

OEH Citizen Science Strategy 2016–18

Driving a new era of public participation in science
to support OEH decision-making



OEH Citizen Science Strategy 2016–18

Citizen science is scientific work undertaken by members of the general public, often in collaboration with or under the direction of professional scientists and scientific institutions.

Citizen science is growing rapidly in Australia and globally and presents valuable opportunities to engage with the community. Despite the potential, there are challenges to make sure the information generated from citizen science is robust, can be readily captured and stored, can produce meaningful results to support decision-making.

OEH citizen science

OEH's objective is to make sure that all citizen science undertaken or commissioned across OEH meets consistent standards and generates information that will be used by OEH to support decision-making. There are currently a number of citizen science projects in OEH, including successful projects in National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and other areas of OEH. The Citizen Science Strategy will build on this existing knowledge and capacity to grow citizen science projects in OEH.

This strategy should be read in conjunction with the [OEH Citizen Science Position Statement](#).

OEH supports citizen science as an exciting and innovative way of improving the scope and quality of information about the environment of New South Wales and to better engage and partner with the community. OEH is also part of a wider New South Wales, Australian and global community working in this field and will support and collaborate with projects and initiatives of mutual benefit.

Citizen science is a great way for the local community to be involved in research.
Photo: S Cotrelle



Vision

Drive a new era of public participation in science by developing collaborative projects that support decision-making and are engaging for the public.

The OEH-wide strategy is needed to achieve this vision. It will focus citizen science projects on strategic issues and guide development of citizen science more broadly. It aims to focus OEH effort on filling priority information gaps through the support and growth of citizen science projects.

OEH needs insights into community motivations and barriers to public participation in science. Targeted tools and resources are also needed to help OEH staff consider, develop and run citizen science projects.

Open and accessible information

It is vital that OEH ensures that the capture and storage of citizen science data and information is scientifically rigorous and trusted in order to increase the use of good quality citizen science information. OEH is committed to making data and information provided by the community open and accessible and giving citizen scientists an improved understanding of how that information is used.

We have developed a number of goals with identified actions to achieve our vision.



2012-02-26 1:56:37 PM M 1/3 0 19°C

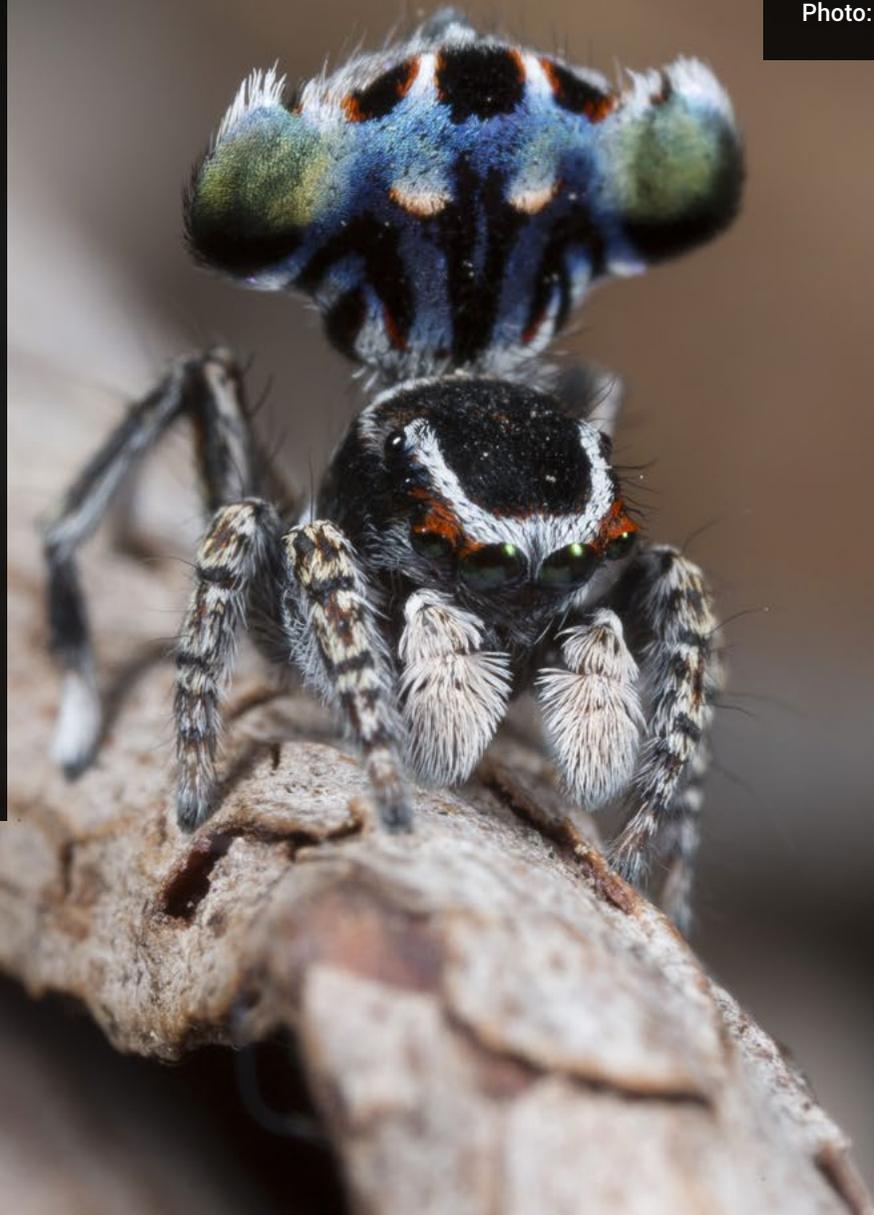


Citizen scientists working online are helping speed up the processing of thousands of images captured by motion sensing cameras for WildCount, a long term fauna monitoring project.
Photo: OEH

Goals

- 1 Determine what motivates the community and OEH to partner in citizen science.
- 2 Make it easy for citizen scientists and OEH to share, document and view information and communicate online.
- 3 Develop standard approaches and build capacity within OEH for high quality citizen science projects.
- 4 Grow citizen science in OEH to address priority information gaps.

Citizen scientists have helped discover new species and can play an important role in identifying and classifying images collected by scientists.
Photo: © Jurgen Otto



Actions

- 1 Champion citizen science in NSW.
- 2 Build capacity within OEH to partner in citizen science and support innovation.
- 3 Prioritise efforts in citizen science to fill the most important information gaps for OEH that are aligned to Government, Corporate Plan and Knowledge Strategy needs.
- 4 Integrate and align citizen science into other OEH strategies and initiatives, including the Open Government initiatives and the OEH Volunteer Strategy.
- 5 Develop a standard approach to citizen science across OEH, guide best practice and ensure scientific rigour.
- 6 Evaluate public engagement in citizen science and the contribution of citizen science to science and Government decision-making.
- 7 Partner with local, national and international citizen science projects to achieve mutual benefits.

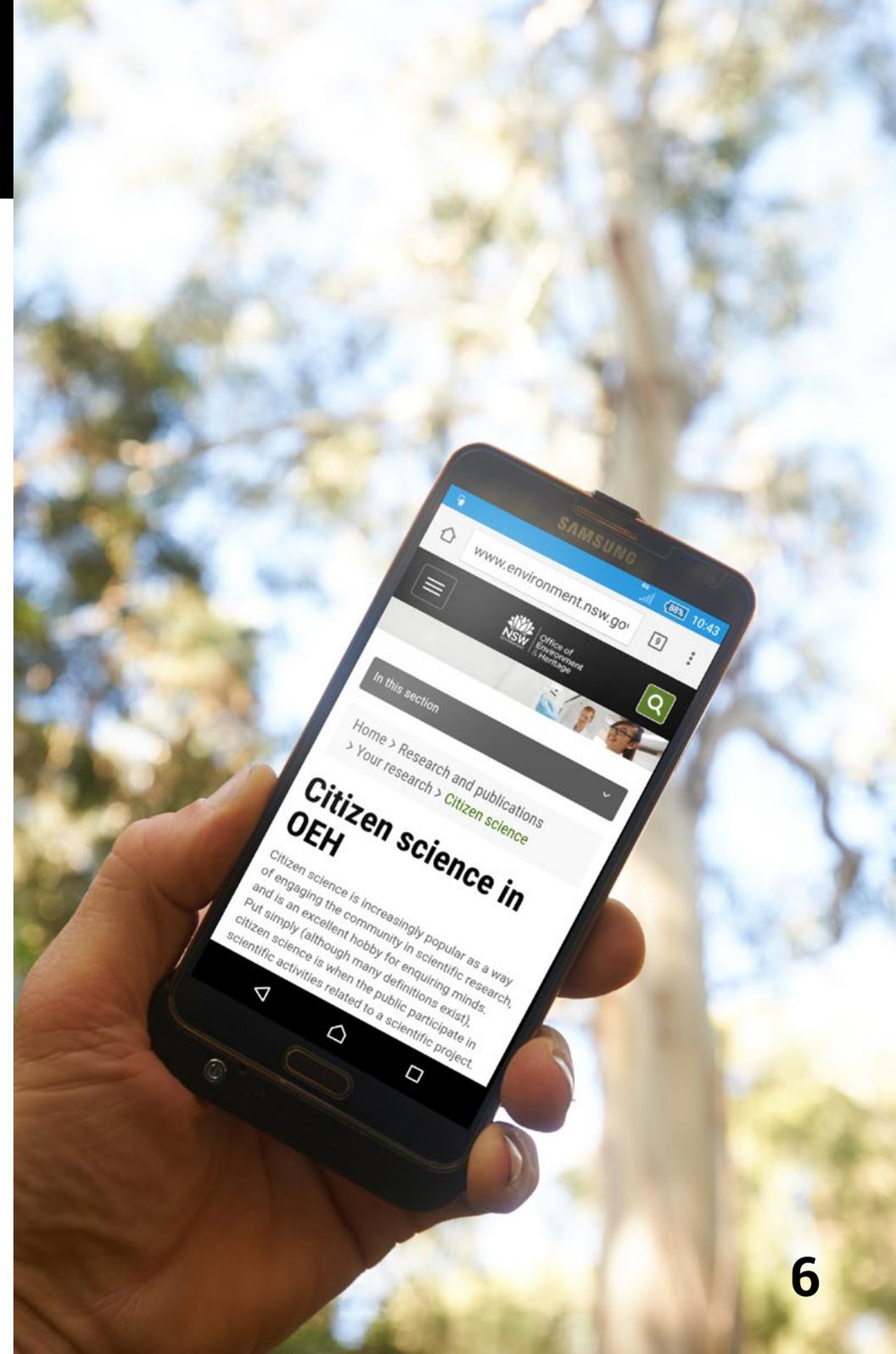


Three key outcomes

- 1 To build the capacity for citizen science in OEH and within the community.
- 2 To ensure that citizen science provides scientifically rigorous data and information.
- 3 To ensure the community is active and engaged in science and recognised as a partner in science projects.



OEH is committed to ensuring citizen science provides scientifically rigorous data and information. Photo above and right: S Cottrelle



Citizen Science Strategy – three year timeline

Year 1 2016	Year 2 2017	Year 3 2018
Build capacity and conduct research	Build projects and systems	Embed and implement
<p>Goal 1 Motivation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct social research into motivation and barriers. <p>Goal 2 Make it easy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore and develop data protocols and an expertise register. Simplify citizen science information on the OEH website. Begin developing new web functionality. <p>Goal 3 New standards and capacity building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop tools and resources for OEH staff. <p>Goal 4 Grow citizen science:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm OEH priorities for citizen science projects. Explore partnerships to address OEH priority information gaps. Develop a communication plan. 	<p>Goal 1 Motivation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share insights about what motivates the community and OEH to partner in citizen science. <p>Goal 2 Make it easy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop interactive web functionality and online communities. <p>Goal 3 New standards and capacity building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build staff skills in developing and running citizen science projects. <p>Goal 4 Grow citizen science:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore new citizen science opportunities in major OEH initiatives. Build new partnerships to address OEH priority information gaps. Implement the communication plan. 	<p>Goal 1 Motivation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop initiatives to acknowledge and celebrate the efforts of citizen scientists. <p>Goal 2 Make it easy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure data standards are in place and there are integrated approaches to data sharing. <p>Goal 3 New standards and capacity building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a network of OEH practitioners. Apply best practice and new technology so OEH is recognised as active and innovative in citizen science. <p>Goal 4 Grow citizen science:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a registration process for citizen science projects and people. Deliver new OEH citizen science projects. Partnerships in place to address OEH priority information gaps. Ensure the communication plan is delivered. Conduct a 3-year evaluation.

© 2015 State of NSW and Office of Environment and Heritage

With the exception of photographs, the State of NSW and Office of Environment and Heritage are pleased to allow this material to be reproduced in whole or in part for educational and non-commercial use, provided the meaning is unchanged and its source, publisher and authorship are acknowledged. Specific permission is required for the reproduction of photographs.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. However, as appropriate, readers should obtain independent advice before making any decision based on this information.

All content in this publication unless credited otherwise is owned by OEH and is protected by Crown Copyright. It is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International \(CC BY 4.0\)](#), subject to the exemptions contained in the licence. The legal code for the licence is available at [Creative Commons](#).

OEH asserts the right to be attributed as author of the original material in the following manner: © State of New South Wales and Office of Environment and Heritage 2015.

Published by:
Office of Environment and Heritage
59 Goulburn Street, Sydney NSW 2000
PO Box A290, Sydney South NSW 1232
Phone: +61 2 9995 5000 (switchboard)
Phone: 131 555 (environment information and publications requests)
Phone: 1300 361 967 (national parks, general environmental enquiries, and publications requests)
Fax: +61 2 9995 5999
TTY users: phone 133 677, then ask for 131 555
Speak and listen users: phone 1300 555 727, then ask for 131 555
Email: info@environment.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Report pollution and environmental incidents
Environment Line: 131 555 (NSW only) or info@environment.nsw.gov.au
See also www.environment.nsw.gov.au

ISBN 978-1-76039-214-7
OEH2015/0859

January 2016

Front cover photo: P Robey and right: S Cotrelle

