

- do not use large amounts of fertilisers and pesticides in your backyard as they may have an impact on animal, bird and reptile species that make your backyard there home.

Out and About

- take all rubbish and plastic bags with you when you leave a picnic or campsite. Such waste can trap native birds and animals.

- use reusable shopping bags and recycle and compost waste materials wherever possible to reduce the amount of waste produced and the need to establish new landfill sites.

- extinguish any campfire you start to ensure it does not spread to surrounding bushland when you leave a campsite.

- leave hollow logs and bushrocks in the bush as they provide shelter for native animals and reptiles.

- never dump unwanted pets or rubbish in local bushland. Unwanted pets will prey on native wildlife, and animals, birds and reptiles may become entangled in rubbish. Weeds and grass clippings too should never be dumped as they may compete with native species for the limited nutrients and water resources available.

- slow down when driving at night as this is when nocturnal animals are most active in our local environment.

What Else Can I Do

If you would like to contribute further to biodiversity in Maitland you may wish to join a local Landcare group or become involved in the Remnant Rescue Program.

Landcare groups are made up of volunteers who join together to work on local environmental projects throughout the Maitland local government area..

Remnant Rescue is a program designed to facilitate community involvement in enhancing the health of our urban vegetation remnants. Opportunities exist to be involved in a range of activities including working bees, native vegetation plantings, weed and erosion control, nature journaling, rubbish collection, bushland appreciation workshops, native plant seed collection and propagation workshops, and backyard faunascaping (creating a frog/bird/butterfly friendly garden using local native plant species')

If you are interested in finding out more about *Landcare* or *Remnant Rescue* contact Councils Community Support Officer.



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What is Biodiveristy

Biodiversity is the variety of all living things. It includes all the plants, animals and micro-organisms, the genetic information they contain and the ecosystems they form.

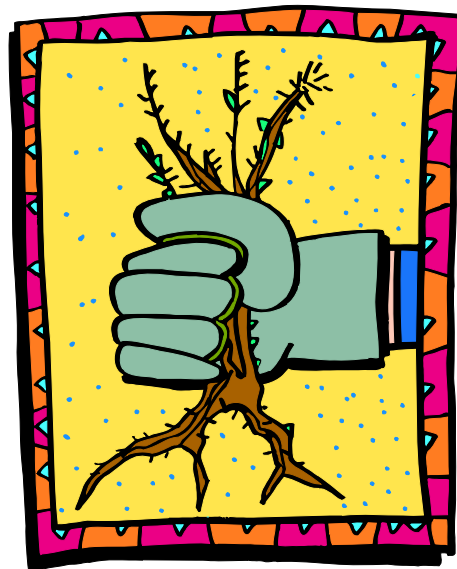
In Australia there are more than one million species, with a large number of these not existing anywhere else in the world. These species are known as endemic. Endemic species in Australia account for 85% of flowering plants, 84% of mammals, over 45% of birds, and 89% of inshore temperate zone fish.

Since Europeans arrived in Australia however pressures have been placed on the Australian environment and the native species of Australia. It is estimated that 27 species of mammals, 23 species of birds, 4 species of frogs, 1 species of fish and 61 species of flora have become extinct in Australia since European settlement in 1788. In addition to these extinct species there are also estimated to be 329 endangered fauna and 1239 endangered flora species in Australia.

What is Threatening Our Biodiversity

As the population of Maitland local government area grows and our urban environment sprawls, there is impact on the biodiversity of the local environment. Such impacts include:

- removal of native vegetation which in turn removes habitat and food sources for native species
- deterioration of local water quality
- predation on native species by pests and feral animals
- weed invasion of native bushland areas



How to Protect Our Biodiversity

In your backyard / workplace / school grounds

- plant native plant species that will provide food and shelter for native birds and animals.
- remove weeds from your property to stop them competing with native plants.
- keep domestic pets in doors at night to prevent them from preying on nocturnal animals.
- install a pond to provide habitat for native frogs.
- install nest boxes in trees to provide shelter for native birds and animals.
- do not hose or sweep material to the stormwater system. Any materials entering the stormwater system will eventually flow into local waterways where fish and other aquatic species may become tangled in them. The decay of plant matter such as dead leaves and grass clippings also reduces the oxygen levels in the water impacting on the ability of aquatic species to breathe.