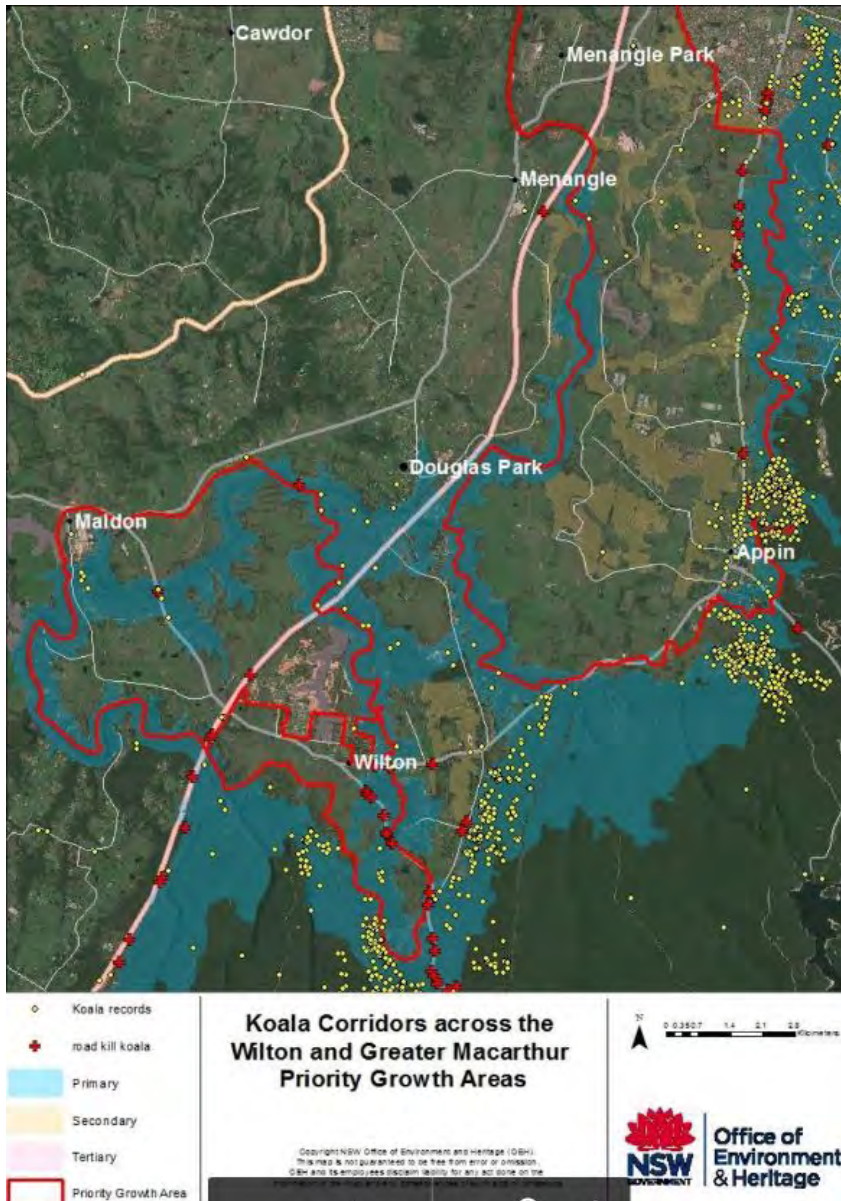




**Brief on
Koala and Cumberland Plain protections in
Macarthur including
residential development at **Gilead and Wilton**,
and the **Appin Rd** widening
October 9th 2019**

IMPORTANCE OF KOALAS IN GREATER MACARTHUR



The Macarthur Region contains the only population of Koalas listed in NSW as likely to be growing (McAlpine 2015),¹ and probably the only chlamydia free colony in Australia². Estimates of the population are at least 500 Koalas in Campbelltown³ and another 500 in Wilton. Gilead (the narrowest section between the Nepean and Georges Rivers) and Wilton (the southern site) - bookend the area being sliced up for development. Blue and yellow areas indicate Koala corridors. Yellow dots - Koala sightings, Red dots - road deaths.

The Koalas of Holsworthy Army Base survived near extinction in the 1930s when as few as 22 may have been left alive. From the mid-1980s they have since been steadily recovering, and re-populating the surrounding Sydney suburbs that used to be their preferred habitat.

¹ McAlpine et. al. 2015. Conserving Koalas: A review of the contrasting regional trends, outlooks and policy challenges. Biological Conservation 192 226-236.

² Conversation Rob Close 2018

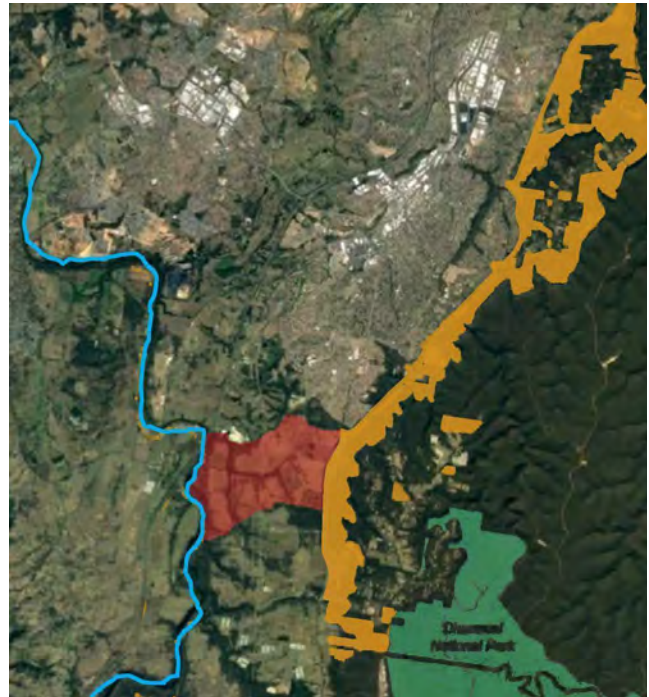
³ 'Saving Our Species: Campbelltown Koala update', OEH 5 November 2018.

Koalas have a unique European heritage connection to Greater Macarthur. It was in this area in 1798 that John Price was the first European to “discover” the Koala, and it is quite likely that the word ‘Koala’ is derived from a local indigenous Darug word, ‘Koolah’ meaning ‘no water’.

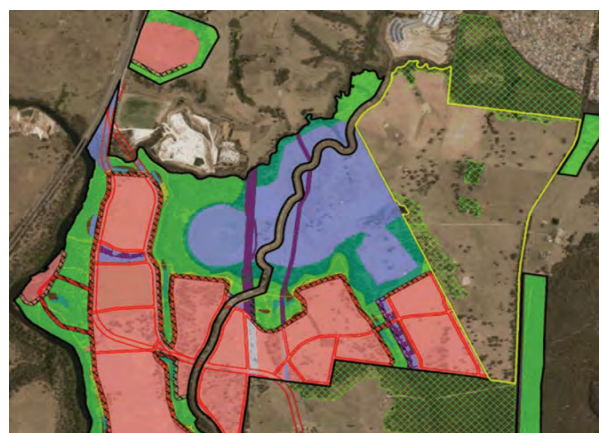
Combined with the new Western Sydney international airport, and Campbelltown’s colonial frontier landscapes, the **potential for Campbelltown to be re-imagined as an international tourist destination** is ripe. Campbelltown Council is too small to take advantage of this possibility and has acquiesced to housing development. The Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan may impose a green landscape outcome if strongly supported. However, Gilead is the antipathy of it.

GILEAD

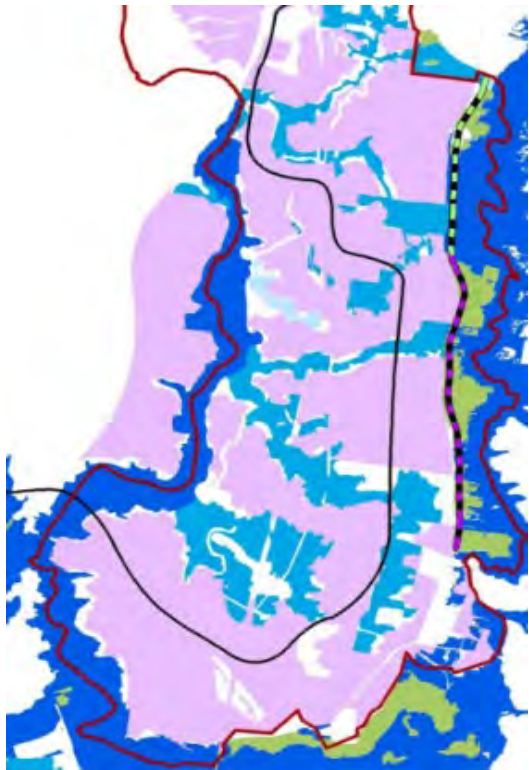
Gilead is of great significance because of the near confluence of two of Sydney’s major Rivers, the Georges and the Nepean/Hawkesbury (Deerrubin). Gilead is the shortest most northern bridge between these two extensive, and long riparian zones - natural wildlife corridors. It ensures the eventual connection between the Campbelltown Koala colony and the Blue Mountains/Hawkesbury Koala colonies - essential for their long term survival. For developer Lendlease, Gilead is no different to any other block of land across Sydney; in fact worse, as it’s not near mass transit or amenities. **The west bank of the Georges River is shown in orange** (this is Stage 1 of the **Georges River Koala National Park**). **Gilead is shown in red** (part of Stage 2 set of corridors).



Above is **Lendlease’s Stage 1**: the blue area is primary Koala corridor as identified by OEH following the Nepean and Georges Rivers, and the **yellow webbing is the secondary Koala corridors** connecting the two.



Above is **Lendlease’s proposed Stage 2: red is proposed housing** - this will functionally wipe out the secondary corridors that connect the two primary ones. **It must not be zoned residential**. The yellow outline is Lendlease Stage 1.



APPIN ROAD

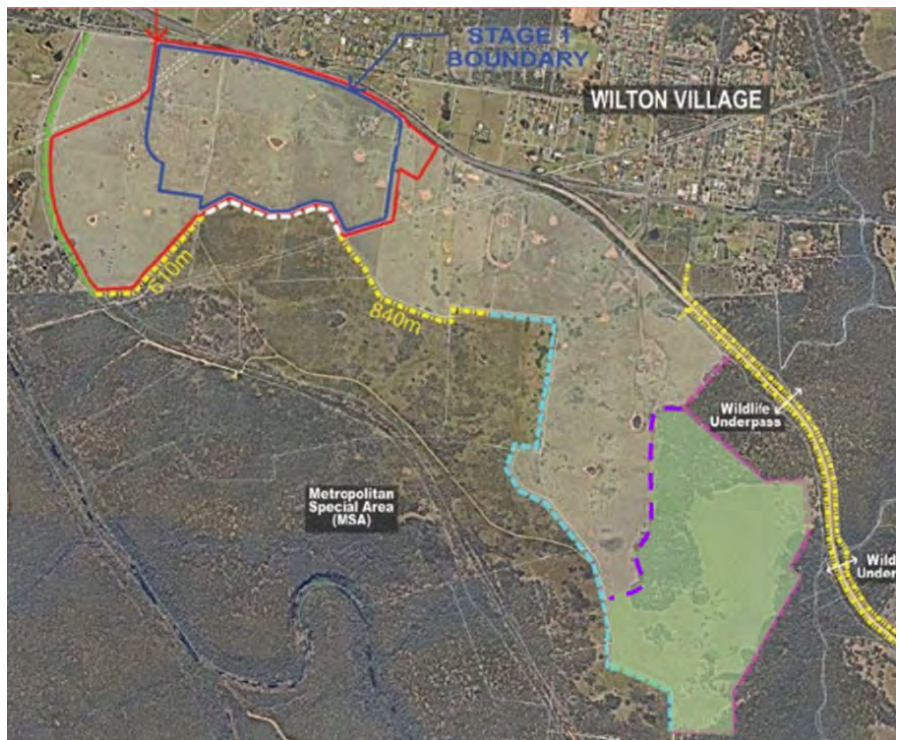
Together with RMS and DPE, Lendlease has been heavily involved in the Appin Road upgrade (their VPA agreement will share in its funding). Not surprising then, that the new road design will be of great benefit to Lendlease as its **'exclusion fencing'** (shown dotted in green and purple) will run the length of Appin Road from Rosemeadow to Appin, removing Koalas from Lendlease's Gilead site west of Appin Road (east of Appin Rd is coloured dark blue with patches of green and proposed for conservation). It is literally enabling a **'localized Koala extinction plan'** as:

1. It will accelerate contact with the Chlamydia infected Koalas of the Southern Highlands.
2. There will be no east-west escapes/exits for Koalas in case of a large fire or other threats emanating from the Holsworthy Army Base.
3. It dramatically reduces connectivity options for Koalas and funnels them into one super Koala highway that could face any number of unforeseen blockages, obstacles or complications and is certain to increase Koala stressors, a cause of Chlamydia.

The exclusion fence along Appin Road will remove Koala habitat and connectivity from the light blue and pink areas. The top light blue area 'secondary corridor' is **Noorumba** reserve connecting into Menangle Creek. The next light blue area down is **Beulah** connecting into Woodhouse Creek. Both of **these existing Biobanks, will be sterilized** not only of Koalas but other terrestrial wildlife such as macropods. To date requests for over or under passes have not received funding commitment.

WILTON South East

In Walkers SE Wilton DA even the weak Koala protections are being undermined. The green area highlighted in the bottom right hand corner, is part of the **Allens Creek Koala corridor** identified as needing conservation by OEH in the **Conserving Koalas in Wollondilly and Campbelltown LGAs** (2018) report. This however, has been zoned UDZ and the Koala fencing diagram put forward by Walker will exclude Koalas, from land zoned environmental for them! **The Koala fence must follow the purple dotted line**, and no housing can go in the highlighted green area.



CUMBERLAND PLAIN CONSERVATION PLAN

The NSW Government is developing a conservation plan for Western Sydney to help balance the future needs of the community, and protect threatened plants and animals in Western Sydney for the long term. The Plan covers an area of around 200,000 hectares in Western Sydney and spans across eight local government areas: Wollondilly; Camden; Campbelltown; Liverpool; Fairfield; Penrith; Blacktown and Hawkesbury. Only relatively small areas of native vegetation remain.

In 2018, the Department also established the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan Community Reference Group with expert representatives nominated from across a range of peak environmental, aboriginal, landscape professional and scientific groups in Western Sydney. Its role is to provide expert advice to the Department on strategic conservation planning in the Cumberland Plain and input on the development of the Plan. The Group has endorsed the strategic approach as the last chance to protect what's left and generate funding to restore key links. There should be a moratorium on development until the Plan is completed and gazetted.

Local and peak environment groups have proposed the Georges River Koala National Park (including east of Appin Road promised by government) as Stage 1 of a major reserve. Stage 2 should be the linkages to the west and along the Nepean River.

Georges River Koala National Park.

The reasons a Georges River Koala National Park are so important:

1. Allows north - south Koala movement along the Georges River.
2. Protects the west bank of the upper Georges River.
3. Removes the threat of the planned Georges River Parkway (motorway), instead used to establish the National Park.
4. Removes future infill subdivision threats.

Stage 2 should focus on east west corridors, including regeneration areas.

Red area is Gilead.

