

Richmond River Koala Parks

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Promoting protection of our remaining native forests as habitat and protection of threatened and all native species

To increase the possibility of saving 132 Threatened Species and some Endangered Communities from extinction, it is proposed that 56,200 ha of State Forests in the southern part of the Richmond River catchment and Richmond Range be created as the Richmond River Koala Parks (Figure 1). Of the reserved targets set in 1998, 35,000 ha still fail to meet their 15% target for forest ecosystems and 41 animal species have not achieved their targets for viable populations. Enhanced connectivity will allow reconnection of fragmented populations, thus improving access to mates for improved genetic diversity, as well as seasonal resources.

- Contains viable areas of high quality Koala habitat, (Including 28,000 hectares of nationally important koala habitat) and 220 year old-growth tree-hollows essential for dens and nests for arboreal species.
- Winter nectar resources for the Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater.
- Encompasses large areas of intact wetlands, woodlands and forests on the extensively cleared Richmond River floodplain.
- There are large carbon sequestration implications.
- It provides an altitudinal gradient from sea level to 600m to allow for shifts in species distributions in response to climate change – climate change refugia
- It is part of and will add to a regionally significant wildlife corridor from the coast to the Border Ranges.
- It will improve the health of the Richmond River by increasing stream flows in dry times and reduce runoff and flooding in wet times.

Threatened Arboreal and Forest Fauna Species

Koala	CE
Southern Greater Glider	E
Spotted-tailed Quoll	V
Yellow-bellied Glider	V
South-eastern Glossy Black-Cockatoo	V
Masked Owl	V
Barking Owl	V
Sooty Owl	V
Powerful Owl	V
Swift Parrot	CE
Regent Honeyeater	CE

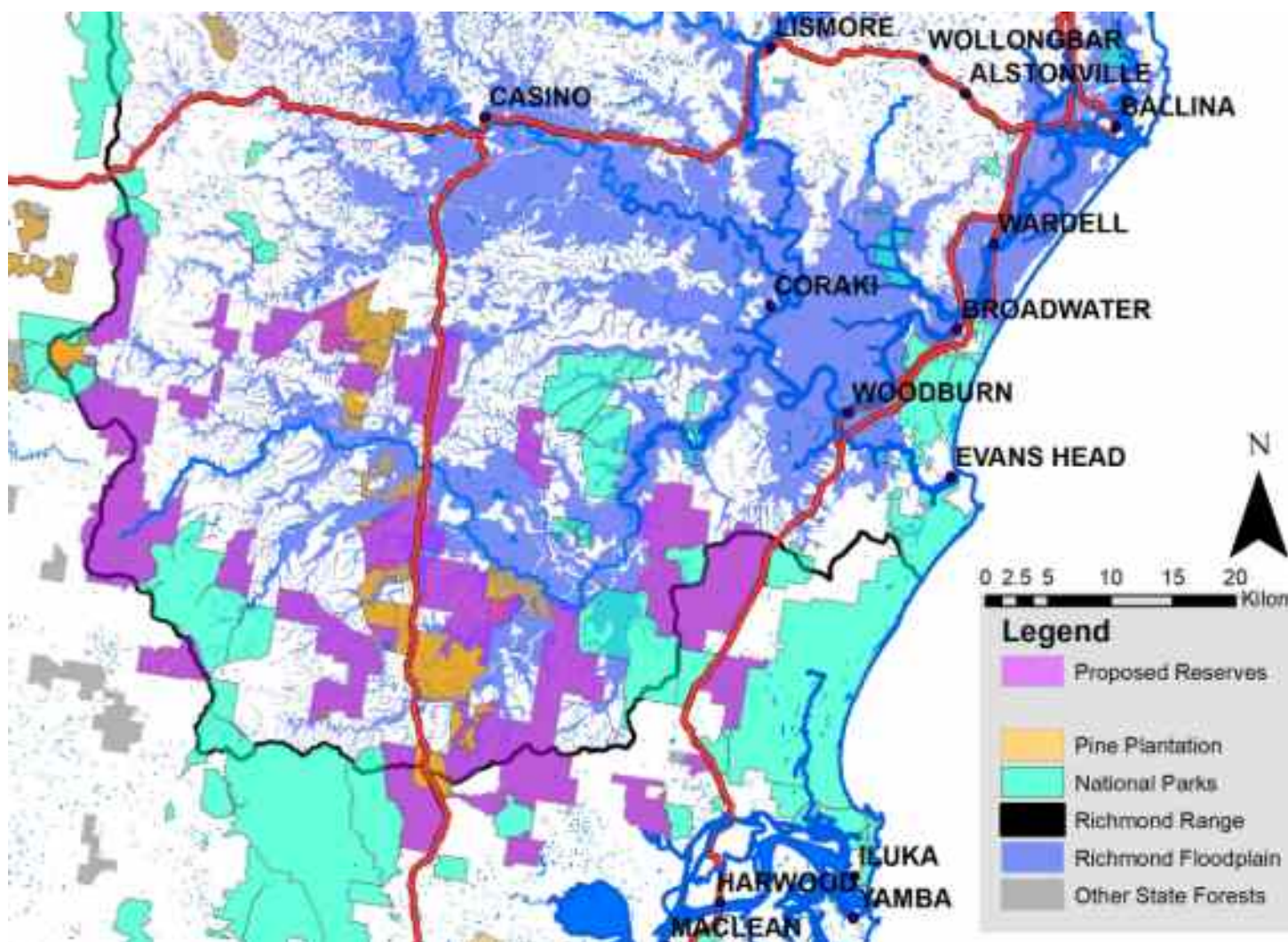


Figure 1. Map showing proposed areas for protection within a National Park with other salient features of the Richmond Range and Floodplain

Extensive impacts from logging and clearing (Figure 2):

- Opening the canopy changes forest structure and increases water use, dries the forests and increases the risk and intensity of wildfires (forests are recovering very slowly from the catastrophic fires of 2019).
- Rapid declines of Koala populations and other Threatened species as well as further isolation due to loss of habitat (fragmentation). The loss of mature, nectar bearing trees with hollows has removed resources for other Threatened species.
- Further impacts from climate change, pathogens, conditions such as Bell Miner Associated Dieback, and decreased species fitness (inbreeding).

Saving these forests will also help reduce atmospheric carbon.



Figure 2 (a) Intact forest, (b) Logging road through forest causing erosions by going straight up and down the slope