

Environment and natural resources

BACKGROUND

The combination of highly fertile basaltic soils, a climate that varies from humid sub-tropical to warm temperate and relatively high rainfall forms the foundation for the Region's significant environmental values. These values are not only a defining feature of the Region, they are also important to its economy.

The Brunswick, Richmond and Tweed catchments of the Far North Coast Region provide the basis on which its environmental values are built. The wetlands, rivers, floodplains and estuaries of the Region are important at both the regional and international level. They are vital to a wide variety of species, including many threatened plants and animals as well as migratory birds recognised by international agreements.

The scenic quality of the diverse landscapes of the Region is also highly valued. Iconic landforms

such as the Mount Warning caldera and Cape Byron provide a backdrop to much of the Region.

The Region is also rich in natural resources that have supported the development of a variety of rural industries over many years. The rural landscapes shaped by these industries, which are also highly valued by the community, contribute much to the 'feel' of the Region.

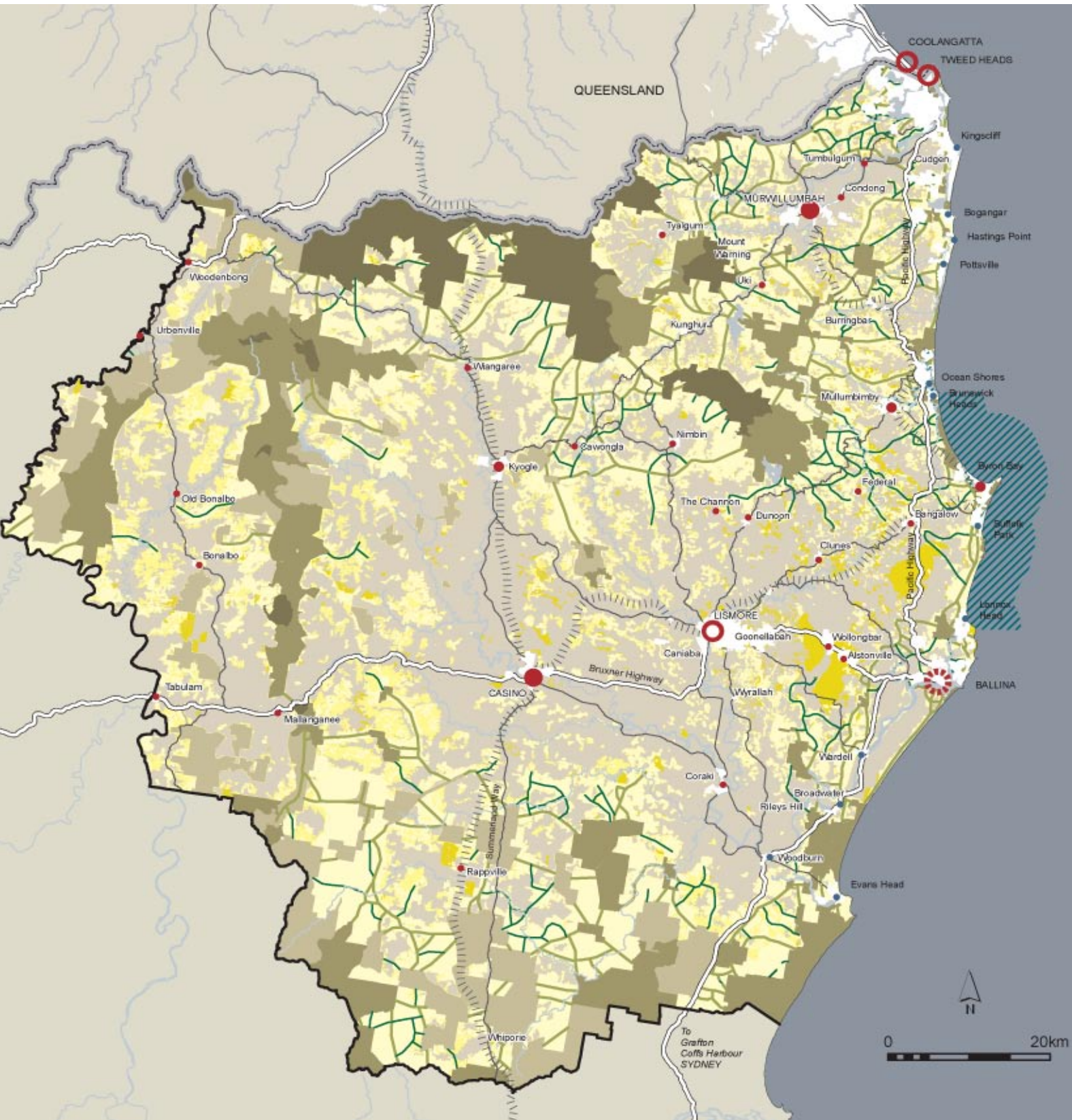
Protection of these areas of high biodiversity value and productive natural resources from development pressures is a major outcome of the Strategy. In building on this essential outcome, the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority has developed a Catchment Action Plan that includes regional investment priorities for funding of community projects and government programs to rehabilitate and enhance environmental values and natural

resources. Ensuring land use planning objectives address the objectives of the Catchment Action Plan and those of other natural resource management plans, such as Water Sharing Plans and Estuary Management Plans, is important in achieving long term environmental sustainability.

Those parts of the Region with environmental, landscape and agricultural production values are shown as 'Environmental Assets and Rural Land' on the Regional Strategy Map. These areas are protected from urban development other than appropriately planned rural residential development. This land classification comprises land with one or more of the following attributes or values:

- existing national park, state forest or crown public reserve
- State or regional environmental and/or biodiversity conservation significance

BIODIVERSITY MAP



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|---|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Major Regional Centre ⊗ Developing Major Regional Centre ● Major Town ● Town ● Village - Inland ● Village - Coastal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Region Boundary State Boundary Highway Main Roads Rail Line Rivers and Creeks | <p>Biodiversity Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Significance Regional Significance Local Significance State Forests National Parks World Heritage Areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cape Byron Marine Park Existing Urban Footprint <p>Fauna Corridors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Corridor Sub-Regional Corridor |
|---|--|---|--|



- strategic or regionally significant interurban break or corridor
- natural resource, including State or regionally significant farmland, regionally significant extractive resources, private forestry plantations, water catchment, water storage and groundwater resource.

All land classified as Environmental Assets and Rural Land maintains its existing land use rights. This will ensure the continuation of current activities, including agricultural production, access to natural resources, water storage, tourism, outdoor recreation and nature conservation.

OUTCOMES

The Strategy recognises the importance of the Region's natural environment and natural resources to its economy and character, as well as to its scenic and cultural values. The Strategy will ensure local environmental plans protect these areas from future urban and rural residential development.

The Strategy supports the maintenance and enhancement of the Region's biodiversity. Urban development will be directed away from areas considered important for conservation. Where development, including new land release, may impact on biodiversity,

it will be designed to minimise impacts or provide offsets by protecting and enhancing the long term viability of priority vegetation and habitat corridors, as well as rehabilitating degraded priority areas. Infill redevelopment will be encouraged and controlled to ensure additional pressure on the environment is minimised.

The values and functions of riparian (river) corridors, coastal wetlands, lakes, estuaries and fishery habitats will also be protected.

While future rural residential development will be located in the Environmental Asset and Rural Land area, it will be appropriately planned and developed in accordance with agreed council strategies. This will ensure that the Region's biodiversity values and natural resources, including groundwater/surface water resources, farmland and extractive resources, will be protected through the provision of appropriate buffers when development occurs near these resources. In addition, limits on the growth, due to rural residential subdivision, of basic landholder rights to extract water for stock and domestic purposes will further protect water resources and improve security for licensed water users.

Rural subdivision will not be permitted to fragment valuable farmland and reduce its productive potential.

Land with high environmental or natural resource values will be protected enabling the effective management of this land in a manner consistent with the Regional Strategy and the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority's Catchment Action Plan.

Town water supply catchments and significant aquifers will be protected by ensuring that only compatible uses occur in these catchments. Adverse impacts on water quality will be reduced. The values and functions of riparian corridors and coastal wetlands will be protected.

ACTIONS

- Local environmental plans will protect and zone land with State or regional environmental, agricultural, vegetation, habitat, waterway, wetland or coastline values.
- Local environmental plans will not zone land within the Environmental Assets and Rural Land area to permit urban purposes, other than rural residential development. Existing and future rural residential development will

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be located in this area, but not where it conflicts or coincides with the attributes or values listed above.

- Local environmental plans will identify and zone land of landscape value (including scenic and cultural landscapes) to protect those values.
- Local environmental plans will protect land identified as having extractive resources of regional significance (see Appendix 2).
- New development adjoining or adjacent to farmland, extractive resources, waterways, wetlands, and areas of high biodiversity value will incorporate buffers to avoid land use conflict.
- The Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Planning will assist local government with the development of appropriate subdivision standards for rural zones.
- Local environmental plans will:
 - > include minimum subdivision standards for rural and environment protection zones
 - > include provisions to limit dwellings in the rural and environmental zones
 - > not include provisions to permit concessional allotments.
- Local environmental plans will include provisions to encourage habitat and corridor establishment in future zoning of Environmental Assets and Rural Land area.
- Local environmental plans will include provisions to limit the creation of additional water rights on land fronting watercourses.
- Local environmental plans will not rezone land within town water supply catchments and significant groundwater areas if this has the potential to reduce the quality and quantity of these assets.
- Rezoning of land for future development within the catchments of coastal lakes (as defined in Schedule 1 of State Environmental Planning Policy No. 71 – Coastal Protection) will consider the recommendation of any Coastal Lake Sustainability Assessment which has been prepared.
- Subdivision and dwelling standard provisions in local environmental plans will reflect the objectives of the relevant zone and the Regional Strategy.
- A Regional Conservation Plan prepared by the Department of Environment and Conservation will guide local councils in implementing conservation outcomes.

