Release

ATTACHMENT A:

This document has been prepared to assist the RTI applicant in understanding the summary of the justification comments provided in the attached spreadsheet for each acquisition. The reason for each property purchase will vary depending on which program the property was acquired under. Below is a brief summary of each program identified in the attached spreadsheet.

Previous and current acquisition program summaries

General Acquisition criteria

The criteria below are general acquisition principles that are applied to most non-specific protected area acquisitions:

- **Establishment and management capacity**
  - Practicality and urgency of management
  - Potential management issues
- **Tourism and Recreational values**
  - Socioeconomic benefits
  - Recreational potential
- **Environmental and Landscape Values**
  - Contribution to comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) reserve system.
  - Resilience to climate change (connectivity, threat mitigation, refugia)
  - Conservation of ecosystem services
  - Contribution to adequacy at landscape or Protected Area level
  - Conservation of priority ecosystems and species
  - Representation of geological features, freshwater systems or wetlands
  - Cultural values
  - Proximity to other reserves
  - Level of threat

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Toward Q2 - Previous Governments election commitment

The Green ambition of *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland* included a target to protect 50 per cent more land for nature conservation and public recreation. The target has two components: land for nature conservation, which encompasses all national parks; and land for public recreation, which typically includes local parks, public gardens and playgrounds.

A State-wide baseline of 7.6 million hectares was established for national parks in June 2008 and, at that time, the target required an increase of 442,000 hectares per annum to achieve the total of 12.9 million hectares by 2020.

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Delbessie Lease Renewal Process

The Delbessie Agreement (or State Rural Leasehold Land Strategy) was a framework for the sustainable management of state rural leasehold land. Developed and implemented by Queensland's former Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM), the Agreement represented a partnership between the Queensland Government, AgForce, and the Australian Rainforest Conservation Society.

The Delbessie Agreement states that 'where the government identifies land for a national park and wishes to acquire it prior to expiration, it will negotiate the purchase of all or part of the lease with the leaseholder and will pay the market value of the land and lawful improvements'.

As leases came up for renewal they were assessed against the **general acquisition criteria** listed above.

National Reserve System (NRS) – Australian Government funding initiative

This program was run by the Australian government and provides funding support to acquire properties for inclusion into the protected area estate. This program requires properties to, primarily, meet the CAR principles. Please refer to Attachments B and C for further information on this program.

Daintree Buy-back Program

The Daintree buy-back project was established in 2004 and aimed to purchase land of high conservation values in the Daintree and/or compensate landowners for lost development interests due to the introduction of Douglas Shire Council's Alternative Planning Strategy.

Cape York Tenure Resolution Process

The Queensland Government supports an active program of land acquisition for protected area purposes on Cape York Peninsula (CYP) with the dual objectives of securing areas of high conservation value within the national park estate and allocating areas of social and economic potential as Aboriginal land.

There have been a number of land use studies and natural and cultural resource assessment programs undertaken across CYP over many years that have identified areas of high conservation significance. An acquisition target list was established based on these assessments and the previous Government allocated funds to support voluntary purchases of properties from the endorsed list. The program has resulted in the acquisition of 13 properties since 2005 totalling in excess of 1,000,000 hectares that are now subject to the CYP State land tenure resolution process which will result in half the area going to national park (CYPAL) and half going to Aboriginal freehold.

Offsets

The purpose of environmental offsets is to counterbalance the unavoidable impacts of development on the Queensland landscape. There were four main (and where appropriate interlinked) processes for environmental offsets in Queensland:

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- Vegetation Management Offsets (under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*)
- Koala Habitat Offsets (under the Offsets for Net Gain of Koala Habitat in South East Queensland policy)
- Biodiversity Offsets (under Queensland's Biodiversity Offsets Policy)
- Offsets under the Commonwealth's *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act)

Of these, biodiversity offsets, koala habitat offsets and offsets under the EPBC Act can result in a protected area outcome.

South East Queensland koala offsets can become protected area as the policy dictates the site must be protected from future development impacts on habitat by permanently securing the site for conservation purposes. This could include (but is not limited to) a protected area outcome such as national park, conservation park or another tenure type under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. Where conservation park or national park is the desired outcome, the area is gifted to the State (if deemed acceptable) for inclusion in the protected area system.

One avenue for acquisition of protected areas under the previous government's Biodiversity Offsets Policy was for a payment to be made to the State. This payment would be made as a part or full 'cash-out' option for a biodiversity offset. This money was then allocated to purchase land to be added to the protected area estate.

A protected area outcome is in some instances essential where EPBC listed communities or species are impacted. This is because the Commonwealth generally requires offsets to be protected in perpetuity. This includes long-term protection from mining. In Queensland only national park or conservation park tenures can achieve this.

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Vegetation Exit Assistance Scheme

The introduction of the Vegetation Management Act 1999 in Queensland, which prevented broad-scale clearing of remnant vegetation on farmland, meant that adjustments had to be made by some farmers to farming practices. The Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority (QRAA) attempted to compensate for these impacts through either:

- enterprise assistance – to build up or develop existing farming operations, or
- exit assistance – to adjust out of primary production or relocate the enterprise.

Farmers were eligible for the Enterprise Assistance Scheme if:

- the farm acquired or obtained the use of the affected land prior to 22 May 2003,
- broadscale clearing of vegetation in the affected area would be necessary for long-term viability of the farm,
- the farm had the capacity to become financially independent of the assistance under the scheme within a reasonable period and can achieve long-term viability, and
- the person operating the farming business is responsible for contributing the majority of the person's labour to the farming business and generates the majority of the person's income from it.

Koala Habitat Protection and Rehabilitation Plan (Previous government)

Under the previous government the then Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) was responsible for rolling out the Koala Habitat Protection and Rehabilitation Plan. The aim of this program was to increase the amount of koala habitat in south east Queensland. To be eligible for consideration, properties outside the urban footprint must be mapped as having greater than two hectares of high or medium value land for rehabilitation as koala habitat. Expression of interest (EOI) for the program was invited from landholders in seven eastern local government areas of south-east Queensland where koala populations are known to be under the greatest pressure. No closing date was specified for landholders to submit an EOI. An assessment panel was convened to evaluate the eligible EOI applications.

Koala Habitat Program – General Information (Current government)

The Koala Habitat Program is part of a range of actions being taken by the Queensland Government to address the declining koala population in Queensland.

Up to $22.5 million is being invested between 2012 and 2015 to strategically acquire land in Queensland to:

- protect existing and create new koala habitat
- implement a landscape approach to habitat conservation by targeting climate resilient habitat that will increase connectivity of Queensland's existing and future koala habitat
- expand and consolidate Queensland's existing protected area estate by targeting neighbouring properties containing suitable koala habitat
- provide additional recreational and ecotourism opportunities for the community wherever possible.

Allocated funding will be distributed over the life of the project.

Round 1 of the program

The first round of the program is now complete. Round one of the program sought Expressions of Interest (EOI) from the public to identify suitable properties within South East Queensland. EOIs for round one closed on 31 October 2012. This phase of the program targeted properties with cleared land suitable for rehabilitation. 161 applications were received during this round, each undergoing a thorough assessment against the program's key criteria. The eligibility criteria for round one was:

- must be located within one of the 10 eligible local government areas:
  - Sunshine Coast Regional Council
  - Moreton Bay Regional Council
  - Brisbane City Council
  - Redland City Council
  - Logan City Council
  - Gold Coast City Council
  - Lockyer Valley Regional Council
  - Scenic Rim Regional Council
  - Ipswich City Council
  - Somerset Regional Council
- must located outside the Urban Footprint area according to the South East Queensland Regional Plan

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- must contains 10 or more hectares of land suitable for rehabilitation according to the South East Queensland Koala Protection Area Koala Habitat Values (http://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/wildlife/koalas/mapping/maprequestform.php)

A competitive assessment process was undertaken to ensure cost-effective properties with the highest koala benefit were selected for purchase. The assessment process considered factors such as:

- the contribution to connectivity or consolidation of koala habitat
- whether existing protected bushland is nearby
- the koala rehabilitation value
- the cost of rehabilitating the land
- ongoing land management
- potential community recreational opportunities.

An expert panel was employed to rank all eligible properties based on key criteria relating to connectivity, security of adjacent koala habitat, threats and management considerations.

The most highly-ranked properties were selected and progressed to price negotiations. The first round of the program resulted in the successful purchase of 'Crohamhurst', a 125.52 hectare property located in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland, costing $2.42 million. This property contains significant koala values with around 75 hectares to be rehabilitated back to koala bushland over the coming 2 – 3 years.

Koala Habitat Program – Round 2

Property investigations for the second round of the program are now underway. The focus of the program has shifted towards a landscape approach to conservation with the aim of building resilience in the landscape for koalas. Properties for purchase are targeted based on their placement in the landscape, their proximity to protected areas and the presence of existing or future quality koala habitat. The key consideration of Round 2 of the program is purchasing and securing properties with existing bushland habitat (rather than cleared properties acquired for rehabilitation) with high connectivity to protected areas and improving existing park management boundaries. The department is currently investigating a number of properties for purchase throughout Central and South East Queensland.

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Property Details								
	Property Name	**Lot/Plan No.**	**Address**	**Area (ha)**	**Acquisition Program (Refer to attachment A for a summary of each acquisitions program)**	**Price Paid**	**Settlement Date**	**Summary of Justification comments (refer to Attachment A and other provided information for a better understanding of program critieria.**
1	Peakvale	13 CP856497, 14 CP856497	Jibbinbar Rd, Springdale Qld 4380	317	Delbessie Agreement	$30,000	09-Mar-12	Identified through Delbessie lease renewal process, met CAR principles and general acquisition criteria and contributes towards Q2 2020 greenspace target.
2	Gilbert River	4638 PH2204	Unnamed Rd Gilberton Qld 4871	37,037	Delbessie / National Reserve System	$1,045,000	19-Jul-11	Identified through Delbessie lease renewal process, met CAR principles and general acquisition criteria and contributes towards Q2 2020 greenspace target.
3	Badgery	3147 PH1511	Kooroongarra-Andersons Rd, Bybera Qld 4387	3,200	Delbessie / National Reserve System	$235,000	05-Aug-11	Identified through Delbessie lease renewal process, met CAR principles and general acquisition criteria and contributes towards Q2 2020 greenspace target.
4	Retreat Valley	4555 PH2083	No street address available	6,475	Delbessie / National Reserve System	$144,000	27-Jun-11	Identified through Delbessie lease renewal process, met CAR principles and general acquisition criteria and contributes towards Q2 2020 greenspace target.
5	Canyon	4863 PH1501	No street address available	49,300	Delbessie / National Reserve System	$1,220,000	18-Nov-11	Identified through Delbessie lease renewal process, met CAR principles and general acquisition criteria and contributes towards Q2 2020 greenspace target.
6	Eight Mile	315 VR840983	Unnamed Road, Gilberton Qld 4871	12,400	Delbessie / National Reserve System	$600,000	29-Mar-2012	Identified through Delbessie lease renewal process, met CAR principles and general acquisition criteria and contributes towards Q2 2020 greenspace target.
7	Littleton	3 CP859354	No street address available	79,600	Delbessie / National Reserve System	$6,200,000	17-Feb-2012	Identified through Delbessie lease renewal process, met CAR principles and general acquisition criteria and contributes towards Q2 2020 greenspace target.
8	12 Mile	43 MH295, 44 MH295, 46 MH29	Wondul Road, Bybera Qld 4387	7,939	General Acquisition/National Reserve System Program	$550,000	04-Apr-12	Met CAR & general acquisition criteria
9	Belmah	6 DSN808887	277 Lochlees Road, Emerald Qld 4720	2,046	General Acquisition/National Reserve System Program	$2,025,000	30-Mar-11	Met CAR & general acquisition criteria
10	Bedourie	17 SP228375	No street address available	20,784	General Acquisition/National Reserve System Program	$1,143,120	13-May-11	Met CAR & general acquisition criteria
11	Rungulla	4957 PH881	Woolgar Road, Woolgar Qld 4871	82,879	General Acquisition/National Reserve System Program	$2,156,000	19-Jul-11	Met CAR & general acquisition criteria

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12	Cromarty/Wongaloo	1 CPEP829, 2 SP109517, 5 RP702116, 1 RP702117, 1 RP702122, 2 RP 711417, 1 RP742440, 1 RP743694, 2 RP743694, 3 RP743694, 3 CPE12453, 550 CPE12497, 563 CPE12497, 5 CPEP148, 16 CPEP210, 1 CPEP738, 2 CPEP738, 2 CPEP627, 6 CPE124359, 73 CPEP1850, 62 CPEP1914, 1 CPRL5760, 1 CPRL4170	34903 Bruce Hway, Cromarty Qld 4809	1665.4294	General Acquisition/National Reserve System Program	$2,509,332	20-Jul-10	Met CAR & general acquisition criteria
13	Redcliffevale	1 CP866146	Redcliffe Road, Turrawulla Qld 4742	30,980	General Acquisition/National Reserve System Program	$3,500,000	09-Aug-10	Met CAR & general acquisition criteria
14		472 RP742052	Black Bean Road, Cow Bay Qld 4873	3.7659	Daintree Buyback	$135,000	09-Sep-11	Within the Daintree Buyback area
15		315 RP739001	Pandanas Road, Cow Bay Qld 4873	0.9999	Daintree Buyback	$63,000	21-Jun-11	Within the Daintree Buyback area
16		81 RP738146	Rosewood Road, Cow bay Qld 4873	1.0209	Daintree Buyback	$81,000	09-Jun-11	Within the Daintree Buyback area
17		469 RP742051	Blck Bean Road, Cow Bay Qld 4873	1.0112	Daintree Buyback	$72,000	01-Jun-11	Within the Daintree Buyback area
18		288 RP 738996	Penda Cl, Cow Bay Qld 4873	1.2	Daintree Buyback	$125,000	09-Feb-11	Within the Daintree Buyback area
19		54 RP739766	54 Cape Tribulation Road, Diwan Qld 4873	1	Daintree Buyback	$33,000	20-Oct-11	Within the Daintree Buyback area
20		63 RP738161	Spurwood Road, Cow Bay Qld 4873	1	Daintree Buyback	$84,500	23-Dec-10	Within the Daintree Buyback area
21		51 RP738160	Spurwood Road, Cow Bay Qld 4873	1.005	Daintree Buyback	$37,500	16-Mar-12	Within the Daintree Buyback area
22		120 RP738161	Spurwood Road, Cow Bay Qld 4873	1.242	Daintree Buyback	$37,500	16-Mar-12	Within the Daintree Buyback area
23	Lot 150 Golden fleece Rd	150 LX655	Unnamed off Golden Fleece Rd, Golden Fleece Qld 4621	314	Offsets	$265,000	16-Jun-11	Improved the existing surrounding national park boundary and was local to the Offset location
24	Lot 1508, Thirty-Eight Rd., Doongul	1508 L37932	Thirty-eight Road, Doongul Qld 4620	259	Offsets	$210,000	04-Oct-10	Improved the existing surrounding national park boundary and was local to the Offset location
25	Lot 22 Golden fleece Rd	22 CK720	Golden Fleece Road, Lakeside Qld 4621	435	Offsets	$440,000	16-Jun-11	Improved the existing surrounding national park boundary and was local to the Offset location
26	Dixie/Wulpan	1 WR4, 14 KG5	47 Hope Street, Dixie Qld 4871	402,000	Cape York	$9,000,000	7-Mar-12	Assessed under the Cape York Peninsula Tenure Resolution's acquisition program
27	Killarney	2570 PH2050	No street address available	101,009	Cape York	$2,240,000	13 Feb 2012	Assessed under the Cape York Peninsula Tenure Resolution's acquisition program
28	Laceys Creek	3 SP174045	3 'Mayvale" Wirth Road, Laceys Creek Qld 4521	39.92	SEQ Koala Habitat Protection and Rehabilitation Plan	$850,000	17-Jun-11	Property met eligibility critieria - located in a high priority area for acquisitions (Pine Rivers), with 9.41 hectares of medium value for rehabilitation, 10.38 hectares of low value for rehabilitation; and 20.14 hectares of medium value bushland. Property has good connectivity to protected area estate.
29	610 West Mt. Cotton Rd	2 RP30584	610 West Mount Cotton Road, Mount Cotton Qld 4165	27.519	SEQ Koala Habitat Protection and Rehabilitation Plan	$2,400,000	24-Jun-11	Identified through EOI process, met eligiblity criteria - contained 13.6 hectares of high and medium value land for revegetation as koala habitat

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30	675 Ford Rd. Priestdale	28 RP173044	675 'Daisy Hill Conservation Park' Ford Road, Priestdale Qld 4127	127.075	SEQ Koala Habitat Protection and Rehabilitation Plan	$5,500,000	23-Aug-10	Property identified by Logan City Council. Located adjacent to Daisy Hill Conservation Park. Met eligibility criteria - contained 81 hectares of high and medium value land for revegetation as koala habitat.
31	Lot 9 - Peachester	9 SP235627	Mt Beerwah Road, Peachester Qld 4519	23.58	SEQ Koala Habitat Protection and Rehabilitation Plan	$750,000	30-Jun-11	While these two properties of land are mapped as low value suitable for rehabilitation, the restoration of vegetation will resuit in area meeting the criteria for medium value bushland. Properties directly adjoin protected area estate, provides for good connectivity to other areas of higher value habitat, and numerous koala sightings in the vicinity of properties
32	Lot 11 - Peachester	11 SP235627	Mawhinney Road, Peachester Qld 4519	94.91	SEQ Koala Habitat Protection and Rehabilitation Plan	$1,100,000	30-Jun-11	
33	267 Avalon Road	2 RP175224	267- 269 Avalon Road, Sheldon Qld 4157	45.8	SEQ Koala Habitat Protection and Rehabilitation Plan	$2,454,545	21-Oct-11	Identified through EOI process, met eligiblity criteria - contained 29 hectares of high and medium value land for revegetation as koala habitat
34	55 Mount View Rd	2 SL4013	1-75 View Road, Mount Cotton Qld 4165	13.24	SEQ Koala Habitat Protection and Rehabilitation Plan	$1,270,000	23-Jun-11	Identified through EOI process, met eligiblity criteria - contained 4.3 hectares of medium value land for revegetation as koala habitat
35	Crohamhurst	2 RP18180, 2 SP167745, 1 SP16	11 Wiild road, Crohamhurst Qld 4159	125.5221	Koala Habitat Program - Round 1	$2,420,000	01-Oct-13	Met program criteria and was ranked as one of the top 5 properties from 161 EOI applications, as assessed by an expert panel.
36	1471 Black Duck Ck Rd)	52 CC2714, 13 CH312519, 14 C	1471 Black Duck Creek Road, Black Duck Creek Qld 4343	2119.51	Koala Habitat Program - Round 2	$1,500,000	22-May-14	Identified through the EOI process of Round 1 of the program. Shortlisted during round 1 as suitable for rehabilitation however onground investigations revealed mapping was incorrect with not enough area to rehabilitate to meet program criteria. With the shift in critieria for round 2 of the program to focus on remnant vegetation suitable for koalas and connectivity to existing protected areas, this property met the critieria for Round 2 of the program.
37	1730 Black Duck Ck Rd)	15 CH31375	1730 Black Duck Creek Road, Black Duck creek Qld 4343	257.582	Koala Habitat Program - Round 2	$450,000	26-Jun-14	
38	Rosevale	3 PR20, 4 PR20, 5 P534, 5 PR13	1155 Rosevale Road, Murweh Qld 4470	53460.2	Vegetation Exit Assistance	$5,629,000	24-Dec-10	Qualified under the Veg Exit Assistance Scheme
39	Mount Poverty	26 CWL10	Papworth Road, Helens Hill Qld 4850	870	externally funded - Offset	$441,000	27-Aug-10	Purchased with money from an external funding party primarily as critical habitat for the endangered mahogany glider
40	Reynolds Ck	178 CC886	178 Croftby Road, Moogerah Qld 4309	103.7	improvement on existing national park management boundary	$105,000.00	19-Nov-12	Improved the existing surrounding national park boundary
41	Werewilka	Lots 1 & 3 NL24, Lot 1 NL8, Lot 4	Unknown Road, Dynevor Qld 4492	53377.695	General Acquisition	$1,850,000	19-Dec-13	Met CAR & general acquisition criteria
42	Boorara	1257 PH1992	No street address available	##########	General Acquisition	$2,550,000	18-Oct-13	Met CAR & general acquisition criteria
43	Coolamon	1 RP108611, 2 RP106198, 4 RP	771-813 Currumbin Creek Road, Currumbin Valley Qld 4223	17.8640	General Acquisition	$500,000	12-Dec-13	General acquisition criteria

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Decision-maker/process
Recommended by the Protected Area Selection Panel, approved by the Executive Management Group Q2 Sub-committee of the Department.
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Delegate of the Minister for Environment
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Delegate of the Minister for Environment
Delegate of the Minister for Environment
Director, Cape York Tenure Resolution Group
Director, Cape York Tenure Resolution Group
Approved for purchase by the Assistant Director-General on 9/06/11
Approved for purchase by the Minister on 12/12/10

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Approved for purchase by the Minister on 14/04/10
Approved for purchase by the Minister on 26/03/11
Approved for purchase by the Director-General on 30/05/11
Approved for purchase by the Assistant Director-General on 4/06/11
Approved for purchase by the Minister on 27/05/13
Approved for purchase by the Minister on 25/02/14
Qld Rural Adjustment Authority
Delegate of the Minister for Environment
Approved for purchase by the Minister on 15/05/12
Approved for purchase by the Minister on 15/07/13
Approved for purchase by the Minister on 15/07/13
Approved for purchase by the Minister on 20/05/13

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NATIONAL RESERVE SYSTEM

Priorities for expansion of the National Reserve System

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The National Reserve System (NRS) is Australia's system of terrestrial protected areas. The overriding priority for expanding the National Reserve System (NRS) is to increase the protection of bioregions with less then 10 per cent represented in the NRS. Within these bioregions the priority is to include unrepresented regional ecosystems, under-represented regional ecosystems and habitat for nationally threatened ecological communities and species.

A table setting out various biodiversity indicators has been developed to help guide the identification of possible sites for inclusion in the NRS. For example, an ecosystem approach is considered to be more efficient than a species based approach, while larger and more diverse sites are considered more viable than small sites. Further explanation of the importance of these indicators is provided in the second table.

BIODIVERSITY VALUE	HIGHER PRIORITY			LOWER PRIORITY
Ecosystem representation	IBRA Region	IBRA Subregion	Regional Ecosystem	Local ecosystem
Current level of protection	0%			>10%
Ecosystem diversity	More than one bioregion	More than one subregion	More than one regional ecosystem	One regional ecosystem
Representation of regional ecosystems	Un-represented in IBRA Region	Un-represented in IBRA Subregion	Un-represented regionally (catchment)	Un-represented locally (sub-catchment)
Regional ecosystems	Restricted			Widespread
Species phylogenetic distinctiveness	Order	Family	Genus	Species
Endemism	IBRA Subregion	IBRA region	Eco-region	Continental
Species diversity	High			Low
Threatened ecological communities scale	National	State	Regional	Local
Threatened ecological communities status	Critically Endangered	Endangered	Vulnerable	Of Concern/ near threatened
Threatened species scale	National	State	Regional	Local
Threatened species status	Critically Endangered	Endangered	Vulnerable	Of Concern/ near threatened
Size	Large			Small
Ecological connectivity	Surrounded by relatively intact ecosystems	Well connected remnants	Poorly connected remnants	Surrounded by cleared and developed land
Significant site	International	National	Regional	Local
Environmental gradient	Steep			Low
Condition	Proportion largely intact			Remnant / ecologically dysfunctional
Threat	High			Low
Manageability of threats	Easily managed			Un-manageable
Environmental benefit	Many / large benefits			Few / small benefits

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BIODIVERSITY VALUE	EXPLANATION
Ecosystem representation	It is a higher priority to increase representation of large scale ecosystems over increasing the representation of local ecosystems as they potentially secure more different elements of the Australian landscape.
Current level of protection	The less there is currently protected the higher the priority to protect the biodiversity values. The level of protection can be measured at a national scale, IBRA region scale and IBRA subregion scale. This information is presented in CAPAD. Within the States and Territories there may be information available on the level of protection of regional ecosystems.
Ecosystem diversity	The greater the ecosystems diversity (number of ecosystems) at the larger scale (IBRA) then the better chance there is of protecting the range of Australia's biodiversity values. Recent work suggests that the greater the diversity of environments in a protected area the better the chance species and ecosystems have to adapt to climate change.
Representation of regional ecosystems	To maximise the range of regional ecosystems protected in the NRS, those unprotected in an IBRA region are a higher priority than those already protected in a subregion.
Regional ecosystems	Restricted regional ecosystems that have a small range and/ or small total area are a higher priority for inclusion in the NRS because they are at greater risk of loss and may contain unique combinations of environmental values.
Species phylogenetic distinctiveness	Phylogenetic distinctiveness refers to the number and closeness of nearest relatives and the likelihood of shared genetic material. It reflects how far down the evolutionary tree the species branched off. For example a platypus is much more genetically distinctive to other mammals than eastern and western grey kangaroos because the evolutionary paths of monotremes and marsupials branched earlier than the branch between eastern and western grey kangaroos.
Endemism	Endemism is a higher priority the more restricted the range of the species. A fish species restricted to one spring is a higher priority than a fish species that occurs throughout the Murray Darling Basin.
Species diversity	Places with high species diversity (number of species) are a higher priority because they present an opportunity to conserve more genetic material (species).
Threatened ecological communities scale	The broader the scale at which an ecosystem is threatened the higher its priority for protection because threat at a national scale implies there are few if any areas where the ecological community is not threatened. A regional threat rating may mean the ecological community is only threatened in the region and that there are other regions where it is not threatened. This may not be the case for ecosystems with restricted distribution as their regional and national threat status may be the same.
Threatened ecological communities status	Threat status indicates the risk of loss for the ecological community therefore the higher the risk of loss the more imperative there is for the protection of the ecological community.
Threatened species scale	The broader the scale at which a species is threatened the higher its priority for protection because threat at a national scale implies there are few if any areas where the species is not threatened. A regional threat rating may mean the species is only threatened in the region and that there are other regions where it is not threatened. This may not be the case for species with restricted distribution as their regional and national threat status may be the same.
Threatened species status	Threat status indicates the risk of loss for the species therefore the higher the risk of loss the more imperative there is for the protection of the species.

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BIODIVERSITY VALUE	EXPLANATION
Size	Generally, the larger the protected area is the better the chance it's biodiversity values can survive and adapt to changes and recover from the impact of threats like fire, extreme weather, etc. Larger sites are predicted to be more resilient to threats and changes and consequently, are a higher priority than smaller sites.
Ecological connectivity	Better ecological connectivity allows ecosystems, species and communities to function more naturally. It should improve their capacity to adapt to change and recover from the impact of threats. More naturally functioning systems with greater capacity to deal with threats and change are a higher priority for inclusion in the NRS.
Significant site	Significant sites are places in the landscape important for the survival and evolution of Australia's biodiversity. These are places that act as refugia during droughts, fire or climate change, places of species evolution, important feeding and breeding sites especially for migratory or nomadic species or places of natural heritage significance. There are internationally significant sites listed through World Heritage or Ramsar through to locally significant sites listed in regional heritage registers. The more broadly significant sites are a higher priority that locally significant sites.
Environmental gradient	Changes in environmental values like rainfall, altitude, aspect and temperature present an opportunity for a wider range of species and ecosystems to survive. If these changes occur over short distances then there is a better chance for biodiversity to adapt to climate change. Steep environmental gradients are a high priority for the NRS because they are diverse with potential to adapt to climate change better than places with low environmental gradients.
Condition	Intact ecosystems are a higher priority than ecosystems in poor condition because they cost less to manage, function more naturally and are better able to cope with threats and changing climate. Ecosystems in poor condition cost more to manage are more costly to restore and protect less biodiversity than an intact (good condition) ecosystem.
Threat	To a certain degree, a site with a high level of threat is a higher priority because it is assumed the active management can reduce the threats and prevent further loss of biodiversity values and there is a greater chance of the loss of an opportunity to protect biodiversity values, Places with a low level of threats will continue to retain most of their biodiversity values and will be available for inclusion in the NRS at a later date with minimal loss of value.
Manageability of threats	The easier threats are able to be managed and minimised the higher the priority for inclusion in the NRS as the cost of management will be lower and the impact of management actions will be greater. Some sites may have threats that are unmanageable such as regional ground water rise or open cut mining which can destroy biodiversity values and their impact is largely unavoidable. These places are a low priority for inclusion in the NRS.
Environmental benefit	Places that deliver a high environmental benefit are a higher priority than places with a low environmental benefit. This is an indication of value to the community of environmental services like water, carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, nature based recreation and tourism.

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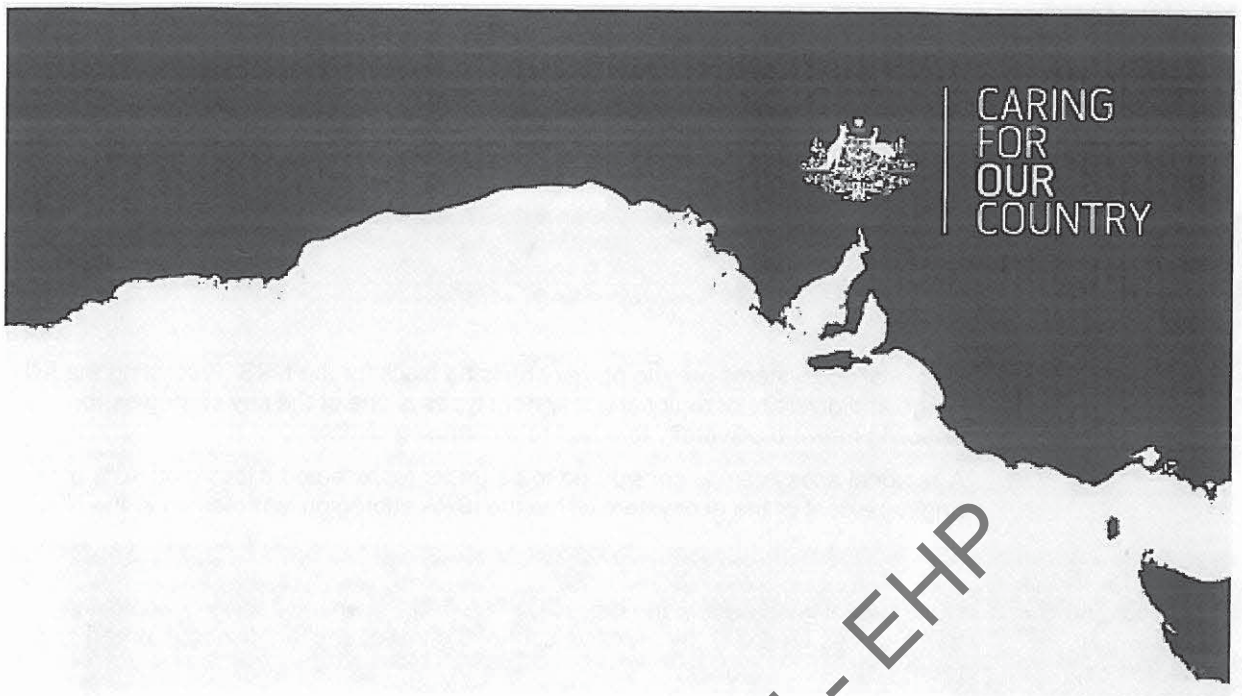
Release



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NATIONAL RESERVE SYSTEM

Minimum requirements for contributing to the comprehensiveness, adequacy and representativeness of the National Reserve System through Caring for our Country funding

As part of the Standards for inclusion in the NRS a proposed protected area must contribute to a comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) National Reserve System (NRS). The tool below can be used as a guide to determine if a proposed site contributes to CAR sufficient to be included in the NRS.

For the purposes of Caring for our Country CAR is explained below:

Comprehensiveness is the protection of the full range of regional ecosystems within an IBRA region in the NRS.

Adequacy is the protection of at least the minimum area of ecologically functional ecosystems needed to provide the ecological viability and integrity of populations, species and ecological communities at an IBRA subregional scale in the NRS.

Representativeness is the protection of the variability of regional ecosystems in a bioregion by protecting the full range of regional ecosystems within an IBRA subregion in the NRS.

CAR elements

A number of key elements have been identified that contribute to CAR. For a site to be added to the NRS it needs to contribute to at least one the elements listed below:

CAR ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
1. **Under represented regional ecosystem**	Regional ecosystems are the primary building block for the NRS. Protecting the full range and diversity of regional ecosystem types is one of the key strategies for enabling native biodiversity to adapt to a changing climate. A regional ecosystem is considered to be under represented if less than 10% of the original extent of the ecosystem within the IBRA subregion is protected in the NRS.
2. **Core habitat for threatened species or ecological community**	Core habitat is an area in the landscape listed* threatened species or ecological communities are likely to naturally occur and survive (shelter, disperse, breed and feed).
3. **Core habitat for marine or migratory species**	Core habitat is an area in the landscape listed* marine or migratory species are likely to naturally occur and survive (shelter, disperse, breed and feed).
4. **Place of environmental significance**	Places that are key areas for the survival and evolution of Australia's native biodiversity may be considered to have environmental significance. Places of environmental significance are important for inclusion in the NRS if they are of significance at the IBRA subregion scale. They are places that may have one or more of the following attributes: climatic refuge, species endemism, high species or ecosystem diversity, aquatic ecosystem, ecological gradient, important for migratory or nomadic species or critical for the lifecycle of key species. Examples of some of the places of environmental significance that contribute to CAR may be places listed* for their natural values like a World Heritage Area, Ramsar wetland or National Heritage site or equivalent state or territory natural heritage place.
5. **Improved adequacy**	A place improves adequacy of the NRS if it helps maintain the integrity and viability of populations, species and/or ecological communities in an IBRA subregion or improves 'ecological functionality' of the reserve system in the IBRA subregion. Adequacy can be improved by: replicating the protection of biodiversity values, improving ecological connectivity and/or re-configuring protected area boundaries to allow for better management of threats to other CAR elements. These sites improve the NRS by increasing the resilience and capacity for adaptation to climate change.

* listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* or similar state or territory legislation.

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Definition of terms used in the tool

Ecosystem	a community of organisms, interacting with one another, plus the environment in which they live and with which they also interact.
Ecological community	the living component of an ecosystem.
Ecological connectivity	the location of natural areas in the landscape which provide species and populations with access to resources (food, breeding sites and shelter), increase habitat availability and facilitate population processes (dispersal, migration, expansion and contraction) and enable better functioning ecological processes (evolution, water, fire and nutrients).
Good condition	ecosystems that are relatively intact with good native vegetation and soil structure, ecological function and a suite of species that would normally occur at this locality.
IBRA	the Interim Biogeographical Regionalisation of Australia is a broad ecological description of Australia as 85 IBRA regions, which are split into 403 IBRA subregions.
Native ecosystem	an ecosystem that would naturally occur in this locality. It includes native vegetation, bare rock, soil and sand communities and open water aquatic communities.
Regional ecosystem	native ecosystem and its associated land form(s) mapped at a scale of at least 1:50,000 in the intensive land use zone and at least 1:100,000 scale in the extensive land use zone.
Self sustaining	an area large enough for a regional ecosystem to function and populations of species to survive given the level of ecological connectivity and the landscape position of the protected area.

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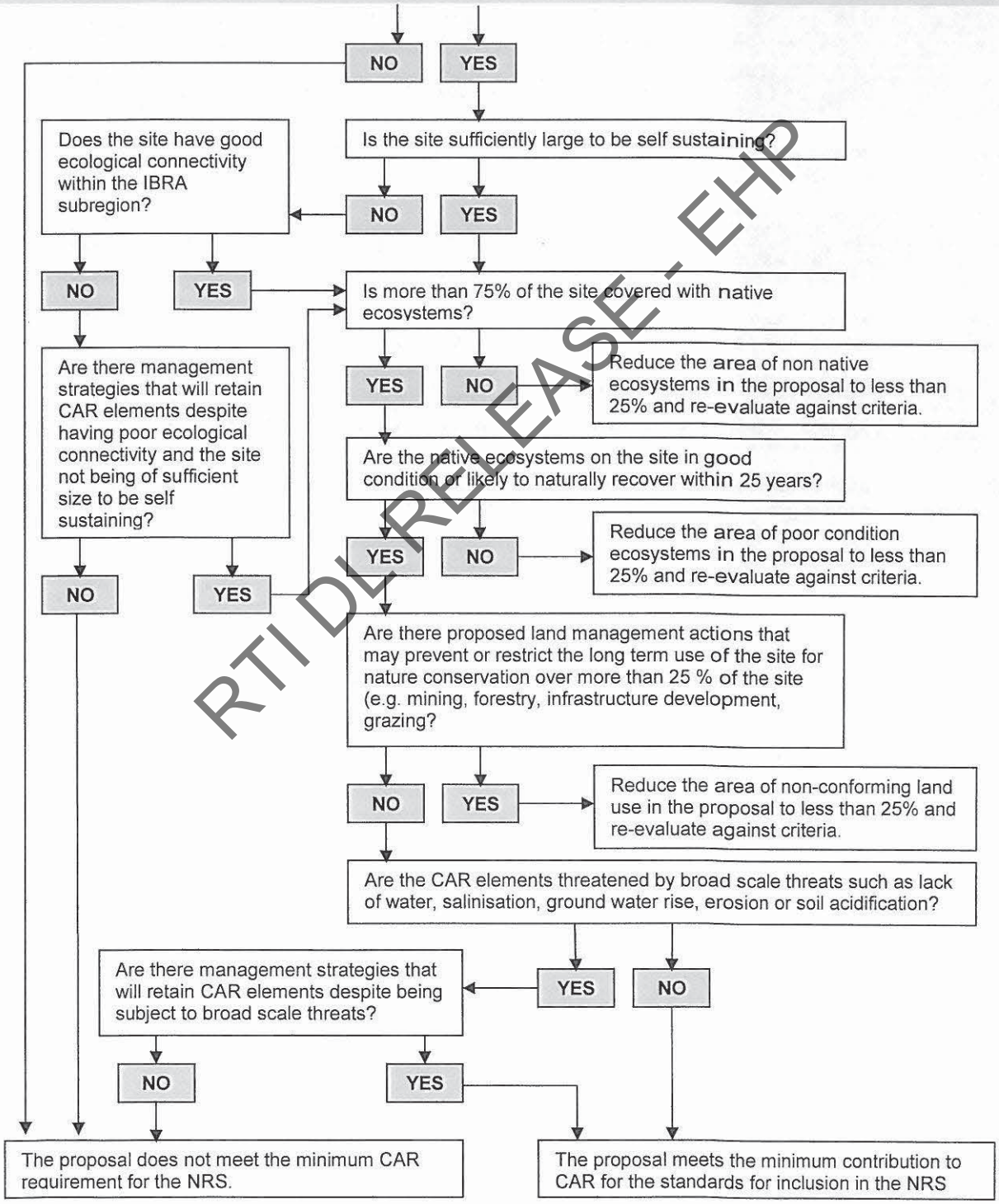
The minimum requirement for contributing to a comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) NRS through Caring for our Country funding

1. **Under represented regional ecosystem**
2. **Core habitat for threatened species or ecological community**
3. **Core habitat for marine or migratory species**
4. **Place of environmental significance**
5. **Improves adequacy**

Does the proposed protected area (the site) have at least one of these five CAR elements?



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