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General Manager
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EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL	
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Dear Sir/Madam,

I write in relation to the recent Final Determination (September 2007) by the NSW Scientific Committee to list the population of Greater Glider in the Bingi – Congo area as Endangered. In doing so the Committee formally acknowledged that the species is facing a very high risk of extinction in this area. The boundaries of the endangered population are as follows and are shown on the attached map: East boundary - the Pacific Ocean, North boundary - Moruya River, South boundary - Coila Lake and West boundary - the Princes Highway.

With its formal recognition as Endangered, the population is now afforded protection under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (TSC Act) and the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*. A series of development assessment and related processes under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) are also now invoked.

The Scientific Committee's determination states that the Greater Glider population at Bingi-Congo relies on two main blocks of vegetation, comprising 2040ha and 1120ha respectively, which are poorly connected by a narrow corridor of scattered trees. Of this vegetated area, approximately 1770ha is estimated to be suitable for the species (including Spotted Gum, Blackbutt and Forest Red Gum forests). Of the total native vegetation in the population area, 75% occurs on freehold land and 25% (840ha) occurs in National Park.

The determination then goes on to state that future reduction in habitat area and quality is predicted to occur as a result of urban and rural residential development.

It is DECC's understanding that a large proportion of the freehold land in the area inhabited by the Greater Glider endangered population is zoned for rural small holdings. DECC advises that if these developments are not carefully planned and located then their impacts could be likely to cause the Greater Glider population to become extinct in the area.

Greater Gliders have small home ranges. Studies have shown that even selective logging can lead to local extinction. They are also highly susceptible to fragmentation. The creation of breaks between forest remnants can necessitate Greater Gliders to move on the ground where they fall prey to foxes, cats and dogs. Isolation can also lead to rapid extinction as Greater Gliders are

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one of the preferred food items of the Powerful Owl, which has been known to virtually eliminate local Greater Glider populations within short periods.

Although there are a number of other threatened species in the Bingi-Congo area (e.g. Powerful Owl, Greater Broad-nosed Bat, Grey-headed Flying Fox, Glossy Black-cockatoo, Masked Owl), the Greater Glider endangered population is the most sensitive and it is likely that much of the clearing that is occurring in the area for small lot subdivisions and other developments and activities will be considered to result in a significant impact on the population.

As a result of the listing, it will be Council's responsibility to make a judgment with regard to whether any proposed developments or activities (including roadside vegetation management) in the area inhabited by the Greater Glider endangered population will result in a significant local effect on this threatened entity pursuant to Section 5A of the EP&A Act .

Given the sensitivity of the species DECC is of the view that that many developments and activities will result in a significant effect pursuant to Section 5A of the EP&A Act and in such circumstances it will be necessary for applicants to provide a Species Impact Statement (SIS) in support of their Development Application (DA). In addition, Section 79B(3) of the EP&A Act states that development consent cannot be granted for development that is likely to significantly affect a threatened species, population, or ecological community, or its habitat, without the concurrence of the Director-General of DECC.

As you will no doubt appreciate, this process will have substantial cost and resource implications for the proponent, Council and DECC. Furthermore, DA by DA assessment may not be the most effective manner of maintaining the endangered population. DECC therefore strongly recommends the preparation of a conservation plan for the Greater Glider endangered population.

DECC proposes that an approach similar to that undertaken by Council and the then National Parks and Wildlife Service for the preparation of the Yellow-bellied Glider conservation plan in the Broulee Area be adopted for the Greater Glider conservation plan. The plan would need to be based on habitat and population mapping and would detail a number of conditions that must be met by landholders/developers and determining authorities if they are to ensure that their development or activity will not be deemed to have a significant effect.

If the plan were deemed to be effective, then it could achieve bio-certification pursuant to the TSC Act. This would mean that any person undertaking development in accordance with the plan would not be required to provide a SIS and it would be unlikely that their DA would be refused on the basis of its impact upon Greater Gliders.

DECC therefore seeks Council's agreement to enter into a planning partnership to develop the Greater Glider conservation plan. The DECC has commenced planning for Greater Glider surveys and vegetation/habitat mapping in the Bingi-Congo area and would like to invite Council to be involved in both the planning and on-ground survey work. The DECC contact officer for the project is Rod Pietsch (Ph 6298 9732; email Rod.Pietsch@environment.nsw.gov.au). Should Council agree to participate, it would be useful if Council could nominate a contact officer for this project who can then liaise with Rod to further develop and discuss the project.

In the interim it would be beneficial for Council and DECC to discuss how the impacts of development applications and activities in the Bingi-Congo area should be assessed until a conservation plan for the Greater Glider endangered population is finalised. This discussion should also include consideration of DAs that have already been submitted in order to assess the implications of the listing for the assessment of these active applications.

I propose that a meeting between the relevant officers from Council and DECC be arranged in the next few weeks to address these matters. Please contact Rod Pietsch to discuss meeting dates and arrangements.

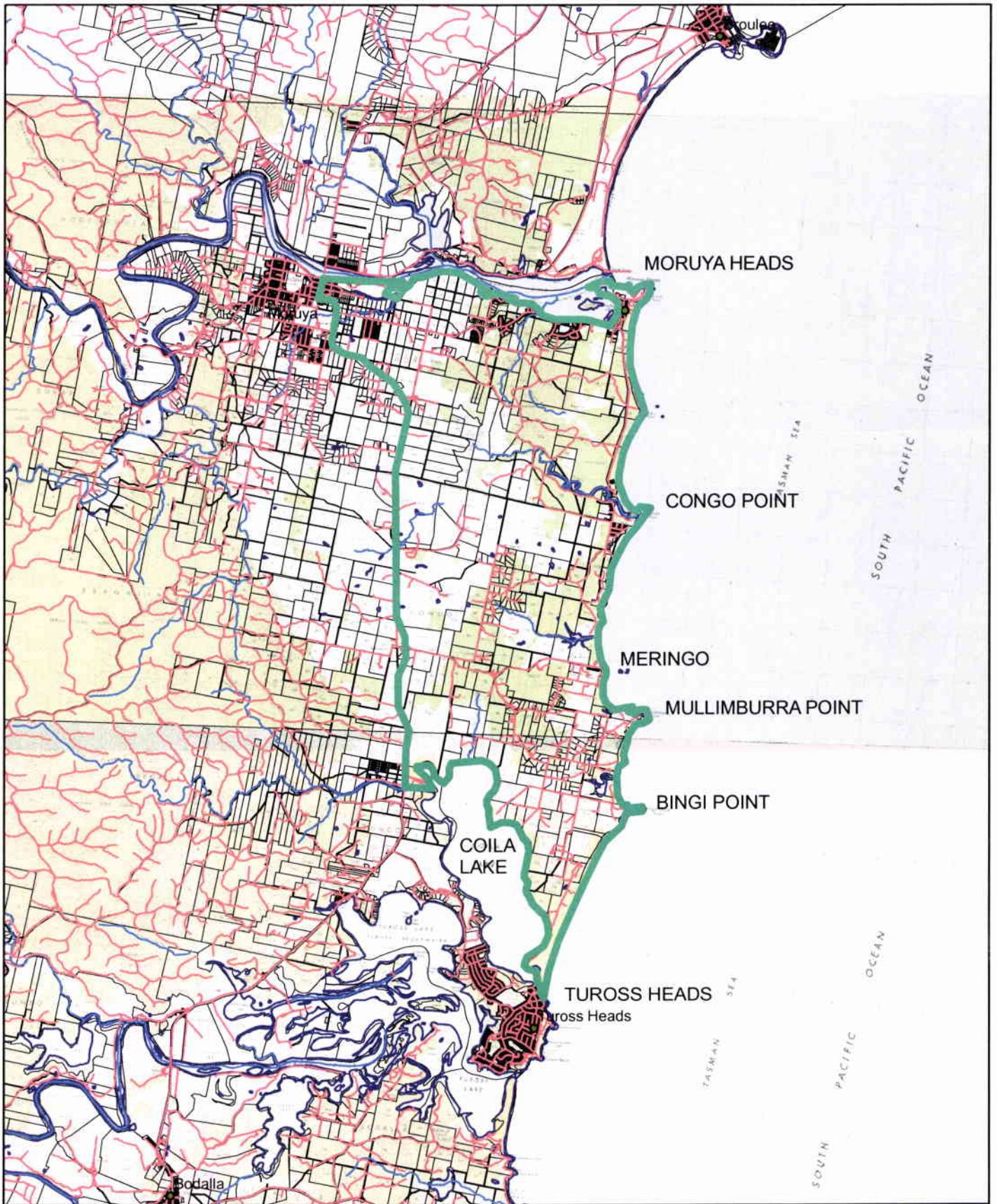
Should you require any further advice from DECC on this matter please contact me on 6298 9715.


Yours sincerely



15 November 2007

MICHAEL SAXON
Manager Biodiversity Conservation Section - South
Climate Change and Environment Protection



 Endangered Population boundary

Bingi-Congo Greater Glider Endangered Population Area

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