



# WESTERN SYDNEY Fact Sheet



## Biodiversity and the airport site

The Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport biodiversity assessment was based on a range of flora and fauna ecological surveys of the airport site, both before and after the airport's *Environmental Impact Statement 2016* (EIS). The airport site is dominated by introduced grasslands, cleared land or cropland, with small pockets of open eucalypt woodland and shrubland. While vegetation and fauna habitat at the airport site is in a generally poor condition, there are fragments of critically endangered ecological communities.

The *Western Sydney Airport Plan 2016* (Airport Plan) sets out a range of measures to reduce and offset the impacts on protected species and biodiversity values from construction and development of the airport.

## Biodiversity impacts during construction

The biodiversity assessment found that, during construction, the removal of native vegetation would affect threatened species and ecological communities on the airport site.

Construction will require the removal of about 1,200 hectares of vegetation. The majority of vegetation at the airport site (around 75 per cent) is introduced grasslands, cleared land or cropland. Just over 300 hectares is native vegetation. Construction will also result in the removal of some aquatic and wetland habitats (such as farm dams) on the airport site and will contribute to the fragmentation of native vegetation in Western Sydney associated with the broader urban development of the region.



The removal of vegetation will have a direct impact on flora and fauna species and ecological communities listed under both Commonwealth and NSW legislation. This includes Cumberland Plain Woodland, the Grey-headed Flying-fox, Cumberland Plain Land Snail, and the native plants *Pimelea spicata*, *Pultenaea parviflora* and *Marsdenia viridiflora* subs. *Viridiflora*.

## Managing impacts during construction

The Airport Plan requires that Western Sydney Airport, the company responsible for building and operating the airport, develop Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs). The Biodiversity CEMP outlines in detail how biodiversity impacts are being managed and mitigated during construction, including how Western Sydney Airport is meeting the conditions in the Airport Plan.

## Biodiversity impacts during operation

Operation of the airport will increase the risk of bird and bat strike from contact with aircraft and ground transportation vehicles. This would primarily be in areas close to the airport site when aircraft are at lower altitudes. Light, noise and vibrations generated by airport operations may displace some species.

As a major transport gateway, the airport may increase the risk of exotic species being introduced into surrounding vegetation. This risk will be reduced by the stringent biosecurity laws and measures used at all Australian airports, such as quarantine procedures and inspections.

## Biodiversity Offset Delivery Plan

The Biodiversity Offset Delivery Plan (BODP) outlines measures for offsetting significant impacts on biodiversity associated with the construction of the airport.

The BODP was prepared as a condition of the Airport Plan and approved by the Department of the Environment and Energy on 24 August 2018.

Components of the BODP being implemented include:

- Restoration and management of at least 900 hectares of native vegetation, including Cumberland Plain Woodland, at the Defence Establishment Orchard Hills
- A contribution to the Greening Australia Cumberland Seed Hub program to develop a reliable source of native seed
- Purchase of biodiversity credits through the NSW Biodiversity Offsets Scheme
- Threatened Flora Propagation Program with the Australian Botanic Gardens Mt Annan
- A range of other measures, such as genetic research and restoration projects



## Biodiversity credits

Biodiversity credits form part of the Australian Government-funded package of measures to offset the biodiversity impacts of construction of the Airport.

Following a formal Request for Tender process, more than 4,000 biodiversity offset credits were purchased in 2019 through the NSW Biodiversity Offsets Scheme.