



Regulatory priorities

Biodiversity, Conservation and Science Compliance Program

Department of Climate Change,
Energy, the Environment and Water



Acknowledgement of Country

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

This resource may contain images or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.

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Artist and designer Nikita Ridgeway from Aboriginal design agency Boss Lady Creative Designs created the People and Community symbol.

Cover photo: Tree clearing in the grazing lands of the North West region of New South Wales. Simone Cottrell/DCCEEW

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About our regulatory priorities

Biodiversity, Conservation and Science (BCS) is part of the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water. The Compliance Program within BCS has several key objectives:

- **improved compliance.** The Program aims to achieve improved compliance with environment and Aboriginal cultural heritage protection laws. This involves ensuring that individuals and organisations adhere to regulations related to biodiversity conservation and Aboriginal cultural heritage preservation.
- **prevention and protection.** The Program focuses on preventing unlawful vegetation clearing, and minimising harm, damage and cumulative impacts to biodiversity at a bioregional scale. By enforcing regulations, the Program contributes to the protection of native species, habitats, ecological communities, and Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- **community-wide deterrence.** Through education, engagement and enforcement, the Program works to remediate harm to the environment and provide community-wide deterrence against non-compliance. By upholding government legislation, the Program aims for better environmental and heritage outcomes across New South Wales.

The Compliance Program operates within a robust framework, including regulatory principles, compliance monitoring, community reports, remote surveillance, audits and investigations. The Program's goal is to safeguard the natural environment and cultural heritage for the benefit of the state.

Publishing our regulatory priorities enhances transparency, guides stakeholders and the community, optimises resource allocation, manages risks, and promotes public engagement.

This document outlines our current priorities and provides an overview of our approach to setting them.

Regulatory priorities strategy and approach

Regulatory priorities can enhance compliance by showing how and where regulatory efforts are focused and by putting targeted sectors of the regulated community on notice to comply with the law. The BCS Compliance Program uses regulatory priorities to foster compliance and address significant land management challenges. Our priorities may evolve to address new issues and enhance environmental outcomes.

Our approach to developing regulatory priorities is based on our compliance data and internal stakeholder consultation. By using multiple quantitative and qualitative data sources we have identified current and emerging risks, areas of non-compliance and environmental harm, and opportunities to enhance regulatory, environmental and heritage outcomes. We have used these data-informed insights to develop our regulatory priorities.

The goal of our priorities is to address current compliance challenges, target areas of non-compliance and enhance environmental outcomes.

Our regulatory priorities

The following priorities will play a significant role in the Compliance Program's activities as we aim to solve problems that have the greatest impact on compliance and land management. The areas we are focusing on to make that happen are:

- **unlawful land management activities that cause a significant loss of native vegetation or biodiversity.** BCS is dedicated to preventing significant loss of native vegetation and biodiversity by actively monitoring, investigating and enforcing actions against illegal land management practices. We will continue to focus on high-priority cases and target areas where our data shows high rates of potentially unlawful land clearing.
- **education of our regulated community.** BCS is committed to educating the community and stakeholders about their obligations under the law. We will focus our outreach efforts on groups, industries and areas where our data shows high rates of non-compliance or potential to cause harm to heritage and the environment. We will strive to increase our presence at field days, community and industry forums, and other events.
- **remediation and protection of areas where significant harm has occurred.** We use available tools (such as remediation orders) to remediate and protect areas that have been harmed by unlawful activities. We will work to improve and promote our remediation approach, and we will conduct audits to quantify our success. We will also educate the community and stakeholders about our remediation efforts.