

NPWS Strategic Additions

West Glenbrook

The West Glenbrook site borders Glenbrook Creek and the popular swimming hole, the Blue Pool. It supports a relatively undisturbed and biodiverse area of the Critically Endangered Shale Sandstone Transition Forest. The floristic abundance of its sandstone fringes and escarpments includes unusual and rare flora species. It is a place of Aboriginal cultural significance.

- 1. Location:** 38 and 40 Station Street Glenbrook; western end of Station and Cox Street and southern end of Wright St; bounded to the south and south-west by Glenbrook Creek and except for the north-eastern portion, by the Blue Mountains National Park.
- 2. LGA:** Blue Mountains City Council
- 3. DP, Lot Numbers and zoning:**
 - L 1 DP 1176069 38 Station St Glenbrook (58.318 ha) 100% Environmental Conservation
 - L 2 DP 1176069 40 Station St Glenbrook Crown Land Reserve 751662 (Part) (.3223 ha) – the access track through the property zoned 100% Environmental Conservation
- 4. Size in hectares:** 58.640117 ha
- 5. Public or private land:**
 - **Lot 1:** Deerubbin Land Council
 - **Lot 2:** Crown Land Reserve (Unreserved Crown Land managed by the NSW State Government); access road/track almost to Glenbrook Creek
- 6. Adjacent existing national parks:** borders the Blue Mountains National Park on all sides except for the north-eastern portion of the property.
- 7. Natural Values:**

Geology, soils, landforms and microclimates: the property occupies a spur of Hawkesbury Sandstone dissected by the Glenbrook Creek System. The sandstone, with thin, poor soils, is capped by Mittagong Formation shales that weather to light clays. Aspect differences mean that microclimates vary from the hot and dry northern sandstone benches to the cooler and moister southern escarpment of Glenbrook Creek.

Ecological Communities supported by the range of microenvironments include:

- **Sandstone vegetation communities** (BMCC Non-scheduled):
 - E.piperita/Angophora costata Open Forest (11B)
 - Corymbia gummifera/C.eximia Open Forest Woodland (11C)
 - C.gummifera/E.sparsifolia Open Forest Woodland (11F)
- **Shale vegetation community** (BMCC Scheduled):
 - Shale Sandstone Transition Forest (2D) – Critically Endangered

A considerable **diversity of plants and animals** is found within the different ecological communities. There are more than 300 species of plants and over 120 species of birds as well as a range of arboreal and terrestrial mammals and of reptiles.

Threatened Ecological Communities and Species:

- **Shale Sandstone Transition Forest in the Sydney Basin Bioregion** occurs on the central ridge where light clay soils form a veneer over Hawkesbury Sandstone. Classified as **Critically Endangered** under State and Commonwealth legislation it supports at least 10 different species of trees and a great diversity of understorey plants including more than 20 species of Pea Flowers, some uncommon, and abundant terrestrial orchids.
- **Threatened species** under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act recorded on or within 1km of the property include: *Dillwynia tenuifolia* (Vulnerable plant); *Calyptorhynchus lathami*

– Glossy Black-cockatoo (Vulnerable); *Neophema pulchella* – Turquoise Parrot (Vulnerable); *Pseudophryne australis* – Red-crowned Toadlet (Vulnerable); and *Tyto tenebricosa* – Sooty Owl (Vulnerable).

Regionally significant communities mapped under LEP 2015: in addition to the **Shale Sandstone Transition Forest** noted above **Blue Mountains Riparian Complex** grows along the boundary with Glenbrook Creek. It is a mix of trees including *Tristaniopsis laurina* (Water Gum), shaded shrubs like *Lomatia myricoides* (River Lomatia) and King Fern *Todea barbara*.

ROTAP species: include *Boronia fraseri* – Fraser’s Boronia, *Lissanthe sapida* – Native Cranberry and *Lomandra fluviatilis* – River Mat-rush.

Unusual/interesting assemblages of plants include **intermittent wet heath** found where water seeps out from the sandstone to sustain abundant sedges, colourful shrubs and very rare plants including *Villeia lyrata* and *Dodonaea camfieldii*, Camfield’s Hop Bush.

8. **Local catchment values:** Glenbrook Creek forms the southern boundary of the property. It supports riverbank ecological communities and is a major tributary of the Nepean River. In its south-eastern corner lies the Blue Pool. The integrity of this popular swimming spot depends on a constant input of clean water that can only be provided by undisturbed bushland.
9. **Wildlife Corridors:** Linked on three sides to the National Park, this property provides ready access for all faunal species to continuous good quality bushland. Some species are relatively sedentary (eg Short-beaked Echidna), others like the Swamp Wallaby and Superb Lyrebird move between the plateau and valleys, while others including the Channel-billed Cuckoo, are long distance travellers that depend on the same bushland habitats being available each year.

10. Heritage and social values:

Aboriginal heritage: the lower Blue Mountains was an occupied Aboriginal landscape prior to European settlement. Nearby archaeological investigations have shown the importance and antiquity of the sandstone rock shelters of the escarpments where cave art may also be found. Rock pools and axe-grinding grooves exist on sandstone outcrops. Traditional pathways provided access to the Blue Pool and the Duck Hole on Glenbrook Creek. Today the property is owned by the Deerubbin Land Council, an indication of its regional Aboriginal significance.

Non-indigenous heritage and social values: for the last 150 years this area has mostly been associated with recreational activities centred on the water holes along Glenbrook Creek. The Blue Pool remains the most popular though increased visitor numbers have seen an upstream focus shift to the Glenbrook Creek Sandbar at the base of the main track down the escarpment through this property. There are additional opportunities here for bushwalking, rock climbing, swimming, dog walking, plant studies, bird watching and history walks.

11. **Current threats, including impacts on adjacent national parks:** there is currently no active management aimed to conserve the natural values of this property so the following threats exist here, all with potential impact on the Blue Mountains National Park – future pressure for rezoning and development, erosion of existing tracks, uncontrolled stormwater, weeds, animal pest species, illegal clearing and intrusion from neighbouring properties, unmanaged recreational activities that have markedly increased in recent years and fire issues particularly related to the pressure for ecologically degrading hazard reduction fires by neighbours.

To conclude: the addition of the West Glenbrook site to Blue Mountains National Park would:

- Logically re-align the National Park boundary in this location by eliminating a virtual in-holding
- Allow for the conservation of the Threatened Shale/Sandstone Transition Forest Ecological Community, and a significant collection of other threatened or rare plants and animals
- Better manage the water resources of Glenbrook Creek and the wider Hawkesbury/ Nepean R
- Protect Aboriginal heritage including sandstone occupation sites and traditional pathways
- Provide a plan for the management of popular but currently uncontrolled recreational activities
- Increase the resources and expertise allocated to manage other current issues that include weed and feral animal control, the intrusion of residential activities and fire hazard reduction