

## THE NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (NEW SOUTH WALES) POLICY ON BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

### PREAMBLE

The Australian Natural Heritage Charter<sup>i</sup> defines biodiversity: *'Biodiversity means the variability among living organisms from all sources (including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part) and includes diversity within and between species and the diversity of ecosystems.'*

Over the last 200 years, Australia has suffered the largest documented decline in biodiversity of any continent. Despite efforts to manage threats and pressures to biodiversity in Australia, it is still in decline.<sup>ii</sup>

Since its inception in 1945, the National Trust has lobbied for the establishment and sensitive management of Conservation Reserves and for the protection and conservation of important bushland remnants in both urban and rural situations. The Trust has listed 100 Landscape Conservation Areas on its Register, has operated for nearly 40 years an urban bushland restoration program, and has made submissions in 2008 and 2009 into reviews of the Australian Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and a submission in September 2014 to the NSW Biodiversity Legislation Review.

### POLICY

1. The Trust strongly supports legislation which provides improved outcomes for biodiversity conservation as a vital element of the Natural Heritage.
2. The Trust urges the adoption, by the relevant authorities, of rigorous monitoring, compliance and enforcement procedures to provide improved outcome for biodiversity conservation and calls for the provision of adequate funding for this purpose.
3. The Trust calls for increased investment in accurate and timely vegetation mapping (including ground truthing) to delineate important habitat for biodiversity conservation.
4. The Trust opposes in principle the practice of biodiversity offsets. The existing biodiversity offsetting rules do not accord with sound biodiversity conservation principles.
5. The Trust calls for a review of current land clearance regulations which have resulted in significant damage to the Natural Heritage, contrary to sound biodiversity conservation principles.
6. The Trust encourages private land conservation as an important element of Natural Heritage and biodiversity conservation.

The Trust will take any action it considers appropriate when Natural Heritage of high biodiversity value is threatened by inadequate or poor planning, or damaging development/land use practices.

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**Approved by National Trust (NSW) Board: March 2016**

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<sup>i</sup> Australian Natural Heritage Charter for the Conservation of Places of Natural Heritage Significance, (Second Edition), Australian Heritage Commission, 2002

<sup>ii</sup> Biodiversity Conservation, Australian Government Department of the Environment Website, 2016 <https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/conservation>