



KOALA KOALITION  
ECONETWORK PORT STEPHENS INC.

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31st January 2023

**Re: Martins Creek Quarry (SSD-6612) - Submissions on Additional Material**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on further information on road transport provided by Umwelt to the IPC as part of the assessment on the State Significant Development SSD-6612 at Martins Creek Quarry in Dungog Shire.

While the revised truck movement numbers and hours have been revised, KKEPS is of the opinion that the additional road haulage from this proposal will still have the potential to be injurious to public health and native wildlife. Although the Martins Creek Quarry is well established <sup>1</sup>, we do not believe that this is a valid reason for road haulage to continue in this area. Smoking in eating establishments was well established and appeared to be tolerated until the risks of passive smoking were better understood and led to smoking bans. We recommend that a longer term view of road haulage is considered as this may only be tolerated short term.

Given the number of current and proposed quarries in Port Stephens and surrounding areas including Dungog Shire, and the fact that many quarries seem to use the same roads as part of their haulage routes, we are also of the opinion that proposals such as Martins Creek Quarry should not be considered in isolation. It is, therefore, not appropriate to use the existing operations at Brandy Hill and Teralba as justification for Martins Creek <sup>2</sup> otherwise any new or proposed quarry can apply the same logic leading to more trucks on the roads and more issues of safety and impacts on native wildlife. In addition, while Paterson may not be a Heritage Conservation Area, nearby areas such as Vacy have a distinct charm.

Vehicle strikes on road haulage routes

Wildlife struck by vehicles at any speed is not only a threat to the animal's health (or existence), but also to members of the public and wildlife volunteers who stop to assist. It is widely recognised that vehicle strike data is largely unreported <sup>3,4</sup> so it is not unreasonable to assume the same applies to Martins Creek and the wider quarry cohort.

*Appendix A, Koala Road Casualties and Current Habitat in the Martins Creek Area - PSKH Rescue Data 1996 - 2019*, identifies the hotspots for known koala strikes on main roads including haulage routes within a 30 km zone around Martins Creek. While data is for multiple years, it clearly identifies some casualties near each mine with hotspots on the road to Brandy Hill and on the Pacific Highway. Even where hotspots are away from Martins Creek, if haulage lorries from the quarry are sharing haulage routes with other quarries/industries, the quarry is still potentially impacting koalas and other wildlife en route.

This data should be used in conjunction with koala sightings. *Appendix B, Koala Sightings in the Martins Creek Area - PSKH Sightings Data 1997 - 2022* indicates a broad hotspot of sightings which includes parts of Paterson Road, Clarence Town Road and Brandy Hill Drive. Any truck movements on these roads, especially at times when koalas may be actively seeking to cross the road, may result in vehicle strikes and callouts for rescue volunteers to attend.

The amended proposal promises there will be no truck movements through Paterson until after 6.45am<sup>5</sup>. Traffic noise aside, this amendment does not reduce the impact on native wildlife nor potentially therefore to rescue volunteers. In NSW, koala vehicle strikes mainly occur between July and November when male koalas are actively looking for new territory and mates. As koalas are more active in the early morning and evening, they may attempt to cross the road during dawn and dusk when light levels are low.<sup>6</sup> Sunrise for July is approximately 6.52am and sunset 5.07pm, both of which fall within truck movement periods. Based on expected sunrise and sunset times, only October and November appear to have truck movements outside of the most at risk times for koalas.

As the road haulage network largely consists of higher speed limits (i.e. over 60km/h), drivers will have less time to react to wildlife on the road and to avoid a collision.<sup>7</sup>

#### Wider implications

The impact of increasing numbers of trucks on haulage routes does not only potentially impact koalas. In addition to possible risk to rescue volunteers, vehicle strikes may impact other endangered or vulnerable species. *Appendix C. Vulnerable and Endangered Species in the Martins Creek Area - BioNet Species Sightings (Accessed January 2023)* identifies hotspots by looking at the diversity of species in any one place. There are pockets of diverse wildlife around or near the queries with hotspots near Brandy Hill and off of the Pacific Highway. As stated above, truck movements on road haulage routes can impact areas away from Martins Creek Quarry, so impacts in the wider areas, and cumulative impacts, should be considered.

I have not made any political donations or gifts to a Councillor or Council employee.

Yours faithfully,

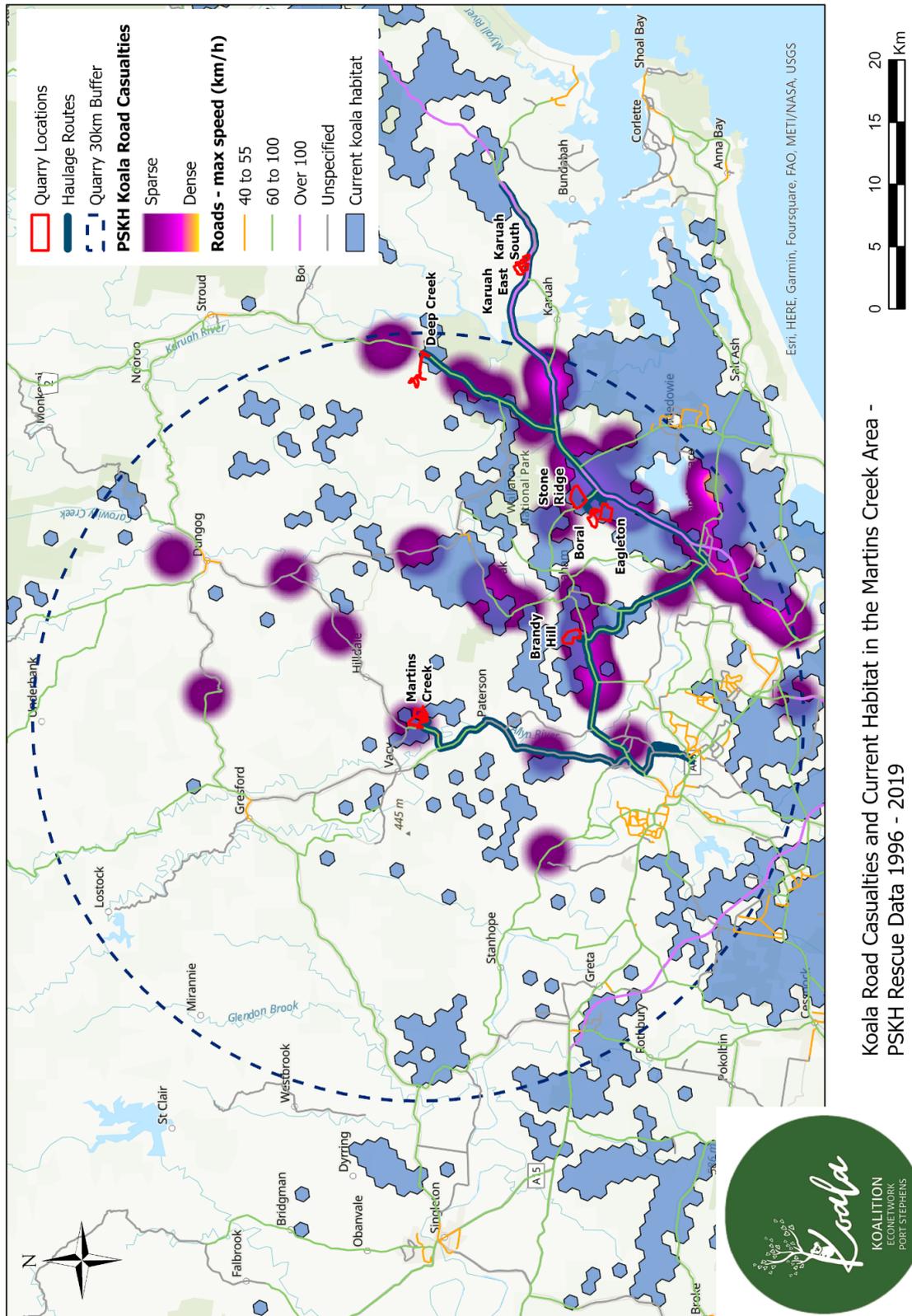
Carmel Northwood  
Convenor  
Koala Koalition EcoNetwork Port Stephens (KKEPS)

#### References

1. Martins Creek quarry Additional Information for IPC by Umwelt Dec 2022 p.17
2. Ibid p.18
3. (Biolink. (2017). Koala Habitat & Population Assessment: Lismore Local Government Area. Final Report to Lismore Council
4. Biolink. (2018) The Southern Clarence ARKS: aspects of distribution and abundance of koalas 1952-2017. Final report to Clarence Valley Council)
5. Martins Creek quarry Additional Information for IPC by Umwelt Dec 2022 p.19
6. DPIE (2020) Wildlife vehicle strike and contributing factors, Koala Vehicle Strike Fact sheet 1, accessed via <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/koala-vehicle-strike-fact-sheet-1-wildlife-vehicle-strike-contributing-factors>
7. Ibid

Appendix A

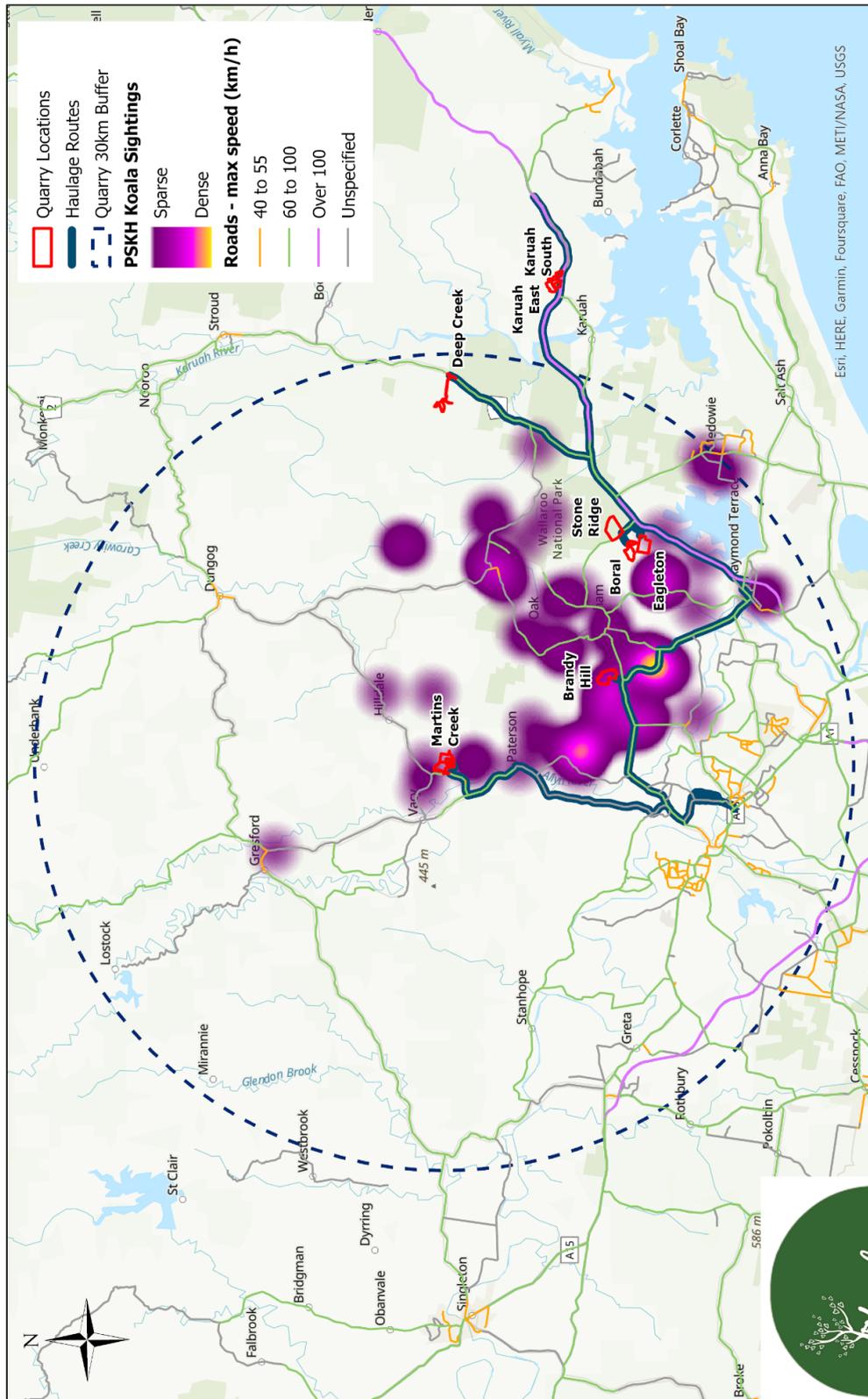
Koala Road Casualties and Current Habitat in the Martins Creek Area - PSKH Rescue Data 1996 - 2019



Koala Road Casualties and Current Habitat in the Martins Creek Area - PSKH Rescue Data 1996 - 2019

Appendix B

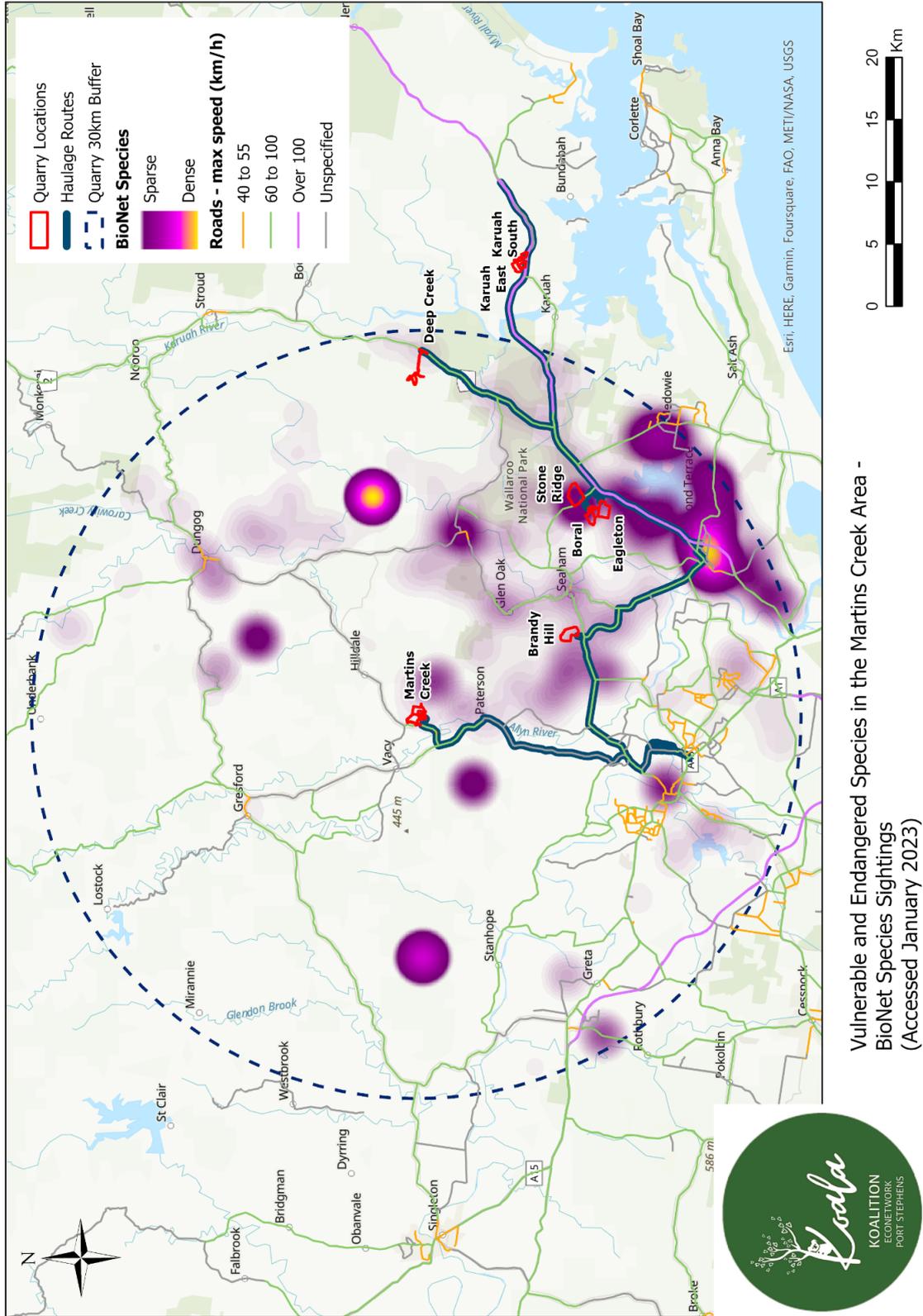
Koala Sightings in the Martins Creek Area - PSKH Sightings Data 1997 - 2022



Koala Sightings in the Martins Creek Area -  
PSKH Sightings Data 1997 - 2022

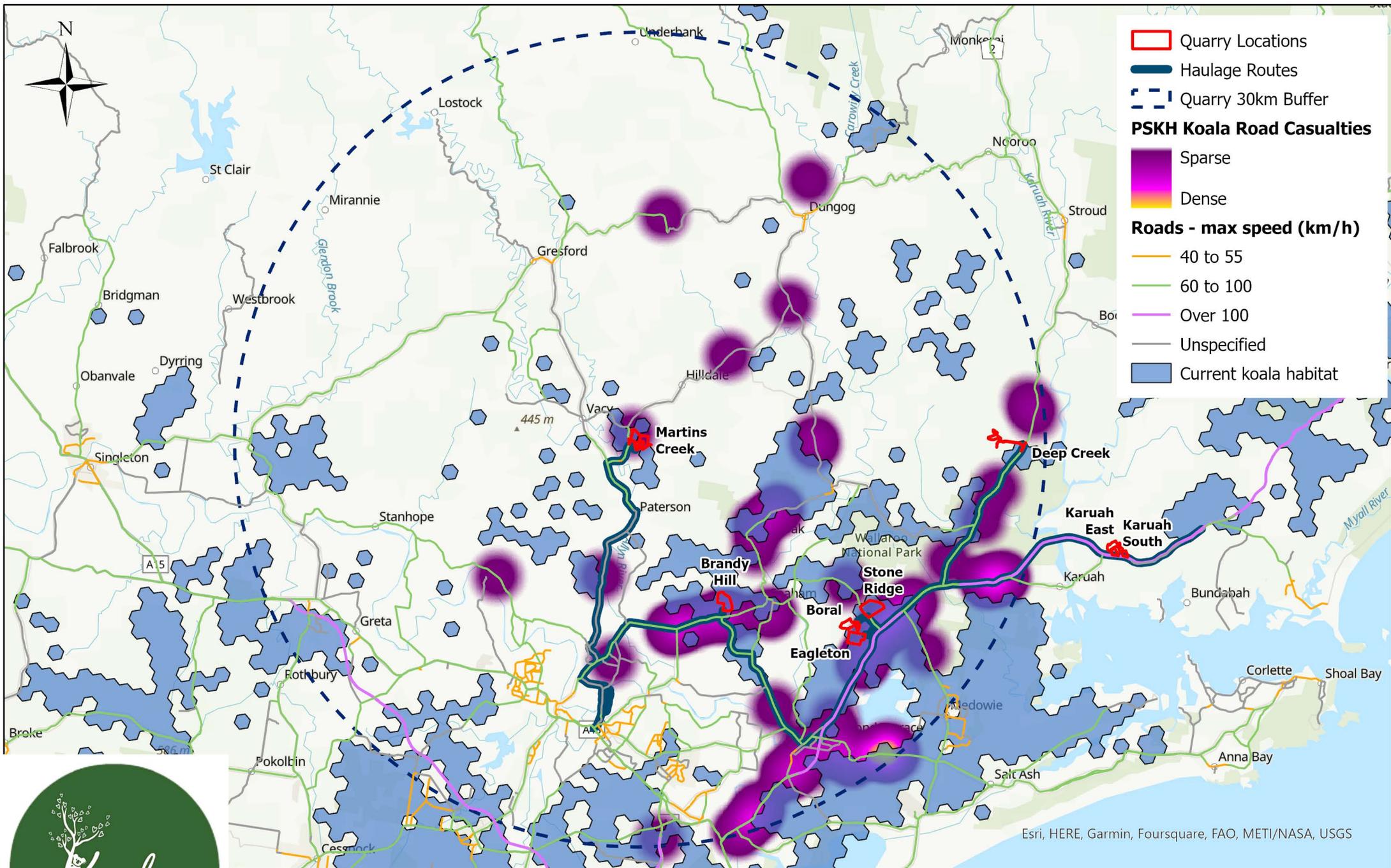
Appendix C

Vulnerable and Endangered Species in the Martins Creek Area - BioNet Species Sightings (Accessed January 2023)

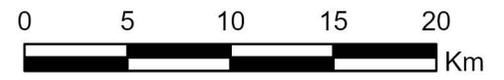


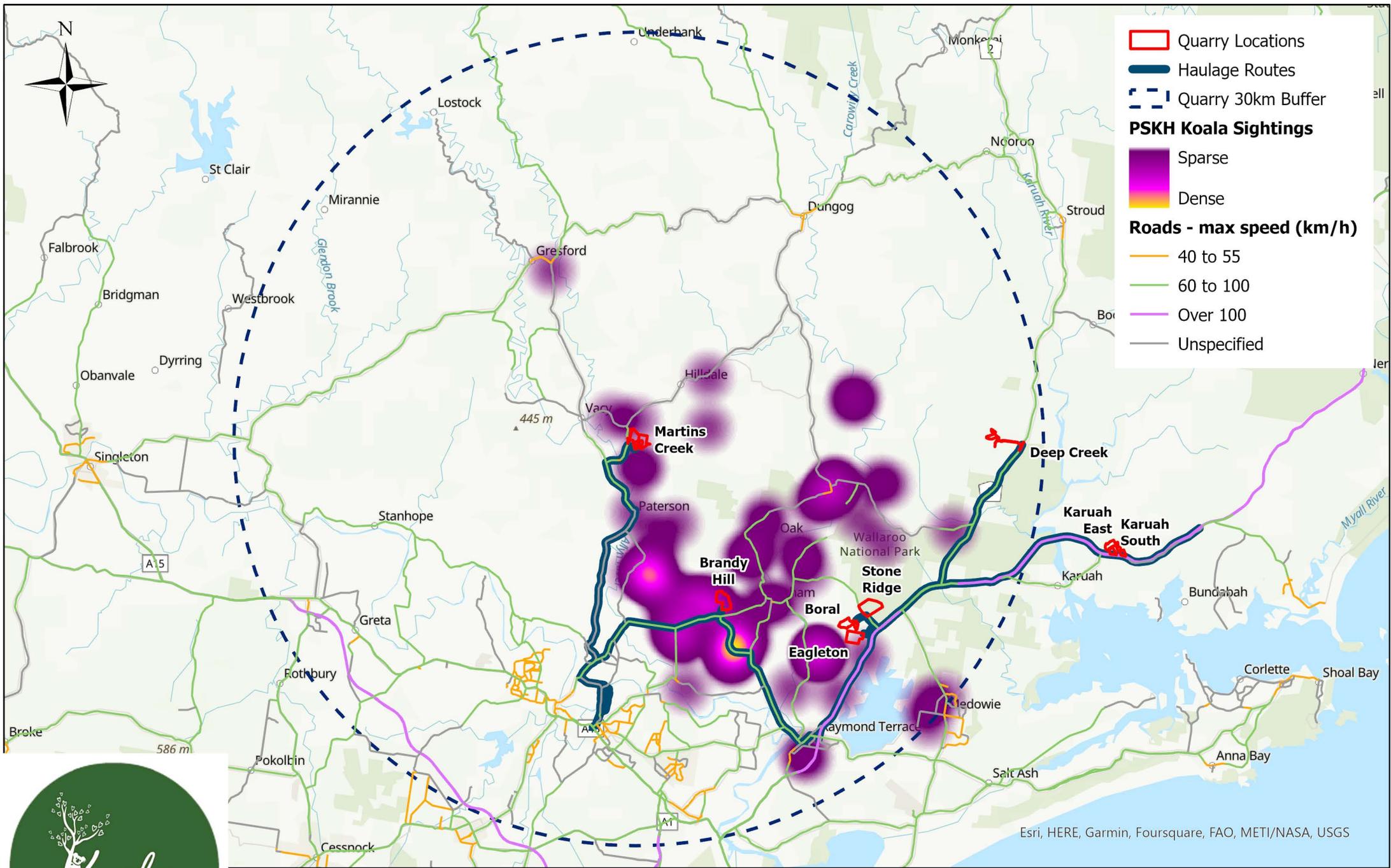
Vulnerable and Endangered Species in the Martins Creek Area -  
BioNet Species Sightings  
(Accessed January 2023)



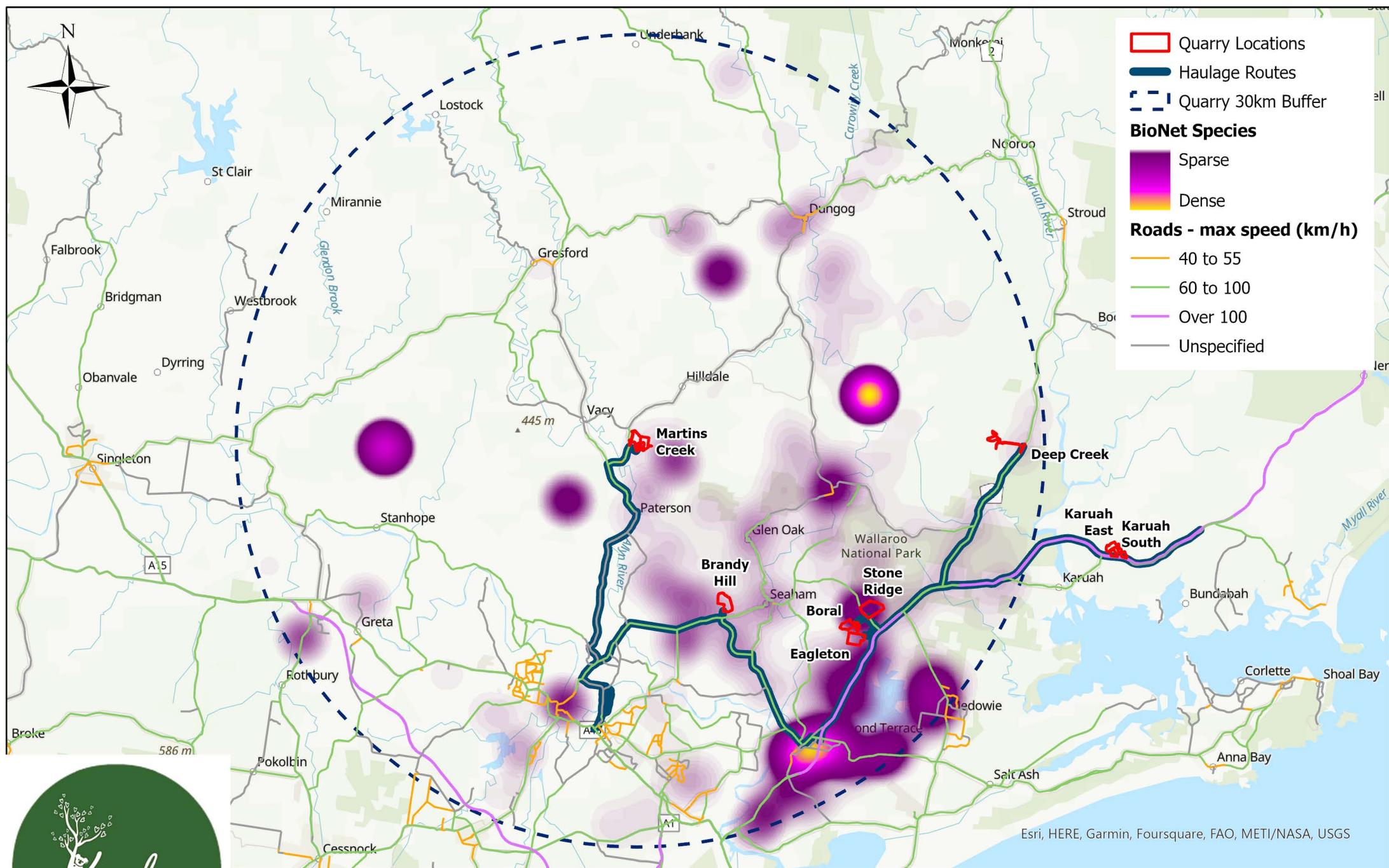


Koala Road Casualties and Current Habitat in the Martins Creek Area - PSKH Rescue Data 1996 - 2019





Koala Sightings in the Martins Creek Area -  
 PSKH Sightings Data 1977 - 2022



Vulnerable and Endangered Species in the Martins Creek Area -  
 BioNet Species Sightings  
 (Accessed January 2023)

