

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re:- Greater Macarthur 2040 interim plan

I am a business owner and Early Childhood Teacher within the Appin Community, I feel it is vital to voice my concerns regarding Greater Macarthur 2040 interim plan. I appreciate you taking the time to consider the valid points of objection outlined below.

I strongly object to the current interim plan for the following reasons:

- We are looking to **conserve our natural flora and fauna**, especially our disease free colony of koala, that use the areas surrounding Appin to breed, move around and live. All of that area is earmarked for residential development. My belief is that the planners of the Greater Macarthur Plan have not taken into consideration the importance of protecting the Cumberland Woodlands and our National animals.

The koala corridors mentioned are simply not enough and are too small to protect our beautiful koalas and this development is most certainly the first step of wiping koalas out in the wild. Surely development of this scale is better suited to areas WITHOUT healthy breeding koalas? Core current habitat should be maintained and improved, not moved and rebuilt for the sake of housing for humans...who could live anywhere! I'm sure people who move into the area would not be as keen if they know we wiped out the koala for them to live there.

Current habitat needs protecting and also a buffer zone to prevent development near it as there are multiple (mostly human) factors that will lead to the destruction of koalas. A simple fence across Appin Road will prevent koalas getting out in the case of a bushfire, and also will stop the current effective breeding practices of koala that require koalas to travel. There is a reason that the koala colony in Appin is healthy and breeding, that is because their habitat and conditions in this area and surrounds are perfect for our koalas.

Koala's have a great cultural significance for Aboriginal Australians and feature in Dreamtime stories

As per the Government Department of planning:

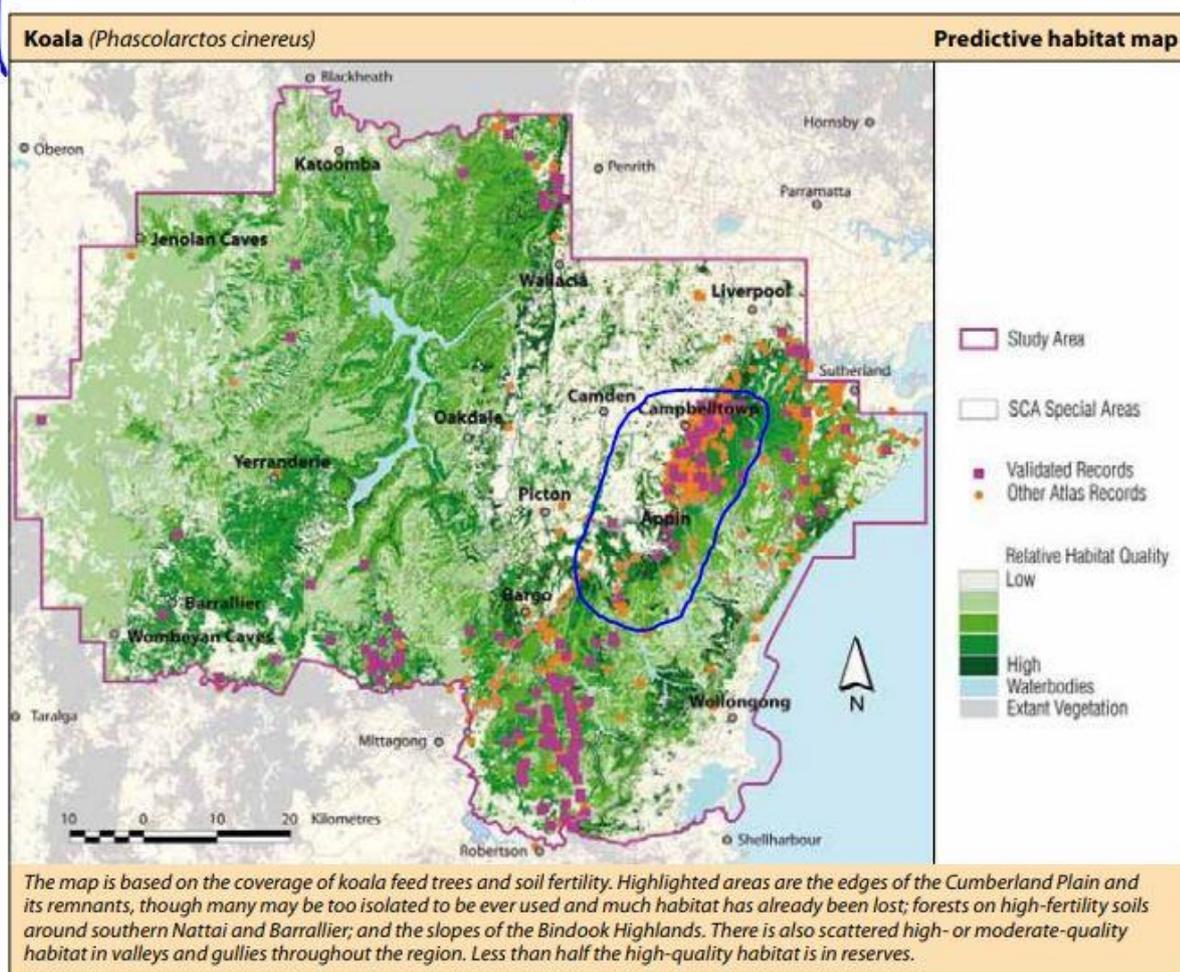
"Since the eighteenth century, foreign animals have been introduced such as rabbits, cats and foxes, which have caused the decline or extinction of many native animals. In addition, much native animal habitat has been lost to development. The Greater Southern Sydney Region was one of the first places in Australia where the landscape was rapidly transformed from native bushland and grassy open woodlands into agricultural land. The best areas to farm were fertile soils and flat, easy-to-work terrain, with good rainfall. The Cumberland Plain between Campbelltown and Camden was quickly cleared, as were the coastal plain of the Illawarra and flat land in the Burrigorang Valley. Animals that depended on these environments were affected, with ground mammals such as bettongs becoming locally extinct. In the Illawarra, stands of subtropical rainforest were cleared and some species that depended on the southern outreaches of these forests disappeared, such as the wompoo fruit-dove."

Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) Koalas live in forests and woodland, feeding on various eucalypt and other tree species. Individuals rest in dense foliage during the day and are most active after sunset. Their home range depends on the density of food trees and population size. In coastal NSW, home ranges can be between 15 and 100 hectares with individuals moving up to 20 km to search for food and habitat. Status/direction of change: Rare resident/stable Significance of study area: Core Key habitat: Grassy box woodlands and other Legislative listing: Vulnerable – TSC Act. Draft NSW recovery plan (DEC various b) Cultural significance The koala is important to the indigenous communities of the Blue Mountains, some believing habitat changes and over-hunting have led to population declines. Traditionally, koalas were a food source, though some groups did not hunt them. Blue Mountains communities and the Tharawal have many stories about the koala and it is often depicted in rock art.

Local names include Gundungurra – colo and goola (female), burrandang (male); Tharawal – kurrilwa; Dharug – kula. Koalas are also important for the non-indigenous community, with many foundations and community groups dedicated to their conservation

Threats Threats include destruction of habitat through clearing for urban development, agriculture and mining; degradation of habitat through fire or weed invasion; mortality from dogs and motor vehicles; and infection by chlamydia which causes keratoconjunctivitis (an infection of the eyes) and infertility. In NSW, chlamydia mostly afflicts animals that are already stressed and is not considered a major problem.

Distribution The koala is most frequently seen in eastern NSW. Records also occur further west, in parts of the Brigalow Belt and in the northern parts of the Darling Riverine Plains. However, koalas may have disappeared from 50–75% of their range in NSW, particularly in the south and west. In and around Sydney, the koala mainly lives on the Central Coast, in the Blue Mountains and on the fringes of the Cumberland Plain. It is rarely found in reserves though it has been seen in Dharug, Wollemi and Tomaree NPs. The new Upper Nepean SCA contains most of the important breeding population in that area. There are several populations in the study area, the two largest being near Campbelltown in the Georges River catchment, and in the Avon and Nepean catchments. The Campbelltown population has over 300 animals, with numbers slowly increasing since the 1980s. The Avon/Nepean population has also expanded. While some animals move between these populations, DNA analysis suggests they are genetically distinct. Another two populations occur near Glenbrook and the adjoining Blue Mountains NP, and in the High Range/Mt Jellore area of southern Nattai NP. Koalas near Glenbrook are probably part of a population centred around Kurrajong, north of the study area. There are scattered records throughout the rest of the study area as young male koalas may also wander well away from these population centres. There are reports of local population extinctions, for instance koalas were known from the tall forests at Upper Cordeaux and Helensburgh until the 1940s.



<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Animals-and-plants/Threatened-species/threatened-and-pest-animals-greater-southern-sydney-070227.pdf>

The destruction of core habitat (the area that contains much important habitat for the animal which is continuously, seasonally or irregularly occupied) for urban development means koalas have to spend a great deal more time on the ground, increasing their chances of being hit by cars, killed by dogs and more prone to chlamydia. Chlamydia causes eye infections and eventually renders the koala infertile. This is becoming the main reason for depleted koala numbers, and their endangerment.

Other species of threatened animal:

Eastern freetail bat (*Mormopterus norfolkensis*) The eastern freetail bat can be identified by its long forearms, upright ears and solid build. Its ultrasonic call is a distinctive pattern of alternating pulses. This is a poorly known species, but its preferred habitat seems to be dry eucalypt forest and woodland, though it has also been captured in rainforest and wet sclerophyll forest. It usually roosts in tree hollows, though it has been found in the roof of a hut and under the metal caps of telegraph poles. Status/direction of change: Rare resident/probably declining Significance of study area: Core Key habitat: Grassy box woodlands Legislative listing: Vulnerable – TSC Act Threats Threats probably include urbanisation and clearing for agriculture and logging, although the bat will forage over farmland and roost in buildings. Pesticide use in and adjacent to farms may also be a threat. Threats may be heightened because the entire known distribution of the species lies in highly populated areas which continue to face pressure from development.

There is High Quality Habitat along all of Appin Road for multiple species of Australian animals, all of which should be protected for our future generations.

- The plans don't deliver any **new infrastructure for hospitals, police, ambulance, fire stations**. . . After a recent call during an emergency, when we needed an ambulance in Appin for a critically sick child, response time was in excess of 15 minutes. Without more ambulances and alternate roads for emergency services to attend Appin, more cars and housing will only delay response times.

I attended Campbelltown hospital on the 27th January with my child to receive stitches in her face after falling. We first arrived at Campbelltown hospital at 9pm and were left in the waiting room until 3:10am. Over 6 hours wait due to no beds in the hospital. Although I am aware of the upgrade to the emergency Department, this still does not allow for more beds within the hospital. This situation is currently unacceptable for the current population of our area, is there land or hospitals ready to be built BEFORE our population explodes with development? At it currently stands, I believe that people's lives will be placed at very high risk due to lack of adequate health services. No beds, no care.

- **Schools-** Oran Park has been developed in recent times, and this year looks at having 12 Kindergarten classes. Children are being forced into out of area schools due to having inadequate space for current students. How many schools will be built to accommodate students for 40000 new dwellings? As our Primary and High schools are already busting at the seams, will these new schools be built to ensure our future generations are educated at the expected high quality of educational services of Australia before development occurs? Where are these schools to be located? I have seen nothing of the plans for additional primary or high school to educate children Oval and play space in schools are being filled with demountable rooms to accommodate existing students within the Macarthur area. This means less opportunity for children to move and play for National recommendations of healthy exercise levels. Development without proper access to open play spaces for children will see a marked decline in children's physical and mental health. As childhood obesity and children's mental health issues are on the increase, I believe that this is linked with children no longer having backyards nor open spaces to play in school. How will this be addressed by Planning?
- **Small lot sizes** means small to no backyards. This is a real concern as obesity is on the rise in Australia. Children will have nowhere to play and so will remain indoors. This will negatively impact

their physical and mental health. Further putting a strain on the already overburdened education and health departments thus perpetuating a vicious cycle.

- There have been very little opportunity for **community input**. There was only one community drop in session in the Shire and only 5 days' notice was given. Residents in surrounding areas like Menangle and Douglas Park are also affected by traffic, people, unsightly development and have not been consulted properly by the State Government, and no input was sought from the people who these issues directly affect. The plan that is available to people already living in these areas is simply not detailed enough to specify changes in infrastructure or roads. It's concerning that people who do not live in these areas don't give adequate voice to existing residents.
- **Water** pressure is an issue in Appin. There is no clear plan for water and sewer in Greater Macarthur, and currently as our dam is at 28%, how will the area have enough water for more people?
- **Tourism**- The Shire is losing more rural and agriculture land and its beautiful scenic rural areas. The low to medium density is not in keeping with the low density of Appin and surrounds. The lots are going to be significantly smaller and destroys the reasons that we are visited by tourists. Tourism and food production on already farmed lands have a greater potential for people of the shire to attract tourists, especially as it is prime koala habitat. What will happen to tourism and tourism businesses in our area. No one is coming to Appin to see a jungle of houses, they want to see our diverse flora and fauna of threatened species, and for food production from farming, such as the honey farms and fruit orchards.
- **Roads**- These new plans are going to add a further 18,000 houses in West Appin. This is more than the total number of houses already in the Shire. Where are all these people going to work? Where are these children going to go to school? How will either group of people get to where they need to go on roads that are already at capacity or beyond? Currently Appin road is the most dangerous road in NSW, will there be an alternate road? Will this be built BEFORE development? As a daily Appin Road user, it can already be a slow drive to get along, and many driveways have seen many accidents take place as people try to turn into driveways. People from Wollongong and the south use Appin road to take the slow journey to Narellan road to get to the M5 and through to Campbelltown. I think that there should be an alternate overpass road to the M5, (possibly straight through from Church Street Appin or Bryans road) to prevent too much traffic on Appin Road, and to protect the koala colony that travel for breeding purposes along this track across the Wollondilly to Wilton.
With already tens of thousands of cars and freight trucks using this road every day, how are we to cope when an emergency arises.
I have been at work at 3pm in Appin when a car accident occurred on the single lanes of Appin Road. A fatality or serious accident on Appin road leads to the entire road being closed for a minimum of 8 hours. Parents are unable to pick their children up from school, and teachers and educators end up being required to stay at school until parents make the journey all the way through Campbelltown, through Menangle, Douglas Park or Picton, and take the small track of Broughton's Pass, down a single lane valley that large vehicles cannot access due to size. As this is the only alternate way to get through to this rural town, multiple cars use the same route, creating traffic, therefore taking up to three hours to get through. After children are picked up, teachers and educators inevitably have to tackle the same tracks to get home.
Depending on the time of the accident, this can mean for some of the people employed in Appin, that we have gotten home from a full day of work after 10pm, for restaurant and supermarket workers, even later! This is not a safe alternative road, having seen a number of accidents on this road myself, especially as it can be more treacherous, with sharp bends, wildlife (wallabies, kangaroos and koalas) especially for inexperienced drivers.

- This increase in houses (hard surfaces) and decrease in green space means the temperature of the area will rise drastically. As many summer days in Appin have been 35 degrees plus this summer, this will only go up! A government that allows such development that creates 'hot spaces' must expect that people would invest in air conditioning, thus exacerbating climate change problems, demonstrating a lack of concern about this issue.
- Out of sequence development is a real concern, will the infrastructure be implemented before the addition of tens of thousands of additional people? Is there a master plan? Does it take into consideration local Australians concerns?

Kind Regards,
Lesley Thomas
Concerned Teacher, mum and resident

Please don't hesitate to contact me as I would like to fully discuss the issues of our area