



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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
2. Core habitat for threatened species or ecological community	<p>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).</p>
3. Core habitat for marine or migratory species	<p>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).</p>
4. Place of environmental significance	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
5. Improved adequacy	<p>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.</p>

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

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.

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

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|---|--|---|--|----------------------|
| 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?

