

Urban Development and Managing Hollows



Wyong
Shire
Council

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Urban Expansion and Loss of Hollows

- 72% of land in Wyong contains native vegetation
- High density of hollows and many large hollows
- Ongoing pressure from urban expansion

40,000 new homes on Central Coast over next 20 years and enhance Warnervale employment lands(DPE 2016)

- 'Greenfield' development – clearing of bushland and rural areas for houses, industry and infrastructure
- Key Threatening Process – Loss of Hollow Bearing Trees



Trees



Environmental Planning And Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)

- **Part 4 Development Assessment**
 - Biobanking Scheme
 - or
 - s5A Assessment of Significance and 79C heads of consideration



Development Assessment Process

- **Flora and Fauna Surveys and Report**
 - Survey hollow bearing trees
 - Stagwatch/camera trap
 - Internal inspection
 - Fauna list for study area and threatened species habitat assessment
- **Section 5A Assessment of Significance**
 - Avoid - retain significant trees
 - Minimise loss of hollows
 - Mitigate - no net loss of hollows – salvage or compensate (nest boxes)
 - Offset



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Wyong's Standard Condition of Consent

- Trees/vegetation to be retained and protected identified on approved plans
- Habitat Restoration Management Plans
- Tree Clearing Protocol
- Mitigation measures:
 - Install natural hollows or nest boxes (number, type)
 - Location
 - Construct and install to Council's specifications
 - Install nest boxes prior to clearing
 - Monitor, maintain and report every 6 months for 3 years
 - Relocate or create hollow logs



Nest Box Construction and Installation



This owl nest box:

- has been installed too low to the ground,
- in a tree that is not of sufficient diameter to mimic suitable habitat for target species
- has been constructed from poor quality materials

It is highly unlikely this box will provide functional compensatory habitat for the target species.

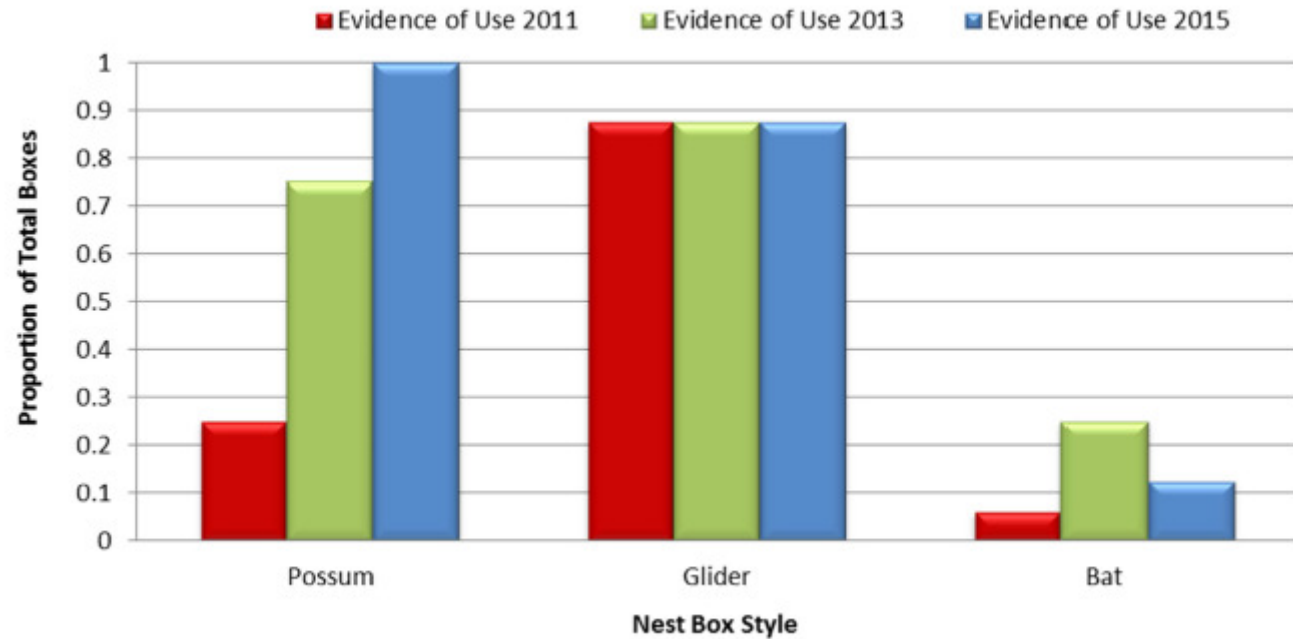
Nest Box Construction and Maintenance



- After 7 years, only 27 of the 98 boxes installed in Wadalba Wildlife Corridor are still functional
- Poor quality materials and construction and lack of maintenance, such that lids fall off, boxes fall apart or boxes fall off trees

Travers Bushfire and Ecology 2015

Nest Box Monitoring



Nest box usage over 5 year period (n = 40)



Forest Fauna Surveys 2015

Nest Boxes for Large Forest Owls



- Designed in collaboration with owl expert John Young
- Internal dimensions 1500 (H) x 500 (W) mm

Monitoring in 2014 for 4 months during owl breeding season:

- Sulfur-crested Cockatoo nesting in one box
- Other box visited by 6 hollow dependent fauna species
- No owl activity in either box

Travers Bushfire and Ecology 2015

Installing Salvaged Hollows



RPS and RoseGroup 2015

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Ongoing Improvement



Travers Bushfire and Ecology 2015

- Council is currently drafting a 'Tree Clearing Protocol and Nest Box Specifications'
- Available on Council's website in late 2016



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