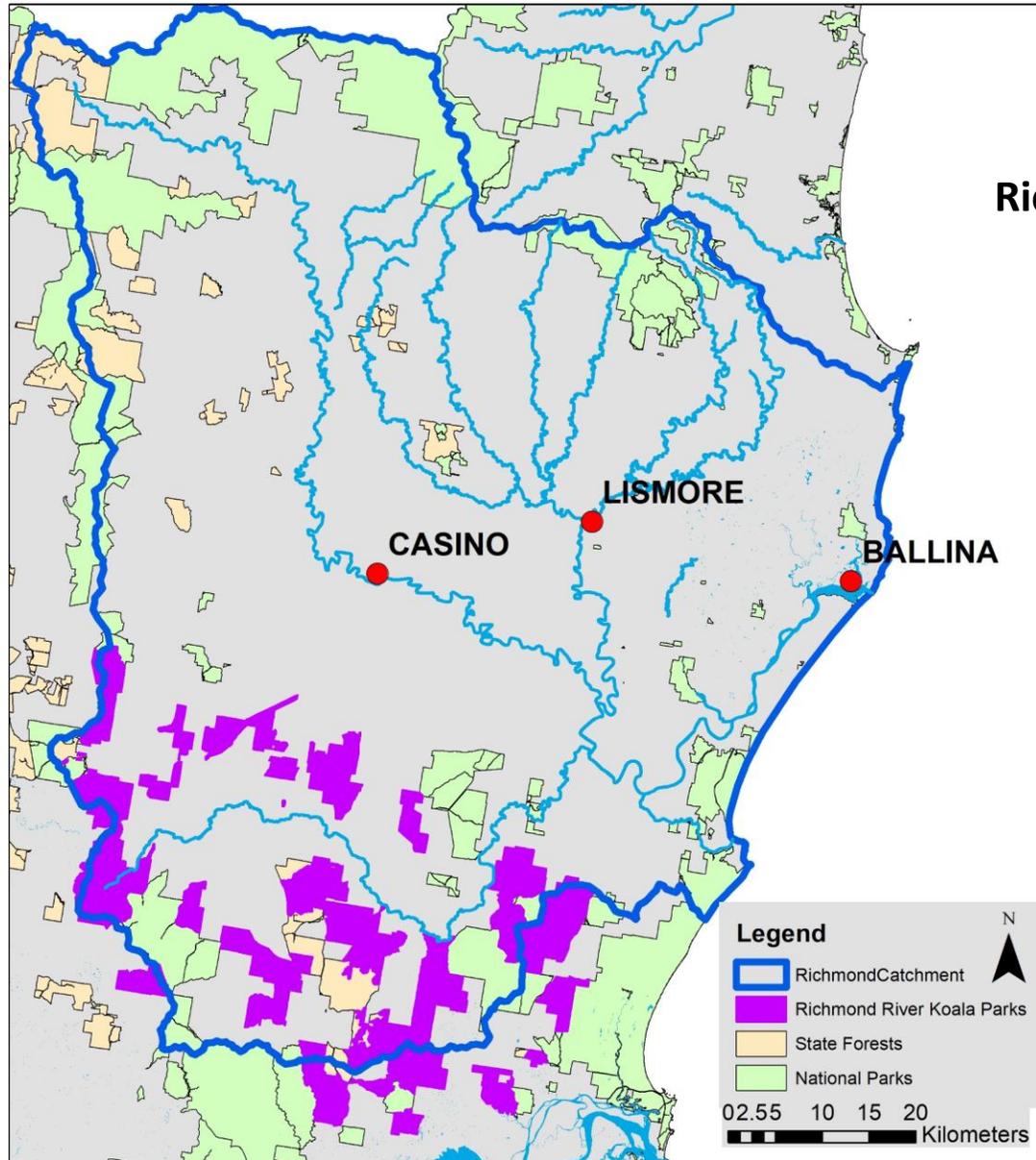


Richmond River Koala Parks



Richmond River
Catchment

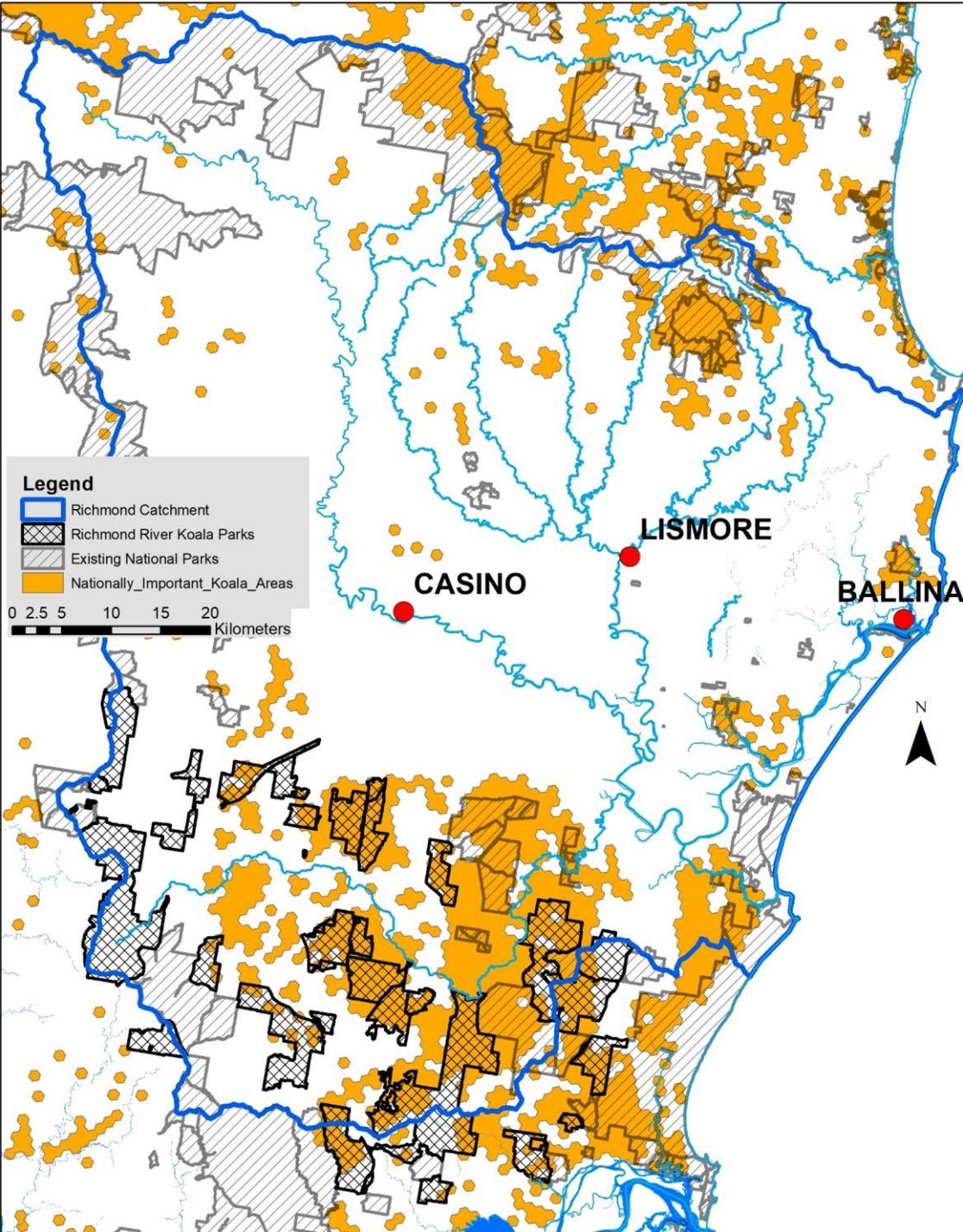


Help us protect 56,200 ha of State Forests in the southern Richmond River valley, and on the Richmond Range to:

- Protect the largest area of nationally important Koala habitat in the Richmond
- Protect a biodiversity hotspot, including habitats of 130 other threatened species
- Protect and restore hollow-bearing trees for dens and nests, and mature nectar feed trees
- Create a regionally important wildlife corridor from the coast to the mountains
- Create an adequate reserve system
- Help restore the health of the Richmond River by increasing dry season flows and reducing storm runoff
- Allow forests to regain the 28 million tonnes of carbon dioxide released from past logging, and increase their resilience to global heating



We urgently need to convince the government to stop cutting down Koala feed trees to give them a chance to recover from the 2019/20 bushfires



NATIONALLY IMPORTANT KOALA AREAS

The Commonwealth has mapped Nationally Important Koala Areas (NIKA) that are *large, connected areas of high-quality and relatively intact koala habitat*”, priority areas *“important for long-term koala persistence”*.

Half the RRKPs have been identified as Nationally Important Koala Areas (orange), and Koalas are more widespread.

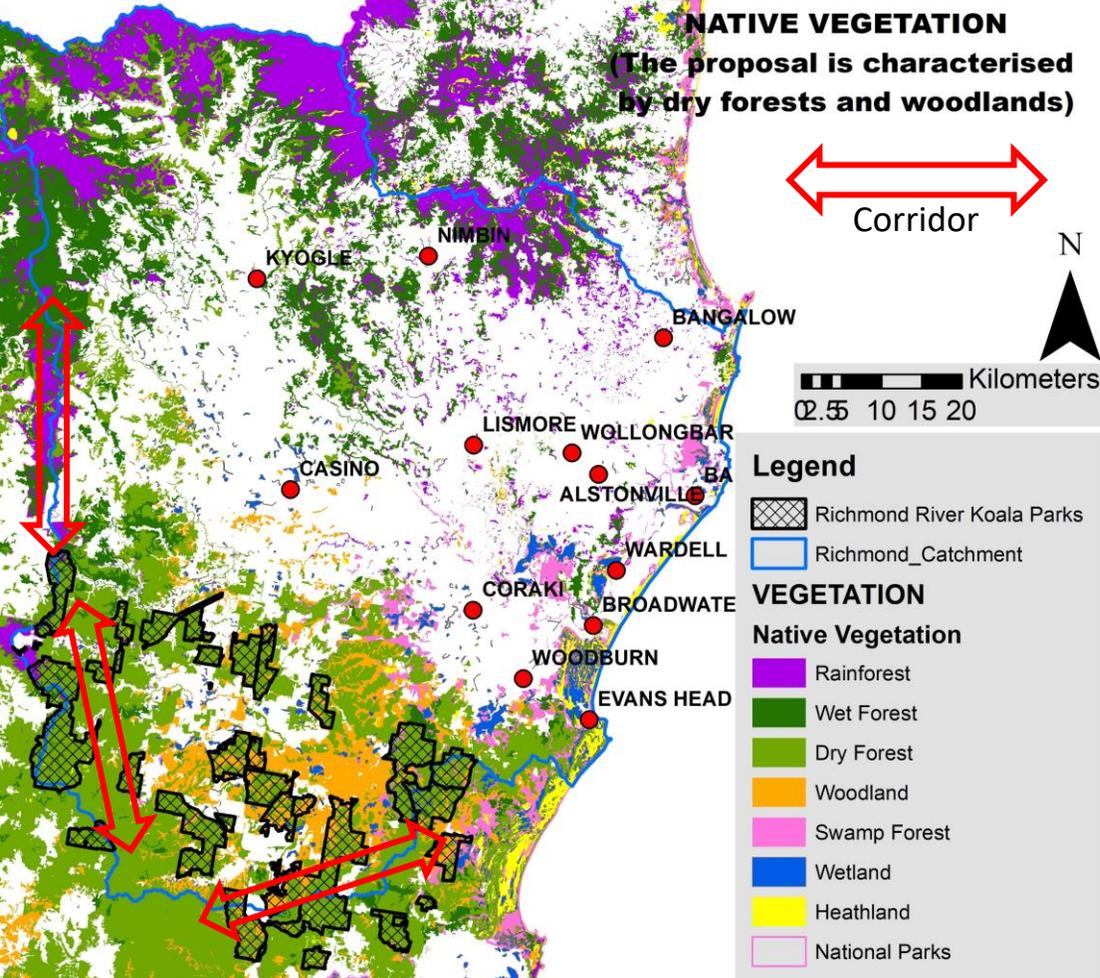
The Richmond Koalas are genetically distinct from those in the Great Koala NP - a different population.

We first identified an exceptional density of koalas here in 2012, and have been trying ever since to get successive governments to protect them:

- Doing surveys
- Lobbying
- Writing reports
- Making submissions
- Protesting
- Taking them to court
- Pleading with ministers

They continue to log Koalas’ homes.





It is a biodiversity hotspot

The area encompasses:

- habitat for 132 threatened species (4 Critically Endangered, 39 Endangered, 89 Vulnerable, and an Endangered Population)
- the largest area of intact wetlands, woodlands and forests remaining on the extensively cleared Richmond floodplain, mostly Endangered Ecological Communities
- a high diversity of plants and animals including many reaching or approaching their northern or southern distributional limits
- a significant woodland outlier
- tree-hollows essential as dens and nests for a multitude of species
- a suite of plants endemic to the Clarence-Moreton Basin or with disjunct populations in the Sydney basin
- critical winter nectar for migratory and nomadic species
- a refuge for species declining elsewhere

Includes part of a regionally significant corridor along the Richmond Range, from Bungawalbin National Park on the coast, to the Border Ranges National Park.



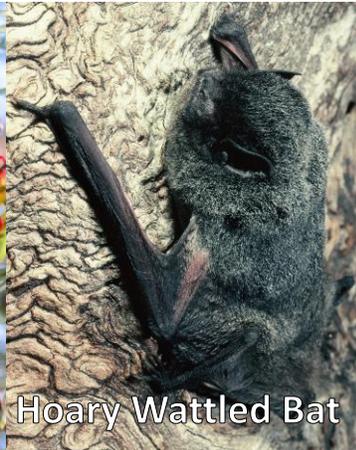
Black-striped Wallaby



Squirrel Glider



Regent Honeyeater



Hoary Wattled Bat



Grey headed
Flying-fox



Rufous Bettong



Barking Owl



Yellow-bellied Glider



Stephens' Banded Snake



Masked Owl



Spotted-tailed Quoll



Glossy Black
cockatoo



Greater Glider



Powerful Owl



Little Lorikeet



Brush-tailed Phascogale

Many species depend upon hollows in old trees for dens or nests.

22 hollow-dependent species in this area are threatened with extinction.

Hollows begin to develop in trees when they are over 120 years old.

The big hollows needed by larger animals, such as owls, gliders and cockatoos, do not form until the trees are over 220 years old.

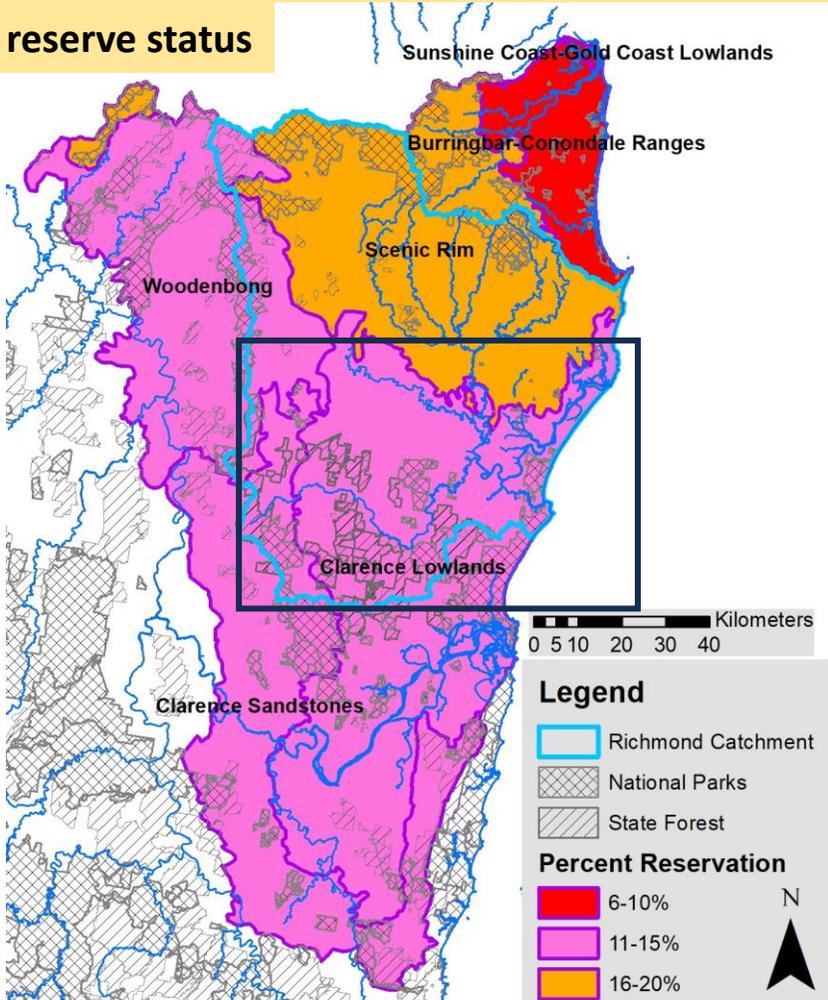
Hollow-bearing trees have been severely depleted by logging and fires.

We urgently need to protect remaining large trees to allow them to grow into the hollow-bearing trees of the future, to replace the few that are left before they die from logging, fire or old age.

Commonwealth & NSW have committed to the international goal of protecting 30% of the earth by 2030 *“especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services”*

RRKPs are part of the NSW section of the South East Queensland Bioregion, one of Australia’s most biodiverse. Less than 15% of this bioregion is in reserves – if all State Forests in this bioregion are protected it would only reach 26%.

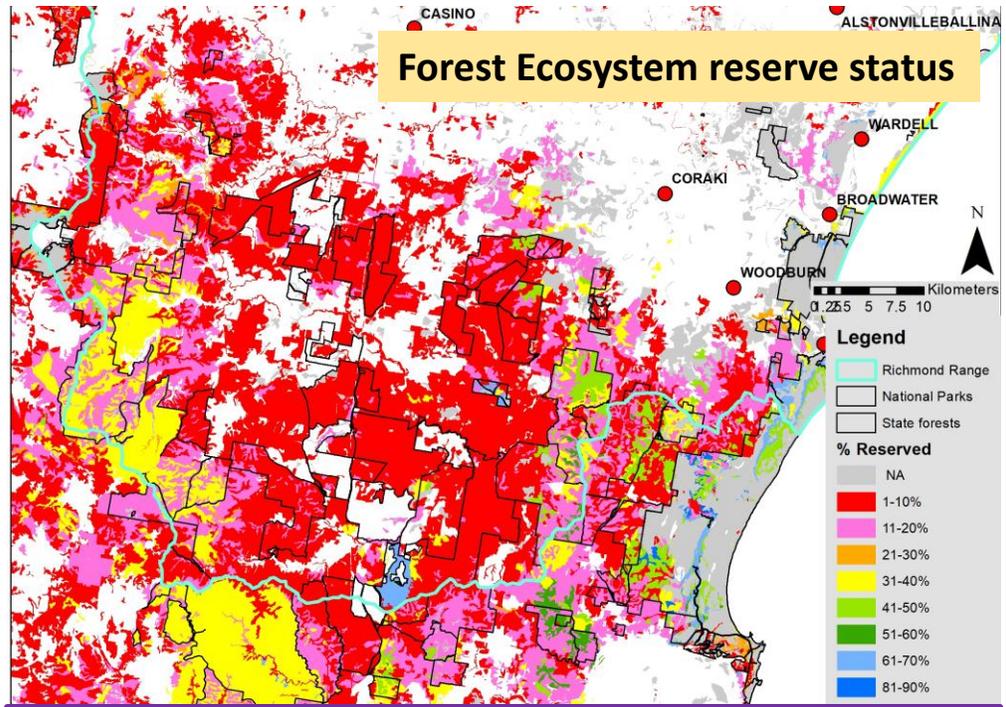
South East Queensland IBRA bioregion, NSW Section reserve status



These forests are grossly under reserved

We have been waiting 28 years for the Governments to honour their 1997 promise to protect 15%

What hope is there for their promise to protect 30% by 2030?



Waiting 28 years for the promised Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative Reserve System

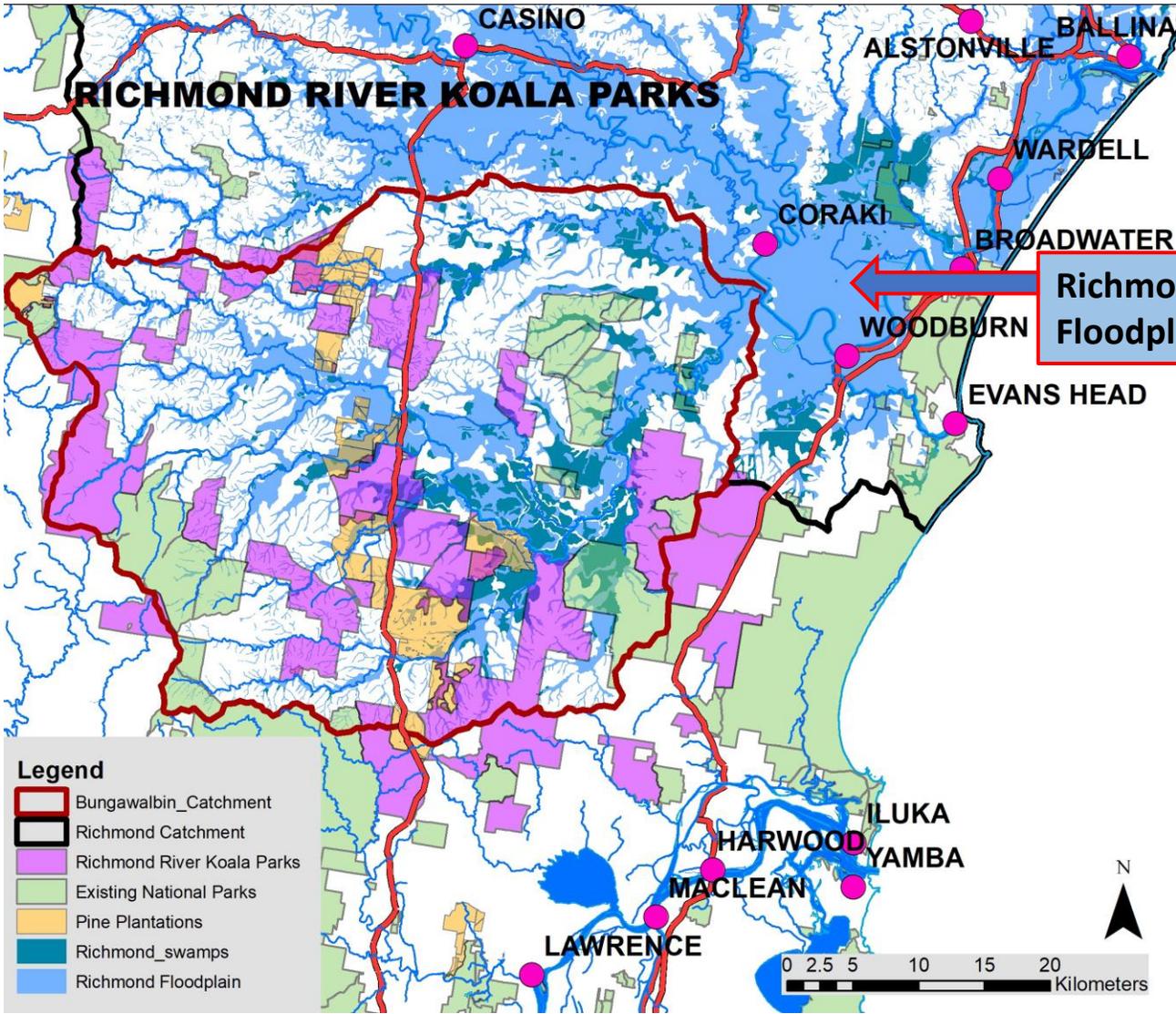
In 1997 the state and Commonwealth Governments adopted minimum targets for a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR) national reserve system for forests, including:

15% of the pre-1750 distribution of each forest ecosystem should be protected in the CAR reserve system

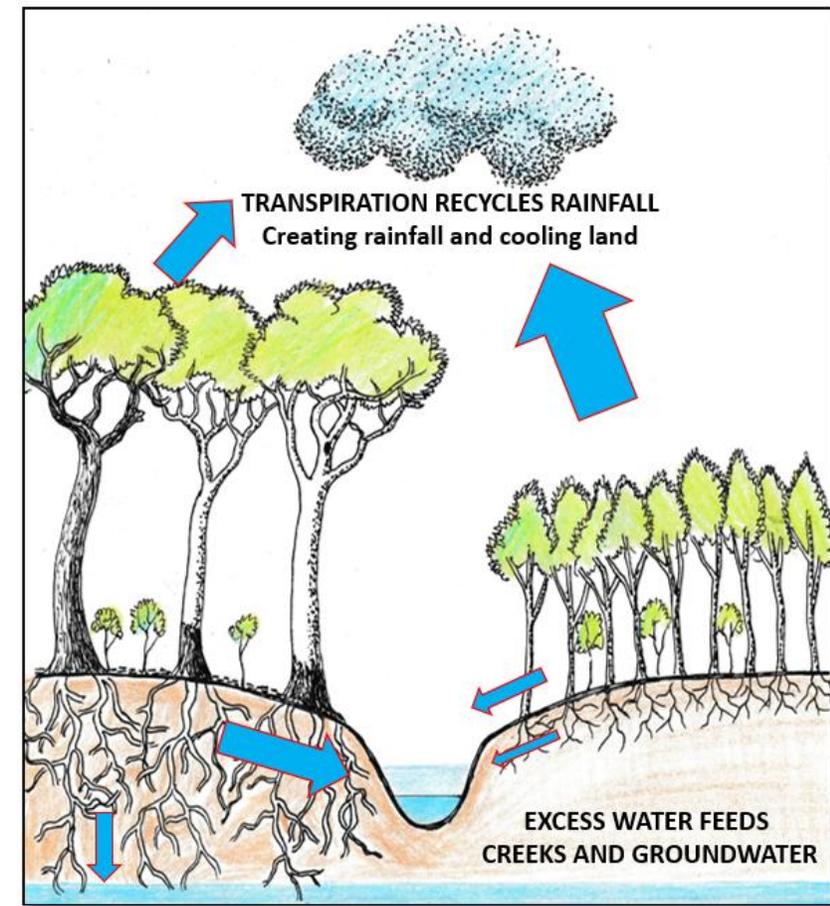
Due to industry pressure they did not establish a CAR reserve system. 28 years later, 62% of these State forests still have not met their CAR reserve targets, with most not even reaching 10% (red).

Restoring the health of the Richmond River

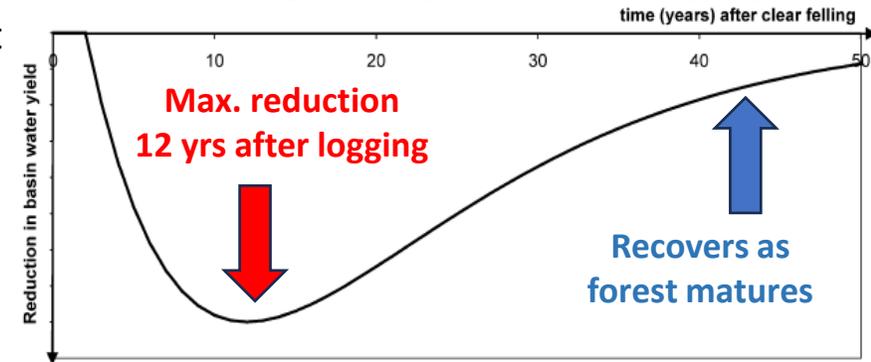
As the forests recover from past logging the maturing forests will moderate streamflows: increasing baseflows in dry periods, and reducing peak flows, erosion and flooding in rainfall events.



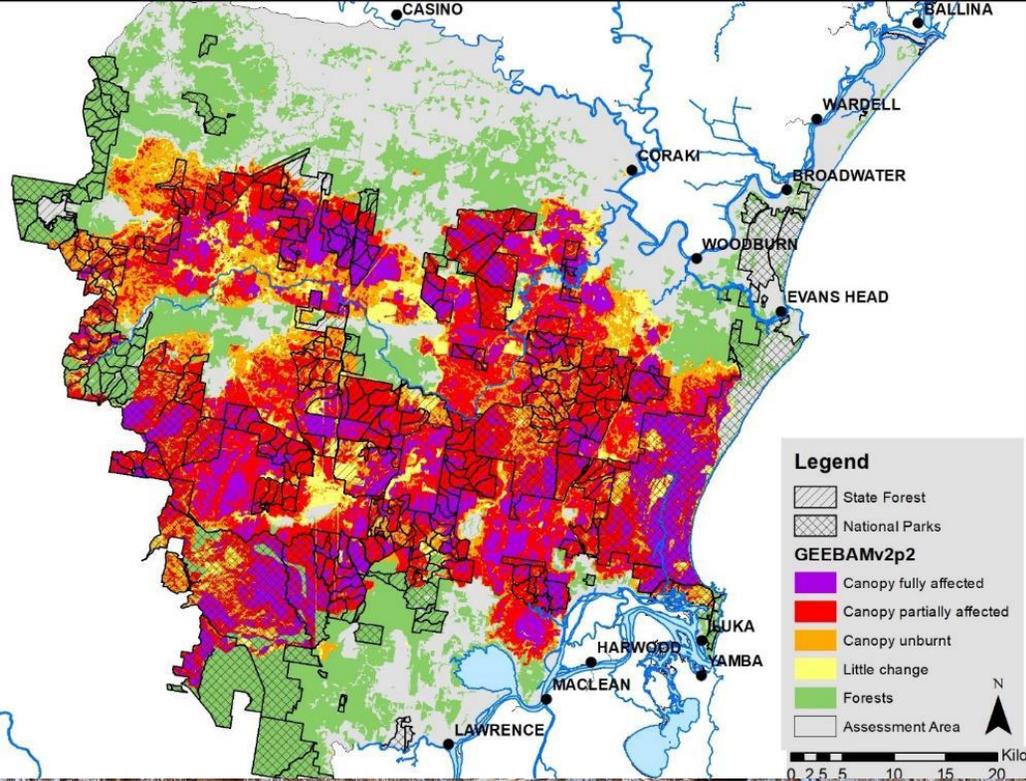
- Streamflow is the leftover rainfall that the forest doesn't use.
- Regrowth forests can use 2-3 times more water than old forests, thereby reducing water yields to streams.
- When logging stops, the forest will mature and use less water, increasing stream flows in dry times into the Richmond River.



LOGGING REDUCES STREAM FLOWS



Kuczera (1985) Curve, reduction and recovery of water yields following loss of overstorey.



These forests were badly burnt in the 2019/20 wildfires and many animals killed

- Across the RRKP 86% burnt, 18% intensively
- Over 14% of larger trees were killed, including hollow-bearing trees
- This was followed by drought for two and a half months
- Most Koalas, and a host of other species, were killed in the intensely burnt forest, and many in the partially burnt forest
- Likely half the Koalas were killed
- Koalas are now slowly recovering, in low numbers, but again using most suitable habitat.

We found Koalas here depend on certain tree species and prefer trees over 30 cm diameter, that take 90 to 110 years to grow. They are not quickly replaced.

Now they are logging over 75% of the mature feed trees Koalas need to rebuild their population.

Less feed trees mean less Koalas

These are extinction operations.

Creating the RRKP is essential to give these Koalas a future.

Grey Gum, Koala's preferred feed tree in these forests



Do Nationally Significant Koalas Matter? **NO**

- In coastal NSW logging is covered by State-Commonwealth Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs)– exempted from the Commonwealth EPBC Act
- In 2018 the Governments changed the logging rules, removing the need to look before they log - to identify and protect Koala High Use Areas
- Now if they see a Koala in a tree they just need to wait for it to leave before logging it
- And temporarily protect 5 small listed feed trees species per hectare – some of which Koalas don't even eat

- In 2019 this population was identified by NSW as the **Banyabba Area of Regional Koala Significance (ARKS)**, a key *“koala population with potential for long-term viability”*
- in 2021 this population was identified by the Commonwealth as **Nationally Important Koala Areas (NIKAs)** - *“high-quality and relatively intact Koala habitat”*
- Because of the fires Koalas were uplisted to **nationally Endangered** in 2022
- **The 2022 National Recovery Plan has the goal**
 - *To stop the trend of decline in population size of the listed Koala, by having resilient, connected, and genetically healthy metapopulations across its range, and to **increase** the extent, quality and connectivity of habitat occupied.*
- **One of the actions is**
 - *Increase the overall area of protected Koala habitat by dedication of Crown land*
- **The RFA requires the logging rules to be updated in accordance with Recovery Plans.**

So what have they done?

NOTHING

Recovering Koala populations can now have most of their preferred feed trees logged

Expert evidence that feed tree lists include species that Koalas don't use, and tree sizes are too small, have been ignored.

The logging rules were required to be updated in 2023. they haven't yet.

If recovery plans can be ignored, there is not much hope for National Environmental Standards.

Save koalas' homes
North East Forest Alliance



Please help
save these
Koalas'
homes,
by
helping create
the Richmond
River Koala
Parks

www.richmondriverkoalaparks.com

