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## GLOSSARY

### Abbreviations

asl	=	above sea level
km	=	kilometre
ha	=	hectare
m	=	metre
cm	=	centimetre
mm	=	millimetre
yr	=	year

### Biodiversity

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 (AHC 2002).

### Buffer

A buffer is a form of vegetation or land use (e.g. road or other infrastructure) that acts as a barrier or absorbs the effects of an activity or another land use. It is undesirable to have high intensity land uses located next to areas of high conservation value, and low or medium intensity land uses may be used as buffers (MacLeod 2002).

### Connectivity

Habitat connectivity is the degree to which an organism can move around the landscape due to the presence of suitable habitat. For fauna, connectivity has been defined as the 'degree to which the landscape facilitates or impedes movement among patches' (Bennett 1999).

### Conservation Value

With regard to the natural environment, conservation value is an expression of the importance of a place in terms of its *natural significance*. *Natural significance* means the importance of ecosystems, biodiversity and geodiversity for their existence value or for present or future generations, in terms of their scientific, social, aesthetic and life-support value (AHC 2002).

### Crown Cover Density

The percentage of the sample site within the vertical projection of the periphery of the crown i.e. the whole crown is treated as opaque.

### Declining Species

Species that have a reduced extent of occurrence and/or decline in abundance, significant enough to raise conservation concern.

### Disturbance

An event that removes organisms and opens up space that can be colonized by individuals of the same or different species (Begon *et al.* 1990). Examples include soil cultivation, herbicide use, tree removal, fire and grazing.

### Dominant Species

Species that make up a large proportion of biomass, or numbers of organisms in a community (Begon *et al.* 1990).

### Ecological Community

An assemblage of plant and animal species that occur together in space and time.

### Ecological Processes

All the processes that occur between organisms, and within and between communities, including interactions with the non-living environment, that result in existing ecosystems and bring about changes in ecosystems over time (AHC 2002).

### Ecosystem

A dynamic complex of organisms and their environment, interacting as a functional unit (AHC 2002).

### Ecosystem Function

In a functioning (or healthy) ecosystem, processes such as nutrient, energy and water flows, and the organisms and their populations, are maintained at levels appropriate to that system. A degraded or dysfunctional ecosystem has one or more of these processes disrupted (McIntyre *et al.* 2002).

### Ecotone

Transition zone between two vegetation communities (e.g. between woodland and grassland).

### Endangered

Means:

- (a) in relation to a community—an ecological community that is in immediate danger of extinction unless the circumstances and factors threatening its distribution, composition and viability as an ecological unit cease.
- (b) in relation to a species:
  - (i) its likely extinction unless the circumstances and factors threatening its abundance, survival or evolution cease, or
  - (ii) the reduction of its numbers or habitats to such a level that the species is in immediate danger of extinction. (*Nature Conservation Act 1980*).

**Evolutionary Processes**

Genetically-based processes by which life forms change and develop over generations (AHC 2002).

**Exotic Species**

A species of foreign origin; not native; introduced from abroad (Delbridge *et al.* 1996).

**Forb**

An herbaceous (non-woody) plant that is not a grass (Scarlett *et al.* 1992).

**Fragmentation**

The separation into parts, of an assumed previously continuous vegetation community.

**Geodiversity**

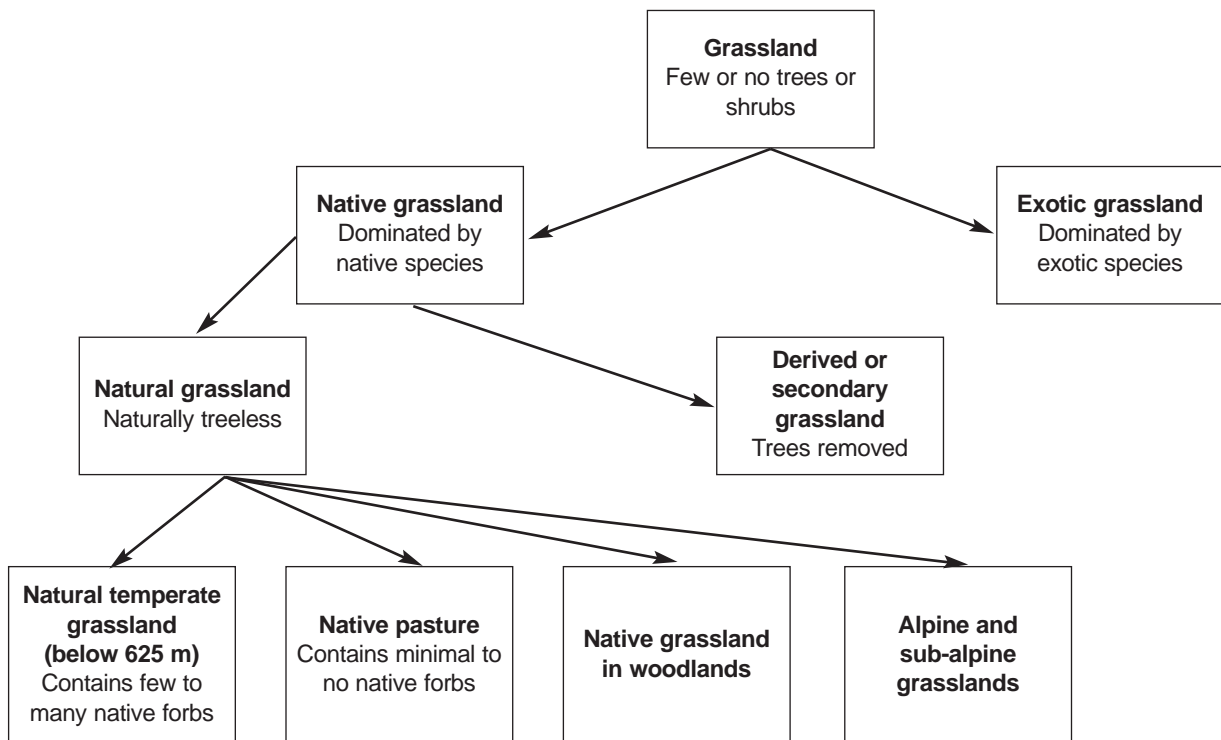
The natural range (diversity) of geological (bedrock), geomorphological (landform) and soil features, assemblages, systems and processes (AHC 2002).

**Grassland**

Benson (1996 in Rehwinkel 1997) compiled a set of grassland definitions that would be universally accepted

by grassland ecologists and those involved with grassland management, as follows:

- **Grassland**—vegetation dominated by grasses and forbs, <10% tree and shrub cover;
- **Native grassland**—grassland with >50% of vegetation cover composed of indigenous species, >50% of species are native, and minimum vegetation cover, alive or dead is >10%;
- **Natural grassland**—native grasslands occurring in regions considered to have had <10% tree and shrub cover at the time of European settlement (cf. secondary grassland below);
- **Secondary grassland**—a native grassland remaining after the removal or dieback of previously occurring trees and shrubs, where these occupy >10% cover;
- **Native pasture**—contains native and introduced species, where introduced species occupy >50%, but <75% of both cover and species present, where pasture species have been mechanically sown;
- **Exotic grassland**—where >75% of species and cover are introduced.



Native pasture and natural temperate grassland are considered in this *Strategy*.

A detailed definition for **natural temperate grassland** is contained in s. 2.1.4. This definition was developed as part of the nomination process that led to natural temperate grassland being declared an endangered ecological community under the *Nature Conservation Act 1980 (ACT)*.

**Habitat**

The structural environments where an organism lives for all or part of its life, including environments once occupied (continuously, periodically or occasionally) by an organism or group of organisms, and into which organisms of that kind have the potential to be reinstated (AHC 2002).

**Herbs**

Plants without woody stems.

**Land Management Agreement**

An agreement between a lessee and the Territory establishing a co-operative management regime for non-urban land in the ACT.

**Natural Integrity**

The degree to which a place or ecosystem retains its natural biodiversity and geodiversity and other natural processes and characteristics (AHC 2002).

**Organism**

Any living being.

**Projective Foliage Cover**

The percentage of the sample site occupied by the vertical projection of foliage only i.e. gaps in the crown are excluded.

**Protection**

Taking care of a place by managing impacts to ensure that natural significance is retained (AHC 2002).

**Regeneration**

The natural recovery of natural integrity following disturbance or degradation (AHC 2002).

**Relictual**

Where a plant or animal species is now living in an environment that has changed from that which is typical for it.

**Restoration**

Returning existing habitats to a known past state or to an approximation of the natural condition by repairing degradation, by removing introduced species or by reinstatement (AHC 2002).

**Riparian**

Any land that adjoins, directly influences, or is influenced by a body of water (Lovett and Price 1999).

**Secondary Grassland**

An ecological community that develops when the tree canopy cover of grassy woodland or forest is removed or suffers dieback and natural regeneration is prevented (Benson 1996).

**Species Diversity**

The variety of species in a place (AHC 2002).

**Taxa**

Another term for species.

**Threatened**

An umbrella term for various categories of risk of premature extinction.

**Vulnerable**

In relation to a species, means a species that within the next 25 years is likely to become endangered unless the circumstances and factors threatening its abundance, survival or evolution cease (*Nature Conservation Act 1980*).

**Weed**

A plant that threatens human welfare by competing with other plants that have food, timber or amenity value (Begon *et al.* 1990). Environmental weeds are plants that threaten diversity and functioning in native ecosystems.