



# Newcastle's bushland: *better standing*

  
Hunter Community  
Environment Centre



# Hunter Community Environment Centre

167 Parry Street, Hamilton East 2303 // [hcec.org.au](http://hcec.org.au) // [coordinator@hcec.org.au](mailto:coordinator@hcec.org.au)



To maintain a community environment information, resource and advocacy centre



To educate and inform the community about biodiversity and the need to protect it



To provide and promote the dissemination of information and views regarding environmental matters



To promote and assist cooperation, sharing of resources and coordination of activities amongst environment and community groups



To protect and conserve ecological processes, genetic diversity and the natural environment.

# Extinction crisis

In NSW:

- 78 species are already extinct, with a further 1,043 species Threatened and 116 of which are Critically Endangered.
- About 60 percent of all described terrestrial mammals, 35 percent of amphibians, and 31 percent of all NSW birds are now listed as threatened in NSW.
- Long-term range contractions have been recorded for 64 percent of all native mammals.

The 2021 Australian State of the Environment Report estimates that a further 44 Australian native species are likely to become extinct within the next 20 years unless major conservation action is undertaken, including:

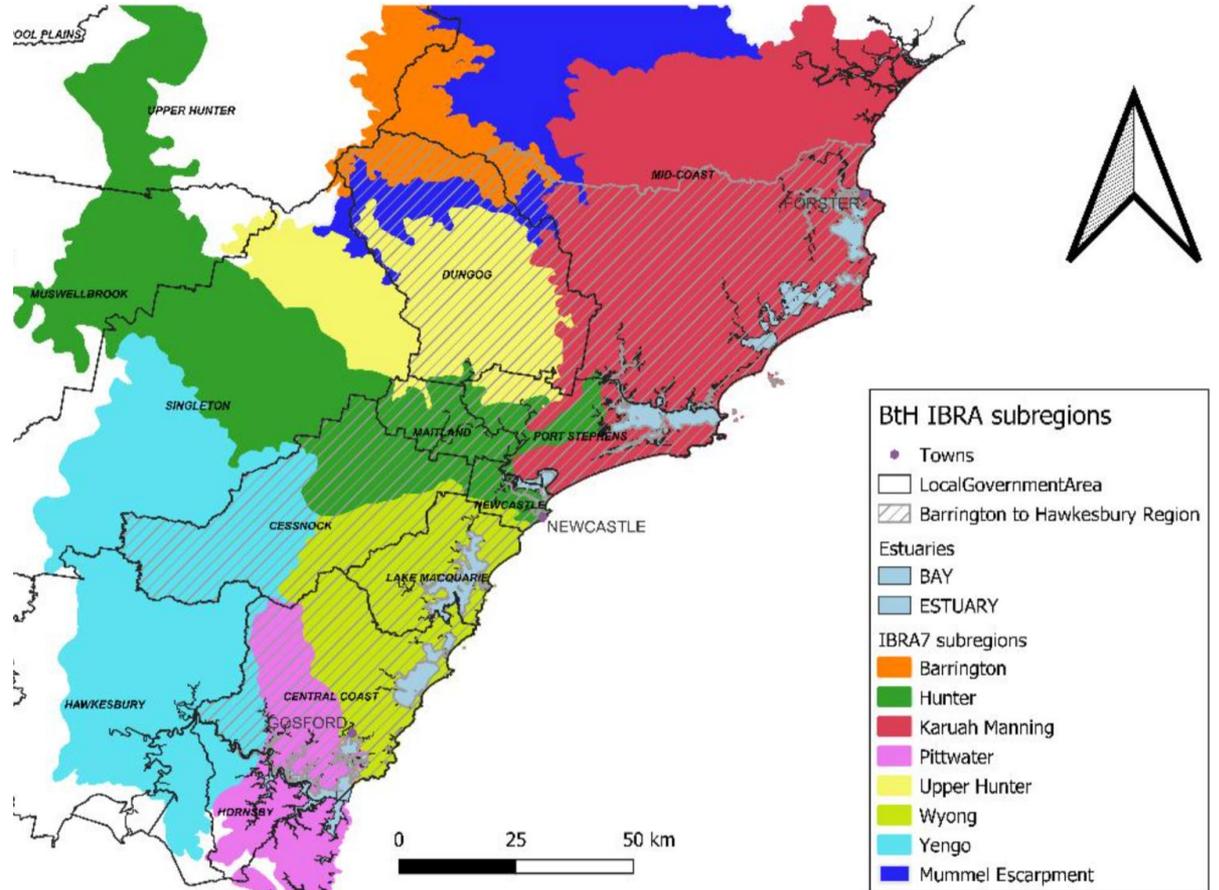
- 10 birds,
- 7 mammals,
- 6 reptiles
- 1 butterfly
- 20 fish

# Regional context

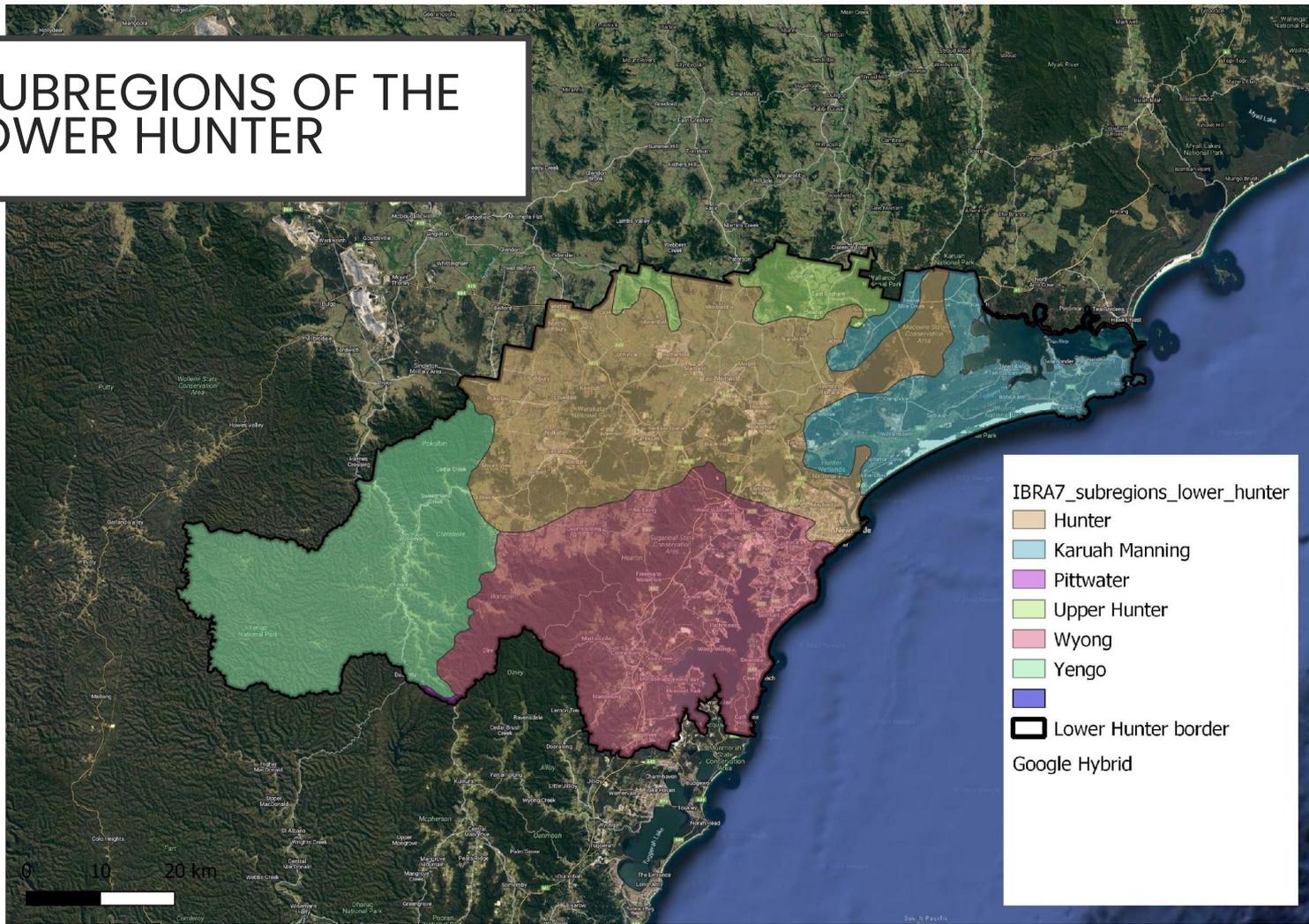
Bioregions intersecting the Newcastle LGA include:

**Hunter** subregion extending westward to Maitland through the Upper Hunter all the way to the Liverpool Plains and the **Wyong** subregion which intersects a southernmost slice of Newcastle and encompasses Lake Macquarie, the bulk of the Central Coast and the southeast portion of Cessnock

The latest **Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia** (IBRA7) classifies Australia's landscapes into 89 large geographically distinct bioregions based on common climate, geology, landform, native vegetation and species information. (DCCEEW)



# IBRA7 SUBREGIONS OF THE LOWER HUNTER



IBRA7\_subregions\_lower\_hunter

Hunter

Karuah Manning

Pittwater

Upper Hunter

Wyong

Yengo

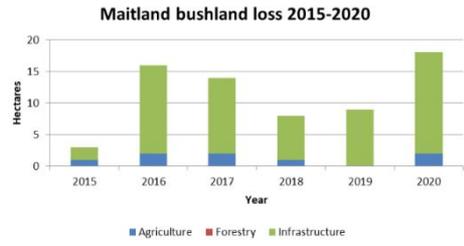
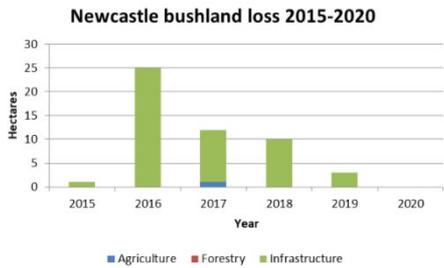
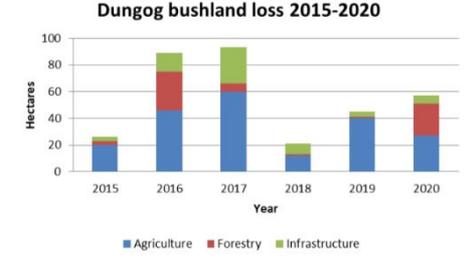
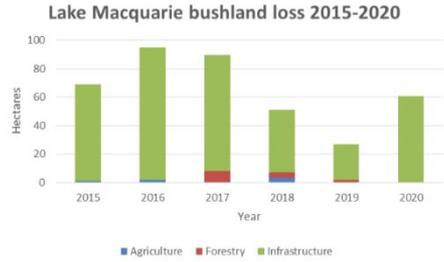
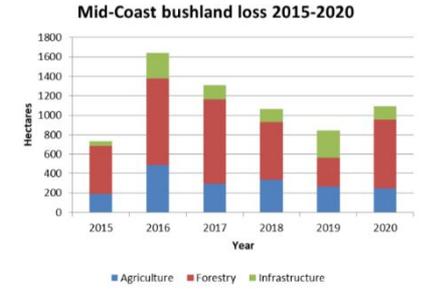
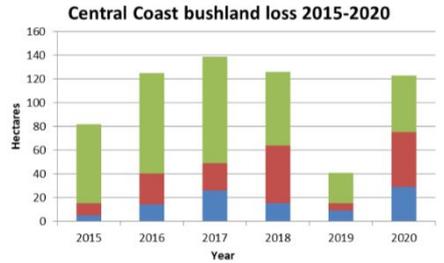
Lower Hunter border

Google Hybrid

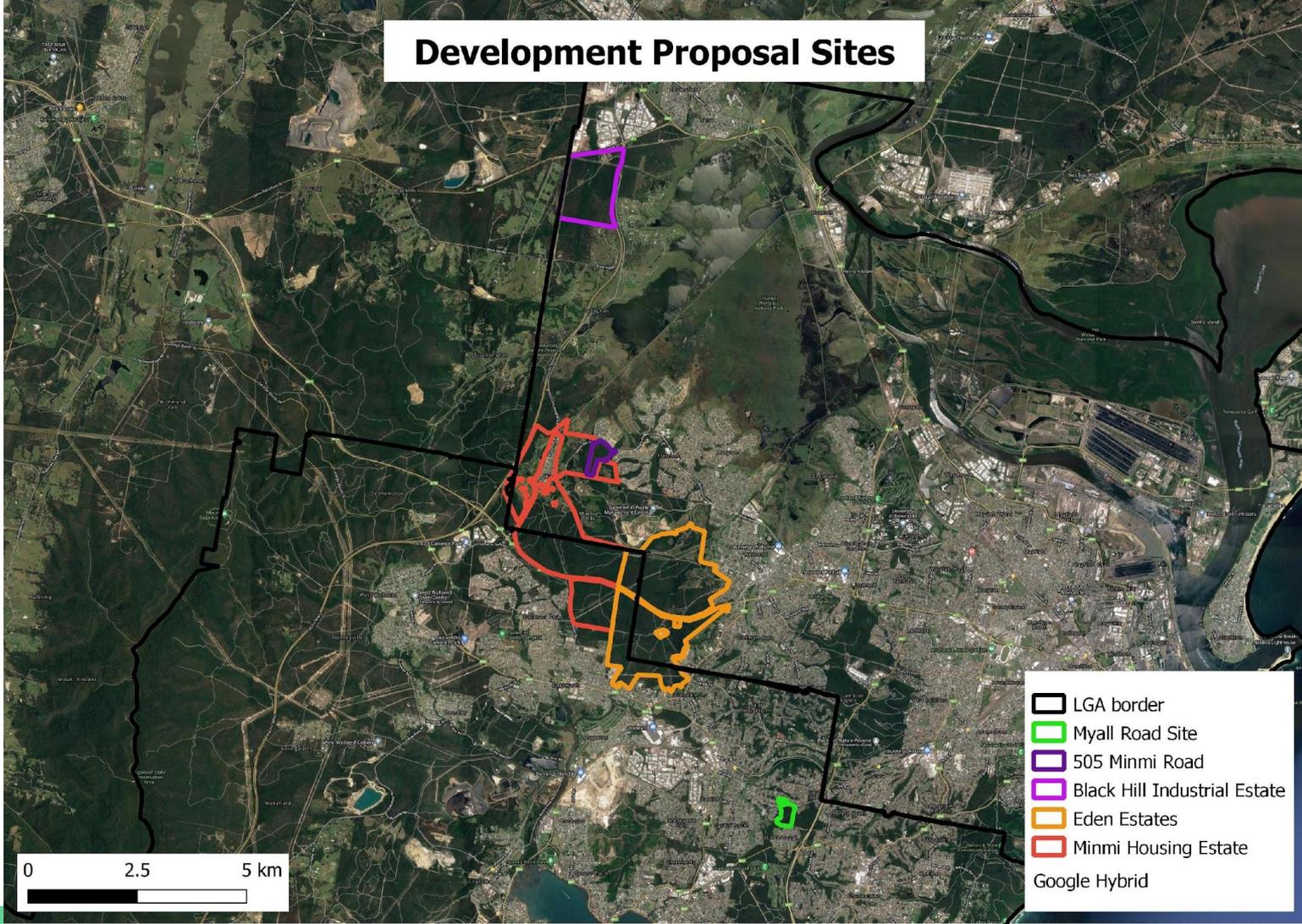
# Bushland loss in the LGA

In the ten years to 2020, almost 10,300 ha in the region between Barrington Tops and the Hawkesbury River was released for “greenfield” urban development:

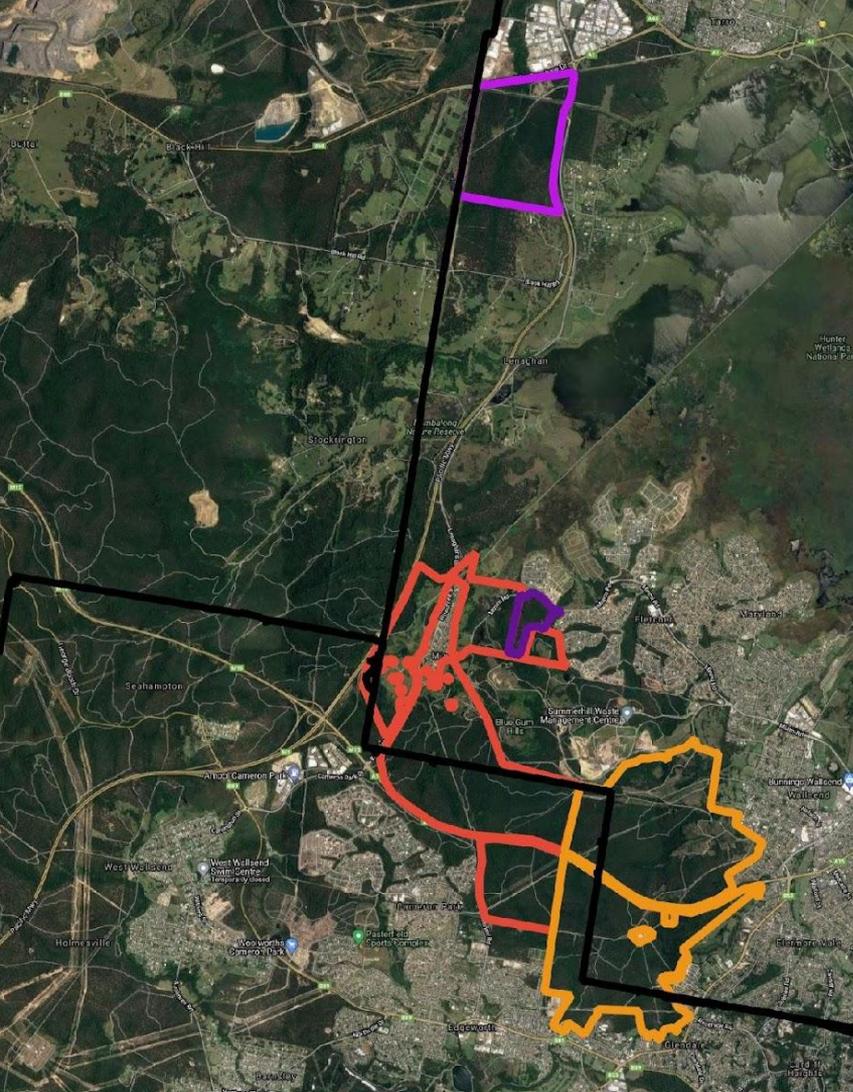
- Maitland LGA 2,922 ha,
- Cessnock LGA 2,842 ha,
- Central Coast LGA 1,941 ha,
- Lake Macquarie LGA 1,078 ha,
- Port Stephens LGA 1,068 ha
- **Newcastle LGA 348 ha,**
- Former Great Lakes portion of Mid Coast LGA 116 ha



# Development Proposal Sites



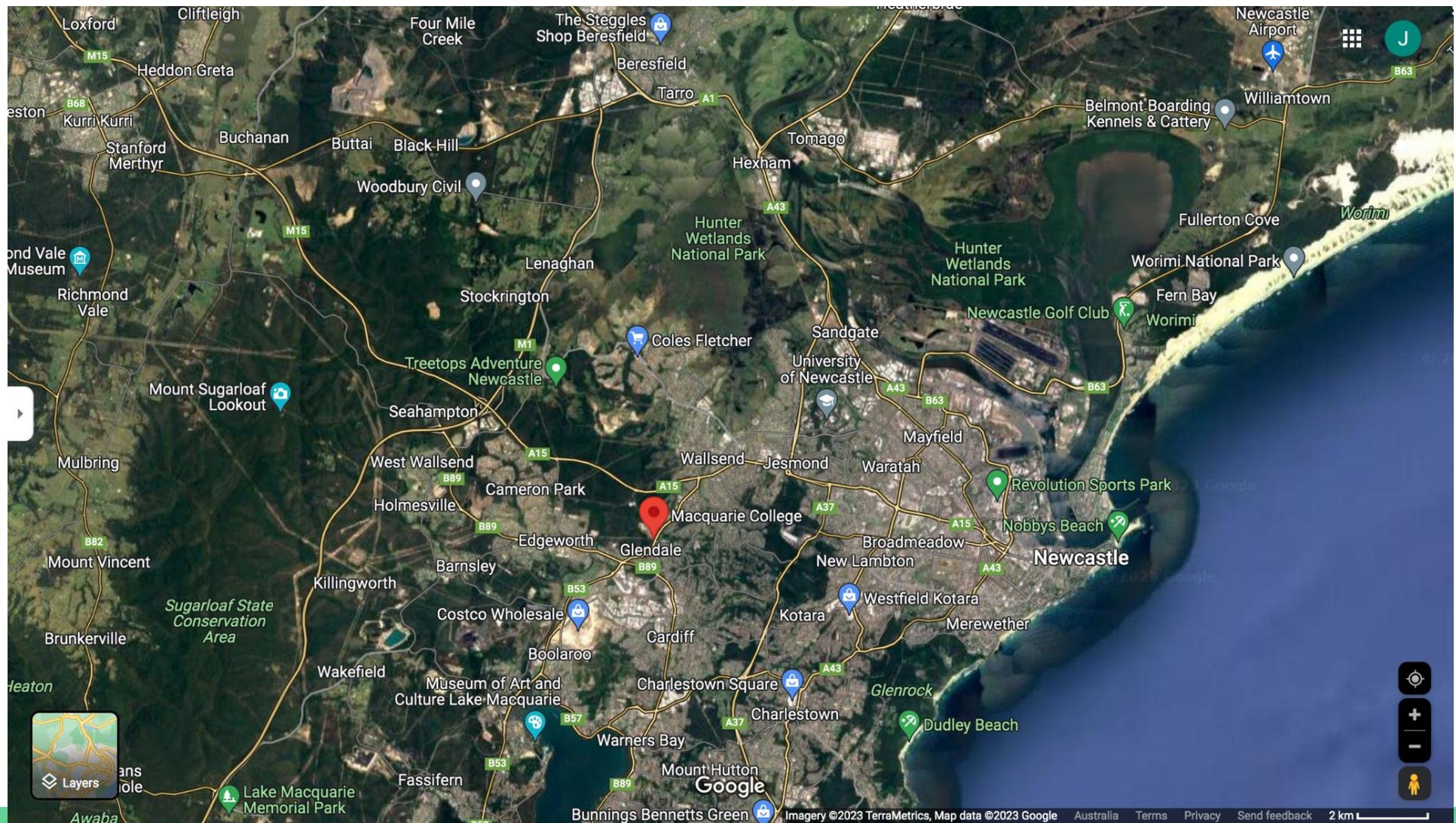
- LGA border
  - Myall Road Site
  - 505 Minmi Road
  - Black Hill Industrial Estate
  - Eden Estates
  - Minmi Housing Estate
- Google Hybrid



# Habitat connectivity has been heavily compromised

East - West connectivity hampered by developments in vegetated areas providing habitat connectivity between the **coastal conservation areas in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie including Glenrock Reserve, Awabakal Nature Reserve and Blackbutt Reserve** to the **Watagan Range and surrounds** including Mt. Sugarloaf Conservation Area, Watagans National Park, Olney State Forest and further southwest to large areas of protected habitat in the Wollemi and Yengo National Parks.

-  505 Minmi Road
-  Black Hill Industrial Estate
-  Eden Estates
-  Minmi Housing Estate



J



# Connectivity value & corridors

“The two most frequently recommended biodiversity climate adaptation strategies are to **expand protected areas and conserve and restore corridors and connected areas**. As climatic conditions change in the coming decades, the persistence of many populations of native species will depend on their ability to colonise newly suitable habitat.”



“Ecological restoration such as restoring native vegetation, installing fauna overpasses and underpasses across highways, removal of aquatic barriers, and rehabilitation of mined areas will all play essential roles in the conservation and utility of these corridors.”

# Link Road Forest

Containing habitat suitable for approximately 50 threatened species

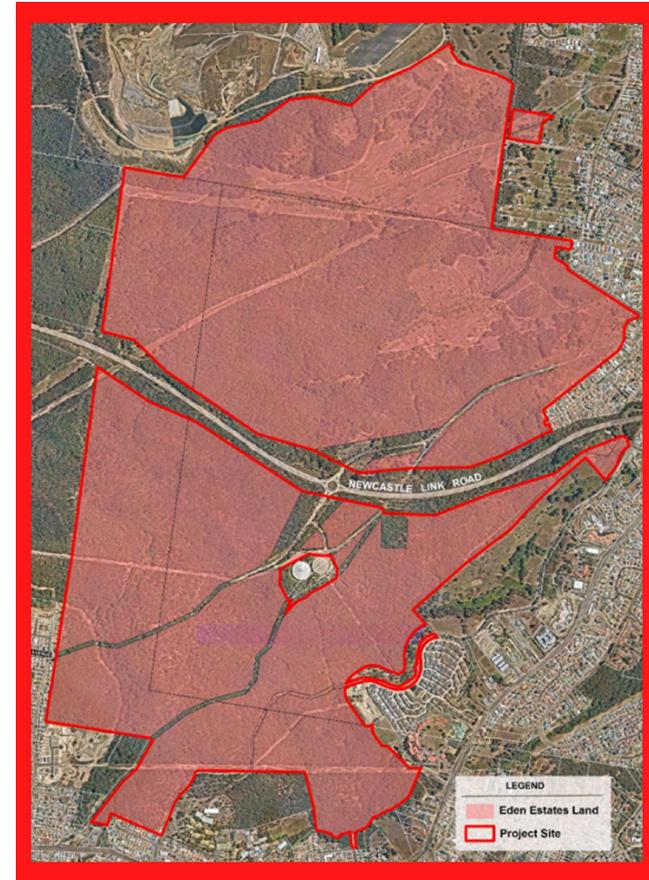
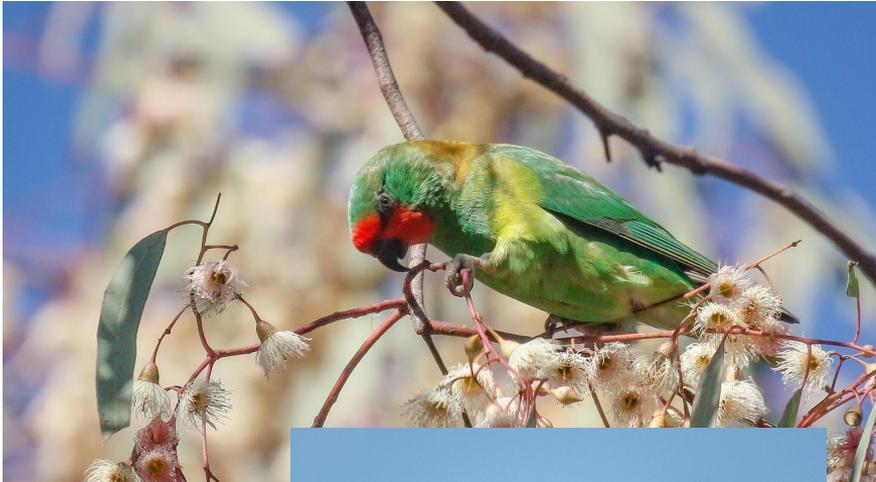


Image credit: Rob Palazzi



# Squirrel Glider

In 2008, the population inhabiting the northern Central Coast and southern Lake Macquarie LGAs was estimated to be the biggest in Australia (Smith 2000 cited in Economos R and McDonald A 2008).

Lake Macquarie City Council ecologists estimate that across Newcastle (Glenrock State Conservation Area, Tingira Heights Nature Reserves, Jesmond bushland, Blackbutt Reserve) the area of likely habitat is 1,767 ha, with a potential maximum population of possibly 300 - 600 Squirrel Gliders.

The Lake Macquarie Squirrel Glider Planning and Management Guidelines 2015 state that within the LGA any further loss of habitat or connectivity in the north-east population is expected to have significant impact on populations, citing loss of major habitat connectivity and reduction in habitat fragments to sizes of less than 400 ha a key factor.



Squirrel Glider *Petaurus norfolcensis* (Photo Michael Murray, Forest Fauna Surveys PL)

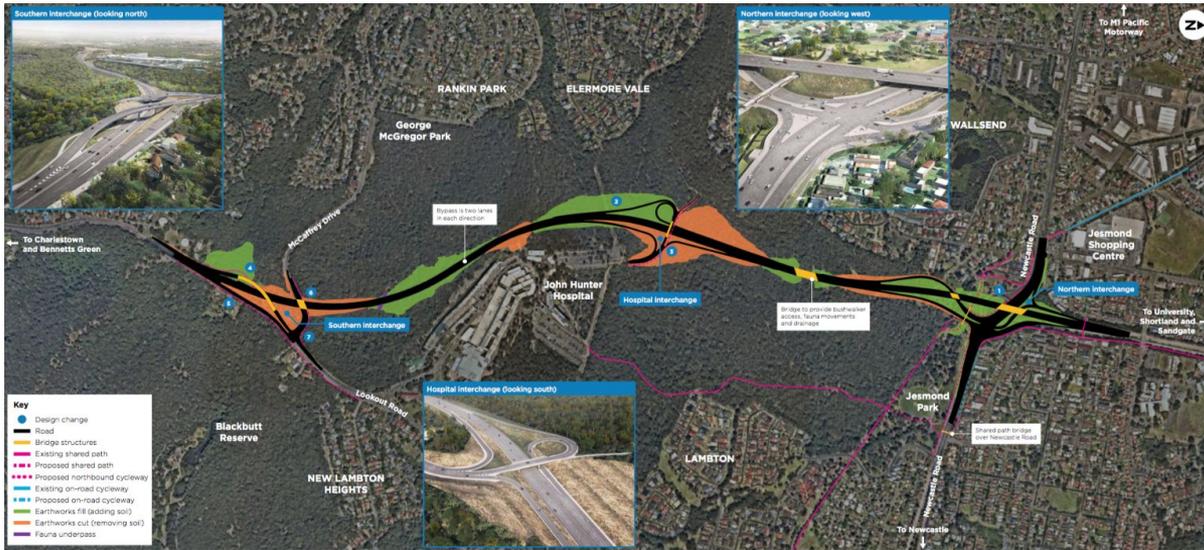




Figure 6 Existing and Recommended Vegetation Corridors, Squirrel Glider Habitat Relief Project, City of Newcastle

# Jesmond bushland: 320 hollow trees lost

Habitat for 5 Threatened fauna species, and 3 Threatened flora species has been destroyed to accommodate the project.



The Biodiversity Assessment Report from June 2018 cited the "...removal of about 320 identified hollow-bearing trees..." with construction requiring **51 hectares of native vegetation to be cleared or disturbed**, of which 43.5 hectares is "...known foraging habitat for the Squirrel Glider".

The construction footprint impinges on the George McGregor Landcare Reserve, and is just 6km from the Hunter Estuary Wetlands, RAMSAR listed migratory shorebird site.

# Our biodiversity protection laws are changing

## **NSW** Five-year review of the Biodiversity Conservation Act.

The Biodiversity Conservation Act requires the Minister responsible for administering the Act to begin a review as soon as possible after 5 years from the commencement of a majority of the Act's provisions (which occurred on 25 August 2017). The purpose of the review is to determine whether the policy objectives of the Act remain valid and whether the terms remain appropriate for securing those objectives. **A report on the outcome of the review will be tabled in each House of Parliament by 24 August 2023.**

Source:

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/biodiversity/overview-of-biodiversity-reform/statutory-review-of-the-biodiversity-conservation-act-2016>

**Commonwealth** The Independent Review of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the Samuel review) resulted in:

- a commitment to National Environmental Standards with strong legislated protections
- an independent Environmental Protection Agency
- a national environmental data system
- an emphasis on 'net positive' outcomes rather than simply averting further loss
- formal recognition of Indigenous knowledge systems and a commitment to partnerships with Indigenous voices.

Source:

<https://www.science.org.au/news-and-events/news-and-media-releases/australias-leading-scientists-welcome-government-response-to-samuel-review>

# Decision makers

## Hon Tanya Plibersek MP



Member for Sydney

**Positions**

Minister for the Environment and Water

**Party**

Australian Labor Party

**Chamber**

House of Representatives

The Hon. (Penny) Penelope Gail SHARPE, MLC



Member of the Legislative Council

Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Member of the Australian Labor Party

Term of service expires 58th Parliament (05 Mar 2027)

The Hon. Paul SCULLY, BCom(Hons), MMgmt(Dist) MP



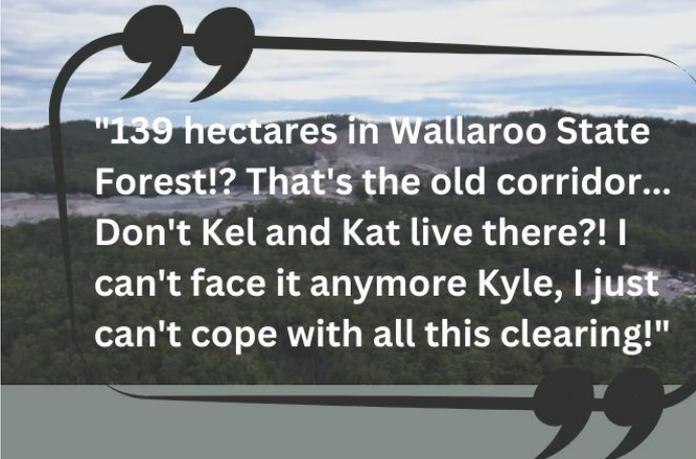
Member of the Legislative Assembly

Member for Wollongong

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

Member of the Australian Labor Party

# PORT STEPHENS KOALAS FACE A QUARRY CRISIS!



"139 hectares in Wallaroo State Forest!? That's the old corridor... Don't Kel and Kat live there?! I can't face it anymore Kyle, I just can't cope with all this clearing!"



**12 DAYS REMAIN** to make a submission to 'Stone Ridge Quarry' to speak up for Koala habitat in a key corridor at risk. Object before August 1st via NSW Planning Portal



**Thank you!**



Hunter Community  
Environment Centre