

# BIODIVERSITY

## FACT SHEET

### WHAT IS IT?

Biological diversity - biodiversity - is the variety of life on earth, including animals, plants, fungi and microorganisms. It includes how the various plants and animals interact. They are interdependent - they need and balance each other.

Biodiversity is generally found in bushland, whether it's a large reserve or a small corner of a local park. Even a suburban backyard can be teeming with life, particularly if native vegetation has been kept or planted.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The oxygen, clean drinking water, soil and food that we need to survive all rely on biodiversity.

It is also important because it:

- is irreplaceable
- gives us 'green' areas to relax and be active in
- creates natural noise barriers
- helps reduce pollution and
- provides a home (habitat) for native animals.

In a healthy natural environment, different living things keep a healthy balance, for example birds eat insects and control their numbers.

### WHAT THREATENS IT?

The main threat to biodiversity is human activity, including:

- clearing vegetation
- removing soil, timber and rock
- introducing feral animals including foxes and cats
- introducing weeds and diseases
- urban development without proper planning and
- releasing pollutants.

### BIODIVERSITY IN PENRITH

Our local natural bushland is an important part of Penrith's history, lifestyle and identity. Some of our reserves contain rare or endangered plants.

Penrith City has:

- the highest percentage of remnant Cumberland Plain vegetation of any council area. There are 13 distinct vegetation communities including Cumberland Plain Woodland, Sydney Coastal River Flat Forest and Shale Sandstone Transition Forest.
- over 500 species of native plants and that's not counting mosses and fungi. Nine of these are threatened, and many more are considered vulnerable as their number or distribution has become restricted.
- at least 132 native species of fish, amphibians, reptiles and mammals and
- over 200 species of birds.

### HOW CAN I HELP?

Every one of us can help protect our valuable local biodiversity, and small actions matter. Plant native vegetation where possible and think before you litter, pour anything down the drain, clear vegetation or let your cat or dog roam.

Think globally, act locally to help preserve our biodiversity now and for future generations.

**For more information phone our Bushland Management Officer on 4732 7777**