

# Blue Mountains Swamps

Lifeblood of the Mountain's Environment.



Blue Mountains Swamps are a biologically diverse plant community that occurs nowhere else in the world. The vegetation in these swamps range from low buttongrass clumps to large shrubs such as *Hakea* and *Grevillea* species. The swamps provide essential habitat to several Threatened Species, such as the Blue Mountains Water Skink (*Eulamprus leuraensis*) and the Giant Dragonfly (*Petalura gigantea*).



There are less than 3,000 ha of Blue Mountains Swamp in existence. As they predominantly comprise many small areas, they are very susceptible to edge effects.

As the urban footprint expands to the edges of the plateau, the swamps are coming under ever increasing pressure.

The predominant threats to Blue mountains Swamps are :

- Nutrient enrichment
- Weed invasion
- Clearing for urban development
- Mowing
- Changes in water flows
- Ground water extraction
- Fire (both 'wild' and hazard reduction)
- Climate change

Blue Mountains swamps play a vital part in maintaining water flows in the area's creeks and waterfalls, by storing water and slowly releasing it over time. Swamps also act as filters, purifying water prior to the release into creeks. Other threatened species such as *Epacris hamiltonii* and *Microstobos fitzgeraldii* rely on the continued seepage from hanging swamps for survival in their specialized habitats.



Photographs by Anne Carey

