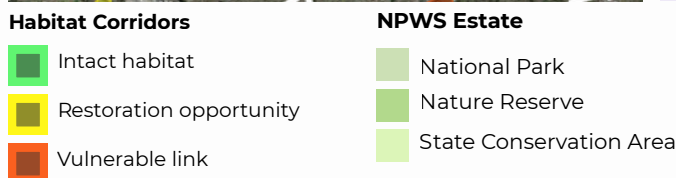
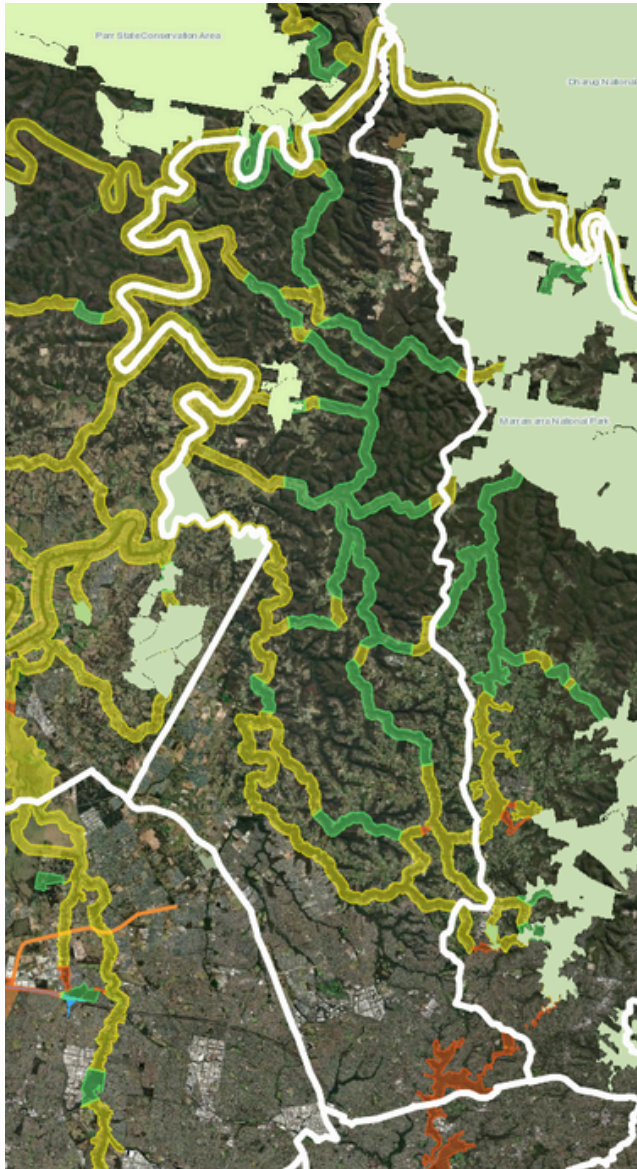


The Hills Shire Habitat Connectivity



Koalas in the Hills Shire

- **Koala distribution:** Increasing sightings as Citizen Scientists continue to uncover the Hills Shire Koalas (see case study below)
- **Population connectivity:** Connected to the Hawkesbury in the west and Hornsby in the East.
- **Regional Significance:** an Area of Regional Koala Significance overlaps with the Hills in the North.
- **Habitat extent:** 20,065 ha of Preferred Koala Habitat
- **Key threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation, bushfire. Lack of protection as the Hills Shire is not listed in the Koala SEPP.

Key Connectivity Considerations

- **Regional Connectivity:**
 - Along with the Nepean and Georges Rivers, the Hawkesbury River is part of the **primary riparian network that underpins landscape-scale connectivity** across the region. The Hawkesbury River runs along the north western border of the Hills Shire LGA, connecting The Hawkesbury LGA in the west to Hornsby LGA in the east.
- **Connecting Protected Areas:**
 - Remnant vegetation along **creeks and rivers** connects the **Cattai National Park, Maroota Ridge State Conservation Area** as well as to the Parr State Conservation Area and Murrumbidgee National Park in **Neighboring LGAs.**

Case Study: Citizen Science in the Hills District

Our network members, the Hills - Hornsby Rural Koala Project, have been tracking koalas in the Glenorie area for years, and recently, with Landcare's Wildseek program, detected 13 koalas throughout their Glenorie and Maroota sites, finding koala presence on 4/5 sites, indicating a low density permanent population. These locations are not recognised as Koala habitat by the state, nor listed in the current koala strategy. It is a testament to community groups in the Sydney Basin that this population was discovered.



Points of danger

- **Lack of recognition** of this Koala population, leaves their habitat unprotected and **vulnerable to loss and fragmentation.**
- **Pinch Points:** Orange zones on the map highlight areas where development has already encroached on habitat.

Opportunities for improved connectivity

- **Increase Riparian Setbacks:** opportunity to revegetate creek lines to **increase corridor function**, and **maintain rural character of large lots** and **provide ecosystem services** to the surrounding community.
- Recognise the Hills Shire koala population by **listing the Hills in the koala SEPP.**
- Opportunities: **Yellow zones** on the map highlight areas where **revegetation** could widen and strengthen habitat corridors, while **green zones** indicate wide existing corridors that must be **protected to maintain connectivity.**