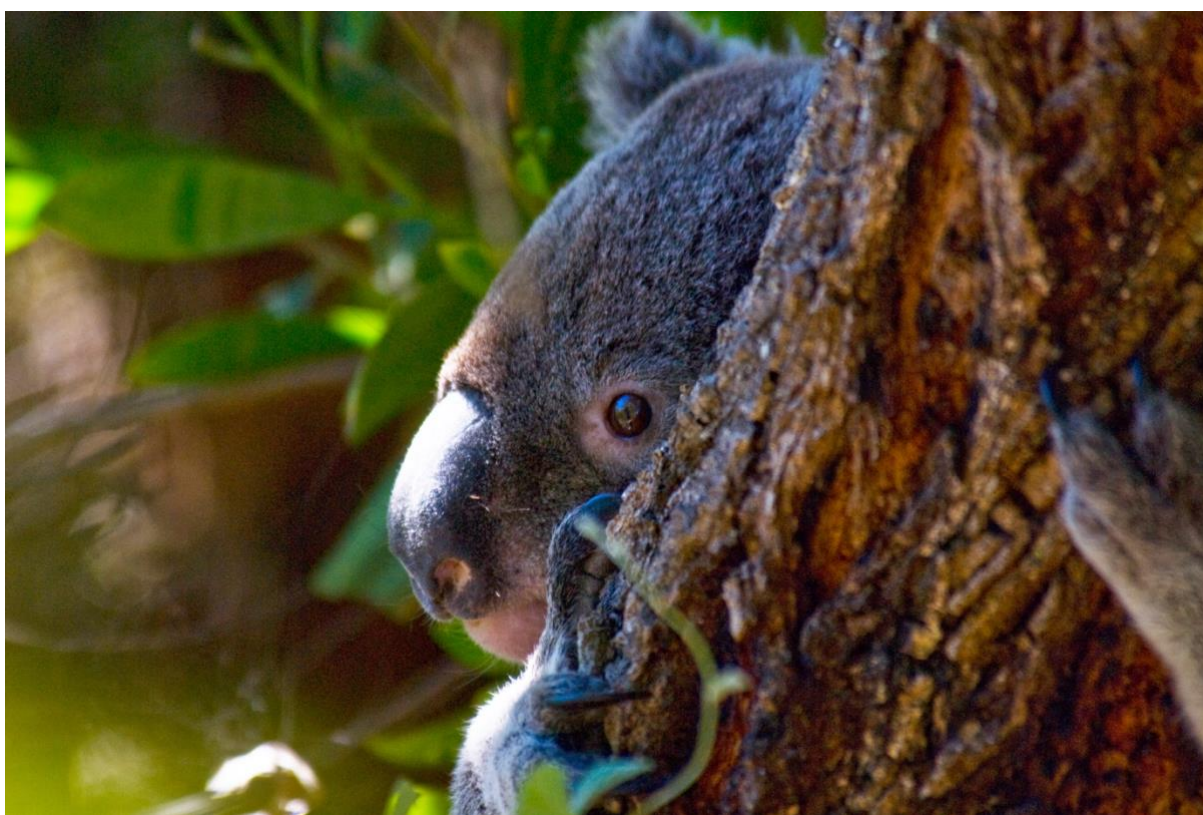


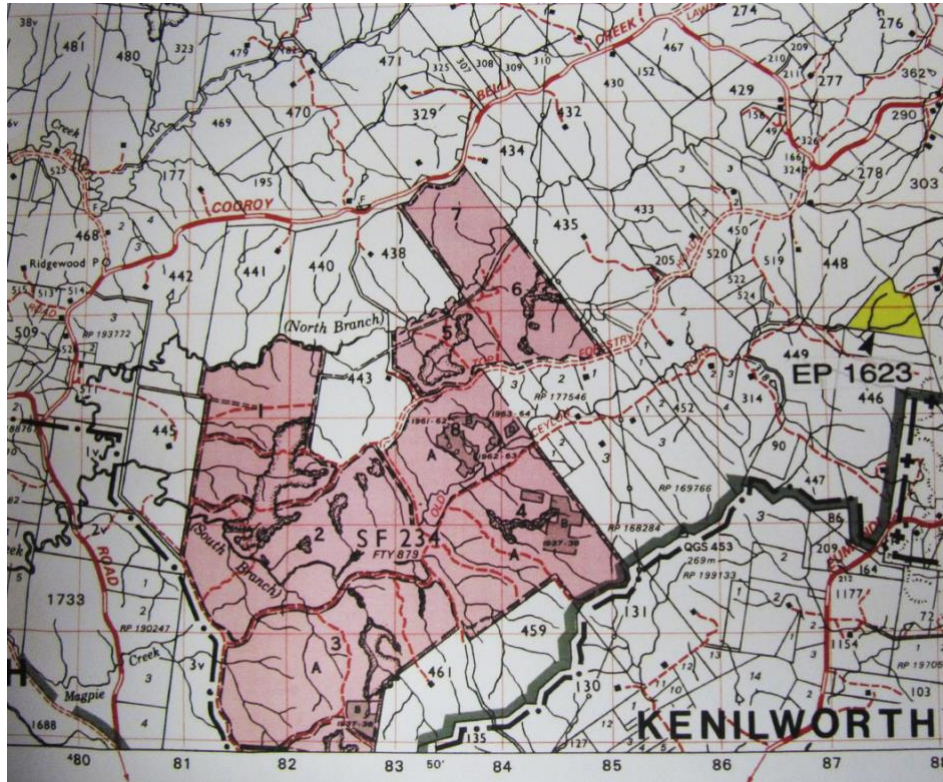
# THE CASE FOR TRANSFERRING WEST COOROY STATE FOREST (SF 234) TO NATIONAL PARK



Prepared by Tony Wellington  
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on behalf of Noosa Parks Association  
August 2020

## THE PROPOSAL

West Cooroy State Forest consists of approximately 1150 hectares of land situated between Yurol Forest and Mapleton Forest. West Cooroy State Forest had been included in the 1999 South East Queensland Regional Forest Agreement for listing as a National Park. It was subsequently removed.



Encouragingly, over the past couple of years, the transfer of West Cooroy State Forest to conservation estate has at various times been included in State Government documents and presentations. A presentation in November 2019 by State authorities noted the plan to “progressively transfer up to 20,000 hectares of state forest in South East Queensland to become conservation estate by 2024” and further that “work has commenced to identify areas where transfer can be prioritised.” Included in that presentation was West Cooroy State Forest, noting that there was 1,100ha available including apiary sites, and that the “logging schedule is unknown”.

It is worth noting that the SEQ Regional Plan “Shaping SEQ” contains a specific goal in relation to koala conservation which is stated thus: *“SEQ’s koala population, and the habitat which supports this iconic species, has been sustained through innovative protection of habitat and management of threats across the region’s landscapes.”*

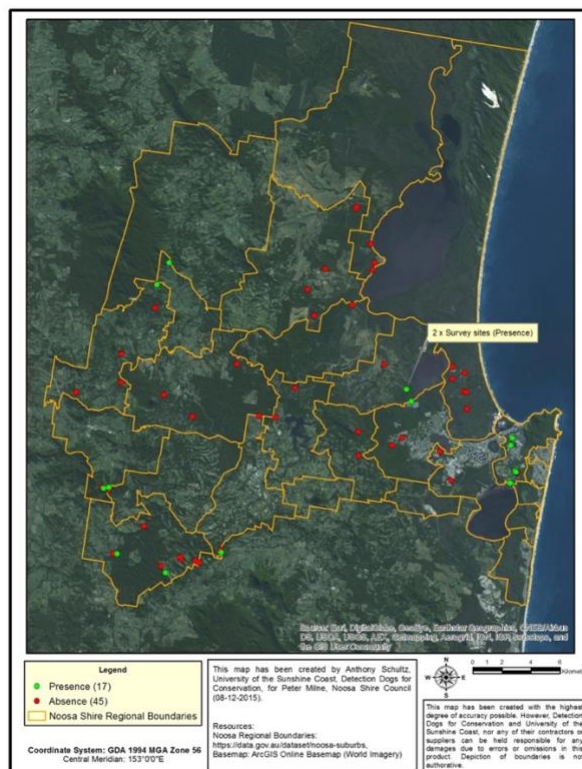
# SUPPORTING INFORMATION

## 1. KOALA HABITAT

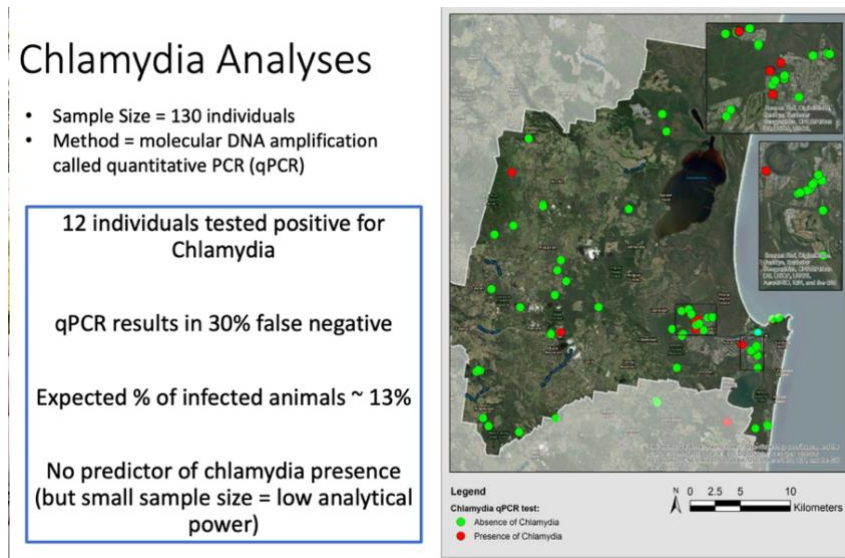
The vast bulk of the West Cooroy State Forest is known koala habitat and mapped as such in State Koala mapping. See image below.



Surveys around the West Cooroy State Forest using koala tracking dogs demonstrated the presence of koalas. (Note that surveys were not carried out inside the Forest boundary.) These results confirm many anecdotal sightings of koalas in and around the West Cooroy State Forest vicinity. The following map shows where koalas have been detected by tracking dogs during recent surveys. Note the cluster of positive results around West Cooroy State Forest.

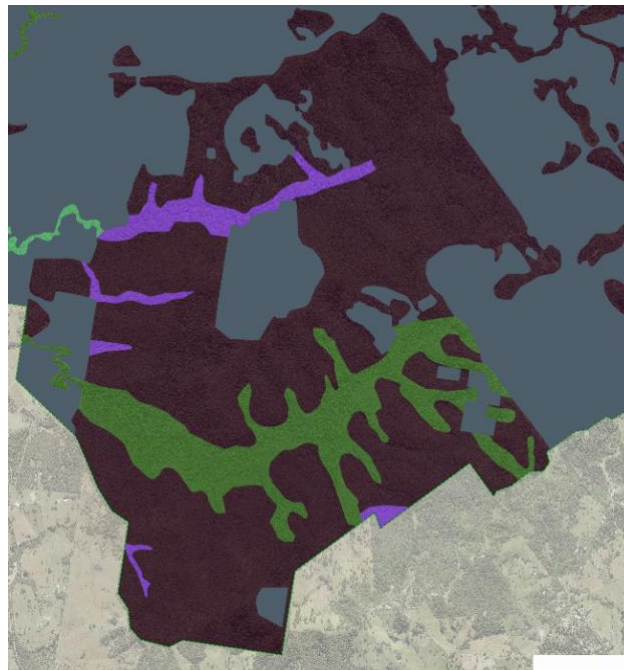


Of note also is that health analysis of koalas around the West Cooroy State Forest detected no prevalence of chlamydia. This augurs well for the future longevity of this koala cohort.



## 2. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

West Cooroy State Forest contains Endangered/Of Concern Rainforest under the Vegetation Management Act along its creek lines – see green areas on the following map:

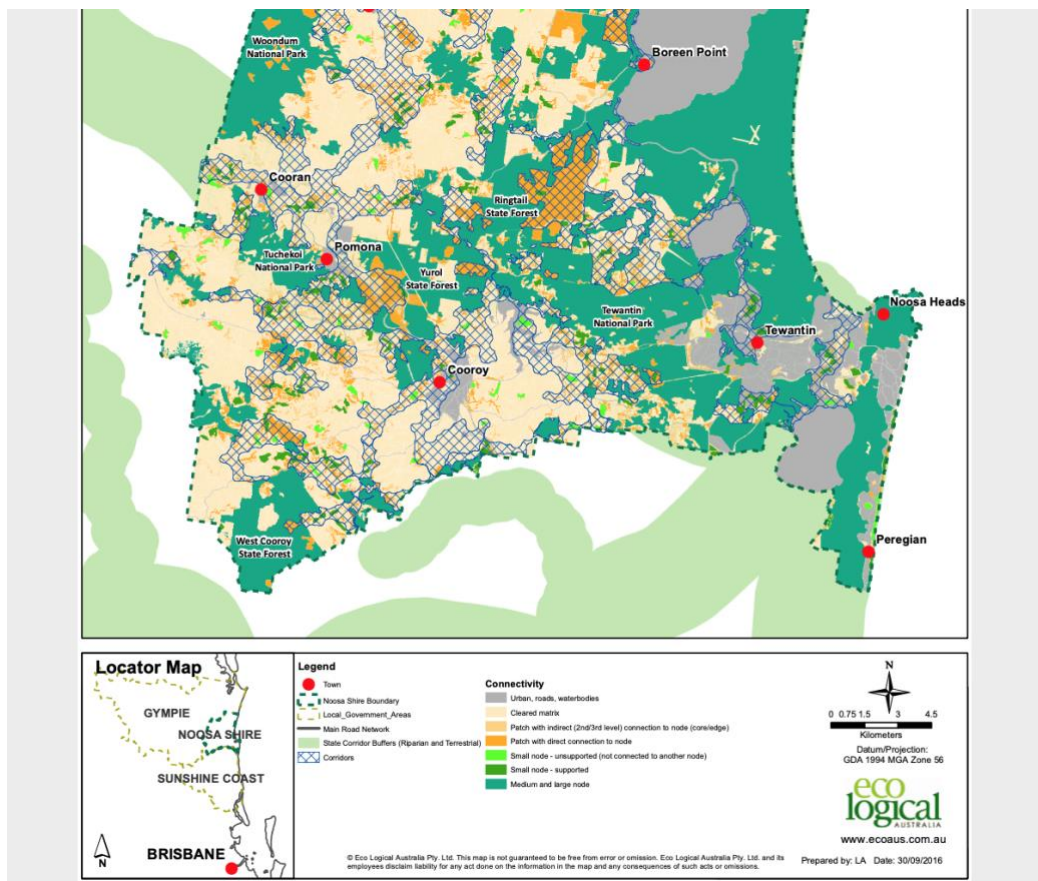


As well as vulnerable Koalas, the Forest is also known to house other threatened and endangered species, including the Giant Barred Frog (*Mixophyes iteratus*). On a more anecdotal level, the West Cooroy State Forest is the only habitat across the Noosa Shire in

which this author has been able to find the Pale Yellow Robin (*Tregellasia capito*) – not to be confused with the Eastern Yellow Robin. The following photograph of this animal was taken in the West Cooroy State Forest:



The West Cooroy State Forest is an important link between both the Yurol/Ringtall Forest areas to the north and the Mapleton Forest to the south. Indeed, the West Cooroy State Forest forms part of the Landscape Connectivity Corridors mapped for Noosa Council’s Biodiversity Assessment Report (see below). It is worth noting that there is a significant cluster of Voluntary Conservation Agreement properties as well as Land for Wildlife properties helping link West Cooroy State Forest with Yurol Forest. Future connectivity with Mapleton National Park is also achievable.



### 3. PLANTATION HARVESTING

Information received from the State Government's Department of Environment & Heritage Protection in April 2015 noted that the West Cooroy State Forest was to be harvested one final time before 31 December 2024. The information also noted that, subject to any other constraints such as mining interests, the West Cooroy State Forest was then to be transferred to the protected area estate following this final harvesting.

It is understood that the State, through the Department of Agriculture & Fisheries, has entered into contractual agreements requiring harvesting of the plantation coops in West Cooroy State Forest to meet the State's contracted hardwood sawlog supply commitments.

Noosa Parks Association has no objection to the harvesting of the existing coops within the West Cooroy State Forest. As can be seen from the following map, the plantation areas (dark pink) are quite small in comparison to the overall Forest area.



The removal of plantation timber from the Yurol and Ringtail Forests as part of that landmark agreement between the State, Noosa Council, Noosa Parks Association and HQ Plantations has clearly demonstrated the capacity of Noosa's local forests to regenerate. Seed stock in the soil plus native wildings render revegetation a largely natural process.

There is no reason to believe that a similarly successful revegetation program would not be achieved in the West Cooroy State Forest.

Significant conservation, recreation and possible tourism-based economic benefits present themselves from having West Cooroy State Forest join the conservation estate of the broader Sunshine Coast region. We hope that the State Government will prioritise this action.