



Western Sydney Airport

BIODIVERSITY



Biodiversity at the airport site

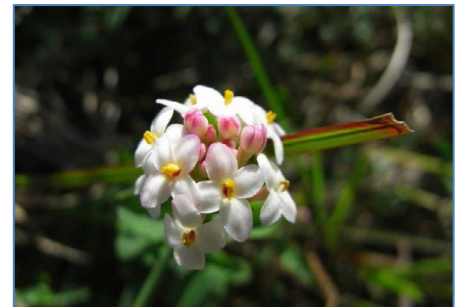
Ecologists have conducted several rounds of flora and fauna surveys at the Western Sydney Airport site. The airport site is covered with introduced grasslands, cleared land or cropland, with small pockets of open eucalypt woodland and shrubland. Vegetation and fauna habitat at the airport site is in a generally poor condition; however, there are valuable fragments of threatened ecological communities and species.

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 remove around 1200 hectares of vegetation. About 350 hectares of this is native vegetation including some aquatic and wetland habitats. Impacts from airport construction will contribute to the broader fragmentation of native vegetation in Western Sydney due to 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, such as Cumberland Plain Woodland, the Swift Parrot, the Grey-headed Flying-fox, the Cumberland Plain Land Snail, and native plants *Pimelea spicata* (Spiked Rice-flower, pictured), *Pultenaea parviflora* and *Marsdenia viridiflora* subspecies *viridiflora*.



Biodiversity impacts during operation

Airport operations 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 will adhere to the stringent biosecurity laws and measures used at all Australian airports, such as quarantine procedures and inspections.

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Protecting biodiversity at Badgerys Creek

Several measures will be implemented to minimise impacts on plants and animals at Badgerys Creek. For example, biodiversity will be relocated to safer areas for rehabilitation, and there will be an ongoing environmental conservation zone (117 hectares) on the airport site that will provide safe habitat for flora and fauna.

Biodiversity Offset Delivery Plan

The Department of Environment and Energy has approved the Biodiversity Offset Delivery Plan (the Plan) for the Stage 1 development of Western Sydney Airport. The Plan identifies suitable measures to offset the impacts of the Stage 1 development.

Biodiversity offsets are actions that balance the environmental impacts of land development and can take various forms. At least 90 per cent of the WSA offsets will be direct offsets, such as:

- Purchasing credits through the NSW Biodiversity Offsets Scheme
- Acquiring and managing land with suitable biodiversity characteristics
- Improving the biodiversity value of protected land through restoration projects

A minimum of 900 hectares of Defence Establishment Orchard Hills, a large site with strategic value and a significant amount of threatened native vegetation, will be restored and secured as an offset site. The site's biodiversity will be actively improved over a period of up to 20 years, with ongoing conservation and management obligations.

Up to 10 per cent of offsets may be other compensatory measures. Some of these are already underway:

- Greening Australia is undertaking a seed collection and production program that will offer a much-needed local source of seed for native vegetation communities of the Cumberland Plain. The program will allow the restoration of vegetation with a higher diversity and density than could previously be achieved.
- The Threatened Flora Propagation Program at the Australian Botanic Gardens in Mt Annan is successfully propagating threatened flora species. The program is trialling innovative techniques and will conduct genetic studies to increase understanding about threatened flora.



The Department is considering potential longer term other compensatory measures, such as research, capacity building and training opportunities, including Aboriginal land management.

Biodiversity Expert Group

A Biodiversity Experts Group, consisting of qualified and experienced biodiversity and ecology experts, local councils, and Aboriginal landowners and stakeholders, was established to provide advice on the Plan.



An environmental conservation zone will be set aside on the airport site to protect 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 fauna movement corridors. Heritage values along creek corridors will also be protected.