategic. ii) Leverage regionally tailored objectives and priorities for regulatory certainty, clear guidance, efficiency and outcome-based regulation. iii) Assess proposals against regionally tailored objectives across State Government regulatory pathways for certainty, fairness, consistent risk management and strategic coordination. iv) Regulate effectively and use complementary mechanisms to achieve native vegetation and biodiversity objectives. v) Improve systems and practices for collecting and sharing data on State Government decisions, enabling a whole-system view of impacts and influences. vi) Promote transparency through publishing data and decisions which account for the values of native vegetation.

Strategy 3: Build and share knowledge



Goals	Approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Data systems promote information sharing across State Government and with stakeholders. b. Statewide mapping and monitoring is developed, enabling a whole-of-state view of issues and trends. c. Integration with decision data which allows policy and practice to be evaluated and improved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Improve mapping, monitoring and information systems for tracking outcomes and improving policy and practice. ii) Use sound science, risk assessment, monitoring, reporting and continuous improvement to inform decisions on native vegetation management. iii) Continue to enhance native vegetation knowledge, and systems for its sharing, analysis and use. iv) Use traditional and local knowledge of native vegetation to inform objectives, priorities and policy-making.

Strategy 4: All sectors enabled



Goals	Approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. State Government policy settings inspire and enable conservation and restoration, across public and private sectors. b. Sustainable jobs derive from Western Australia's unique flora and landscapes. c. Awareness of native vegetation values and ecosystem services is built and leveraged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Build public understanding of the critical contribution of native vegetation to community wellbeing. ii) Manage native vegetation in ways that deliver economic, social and employment opportunities for traditional owners, other Aboriginal people and regional Western Australians. iii) Leverage existing incentives to support voluntary conservation and restoration on various land tenures, to support biodiversity, ecosystems and their co-benefits. iv) Explore mechanisms for appropriate pricing and markets, potentially broader than existing offsets schemes, to reward good stewardship and provide economic opportunities. v) Explore strategic coordination of funding streams (e.g. environmental or carbon offsets, restoration funding, tourism opportunities) to deliver positive native vegetation outcomes together with other priorities.



Roadmap: Priorities and opportunities

To achieve the intended outcomes, this policy identifies a roadmap of priorities and opportunities to be implemented primarily through State Government actions. These actions comprise a coordinated, whole-of-government approach.

Achievement of the roadmap actions will be monitored through a steering committee of Directors General, with annual public reporting on progress. The roadmap lays out a broad-ranging suite of reforms, sequenced so that earlier actions build lasting change and the foundations for successive actions.

Stage 1 actions

Commence in
1–3 years

Stage 2 actions

Commence in
4–6 years

Stage 3 actions

Commence in
6–10 years

Strategy 1. Planning, collaboration and coordination



Ref.	Opportunity	Lead agency Partner	Stage
1.1	<p>Prioritise areas or matters for strategic collaborations or planning. Identify policy-making pathway(s), spatial boundaries, lead agency, participants and implementation pathways.</p> <p>Prepare framework of relationships between existing policy frameworks, across State Government.</p> <p>Focus on regulatory, land management, land planning and funding responsibilities.</p>	<p>DWER</p> <p>DBCA, EPA, DPLH, DMIRS, DPIRD, DPC</p>	1
1.2	<p>Develop outputs, including regionally tailored objectives and priorities, in line with outcomes 1 and 2, and their goals and approaches.</p>	<p>Lead agency (1.1)</p> <p>As for 1.1 plus key stakeholders including local governments and prescribed body corporates</p>	1
1.3	<p>Implement regionally tailored objectives and priorities through relevant State Government functions, updating documents, processes and systems as appropriate (see Action 2.1b).</p>	<p>Agencies with relevant responsibilities (Table 1)</p> <p>Optional for boards and commissions (per Glossary), local governments</p>	1
1.4	<p>Establish monitoring and evaluation against regionally tailored objectives and priorities, leveraging native vegetation extent, condition and type data, and biodiversity audit data supported by Strategy 3 actions.</p>	<p>EPA / DWER</p> <p>DBCA</p>	3

Strategy 1. Planning, collaboration and coordination



Ref.	Opportunity	Lead agency Partner	Stage
Priority Projects			
1.5	Evaluate the efficacy of existing State Government mechanisms for native vegetation protection and strategic planning. Collaborate with agencies to progress the recommendations.	DWER Other agencies, as relevant	1
1.6	Address ongoing loss of native vegetation in the Wheatbelt through whole-of-government approaches, including (see also Action 3.4):	DWER – coordination and implementation	1
	a) Prepare a whole-of-government strategy for a nett improvement in Wheatbelt native vegetation extent – through coordination of restoration (including offsets); reserve and roadside management; and regulation. Includes defining the policy-making pathway(s), spatial boundaries and stakeholder engagement approach.	DWER or EPA Key stakeholders including local governments, prescribed body corporates and Wheatbelt Development Commission	1
	b) Establish a whole-of-government approach to Wheatbelt restoration to coordinate offsets, carbon farming, natural resource management funding, regenerative agriculture and other funding streams with conservation investment.	DPIRD DBCA, DWER, plus key stakeholders including local governments and Prescribed Body Corporates	1
	c) Develop and implement a strategic, coordinated, whole-of-government approach to managing roadside vegetation (including for road safety and strategic transport planning).	DWER RSC, DoT, MRWA and key stakeholders including local governments and Wheatbelt Development Commission	1
1.7	Establish a new roadside vegetation advisory group under s.25 of the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> .	DWER Roadside vegetation stakeholders	1
1.8	Improved coordination of the State Government's mechanisms for managing silvicultural activities (including thinning) in south-west forests and woodlands – across land tenures, for multiple outcomes (e.g. biodiversity, forest health, carbon, reducing fire risk, timber production and water production).	DWER (coordination) DBCA, DFES, FPC, DPLH	1

Strategy 2. Contemporary systems and practice



Ref.	Opportunity	Lead agency Partner	Stage
2.1	a) Progressively improve the transparency of decisions affecting native vegetation, publishing where appropriate.	DWER, EPA, DMIRS, WAPC/ DPLH	1
	b) Transparently assess regulated proposals against relevant regionally tailored objectives and priorities (see Action 1.3).	DWER, EPA, DMIRS, WAPC/ DPLH	1
2.2	Progressively capture decisions that affect native vegetation condition or extent in spatial format, to aligned data standards, supporting data sharing. Identify key pathways for spatial capture of actual (reported) clearing or burning, to support Action 3.1 .	DWER – coordination DWER, EPA, DMIRS, DPLH, DFES, DBCA, local governments	1
2.3	Identify and address legislative or other barriers to data capture or sharing, as appropriate.	DWER – coordination DMIRS, DBCA, DPIRD, DPLH, EPA	2
2.4	Digital systems:		
	a) Progress the Environment Online digital portal and assessment system for environmental and water regulation, including links to BIO (Action 3.3b), as appropriate).	DWER	1
	b) Progress digital systems for capture, interpretation and sharing of biodiversity data, through BIO.	DBCA Key stakeholders	1
	c) Engage across State and Local government to progress towards a single, publicly accessible digital system for native vegetation data capture, sharing and use. Leverage Environment Online and BIO, and integrate products from Actions 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 , as appropriate.	DWER – coordination Other government agencies, as feasible	1
Priority Projects			
2.5	Improve operational systems, policy and processes for clearing permits (Part V Division 2, <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i>) for efficiency and clarity.	DWER	1
2.6	Support initiatives to improve rangelands' ecological condition, leveraging pastoral diversification and implementation of the <i>Good Pastoral Land Management Guidelines</i> .	PLB/DPLH DWER, DPIRD, DBCA	2

Strategy 3. Build, share and use knowledge to improve



Ref.	Opportunity	Lead agency Partner	Stage
3.1	Native vegetation extent: Leverage satellite imagery and machine learning to develop a semi-automated, regularly updated, statewide terrestrial native vegetation extent product. An improved extent product would:	DWER – coordination Landgate, DBCA, DPIRD, with stakeholders and suppliers	1
	a) track clearing over time	EPA DWER, DBCA	2
	b) improve statistics on proportion of vegetation type remaining	DWER DBCA	2
	c) enhance compliance and enforcement capacity.	DWER, EPA, DMIRS, DPLH	2
3.2	Native vegetation condition:		
	a) Develop a product derived from satellite imagery to monitor vegetation condition on pastoral leases.	DPIRD DWER, DBCA, PLB/DPLH	1
	b) Build on learnings from pastoral condition spatial product (3.2a) to develop a statewide native vegetation condition product to enable tracking of changes over time.	DWER – (coordination) DBCA, DPIRD, key data users and suppliers	2
3.3	Biodiversity datasets and native vegetation type mapping:		
	a) Expand capture of native vegetation data within the Index of Biodiversity Surveys for Assessment (IBSA).	DWER Proponents, EPA	1
	b) Progress scientific and system capability to generate updated native vegetation type mapping, leveraging pooled biological survey datasets (e.g. BIO – Action 2.4c).	DBCA DWER, key stakeholders	3
Priority Projects			
3.4	Improve native vegetation mapping in the Wheatbelt, prioritising mapping to support strategy development (see Action 1.6).	DWER DBCA	1

Strategy 4. All sectors enabled



Ref.	Opportunity	Lead agency Partner	Stage
4.1	Progress and improve how incentives and pricing are used to support good stewardship of native vegetation, including avoidance and minimisation of clearing:	DWER coordination	1
	a) Explore opportunities for new pricing and valuation methods to incentivise stewardship, including environmental offsets.	DWER DPIRD, PLB/DPLH, FPC	2
	b) Support and promote agricultural, pastoral and forestry land uses that fix carbon, support biodiversity, promote soil health and other ecosystem services.	DPIRD DWER, FPC, PLB/DPLH	1
4.2	Environmental offsets:		
	a) Improve the environmental offsets framework in line with recommendations of the WA environmental offsets framework review.	DWER	1
	b) Undertake a broad strategic evaluation of environmental offsets to enable flexibility and clarity; encourage rehabilitation and revegetation; and ensure offsets contribute to strategic regional priorities.	DWER	1
4.3	Enhance the effectiveness of fuel-mitigation programs across the state to reduce the risk of bushfire to the community and the environment.	DFES, DBCA DPLH, FPC, local governments	1
4.4	Plan for Aboriginal engagement in parks and bushfire management through existing and future initiatives	DBCA, DFES	1
4.5	Leverage Western Australia's iconic vegetation to create regional jobs in tourism and conservation.	JTSI DBCA, Treasury	1
4.6	Develop and implement a Wildflower Friendliness Rating Scheme, to reward LGAs with wildflower-friendly roadsides.	Wildflower Society of WA JTSI, DWER	1
4.7	Build on existing strategies to protect and enhance urban forests.	DPLH Local governments	2

Acronyms

Acronym	Abbreviation for:
BIO	Biodiversity Information Office at the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
CAR	Comprehensive, adequate and representative
DAFWA	Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (now a part of DPIRD, see below.)
DBCA	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
DFES	Department of Fire and Emergency Services
DoT	Department of Transport
DMIRS	Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety
DPC	Department of the Premier and Cabinet
DPIRD	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
DPLH	Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage
DWER	Department of Water and Environmental Regulation
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority of Western Australia
FPC	Forestry Products Commission of Western Australia
JTSI	Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation
MRWA	Main Roads Western Australia
PLB	Pastoral Lands Board
RSC	Road Safety Commission
SES	Senior Executive Service (as in State Government boards and commissions in the Glossary below.)
Treasury	Department of Treasury
UN	United Nations

Glossary

Aboriginal people	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We acknowledge that many Aboriginal people prefer to be referred to by language group, nation, tribe or clan, with many distinct groups across Western Australia.
Agency/agencies	A department or an SES organisation as defined in the <i>Public Sector Management Act 1994</i> .
Bush products	Includes foods derived from Australian native plants (including honey), native plant-derived industries and botanicals-based products.
Co-benefits	Benefits to other matters or features, from management to achieve positive native vegetation (e.g. urban cooling, climate mitigation, erosion control).
Comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR)	A recognised objective of the national and state reserve systems is to achieve a comprehensive, adequate and representative suite of ecosystems within protected areas.
Conserve	Protect from harm, loss or change.
Ecological thinning	Forest thinning which involves a reduction of vegetation density to promote forest health and resilience, and to mitigate the risk of bushfires by reducing woody fuel loads.
Ecologically sustainable development	Using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased.
Ecosystem services	The benefits people derive from ecosystems, including provisioning (e.g. food, fibre, fuel), regulating (e.g. erosion control, water filtration), supporting (e.g. biodiversity conservation) and cultural services (e.g. sense of place, nature based or cultural tourism).
Extensive land-use zone	The areas of Western Australia that are not within the intensive land-use zone.
Indigenous	Naturally existing within a given region as a result of natural processes, with no human intervention. In this policy, indigenous refers only to vegetation.

Intensive land-use zone	The intensive land-use zone as defined in Shepherd, D.P., Beeston, G.R. and Hopkins, A.J.M. <i>Native Vegetation in Western Australia. Resource Management Technical Report 249</i> (2001) published by the Department of Agriculture, Perth (aligned with definition in the Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004).
Landscape-scale	At a scale that permits understanding and management of ecological processes across space, jurisdiction and time, often with a focus on ecological corridors, connectivity and global change including climate change. This contrasts from planning for individual projects or places.
Marine vegetation	For this policy, marine vegetation includes vegetation found at or below the high-water mark of seas and estuaries. It includes but is not limited to mangroves, seagrass, kelp, algae and corals.
Mitigation hierarchy	Essential, sequential steps that must be taken during planning, to limit impacts on native vegetation. The steps are avoid, minimise, rehabilitate and offset. Environmental offsets will only be considered after avoidance and mitigation options have been pursued. See also the WA Environmental Offsets Policy and Guidelines.
Native vegetation	<p>Native vegetation is as defined in the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> (the Act):</p> <p><i>Indigenous aquatic or terrestrial vegetation, including dead vegetation unless that dead vegetation is of a class declared by regulation to be excluded from this definition but does not include vegetation in a plantation.</i></p> <p>The Act's definition also includes indigenous or terrestrial aquatic vegetation that was intentionally sown, planted or propagated, as per Regulation 4 of the Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004.</p>
Policy settings	A coordinated suite of policy instruments and policy positions aimed to, together, achieve the desired native vegetation outcomes.
Regionally tailored objectives and priorities	Objectives and priorities specific to a defined part of the state, derived through a consultative planning process which defines their geographic extent of application.
Restore	Includes re-establishment of native vegetation in degraded areas and the repair of ecosystem processes and management of threats

Sector	A specific part of society or the economy (e.g. public and private sectors, community, environment or industry sectors).
Silvicultural activities	The theory and practice of managing the establishment, composition, health, quality and growth of forests and woodlands to achieve specified management objectives.
South-west forests and woodlands	For this policy, south-west forests and woodlands means native forests and woodlands within the area covered by Map 1 of the <i>Forest management plan 2014–2023</i> (Conservation Commission of Western Australia, December 2013).
State Government boards and commissions	<p>For this policy, State Government boards and commissions refers to non-SES organisations, as defined in the <i>Public Sector Management Act 1994</i>.</p> <p>It includes organisations set up under their own legislation but whose senior leaders are not members of the public sector's Senior Executive Service (such as the seven health service providers, Corruption and Crime Commission, and Environmental Protection Authority).</p>
Swan Coastal Plain	<p>For this policy, the Swan Coastal Plain is defined as Perth subregion (SWA02) of the Swan Coastal Plain bioregion, within the Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia, version 7.</p> <p>The Dandaragan Plateau subregion of the Swan Coastal Plain bioregion (SWA01) is captured within this policy's definition of the Wheatbelt.</p>
Thinning	A felling made to reduce the density of trees within a defined forest area. Undertaken to enhance forest health, water production, reduced forest fuel and its structure, the growth rates of retained trees, or achieve another objective.
Traditional owners	Aboriginal people who are native title claimants, native title holders or who have otherwise been recognised as having a right and responsibility to speak for country.
Wheatbelt	For this policy, the Wheatbelt is defined as the area of land broadly coinciding with broadacre farming, depicted in the Generalised Land Use of Western Australia map (Department of Agriculture and Food, WA, 2017), with the boundaries to be refined through the collaborative process. See Figure 1.



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