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**From:** Camp Ourimbah <@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 1 June 2022 5:48 PM  
**To:** Portfolio Committee 4  
**Subject:** Re: Opening statement - 29 April - Inquiry into the long term sustainability and future of the timber and forest products industry - Coffs Harbour  
**Attachments:** Koalas in OSF.pdf; Transcription Corrections Ursula Da Silva.docx; GIPA Compartment Boundaries Forestry Corp.pdf

Dear Lauren.

Attached are documents requested and a correction to the transcript addressed to the committee.

Here is a link to a bee keepers association on the Central Coast as requested:

<http://www.centralcoastbees.org/>

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# KOALAS IN OURIMBAH STATE FOREST

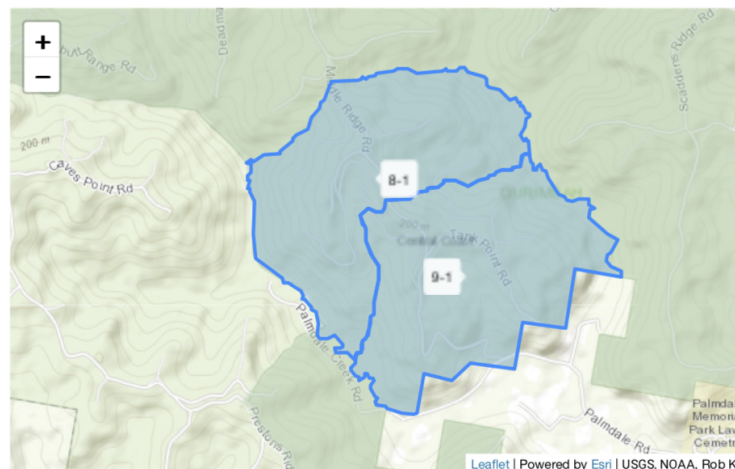
August 2021

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**Evidencing the existence of Koalas**  
*(Phascolarctos cinereus cinereus)* in Ourimbah State Forest

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## A Citizen Science Report



Compartments OUR008 OUR009, Ourimbah State Forest  
Source: Forestry Corporation Plan Portal

By Ursula Da Silva  
Revised with addition by Sally Alldis, Ecologist

**JULY 2021**

## **Introduction**

Forestry Corporation NSW is logging koala habitat in Ourimbah State Forest. This study confirms the logging compartments contain koala habitat and koalas currently exist here. The area therefore contains a “contemporary koala record” with a record of a koala detected in the previous 10 years. The Central Coast Council and Australia Koala Foundation have been notified of a koala sighting through photographic evidence provided by Ourimbah Creek Road (OCR) resident, Emma Griffith whose property is less than 1km from Ourimbah State Forest (OSF).

**Aim: To identify Koala Browse Trees in compartments Forestry Corporation NSW intend to log to further evidence the existence of koala populations in the OSF that must be investigated and protected.**

## **From letter to Forestry Corporation written by Ursula and Emma (OCR resident/solicitor)**

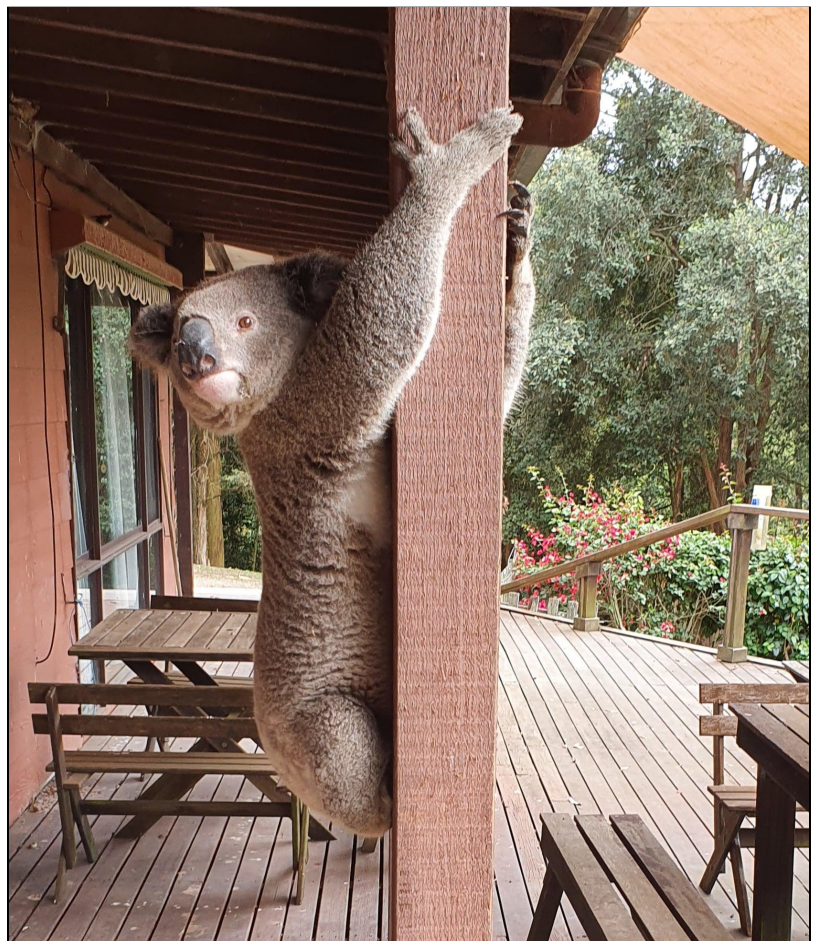
“The current harvest plans of Forestry Corporation of OSF are not accurate as there has been evidence of koalas, i.e. a contemporary koala record present, in the area as stated...Therefore these plans are not legal as they are invalid and not up to date.”

## **Key:**

Forestry Corporation NSW (FC)  
Ourimbah State Forest (OSF)  
Ourimbah Creek Road (OCR)  
Koala Browse Tree (KBT)  
KMA (Koala Management Areas)

## **Method:**

Eucalyptus sample collections from compartments OUR008 and OUR009 in the OSF. Collect gumnuts-mature and immature, leaves, bark. Take photos. Read relevant reports to find KBT in compartments. Take samples to Deidrie Jinks, horticulturist and owner of Sydney Rainforest Nursery for identification.



*Source: OCR Resident Emma Griffith, Dec 2020*



**Sunday 1st of August, 4.00pm-5.30pm**

Collected samples of 4 different kinds of gum trees found in the compartment (OUR009).

Attempting to analyse if any are Koala Browse Trees (KBT). Collected: gumnuts, bark, leaves and took a photo of the tree. Getting species identified by Deidrie Jinks.



**Sample 1**



**Sample 2**



**Sample 3**





**Sample 4**





**Thursday 5th of August, 1-3pm**

Return to the compartments to look for Blue Stringybark. Unable to find any. Find black she-oaks, acacias, smooth barked angophoras, turpentines. Cabbage tree palms on a south facing slope about 200m down from Middle Ridge Road. Get samples (gumnuts, leaf, photo of tree) of suspected Grey Gum. (*E. Punctata*). I counted about 15 of these trees in a circle within a 5m radius around me (below).

**Sample 5**





## Deidrie Jinks identifies tree samples



Koala Browse Trees (KBT) are placed in a table below.

Sample 1: Red iron bark (*E. sideroxylon*)

Sample 2: White mahogany (*E. acmenoides*)

Sample 3: Forest red gum (*E. tereticornis*)

Sample 4: Thin leaved stringy bark (*E. eugenoides*)

Sample 5: Grey gum (*E. punctata*)

Also found in compartment;

Smooth-barked apple (*A. costata*).

Rainforest species

Acacia species

Black she-oak (*A. littoralis*)

Lilly pilly (*Acmena smithii*)

Coachwood (*Ceratopetalum apetalum*)

According to table 6; A review of koala tree use across New South Wales, the **Forest Red Gum** was rated number 1 in high use KMA (Koala Management Areas).

**Table 6 A summarised ranking reflecting evidence of koala tree use across all KMAs in NSW (after Phillips 2000; DECC 2008)**

Use = feeding, shelter, social; legend represents the state use level for tree species.

High use in ≥3/7 KMAs		High use in 1 or 2 KMAs		Significant use in ≥1 KMA (no high use)		Irregular use in ≥1 KMA (no higher use)		Low use in ≥1 KMA (no higher use)	
Rank	Species	Rank	Species	Rank	Species	Rank	Species	Rank	Species
1	Forest red gum ( <i>E. tereticornis</i> )	2	Yellow box ( <i>E. melliodora</i> )						
1	River red gum ( <i>E. camaldulensis</i> )	2	Blackbutt ( <i>E. pilularis</i> )						
1	Ribbon gum ( <i>E. viminalis</i> )	2	Narrow-leaved peppermint ( <i>E. radiata</i> )						
2	Tallowwood ( <i>E. microcorys</i> )	2	Broad-leaved peppermint ( <i>E. dives</i> )						
2	Mountain blue gum ( <i>E. brunnea</i> )	2	Yellow stringybark ( <i>E. muelleriana</i> )						
2	Red mahogany ( <i>E. resinifera</i> )	2	Silver-top stringybark ( <i>E. laevopinea</i> )						
2	Swamp mahogany ( <i>E. robusta</i> )	2	Red stringybark ( <i>E. macrorhyncha</i> )						

Source: An evidence-based review of koala tree use across New South Wales, p.29

Table 6: A summarised ranking reflecting evidence of koala tree use across all KMAs in NSW (after Phillips 2000; DECC 2008)

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Animals-and-plants/Native-animals/review-of-koala-tree-use-across-nsw-180385.pdf>

Using the information from this report, I compiled the species of trees identified in the compartments into a table.

Species found in approved logging compartments	Koala Usage
Forest red gum ( <i>E. tereticornis</i> )	High use
Grey Gum ( <i>E. punctata</i> )	High use
White mahogany ( <i>E. acmenoides</i> )	Significant use
Smooth-barked apple ( <i>A. costata</i> ).	Significant use
Thin leaved stringybark ( <i>E. eugenoides</i> )	Significant use
Swamp oak ( <i>C. glauca</i> )	Irregular use
Acacia species	Irregular use
Rainforest species	Irregular use
Black she-oak ( <i>A. littoralis</i> )	Irregular use
Lilly pilly ( <i>Acmena smithii</i> )	Low use
Coachwood ( <i>Ceratopetalum apetalum</i> )	Low use

The Central Coast is identified as KM2 in this report.

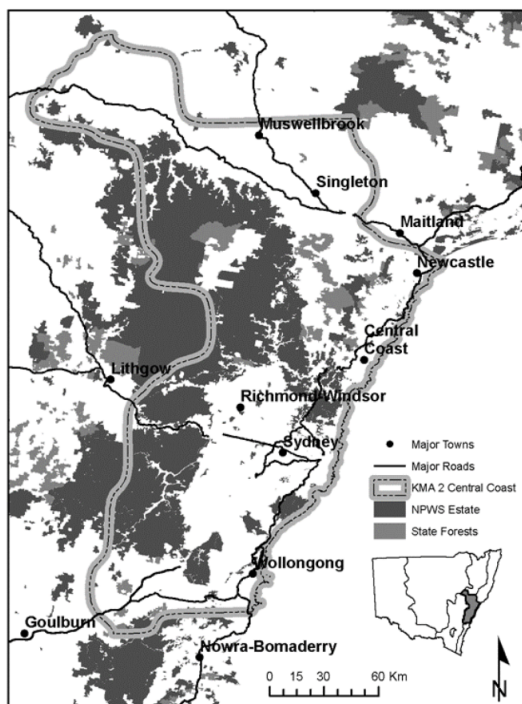


Figure 8 Central Coast Koala Management Area (after Phillips 2000; DECC 2008)



According to Forestry Corporation it is North (north lower north east according to ABARES)

## Plan Details: HP\_OURIMBAH\_8\_9\_2021

[Back to Plans](#)

Copy Plan Id to Clipboard

### Plan Status

Approved [Status History](#)

### Division

HFD

### Plan Type

Harvest Plan

### Region

North

### Plan Number

200001035

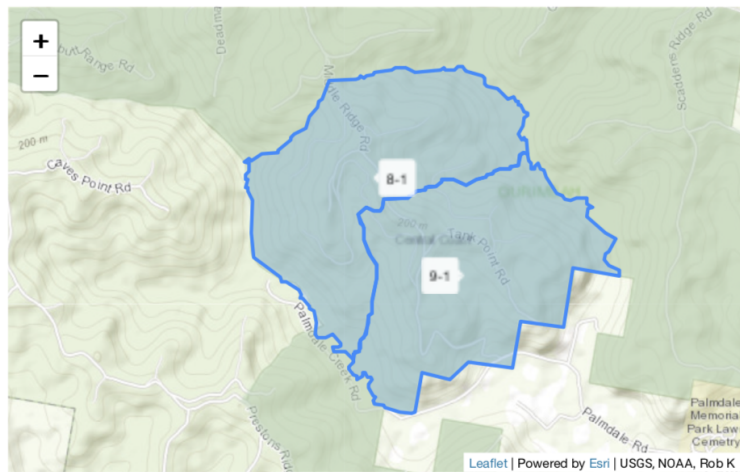
### Plan Name

HP\_OURIMBAH\_8\_9\_2021

### Last Harvest or Regeneration Activity

#### Year

2003



Source: Forestry Corporation Plan Portal

## Conclusion

There are a large number of Koala Browse Trees ranging from high usage to low usage in the compartments that Forestry Corporation NSW intend to log in addition to a koala photographed Dec 2020 less than 1km from the Ourimbah State Forest.

There is a very high possibility of a contemporary koala population living in the forest that must be investigated. The evidence of a koala population and KBT shown in this report means that current Forestry Corporation harvesting plans are illegal and invalid as they state: 'No contemporary koala record present' and 'Koala Feed Trees-no Koala Browse Tree prescription in compartments.'

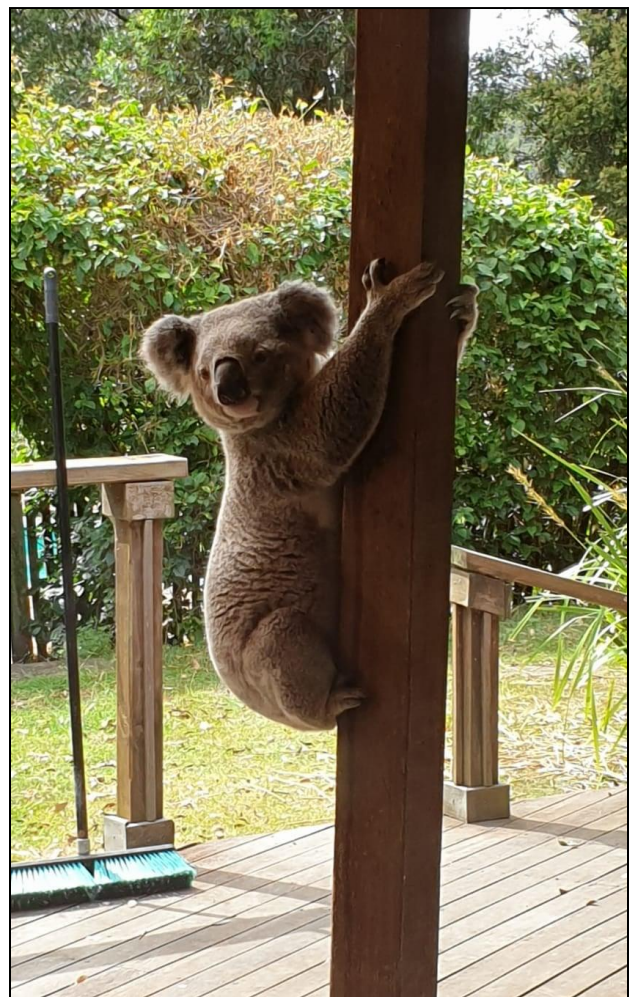
There is a strong possibility of the re-introduction of koala populations in the area post 2019-2020 bushfires. After crossing George Downes Drive to escape the fires, the koala appears to be inhabiting OSF, the next obvious available food source. This is one possibility, or alternatively there has always been a koala population that FC has not previously identified.

This is supported by a statement made by CEA spokesperson, Jake Cassar;

"There have been more than 70 registered sightings of koalas in our area over the past 20 years and the sightings have been surprisingly widespread," (See Coast Community News, 13th Jan 2021). Indeed the article this newspaper publishes features the koala that Emma photographed, the one that appears in this report.

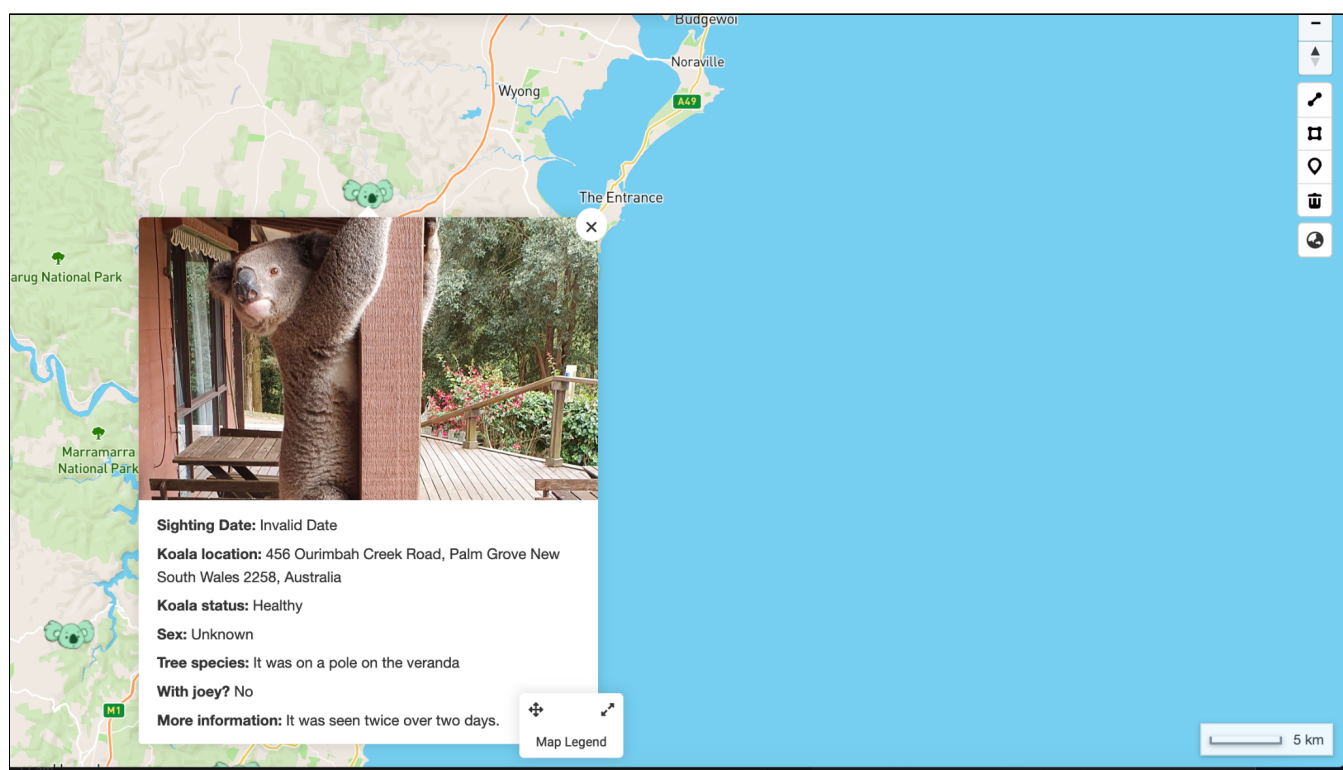
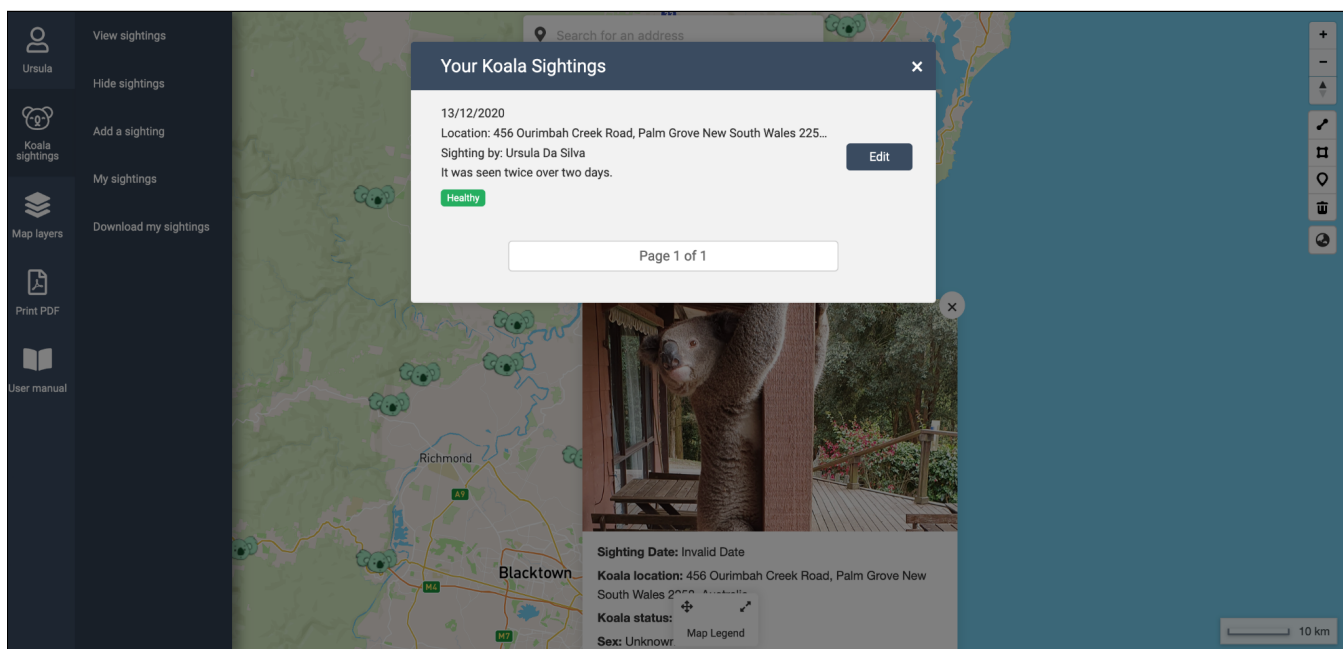
It is the recommendation of the community and the report that all logging (LLAP\_TANK POINT\_2020 200000647) in Ourimbah State Forest cease immediately to sanction what habitat and food source is available to this koala population. It is critical as koalas are a vulnerable EPBC listed species.

The Australian Koala Foundation and the Central Coast council were notified of the sighting. Contact has been made to forward the bodies this report. See images below.



*Source: OCR Resident Emma Griffith, Dec 2020*





Date verified in image above.  
 Source: Australian Koala Foundation website

## **Sally Alldis, Ecologist**

### **Koalas Face Extinction**

Since the recent Australian Federal Government listing of koalas as endangered it has become more urgent that we act on conserving and protecting vegetation communities that support habitat for koala populations. Habitat loss is a key driver in the decline of koala populations and whilst planting koala food trees and creating new koala habitats is often presented as an effective way of preserving koalas, protecting and maintaining already intact vegetation communities is a more economically viable long-term solution that offers koalas crucial habitat in the present.

Ourimbah State Forest holds habitat for numerous vulnerable, endangered and critically endangered species, see table 1. Retention of all biodiversity values to the vegetation communities present is critical to upholding biodiversity standards to ensure survivorship to these species and to prevent further disjunct populations. State Forests are worthy of comprehensive surveying and analysis, conducted by accredited third parties, to provide data on biodiversity, distribution patterns, rarity and threats and condition integrity to gain knowledge of biodiversity values that State Forests possess.

### **Ourimbah State Forest is Koala Habitat**

The significant connection of this vegetation to the surrounding landscape offers suitable habitat for a koala population. If this forest was to be identified as a koala habitat for conservation by the NSW State government it would prevent further koala habitat loss and lock up areas for future population survivorship.

The most important factor to koala existence is habitat tree availability and structural diversity. The compartments marked for logging by Forestry Corporation NSW and direct surrounding areas consist of vegetation communities that are dominated by high and significant use koala browse trees in a range of age classes, such as Grey gum, Forest Red Gum, Smooth barked apple (angophora), White mahogany, Yellow bloodwood and Turpentine tree. The existence of these critical habitats that hold high biodiversity significance for koalas generate an urge to conserve and protect.

Whilst areas of Ourimbah State Forest are not primary or secondary koala habitat they do offer corridors between the habitats therefore providing resources for koalas and also hold vegetation that supports other listed vulnerable, endeared and critically endangered species. The key threatening process of native vegetation removal, often caused by disturbance events associated with logging, lead to a chain of events of further habitat degradation to occur across vegetation communities by fragmenting species and leaving them vulnerable to predation and invasion of exotic species.



Table 1: Vulnerable, Endangered and Critically Endangered Species at Ourimbah State Forest listed on Bionet.

Flora		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Conservation Status in NSW
Rainforest Cassia	<i>Senna acclinis</i>	Endangered
Scrub Turpentine	<i>Rhodamnia rubescens</i>	Critically Endangered
Fauna		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Conservation Status in NSW
Gang-gang Cockatoo	<i>Callocephalon fimbriatum</i>	Vulnerable
Giant Burrowing Frog	<i>Heleioporus australiacus</i>	Vulnerable
Golden-tipped Bat	<i>Phoniscus papuensis</i>	Vulnerable
Green-thighed Frog	<i>Litoria brevipalmata</i>	Vulnerable
Koala	<i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i>	Endangered
Large Bent-winged Bat	<i>Miniopterus orianae oceanensis</i>	Vulnerable
Little Bent-winged Bat	<i>Miniopterus australis</i>	Vulnerable
Red-crowned Toadlet	<i>Pseudophryne australis</i>	Vulnerable
Sooty Owl	<i>Tyto tenebricosa</i>	Vulnerable
Yellow-bellied Glider	<i>Petaurus australis</i>	Vulnerable
Yellow-bellied Sheath-tail-bat	<i>Saccolaimus flaviventris</i>	Vulnerable