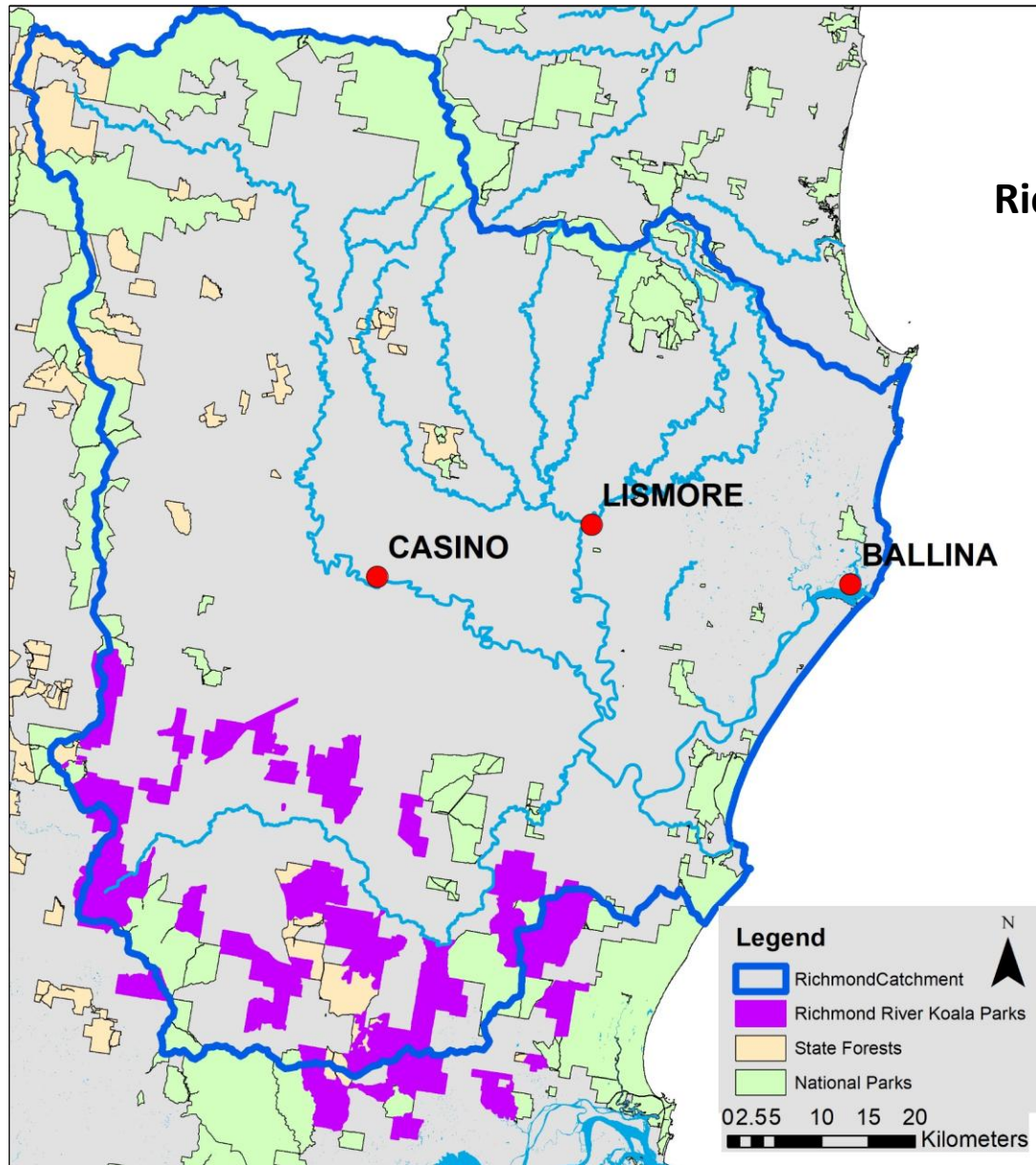
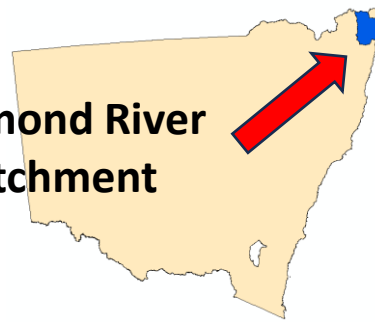


Richmond River Koala Parks



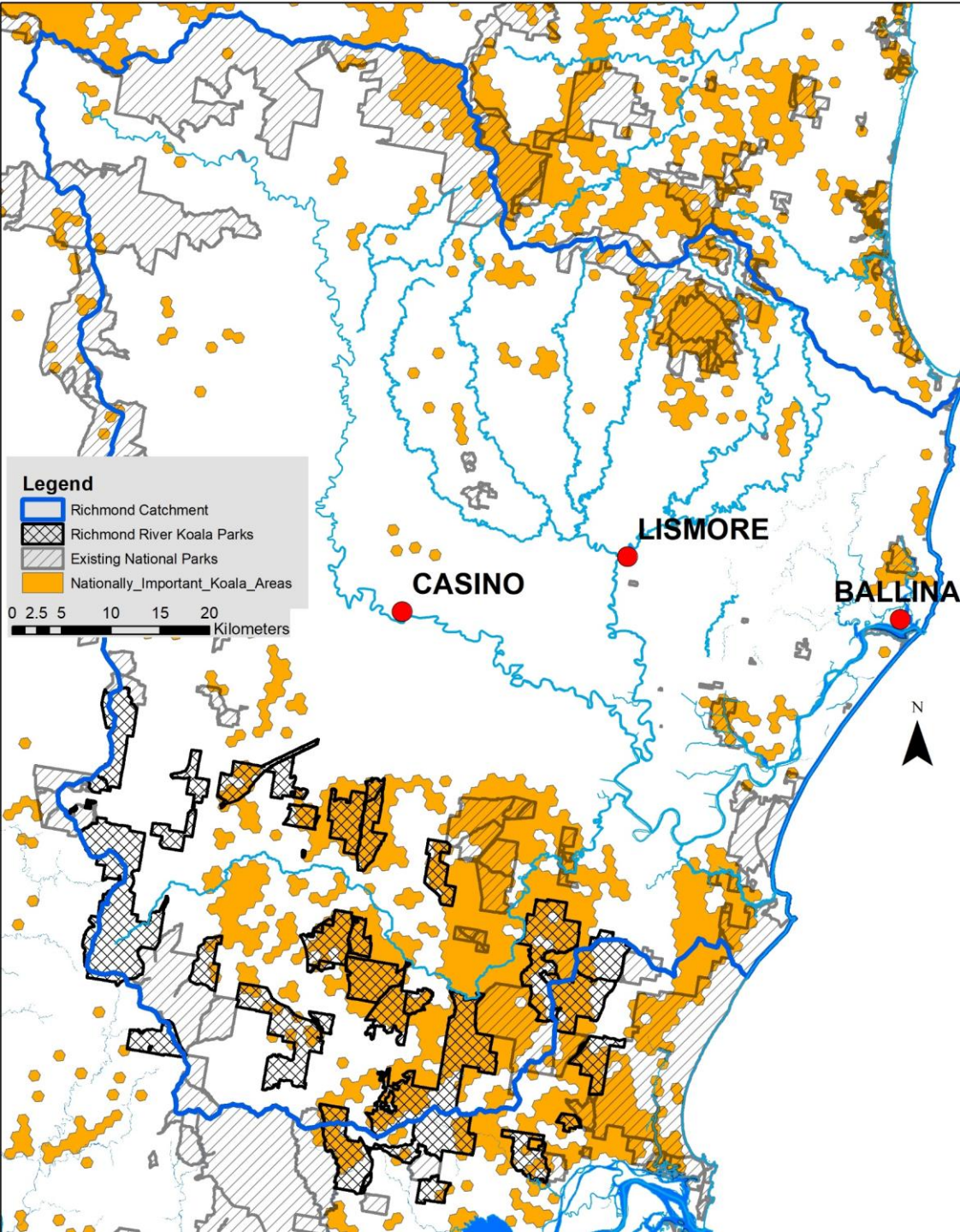
Richmond River
Catchment



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 Koalas 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”*.

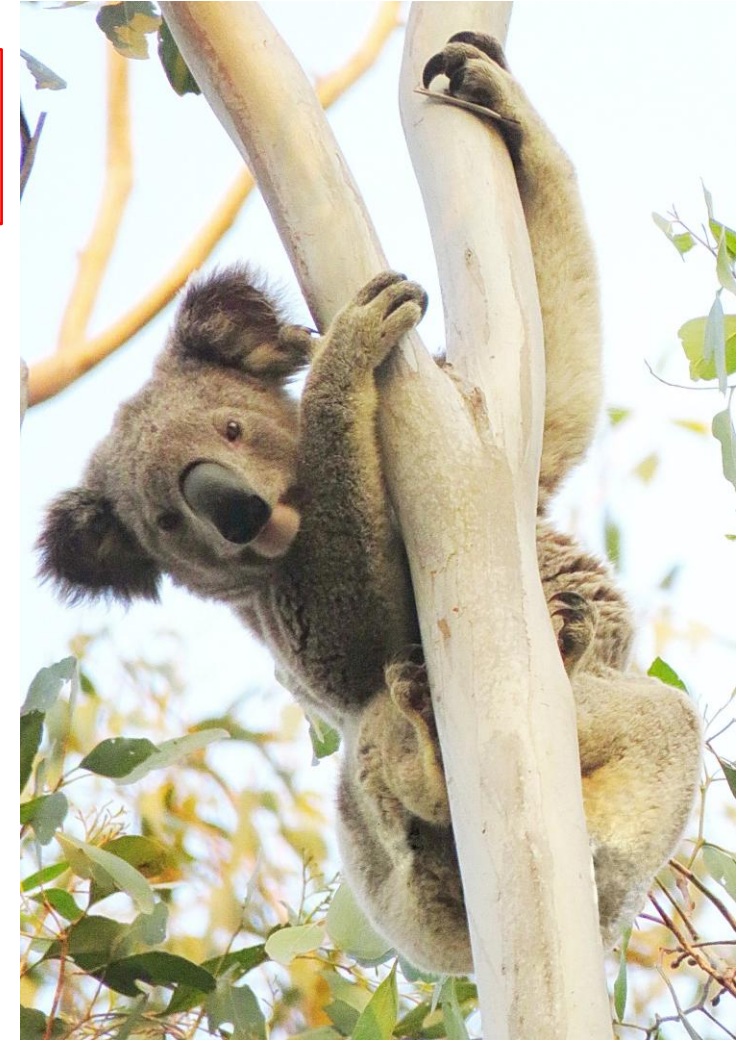
Half the RRKPs have been identified as **Nationally Important Koala Areas** (orange), and Koalas are more widespread.

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.



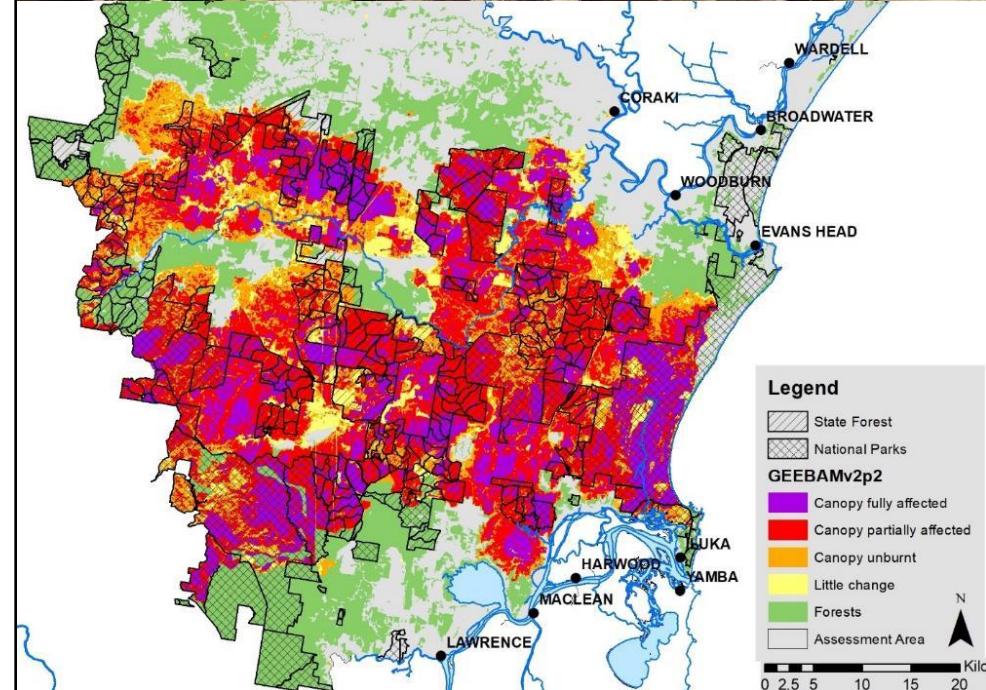
Do Nationally Significant Koalas Matter? **NO**

In 2018 they removed the requirement to search for and protect Koala High Use Areas

- In coastal NSW logging is covered by State-Commonwealth **Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs)**– exempted from the Commonwealth **EPBC Act**
- From **2012** NEFA focussed on showing FCNSW were not complying with the requirement to **look for and protect Koala High Use Areas**
- In **2018** the Governments **changed the logging rules**, removing the need to look before they log – no more 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 tree** species per hectare – some of which Koalas don't even eat

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

- Across the RRP 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.



Growing awareness and fire impacts make little difference

- In **2019** this population was identified by NSW as the **Banyabba Area of Regional Koala Significance (ARKS)**
- In **2021** this population was identified by the Commonwealth as **Nationally Important Koala Areas (NIKAs)**
- In **2022** Koalas were uplisted to **nationally Endangered** because of the fires,
- **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 logging rules are meant to be updated in accordance with Recovery Plans, though NSW refuses to do so.

So what are they doing?

- For a while after the fires, FCNSW **excluded logging** from an additional **5% of the loggable area** for Koalas, though this has now stopped, and those areas are being logged
- They are now **logging over 70%** of the **mature feed trees** Koalas need to rebuild their population.
- They just **logged some 8,000 mature feed trees** in Braemar SF, are **now logging another 10,000** in Cherry Tree SF, and thousands more in Myrtle SF
- Less feed trees mean less Koalas, **these are extinction operations**

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 will take a century to be replaced, Koalas can't wait.

Trees 10-30 cm DBH comprised 74% of trees, though only 15% of trees used

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

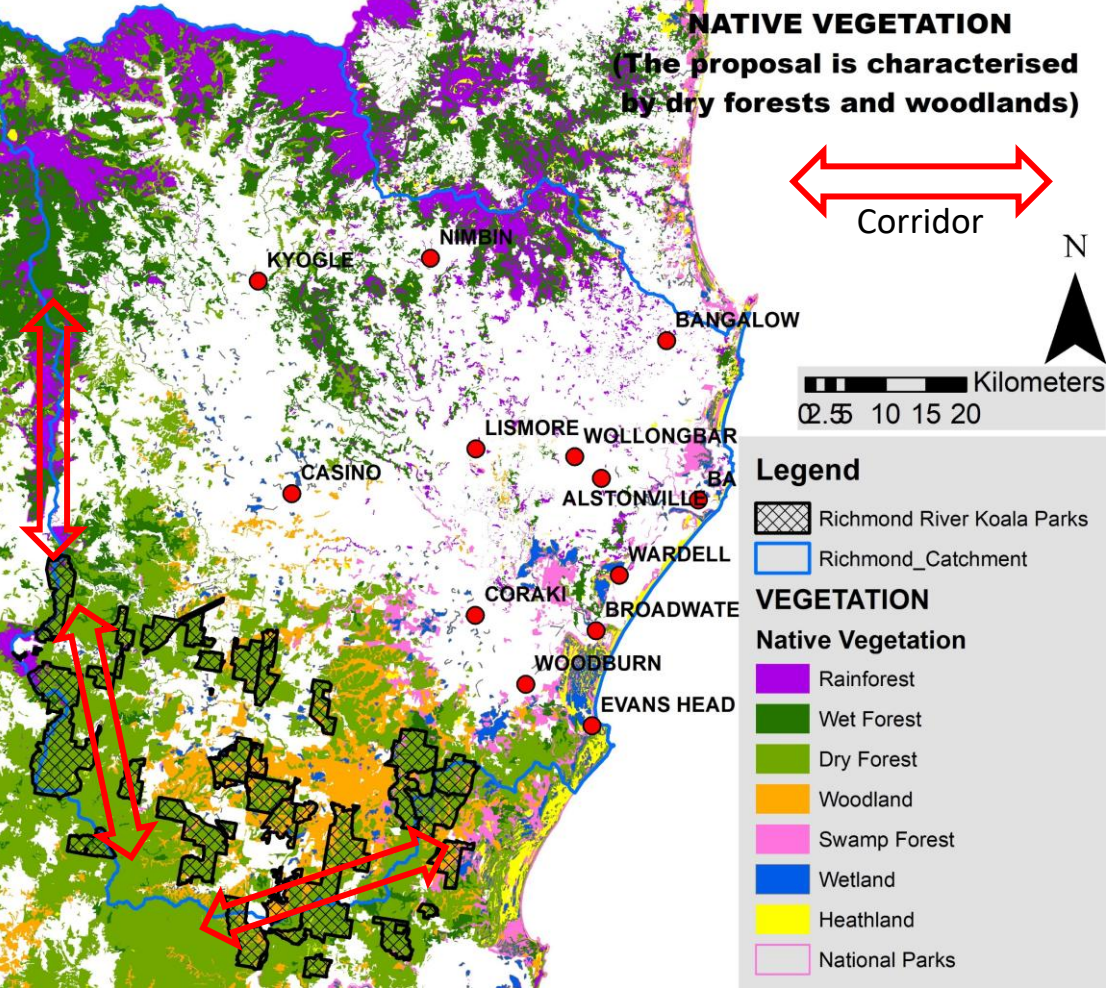


It is a biodiversity hotspot

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 **wildlife corridor** along the Richmond Range, from Bundjalung National Park on the coast, to the Border Ranges National Park.



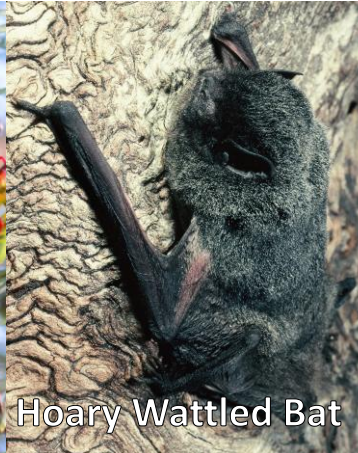
Black-striped Wallaby



Squirrel Glider



Regent Honeyeater



Hoary Wattled Bat



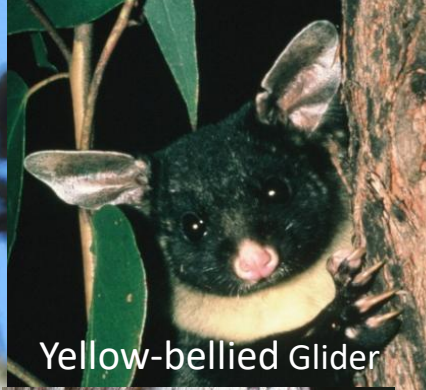
Grey headed
Flying-fox



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 mature 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 Global Biodiversity Framework goal of protecting 30% of the earth by 2030 *“especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services”*, also prioritising;

- adequately sampling the full range of existing ecosystems, and
- creating well connected networks of reserves.

South East Queensland IBRA bioregion.
NSW section reserve status

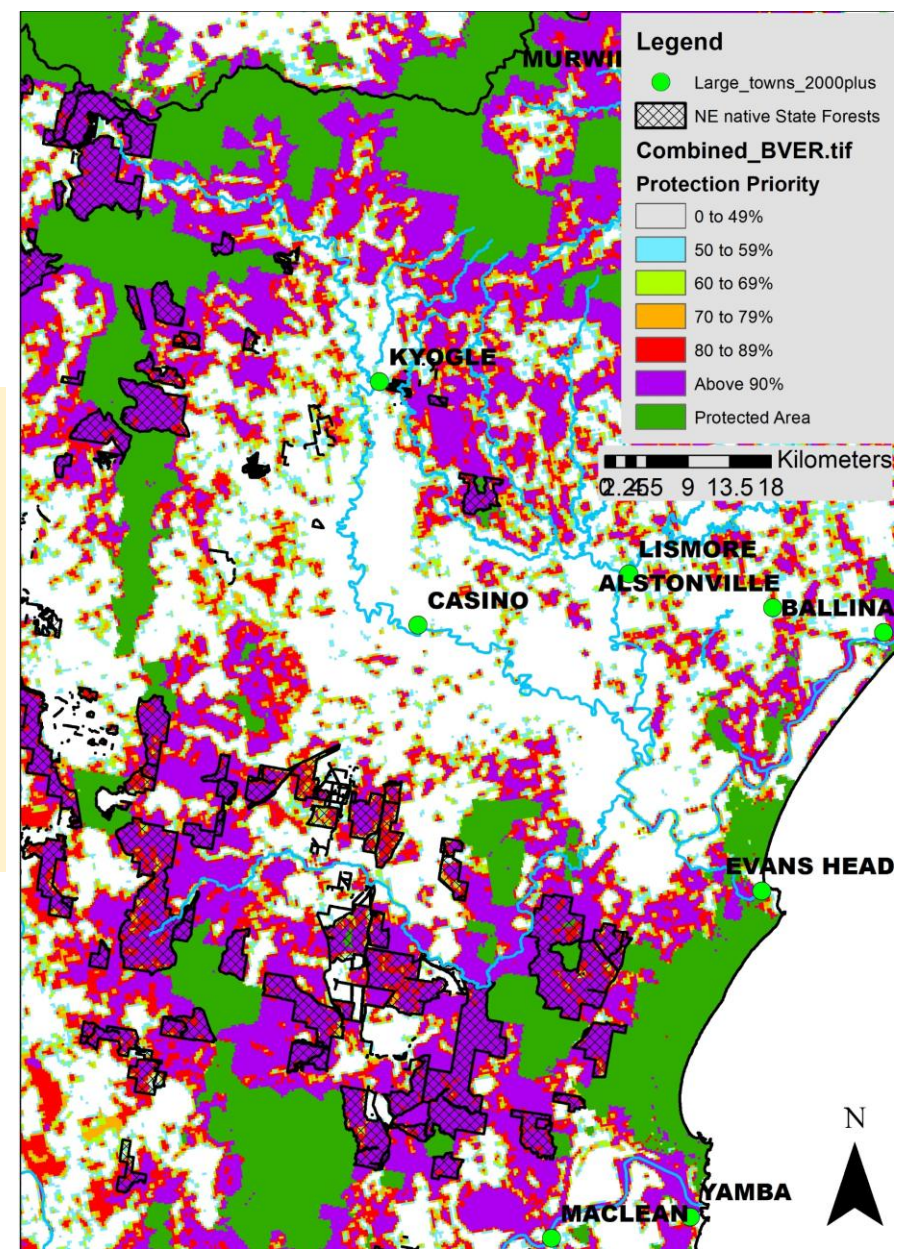
These forests are part of one of Australia’s most biodiverse Bioregions, yet remain grossly under reserved.

- RRKPs are part of the NSW section of the South East Queensland Bioregion.
- Less than 15% of this bioregion is in reserves.
- Protecting all State Forests would increase reservation to 26%, while improving connectivity.

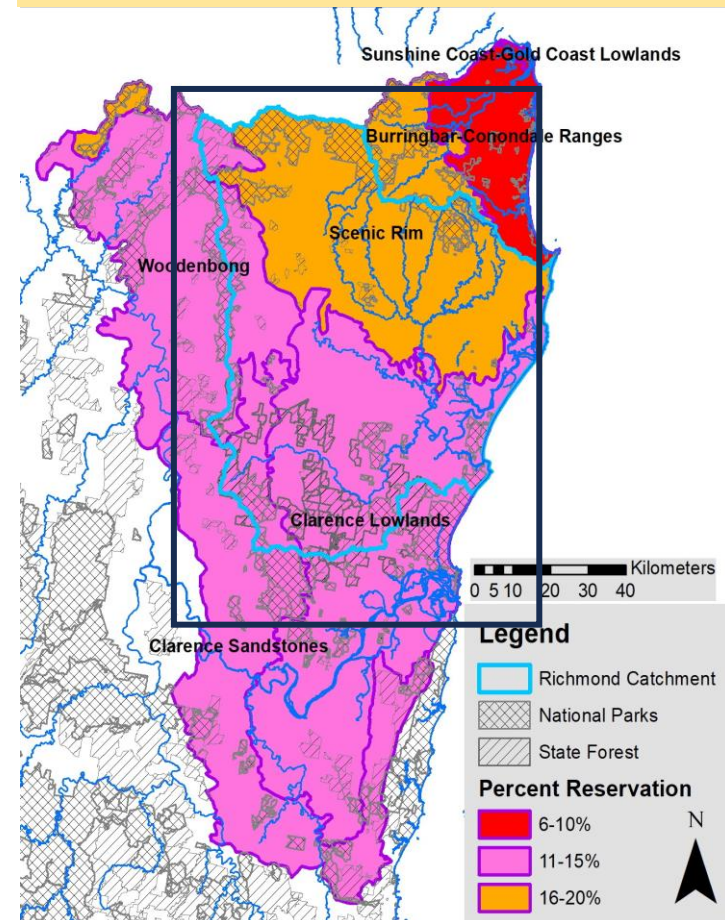
Under the National Roadmap for achieving 30by30, in January the Federal Government released maps identifying areas known to have important biodiversity and ecosystem values that are not well represented in Australia’s existing protected areas.

The highest Australian priorities include;

- All State Forests in north-east NSW
- The proposed Richmond River Koala Parks



This region’s State forests are amongst the highest national priorities for protection (purple is the highest) as inadequately reserved forests of exceptional biodiversity value.



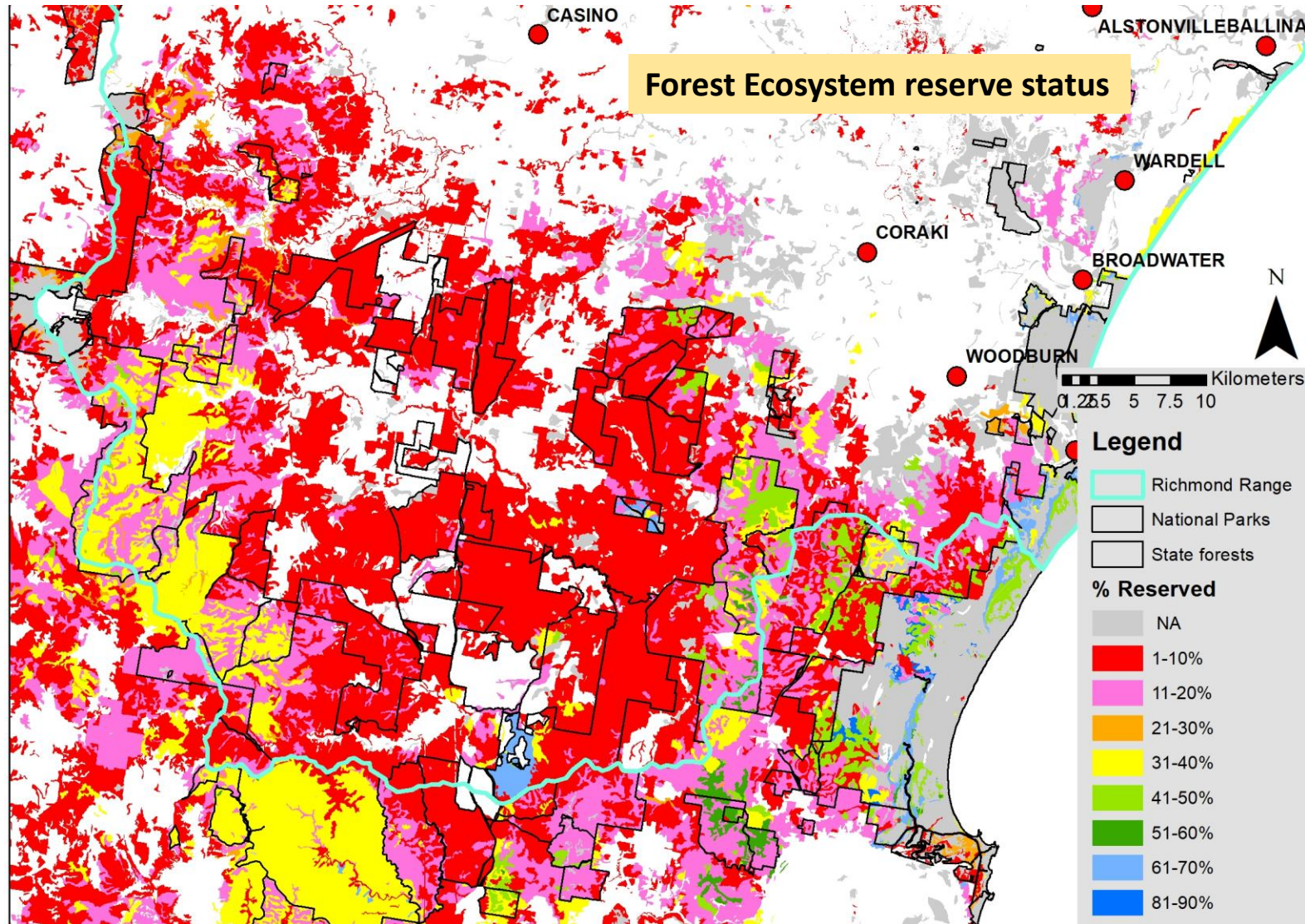
What happened to the 1997 promise to protect 15% of the original extent of each forest ecosystem in reserves?

We have been waiting 28 years for the Governments to honour their 1997 promise. What hope is there for their promise to protect 30% by 2030?

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

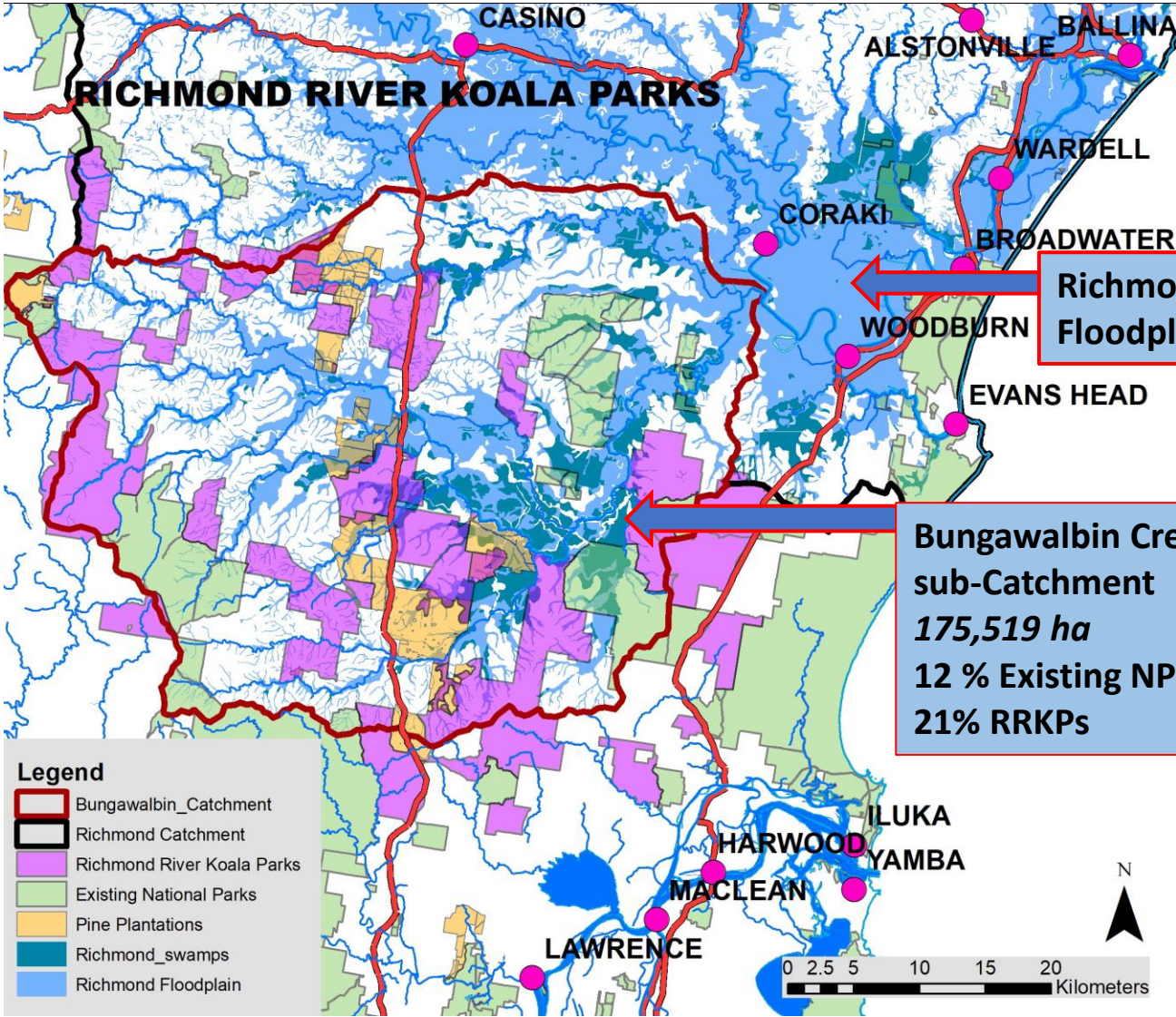
15% of the pre-1750 distribution of each forest ecosystem should be protected in the CAR reserve system

Due to industry pressure they did not establish a CAR reserve system. 28 years later, **two thirds** of these State forests have still **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, while **reducing peak flows**, erosion and flooding in rainfall events.

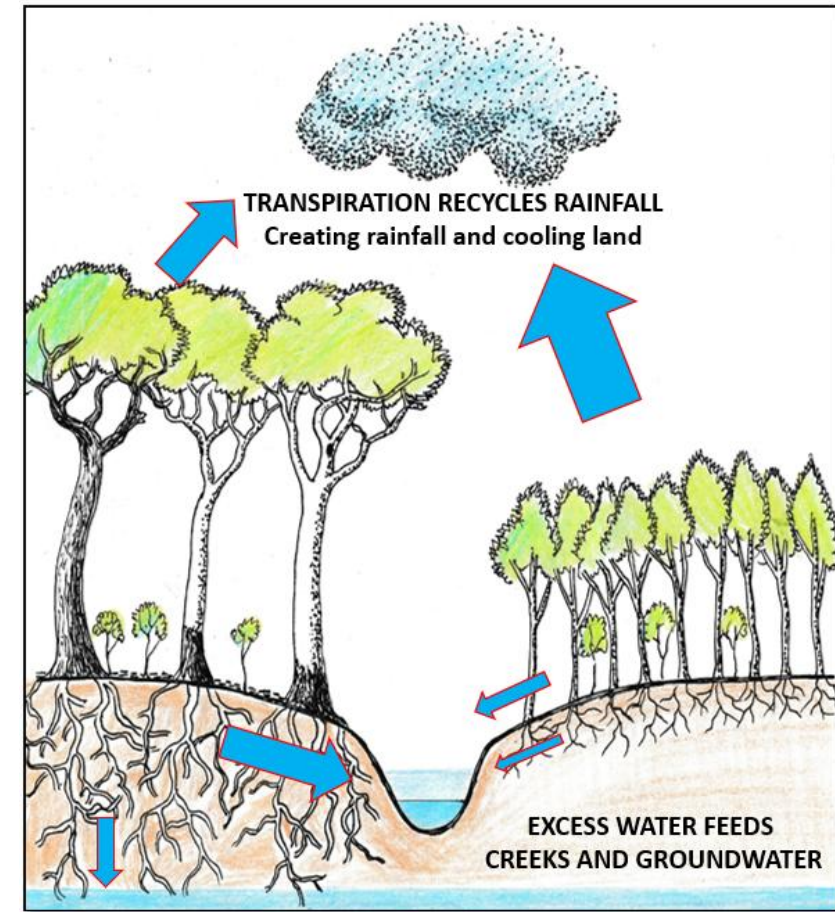


Richmond Floodplain

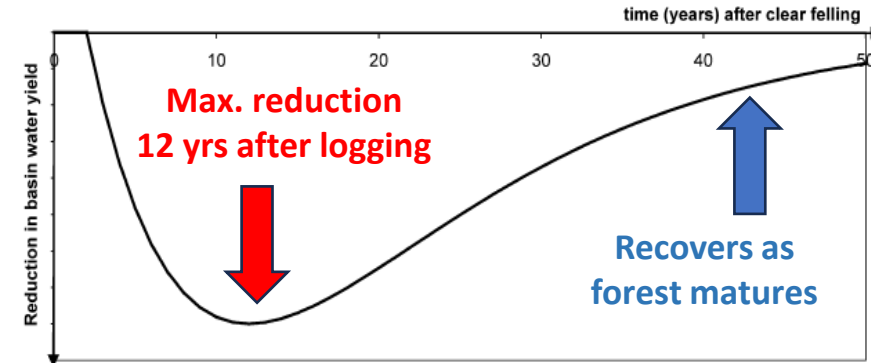
Bungawalbin Creek sub-Catchment
175,519 ha
12 % Existing NPs
21% RRPks

- **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, recovering 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.

The loggers want to lock it up

Wood Supply Agreements (WSAs) guarantee set volumes to sawmill owners. They are given to them for free, without tender, yet they can sell them. If NSW doesn't supply the timber they must **pay compensation**.

After the death of millions of trees in the 2019/20 wildfires, in 2022 **WSAs** were **extended unaltered** from 2023 to **2028**. Since the fires Forestry have been **unable to supply 25% of WSAs**, despite prematurely logging plantations, resulting in taxpayers owing the sawmill owners millions in compensation.

To stop community efforts to protect State Forests, sawmill owners are now demanding their **WSAs be extended indefinitely** to lock in logging. There is a danger the Government may give them what they want.

They claim that they are doing it for jobs.

If all logging of public native forests in north-east NSW was stopped it would result in the **loss of 150 to 350 direct jobs**. With **20 to 40 jobs** attributable to the Richmond River Koala Parks.

Affected workers will be given generous **redundancy payments**, an **industry transition** plan implemented, and new opportunities created in **park management and tourism**.

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

www.richmondriverkoalaparks.com

