

2. Change zoning, vesting and reserve status to protection biodiversity values, where and when opportunities arise
3. Maximise the width of buffers and setbacks when re-zoning or planning for development
4. Strengthen regional and local linkages through protection, retention and revegetation
5. Design developments and apply conditions to development that achieve biodiversity conservation and management goals
6. Retain native vegetation in Public Open Space, streetscapes and transport corridors if development occurs
7. Direct recreational activities or facilities into cleared or severely degraded areas of recreational reserves and fence and protect remnant vegetation
8. Develop and implement management plans for conservation areas
9. Continue or develop partnerships with community, private landholders and grant funders to implement conservation and regeneration activities in reserves
10. Develop support and incentive programs for private land conservation.

For ACVs with good opportunities for retention of biodiversity, and to achieve the targets for retention the summary recommendations are:

1. Maximise the width of buffer, setbacks and area of vegetation retained when re-zoning or planning for development
2. Design developments and apply conditions to development that achieve biodiversity conservation and management goals
3. Retain native vegetation in Public Open Space, streetscapes and transport corridors when development occurs
4. Develop support and incentive programs for conservation on private land

5. Develop management plans and apply conservation policies where possible
6. Strengthen regional and local ecological linkages through protection, retention and revegetation

For ACVs that have constraints for protection or retention of natural areas but they contain natural areas of high conservation value that need to be considered in decision making:

1. Maximise the width of buffer, setbacks and area of vegetation retained when re-zoning or planning for development
2. Retain native vegetation in Public Open Space, streetscapes and transport corridors
3. Develop support and incentive programs for private landholder conservation

What is the process for the LBS to be approved?

- During the advertising period any persons may lodge a submission making comments for or against the recommendations in the LBS.
- Following closure of the public consultation period, submissions will be reviewed and a report with recommendations prepared for Council's consideration should it be required.

The Draft Local Biodiversity Strategy is open for public comment until the **31st January 2013**. Submissions must be made in writing and lodged with either the Chief Executive Officer of the City of Greater Geraldton or the Shire of Chapman Valley.

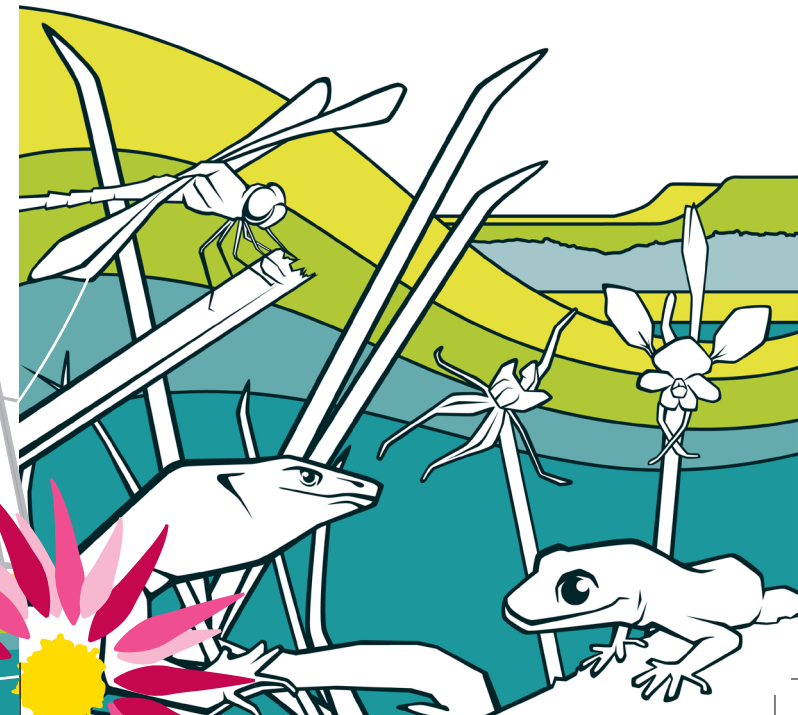
A copy of the complete LBS document and submission forms are available during office hours at the Geraldton Civic Centre, Cathedral Avenue, Geraldton or the Shire of Chapman Valley office, 3270 Chapman Valley Road, Nabawa.

Copies can also be viewed on the City's website at www.cgg.wa.gov.au or the Shire's website at www.chapmanvalley.wa.gov.au



Draft Local Biodiversity Strategy

The draft Local Biodiversity Strategy is being advertised for the purpose of public comment. This brochure provides an explanation of the strategy and seeks to answer commonly asked questions.



What is Biodiversity?

BIODIVERSITY is the variety of all life forms – the different plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms, the genes they contain, and the ecosystems of which they form a part.

BIODIVERSITY is not static, but constantly changing; it is increased by genetic change and evolutionary processes and reduced by processes such as habitat degradation, population decline and extinction. (Commonwealth of Australia 1996)

Why should local communities care about Biodiversity?

BIODIVERSITY affects our quality of life and ultimately our survival – our choice.

The City of Greater Geraldton and the Shire of Chapman Valley's policies and strategies show a commitment to environmental values, and to halting and reversing the observed trends towards collapse of local ecosystems. Recent surveys and forums have also shown community support for strong commitments to preservation of social, economic, cultural and intrinsic values and ecosystem services provided by natural areas.

Biodiversity status in Geraldton and its surrounds

Geraldton and its surrounds is part of one of only 34 global biodiversity hotspots, being both very high biodiversity value, yet also under significant threat.

Only 6,041 ha of vegetation remains in the LBS study area, representing only 18% of pre-European extent of native vegetation, and well under the 30% threshold recognised as a level at which species loss accelerate exponentially at an ecosystem level.

More than a third of remaining vegetation is on land identified for future development and an additional 20% is on land where potential future development could result in further vegetation clearing. Less than 1.8% of the pre-European extent of vegetation in the study area has some level of protection, this is well below the national target of at least 10%.

Despite this, the study area supports 15 plant communities, threatened and priority flora and provide home to a range of native animals.

What is the Draft LBS?

A LBS provides a process for assessing the ecological significance of local natural areas, it determines their protection status and provides a process for retaining and conserving these areas by assessing known constraints and opportunities for protection.

A key objective of the LBS is to protect the remaining natural assets as it is more financially prudent than subsequent restoration or regeneration of degraded lands (estimated to cost \$250,000 per hectare). The proposed actions will likely yield measurable and popular social, economic and environmental benefits.

Geographically, the LBS covers 32,410 ha including the coastal portion of the City of Greater Geraldton, the Shire of Chapman Valley and small portion of the Shire of Northampton. The area is approximately bounded by Coronation Beach Rd to the north, Devlin Pool Rd to the south and Moresby Range to the east.

The LBS uses detailed spatial and policy analysis to suggest a prioritised list natural areas for conservation action and a comprehensive set of recommendations for mechanisms to achieve the vision for biodiversity conservation in the study area.

What will the LBS do?

The LBS objective is set out in five Goals:

Goal 1: Retention – Retain natural areas

Given current constraints to natural area retention, this goal translates into 10% of the original extent of native vegetation in the study area, as a minimum:

- Retention of at least 3,334 ha of the remaining 6,041 ha of natural areas remaining; and
- Requirement to offset and revegetate as compensation where losses are unavoidable.

Goal 2: Protection – Protect natural areas and specific biodiversity features. This goal translates into:

- Protection of at least 5% of the original extent of natural areas;
- Protection of an additional 1058 ha of areas of conservation value; and
- Protection of Threatened Ecological Communities, Declared Rare Flora, Priority flora and fauna, and riparian and coastal vegetation.

Goal 3: Management – Manage protected natural areas for conservation. This goal translates into:

- Active management of 100% of Local Government natural areas of conservation value;
- Active management of 50% of all other retained natural areas (1,659 ha), through provision of incentives for private land conservation and restoration; and
- Valuation of biodiversity assets and implementation of asset management plans.

Goal 4: Engagement – Increased community contributions to biodiversity conservation. This goal translates into:

- Observable change in public and institutional language, values and priorities;
- Measured decrease in behaviours identified as threats;
- Measured increase in the time, money or resources contributed to biodiversity conservation;
- Observable increase in the biodiversity 'proofing' of policies; and
- Increase in evidence that the community are 'acting as stewards for the environment'.

Goal 5: Regeneration - Ensure the rate of regeneration exceeds the rate of degradation. This goal translates into:

- Restoration of more than 1,500 ha of natural areas in the City;
- Measurable improvement in connectivity between natural areas and along ecological linkages; and
- Use of local offsets to over-compensate any future clearing of native vegetation.

Where are the priority areas for conservation action?

How to best achieve LBS goals was to identify Areas of Conservation Value (ACVs) across the study area. ACVs are natural areas where consideration of native vegetation retention and protection should be a priority consideration in decision-making.

What does this mean for the local community?

For ACVs with good opportunities for protection of biodiversity, and to achieve the targets for protection the summary recommendations are:

1. Review and implement existing management plans and policies where they apply