

Central West & Orana Environment and Heritage

Fact Sheet #6

May 2016

The NSW Government has released the draft Central West and Orana Regional Plan (draft Plan) to guide sustainable growth in the region over the next 20 years.

It outlines a vision to grow and diversify the economy by supporting jobs growth, sustainably managing its agricultural, mining and natural resources and strengthening the region's cities, centres, towns and villages.

You can have a say on the draft Plan which is now on exhibition.

What does the draft Plan say about the environment and heritage?

- The draft Plan recognises the importance that the community places on the region's unique environmental features and their associated cultural, tourist and recreational values.
- The region is home to a diverse range of natural environmental features, including the Blue Mountains in the Great Dividing Range, vast western plains, major river systems, karst systems and internationally significant wetlands. It is vital that these environmental assets are not only protected but also actively managed and restored.
- The draft Plan identifies areas within the region which have potentially high environmental value. These include:
 - areas protected for conservation, including national parks, state flora reserves and Crown reserves;
 - native vegetation of high conservation value, including over-cleared vegetation types and vegetation within over-cleared landscapes;
 - known habitat for threatened species and populations;
 - endangered ecological communities;
 - wetlands and lagoons, such as Dunns Swamp and 'the Drip' near Mudgee and the Macquarie Marshes near Warren;
 - areas of geological significance, such as karst landscapes like Jenolan, Abercrombie, Borenore and Wellington Caves; and
 - the volcanic landscapes of Coolah Tops and the Warrumbungles.
- These areas need to be actively managed so that future generations can continue to enjoy them.
- The draft Plan also recognises the region's rich and diverse Aboriginal and European cultural heritage and the way it enriches the life of the community and the character of the region.
- There are over 137 heritage items listed on the NSW State Heritage Register in the region and more than 1,967 local heritage items listed in council's local environmental plans.
- There is significant Aboriginal cultural heritage in the region. Rivers, in particular, have great spiritual and cultural importance to Aboriginal communities because they provide a direct link with their traditional culture.

Central West & Orana Environment and Heritage

Fact Sheet #6

May 2016

What does the draft Plan propose for Aboriginal heritage?

- The draft Plan highlights that the planning system needs to strengthen the way that it deals with Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- The draft Plan proposes the NSW Government will continue to work with councils and Aboriginal communities to develop and implement local and regional heritage studies, including Regional Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Studies. These studies will be important inputs to the development of local land use plans.
- The NSW Government is also aiming to introduce new stand-alone legislation for Aboriginal cultural heritage. The legislative reform includes removing Aboriginal cultural heritage provisions from the current National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974, creating a new stand-alone legislation for Aboriginal cultural heritage, and recognising Aboriginal people's right to protect and determine the management of their heritage.

What does the draft Plan propose for European heritage conservation in the region?

- The draft Plan identifies opportunities to capitalise on the region's heritage assets to increase community resilience.
- Conserving and/or adapting heritage items not only provides a focus for community activity but it can extend the life and usefulness of these places within the community, for example as tourist attractions or community facilities.
- The draft Plan proposes that the NSW Government work with councils to find ways to encourage heritage conservation, to review and promote the conservation incentives that are available in local areas and to increase community awareness about heritage conservation and protection.

What does the draft Plan propose for the Environment?

- The draft Plan aims to facilitate improved access to quality information relating to high environmental values and use this information to avoid, minimise and offset the impacts of development on significant environmental assets.
- It proposes implementing appropriate planning controls to protect areas of high environmental value, water catchment areas and groundwater sources, when preparing planning strategies or local environmental plans for new or more intensive development.

How will the final Plan be implemented?

- A Coordination and Monitoring Committee will be established to oversee the implementation of the final Central West and Orana Regional Plan, comprising State agencies, councils and other representatives.

Further information

- To find out more and to make a comment visit: www.planning.nsw.gov.au/centralwestandorana