

Post Clearing Report (Fauna Management Services Report)

The Heights -Precinct C1 & C2
Rifle Range Road, Pimpama

Tomewin Wildlife Consultancy
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1. Introduction

1.1. Project Background

Tomewin Wildlife Consultancy (TWC) was commissioned by Golding Contractors on behalf of Sunland Property Group ('the Proponent') to produce a post clearing fauna management report in accordance with the 'Queensland Code of Practice for the Welfare of Wild Animals Affected by Land-Clearing and Other Habitat Impacts and Wildlife Spotter / Catchers (Draft), prepared by Hanger, J. and Nottidge, B. 2009' ('the Code') for proposed clearing works associated with The Heights residential development at Pimpama. This report also encompasses the provisions of the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NCA) and 'The Heights Koala Management Plan – EPBC Approved EPBC Act Management Plan, prepared by Saunders Havill Group. 2016' (KMP).

This report covers clearing activities associated with Precinct C1 & C2 Fauna Spotter pre-clearing and trapping surveys were carried out between 23rd and 24th August 2018. Monitoring of clearing processes and fauna recovery was carried out between the 23rd to 28th August 2018. Commonwealth, State and Locally listed species and well as common fauna species threatened and common fauna species and their habitats have been considered.

1.2. Site Context

Contextually, the site is located approximately 35 km north of the Gold Coast and 50 km south of Brisbane. The site is an area of approximately 18ha located on moderate slopes with dry eucalyptus forest peripheral to a large previously cleared development site adjacent to Rifle Range Road, Pimpama. The site specific area including areas of prior rural residential land use to be cleared extends from the northern boundary adjacent to an environmental retained area to the south.

The Precinct C1 & C2 clearing extent is the third clearing phase for the Heights Estate, Rifle range Road, Pimpama located to the south – west of the existing estate on both sides of Nambucca Crescent and Kiama Crescent. The specific project is tree clearance for real estate development (refer Figure 1).

The site is an area of dry eucalypt forest to wattle re-growth approximately 4ha located on a moderate slope ridge to steep slope including areas of prior rural residential land use to be cleared south of existing precincts.

2. Spotter –Catcher Actions

The following actions were performed in accordance with the Wildlife Habitat Impact Mitigation Plan prepared by TWC, August 2018.

2.1. Pre-Clearing Fauna Survey

The below techniques were applied to confirm the current fauna values

- Pre-clearing inspection of site to clearly identify all static fauna valued ground features and trees with high visibility tape.
- Daily surveys to confirm fauna value and actual fauna present on the site specific immediately prior to clearing using techniques defined below.
 - Observation of canopy and under-story vegetation for active bird nests, possum drays and termite mounds
 - Observation of site to locate and identify actual wildlife present prior to clearing.
 - Examination of favoured feed trees bark to 6 m height for presence Koala, possum, glider trace to assess usage/incidence
 - Binocular search of canopy vegetation to locate visibly hollow bearing trees hollows or potentially hollow bearing trees.
 - Examination of visible hollows to evaluate presence of active breeding birds or glider activity/trace.
 - Spotlighting to confirm absence or presence of nocturnal fauna.

2.1.1 Specific Methodology for Koalas

Due to the specific requirements relating to the Koala the following techniques were employed at the clearance site to ascertain presence/absence status:

- Use of binoculars to inspect the crown, forks and trunk of trees;
- ‘Drip zone’ searches at the base of known food trees for the presence of scats to a radius equal to that of the crown of individual trees;
- Inspection of trunks for scratchings indicative of use by Koalas.

Koala management strategies highlighted in the *Nature Conservation (Koala) Conservation Plan 2017* have resulted in particular conditions placed on vegetation clearance involving the removal of Koala food trees.

Further, provisions include the restriction of all clearance that may directly interfere with the tree a Koala is residing in. Koalas are to leave via their own volition and may not be interfered with by any means. Only when Koalas have vacated a tree can clearance operations include the host tree and surrounding vegetation.

2.2. Liaison

- Attended meetings with clearing supervisor, to confirm progress, daily/weekly issues occurring
- Daily liaison with clearing crew supervisors to confirm site specific issues and co-ordinate clearing / spotter inter-actions.

2.3. Spotter Catcher Activities Undertaken

- One Koala spotter and one spotter-catcher per tree-felling machine conducted daily pre-clearing searches for Koalas and was present for the duration of all tree-felling
- One spotter-catcher conducted daily check of timber stacks prior to shearing and monitored shearing of timber stacks proximal to retained habitat
- Pre-clearing trapping program for small terrestrial fauna and trapping program around felled vegetation stockpiles.
- Daily pre-clearing inspection of site to confirm absence or presence of Koalas within vicinity of clearing zone.
- Checking of ground features (drainage lines, fallen logs, rock formations, tree stumps, burnt out tree stump cavities) for track and trace, reptiles, burrow entrances
- Confirmation of located fauna presence with clearing crew and direction of clearing process to allow fauna dispersal opportunity
- 24 hour exclusion zones applied to located dispersed fauna during clearing processes.
- Cessation of clearing process within designated exclusion zone areas of located Koalas
- Minor static fauna values - visibly hollow bearing trees were addressed after de-accelerated felling. Techniques included access of hollows with chainsaw and buffer rags, examination by torch to confirm absence or presence of wildlife and exclusion of felled tree from immediate processing
- Capture of located fauna
- Identification and health assessment of captured wildlife.

2.4. Addressing Located Static Fauna values

Minor and major static fauna values - visibly hollow bearing trees were addressed after de-accelerated felling. Techniques included access of hollows with chainsaw and buffer rags, examination by torch to confirm absence or presence of wildlife and exclusion of felled tree from immediate processing.

3. Fauna Interactions

Fauna observed, encountered and identified during spotter-catcher actions throughout clearing processes are detailed as Dispersed, Capture/release, Capture/relocated or fauna mortality. Raw data is provided in Appendix A.

3.1. Dispersed Fauna

Fauna noted dispersing from clearing processes or during spotter-catcher actions is listed below.

Table 1: Dispersed Fauna

No. Animals	Common Name	Scientific name	Comments
1	Red-neck Wallabies	<i>Macropus rufogriseus</i>	present within site noted during morning pre-clearing inspection.
2	Brushtail Possums	<i>Trichosurus vulpecula</i>	Dispersed from tree clearing into adjacent suitable habitat during clearing of HBTs
2	Sugar Gliders	<i>Petaurus breviceps</i>	Dispersed from HBT during clearing in adjacent habitat.
2	Tawny Frogmouth	<i>Podargus strigoides</i>	Dispersed from tree clearing into adjacent suitable habitat
1	Goannas	<i>Varanus varius</i>	Dispersed in adjacent suitable habitat.
-	Unidentified insect bats		Dispersed from tree clearing or during clearing of HBTs into adjacent suitable habitat.

3.2. Capture / Released

Fauna located during spotter-catcher actions were captured, examined briefly for age, health and held in suitable ambient conditions, consistent with FMP intentions.

Table 2: Captured and Released Fauna

No. Animals	Common Name	Scientific name	Release site
1	Brushtail Possums	<i>Trichosurus vulpecula</i>	Released into proximal suitable habitat
2	Gould's Wattled Bats	<i>Chalinolobus gouldi</i>	Released into proximal suitable habitat
1	Goannas	<i>Varanus varius</i>	Released into proximal suitable habitat
5	Robust Velvet Geckos	<i>Oedura robusta</i>	Released into proximal suitable habitat
3	Bearded Dragons	<i>Pogona barbata</i>	Released into proximal suitable habitat

The common fauna species listed above were in the main part associated with removal of hollow bearing trees. Where possible, following health checks, the captured fauna was retained within the located hollow to minimize stress during release into the adjacent retained habitat.

3.3. 4.3 Fauna Capture / Re-located / Mortality

Table 3: Fauna Captures, Relocations and Mortalities

No. Animals	Common Name	Scientific name	Comments
2	Squirrel Glider	<i>Petaurus norfolcensis</i>	Sub-adult & juvenile glider located during fauna recovery taken to Currumbin Wildlife hospital for health check and fostering.

4. Site Summary

This document is the final post-clearing fauna summary report that collates spotter-catcher actions within the Precincts C1 & C2 of the Heights Estate, Rifle Range Road, Pimpama.

All activities during the clearing process were in accordance with the conditions of 'Wildlife Habitat and Impact Mitigation Plan, prepared by TWC, August 2018' (WHIMP) and the 'The Heights Koala Management Plan – EPBC Approved EPBC Act Management Plan, prepared by Saunders Havill Group. 2016' (KMP).

No Koalas were observed during clearance. All supervised clearing activities occurred with good liaison with the clearing crews ensuring a minimal impact to fauna within the site.