



## **Bushfire recovery for wildlife and habitats on the NSW North Coast and Northern Tablelands - Regional Co-design workshop**

The 2019-20 summer bushfires burnt more than 1.6 million hectares in the NSW North Coast and Northern Tablelands region, with 45 per cent burnt at high or very high severity. The area includes 73 per cent of the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area, of which over 40 per cent was affected by fire.

The Australian Government has invested over \$200 million to support the ongoing recovery of native plants and animals, ecological communities and natural assets. As part of this investment, *Rainforests of the NSW North Coast and Tablelands* has been identified as one of seven bushfire affected regions that will receive a share of the \$110 million regional funding available over the next two years.

On 30 September 2020, the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment held a virtual workshop to assist in the co-design of the regional actions for the next phase of investment in bushfire recovery in the region.

Traditional Owners, environment NGOs, landcare groups, scientists, wildlife experts and local, state and federal government agency representatives discussed actions to support the long-term recovery and resilience of a range of priority matters including:

- the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area
- threatened ecological communities: the New England Peppermint Grassy Woodlands and the Lowland Rainforest of Subtropical Australia
- animals such as the Hastings River Mouse, Parma Wallaby, Rufous Scrub-bird, Rainforest Cool-skink and Mortiz's Leaf-tail Gecko
- plant species such as the Banyabba Shiny-barked Gum and New England Gentian.

Workshop participants discussed comprehensive and broad-ranging bushfire recovery actions for the region including habitat enhancement such as strategic weed control, fire management, Traditional Owner led land management, management of riparian areas to reduce erosion, species-specific actions and targeted pest control for feral cats, foxes, pigs, deer, horses, goats and toads.

The Australian Government's final suite of investments in this region will be guided by the workshop outcomes and will include careful consideration of community capacity, complementarity with existing recovery efforts and value for money. The Australian Government will primarily administer these investments through existing delivery arrangements, for example with NRM regions and/or state governments. This will include developing or continuing formal and informal partnerships with other organisations and community groups where this will enhance recovery outcomes.

*Thanks to:* Armidale Regional Council, Big Scrub Landcare, Birdlife Australia, Botanic Gardens and Centennial Parklands, Bushfire Recovery Expert Panel, Coffs Harbour Local Aboriginal Land Council, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Firesticks Alliance Indigenous Corporation, Greening Australia, former Gondwana Rainforests of Australia Technical and Scientific Committee, Jaliigirr Biodiversity Alliance, National Bushfire Recovery Agency, Ngullingah Jugun Aboriginal Corporation, North Coast Regional Landcare Network, North Coast Local Land Services, Northern Tablelands Local Land Services, NSW Aboriginal Land Council, NSW Department of Industry, Planning and Environment, NSW Department of Primary Industries, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, QLD Department of Environment and Science, Rous County Council, Southern Cross University, Tamworth Local Aboriginal Land Council, Taronga Zoo, Yaegl Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and University of New England.