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# RANDWICK ENVIRONMENTAL PARK

## Heritage Conservation Area

*Randwick Environmental Park has an area of 13.1 hectares. Of this, approximately 4.0 hectares are Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub. The vegetation structure, species richness and natural regeneration of seedlings varies greatly within Randwick Environmental Park.*

The park was originally part of the Randwick Army barracks. During World War I the barracks included a rifle range and horse riding training ground. The wetland at this time was a smaller, shallower depression roughly located in the centre of the southern circular section of the current wetland.

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### What is the area's significance?

#### Aesthetic Significance:

The heritage conservation area has considerable scenic value, providing an attractive natural backdrop for many views in the local area.

#### Historic Significance

Some historical significance is attributed to the use of the land by the military since the late 1800s, and its continuity as a large land holding within Randwick. The park was originally part of the Randwick Army Barracks with the eastern part used during World War II as the site for storage sheds.

#### Technical/Research Significance

The vegetation structure, species richness and natural regeneration of seedlings varies greatly within Randwick Environment Park. Since 1995, 92 indigenous plant species have been recorded within Randwick Environment Park. Of these, 27 species are considered to be characteristic of Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub. This is relatively high, given its location within the northern and more densely developed part of Randwick City. The high number of species is partly attributable to the variety of habitats present on the site. One of the species present, *Acacia terminalis* sub.sp. *terminalis*, has been listed as a 'threatened species'<sup>1</sup>. Twelve other species recorded on the site have local significance in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs.

Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub, is an endangered ecological community of state and national significance, occurring on the nutrient poor sands between Botany Bay and Port Jackson. It has been reduced to 1% of its former extent due to fragmentation, clearing, urban development and weed invasion, and is likely to become extinct unless factors threatening its survival cease. Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub is thus regarded as of extremely high conservation significance.

The Randwick Environment Park contains an ephemeral wetland which contains some aquatic flora species, the presence of which is influenced by periods when water is present in the wetland. The wetland is a window to the groundwater table forming part of the extensive Botany Aquifer, and drains an urban catchment of 89 hectares. The wetland has a sparse to open cover of vegetation, reflecting both past disturbance and extended periods of dryness over recent years.

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<sup>1</sup> (under both the TSC and EPBC Acts)

Although degraded as a result of past clearing, some of the vegetation present in the Randwick Environment Park has considerable significance as fauna habitat. The park supports 4 main habitat types: shrub land; exotic grassland; wetland; and rock outcrops. The shrub land provides shelter and food for small animals such as birds and reptiles, while the grassland supports birds such as Australian magpies, galahs, and masked lapwings. The ephemeral wetland has some periodic habitat values for waders, waterfowl and frogs. In a 2002 study, a Great Egret (a migratory water bird listed under the Commonwealth's EPBC Act 1999) was observed foraging within the shallow waters of the wetland. However, no Great Egret roosting colonies have been recorded on or in the vicinity of the Randwick Environment Park. The small areas of rock outcrops provide shelter for some reptile and frog species.

### Themes Represented

The following historical themes, identified in the 1989 Randwick Heritage Study, are directly illustrated in the conservation area:

- Modifying the landscape
- Government and institutions
- Industry and commerce

The following themes are indirectly represented:

- Recreation, entertainment and leisure

