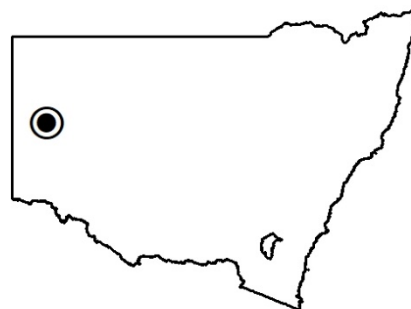




Statement of Management Intent



Langidoon-Metford State Conservation Area

1. Introduction

National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) acknowledges that Langidoon-Metford State Conservation Area ('the park') is part of the traditional Country of the Barkandji Aboriginal people. The park was established following the acquisition of Langidoon and Metford stations, one of the largest land acquisitions for national parks in the last 10 years.

This statement of management intent outlines the main values, issues, and key management directions of the National Parks and Wildlife Service for managing Langidoon-Metford State Conservation Area (SCA). This statement, together with relevant NPWS policies, will guide the management of the area until a plan of management has been prepared in accordance with the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. The NPWS Managing Parks Prior to Plan of Management Policy states that parks and reserves without a plan of management are to be managed in a manner consistent with the intent of the National Parks and Wildlife Act and other relevant legislation, existing park management policies, and other relevant manuals, procedures and guidelines.

2. Management principles

Under section 30G (2) of the National Parks and Wildlife Act (NPW Act), a state conservation area is to be managed in accordance with the following principles:

- the conservation of biodiversity, the maintenance of ecosystem function, the protection of natural phenomena and the maintenance of natural landscapes
- the conservation of places, objects and features of cultural value
- provision for the undertaking of uses permitted under other provisions of the NPW Act in such areas (including mining as permitted under section 47J) having regard to the conservation of the natural and cultural values of the state conservation area

- provision for sustainable visitor or tourist use and enjoyment that is compatible with the conservation of the state conservation area's natural and cultural values and with uses permitted under other provisions of the NPW Act in such areas
- provision for the sustainable use (including adaptive re-use) of any buildings or structures or modified natural areas having regard to the conservation of the state conservation area's natural and cultural values and with uses permitted under other provisions of the NPW Act in such areas
- provision for appropriate research and monitoring.

3. Context

Reservation details: Langidoon-Metford SCA was reserved on 10 December 2021.

Size: 60,416 hectares.

Background: Langidoon-Metford SCA is located in the far west of New South Wales in the Broken Hill Complex Bioregion. The park lies along the Barrier Highway, approximately 65 kilometres east-north-east of Broken Hill and 110 kilometres west-south-west of Wilcannia. Nearby reserves include Mutawintji National Park and Mutawintji Historic Site, approximately 25 kilometres north-north-east of the park, and Kinchega National Park, located some 65 kilometres south-south-east of the park. Topar Station, immediately to the south of the park, is a NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust wildlife refuge.

The lands of the park are characterised by sandplains and stony desert, gibber chenopod shrublands and floodplain woodland along watercourses.

Langidoon-Metford SCA is located within the administrative areas of the Broken Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council, Western Local Land Services and the NSW Unincorporated Far West Area.

The park includes sub-surface lands to a depth of 100 metres.

4. Values

- The park and surrounding lands are significant to the Barkandji People and contain important Aboriginal heritage. Aboriginal occupation and use of what is now the park is likely to have been widespread, and artefacts previously found on the property include a grinding plate, grinding stones and a digging stick. Recent surveys conducted before maintenance roadworks recorded a large number of Aboriginal artefacts. Further surveys will likely reveal more Aboriginal sites, places and artefacts across the park.
- The park contains a diversity of landforms and ecosystems, including grassy semi-arid woodlands, arid shrublands (acacia and chenopod sub-formations), grasslands, freshwater wetlands and saline wetlands. These ecosystems support a range of habitats and a high level of biodiversity for both flora and fauna, including 33 mapped vegetation communities.
- The park is located within the Broken Hill Complex Bioregion. It is largely within the Barrier Range sub region (approximately 85%), whilst some of the eastern fringes of the park are within the Barrier Range Outwash subregion. The park significantly contributes to the protection of the Barrier Range sub region and is the first representation of this sub region in NPWS reserves.



- A range of regional ecosystems (or Mitchell Landscapes as a surrogate) are present in the park, including Barrier Tablelands, Barrier Alluvial Plains, Barrier Downs, Barrier Salt Lakes and Playas, Barrier Sandplains, Barrier Fresh Lakes and Swamps, and Scropes Sandplains.
- Prior to the establishment of this park, the Barrier Alluvial Plains, Barrier Salt Lakes and Playas, Barrier Tablelands, Barrier Sandplains and Barrier Fresh Lakes and Swamps of the Broken Hill Complex Bioregion were not protected in either public or private reserves. All, except Barrier Fresh Lakes and Swamps, have been given additional protection with the subsequent acquisition of Avenel Station.
- The endangered ecological community *Acacia loderi* shrublands occurs widely in the park, covering over 20,000 hectares. No other *Acacia loderi* shrublands in the Broken Hill Complex Bioregion are currently protected within reserves. Aboriginal people have a strong cultural association with *Acacia loderi* or *Nelia*, and this endangered ecological community has important cultural heritage value. Most of this vegetation community in the park is degraded but is expected to recover without grazing.
- Yellow-keeled swainsona (*Swainsona flavicarinata*) is the only threatened plant species recorded in the park to date. Bindweed (*Convolvulus tedmoorei*) has been recorded within 10 kilometres of the park.
- Six threatened native animals have been recorded in or adjacent to the park. These include spotted-tailed quoll, Australian bustard, spotted harrier, white-fronted chat, flock bronzewing and eastern grass owl. A further 5 threatened native animals have been recorded within 10 kilometres of the park, including brown treecreeper (eastern subspecies), freckled duck, blue-billed duck, pink cockatoo and black falcon. Also recorded within 10 kilometres of the park is the long-toed stint and gull-billed tern both of which, although not listed as threatened in New South Wales, are migratory species protected by international agreements.
- High points with outstanding landscape views may be of geological interest, including a gibber rise and an exposed sandstone escarpment.
- Two second order, ephemeral river red gum lined channels and floodouts occur on the park – Treloar and Acacia creeks. Numerous first order channels lined with black box also occur, especially in the north, on the former Langidoon Station portion of the park.
- The park includes areas of ephemeral lakes, including the 160-hectare Eckerboon Lake which, during times of flood, provides significant habitat for migratory bird species and is an area with important Aboriginal cultural heritage, including evidence of Aboriginal occupation, especially at the high water mark.
- The park contains significant infrastructure associated with its former pastoral use, including Langidoon and Metford homesteads, managers' residences, woolsheds, shearing sheds, shearers' quarters, fuel storage, yards, fences, water points such as bores and dams, and roads and tracks. There is also an airstrip at Langidoon with E-W and N-S runways.
- A quarry with capacity to provide clean local material for roadworks and other construction works is located in the park.
- Several sites contain the remains of old homesteads. One is an old stone homestead in the north-west corner of the park. The other 2 former homestead sites, the Lake View homesteads, are near Eckerboon Lake and close to the Lake View woolshed. The park was also the filming location for the kangaroo-shooting scene in the 1971 Australian

movie *Wake in Fright*, starring well-known actors, including Jack Thompson, Chips Rafferty and John Meillon.

5. Issues

- The Mutawintji Board of Management, Barkandji Native Title Holders and Broken Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council are the primary groups who speak for this Country. Discussions commenced in 2021 but have not yet identified a culturally appropriate name for the park. The name 'Langidoon-Metford', which adopts the 2 property names, has been assigned to the state conservation area as an interim measure whilst further consultation occurs. Once an appropriate name has been identified, NPWS will seek endorsement for the new name from the Geographical Names Board and, pursuant to section 30A(2) of the NPW Act, publish a notice in the NSW Government Gazette to formally change the name of the park.
- Consistent with the management principles for state conservation areas identified in the NPW Act (see section 2 above), mining and exploration may take place in the park, subject to environmental and other necessary assessments and approvals. Historic petroleum exploration data indicate the presence of groundwater at depths between 400 to 800 metres that may be suitable for stock and domestic use.
- Langidoon-Metford SCA was established during severe drought when stock had been largely removed from the land. Permanent destocking of the park will assist regeneration of vegetation, however, the park's natural and cultural values will continue to be susceptible to the impact of feral animals, invasion by weeds and the vagaries of boom and bust cycles associated with arid Australia.
- Loss of species and structural diversity due to grazing and browsing by domestic stock and feral herbivores (mainly goats and rabbits) is a key threat to the endangered *Acacia loderi* shrublands. Other threats include weed invasion of the understorey, inappropriate fire regimes leading to a loss of adult trees, and climate change that may change the seasonal patterns of temperature and rainfall.
- Former property owners removed around 2,000 goats each year. Ongoing feral animal control, including for goats, foxes, pigs and wild dogs, will be required to maintain low levels of pest animals and to limit their impact on park values, including *Acacia loderi* shrublands.
- No weeds are known to be widespread in the park, although both Acacia and Treloar creeks contain significant densities of weed species such as Noogoora burr. Ongoing effort will be required to ensure the impact of weeds on park values remains low.
- The NSW Government reviewed the travelling stock reserve network in NSW (DoI 2018). The review recognised that, in the Western Division, travelling stock reserves are generally no longer used or required for moving stock and recommended that the travelling stock reserve network in the Western Division gradually be reverted to its underlying land tenure. Consistent with this approach, the former travelling stock route along the Barrier Highway has been incorporated into the park. However, there is a 100-metre wide exclusion along the Barrier Highway.
- Given the park is relatively isolated from existing NPWS offices and depots at Broken Hill, Mutawintji and Wilcannia, some existing infrastructure such as the homesteads and workers residence at Langidoon or Metford, may be adaptively re-used for staff accommodation and/or as a local office. Other outbuildings may be used to store

materials, vehicles and equipment for park management. These uses will only be permitted subject to heritage, environmental impact, and sustainability assessment.

- Some of the pastoral infrastructure may be retained to provide park visitors with a visible, tangible link to the former use of the property. There is potential for existing infrastructure to be adaptively re-used for on-park visitor accommodation, subject to heritage, environmental impact, and sustainability assessment.
- Some of the pastoral infrastructure may not be required for park management or for public visitation and may be decommissioned.
- Asbestos may be present at some of the existing buildings or ruins sites. There is also a former rubbish tip that may require clean-up and rehabilitation to prevent contamination of adjacent ground.
- The camp draft arena on the Barrier Highway near the south-eastern corner of the park had been part of Metford Station but was excluded from the park.

6. Key management directions

- Manage fire as guided by the park fire management strategy.
- Continue to provide opportunities for Aboriginal people to access Country, and to maintain, renew or develop cultural practices and associations.
- Provide opportunities for Aboriginal people to be involved in park management, including collecting and managing information about cultural sites and values and protecting and interpreting cultural sites.
- Support the non-commercial cultural use of wild resources by the Aboriginal community, such as the collection of medicinal plants and bush tucker, subject to NPWS policies and licences as appropriate.
- Facilitate surveys, monitoring and assessment of biodiversity and cultural values to improve knowledge and understanding of the park and further inform management. This may include undertaking targeted activities for protecting and monitoring threatened species and communities and threatening processes such as high frequency fire, and competition and habitat degradation by feral goats.
- Conduct feral animal control and weed control in accordance with NPWS policies and procedures to reduce and maintain feral animal densities at a level that ensures no significant ecological impact, to the greatest extent practicable. Work will be undertaken in cooperation with park neighbours and will complement the Western Local Land Services Regional Strategic Pest Animal Management Plan and Western Local Land Services Strategic Weed Management Plan.
- Implement and undertake other environmental repair and threat management programs that ensure health and safety, protect the environment or maintain existing assets at current standards (e.g. erosion control measures) as necessary and in accordance with NPWS policies and procedures.
- Visitor facilities have been provided to enable safe access and opportunities for sustainable visitor use and enjoyment, with a camping and day use area provided for at Eckerboon Lake and opened to the public Easter 2023.

- Additional facilities that may be provided for visitors include improvements to a tourist drive, walking tracks, a remote camping area on Treloar Creek and a day use area in the north-west of the park.
- Adaptively re-use existing infrastructure for park management purposes such as staff accommodation, office space or for storage of vehicles, equipment and materials, where this is consistent with any heritage assessment. Langidoon and Metford homesteads are both currently being adaptively re-used as NPWS staff accommodation. Additional or new structures may only be established if they are essential for public or staff health and safety, or otherwise with the approval of the Branch Director.
- Roads and trails that are not required for park management or public visitation may be closed. Retain existing park roads and management trails and, if required, construct any new park roads and management trails to support implementation of the reserve fire management strategy and the West Darling Bush Fire Management Committee Fire Access and Fire Trail plan. Maintain retained roads and trails to the standards identified in those documents. Temporarily close park roads and manage trails during and after wet conditions.
- Except in emergencies, additional park roads or management trails may only be constructed with the approval of the Branch Director. For example, Branch Director approval could be sought if the Aboriginal community proposed a detour to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage on, or adjacent to, an existing critical road or trail.
- Decommission water infrastructure, such as bores and dams not required for park management or public visitation.
- Review other existing infrastructure, such as woolsheds, yards and fencing, to determine if any are required for park management or are suitable for public visitation, including interpretation. Where appropriate, these buildings may be adapted for a range of purposes consistent with the NPW Act and subject to heritage, environmental impact, and sustainability assessment.
- Decommission the former pastoral infrastructure not required for park management or public visitation, provided this is consistent with its heritage value and any heritage conservation assessment. An approved conservation assessment or plan is required to disturb, remove, destroy or otherwise interfere with heritage items. An environmental impact assessment may also be required.
- Stabilise or remove derelict structures, infrastructure and facilities (e.g., former tip site) as appropriate, and in accordance with any heritage value and, where relevant, an approved heritage conservation assessment or plan.
- Non-intrusive works may be undertaken where necessary to protect cultural heritage items from further deterioration or to ensure the safety of visitors or wildlife.
- Prepare a plan of management to set out the ongoing management objectives for the park. The plan of management is a statutory document under the National Parks and Wildlife Act which will be available for public comment. NPWS will also encourage the community to contribute to the ongoing conservation of the park by promoting and raising public awareness of its special values.

For additional information or enquiries about any aspect of this park or this statement, contact the NPWS Broken Hill Office on (08) 8084 2880 or at npws.westdarling@environment.nsw.gov.au

More information

Fire Management Strategies

Managing Parks Prior to Plan of Management Policy

National Parks and Wildlife Act (No 80) 1974

NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust

NSW Travelling Stock Reserve Network – Review and Government Response

Disclaimer: This is a statement of intent to guide the management of the park prior to the development of a plan of management. Any statements made in this publication are made in good faith and do not render the Department of Planning and Environment liable for any loss or damage. Provisions in the final plan of management may vary from those identified in this document as a result of new information and community consultation. The map in this statement is intended to show the park's location and basic features only and is not suitable for use when navigating to or exploring within the park.

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