

## Biodiversity at the airport site

The Western Sydney Airport biodiversity assessment was based on flora and fauna surveys conducted at the airport site. The airport site at Badgerys Creek is dominated by introduced grasslands, cleared land or cropland, with small pockets of open eucalypt woodland and shrubland. While vegetation and fauna habitat at the airport site is in a generally poor condition, there are valuable fragments of threatened ecological communities.

## Biodiversity impacts during construction

The biodiversity assessment found that, during construction of the Stage 1 development (one runway and up to 10 million passengers a year), the removal of native vegetation would affect threatened species and ecological communities on the airport site.

Construction will require the removal of about 1,200 hectares of vegetation. The majority of vegetation at the airport site (around 75 per cent) is introduced grasslands, cleared land or cropland. Just over 300 hectares is native vegetation. Construction will also result in the removal of some aquatic and wetland habitats (such as farm dams) on the airport site and will contribute to the fragmentation of native vegetation in Western Sydney associated with the broader urban development of the region.



The removal of vegetation will have a direct impact on some threatened flora and fauna species and ecological communities listed under both Commonwealth and NSW legislation. This includes Cumberland Plain Woodland, the Grey-headed Flying-fox, Cumberland Plain Land Snail, and the native plants *Pimelea spicata*, *Pultenaea parviflora* and *Marsdenia viridiflora* subs. *viridiflora*.

## Biodiversity impacts during operation

Operation of the airport will increase the risk of bird and bat strike from contact with aircraft and ground transportation vehicles. This would primarily be in areas close to the airport site when aircraft are at lower altitudes. Light, noise and vibrations generated by airport operations may displace some species.

As a major transport gateway, the airport may increase the risk of exotic species being introduced into surrounding vegetation. This risk will be reduced by the stringent biosecurity laws and measures used at all Australian airports, such as quarantine procedures and inspections.

# Western Sydney Airport

## How will biodiversity be protected at Badgerys Creek?

Before Western Sydney Airport can be built, a range of biodiversity activities are required to minimise impacts on plants and animals in Badgerys Creek.

- Some plants or animals will be relocated to safer areas for rehabilitation.
- 117 hectares of land is being protected on the airport site as an environmental conservation zone, providing a safe habitat for flora and fauna.
- Greening Australia is collecting native grass seeds from the airport site to grow seeds to help restore biodiversity on the Cumberland Plain.
- Scientists from the Australian Botanic Garden in Mt Annan are taking plant cuttings and seeds from three threatened plant species (including the Spiked Rice-flower, pictured) to grow more plants in protected areas.



## Biodiversity offsets package

A biodiversity offsets package has been developed to balance the loss of biodiversity for the Stage 1 development of Western Sydney Airport. This package sets the framework for an investment of up to \$180 million by the Australian Government into biodiversity offset activities to conserve threatened species and ecological communities in the Western Sydney region. The package will guide activities to identify and permanently secure suitable offsets in the region surrounding the airport site.

To achieve greater strategic benefits for biodiversity conservation in the region, the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities continues to consult closely with the Department of the Environment and Energy, along with relevant NSW authorities, organisations and stakeholder groups on offsetting opportunities. The delivery of biodiversity offsets for the Stage 1 development will consider a range of activities that meet best practice, including:

- investing in biodiversity offset sites
- securing and protecting important vegetation on the Cumberland Plain
- investing in conservation programs and restoration and revegetation activities

## Biodiversity Expert Group

A Biodiversity Experts Group, consisting of qualified and experienced biodiversity and ecology experts, has provided advice on the department's development of a Biodiversity Offset Delivery Plan.



An environmental conservation zone will be set aside on the airport site for the protection of a range of flora and fauna. The zone will retain woodland and riparian communities along Badgerys Creek, Oaky Creek and Duncan Creek. This will help maintain vegetation and provide movement corridors for fauna. Heritage values along creek corridors will also be protected.