

The Standard and targets

One goal Landscapes that are ecologically sustainable, function effectively and support the environmental, economic, social and cultural values of our communities.

Thirteen targets

The NSW Government has adopted thirteen state-wide targets for natural resource management. The targets set out what we need to achieve if we are to enjoy healthy, functioning landscapes and communities in the future.

These targets are embedded in the *State Plan: A new direction for NSW*. The State Plan sets out clear targets for the NSW Government to deliver across all its areas of responsibility. The state-wide targets for natural resource management make up Priority E4 of the plan. This means that the whole of the NSW Government is committed to improving the condition of our natural resources—and will be held accountable for it.

The targets

Provide a common focus and guide investment: State-wide targets are critical to connect and coordinate the actions of individuals and groups. Natural resources used to be managed in an ad hoc manner, resulting in patchy, inconsistent results. State-wide targets provide a clear, consistent focus for all natural resource managers and help to make the most of available resources.

Support accountability: Millions of government dollars are being invested to manage our natural resources in the best interests of the state. The targets provide a yardstick for tracking and measuring progress.

Allow for local input: Requirements and issues vary greatly across regions, so the targets are flexible enough to be customised to suit the needs of many different environments and communities. Prioritisation and decision-making can be guided by local knowledge and expertise, increasing the chances of success.



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State-wide targets for natural resource management

Biodiversity	
1	By 2015 there is an increase in native vegetation extent and an improvement in native vegetation condition.
2	By 2015 there is an increase in the number of sustainable populations of a range of native fauna species.
3	By 2015 there is an increase in the recovery of threatened species, populations and ecological communities.
4	By 2015 there is a reduction in the impact of invasive species.
Water	
5	By 2015 there is an improvement in the condition of riverine ecosystems.
6	By 2015 there is an improvement in the ability of groundwater systems to support groundwater-dependent ecosystems and designated beneficial uses.
7	By 2015 there is no decline in the condition of marine waters and ecosystems.
8	By 2015 there is an improvement in the condition of important wetlands, and the extent of those wetlands is maintained.
9	By 2015 there is an improvement in the condition of estuaries and coastal lake ecosystems.
Land	
10	By 2015 there is an improvement in soil condition.
11	By 2015 there is an increase in the area of land that is managed within its capability.
Community	
12	Natural resource decisions contribute to improving or maintaining economic sustainability and social wellbeing.
13	There is an increase in the capacity of natural resource managers to contribute to regionally relevant natural resource management.

One standard

How should natural resource management be undertaken to give us the best possible chance of reaching our targets? How can we ensure that natural resource management is rigorous and systematic? How can we give investors and our communities confidence that the best decisions are being made?

The NSW *Standard for Quality Natural Resource Management* (the Standard) underpins high-quality natural resource management practice in NSW. While the targets define what we want to achieve, the Standard defines how we should go about the business of natural resource management to deliver them. With so many people involved and so much at stake, it is important that decisions support investment where it is most needed, aim for the highest quality results and stand up to public scrutiny.

The Standard defines required levels of quality for seven components of natural resource management:

- collection and use of knowledge
- determination of scale
- opportunities for collaboration
- community engagement
- risk management
- monitoring and evaluation
- information management.

These seven components support high-quality decision-making in all four phases of adaptive management: planning, implementation, audit and response.

The state's Catchment Management Authorities have led the way by using the Standard to improve the way they do business. While the Standard is mandatory for Catchment Management Authorities, it provides a benchmark for everyone involved in natural resource management. Widespread use of the Standard will result in taxpayers' money being spent on the right things at the right time. It will also promote innovation and sustainable development by encouraging appropriate trade-offs between environmental, economic and social considerations.