



Conservation Commission  
of Western Australia



# **Interim Conservation Commission policy and guidelines for the performance assessment of conservation reserve and forest management plans and biodiversity management in WA**

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## **Preface**

This document provides information on the Conservation Commission performance assessment responsibility. Conservation Commission performance assessments are undertaken primarily to fulfil the functions described in section 19(1)(g) of the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*. That is to “assess and audit the performance of the Department and the Forest Products Commission in carrying out and complying with the management plans”.

Performance assessments will also help inform the Conservation Commission’s policy development function and its responsibility to advise the Minister on conservation and management of biodiversity components throughout the State. More information on the functions of the Conservation Commission can be found at [www.conservation.wa.gov.au](http://www.conservation.wa.gov.au).

It should also be noted that this function is one that has multiple objectives including that of improving transparency so that public trust in the management of conservation matters is improved. The degree of transparency that can be provided through this function needs to be considered against other performance assessment objectives such as raising staff awareness and enhancing the commitment to sound environmental management. In some instances achieving the best overall outcome may be perceived by the public as compromising transparency. It will be necessary for the Commission to communicate effectively with the public on an ongoing basis to ensure there is an understanding of the broader objectives of performance assessment.

This interim policy will be tested over the next 12 months and may be updated from time to time during that period. Public comment is also invited during this time. Experience gained during this testing period and feedback from the public will be considered in the development of the final version.

*Conservation Commission Policy – “Interim Conservation Commission policy and guidelines for the performance assessment of conservation reserve and forest management plans and biodiversity management in WA.”*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Assessment and audit functions (performance assessment - PA) are a well established part of sound management systems and are recognised as an essential part of environmental management systems as set out in the ISO 14000 standard. The results of such performance assessments serve many uses including:

- the promotion of adaptive management which leads to continuous improvement;
- improving management planning;
- and promoting accountability and public support for management actions.

It is likely that the uses of performance assessment will vary across the range of parties directly involved or otherwise interested in the management of lands vested in the Conservation Commission. The Conservation Commission regards its performance assessment function as much more than a compliance or policing tool. The Conservation Commission believes that the greatest value of performance assessments is that they will:

- assist land managers in their work;
- improve management planning practice and management outcomes; and
- help inform policy decisions that will benefit the environmental management of the lands vested in the Conservation Commission.

This policy will be implemented by staff of the Conservation Commission and will be managed through the Performance Assessment Review Committee (PARC) of the Conservation Commission. Terms of reference of PARC are provided in Appendix 1.

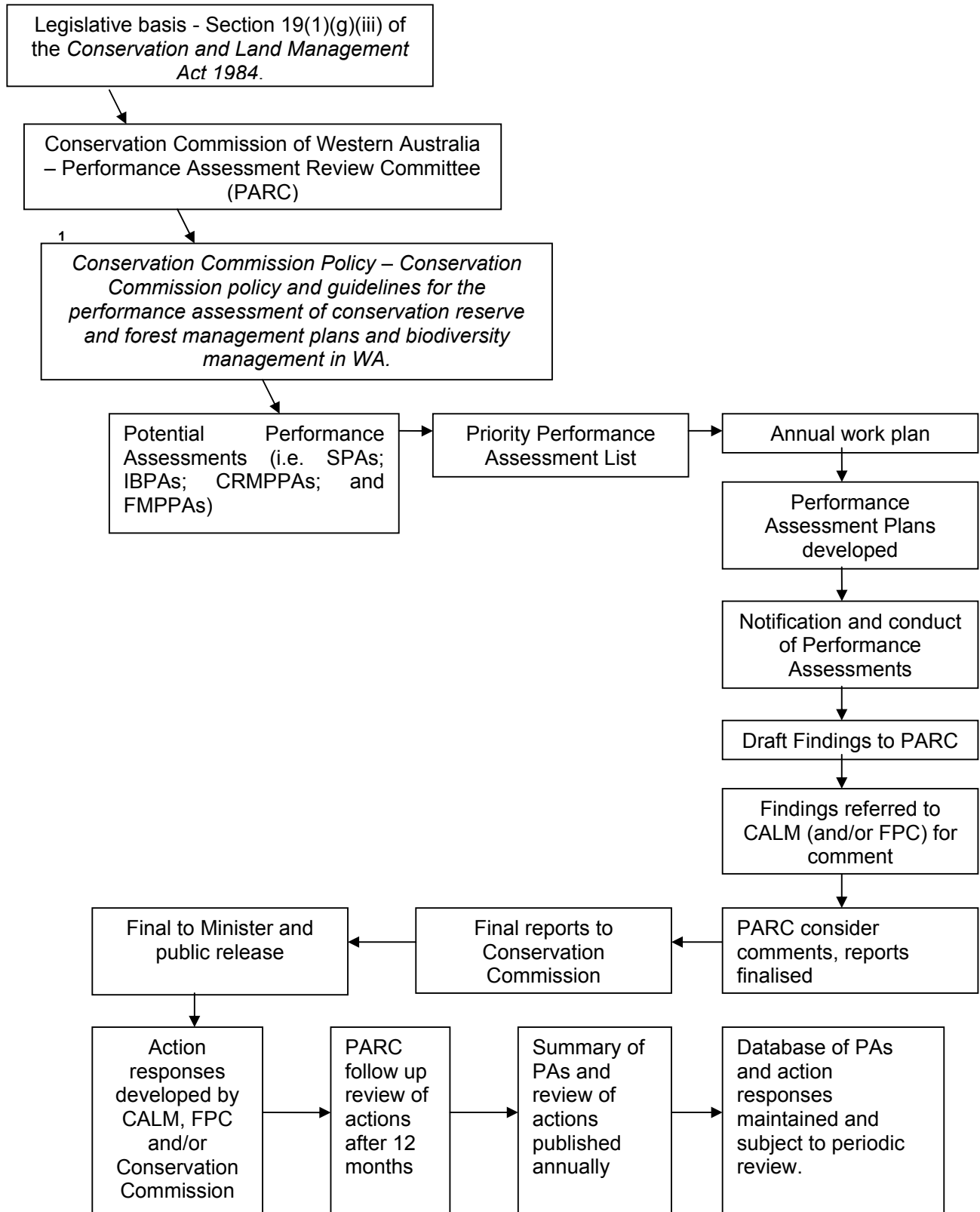
## 2. OBJECTIVE

This policy and associated guidelines provide a detailed description of:

- the rationale and framework for performance assessments to be undertaken as part of the Conservation Commission's statutory functions as described in section 19 of the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*;
- the types of performance assessments that will be implemented under this framework; and
- the approaches to be taken in implementing and reporting on such assessments.

The policy has been prepared to guide Conservation Commission staff, and for the information of the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) and the Forest Products Commission (FPC). Both CALM and FPC will be subject to performance assessments and so will be responsible for providing the Conservation Commission access to data, records and other information as necessary. The policy will also be distributed to key stakeholders for their information and be published via the Conservation Commission's web page for any other interested members of the public. An overview of the performance assessment process described in detail in this document is shown in Figure 1.

**FIGURE 1 Flow of performance assessment process**



<sup>1</sup> status performance assessments (SPAs); issue based performance assessments (IBPAs); conservation reserve management plan performance assessments (CRMPPAs); and forest management plan performance assessments (FMPPAs)

### 3. BACKGROUND

Section 19 (1) (g) of the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* establishes that it is the function of the Conservation Commission of Western Australia:

- “ in relation to management plans for land vested, whether solely or jointly with an associated body, in the Conservation Commission-
- (i) to develop guidelines for monitoring and assessing the implementation of the management plans by the Department (CALM);
  - (ii) to set performance criteria for assessing and auditing the performance of the Department (CALM ) and the Forest Products Commission in carrying out and complying with the management plans; and
  - (iii) to assess and audit the performance of the Department (CALM) and the Forest Products Commission in carrying out and complying with the management plans”.

This policy aims to satisfy the first of these related functions. The second - “to set performance criteria for assessing and auditing” - will be provided through the development of guidelines for setting key performance indicators (KPIs) in management plans. By conducting performance assessments the third function will be satisfied.

In this policy the term “performance assessment” is used broadly to encompass the actions described in the functions above (i.e. monitor, assess and audit) and other terms commonly used in this context such as evaluation and review.

### 4. PURPOSE OF PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS

The overarching purpose of the CALM Act as stated in its long title is to make “better provision for the use, protection and management of certain public lands and waters and the flora and fauna thereof”. Within this overarching purpose section 56 (1)(c) & (d) of the Act describes required objectives for conservation reserves:

- national parks and conservation parks: *to fulfil so much of the demand for recreation by members of the public as is consistent with the proper maintenance and restoration of the natural environment, the protection of indigenous flora and fauna and the preservation of any feature of archaeological, historic or scientific interest;*
- nature reserves: *to maintain and restore the natural environment, and to protect, care for, and promote the study of, indigenous flora and fauna, and to preserve any feature of archaeological, historic or scientific interest;*

In respect of management objectives for indigenous State forests and timber reserves the Act requires that management plans are designed to achieve the purpose, or combination of purposes, described under section 55(1a), these being: conservation; recreation; timber production on a sustained yield basis; water catchment protection; and other purposes being a purpose prescribed by the regulations.

In the *Forest Management Plan 2004-2013*, all areas of indigenous State forest and timber reserves within the Swan, South West and Warren Regions, other than those identified to be reclassified as conservation reserve, are reserved for the purposes of conservation, recreation, timber production on a sustained yield basis, water catchment protection and other purposes being a purpose prescribed by the regulations. To date no additional purposes for State forest and timber reserves have been prescribed in regulations.

The Conservation Commission performance assessments provide a systematic, documented, periodic and objective process that will support this overarching purpose and specific objectives for these lands by:

- promoting good environmental management;
- assessing compliance with relevant statutory and internal requirements;
- facilitating management control of environmental practices;
- raising staff awareness and enhancing the commitment to sound environmental management;
- generating public understanding and support for good management;
- exploring opportunities for improved management strategies and actions; and
- establishing performance baselines to enable long term monitoring and demonstration of improvement.

## 5. TYPES OF PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS

Four types of assessment are described in this section:

- status performance assessments (SPAs);
- issue based performance assessments (IBPAs);
- conservation reserve management plan performance assessments (CRMPPAs); and
- forest management plan performance assessments (FMPPAs)

### *SPAs*

Periodically CALM endorsement will be sought to undertake performance assessments that focus on documenting the status of the biodiversity in a geographic area to provide an overall view of management performance. These will focus less on assessing management plans and will enable the status of CALM's off-reserve activities, such as wildlife recovery programs, to be assessed more broadly. These PAs will be used to generate reports of conservation status on a State wide or bioregional basis that could integrate with the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and State of the Environment reporting cycles.

### *IBPAs*

Issue based performance assessments will be developed to generate knowledge in relation to the most significant land management issues or policies as they apply across a number of reserves. They are distinct from CRMPPAs because of this focus on issues of significance as opposed to the focus on individual management plans. Reserves may be selected as a representative sample across the State or as groups within a common geographic or management region. These IBPAs will include areas subject to individual (area) management plans and/or to higher level plans; e.g. a CALM regional management plan. In areas where there is not a management plan but the issue is sufficiently significant or application of the policy is used routinely to guide the management of Conservation Commission vested lands, the Conservation Commission will seek the endorsement of CALM to include such areas in the assessment. Such IBPAs can provide a more efficient mechanism for the conduct of the Commission's performance assessment function than CRMPPAs as they enable resources to be channelled into performance assessments of issues that are deemed to present a higher risk to the achievement of objectives, and to do so within a targeted geographic scope (e.g. feral animal management within the Kimberley Region).

## *CRMPPAs*

Conservation reserve management plan performance assessments will be undertaken to assess CALM's performance in carrying out and complying with management plans and will also enable conclusions to be drawn regarding the quality of the plan itself in supporting the achievement of the overarching objectives held for conservation reserves. For management plans prepared for areas of the conservation estate (individual reserves, groups of reserves or plans for CALM regions), the level of detail given in the plan with respect to performance assessment is highly variable depending on the age and style of the management plan. For example, more recent plans include KPIs, while earlier plans lack these elements which help guide performance assessment. They are also highly variable in the extent to which management objectives, strategies and actions are articulated and thus can be more open to interpretation in their implementation, making any assessment of performance more qualitative. More recent plans give a greater degree of guidance for the performance assessment process and incorporate KPIs that are focused on outputs and outcomes.

The importance of KPIs in the PA process is significant. Accordingly a focus of Conservation Commission input to management plans has been in this area. An overview of general requirements for KPIs as perceived by the Conservation Commission is provided in Appendix 2.

The scope of assessments will extend beyond the checking of performance in implementing specific actions or strategies identified in management plans as such plans invariably refer to requirements to implement various subsidiary management policies and guidelines. These in turn identify further actions and strategies that are to be applied. Thus the implementation of important policies and guidelines will be included as a part of the assessment of management plan implementation. Guidance on how this will be done is provided in Appendix 2.

Overall CRMPPAs will generate an understanding of the management standards being applied to conservation reserves as required through implementation of the management plans.

## *FMPPAs*

For areas vested in the Commission within CALM's Swan, South West and Warren regions the *Forest Management Plan 2004-2013* (FMP) (with an emphasis on the management of State forests and timber reserves) sets out how performance assessments will be undertaken by documenting:

- detailed expectations with regard to standards that should be applied to management (through the FMP, existing or anticipated policies and other guidance documents);
- key performance indicators (KPIs) with performance targets and reporting requirements;
- requirements for CALM, FPC and the Conservation Commission to plan and undertake performance assessments in a cooperative manner; and
- priority areas where the Conservation Commission will undertake independent performance assessments of the extent to which management is undertaken in accordance with the FMP.

Together, the implementation of these actions will allow the Conservation Commission to assess the performance of CALM and FPC in carrying out and complying with the FMP. They will also be integral to the reporting of performance to the Environmental Protection Authority as is required under the conditions of the approval of the FMP.



Regardless of the level of guidance provided within management plans or within other policies or guidelines subject to assessment, a performance assessment plan will be developed to guide the assessment process and to inform managers of the process and details of the focus of the performance assessment. This will be based on a performance assessment framework discussed below.

## 6. PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

It is important to have a consistent approach to the performance assessment of management applied to all lands vested in the Conservation Commission. This policy and guideline provides a framework that can be applied to the assessment of management plans and other reserve management issues that will ensure that the same elements related to management are considered and reported on as appropriate for each assessment undertaken.

Performance assessment requires a broad suite of tools to ensure that all stages of the management cycle are assessed. Ideally, systems for performance assessment for conservation reserves will consider each of the framework elements outlined below. The framework follows that developed by the World Commission on Protected Areas for evaluating effectiveness of management of conservation reserves (and which is equally applicable to State forests and timber reserves) which identifies six stages (framework elements) of the management cycle for assessment.

- **Context** - *Is knowledge adequate for sound decision making?*
- **Planning** - *Is the plan/policy adequate?*
- **Inputs** – *Were inputs applied as required?*
- **Management Systems** – *Are management systems adequate?*
- **Outputs** – *What were the results?*
- **Outcomes** - *What were the achievements?*

Although all elements will be considered in the course of each performance assessment, the depth of assessment under each element is likely to vary across the range of assessments undertaken. Where assessments relate to individual reserve management they will most commonly focus on performance in relation to outputs and outcomes to enable the provision of statements such as how well the reserve is being managed and what can be done to improve this. When assessments address the management of multiple reserves, or issues of management that have State or region wide significance, or when information gathered in a number of site assessments is combined, a broader and more comprehensive analysis is possible with more focus on context, planning, inputs and management systems. This will enable the development of comment on the planning, resourcing and other management tools that are in place and what is needed if improvement is required. Such comprehensive assessments will be important to assure the community and Government of sound management and to inform continuous improvement measures.

The intensity of each assessment will also vary in recognition of variations both in the significance of reserves and of the issues that are being considered. The appropriate level of intensity will be identified during consideration of the context element of the framework which will be undertaken during planning of the performance assessment as discussed below.

The framework will be used in the development of performance assessment plans (PAPs) to guide structure and provide consistency between assessments. It will also be used as the report framework for performance assessments. Table 1 uses the framework to show matters to be examined in relation to the four types of performance assessment.

**TABLE 1 Performance Assessment– Framework**

Framework elements and factors that are assessed (focus of each type of assessment shaded)						
	Adequacy of agency planning and management				Implementation achievements	
	<b>Context</b> <i>- Is knowledge adequate for sound decision making?</i>	<b>Planning</b> <i>- Is the plan/policy adequate?</i>	<b>Inputs</b> <i>- Were inputs applied as required?</i>	<b>Management Systems</b> <i>- Are management systems adequate?</i>	<b>Outputs</b> <i>- What were the results?</i>	<b>Outcomes</b> <i>- What were the achievements?</i>
<b>Status Performance Assessments</b>	<i>Detailed review of biological and social significance, threats, vulnerability and opportunities for the area under assessment.</i>	<i>Detailed review of tenure issues, conservation reserve design, management plan quality, adequacy of management guidance, integration with Government wide planning.</i>	<i>Overview of financial, human and other resources allocated or available at the appropriate scale.</i>	<i>Overview of the management systems in place and their appropriateness within the context of the assessment.</i>	<i>Review of outputs against any appropriate high level targets or standards</i>	<i>Review of outcomes against any appropriate high level targets or standards</i>
<b>Issue Based Performance Assessments</b>	<i>Limited review of context as it will have been well defined in identifying need for issue based assessment. Review primarily used to develop the assessment plan.</i>	<i>Variable level of review in accord with the level of planning already undertaken for the issue (e.g. an issue of long standing such as dieback versus a new one such as climate change response).</i>	<i>Detailed review of the level of inputs examined in context of issue and compared with inputs to other issues or to assessment of economic or societal costs of inadequate resourcing.</i>	<i>Detailed review of the management systems in place and their appropriateness within the context of the issue.</i>	<i>Variable level of review depending on the availability of monitoring information for the issue being assessed. Analysis of achievement of work plans will also be undertaken.</i>	<i>Variable level of review depending on the availability of monitoring information for the issue being assessed. Analysis of achievement of any broad objectives will be undertaken.</i>
<b>Conservation Reserve Management Plan Performance Assessments</b>	<i>Limited review of context principally to determine if there have been any significant changes since the development of the management plan.</i>	<i>Review of the adequacy of the plan to deliver objectives of the reserve/s and to update for any changes.</i>	<i>Review of resources applied to the implementation of the management plan to assess adequacy.</i>	<i>Detailed review of the management systems that are used to implement the management plan and their appropriateness to achieve management plan objectives.</i>	<i>Detailed review of outputs for KPIs where identified in the plan and for other key management plan actions and strategies. Analysis of actual achievement in annual work plans against inputs and expectations.</i>	<i>Detailed review of KPIs where developed and or any quantitative information from monitoring or research related to key reserve objectives. Use of qualitative judgement in absence of data.</i>
<b>Forest Management Plan Performance Assessments</b>	<i>Limited review. Context analysis has already been undertaken in the FMP. Review of this element will be included for mid term and end of term reports to update any changes.</i>	<i>Limited review of the adequacy of the plan to deliver objectives. Some more detailed assessment where the plan is not supporting the achievement of objectives.</i>	<i>Review of resources applied to the implementation of the management plan to assess adequacy.</i>	<i>Detailed review of management systems will be undertaken as a number of new and existing systems are integral to the achievement of the plan's objectives.</i>	<i>Detailed review of outputs for KPIs where identified in the plan and for other key management plan actions. Analysis of actual achievement in annual work plans against inputs and expectations.</i>	<i>Level of achievement of KPIs identified in the FMP. Outcomes in other key areas identified in the FMP or identified subsequently as an issue requiring assessment.</i>

## 7. PRIORITISING ASSESSMENTS

In order to systematically undertake performance assessments a list of potentially assessable areas to cover a rolling three year period will be defined and updated annually. This list is categorised by assessment type:

- status performance assessments (SPAs);
- issue based performance assessments (IBPAs);
- conservation reserve management plan performance assessments (CRMPPAs); and
- forest management plan performance assessments (FMPPAs).

The allocation of resources to each of these categories of performance assessment will be determined annually. In broad terms it is likely that the inputs to the assessment of individual plans will be relatively limited as they represent a less efficient means of determining ways of improving performance at a strategic level compared with SPAs and IBPAs. Both of these types of assessment have a much greater potential to allow for broader geographical coverage with the focus on matters identified as being of importance to conservation reserve or biodiversity management. There is also a significant level of resource commitment to FMPPAs provided through special allocation. Thus, relatively more resources will be allocated to SPAs, IBPAs and FMPPAs.

This initial listing of potential performance assessments is shown in Appendix 3. This list will be updated annually or otherwise as necessary through the Conservation Commission's Performance Assessment Review Committee (PARC).

From this list an annual performance assessment program will be developed by the Audit Manager with input from CALM and FPC (in relation to FMP assessments only) for subsequent endorsement by the Conservation Commission through its PARC. The development of priorities for inclusion on the annual performance assessment program will be guided by the following criteria:

### *Status performance assessments:*

- geographic regions or management themes of significance identified by the Conservation Commission or identified within key strategic documents (e.g. State of the Environment reports, proposed Biodiversity Conservation Strategy).
- matters of significance requested for assessment by the Minister or CALM.
- from those identified above a prioritisation based on the significance, threats and vulnerability of the region or theme to be assessed including consideration of the level of community interest. Coverage to be determined within the constraints of the Commission's assessment capacity, or as required with the provision of additional resources.

### *Issue based performance assessments:*

- matters of significance and of common importance with a regional plan or a number of individual reserve management plans identified by the Conservation Commission or identified within key strategic documents (e.g. Biodiversity Conservation Strategy).
- matters of significance requested for assessment by the Minister or CALM.
- from those identified above a prioritisation based on the significance, threats and vulnerability of issue to be assessed including consideration of the level of community interest. Coverage to be determined within the constraints of the Commission's assessment capacity, or as required with the provision of additional resources.

### *Conservation reserve management plan performance assessments:*

- those at their mid-term review stage or prior to their revision after ten years.
- management plans which specify timing of Commission assessments which differs from that above.
- reserves the subject of contention or significant community interest
- matters of significance requested for assessment by the Minister or CALM.
- significantly changed circumstances relating to the management of the reserve such that it is likely to require revision of the management plan; and
- from those identified above a prioritisation based on significance, threats and vulnerability of the reserve to be assessed including consideration of the level of community interest. Coverage to be determined within the constraints of the Commission's assessment capacity or as required with the provision of additional resources.

*Forest management plan performance assessments:*

- in accord with timing requirements as specified in the FMP.
- significantly changed circumstances relating to aspects of management guided by the FMP such that it is likely to require revision.
- matters of significance requested for assessment by the Minister, CALM or FPC.
- from those identified above a prioritisation based on the significance, threats and vulnerability of issue to be assessed including consideration of the level of community interest. Coverage to be determined within the constraints of the Commission's assessment capacity, or as required with the provision of additional resources. It will also be necessary to coordinate annual assessment plans with CALM and FPC in relation to FMPPAs as is required in the FMP.

In determining the annual work plan for performance assessments the PARC will be guided by Appendix 4 which provides indicators for determining biological and social significance, threat, and vulnerability.

Once the annual assessment plan is endorsed by the PARC it will be posted on the Commission's web site and will be forwarded to key stakeholders for the provision of comment in relation to the scope or any particular areas of concern regarding the assessments proposed. Any information received will be considered during the development of the PAP allowing for the inclusion of assessment requirements that will address matters appropriately and provide an objective view to be presented in the performance assessment report.

## **8. PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT PLANS**

For each assessment a performance assessment plan (PAP) will be developed to guide the conduct of the assessment. Although primarily for use by those undertaking the assessment it will also contain any necessary information for those subject to the assessment. The PAP needs to be flexible in order to permit changes in emphasis based on information gathered during the assessment, and to permit effective use of resources.

The PAP will identify objectives; scope; criteria; compliance expectations; details of how the assessment will be conducted; the process for correcting any matters requiring urgent

attention to avoid ongoing environmental harm identified in the course of the assessment; how unresolved issues will be managed; and how the assessment will be reported and finalised. The PAP will also be the means by which matters raised by the community, such as through complaints over management activities, are addressed. Such matters can be incorporated into the assessment process by ensuring that the scope of the PA provides for appropriate assessments to be made. Operational guidelines for the conduct of assessments and a template for the PAP are provided in Appendix 5.

The PAP will be provided to CALM and FPC (in respect of relevant FMP assessments) at least 20 working days before the date assessment will commence to allow them to make necessary arrangements including the provision of data. It will be necessary for a memorandum of understanding to be developed between the Conservation Commission and CALM and FPC to allow ready and timely access to all information sources necessary for the Conservation Commission to undertake performance assessments. This memorandum of understanding will detail required response timelines for the provision of information and identify any necessary restrictions on the use of the information by the Commission which may arise because of commercial or other contractual obligations.

## **9. PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT REPORTS**

For each assessment a report will be produced in the format shown in Appendix 6.

The PARC will consider and endorse draft reports which will then be provided to the Executive Director-CALM (and/or the General Manager FPC as necessary) for comment with a response required within 20 working days. This response is expected to provide comment on matters that will allow clarification or corrections of matters of fact. It may also request that a finding and associated recommendation contained in the report be identified as unresolved. This request will be considered and may result in the issue of the final assessment report with qualification in respect of such a matter together with a description of the process and timeline for resolution.

The final assessment report as amended to correct any errors of fact identified by CALM or the FPC following comment will be presented to the Conservation Commission for endorsement before forwarding to Minister for the Environment and public release. The final assessment report will also be forwarded to the Executive Director of CALM (and the General Manager of FPC as necessary).

Summaries of assessments undertaken in the course of the financial year will be noted in the Conservation Commission's Annual Report. As appropriate, information gathered in the course of assessments will be included in other public reporting such as State of the Environment reports.

## **10. PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT RESPONSES AND REVIEW**

Performance assessment recommendations will generally identify the need for a response or action to be taken by those subject to assessment (i.e. CALM or FPC) and in some instances from the Conservation Commission itself (e.g. in the case of management plan revisions that may be recommended). The performance assessment report will specify indicative time frames for the provision of responses and expectations as to completion timelines for any required actions.

The performance assessment section of the Conservation Commission will maintain oversight on progress on recommendations arising from PAs and will report annually to the PARC. Any further action required will be determined by the PARC. The review of progress on recommendations will be published in the Conservation Commission's Annual Report together with a summary of PAs undertaken that year..

A database of PAs and action responses and the timeliness of these will be established and maintained on the Conservation Commission's web site. This will provide an overall picture of the PA activities of the Commission and the effectiveness of its PAs in supporting improvements in management that will build up over time. It is anticipated that this database will be used by the community and external reviewers of the Commission's function to help determine the effectiveness of the Commission's PA activities.

## **APPENDIX 1 - Terms of Reference for Performance Assessment Review Committee (PARC)**

The Committee's terms of reference are:

- To oversee and review and amend as necessary the Performance Assessment policy and guidelines.
- To advise the Conservation Commission on priorities for issues and areas to be included on the performance assessment annual work plan and three year rolling plan.
- To consider and endorse draft performance assessment reports for forwarding to CALM (and FPC as necessary) for comment.
- To consider and endorse final performance assessment reports for forwarding to the Conservation Commission.
- To consider other matters referred to it by the Conservation Commission.

Membership: Will consist of three members of the Conservation Commission drawn from members with appropriate knowledge and experience, and the Audit Manager. A nominee from CALM will be invited as an observer.

## **APPENDIX 2 - Key Performance Indicators and assessment guidelines for older management plans and other policies**

This appendix provides general guidance on requirements for effective key performance indicators (KPIs), and how performance assessments (PAs) should be undertaken in the absence of KPIs. Although the focus of this guidance is on KPI development and PAs for management plans it can be equally applied to other plans, policies and guidelines where the requirement for appropriate KPIs is equally valid.

### **KPI guidance for selection and input to new management plans and policies or guidelines.**

The Conservation Commission seeks to have a more transparent link between a management plan's vision, goals, objectives, strategies and actions, and KPIs. While the Commission's focus has been on the KPIs, management plans also need to make clear that the Commission's PA function is not limited to the review of performance against the KPIs. The Conservation Commission will take a comprehensive and broad view of the extent to which the management of the area to which the plan applies, has been undertaken in accordance with the plan.

KPIs need to provide indicators that will enable the Commission to independently gauge how well a management plan is delivering its objectives. Therefore there needs to be a logical connection between the objectives and KPIs. In practice it may be necessary to link the KPIs to the strategies and actions. However, following on from the Pressure/State/Response Model for State-of-the-Environment reporting the KPIs should, where possible, be paired into a state and a response indicator; i.e. in terms of the Commission's PA framework: inputs, management systems, outputs and outcomes.

In terms of the six PA elements, KPIs that measure outcomes are clearly more likely to support the need to identify how well management plan objectives are being met. However it is acknowledged that using outcome based measures is not always practicable in complex areas such as natural resource management. A number of factors such as the cost of data collection, high levels of natural variability and the time required for measurable responses to actions can restrict the use of outcome based measures. Further work will be undertaken by the Conservation Commission as part of its management plan development function to give guidance on the production of appropriate KPIs in these circumstances. This may include such measures as incorporating a range of outcomes as the target. However it is unlikely that appropriate outcome based KPIs will be available in every instance and for this reason there will be instances where measures of outputs and, in fewer instances, of management systems or inputs will be assessed to help inform judgements of management standards in relation to the achievement of objectives.

A key set of indicators is defined in Kanowski *et al.* (2001)<sup>2</sup> when considering the conservation of biodiversity as: "the minimum set, which if properly monitored, provides rigorous data describing the major trends in and impacts on, Australian biodiversity".

Ideally KPIs should:

- be a robust indicator of change and reflect a highly valued aspect of the plan;
- provide an early indication of adverse change;
- be capable of being readily measured and be cost effective to collect the data;
- be easy to understand;
- be directly relevant to the specific, individual desired outcomes where possible; and

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<sup>2</sup> Kanowski, P.J., Cork, S.J., Lanb, D. and Dudley, N. (2001). Assessing success of off-reserve forest management in contributing to biodiversity conservation. In R. J. Raison, A. G. Brown and D. W. Flinn (Editors) Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management. IUFRO Research Series 7. CABI Publishing.



- contribute to other monitoring requirements such as State of the Environment reporting.

### **Assessments of management plans and policies or guidelines that do not have KPIs**

Most older management plans and policies or guidelines that may be subject to PA lack clear or appropriate performance measures. They may also lack clear goals, objectives or strategies. In many instances because these have not been identified there is a lack of quantitative monitoring data that would enable outcome based judgements to be made. In these instances it may only be practicable to report on performance based on inputs, management systems and outputs against specific strategies or actions where these are detailed in the management plan or policy. From this information qualitative judgements of outcomes may be made.

## **APPENDIX 3 - Listing of Potential Areas for Performance Assessments for forward three years**

### **Status Performance Assessments**

- Planning and management status of pastoral lands acquisitions
- Wheatbelt reserves (salinity/drainage)
- Joint management

### **Issue Based Performance Assessments**

- *Phytophthora* management in Conservation Commission vested lands (inside and outside FMP area)
- Weed and feral pest management in Conservation Commission vested lands
- Fire management (State wide – including wildfires and prescribed burns)
- Threatened flora, fauna and communities management in Conservation Commission vested lands

### **Conservation Reserve Management Plan Performance Assessments (further refinement of this list will be undertaken progressively)**

- Lane Poole Reserve - 14/12/90
- Shannon and D'Entrecasteaux National Parks - 8/1/88
- Cape Range National Park - 23/3/90
- Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park - 21/4/89
- Yanchep National Park - 29/9/89
- Fitzgerald River National Park - 19/7/91
- Dampier Archipelago Nature Reserves - 31/8/90
- Walpole-Nornalup National Park - 3/7/92
- South Coast Region - 13/3/92
- John Forrest National Park - 19/8/94
- Goldfields Region - 24/2/95
- West Cape Howe National Park - 4/8/95
- Yalgorup National Park - 15/8/95
- Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve - 7/6/96
- Purnululu National Park and Conservation Reserve - 5/3/96
- Nambung National Park, Wanagarren, Nilgen and Southern Beekeepers Nature Reserves. - 11/9/98
- Karijini National Park - 15/6/99
- Stirling Range and Porongurup National Parks - 3/12/99
- Shark Bay Terrestrial Reserves - 3/10/00

### **Forest Management Plan Performance Assessments**

- The management of old-growth forest in informal reserves
- The protection of stream zones and less well reserved vegetation complexes
- The selection and management of fauna habitat zones
- Marri retention
- Dieback hygiene
- Protection of significant flora and understorey species
- Soil management
- Fire management
- Sustainability assessment of plantation management on State forest
- Wungong thinning trial
- Utilisation and stockpiling

**APPENDIX 4 – Examples of indicators for biological and social significance, threats, vulnerability to support prioritisation of performance assessments.**

<b>Risk Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Examples of Indicators</b>
<b>biological significance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• biological values</li> <li>• environmental services</li> <li>• uniqueness</li> </ul>	Listing on relevant international, national or State registers (e.g. RAMSAR, EPBC Act, ) Presence of listed species (endangered etc) Strategically important at region, state, or national level as representative, unique, wildlife refuge area etc Importance identified in the Biodiversity Audit of WA
<b>social significance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cultural</li> <li>• economic</li> <li>• aesthetic</li> </ul>	Visibility, proximity to population centre Local profile and “ownership” Levels of visitation (local, state, national, international) Importance as a clean water production catchment
<b>threats</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inappropriate general resource policy</li> <li>• external threats (eg pollution)</li> <li>• internal impacts (eg ferals, visitors)</li> <li>• resource extraction (logging/mining)</li> <li>• extent and nature of use</li> </ul>	Biological or social values threatened by salinity, dieback, wildfire or inappropriate fire regimes, climate change, feral animals, weeds, proposals for mining, urban or infrastructure development As documented in the Biodiversity Audit of WA
<b>vulnerability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• legal status</li> <li>• boundary demarcation</li> <li>• fragility</li> <li>• susceptibility and resilience to environmental impacts (eg natural disasters, climate change)</li> <li>• current resource condition</li> </ul>	Less secure land category Ecosystem of poor resilience Existing ecosystem in poor condition Multiple/cumulative threats As documented in the Biodiversity Audit of WA Identified within the proposed Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Inadequate management resources

Risk assessment systems will often quantify risk using a process of scoring “likelihood x consequence” to prioritise areas where action to respond to the risk is required. Because of the range of performance assessments to be undertaken and the complexity of indicators to be considered in determining priorities a scoring system is not practicable. In this instance a qualitative judgement will be made by the PARC based on the information gathered on the example indicators above and others as deemed relevant by the PARC.

## **APPENDIX 5 - Performance Assessment Operational Guidelines and Performance Assessment Plan**

### **Assessment implementation**

#### **Responsibilities**

The leader for all performance assessments will be either the Audit Manager or the Forest Management Auditor. Other Commission staff, Commission members or externally engaged persons with suitable qualifications may participate in assessments. Details of those participating in an assessment will be included in the PAP.

#### **Timing**

Indicative timing of the conduct of the performance assessment will be defined in the PAP. It may be influenced by such factors as seasonal influences on key issues to be assessed, the availability of management staff, or accessibility to areas to be assessed.

#### **Process**

The process to be used in the conduct of the assessment will be defined in the PAP. Expected data sources include:

- file records
- budget reports
- aerial or satellite images
- externally generated reports
- interviews with CALM, FPC and/or stakeholders; and
- field inspections.

It is anticipated that for CRMPPAs an implementation progress report will be sought from the District responsible prior to assessment. For SPAs and IBPAs detailed document review and analysis may be required. Copies of relevant records will be taken and photographic records will be made to support findings or provide context. For field visits maps will be generated to record the location of any specific observations or findings.

#### **Identifying external stakeholders**

Stakeholders external to the agency subject to assessment (i.e. CALM or FPC) that may be interviewed in the course of the assessment will be identified during the PAP development process. This may include members of advisory committees and the local community, adjoining property holders, local aboriginal groups, industry representatives (e.g. tourism, timber), local government and other relevant agency representatives.

#### **Assessment tools**

As there will be a diverse mix of data used for assessments there will be a need to use a variety of assessment tools to help make judgements of the level of performance. Thus it is anticipated that both quantitative and qualitative judgement will be made. As there may be little or highly variable monitoring data available it will be necessary to look for multiple sources of information in order to generate a level of confidence in findings.

## Indicative information sources for performance assessments

Element		Information sources
<b>Context</b>		Documentation review (internal, national and international). Seek views of key stakeholders (e.g. advisory committee).
<b>Planning</b>		Review of management plan or other planning documentation
<b>Inputs</b>		Review district/regional budgets, staff skills and numbers, annual work plans and office records. Interviews with staff.
<b>Management systems</b>		Assessment of management processes, staff structure, staff experience. Guidelines in place for management Field observation of implementation standards
<b>Outputs</b>		Field observations. Interviews with staff Office records
<b>Outcomes</b>		Results of monitoring or research programs. Interviews with staff, experts and stakeholders. Field observations

## Conservation Commission – PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT PLAN (PAP) TEMPLATE

Title: *Short title description of assessment*

<b>Date Prepared:</b>	<i>date PAP finalised</i>	<b>PA No.:</b>	<i>assessment type/year/number for the year</i>
<b>Major System:</b>	<i>overall management plan, issue system, process or policy under assessment</i>	<b>Directors Responsible:</b>	<i>primary director responsible for system within CALM or FPC</i>
<b>Component to be assessed</b>	<i>description of specific elements of management plan or system to be assessed if applicable</i>	<b>Manager Responsible:</b>	<i>identification of those who have primary management responsibility for component to be assessed</i>
<b>Background</b>	<i>details of significance, threats, vulnerability of issue or area to be assessed</i>		
<b>Assessment Scope</b>	<i>geographic or other limits to the assessment</i>		
<b>Objective of the management system to be assessed:</b>	<i>in relation to biological, cultural, social or economic purposes that CALM or FPC is responsible for</i>		
<b>Statement of specific assessment objectives:</b>	<b>Assessment Criteria:</b>	<b>Qualitative and quantitative compliance expectations:</b>	
<i>For each element provide a statement of what information is expected to be generated.</i>	<i>Detail the source of any criteria that will be used in the assessment (e.g. KPIs, policy objectives)</i>	<i>Detail of any compliance or other expectations against which judgements of compliance will be made where applicable (primarily in FMPPAs)</i>	
<i>Context</i>			
<i>Planning</i>			
<i>Inputs</i>			
<i>Management Systems</i>			
<i>Outputs</i>			
<i>Outcomes</i>			
<b>How PA will be conducted:</b>	<i>timing, resources required, approach (e.g. document review, , field observation etc), personnel to be involved</i>		
<b>Information needs:</b>	<i>e.g. documents required – detail as specifically as possible; access to databases or other computer systems; personnel to be available for interview; external stakeholders to be interviewed</i>		
<b>Reporting arrangements:</b>	<i>as per guidelines unless otherwise required</i>		
<b>Timing (season) of the PA:</b>		<b>Time required for the PA (days):</b>	

## APPENDIX 6 - Performance Assessment Report Template

<b>INSIDE COVER:</b>	Provides general information about the Commission, its role, and about the assessment process and refers to where other documents such as Commission performance assessment policy and guidelines can be found (i.e. web page links).
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	General brief introduction to the assessment and how it was done.
<b>OVERVIEW OF KEY FINDINGS AGAINST PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES:</b>	Overview of key findings against the overall objectives set for the performance assessment in the PAP. Reference made to any recommendations.
<b>DETAILED PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FINDINGS:</b>	Details of findings and recommendations under each of the assessment framework headings
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	
<b>Assessment Process</b>	Timing, how done, areas visited, who was spoken to, what documentation was reviewed, general information gathered etc.
<b>Maps</b>	General location map and others specific to any findings as necessary.
<b>Supporting documentation</b>	Copies of, or links to, relevant reports or documentation that support the findings.
<b>Performance Assessment Plan</b>	As developed before the assessment.