

Overview of agency



Geikie Gorge National Park. Photo – Peter Nicholas/DBCA

Executive summary

The Department of Parks and Wildlife continues to work with the community and partners to ensure the natural assets of Western Australia are conserved and valued.

Major achievements in 2016–17 included history-making new biodiversity conservation legislation passing through Parliament, a two million-hectare expansion of Western Australia's marine reserve system with the creation of four new Kimberley marine parks, six Indigenous Land Use Agreements signed with Kimberley traditional owner groups and a record prescribed burning outcome.

Wildlife

Western Australia has gained contemporary environment laws which meet modern expectations for environmental protection, following the enacting of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. When fully proclaimed, the Act will replace the outdated *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950* and *Sandalwood Act 1929* and provide legislation which focuses on encouraging biodiversity conservation, while removing unnecessary regulatory barriers.

A Pilbara Conservation Strategy was released, outlining a landscape-scale approach to conservation across the Pilbara bioregion and identifying opportunities for partnerships to mitigate the impacts of bushfires, weeds and feral animals across tenure boundaries to protect conservation values.

A new 1000-hectare, predator-proof enclosure was constructed in the proposed Dryandra Woodland National Park to help protect numbats, woylies and other endangered species.

The department's commitment to developing and maintaining strong partnerships with research institutions such as the Western Australian Marine Science Institution and Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institution, along with industry, community and other organisations continued.

Conservation of threatened species was a focus, including the translocation of a second cohort of black-flanked rock wallabies into Kalbarri National Park, with support from WWF-Australia, boosting a small-but-growing population of the marsupials. (See case study on page 38.)

The *Western Shield Plan 2017–2026* was finalised, shaping the direction of the wildlife recovery program over the next decade by defining the program's mission, objectives and key strategies to protect and recover native wildlife susceptible to predation by foxes and feral cats. Approximately 3.8 million hectares of conservation reserves and State forest was baited for foxes and feral cats.

Parks

WA national parks and reserves received 20 million visits in a single year for the first time in 2016–17 and a visitor satisfaction level of 92.5 per cent. Each year Parks and Wildlife aims for a satisfaction rating above 85 per cent, a figure it has achieved for more than 10 consecutive years.

Four Kimberley marine parks – Yawuru Nagulagun / Roebuck Bay, Lalang-garram / Horizontal Falls, North Lalang-garram and North Kimberley – were created, nearly doubling the size of the State's marine reserve system to more than 4.6 million hectares.

Thirteen management plans were in preparation in 2016–17 and six Indigenous Land Use Agreements were signed with Kimberley native title groups, paving the way for joint management arrangements to be established.

The \$20 million Kalbarri Skywalk and National Park Tourist Infrastructure Project began with the sealing of 22km of roads to the Loop, Z Bend and Meanarra Hill sites at Kalbarri National Park.

One hundred and eighty two new camp sites were completed in 2016–17, bringing the total number of camp sites delivered over four years to more than 520 and greatly expanding opportunities for people to experience camping in the State's renowned national parks and reserves.

Fire

Bushfire preparedness and suppression on Parks and Wildlife-managed lands are among the department's key responsibilities.

This year, departmental staff attended and monitored 421 bushfires which burnt about 9171 hectares, a significant reduction on the previous year.

Prescribed burning throughout the State's south-west was boosted by the department's Enhanced Prescribed Burning Program, contributing to an achievement of more than 247,360ha during 2016–17, the best outcome in 29 years.

Throughout the rest of the State, a further 2,988,394ha of prescribed burning was completed. Many of these prescribed burns were conducted in collaboration with other land managers, including traditional owner groups.

Executive summary

Forest management

The Forest Management Plan 2014–2023 (FMP) guided departmental actions for the appropriate management of State forests and timber reserves for a range of uses, along with weed, pest animal and disease management (such as *Phytophthora dieback*), and also for wood production.

The plan's implementation included finalising interagency working arrangements with the Forest Products Commission and protocols for 24 key performance indicators, which will measure success in meeting the objectives of the FMP.

The third five-year progress review of the Regional Forest Agreement for the South-West Forest Region of Western Australia was released for public comment in November 2016.

Swan Canning Riverpark

Parks and Wildlife manages the Swan and Canning river system, including adjoining public land and reserves along the Southern, Avon and Helena rivers, to ensure the ecological health and community benefit of the rivers is protected.

Through the successful Swan Alcoa Landcare Program, more than \$367,000 was distributed to 19 groups for 47 landcare projects in 2016–17, while more than \$2.3 million was distributed to 22 priority riverbank projects

across 16 foreshore land managers as part of the Riverbank program (see case study on page 61).

The \$3 million Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary wetland, designed and implemented with the City of Bayswater, is now operational.

Parks and Wildlife continues to partner with research institutions, Government agencies and other organisations to deliver environmental programs to improve the health and resilience of the river system.

People

The department's relationships with people, including its staff, volunteers, community partners and business organisations, are central to achieving its goals to ensure WA's natural assets are conserved and valued now and into the future.

Learning and achievements by staff were supported and celebrated with a Graduation and Awards Ceremony held in June 2017. The event highlighted ongoing education through scholarships and the department's Mentored Aboriginal Training and Employment Scheme. Presentations included the *Western Shield Award*, which recognises an employee who has demonstrated a long-term commitment and passion for native animal conservation. The Fire Management Reward and Recognition Program acknowledged excellence in fire management.



Sailing on the Swan River. Photo – Mandy Pike/DBCA



Ranger Nicholas Detchon in Coalseam Conservation Park. Photo – Peter Nicholas/DBCA

The department is supported by an outstanding volunteer base, which this year recorded a record-high number of hours contributed to parks and conservation in WA – 723,508 hours by 5,410 volunteers. This is also the highest ever number of active volunteers in any financial year.

Parks and Wildlife will become part of the new Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions on 1 July 2017, together with the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, Rottnest Island Authority and Zoological Parks Authority.

Operational structure

About the department

The Department of Parks and Wildlife is responsible for protecting and conserving the State's natural environment on behalf of the people of Western Australia.

Parks and Wildlife manages the State's 100 national parks, 17 marine parks and other reserves and State forests, which collectively cover more than 31 million hectares of diverse landscapes and seascapes, from coral reefs and tall forests, to deep gorges and open plains of wildflowers.

The department is responsible for conserving and protecting native animals and plants, and for managing many aspects of the access to, and use of, WA's natural areas.

The department is also responsible for fire preparedness and pest animal and weed control over almost 90 million hectares of unallocated Crown land and unmanaged reserves.

We are a regionally-focused agency and value the relationships we continue to build with our neighbours, visitors, volunteers, partners, the individuals and organisations who do business with us and the communities in which we work.

Enabling legislation

On 1 July 2013 the Department of Parks and Wildlife was established under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*.

Responsible Minister

The department reported to the Minister for Environment Hon Albert Jacob MLA until the election of the McGowan Labor Government on 11 March 2017. Hon Stephen Dawson MLC was appointed on 17 March 2017 as the Minister for Environment and the department reported to Minister Dawson from this date.

The Minister and department exercised authority under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*, *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*, *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006*, *Sandalwood Act 1929* and other legislation administered by the department, listed right.

On 21 September 2016, the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* received Royal Assent as Act number 24 of 2016. Significant parts of the Act were proclaimed in the *Government Gazette* of 2 December 2016 and became operable from 3 December 2016. The remaining parts of the Act are to be proclaimed once the proposed Biodiversity Conservation Regulations are in place.

Legislation administered by the department at 30 June 2017

Acts

- *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*
- *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*
- *Reserves (National Parks and Conservation Parks) Act 2004*
- *Reserves (National Parks, Conservation Parks and Other Reserves) Act 2004*
- *Reserves (National Parks, Conservation Parks, Nature Reserves and Other Reserves) Act 2004*
- *Sandalwood Act 1929*
- *Swan and Canning Rivers (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Act 2006*
- *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006*
- *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*

Regulations

- Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002
- Forest Management Regulations 1993
- Sandalwood Regulations 1993
- Swan and Canning Rivers Management Regulations 2007
- Wildlife Conservation Regulations 1970
- Wildlife Conservation (Reptiles and Amphibians) Regulations 2002

Changes made in 2016–17 to legislation administered

- On 31 August 2016 the Conservation and Land Management Amendment Regulations (No.4) 2016 (published in the *Government Gazette* on 30 August 2016) amended the Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002 to introduce a new Part 11 – Transitional Regulations with a new Regulation 124. Regulation 124 established transitional arrangements to authorise the process steps undertaken for a State forest excision that had commenced before, but not been completed when the excision requirements changed due to the *Conservation and Land Management Amendment Act 2015*.

Operational structure

- On 1 September 2016 the Conservation and Land Management Amendment Regulations (No. 3) 2016 (published in the *Government Gazette* on 5 July 2016) amended the Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002 to increase entrance fees to a number of facilities operated by the department.
- On 21 September 2016 the Governor Assented to the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. The Biodiversity Conservation Act was prepared to replace, update and modernise the State's conservation and management of biodiversity including wild sandalwood. When fully proclaimed it will replace the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950* and *Sandalwood Act 1929*, which currently remain in force.
- On 3 December 2016, the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 Commencement Proclamation 2016* (published in the *Government Gazette* on 2 December 2016) gave effect to the long title and Parts: 1 (other than section 1 and 2); 5; 7; 8; 11; 13 (Division 1); 14 (other than section 256); 15; 17 (Division 1, other than sections 291(b), 292(2) to (4), 293 to 297, 299, 301, 302 and 304 to 309); Part 17 (Division 2 heading); section 319 and Schedule 1. These parts gave effect to provisions related to:
 - biodiversity management programs
 - biodiversity conservation agreements

- biodiversity conservation covenants
- nature-based tourism and recreation and,
- administrative functions relating to: some legal proceedings; the making of regulations, orders and guidelines; the giving of documents and other matters; consequential amendments to some other Acts; and the matters for which regulations may be made.
- On 24 January 2017, the Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002 were amended by the Environment Regulations Amendment (Public Health) Regulations 2016 (published in the *Government Gazette* on 10 January 2017) to replace the reference in Regulation 98G to the *Health Act 1911* with a reference to the *Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1911*.

Proposed changes to legislation administered

There were no major changes proposed for the existing legislation administered by the department during the year. Work has been ongoing since Assent was given to the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* on the preparation of drafting instructions for the Biodiversity Conservation Regulations. Completed regulations will be necessary to provide for full implementation of the Biodiversity Conservation Act. The Biodiversity Conservation Act provides that both the

Wildlife Conservation Act 1950 and the *Sandalwood Act 1929* and their associated regulations will be automatically repealed once the relevant parts of the Biodiversity Conservation Act commence.

Notices, appointments, orders and approvals

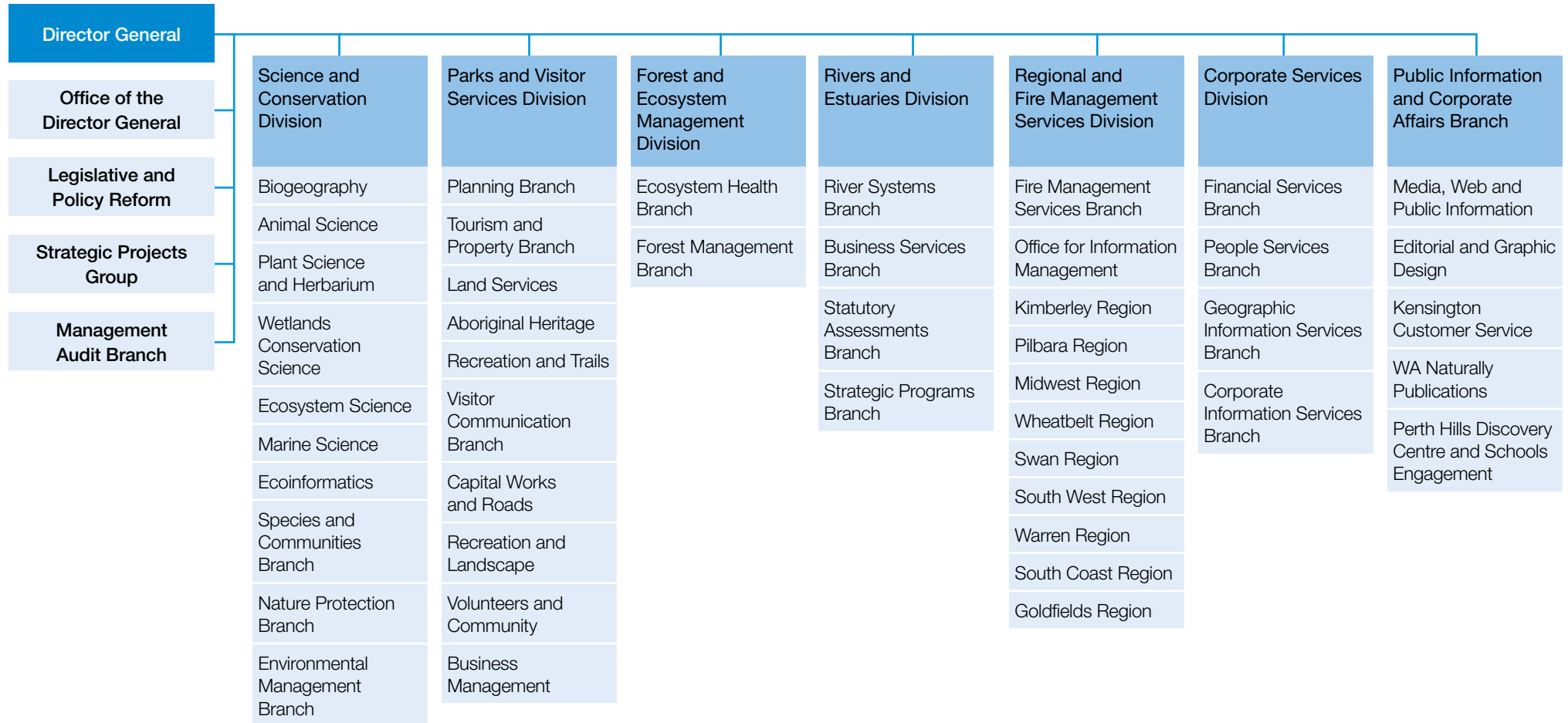
On 2 December 2016, the *Biodiversity Conservation Act Commencement Proclamation 2016* was published in the *Government Gazette* and the following provisions of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* came into operation on 3 December 2016:

- Long Title
- Part 1 (other than sections 1 and 2)
- Part 5
- Part 7 (other than section 120 (1) to (4))
- Parts 8 and 11
- Part 13 Division 1
- Part 14 (other than section 256)
- Part 15
- Part 17 Division 1 (other than sections 291(b), 292(2) to (4), 293, 294, 295, 296 and 297, 299, 301, 302 and 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, and 309)
- Part 17 Division 2 heading
- Section 319, and
- Schedule 1.

The following notices were made by the Minister for Environment under the provisions of sections 14(4) and 23F (2) of the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950* during the 2016–17 reporting year:

- The *Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice 2016*, published in the *Government Gazette* on 6 January 2017
- The *Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice 2016*, published in the *Government Gazette* on 6 January 2017
- The *Wildlife Conservation (Reptiles and Amphibians) (Pet Herpetofauna) Notice (No. 2) 2016*, published in the *Government Gazette* on 23 August 2016
- The *Wildlife Conservation (Restricted Open Season for Wild Ducks Causing Damage) Notice 2016*, published in the *Government Gazette* on 30 December 2016
- The *Wildlife Conservation (Close Season for Marine Mammals) Amendment Notice 2016*, published in the *Government Gazette* on 25 October 2016, and
- The *Wildlife Conservation Amendment Regulations 2016*, which amended or introduced fees under regulations 7, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17 and 56H and was published in the *Government Gazette* on 26 August 2016.

Parks and Wildlife organisational chart



Correct at 30 June 2017

Operational structure

The following management plans were approved by the Minister for Environment under s60 of the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act) during the 2016–17 reporting year:

- The *Yawuru Birragun Conservation Park Joint Management Plan 2016* was published in the *Government Gazette* on 7 October 2016.
- The *Yawuru Nagulagun / Roebuck Bay Marine Park Management Plan* was published in the *Government Gazette* on 11 October 2016.
- The joint management plan for the Lalang-Garram / Horizontal Falls and North Lalang-Garram Marine Parks was published in the *Government Gazette* on 2 December 2016.
- The joint management plan for the North Kimberley Marine Park was published in the *Government Gazette* on 23 December 2016.

During the reporting period, the Conservation and Parks Commission and the Director General gave notice in the *Government Gazette* of proposed amendments to the following management plans:

- Proposed amendments to the *Ngari Capes Marine Park Management Plan 2013–2023*, *Management Plan No. 74*, which were published in the *Government Gazette* on 23 September 2016.

- Proposed amendments to the management plan for the *Ningaloo Marine Park and Muiron Islands Marine Management Area 2005–2015*, *Management Plan No. 52*, which were published in the *Government Gazette* on 21 October 2016.

On 23 December 2016, the *Parks and reserves of the south-west Kimberley and north-west Pilbara draft joint management plan 2016* was made available for public comment and published in the *Government Gazette*.

Orders by the Governor in Executive Council under s13 of the CALM Act were published in the *Government Gazette* to reserve the following as Class A Marine Parks:

- On 4 October 2016, the Yawuru Nagulagun / Roebuck Bay Marine Park
- On 22 November 2016, the Lalang-garram / Horizontal Falls Marine Park
- On 22 November 2016, the North Lalang-garram Marine Park
- On 16 December 2016, the North Kimberley Marine Park.

On 14 February 2017, a further Order by the Governor in Executive Council, under s13 of the CALM Act, was published in the *Government Gazette*, altering the boundaries of the Yawuru Nagulagun / Roebuck Bay Marine Park.

On 23 December 2016, *Public Firewood Areas Order 2016* was published in the *Government Gazette* under r98 of the Forest Management Regulations 1993, designating specified areas of State forest as public firewood areas.

On 23 June 2017, *Public Firewood Areas Order 2017* was published in the *Government Gazette* under r98 of the Forest Management Regulations 1993, designating specific areas of State forest as public firewood areas.

Also during the 2016–17 reporting year, the following (Excision from State forest) Orders were made by the Governor under s9(3) (b) of the CALM Act and published in the *Government Gazette*:

- On 10 February 2017, *Conservation and Land Management (Excision from State forest) Order (No. 1) 2017* excised an area of 0.8383ha from State forest No.21 east of Kirup to facilitate upgrades to Upper Capel Road.
- On 10 February 2017, *Conservation and Land Management (Excision from State forest) Order (No. 2) 2017* excised an area of 0.1772ha from State forest No. 65 east of Banksia Grove to facilitate upgrades to the intersection between Neaves Road and Meadowlands Drive.

- On 10 February 2017, *Conservation and Land Management (Excision from State forest) Order (No. 3) 2017* excised an area of 0.3079ha of State forest No. 14 east of Waroona to facilitate the dedication of existing access to Lot 10 of Deposited Plan 42619.

Also during the 2016–17 reporting year, the following ‘Excision from Timber Reserves’ Order was made by the Governor under s10(3) (b) of the CALM Act and published in the *Government Gazette*:

- On 10 February 2017, the *Conservation and Land Management (Excision from Timber Reserve) Order (No. 1) 2017* excised an area of 0.1359ha from Timber Reserve No. 151/25 about 10km north-east of Westdale for the purpose of rationalising the tenure of Brookton Highway.

In the same period, the following Conservation and Land Management (revocation of State forest) Order was made by the Governor under r124(2) of the CALM regulations and published in the *Government Gazette*:

- On 23 December 2016, the *Conservation and Land Management (revocation of State forest) Order No. 1 2016* was published in the *Government Gazette* revoking 131.4928ha from State forest No.16, comprising of Lot 350 on Deposited Plan 404482 south-west of Waroona to facilitate the creation of a new State explosives facility.

On 27 January 2017, the *Rowley Shoals Marine Park (Classified Waters) Amendment Notice 2017* was published in the *Government Gazette*. This notice declared the types of recreational fishing incompatible with recreational purposes in the recreation areas of the marine park.

During the 2016–17 reporting year, the following amendments were made to the Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002:

- Conservation and Land Management Amendment Regulations (No.3) 2016, which were published in the *Government Gazette* on 5 July 2016 and made amendments to fees in Schedule 1.
- Conservation and Land Management Amendment Regulations (No.4) 2016, which were published in the *Government Gazette* on 30 August 2016 and inserted Part 11 Transitional regulations, after regulation 123.

Performance management framework

Parks and Wildlife supports Government goals with more specific desired outcomes, achieved via delivery across eight services.

The table to the right illustrates the relationship between agency-level desired outcomes and the most appropriate Government goal.

Changes from the 2015–16 reporting year

There were no changes to the performance management framework from 2015–16.

Shared responsibilities with other agencies

During the year, Parks and Wildlife contributed to whole-of-Government reform initiatives including implementation of efficiency and other targeted savings.

Government goal	Desired outcomes	Services
Social and environmental responsibility: Ensuring that economic activity is managed in a socially and environmentally responsible manner for the long-term benefit of the State.	Community enjoyment of the State's national parks, marine parks, State forest and other reserves.	1. Provision of Parks and Visitor Services
	The State's native plants and animals are conserved and habitat, ecosystem and landscape-scale conservation are based on best practice science.	2. Conserving Habitats, Species and Ecological Communities 3. Conservation Partnerships
	The State's plants and animals and the lands and waters under the department's care are managed for tourism, water and wood production, and other approved uses.	4. Forest Management Plan Implementation 5. Provision of Services for Commercial Forestry
	Lands under the department's care are managed to protect communities, visitors and built and natural assets from bushfire damage and planned fire is used to achieve other land, forest and wildlife management objectives.	6. Prescribed Burning and Fire Management 7. Bushfire Suppression
	The ecological health and community benefit of the Swan and Canning rivers is protected.	8. Protection of the Swan and Canning Rivers System