



Environment,
Climate Change
& Water



Great Eastern Ranges Initiative

A continental-scale lifeline
to engage people with nature

Annual Progress Report 2008-09



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Executive summary

Significant progress has been made on achieving the key milestones and objectives for the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative (GER Initiative) which were specified in year two of the NSW Business Plan 2007–2010. The NSW Environmental Trust allocated \$3 million for the GER Initiative for 2008–09. Key achievements include the following:

- Regional partnership groups have been established in three additional priority areas, involving more than 50 organisations. These areas are the Southern Highlands, Hunter Valley and Border Ranges. These partnership groups are developing and implementing integrated community awareness strategies, and conservation programs on private land, including Aboriginal-owned land. The GER Initiative now has five priority areas for investment.
- Four non-government partners are working with DECCW to lead the partnership groups in each priority area. They are the Nature Conservation Trust of NSW which leads the Slopes to Summit and Border Ranges partnerships, Bush Heritage Australia which leads the Kosciuszko to Coast partnership, Greening Australia (NSW) which leads the Southern Highlands partnership, and OzGreen which leads the Hunter Valley partnership. These organisations have contributed significant in-kind support and funding that match, or significantly exceed, the Environmental Trust allocation, and complement the activities and investment of catchment management authorities and other organisations.

Each partnership group is improving connectivity conservation management on private land, and buffering and connecting core protected areas which extend along the great eastern ranges conservation corridor. Community acceptance, engagement and support continue to grow. The interest of land holders in the program is rapidly increasing and new partners are becoming involved.

Workshops have been run with lead partner organisations, and other conservation and stakeholder organisations. Further workshops are planned for the later half of 2009. Outcomes of this work will be presented to the Minister for consideration.

- Regional partnership facilitators have been established in the five priority areas. They are involving a growing number of organisations in regional projects and programs.
- A report by independent scientists led by Professor Brendan Mackey of the Australian National University has been completed. The report discussed the scientific principles for continental-scale connectivity conservation of the great eastern ranges. The report has been independently peer reviewed by leading Australian ecologists, and will be considered by the Natural Resources Policies and Programs Committee in August 2009. The report will inform policy makers at state and federal level and help build community support.
- Significant progress has been made on developing a monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework which includes outcomes for biodiversity and social benchmarks.
- A draft science and delivery plan has been prepared in consultation with the Science and Technical Reference Group and as an outcome of the annual Science Forum. The draft is awaiting peer review.
- Planning is under way on the first national conservation and environment chief executive officers forum on 'Linking Landscapes'. The event will be held in October 2009 at Kingscliff on the NSW north coast. It is being organised by a national committee lead by Parks Victoria. The Federal Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts will open the event, which will provide an outstanding opportunity to promote the GER Initiative as a national conservation priority to mitigate the impacts of climate change on Australia's richest biodiversity.



- A communications strategy has been developed to ensure good long-term foundations for GER Initiative communications. This strategy emphasises the importance of well-developed internal communications for promoting a high public profile. Activities to achieve good internal communications are under way with some activities waiting until branding protocols and other issues have been determined with the four lead conservation partners (see dot point 2).

Late approval of the budget and a change in government policy on advertising resulted in a significant change in the direction of the proposed marketing and media campaign. Messages are now being delivered through online and partnership-based initiatives. Early external communication products include:

- a short film produced by Australian Geographic for the International Union for Conservation of Nature in partnership with DECCW, which was launched at the World Conservation Congress in Barcelona in October 2008
- introductory brochures and branded materials for use by regional facilitators.

A draft tourism engagement strategy has been developed by the newly appointed Tourism Marketing Officer, in consultation with DECCW and Tourism NSW. This strategy focuses on raising awareness of the GER Initiative, and will help to achieve the NSW State Plan's objective to increase visitation to NSW national parks.

Key issues for the next 12–18 months include consolidating and maintaining partnerships, progressing projects and programs in the five priority areas for investment (see dot point 1), increasing community awareness, developing a vision and options for future governance, and identifying and securing sustainable sources of funding in partnership with the four lead conservation organisations (see dot point 2).



1 Introduction

The Great Eastern Ranges Initiative (GER Initiative), formerly known in NSW as the Alps to Atherton Initiative, is a national long-term strategy. It aims to maintain and improve connectivity conservation in mountain ecosystems that extend more than 2,800km along the Great Dividing Range and Great Escarpment of eastern Australia from southern Victoria to far north Queensland. This annual report is for the NSW GER Initiative, which covers 1,200-kilometres of the great eastern ranges. The NSW GER Initiative is currently funded by the NSW Environmental Trust.

Drawing together the efforts of the various community, industry, government and non-government organisations and individuals already working on conservation projects in the area, the GER Initiative is strengthening the resilience of natural ecosystems and the native plant and animal species that they support, in the face of climate change and ongoing threats.

The GER Initiative is helping to protect water supplies for over three-quarters of Australia's population, rich assemblages of plants and animals, and significant nature-based tourism assets. The maintenance of ecosystems and connectivity of mountainous catchments are essential for sustaining the health and wellbeing of the rapidly growing human population and economy in eastern Australia, particularly with the onset of climate change.

This report outlines the activities undertaken in 2008–09 to achieve connectivity conservation along the great eastern ranges and achieve the objectives, milestones and deliverables outlined in the NSW Business Plan 2007–2010. These activities include:

- implementing a marketing, branding and awareness program to enhance the profile of the GER Initiative and engage with the NSW community
- investing in the biological, social and economic bases for decision making and future governance arrangements
- stimulating the integrated delivery of conservation actions on public and private land, by addressing priorities agreed to in partnership with landowners, the community, industry, agencies and governments.



Figure 1: Linking landscapes in the Slopes to Summit section of the Great Eastern Ranges. Photo S. Cohen, DECCW.



2 Summary of key activities

This section summarises progress in 2008–09 on achieving the five goals specified in the NSW Business Plan 2007–2010.

The GER Initiative has a primary goal to achieve a network of interconnected habitats, supported by four other goals which seek to engage partners, raise community awareness, establish administrative and ongoing governance frameworks, and apply available and emerging data, knowledge and interpretation to the making and implementation of decisions (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: Great Eastern Ranges Initiative goals



Goal 1 Connectivity conservation: Achieving an interconnected NSW GER conservation corridor supporting healthy environments and healthy people

Since the annual budget was approved in November 2008, 18 grant agreements worth \$1.2 million have been developed with a range of conservation partners. These partners have contributed matching or greater funding for:

- on-ground voluntary conservation activities with private land holders
- formation and maintenance of partnerships
- communication and conservation planning products
- research.

The GER Initiative focuses on five priority areas where conservation projects are under way to connect landscapes in the great eastern ranges (see Figure 4). These areas are:

- Kosciuszko to Coast
- Slopes to Summit
- Southern Highlands
- Hunter Valley
- Border Ranges.

More information on activities in each area is provided under Goal 3.

Investing in various regional and cross-program activities has contributed to achieving connectivity conservation. Such activities include:

- engaging with regional communities
- providing covenants, incentives and recognition of other efforts
- working with Indigenous land managers and communities
- partnership facilitation and coordination
- planning conservation actions
- improving the science knowledge base
- monitoring and reporting on program performance
- progressing opportunities for future program support.



Figure 3: Alison Skinner, Slopes to Summit facilitator, with Brian Ward, landowner, in Albury, NSW. Photo: G. Crane, DECCW.

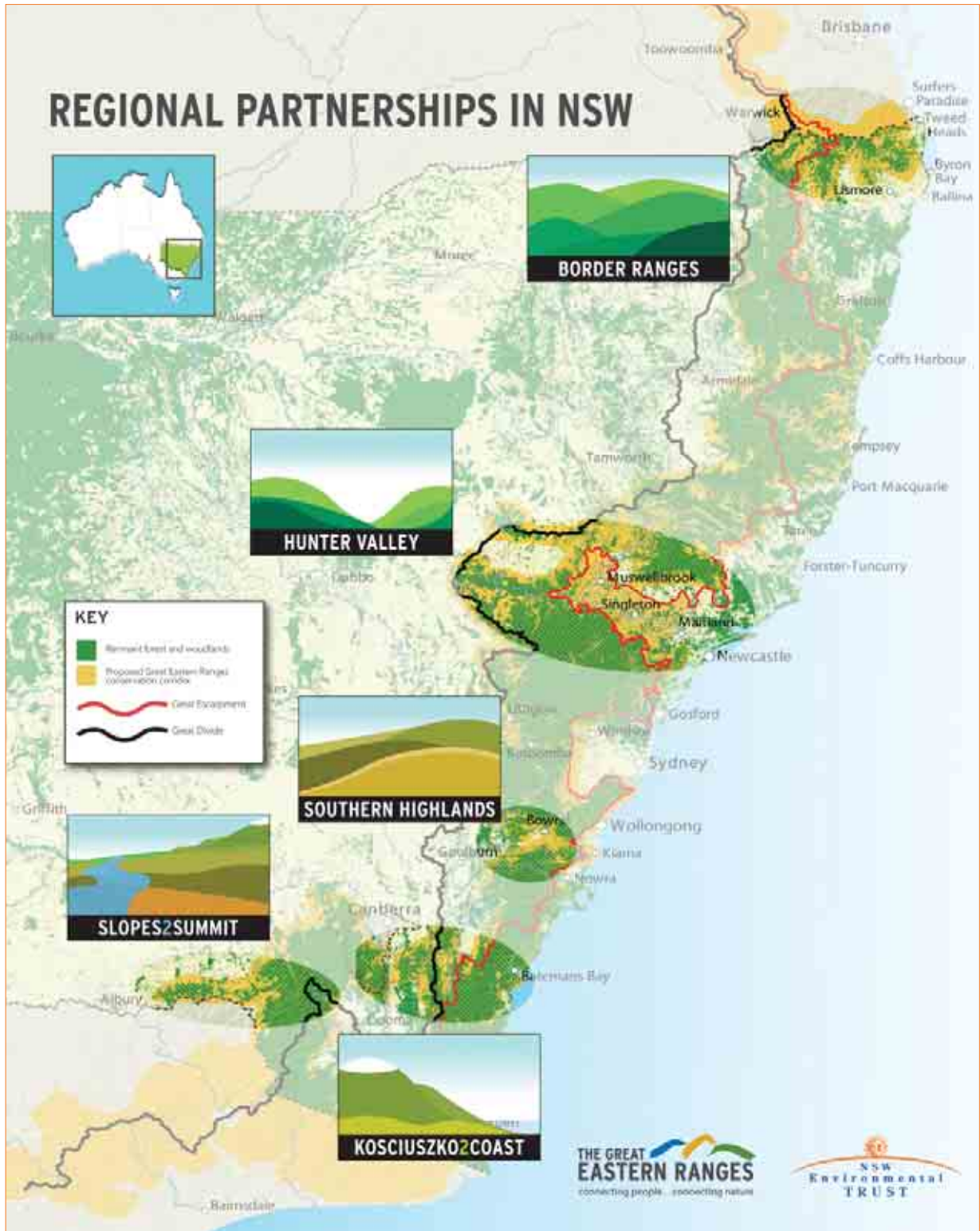


Figure 4: Priority connectivity conservation areas for establishing voluntary partnership groups along the great eastern ranges conservation corridor and investing in on-ground conservation activities.



Goal 2 Communicating with the community: Fostering an aware, supportive and active NSW GER community

Under a grant agreement with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Australian Geographic produced a short film entitled *Australia's great eastern ranges – our vision to protect them forever*. This film was launched at the World Conservation Congress in Barcelona in October 2008, and has been distributed to key agencies and stakeholders.

Significant progress has been made in supporting Aboriginal partnerships through providing grants for three projects in the Border Ranges:

- 'ConnectKids Resource Kit' – in collaboration with selected groups, a resource kit is being developed for school students. The kit will provide recovery actions from property management plans and the Threatened species priorities action statement that can be implemented by school students on community-owned land. It will also contain information on biodiversity values and the cultural significance of natural values.
- 'Aboriginal Property Management Planning' – this project engages the Aboriginal community in preparing and implementing property management plans for managing biodiversity and habitat connectivity on community property, and informs Aboriginal communities of ways of accessing Commonwealth and state natural resource management funding.

Property management planning allows staff from the GER Initiative to engage directly with Aboriginal communities through a particular property. It also provides a focus for collaboration on parallel programs such as LandAlive and HotSpots programs funded by the NSW Environmental Trust.

- 'Scoping Indigenous Ecotourism Opportunities' – 'connection walks' are being created in two locations to encourage Indigenous interests to be integrated into connectivity conservation, ecotourism and education across the broader landscape.

The projects have provided a strong model for future engagement with Aboriginal communities (see Figure 5).



Figure 5: Elements of the GER Initiative's integrated approach to engagement with Aboriginal communities



The communications strategy has been developed to ensure good long-term foundations for GER Initiative communications. This strategy emphasises the importance of well-developed internal communications as a pre-cursor to a building a high public profile. Regional facilitator workshops have been held to ensure consistent messages and coordinated development of regional strategies.

The communications strategy works on two levels:

1. to ensure regional facilitators gain the support and resources they need to manage local projects
2. to provide communications tools for DECCW and the wider community.

Communications infrastructure is currently being established. Two senior staff were recruited in November 2008 – a Marketing and Community Relations Manager, and a Tourism Marketing Officer. They are developing clear lines of communication and consultation, developing resource materials and planning for long-term community engagement. They are also guiding the proposed marketing/advertising campaign. A recent decision by the NSW Government regarding government advertising has meant there is now more emphasis on online communication and partnership initiatives.

Regarding media interest, the GER Initiative has been reported on in Mindfood magazine (a new magazine containing information on online communications, media and social networking); and there has been an article and pull-out poster in Cosmos magazine (Australian science magazine). Mindfood magazine is developing a more in-depth article on the Kosciuszko to Coast partnership. Communication products are also being developed with Australian Traveller magazine.

A suite of communications and promotional materials are being developed including signage and display material, fact sheets, photographs, GER Initiative-branded promotional items including caps and polo-shirts, and car magnets for use by regional facilitators and the Secretariat.

Communication products and presentations were made at open days in the Southern Highlands and on World Environment Day in the Border Ranges area.

The GER Initiative is presented as a case study in a new global guide on continental-scale connectivity conservation to be published by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, World Commission on Protected Areas – in Worboys GL, Francis WL and Lockwood M 2010, 'Connectivity conservation: A management guide', Earthscan, London.

The requirements for, and design of, a GER Initiative website are complete and phased development is under way with phase 1 completed by 30 June 2009.



Goal 3 People working together : Helping people to work together effectively to achieve healthy NSW GER environments

As in the first year of the program, the GER Initiative has stimulated successful partnership collaboration. This has required a substantial commitment of time and resources to build strong relationships and common understanding with key partners. Investing this time has ensured a solid base on which to build the GER Initiative as it progresses and grows.

Four lead conservation delivery organisations are working together to consolidate their involvement in the GER Initiative and determine a future governance model. These organisations are Greening Australia, the Nature Conservation Trust, OzGreen and Bush Heritage Australia. In keeping with the media strategy, the GER Initiative is aiming to keep the project profile relatively low until relationships with these organisations have been solidly defined.

Workshops with these organisations have dealt with:

- identifying roles and responsibilities
- defining levels of engagement across the project
- common terms to be used
- consultation.

In upcoming meetings, the following issues will be discussed:

- defining key messages
- branding protocols
- coordination and management of media opportunities.

Over 50 organisations are now working together to plan and implement voluntary conservation activities with private and other public land holders and managers. The GER Initiative is also seeking to maximise the benefit of biodiversity offsets from development activities, including from mining and power generation industries in the Hunter Valley and the Hume Highway upgrade in southern NSW.

As engagement activities proceed, the GER team is witnessing more commitment to collaborative planning, information sharing, data collection, and conservation analysis. DECCW programs are being reviewed to identify those which intersect with the GER Initiative, as the first step in developing a better understanding of how the Government's existing conservation programs contribute to connectivity conservation.

The Nature Conservation Council has agreed to align its HotSpots program with the GER Initiative's activities with land holders. This relationship is further enhanced by previously agreed collaboration on the LandAlive program administered by DECCW.

Progress continues towards establishing a national conservation corridor along the length of the great eastern ranges. An interstate agency working group, led by DECCW, includes the Commonwealth Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, and agencies in Victoria, the ACT and Queensland.



Table 1: Examples of stakeholders engaging with the GER Initiative

Sector	Organisations achieving the GER Initiative
Lead delivery partner organisations	Bush Heritage Australia (Kosciuszko to Coast), Nature Conservation Trust (Slopes to Summit and Border Ranges), Greening Australia (Southern Highlands), OzGreen (Hunter Valley)
Heavy industry	Coal mining, power generation
Agriculture	NSW Farmers Association, thoroughbred horse breeding, wine industry
Community	Landcare, Wetlandcare, indigenous groups, community and environmental education enterprises, natural history societies, friends groups (such as Friends of Grasslands), catchment committees, local tourism bodies
Government	Catchment management authorities, local councils, rural lands protection boards, conservation management networks, government agencies
Research and academic	Australian National University, Charles Sturt University, Sydney University, University of Tasmania, Monash University, CSIRO, Australian Museum, national research centres e.g. Applied Environmental Decision Analysis Facility, University of Queensland

Regional partnership areas

Border Ranges

Co-lead organisation – Nature Conservation Trust of NSW

Number of partners – 18

Key values – the Border Ranges comprise one of the most biologically diverse landscapes on the continent, supporting many of its threatened species and endemic plants and animals. Highly fragmented due to past clearing for development and grazing on the lower slopes and surrounding landscapes, the area comprises part of the network of World Heritage-listed ‘Gondwana Rainforests’. It is particularly important to manage pests and weeds in this area, and buffer the rainforest remnants against the potential impacts of wildfire and population expansion, particularly in the face of impending climate change.

Overview of progress – the area has been the subject of intense conservation planning and community engagement over the last three years, with NSW, Queensland and Australian governments developing a draft Border Ranges Rainforest Biodiversity Management Plan. Due to the area’s highly enthusiastic and committed community, there has been extraordinary uptake of conservation incentives on private land.

The GER Initiative committed almost \$350,000 in investment to support conservation and delivery of the Border Ranges Plan 2008–09. One consultation meeting was held in April 2008, and since then the GER Initiative has engaged with partners through the Biodiversity Steering Committee which oversees the plan.



In mid 2008, the Nature Conservation Trust hosted a field trip through the Border Ranges which was participated in by representatives from key conservation agencies, Landcare organisations, the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Board, the Nature Conservation Trust Board and the GER Initiative team. The field trip showcased activities that were conserving biodiversity in the Border Ranges area, took participants through the GER priority areas for investment, and provided an opportunity for key partners to discuss current activities and identify future opportunities.

A substantial time delay then occurred in the provision of funds for GER-related activities. The facilitator role was funded in November 2008 when the budget was approved. Despite this delay and uncertainty, Nature Conservation Trust staff worked to maintain the support of partners for the planned initiative.

The Border Ranges Partnership is still being established. Achievements in 2008–09 include:

- effectively engaging the Northern Rivers Steering Group as an advisory group for the Border Ranges partnership
- facilitating the steering group's short–medium term priorities for implementing the draft Border Ranges Rainforest Biodiversity Management Plan
- preparing an information document for Landcare Community Support Officers to clarify biodiversity programs run over the 2008–09 summer period
- participating in the Border Ranges cross-border 'Caring for our Country' application for Commonwealth natural resources management funding
- holding the second annual Border Ranges Partners Forum in June 2009.

Hunter Valley

Co-lead organisation – OzGreen

Number of partners and interested organisations – 40

Key values – the Hunter Valley is the most complex of the five partnership areas from a number of perspectives – social, economic, biodiversity and connectivity conservation. Elsewhere, the ranges provide a more impermeable barrier to north–south species movements than in the past due to extensive agricultural and urban development. At the head of the Hunter Valley, however, the higher sections of the eastern ranges become a low, narrow ridge. The Hunter Valley is one of only three areas on the eastern seaboard of Australia where inland ecosystems are not held back by the ranges, but stretch down to the coast. The rich assemblage of ecosystems represents flora and fauna from west of the dividing range, and upland and coastal species, a number of which reach their southern, northern or eastern limits of distribution in the Hunter Valley. This mix of species, juxtaposed against western outliers of rainforest and upland flora, represent a significant east–west link with potential north–south stepping stones. These ecosystems and links are threatened by extensive coal mining and past agricultural development. However, a diverse mix of industry (coal, power, horse stud, agriculture, viticulture, tourism, conservation) community, government, local government and academic interests have come together for the first time to act to conserve the unique values of the region.

Overview of progress – the Hunter region is a significant landscape at risk. It has in the past not been subject to much needed conservation assessment and planning. Catchment management authorities and agencies are aware that there are conservation efforts in the Hunter Valley, but these are overshadowed by mining issues. Urban and industrial activities are growing rapidly. The coal and power industry will mine a high proportion of the valley floor over the next 30–50 years. However, this industry is keen to be involved with the GER Initiative and see it as a rational means of gaining credit for offsets and biodiversity certification, and



obtaining the best possible environmental outcomes. DECCW now has a significant opportunity to harness this extensive and diverse body of community and industrial interests to work for positive environmental outcomes for the valley.

No program has previously sought to engage with and connect the various and diverse mix of groups in the area, and the GER Initiative team has been inspired by the enthusiasm and support that the initiative has received.

The Hunter Valley Partnership commenced publicly with the first stakeholder forum on 23 April 2008. Since then, significant progress has been made, including:

- bringing together over 60 individuals representing 40 organisations through two successful stakeholder meetings
- forming a steering committee and appropriate governance
- securing funding to run a community engagement program (MYRiverR)
- identifying terms of reference, principles of collaboration and objectives
- extensive data gathering and modelling of key habitats and corridors –DECCW, the working group and the Hunter Steering Committee have identified four priority areas of conservation interest in the valley
- running a field trip to familiarise stakeholders with the four areas of interest (see previous dot point).

Most important has been the bringing together of motivated and experienced natural resource management partners, the local community and a diverse range of interest groups from across the Hunter region.

Engagement has raised awareness and engendered enthusiasm for the GER Initiative whilst acknowledging the diversity, challenges and cultural significance of the region.

The next step includes recommending the four priority conservation areas to the partners and beginning a conservation planning process for one or more of these areas. After two partners' workshops, several steering committee meetings and countless small presentations and meetings, the region looks set for an active conservation planning and community engagement process over the coming months.



Figure 6: Matthew Taylor, Ozgreen, surveys The Great Escarpment near Scone, NSW.
Photo: I. Pulsford, DECCW.



Table 2: Examples of community engagement activities – Hunter Valley

Type of activity	No	Nature of workshop	Participants
Phone and/or email contacts	150	Personal visits or calls to introduce the GER Initiative and encourage support	150 + 1 organiser
Meetings, preliminary discussions and actions to progress the project	28	Face-to-face meetings with organisations to introduce the GER Initiative, encourage support and progress actions	65 + 2 organisers
Stakeholder forum	2	Participatory planning and discussion – values, expectations, challenges, vision and forward planning and involvement	66 + 3 organisers
Steering committee meeting #1	1	Inaugural meeting to define role, structure and governance issues	12 + 2 organisers
Agencies working group meeting	1	Meeting to examine habitat and corridor mapping	9 + 2 organisers
Steering committee meeting #2	1	Meeting to progress draft objectives and discuss recommendations from agencies group	17
Steering committee meeting #3	1	Refine areas of interest, identify pathways forward and next steps	9

Southern Highlands Link

Co-lead organisation – Greening Australia (NSW)

Number of partners – 15

Key values – previous conservation analysis of the southern Sydney region has identified four significant ‘corridors’ in the area, three comprising north–south aligned woodland linkages. The fourth corridor links rainforest and wet sclerophyll forest associated with the Illawarra escarpment. In the area, there are links between Morton and Nattai national parks, and the area is used by coastal wetland birds that travel east–west inland during wetter seasons. Connectivity is significantly threatened by urban expansion associated with the Sydney–Canberra development corridor, and encroachment of rural subdivision blocks into the hilly country that contains forest and woodlands.

Overview of progress – the Southern Highlands partnership was not originally anticipated in the Alps to Atherton Initiative NSW Business Plan 2007–10, but came into being through the enthusiasm of the Hawkesbury–Nepean Catchment Management Authority and Greening Australia. The partnership has developed a draft conservation action plan, which seeks to focus in the first instance on the westernmost woodland linkage in the Burragorang Valley.

There will be extensive consultation on the draft plan, with the aim of engaging landholders and businesses in the region in supporting the partnership and its efforts. The GER Initiative team is planning a significant social research pilot project.



Slopes to Summit (S2S)

Co-lead organisation – Nature Conservation Trust of NSW

Number of partners – 8

Key values – the Slopes to Summit (S2S) region comprises the mountains, wooded hills and low ridges between Kosciuszko National Park in the east and Albury in the west. The area cuts across the south-west slopes, connecting inland temperate woodland and grassland ecosystems in otherwise highly fragmented agricultural districts with the intact and well-conserved mountains. The link provides a core of remnant habitats as the basis for broader landscape restoration efforts. Connecting with landscapes in the Kosciuszko to Coast region immediately to the east, the S2S region completes a unique 300-kilometre transect of the landscapes and sequence of ecosystems of southern Australia from the coast to the top of Australia's highest mountains and alpine areas through forests and out onto the dry grassy woodlands of the south-west slopes.

Overview of progress – S2S was the second initial pilot project established in the early days of the GER Initiative. Still relatively small, the partnership has a strong focus on research. A preliminary conservation action plan has been developed and is being reviewed. There is limited landholder involvement in the partnership, so the partnership is seeking to expand the direct involvement of Landcare and other primary producer networks.



Figure 7: Wattle day, Albury, NSW. Photo: B. Crawshaw, DECCW.



Kosciuszko to Coast (K2C)

Co-lead organisation – Bush Heritage Australia

Number of partners – 10

Key values – comprising a series of parallel north–south aligned ridgelines, the Kosciuszko to Coast (K2C) region supports a variety of woodland and forest ecosystems and associated species. Stretching from Kosciuszko National Park to the south coast of NSW, the region occupies the greatest altitudinal sequence on the Australian continent, supporting communities ranging from alpine snowfields to coastal heath and dunes. Connectivity values in the region include:

- opportunities to maintain north–south connectivity through the largely intact, though modified, forests on the upper ridgelines
- maintaining altitudinal and ecosystem connectivity in the region
- the need to rehabilitate foot slopes and the intervening valley floor between the ridgelines to enhance east–west connections.

Overview of progress – K2C was the first of two pilot partnerships to be formed between the GER Initiative and groups of organisations already collaborating in a priority area. The group was set up while the GER Initiative was being developed. Bush Heritage Australia was looking to purchase a property in the area using funds from a private bequest. DECCW suggested linking lands in the Murrumbidgee valley which became known as the K2C corridor. Bush Heritage Australia subsequently chose ‘Scottsdale’, a property supporting grassy box woodlands, upland forests and grasslands, and providing east–west connectivity.

A K2C open day was launched by the Hon Verity Firth MP (then Minister for Environment and Climate Change) at a major field day in 2008. The group has since expanded to include Landcare, non-government agencies such as the Nature Conservation Trust and Greening Australia, and, more recently, the ACT Government.

The K2C project has continued to maintain and build its effectiveness during 2008–09 due to the committed partnership of 10 groups and organisations, including DECCW and at least 50 land holders.

Goal 4 Effective administration: Running an effective and well-administered NSW GER program that achieves financial sustainability

An important objective is to attract sufficient resources and income to sustain an ongoing program of activities beyond June 2010. Key activities include:

- consolidating and formalising existing relationships with lead delivery partners
- consolidating partnerships in regional priority areas to focus effort, and developing success stories to attract the enthusiasm and support of industry and government
- establishing a partners/contributors’ network or ‘Friends of the GER’ program, supported by a website, to provide information about the ranges and the GER Initiative and connect potential partners and supporters with ongoing programs
- developing operational frameworks to support internal communications and consultation
- developing resource materials for use in regional partnership networks



- developing regionally targeted marketing and promotions strategies
- consulting with lead partner organisations and other key stakeholders to develop a long-term vision and governance framework for the GER Initiative so it can extend beyond the term of current funding arrangements; this process has taken longer than expected and will be continued in 2009–10
- developing a draft tourism engagement strategy to realise the potential role of the tourism sector in promoting the GER Initiative and engaging with the GER Initiative in a mutually beneficial way.

Future income sources

With less than two years remaining of funding from the Environmental Trust, it is essential that potential sources of investment and financial support are found to ensure the GER Initiative persists beyond June 2010. A partnership project with Greening Australia is under way to:

- review previous work by partner organisations to:
 - collate recommendations on likely sources of program income
 - develop models for trialling these recommendations in the context of the GER Initiative
 - identify gaps in investigations and further investigate sources of income for the GER Initiative.
- obtain expert advice on establishing pilot projects (including appropriate governance frameworks) that satisfy the potential for income to be sourced to support a GER Initiative into the future. This will involve seeking advice on governance and sustainable investment frameworks from experts with experience in similar conservation initiatives, such as the Yellowstone to Yukon Initiative in North America, and exploring ways in which current strategies employed by the GER Initiative to promote awareness, support and ownership of the program by partners might be used to best effect.
- work with existing and prospective partners to identify potential locations for collaborative pilot projects and develop proposals to establish pilot projects in the most likely viable locations. An early indication of the likely start-up costs that will be needed from the GER Initiative's 2009–10 budget will be needed by March 2009 to ensure that adequate resources are allocated in that year for start-up.

Greening Australia is investigating and testing options for financial support from a range of sources, including:

- identifying landscapes with the potential to generate income from carbon sequestration, and enhancing connectivity and ecosystem resilience through the design of such plantations
- developing schemes that sell credits for the provision of ecosystem services such as water quality, maintenance of biodiversity and scenic amenity
- using GER communication products and services to generate income from commercial sources, such as online advertising and bookings service for local businesses, and consultancy services
- making better use of developers' investment in local biodiversity offsets, including accessing the market for the BioBanking Scheme
- making use of donations made locally, whether these are small amounts provided by supporters or large donations attracted from bequests, and gaining access to international organisations that have significant donor support.



Goal 5 Applying knowledge and skills: Applying people's knowledge and skills wisely for the benefit of the NSW GER

Performance evaluation and monitoring, evaluating and reporting

Because the GER Initiative is a long-term and large-scale strategy for achieving connectivity conservation, its success depends on establishing strong community support, strategic partnerships and operational processes. Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on program effectiveness during the early stages of establishing this infrastructure will allow for adaptive management and improve long-term effectiveness of the program.

During the latter half of 2008–09, significant progress was made on developing a performance evaluation and monitoring, evaluation and reporting plan to effectively measure the progress of the GER Initiative.

Building the science of continental-scale connectivity conservation in Australia

A landmark report by independent scientists led by Professor Brendan Mackey of the Australian National University on the scientific principles for continental-scale connectivity conservation of the great eastern ranges has been completed. The University of Queensland completed an independent peer review in December 2008. The Alps to Atherton Inter State Agencies Working Group that commissioned this work has gained approval from the Australian Government's Natural Resources Policies and Planning Committee to publish the report. The report will be valuable in influencing future debate on landscape connectivity conservation policies and priorities in Australia.

Grant agreements have been provided as contributions to biodiversity science and social research projects. All projects are under way. Results will be reported on in subsequent progress reports.

Plant and animal population viability modelling

The key outputs include:

- a long-term collaborative partnership between DECCW, the University of Melbourne, the Australian National University and Macquarie University with primary funding from the Australian Research Council; a principal goal of the partnership is to inform connectivity conservation priorities related to the GER Initiative in NSW
- a post-doctoral fellow has been appointed to develop population viability models to incorporate the best available knowledge, science, information and data for assessing conservation options under climate change
- a list of target species for trialling the population viability of models has been prepared, which includes many species occurring in the great eastern ranges; models are currently being developed for the greater glider and heath banksia
- spatial data layers have been prepared for 27 climate parameters for 2030, 2050 and 2070, as well as 'present-day' (1990); these will be linked with the population viability models (see previous dot point) to improve understanding of climate change impacts on species populations in the great eastern ranges, and develop management strategies best suited to enhance their viability
- a review paper has been prepared with international collaborators, describing the modelling approach and identifying relevant research challenges.



Social research

This project by Charles Sturt University and the University of Tasmania will address gaps in knowledge and awareness of, and the capacity to engage with, conservation programs in the Southern Highlands link. The project will determine the most effective ways of communicating with different land holders, community groups and industries. The project specifications were significantly reduced when a partnership grant of an additional \$400,000 was terminated when the Australian Government announced the closure of Land and Water Australia in April. Outcomes have been rescheduled to be delivered by June 2010. A research plan has been developed and field work has commenced.

Approaches to conserving biodiversity in the great eastern ranges

This project was identified in the annual plan but due to later changes negotiated to the budget, was not funded.

Spatial analysis and decision support

Significant progress on developing and implementing the spatial analysis methodology based on the best available data and connectivity conservation knowledge has been made. The following is a summary of the projects undertaken and the products produced to support key decision making processes in the priority partnership areas.

Hunter Valley partnership area

A new approach to modelling key wildlife habitat and corridors, using the most up-to-date satellite-derived vegetation maps, was developed and trialled in the Hunter partnership area. Maps of modelling outcomes were presented and informed key decisions at three stakeholder meetings (two agency steering group meetings and one stakeholder steering committee meeting).

The maps displaying the modelling results have proved to be very important. They have enabled stakeholders to identify four areas of interest based on common habitat and connectivity values. Ecological and social information is now being collated on these areas of interest, to inform their future management.

Kosciuszko to Coast (K2C)

A discussion paper outlining a proposal to undertake regional landscape mapping to inform and guide conservation planning was presented to the stakeholder steering committee. The committee endorsed the proposed project.

The K2C Technical Working Group held a key workshop to decide on the best approach for analysing regional conservation priorities in the region. The conceptual framework for landscape-scale conservation planning developed in this workshop was successfully trialled in the Hunter partnership area and is currently being applied in the K2C and Slopes to Summit partnership areas.

Spatial databases

A spatial database has been created for each partnership area. These databases now form the basis of a data audit for the Kosciuszko to Coast, Slopes to Summit and Hunter Valley partnership areas. The aim of developing these databases is that they will be made available to stakeholders under data sharing license agreements



3 Activities and outputs in 2008–09 against the objectives and milestones of the NSW Business Plan 2007–2010

Goal no. in business plan	Objective/milestone	Target date	Output	Achieved
Goal 1: Connectivity conservation				
6	Facilitate a national response by governments to connecting and conserving areas covered by the Alps to Atherton Initiative	mid-2008	A peer reviewed report by an independent scientist, Professor Brendan Mackey, on the scientific principles that underpin a continental-scale conservation corridor has been approved for publication in 2010	April 2008
	Initiate four targeted voluntary conservation agreement programs as demonstration projects	2008	Targeted programs implemented in Slopes to Summit, Border Ranges, Kosciuszko to Coast and Southern Highlands areas; in addition, \$130,000 was delivered as incentives through long-term property vegetation plans in the Border Ranges area (in conjunction with delivery of an additional \$290,000 for conservation incentives) by Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority.	May 2009
Goal 2: Communicating with the community				
4	Community consultation program commenced	Dec 2007	Over 60 organisations involved in partnership activities with the GER Initiative	Oct 2008
5	Conduct the first annual science forum involving managers and researchers who are involved with the Alps to Atherton Initiative	mid-2008	First GER science forum held at Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, to identify key research questions/priorities Two meetings of the Science and Technical Reference Group held to develop priorities for a research investment. Draft plan in preparation	Sep 2008 ongoing



Goal no. in business plan	Objective/milestone	Target date	Output	Achieved
6	Develop background information to help the community understand all aspects of the Alps to Atherton Initiative, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its purpose and vision • its economic and social benefits • private landowner benefits • ways in which projects developed under the Alps to Atherton Initiative will combat feral animals, fire and weeds. 	mid-2008	Basic web presence on DECCW web site established	July 2008
			Great Eastern Ranges film produced by IUCN/ Australian Geographic/ DECCW and launched at World Conservation Congress in Barcelona. Up to 1,000 copies being produced for widespread free distribution	Oct 2008
7	Develop a regular national newsletter to circulate amongst all stakeholders to inform, inspire and communicate with them	early 2008	A newsletter is being prepared and will be circulated using mass electronic mail-out technology	in progress
	Develop a GER website to serve as a communication medium for the program	Late 2009	Design and requirements are complete. Phase 1 is on track for completion by the end of July 2009 with subsequent phases due towards the end of 2009	Dec 2009
8	Alps to Atherton vision, brand and name agreed to and launched/marketed	May 2008	GER brand designed and selected.	Oct 2008
			GER Initiative launched via a high quality film and press conference at the World Parks Congress in Barcelona in October 2008	Feb 09 and ongoing
			Project-wide branding conventions for new name developed in consultation with regional partnerships Proposed TV and radio advertising campaign direction reviewed due to change in NSW Government policy on advertising – this is being incorporated into the communications strategy	Feb 09



Goal no. in business plan	Objective/milestone	Target date	Output	Achieved
Goal 3: People working together				
9	National working group established and operating	Dec 2007	Working group considered independent peer review of great eastern ranges scientific principles report. Report was presented to meeting in August for approval to publish	Dec 09
	Provide opportunities for people in the community to communicate and share their interests, values and ideas on the initiative. Forums could include public meetings and web discussion space	mid-2008	Significant community and partner engagement has occurred through a variety of forums, workshops, and other events in the five priority partnership areas	Ongoing
11	Stakeholder working group established and operating	Dec 2007	Stakeholder working group established	Feb 2009
Goal 4: Effective administration				
18	Operations plan for 07–08 completed	Aug 2007	Operational plan for 2008–09 revised	Jan 2009
19	Assess investment mechanisms provided by projects funded by the Environmental Trust and other programs, to ensure complementary resourcing	Oct 2007	Ongoing collaboration between GER Initiative and Environmental Trust projects, including Hotspots Fire Project and the LandAlive program, and including alignment of where project efforts are focused	July 2008 and ongoing
22	Draft evaluation management plan completed	Dec 2007	Draft monitoring, evaluation and reporting plan developed by officer on secondment from Commonwealth	June 2009
Goal 5: Applying knowledge				
15	The research program is successfully implemented and provides world-class scientific support by using the Alps to Atherton Initiative as an internationally significant case study to develop highly innovative approaches to connectivity conservation management	2007-2010	Draft Science and Information Delivery Plan developed for wider discussion with research partners	July 2009



4 Issues and opportunities

Within the five strategic priority areas, the GER Initiative is increasingly supported and driven by non-government partners (Nature Conservation Trust of NSW, Bush Heritage Australia, Greening Australia) and catchment management authorities (Northern Rivers, Hunter–Central Rivers, Hawkesbury–Nepean, Southern Rivers and Murray). Offers have been made in each area by a non-government organisation to lead efforts to consolidate partnership formation. This is a highly desirable outcome, and one that is emerging earlier than anticipated. It is also highly possible that the coal mining and other industries in the Hunter Valley will become significant contributors to the development of the GER Initiative during the next 12–18 months.

The increased number of non-government partners does, however, place increasing demands on the GER Initiative team to provide strategic program oversight and leadership on key aspects, such as connecting with tourism and other industry groups, conservation prioritisation, policy development and the production of media and marketing products.

The larger number and broader range of interests involved in the GER Initiative provides more capacity to engage widely with the community than if the GER Initiative team were based solely in DECCW. In turn, DECCW is now better placed to focus on addressing strategic partnerships with industry, particularly with potential partners in the tourism sector, to gain support and investment into the future. This opportunity could be more fully realised when the lead partners develop a brand strategy that reflects the lead partner organisations acting as the one entity. Such a brand should attract commercial industry support.

Late approval of the budget and a change in government policy on advertising has resulted in a significant change in the direction of the proposed marketing/TV/media campaign. The focus for delivery of GER Initiative communication has shifted onto online communication and communication through partnerships. The creative content of the communication strategy will still be developed as planned, but suited to the new delivery modes. Proposed web-based delivery may include:

- an entry point for tourists so they can access detailed information about the GER Initiative; it will provide a framework for local tourism bodies, businesses and community groups to add content to over time
- contact information for the conservation programs
- science information about the great eastern ranges
- links to information on national parks and reserves, and related conservation programs
- mobile delivery so visitors can access at least some of the above on the road – a phone network rather than receiver-only GPS would be the most appropriate technology.



5 Conclusions

The GER Initiative has continued to make strong progress in achieving the approved objectives, goals and milestones for 2008–09. This significant progress reflects the considerable investment in relationship building that is required for a partnership-driven project.

DECCW's efforts to establish a wide range of partners willing to work together has placed the GER Initiative in a very strong position to rapidly implement connectivity conservation activities in the five key priority areas and to begin marketing and awareness activities involving the tourism and industry sectors in 2009–10.

Due to delays and changes in government policy on advertising, earlier targets regarding the public profile are unachievable. Activities are now consistent with the communications strategy recommendation for well-established internal communications, consultation and relationship building.

Key issues for the next 12–18 months include consolidating partnerships, increasing community awareness and developing a transition process to define and establish a future governance model and sustainable sources of funding. These outcomes will be developed in partnership with key non-government conservation organisations.



Appendix: Summary of outputs and deliverables

A. General outputs and deliverables

Partnership area	Activity	Funds allocated	Description	Status
Border Ranges	Piloting Aboriginal engagement in the Border Ranges	\$90,000	Engaging Indigenous communities by building the capacity of private property owners through property management planning and joint property ventures	Project delivered the required number of property management plans, and materials were purchased to construct the connection walk
Border Ranges	Connect Kids Education Kit	\$30,000	Development of a cultural connections kit utilising outputs of property management plans and the Threatened species priority action statement, in conjunction with local Aboriginal communities and schools	Grant agreement finalised and funding delivered in December 2008.
Hunter Valley	Climate data collection	\$10,000	Contribution to 18-month project collecting high resolution (site) climate data. Project will provide essential data on baseline climate conditions and input to vegetation and climate change modelling, and will engage land holders in field data collection	150 iButton sensors have been sited in locations throughout the Hunter Valley, including 99 sensor stations on private land, with data gathering ongoing
Kosciuszko to Coast	Whole-of-paddock restoration	\$15,000	Incentives for paddock resting to promote rehabilitation and improved biodiversity value of 'messy native paddocks'	Greening Australia advised that available funds were insufficient to match delivery costs – funds to be redirected to fund the 2007–08 overspend



B: Incentives and agreements

	Border Ranges connectivity Conservation incentives	Slopes to Summit covenant agreements
Lead organisation	Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority	Nature Conservation Trust of NSW
Dollars available from GER Initiative	\$130,000 from the GER Initiative and (and \$390,000 delivered by the catchment management authority across aligned programs)	\$80,000
Proposals received	13 covering 190 hectares (and 54 across aligned catchment management programs covering 928 hectares)	4 covering 180 hectares
Proposals inspected	13 (and 39 across aligned catchment management authority programs)	4
Agreements negotiated	5 (and 19 across aligned catchment management authority programs)	4
Area negotiated	440 hectares All sites were freehold tenure apart from one Crown Lands site (14.3 hectares), i.e. Byrangerry Grass Reserve Trust All agreements were property vegetation plans registered on title	180 hectares All sites were freehold tenure All agreements were covenants registered on title
Ecosystems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 223 hectares were identified as rare and endangered vegetation types, largely subtropical rainforest • 16 hectares of paperbark swamp sclerophyll forest were registered as being in good condition • Sites contained a number of threatened species • 14 sites included riparian areas with 4 sites being predominantly riparian • 4 sites and 11.2 kilometres of stream bank were priority Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority river reaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest types recorded were brittle gum-peppermint open forest; candlebark-applebox-peppermint forest; riparian Blakely's red gum-broad-leaved sally woodland; long-leaved box-red box-red stringybark forest; and river red gum forest. • Native grassland comprised red legged, kangaroo and wallaby grasses. • There was recorded evidence of the yellow-bellied glider and powerful owl.
Management works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5 kilometres of fencing will be constructed on sites to exclude stock • Stock exclusion fencing repairs will be made to at least the same length of existing fencing • Many applicants employed professional fencing and bush regenerator contractors to assist with maintenance and improvement works 	



Management plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41 site action plans • 24 property vegetation plans 		
Field days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Bell Miner Associated Dieback Field Day occurred in late April 2009 on the Sommerville property, the largest property funded under biodiversity grants and located in a GER priority area near Toonumbah National Park. The field day showcased works under way on the site, particularly splatter gun techniques to control lantana. 		
	Kosciuszko to Coast targeted conservation agreements and wildlife refuges	Southern Highlands targeted conservation agreements and wildlife refuges	Border Ranges covenant agreements
Administrative body	DECCW Community Partners' Program	DECCW Community Partners' Program	Nature Conservation Trust of NSW
Dollars available from GER Initiative	\$70,000	\$50,000	\$90,000
Proposals received	8 covering 420 hectares	5 covering 161 hectares	14
Proposals inspected	8	3	14
Agreements negotiated	5 (in preparation)	4 (in preparation)	7 (in preparation)
Area negotiated	128 hectares (4 voluntary conservation agreements) 400 hectares (1 wildlife refuge)	17 hectares	
Ecosystems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snow gum woodland, and black gum forest (both provisionally listed as endangered ecological communities) • Grassy box woodland endangered ecological community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Box gum grassy woodland • Red bloodwood– Sydney peppermint – Sydney stringybark forest of the southern Blue Mountains • Sydney turpentine– ironbark forest • Sydney peppermint gum forest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal flooded gum • Wet bangalow brushbox • Northern moist blackbutt • Northern wet brushbox • Wattle • Wet bloodwood tallowwood



	Kosciuszko to Coast targeted conservation agreements and wildlife refuges	Southern Highlands targeted conservation agreements and wildlife refuges	Border Ranges covenant agreements
Ecosystems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riparian vegetation and in-stream environments of Macquarie Perch breeding habitat (listed as 'endangered' under the Commonwealth's <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>) Macquarie Perch breeding section of river (listed as 'endangered' under the 'Fisheries Management Act). Connectivity across a highly modified landscape Vegetation containing a suite of threatened species Protection of vegetation along a section of the Murrumbidgee River which is listed on the National Heritage register for its values as a fauna migratory route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swamplands Sandstone heathlands Illawarra lowland grassy woodland Illawarra rainforest Dry sclerophyll rainforest Wet sclerophyll forest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wet flooded gum tallowwood Rainforest Introduced scrub Grey gum rainforest
Management works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management schemes for both conservation agreements and wildlife refuges provide guidance and direction for management of conservation values Monitoring schemes put in place with the establishment of conservation agreements and wildlife refuges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management schemes for both conservation agreements and wildlife refuges provide guidance and direction for managing conservation values Monitoring schemes are put in place with the establishment of conservation agreements and wildlife refuges 	



	Kosciuszko to Coast targeted conservation agreements and wildlife refuges	Southern Highlands targeted conservation agreements and wildlife refuges	Border Ranges covenant agreements
Management works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing monitoring and support through the DECCW Conservation Partners Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is ongoing monitoring and support through the DECCW Conservation Partners Program 	
Management plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-ground works support the establishment and ongoing management of conservation agreements and wildlife refuges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-ground works support the establishment and ongoing management of conservation agreements and wildlife refuges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-ground works support the establishment and ongoing management of conservation agreements and wildlife refuges
Field days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land holder gathering and networks are encouraged and supported to build land holder capacity and capability through the DECCW Conservation Partners Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion through Canyonleigh field days (attended by 40 landholders) 	



C: Regional partnership facilitation

KPI	Description	Border Ranges	Hunter Valley
	Lead organisation	Nature Conservation Trust of NSW	OzGreen
#1	List the major outcomes of your project (minimum 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Border Ranges Partners Meeting (25/6/09) attended by 24 people plus 8 Nature Conservation Trust and GER Initiative staff. Development of draft partnership model, terms of reference, working group and directory of partners, their activities and events • GER workshop to effectively engage the Northern Rivers Regional Biodiversity Management Plan Steering Group in an advisory role for the Border Ranges partnership and identify the short to medium term priorities for implementing the draft Border Ranges Rainforest Biodiversity Management Plan • Participation in the Border Ranges cross border 'Caring for our Country' proposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing together motivated and experienced natural resource management partners, the local community and a diverse range of interest groups from across the Hunter region • Raising awareness and engendering enthusiasm for the GER Hunter Initiative whilst acknowledging the diversity, challenges and cultural significance of the region • Forming the steering committee and identifying primary areas of interest to focus activities in Hunter Valley
#10	Number and type of collaborative activities with partner groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four sets of preparation of summary documents for community service officers and extension staff regarding summer programs; working group to identify short-term opportunities for GER investment in implementing the draft Border Ranges Rainforest Biodiversity Management Plan; preparation of partners meeting; preparation of cross border Caring for our Country application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not generally applicable at this stage of program, however opportunities have arisen to form a partnership with an initiative by the Australian Museum to gather climate data by using iButtons installed at various locations around the Hunter region
#11	Number of people directly participating in project activities (organisers/participants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32 x (including 3 x Nature Conservation Trust staff) and representatives from the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority, the Nature Conservation Trust, DECCW, Envite, environmental consultancies and the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 307x (incl 3 x OzGreen staff)



KPI	Description	Border Ranges	Hunter Valley
	Lead organisation	Nature Conservation Trust of NSW	OzGreen
#12	Number of workshops/seminars/events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 x GER workshops with Northern Rivers Regional Biodiversity Management Plan Steering Committee GER agenda item at Northern Rivers Regional Biodiversity Management Plan Steering Group meetings (4/12/08, 12/3/09 and 18/6/09) 1 x Border Ranges partners forum (25/6/09) GER facilitators workshop (29 and 30/6/09) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 x annual partners' forum 2 x Agencies Working Group meetings 3 x Partnership Steering Committee meetings 28 x local government, industry and other partners' briefings
#13	Nature of training conducted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updates on GER Initiative and Border Ranges natural resource management community engagement, development of partners group, strengthening of existing regional natural resource management networks, capacity building of facilitator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
#14	Number of people who attended workshops/seminars/events/training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See KPI 11 on previous page 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See KPI 11 on previous page
#15	Number of volunteer hours contributed to the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 322 hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A (during this reporting period)
#16	Stage of implementation of partner communication plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Still in development. Preliminary agreement by partners on partnership structure and terms of reference but no formal communications plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At stage of bringing partners on board and identifying nature/scope of partnership. This is being achieved through stakeholder forums and steering committee meetings
#17	Number of types of resources produced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 x summer programs documents; partners meeting materials including agenda, draft partnership model, draft terms of reference, draft directory of partners and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable at this stage of program. Planning is under way for newsletters, brochures and fact sheets – aligned with communications plan from DECCW. Input is being prepared for the GER website



KPI	Description	Border Ranges	Hunter Valley
	Lead organisation	Nature Conservation Trust of NSW	OzGreen
#18	Number of each type of communication resource distributed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summer program document provided to community service officers, extension staff and consultants (18); meeting materials (4 x 35 = 140) were sent to people additional to those that attended. A total of 158 communication resources were distributed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable at this stage of program
#19	Number of media items published/ broadcasted about the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The only media relates to the Border Ranges covenant program, including 1 Border Ranges Partnership Facilitation Final Report. advertisement in the Northern Star (see March progress report for Border Ranges covenants), and distribution of program information to local natural resource management networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In alignment with the GER communications policy, media coverage will not be finalised until the geography of the area, and the partners and media audiences, have been finalised
#29	Number of GER presentations to types of audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 GER workshops 5 partners meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28 local government, industry and other partners' briefings



KPI	Description	Southern Highlands Link	Kosciuszko to Coast
	Lead organisation	Greening Australia	Bush Heritage Australia
#1	List the major outcomes of your project (minimum 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major progression and detailed review of conservation action planning process including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – participation of key stakeholders – a detailed review by Greening Australia Director of Science, and NSW and national boards – a feasibility assessment of biodiverse carbon plantations and biodiversity offsetting, including land access economic analyses – the successful negotiation of Hawkesbury–Nepean catchment management funding (\$196,000) for Arthursleigh to protect and restore 10 kilometres of the Wollondilly River – brokered additional Hawkesbury–Nepean Catchment Management Authority project to protect 1,000 hectares of key corridors including grassy box woodland – successfully obtaining corporate funding of \$83,000 for the Arthursleigh project from Macquarie Bank and Accor Hotels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7,200 hectares of private land influenced by Kosciuszko to Coast partner incentive programs, e.g. voluntary conservation agreements, Nature Conservation Trust covenant/revolving funds, Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority bush incentives • 4 land management agreements developed for over 817 hectares of privately-managed property including protection of the only known site of the critically endangered Bredbo gentian (plant) • Worked with other landscape partnerships of the GER Initiative, particularly the Slopes to Summit (project) • Worked between all Kosciuszko to Coast partner organisations through the Kosciuszko to Coast Steering Committee, steering committee meetings and work group meetings • Worked with smaller groups of partner organisations, particularly through organising joint site visits to landholder properties • Worked with individual partner groups through attending group meetings • Worked with groups of land holders • Worked with individual land holders



KPI	Description	Southern Highlands Link	Kosciuszko to Coast
	Lead organisation	Greening Australia	Bush Heritage Australia
#10	Number and type of collaborative activities with partner groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Caring for our Country applications submitted (unsuccessful) • Hawkesbury–Nepean Catchment Management Authority project proposal developed and funded • 2 corporate project proposals submitted and funded • Background research to enable development of potential carbon and BioBanking credit projects • Multiple biodiverse carbon plantation proposals submitted (awaiting response) • Biodiversity offset opportunities investigated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Caring for our Country applications submitted (unsuccessful) • 1 job fund application • Conservation action planning major review undertaken • Develop kangaroo grass trial for 30 landholders
#11	Number of people directly participating in project activities (organisers/ participants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90 people involved in discussions about on-ground activities, and participation in field events • 40 participants at Canyonleigh Field Day on 30 May 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 land holders directly engaged • 180 land holders participating in workshops, promotion events, planning and training • Extensive partner group participation – 10 organisations with extensive networks involving more than 200 people
#12	Number of workshops/ seminars/events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 conservation action planning workshop • 1 community field day (canyonleigh) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 conservation action planning workshops • 6 community field days/ workshops/seminars • 6 Kosciuszko to Coast Steering Group meetings • Monthly Kosciuszko to Coast Technical Working Group meetings
#13	Nature of training conducted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 facilitator involved in training in conservation action planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassy Ecosystem Management Kit training for 30 government and landholders • African Lovegrass Workshop – 50 attendees • Grasslands Extravaganza Day – 40 attendees



KPI	Description	Southern Highlands Link	Kosciuszko to Coast
	Lead organisation	Greening Australia	Bush Heritage Australia
#13	Nature of training conducted		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grassland Survey Training – Friends of Grasslands Railway Walk – 40 attendees Enviro-learn students from TAFE – 10 attendees
#14	Number of people who attended workshops/seminars/events/training		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See KPI 11 on previous page
#15	Number of volunteer hours contributed to the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 406 hours contributed as in-kind via Greening Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 400 volunteer hours contributed from partner organisations 18 Bush Heritage Australia volunteers contributing 245 volunteers hours at anchor property in the Kosciuszko to Coast region
#16	Stage of implementation of partner communication plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft communications plan developed on conjunction with Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final draft currently being reviewed by partner organisations
#17	Number of types of resources produced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft communication plan developed with Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority Powerpoint presentation developed Media assistance provided to the GER Initiative, DECCW's Conservation Partners Program and the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority Developed partnership terms of reference Developed position description for landscape leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kosciuszko to Coast website has been maintained and updated – www.k2c.org.au Kosciuszko to Coast project area boundary has been reviewed and refined Generic Powerpoint presentation for use by all partner groups 6 event flyers 1 conservation action planning primer document 1 potted history of Kosciuszko to Coast document Summary report of Kosciuszko to Coast on-ground achievements



KPI	Description	Southern Highlands Link	Kosciuszko to Coast
	Lead organisation	Greening Australia	Bush Heritage Australia
#18	Number of each type of communication resource distributed		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 newsletters (6–8pp) with circulation of 550 • 5 event flyers with circulation of 550 • Refined and reviewed Kosciuszko to Coast objectives, strategic actions and facilitator works plan
#19	Number of media items published/ broadcasted about the project		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 land holders directly engaged • 180 land holders participating in workshops, promotion events, planning and training • Extensive partner group participation – 10 organisations with extensive networks involving more than 200 people
#29	Number of GER presentations to types of audiences		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 print media articles – Queanbeyan Age, Cooma Monaro Express, Monaro Post, Summit Sun • 1 radio broadcast interview – ABC



KPI	Description	Slopes to Summit
	Lead organisation	Nature Conservation Trust of NSW
#1	List the major outcomes of your project (minimum 3)	<p>Invitation and acceptance of Holbrook Landcare Group into the Slopes to Summit Partnership</p> <p>Development of a medium-scale bid (approximately \$12 million over 4 years) under Caring for our Country funding round and acceptance by Holbrook Landcare Group to be proponent of the bid</p> <p>Finalisation of Slopes to Summit connectivity conservation objectives and initiation of process for development of Slopes to Summit communications strategy, through coordination of communications workgroup</p>
#10	Number and type of collaborative activities with partner groups	<p>5 partnership meetings</p> <p>1 joint funding application through Caring for our Country business plan for \$10 million over 4 years</p> <p>See KPI 12</p>
#11	Number of people directly participating in project activities (organisers/ participants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 8 and 15 representatives of 8 partner organisations • 6 partner organisations directly involved in delivery of works
#12	Number of workshops/ seminars/events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 wildlife seminar, Tumbarumba, November 2009 (promoting the Nature Conservation Trust Slopes to Summit covenanting program and the importance of conservation activities in the Slopes to Summit area) • 1 information session for Holbrook Landcare Group's natural resource management committee on the natural regeneration of trees in agricultural landscapes; recognition of factors limiting regeneration and typical timeframes for recruitment to occur
#13	Nature of training conducted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see KPI 12 above)
#14	Number of people who attended workshops/ seminars/events/ training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 people – covenantees and general public • 6 members of Holbrook Landcare Group's natural resource management committee • (see also KPI 12)
#15	Number of volunteer hours contributed to the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A (during this reporting period)
#16	Stage of implementation of partner communication plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Slopes to Summit communication plan is still in development. Slopes to Summit has been promoted through partner programs, but a full launch depends on further development of the Slopes to Summit communication strategy and the progress of the GER communication strategy



KPI	Description	Slopes to Summit
	Lead organisation	Nature Conservation Trust of NSW
#17	Number of types of resources produced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions to GER website in production • Slopes to Summit info pamphlet and promotional poster
#18	Number of each type of communication resource distributed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information pamphlets (GER and Slopes to Summit – about 50 of each) • Slopes to Summit /GER promotional poster (seen by 400 people)
#19	Number of media items published/broadcasted about the project	
#29	Number of GER presentations to types of audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife seminar to landholders and general public at Tumbarumba, November 2008 • Poster presentation to land managers, policy makers and researchers at Biodiversity Conference, Ballarat, June 2009



D: Reports

Report title	Author(s)	Status/publication details
Business plan and partnership reports		
Great Eastern Ranges Initiative Business Plan Part B Annual Plan 2008–2009	DECCW	July 2008
Kosciuszko to Coast (K2C) partnership report	Bush Heritage Australia	July 2009
Southern Highlands Link partnership report	Greening Australia	July 2009
Border Ranges partnership report	Nature Conservation Trust of NSW	July 2009
Slopes to Summit Program (S2S) partnership report	Nature Conservation Trust of NSW	July 2009
Hunter Valley partnership report	OzGreen	July 2009
Slopes to Summit Program (S2S) Covenanting Program final report	Nature Conservation Trust of NSW	July 2009
Border Ranges Covenanting Program final report	Nature Conservation Trust of NSW	July 2009
Kosciuszko to Coast (K2C) voluntary conservation agreements and wildlife refuges	DECCW (Community Partners Program)	July 2009
Southern Highlands Link voluntary conservation agreements and wildlife refuges	DECCW (Community Partners Program)	July 2009
Border Ranges connectivity conservation incentives final report	Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority	July 2009 summary report available on request. Detailed report with property vegetation plan details not available for distribution (includes material commercial in confidence)



Report title	Author(s)	Status/publication details
GER science		
Connectivity conservation and the Great Eastern Ranges corridor: an independent report to the Interstate Agency Working Group (Alps to Atherton Connectivity Conservation Working Group) convened under the Environment Heritage and Protection Council/Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council	Mackey B, Watson J and Worboys GL	Awaiting Ministerial approval for public release
Great Eastern Ranges Science and Information Delivery Plan	DECCW, Howling G	July 2009 (draft subject to peer review)
Great Eastern Ranges Performance Evaluation and MER Plan	Dahl-Tacconi N	July 2009 (draft subject to peer review)
Natural and cultural values		
The natural heritage values of the NSW section of the Great Eastern Ranges Corridor	Hyder Consulting	July 2008



E: Completed communications collateral completed

Item	Supplier	Description and use	Feedback	Notes
Re-designed GER logo	Paper Monkey	<p>Distributed to all partnership facilitators with the advice that it must be used on all promotional material, along with the NSW Environmental Trust logo</p> <p>Distributed to local organisations holding events that the GER Initiative has sponsored.</p> <p>Used in advertising for Byron Shire Council's World Environment Day, 'Living Landscapes', as sponsor, Caldera Environment Centre World Environment Day and upcoming Big Scrub Rainforest Day and Kyogle Forum (Richmond Landcare Services) which are all GER-sponsored activities in the Border Ranges. Media uses included event brochures, web page, program lift-out in local paper and most promotion of events.</p>	Excellent. Now being used by all partnership facilitators and DECCW GER Initiative staff	
Designed priority area icons	Paper Monkey	Distributed to all partnership facilitators and used on any partner documents and papers such as steering committee papers	Good. Helps to establish each priority area with its own name (e.g. Slopes to Summit) and individualise programs	
Brochure	Paper Monkey	<p>Description: colour generic brochure giving background on the Great Eastern Ranges and information on the Initiative – includes a map of regional partnerships in NSW</p> <p>Uses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Various tourism – DECCW Fitzroy Falls 2. Land holders who were interviewed for media articles who then distributed the brochures to local TAFES and other land holders 3. Distributed to all partnership facilitators 4. Distributed to local organisations for several forums and World Environment Days that the GER has sponsored 	Good feedback. More requests from Landcare groups and facilitators.	



Item	Supplier	Description and use	Feedback	Notes
DVD <i>Australia's great eastern ranges—our vision to protect them forever</i>	Australian Geographic	<p>Description: DVD presented by Sorrel Wilby, Australian Geographic, that explains why the great eastern ranges are so special and the vision of the initiative.</p> <p>Uses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Land holders who were interviewed for media articles who then distributed the DVDs to local TAFES and other land holders 2. Distributed to local organisations for several forums and World Environment Days that the GER has sponsored, and was screened at the Outdoor Movie Program of the Byron Shire World Environment Day 3. Used by Graeme Worboys of the Independent Union for the Conservation of Nature as part of parliamentary lobbying to increase awareness of climate change 4. Used by land holders passionate about conservation to promote the GER Initiative at Cooma TAFE in conservation courses. Donated to Cooma TAFE library and Cooma–Monaro local library 	Very grateful for provision of conservation promotional material, especially for education purposes.	
Polo shirts embroidered with GER logo	Insignia Design	<p>Distributed to all partnership facilitators.</p> <p>Used as prizes and give aways at local partner meetings and World Environment Days (as listed under 'Brochure')</p>	Good. Well liked. More requested in specific colours.	
Caps	Paddywack and National Promotions	<p>To be used at Landcare Catchment Management Forum on 9–11 Sept 2009 as part of attendee conference satchel</p> <p>To be distributed to partnership facilitators for promotional use</p>		
Images library	Ian Brown – Elanaus P/L	<p>Description: a selection of beautiful landscape photos by Ian Brown have been purchased</p> <p>Uses: for promotional purposes and tourism marketing</p>		Listed under 'Tourism work'



Item	Supplier	Description and use	Feedback	Notes
Land holder stories library	Contracted GER media writer	Comprises interviews, transcripts and audio interviews with land holders		
Overview sheet	Contracted GER media writer			
GER fact sheet	Contracted GER media writer			

Communications and tourism contracts/grants completed

KPI	Supplier	Deliverables	Delivery date
	National Parks Association	Phase 1 – GER crossings report	April 2009
	National Parks Association	Phase 2 – GER crossings report	June 2009

F: Communications and tourism contracts/grants in progress

KPI	Supplier	Deliverables	Delivery date
	Arketype P/L	Mobile Exhibition Display using images from Australian Traveller campaign to promote the GER Initiative	January 2010
	Mental Media P/L	Mobile Exhibition Display – topographic multi media model to promote the GER Initiative	August 2009
	Australian Traveller	Photographic campaign	October 2009 to March 2010
	Australian Traveller	Photographic campaign	



G: Spatial analysis

Activity	Objective	Status
GIS support and related assistance	Provide general GIS support for GER team	Up-to-date
Derive statistics on the great eastern ranges	Undertake spatial analysis to derive descriptive statistics such as a list of national parks and reserves in the great eastern ranges and the proportion of the NSW and Australian population that rely on fresh water provided by the great eastern ranges	Complete
Prepare mapping products	Provide graphical information for the GER Initiative team and for use in publications and reports	Complete
Compilation of spatial databases for priority partnership areas	Compile a GIS spatial database for the entire GER study area and each of the five priority partnership areas	Initiated and ongoing. Data for Queensland and Victoria has been sourced
Prepare datasets for use in landscape-scale conservation assessment within partnership areas	Compile and prepare GIS datasets to guide analysis of key habitat and corridors in priority partnership areas	Complete for the Hunter partnership area, ongoing in Slopes to Summit and Kosciuszko to Coast areas
Undertake landscape-scale conservation assessments	Provide maps showing outputs from key habitat and corridor analysis within priority partnership areas to support decision making processes	Complete for the Hunter Partnership area, ongoing for Slopes to Summit and Kosciuszko to Coast areas
Develop maps for use in partnership area conservation action planning	Develop maps to inform the decision making process in the partnership areas	Complete for the Hunter Partnership area, ongoing for Slopes to Summit and Kosciuszko to Coast areas
Document the landscape-scale analysis principles and GIS techniques	Document the principles and GIS techniques used to undertake biodiversity forecasting and key habitat and corridor analysis	Draft completed
Develop a landscape scale conservation assessment framework	Develop a conceptual framework for the inclusion of landscape-scale conservation analysis results into existing planning processes (e.g. catchment action planning process)	Complete
Liaise and assist technical and planning staff within GER stakeholder organisations	Work closely with technical and planning staff within GER stakeholder organisations	Complete and ongoing



Activity	Objective	Status
Initiate and run technical workshops	Run workshop with the Kosciuszko to Coast technical working group to develop a analysis framework for landscape-scale conservation analysis in the Kosciuszko to Coast area	Complete
Landscape value mapping	Landscape value mapping to be undertaken for the NSW Eastern Division. Currently contributing to landscape-scale planning processes in the partnership areas. When complete, this mapping product will form an important part of the GER-wide analysis.	Commenced – 25% complete

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The Great Eastern Ranges Initiative also has its own email address (info@greasterranges.org.au) and website (www.greasterranges.org.au).

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