ACT Government
Environment and Planning

ACT Government
Australia's Native Vegetation Framework

Progress Report 2015

JULY 2015

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Introduction

In 2012 the ACT Government signed Australia's Native Vegetation Framework (Framework) along with the Australian Government and other Australian state and territory jurisdictions. This report highlights the key achievements by the ACT Government against its commitments under the Framework.

The Framework articulates the following five goals:

Goal 1: Increase national extent and connectivity of native vegetation.

Goal 2: Maintain and improve condition and function of native vegetation.

Goal 3: Maximise native vegetation benefits of ecosystem service markets.

Goal 4: Build capacity to understand, value and manage native vegetation.

Goal 5: Advance the engagement and inclusion of Indigenous peoples in management of native vegetation.

The Framework also identifies the following generic threats to native vegetation:

a. Loss, fragmentation and degradation of habitat;

b. Unsustainable use of natural resources

c. Invasive species

d. Changes to the aquatic environment and water flows

e. Inappropriate fire regimes

f. Urban development

g. Lack of valuation of the environment

h. Climate change.

The ACT Government recognises the importance of managing for these threats as part of an effective native vegetation management regime.

Native Vegetation in the ACT

Protecting and preserving native vegetation is an important element of nature conservation in the ACT. With over 61% of land in the ACT managed primarily for nature conservation or as water catchment, and a total of around 70% of ACT land under public management, the ACT stands out as an Australian jurisdiction with a strong environmental commitment.

The grasslands, woodlands, forests, riparian and alpine areas of the ACT are rich and biodiverse ecosystems. Many of these ecosystems, and the biodiversity they support, have regional and national conservation significance due to the size of vegetation patches, their condition and functioning, and the habitat they provide to rare and threatened species and ecological communities.

Mt Majura Woodlands

ACT Government Policy Setting

The ACT Government's policies are consistent with the goals of the Framework. The management of native vegetation in the ACT is underpinned by the ACT *Nature Conservation Act 2014* and the ACT Nature Conservation Strategy 2013–23. The planning and on-ground implementation of native vegetation management is further strengthened by a suite of legislation and policies as listed below.

Legislation and policies influencing native vegetation management in the ACT

- *ACT Nature Conservation Act 2014*
- *ACT Pest Plants and Animals Act 2005*
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Commonwealth)
- *ACT Planning and Development ACT 2007*
- Australia's Native Vegetation Framework (Commonwealth)
- *ACT Heritage Act 2004*
- *ACT Emergencies Act 2004*
- ACT Nature Conservation Strategy 2013–23
- ACT Environmental Offsets Policy
- ACT Weeds Strategy 2009–19
- ACT Pest Animal Management Strategy 2012–22
- ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy
- ACT Lowland Native Grassland Conservation Strategy
- ACT Kangaroo Management Plan
- AP2 – A New Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for the ACT
- Strategic Bushfire Plan for the ACT
- Regional Fire Management Plans
- Threatened and rare species and communities action plans
- ACT Territory Plan
- National Capital Plan

ACT Government Approach to Native Vegetation Management

The *ACT Nature Conservation Act 2014* and ACT Nature Conservation Strategy 2013–23 establish a framework for the ACT which encompasses:

- Targets and objectives
- Data collection and management
- Monitoring and reporting on ecosystem condition
- Listing and managing for threatened species and communities
- Research
- Restoration and management programs
- Community engagement
- Land use planning.

The ACT Nature Conservation Strategy 2013–23 establishes a whole of landscape approach for nature conservation in the ACT. This approach integrates management across tenures and land uses, to better support ecosystem processes, ecological values and landscape resilience. Eight ecosystem classifications have been defined for the ACT as listed below.

Eight ACT ecosystem units used in the classification of protected area reserves

Eight ACT ecosystem units[1]

- Lowland grasslands
- Lowland woodlands
- Lowland forests
- Aquatic and riparian ecosystems
- Montane grasslands
- Upland forests
- Sub-alpine woodlands
- Sub-alpine bogs and grasslands

1 2015 Stevenson & Seddon – Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program

Natural Temperate Grasslands of the Southern Tablelands

Natural temperate grasslands (of the southern tablelands) are listed as an endangered community under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and the ACT *Nature Conservation Act 2014*. The ACT has some of the largest remaining patches of natural temperate grassland in Australia, which represent the majority of conservation areas for this community. These areas are also major habitat for several nationally threatened grassland fauna and flora.

Case Studies

Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary

Since 2004 the ACT Government and the Australian National University (ANU) have collaborated on 'The Mulligans Flat-Goorooyarroo Woodland Experiment' to better understand and manage temperate woodlands for improved biodiversity conservation. The sanctuary fence encloses around 485 hectares and has a perimeter of 11.5 km.

This project is breaking new ground by investigating experimental management manipulations including:

1. adding dead wood, which provides habitat for animals
2. eradicating exotic predators, which are a major threat to woodland fauna
3. managing kangaroo populations through culling – as they are having a major impact on plant biomass
4. investigating the use of experimental burns as an ecological management tool
5. using prescribed burning to manage bushfire fuels.

The research also is investigating the ecological impact of excluding exotic pests such as feral cats, foxes and rabbits and the effects of reintroducing locally extinct, "keystone species" such as bettongs.

The results of this research will inform how the ACT Government manages woodlands throughout the ACT.

ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy

The ACT has some of the biggest, best connected and most botanically diverse temperate woodlands in Australia.

A review conducted in 2013 of the ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy highlighted activities that are improving the protection, management and restoration of woodlands, including the critically endangered Yellow-Box-Red Gum Grassy Woodland.

The ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy builds on more than ten years of survey, monitoring, research, conservation planning and management in relation to lowland native grasslands in the ACT and region. The review highlights a 60,000 hectare woodland restoration program, significant research projects and the propagation and translocation of threatened plant species.

The review also noted the strong collaboration between the ACT Government, research institutions, Greening Australia Canberra Region, Canberra Ornithologists Group, ParkCare and community groups, and rural landholders in the implementation of the strategy.

The ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy strongly demonstrates the ACT Government's commitment to making an outstanding regional and national contribution to conservation of native vegetation.

ACT and Southern Tablelands Weed Spotter

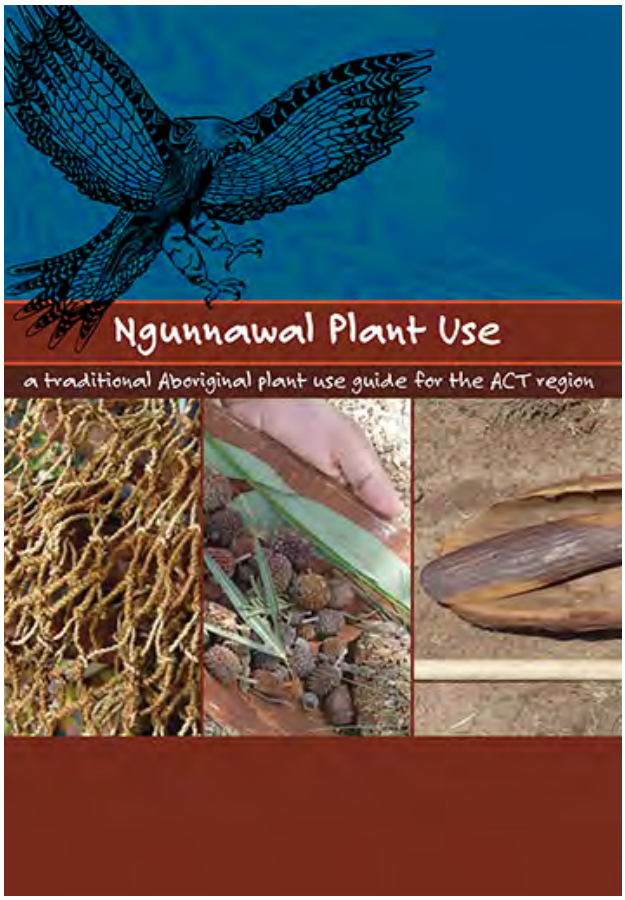
The ACT and Southern Tablelands Weed Spotter is a web-based application with associated Android and Iphone applications. It was developed by the Atlas of Living Australia in partnership with the ACT Government and 10 NSW Local Government Areas, 3 catchment groups, the ACT Conservation Council and the regional Landcare community. It enables the community to map weeds and weed control efforts on an on-going basis, and analyse and share this information on a public platform.

Ngunnawal Plant Use - a traditional Aboriginal plant use guide for the ACT region

"Ngunnawal Plant Use" introduces and explains the traditional significance of plants in the ACT region that have played a useful role in the lives of the Ngunnawal people as Aboriginal custodians of the ACT. Development and use of the field guide has strengthened local Indigenous peoples' involvement in native vegetation management.

The field guide published by the ACT Government in 2014 was developed in partnership with Ngunnawal Elders and their families and Greening Australia Capital Region. It records traditional plant knowledge of 70 trees, shrubs, grasses, ferns and other plants in the ACT region, and their use as food, fibre, medicine, tools, paint and/or for spiritual purposes.

The sustainable use of natural resources is vital to the continuation of Ngunnawal cultural knowledge and for its integration into best practice native vegetation management practices.



Land Use Planning

Urban development has been largely concentrated away from lowland woodland vegetation, while some woodland areas of high conservation significance, previously identified for future urban use, have been added to the reserve network. Since 2004, approximately 2200 hectares of lowland woodland, including Yellow Box–Red Gum Grassy Woodland, have been added to the reserve network, are managed for conservation or have been proposed as reserve. Additions include Callum Brae, Goorooyarroo, Kama, West Jerrabomberra, Condor, Percival Hill, Kinlyside, Molonglo, East Bonner, north and east Throsby and Kenny. In planning for additional suburbs, offsets were required for Yellow Box–Red Gum Grassy Woodland as this community is a Matter of National Environmental Significance under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. These offset areas will be added to the reserve network and can be viewed on ACTMAPi at www.actmapi.act.gov.au/home.html.

Grazing and disturbance management are key issues in urban fringe areas which are being addressed through better integration of infrastructure planning, reserve management and community engagement. Large populations of the nationally endangered Button Wrinkelwort (*Rutidosis leptorhynchoides*) occur within Crace grassland reserve and Red Hill woodland reserve, and another is being established within East Jerrabomberra.

Button Wrinklewort plants

ACT Government Progress Against Australia's Native Vegetation Framework Targets

Effectively and efficiently managing native vegetation remains a priority for the ACT Government. Since 2012 the ACT Government has implemented a range of measures against goals and targets of the Framework, as outlined in Table 1: ACT Government progress against Australia's Native Vegetation Framework (Targets).

The ACT Government will continue to develop and implement an integrated framework of policies to protect the ACT's biodiversity, including its native vegetation, through:

- Continuing to manage threats to the reserve system
- Strengthening ecological connectivity between areas of native vegetation
- Engaging in landscape and regional scale planning for biodiversity with ACT and regional stakeholders
- Building knowledge and awareness in government and the community of the ACT's environmental assets and potential impacts of climate change, including for ecological connectivity, and weed and pest animal management
- Strengthening partnerships with land managers.

Goorooyarroo Woodlands

Table 1: ACT Government Progress Against Australia's Native Vegetation Framework Targets

National target	ACT Government proposed approach	ACT Government progress to date
GOAL 1. Increase the national extent and connectivity of native vegetation		
1:Develop target for the extent of native vegetation (2014)	Set target for extent of native vegetation in the ACT. Revise legislation for nature conservation. Strengthen evidence-base for decision-making. Undertake vegetation mapping.	**In 2015 the ACT Government specified a target for native vegetation extent of 'Increase extent of protected area reserves in the ACT using a baseline of 2012'**. The 2012 baseline of 129,602 hectares includes national park, nature reserve and wilderness zones, and represents 54.96% of the ACT.(Source: Collaborative Australian Protected Area Datebase (CAPAD)) The ACT Government revised its primary legislation for the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems in 2014. 'Native vegetation' is defined in the *ACT Nature Conservation Act 2014* as follows: native vegetation, for an area, means any of the following kinds of vegetation indigenous to the area: a. trees b. understorey plants c. groundcover consisting of any kind of grass or herbaceous vegetation d. plants occurring in a wetland or stream in the area. where native vegetation area, means an area where: a. either: i. 10% or more of the area is covered with vegetation (whether dead or alive); and ii. no more than 60% of the ground layer vegetation cover is exotic annual (at any time of year); and iii. more than 50% of the perennial ground layer vegetation cover is native vegetation; or b. trees or shrubs indigenous to the area have a canopy cover of 10% or more in any stratum over the area. The ACT Government is updating mapping of the Territory's vegetation. The map will provide information on the extent, distribution, and representation in the ACT. When complete, the mapping information will be used to help revise the woodland strategy (Action Plan 27). Vegetation mapping has been completed over an area of 75,000 hectares, which includes 52,000 hectares in eastern ACT and parts of Namadgi National Park.
2.Target for native vegetation extent reflected in planning for natural resource management, land use and land management (2016)	Develop an ACT Environmental Offsets Policy. Undertake land use planning.	Requirements for environmental assessment for works or developments in the ACT are contained in the *ACT Planning and Development Act 2007* (Planning Act). The ACT Environmental Offsets Policy (2014) is a requirement under the Planning Act and aims to maintain or improve the likelihood of protected matters persisting in the ACT. The policy is consistent with the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The ACT Government's Environmental Offsets Policy is delivered in a broader framework for biodiversity conservation articulated in the ACT *Nature Conservation Act 2014* and the ACT Nature Conservation Strategy 2013–23, which aim to improve outcomes for biodiversity through measures such as management of protected areas, programs for the restoration of biodiversity and implementation of a range of strategies and plans. Strategic management plans and policies are in place for key threats such as weeds, pests, threatened species and communities, fire and climate change.

National target	ACT Government proposed approach	ACT Government progress to date
3.Net national increase in extent of native vegetation, including where it can contribute to landscape connectivity (2020)	Improve habitat connectivity and wildlife corridors through revegetation programs. Include connectivity mapping data in planning and decision-making considerations. Implement ACT Environment Offsets Policy.	The ACT Government undertakes ongoing rehabilitation and restoration activities which take into account the need to enhance habitat connectivity and provide wildlife corridors. **Woodland restoration** The Restore ACT and Greater Goorooyarroo Woodlands project began in 2012. The six-year project aims to protect, consolidate and connect 60,000 hectares of the largest remaining box-gum grassy woodland landscape in Australia through on-ground restoration and regeneration works. It will enhance the biodiversity and carbon storing capacity of the landscape, improving resilience to climate change. The project is funded by the Australian Government ($2.155 million from 2011–12 to 2016–17) and the ACT Government. In addition, it involves NSW Government entities, NSW's South East Local Land Services, Greening Australia Capital Region, researchers, local landholders, community groups, volunteers and local Indigenous stakeholders. CSIRO research has found most animals of southern Australian woodlands and forests will not usually cross a canopy gap of more than 100 metres, and will not travel more than 1 kilometres from at least a 10 hectare sized patch of suitable living habitat. Under contract to the ACT Government, the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage used this information to model fauna habitat and connectivity values across the ACT and surrounding region, identifying areas that are key to existing wildlife movement and areas where connections can be easily restored. This information, along with connectivity mapping tools available through ACTMAPi, has guided restoration efforts.

Goorooyarroo Woodlands

National target	ACT Government proposed approach	ACT Government progress to date
Goal 2. Maintain and improve the condition and function of native vegetation		
4.(a) Agreed protocols are in place to measure changes in the condition of representative native vegetation communities (2014) 4.(b) Monitoring systems are in place to measure changes in the condition of representative native vegetation communities	(Pending Australian Government action.) The ACT Government is developing a framework for monitoring conservation effectiveness within its nature reserves. Where appropriate, this approach also will be applied to non-reserve areas of the ACT. Establishing a transparent monitoring framework to support planning, decision-making and implementation is also a priority.	A draft framework for monitoring conservation effectiveness within eight representative ecosystems in the ACT was developed in 2014. Pilot monitoring plans for two of these ecosystems are currently under development. The plans will identify indicators of biodiversity condition and management inputs. Monitoring systems will be supported by improved vegetation, soils and water data. Progress includes: • The ACT Government is updating mapping of the Territory's vegetation. The map will provide information on the extent, distribution, and representation in the ACT. • Hydrogeological landscape units and associated fine-scale management areas within the ACT have been mapped. • Representative profiles for Namadgi National Park soils are near completion. • Representative profiles for rural land soils has commenced. Pest Plant Management Plans (PPMPs) for critical weed species have been developed. A weed alert system was developed for the ACT. An ACT and surrounding region web-based weeds portal on the Atlas of Living Australia was developed to support improved mapping and monitoring.
5. Strategic plans developed to reduce priority threats to native vegetation condition (2015)		The ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy 2004 (Action Plan 27) is one of the action plans developed under the *ACT Nature Conservation Act 1980* to protect and manage threatened species and ecological communities. The aim of the woodland strategy is for the ACT to make an outstanding contribution, regionally and nationally, to conservation of lowland woodland. The strategy sets out how landholders, government and the community can help conserve lowland woodland and the species that depend on its habitats, including through management of feral animals and weeds, grazing pressure, controlled burning and slashing, and revegetation. Management of threats to native vegetation condition has been enhanced through: • Annual Weed and Pest Plans and their implementation • Trialling of pest animal risk assessment tools for application in the ACT • The development of a weed alert system for the ACT. The ACT and surrounding region web-based weeds portal on the Atlas of Living Australia was developed to support improved mapping and monitoring, and • The ACT being actively engaged in climate change adaptation planning exercises with CSIRO, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, South East Local Land Services, National Ecological Research Program, and the Bureau of Meteorology.

National target	ACT Government proposed approach	ACT Government progress to date
6. Net national improvement in native vegetation condition (2025)		Major woodland restoration initiatives include Restore ACT and Greater Goorooyarroo Woodlands Project, and the ACT Woodlands Restoration Project. A 3 year review (2014) of the implementation of the ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy 2004 highlighted: • The area of lowland woodland under, or identified for, conservation management has increased by 2200 hectares • A 60,000 hectare woodland restoration program is underway • Significant research projects, including projects to restore woodland in the Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary, and propagation and translocation of threatened plants are being undertaken • The important role of vegetation and connectivity mapping in informing decisions • On-going active woodland management by ParkCare and Landcare groups and • More rural landholders are protecting or restoring woodland remnants on their lands. The ACT Government established the Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary in 2004. An 11.5 km feral-proof fence was erected in 2009 with the aim of improving the condition of the woodlands, including through reintroducing native animals and monitoring their effects on the woodland ecosystem. Leading-edge research in the sanctuary and surrounding Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve has seen the successful reintroduction of the Eastern Bettong, native grass understorey and woody debris. Animals. such as bettongs. are thought to be 'ecosystem engineers' and may play a pivotal role in ecosystem restoration through their roles in soil aeration and hydrology, dispersal of mycorrhizal fungal spores, incorporation of organic matter and provision of seed germination sites.

National target	ACT Government proposed approach	ACT Government progress to date
GOAL 3. Maximise the native vegetation benefits of ecosystem service markets		
7. Systems and guidelines developed for accreditation and reporting of biodiversity co-benefits of carbon markets (2014)		Not applicable at this stage
8. Credible and consistent accounting tools are developed to measure and report on carbon sequestration and avoidance initiatives across Australia, related to the establishment and management of native vegetation communities, including permanent, biodiverse, locally native plantings (2015)		Not applicable at this stage

National target	ACT Government proposed approach	ACT Government progress to date
GOAL 4. Build capacity to understand, value and manage native vegetation		
9.Targeted communication programs are in place to enable a range of stakeholder groups to better understand the values of native vegetation (2014)		The ACT Government and local community groups regularly hold guided walks and restoration activities to help local residents learn more about woodlands and participate in their restoration. A number of restoration projects have been, and continue to be, carried out across woodlands in the ACT, contributing to a wider woodland restoration program that extends into NSW. Projects involve working with land managers and volunteer groups, such as ParkCare, Landcare, Friends of Grasslands, Bush on the Boundary and the Canberra Ornithologists Group, to identify and help restore woodland areas. The ACT Regional Landcare Facilitator works with groups of rural landholders and a well respected agronomist, to increase knowledge of native pastures on local properties, and how to manage these pastures sustainably to support both conservation and production outcomes. This work involves supporting landholders to develop grazing management and weed management plans. This work was undertaken adjacent to Namadgi National Park and is impacting positively on management of rural lands and the park.
10.An increase in the number of Australians who understand the benefits and values of native vegetation (2016)		The ACT Regional Landcare Facilitator supports a range of capacity building activities (workshops, field days and on-ground events) aimed at farmers, urban Landcarers and the broader community, which increase understanding of the value of native vegetation. These activities include field days on managing weeds on native pastures, managing native vegetation to achieve production and conservation outcomes, and native plant identification. The Regional Landcare Facilitator runs an annual Landcare Singles tree planting event which aims to attract participation by local residents, who have not previously been aware of or involved in Landcare events, to plant native vegetation. Each year Landcare Singles attracts 80-100 people who are new to Landcare and natural resource management. This event applies a “learning by doing” approach. The 2013 and 2014 Landcare Singles events focused on plantings to improve biodiversity in Jerrabomberra Wetlands; to provide habitat (planting of Allocasuarina trees) and food for the endangered Glossy Black Cockatoo and to contribute to a wildlife corridor across the region. The 2015 Landcare Singles plantings focused on connecting remnant woodland on the border of the ACT. Approximately 1000 native trees, shrubs and grasses have been planted at each event. The ACT Government, in partnership with Landcare/ParkCare volunteers, the Regional Landcare Facilitator and the ACT Parks and Conservation Landcare ParkCare Coordinator held the inaugural ACT ParkCare and Landcare forum for the ACT’s ParkCare and Landcare volunteers working on the public land estate (including Namadgi National Park, Red Gum Yellow Box woodlands, natural temperate grasslands and river corridors). The forum provided an opportunity to share knowledge about the management of these areas, reflect on achievements of the volunteers and to look to the future of Landcare on the conservation estate in a changing environment. The forum included presentations and talks by Aboriginal NRM practitioners and experienced scientist on managing biodiversity.

National target	ACT Government proposed approach	ACT Government progress to date
11. Major public and private land managers and industries recognise the benefits of native vegetation by undertaking practices that promote the ecologically sustainable management of native vegetation (2016)		Around 61% of the land in the ACT is demarcated as nature reserve and managed by the ACT Government's Parks and Conservation Service. The *Planning and Development Act 2007* identifies the primary management objectives for Nature Reserves as: 1. To conserve the natural environment 2. To provide for public use of the area for recreation, education and research. The ACT Government works with volunteers, researchers, proponents of particular activities and uses, rural landholders, and others to promote awareness and encourage practices that promote improved management of native vegetation. For example: • ParkCare is a volunteer community program for people with an interest in the natural environment. Training, equipment and support are provided by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. ParkCare volunteers do a variety of important activities including; seed collection; plant propagation; tree planting; weed removal; erosion control; vegetation mapping and recording; water quality monitoring; raising community awareness; and maintaining and restoring places of cultural heritage significance. • The ACT Government and Australian National Botanic Gardens are researching threatened woodland plant species, including the Tarengo Leek Orchid and Small Purple Pea, and propagating them where possible to ensure populations will survive into the future. Icon Water (formerly ACTEW) has also supported translocation of the Small Purple Pea to a conservation site as part of its offset obligations. • The ACT Rural Grants, funded under the National Landcare Programme, is supporting rural landholders to implement sustainable agricultural practices, including protecting and enhancing woodlands and enhancing connectivity across the landscape. Five successful grant applications in the 2014–15 grant round supported or part-supported woodland restoration works including fencing of a tributary of Paddys River, protection of paddock trees, fencing to create and protect tree lots and tree regrowth in a priority area for woodland restoration, and investment in serrated tussock control on box-gum woodlands and native grasslands adjacent to Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve.

National target	ACT Government proposed approach	ACT Government progress to date
GOAL 5. Advance the engagement and inclusion of Indigenous peoples in management of native vegetation		
12. Indigenous people's engaged in developing culturally appropriate approaches to their engagement in native vegetation management across Australia		Together with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, the ACT Government has identified six key areas of focus in the ACT Government's Aboriginal Natural Resource Management (NRM) Program: 1. Identifying and sharing cultural knowledge 2. Engaging Aboriginal youth 3. Aboriginal NRM employment 4. Applying Aboriginal land management techniques 5. Engaging justice and health 6. Aboriginal NRM governance The sustainable use of natural resources is vital to the continuation of Ngunnawal cultural knowledge and for its integration into best practice native vegetation management practices. The ACT Aboriginal Natural Resource Management Facilitator runs a range of programs to support increased engagement of Indigenous people in native vegetation management and the development of Aboriginal enterprises which promote culturally appropriate approaches to sharing knowledge about and implementing Indigenous native vegetation management The ACT NRM Facilitator works with an Indigenous Restoration Officer at Greening Australia Capital Region to support Indigenous inmates in the ACT adult and youth correctional facilities (Alexander Maconochie Centre) to develop skills which will support improved native vegetation management using culturally appropriate approaches. Ngunnawal Plant Use was produced by the ACT Government in partnership with local Ngunnawal Elders and their families to capture and record traditional plant knowledge in a contemporary context, to preserve it for future generations, and to promote greater appreciation of the cultural heritage values of native vegetation in the region to the broader community. It records traditional plant knowledge of 70 trees, shrubs, grasses, ferns and other plants in the ACT region, used for food, fibre, medicine, tools, paint and/or spiritual purposes.

National target	ACT Government proposed approach	ACT Government progress to date
13.Culturally appropriate approaches have been implemented that involve Indigenous peoples in native vegetation management		The ACT Government has coordinated and invested in community based projects such as: • A 12 month Aboriginal land management course directed at male Indigenous detainees and all female, including non-Indigenous, detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre. • An Aboriginal Heritage Workshop that educated 48 staff and volunteers working in the field including participants from ACT Parks & Conservation Services, Greening Australia Capital Region, and Landcare/ParkCare Groups. The workshop included presentations on identifying artefacts, understanding the ACT Heritage Act 2004, and the procedure to follow when an unanticipated artefact is discovered. It also looked at reading the landscape from an Aboriginal NRM perspective. • Working with Women's/Men's Groups. A current project involves working with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Services and Medicare Local to help their men's and women's groups participate in cultural and bush regeneration activities. • A community planting day celebrating Reconciliation Week at the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre, Yarramundi Reach. Over 120 participants planted native species, learnt about Ngunnawal culture and bush tucker, and participated in weaving classes. • NAIDOC Family Fishing Day aimed to assist Aboriginal youth to develop fishing skills, and identify native and introduced species. The ACT Government partnered with the Boomanulla Carp Killers (a local Aboriginal owned fishing club) who facilitated the community on the day. • Bush Tucker Cooking Classes have been offered. These events included presentations by Diabetes ACT, and Greening Australia Capital Region provided 15 participants with information on the importance of using local natural resources and the impacts of a Western diet on Aboriginal people. A local indigenous catering company provided examples of incorporating bush tucker into modern healthy meals. • Through funding provided by the Australian Government, the ACT Government ran the two year Caring for the Cotter Catchment, which involved employing a team of four Aboriginal staff to develop skills in environmental restoration, undertake extensive restoration of the Cotter catchment and apply Indigenous knowledge to land management. This project was one of the case studies presented in the Native Vegetation Framework (2012). The project finished in 2013, and Greening Australia Capital Region employed one of the team members as an Indigenous restoration officer using funding provided by the ACT Government through the Australian Government. The Greening Australia restoration officer is promoting and demonstrating culturally appropriate approaches to native vegetation management to a broad range of stakeholders including NRM stakeholders, Aboriginal organisations, farmers, school, TAFE and university students, sand Landcare volunteers.

National target	ACT Government proposed approach	ACT Government progress to date
14. Relevant decision-makers in all levels of government understand the significance of native vegetation to Indigenous peoples and reflect this in decision-making.		The ACT Government understands the importance of involving the traditional custodians in heritage and environmental decisions. For cultural heritage advice the ACT Government follows the *ACT Heritage Act 2004* and the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008* – under which the Representative Aboriginal Organisations (RAOs) and the United Ngunnawal Elders Council (UNEC) were engaged.

Caring for the Cotter Catchment project trainee