

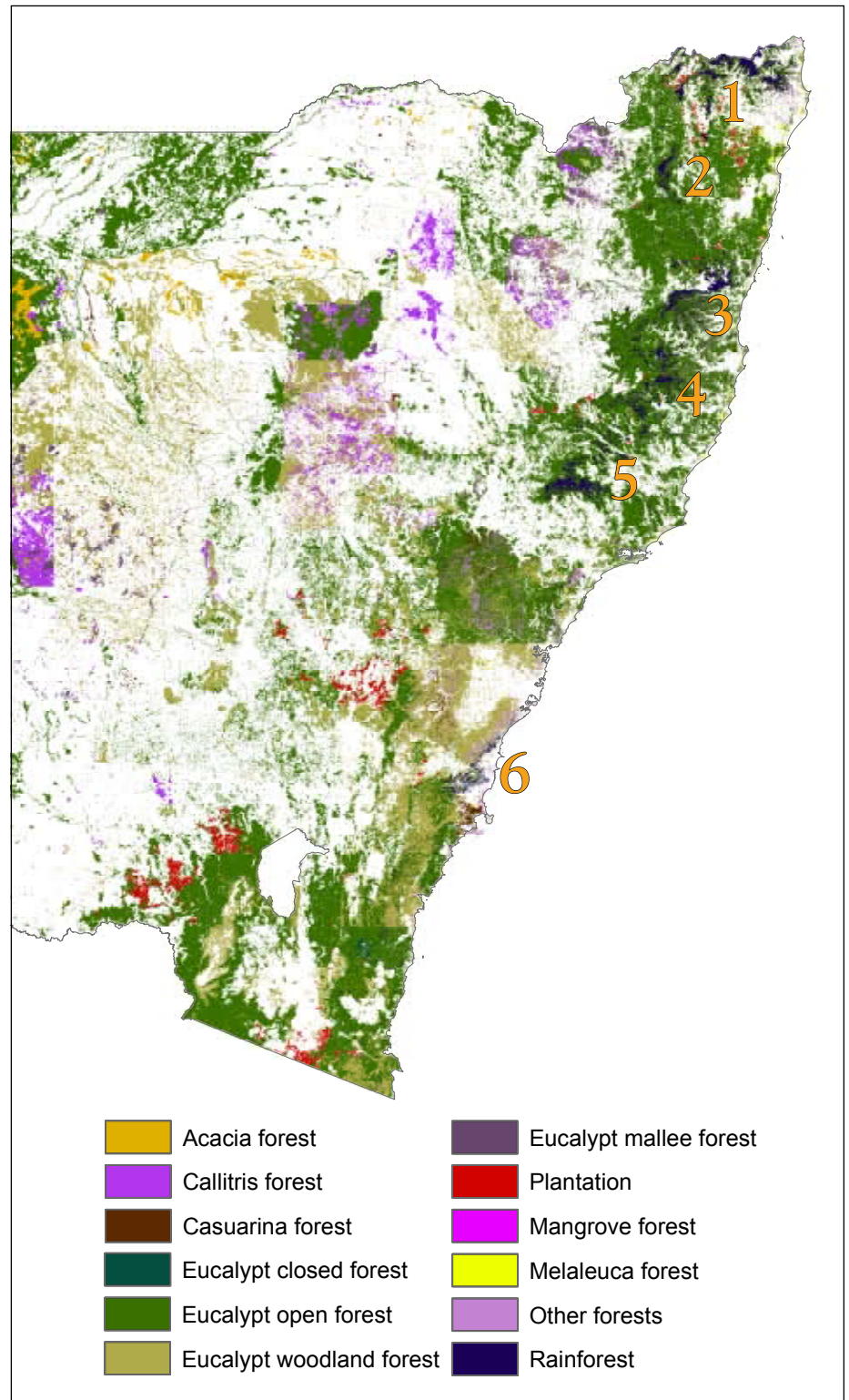
Where does rainforest occur in New South Wales?

Rainforest occurs along the eastern side of New South Wales as discontinuous patches like a chain of islands in a sea of fire-prone eucalyptus forest. These range in size from tiny gullies to more extensive stands covering large valleys, ranges and tablelands.

Six major areas can be recognised:

1. Richmond and Tweed Valleys
2. Washpool and Gibraltar
3. Dorrigo and New England
4. Hastings Valley
5. Barrington and Gloucester Tops
6. Illawarra

Each of these areas has nutrient-rich soils and all are located on the eastern side of the Great Dividing Range where rainfall and temperature are favourable. Most rainforest is on the protected and moister eastern and southern-facing slopes or on rich alluvial lowland floodplains. All, and particularly the Illawarra area, have been much reduced in size since European settlement.



Vegetation map courtesy of National Forest Inventory, Australian Bureau of Agricultural Resource Economics and Sciences.

Rainforest Centres

Gateways to our natural heritage under the canopy.

The National Rainforest Conservation Programme was jointly funded by the Commonwealth Government and New South Wales governments. One of its aims was to encourage a better understanding of the importance of rainforest by the people of Australia. To further this aim Rainforest Centres have been built at Sea Acres National Park, Dorrigo National Park, and at Minnamurra in Budderoo National Park. These centres provide visitors with information on rainforest in general, the local rainforest, and places to visit. All are linked to walking tracks and viewing areas which allow easy access to an experience of the rainforest without discomfort and, where practicable, facilities for the disabled.



Sea Acres National Park



Minnamurra



Dorrigo National Park

Richmond - Tweed

RICH IN RAINFOREST AND SCENIC BEAUTY

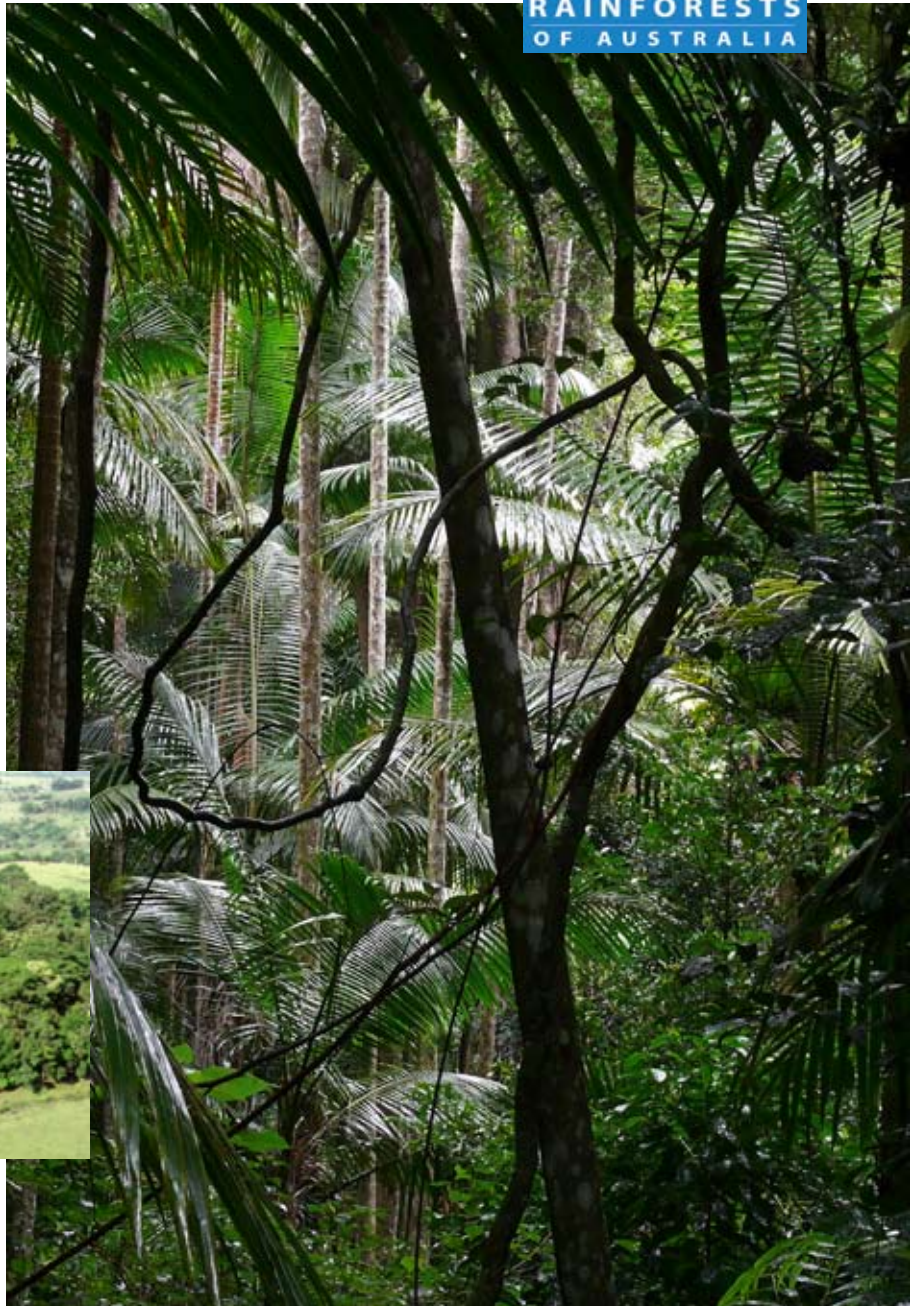
The rainforests of the Richmond-Tweed are the richest in New South Wales in terms of rainforest species. This reflects the diversity of types from cool temperate to subtropical which have survived through past climatic changes. The landscape is striking with vertical cliffs, the sites of many waterfalls, forested slopes and cleared agricultural land. The rainforests of this area are generally centred on the soils derived from the outpourings of two ancient large volcanoes, the Focal Peak Volcano centred near Mount Barney and the Tweed Volcano centred on Mount Warning.





**GONDWANA
RAINFORESTS
OF AUSTRALIA**

Rainforest covered much of the area at the time of European settlement and good examples of all five subforms can be experienced. The rugged ranges surrounding the Tweed Valley (Nightcap, Tweed and McPherson Ranges), Mount Warning and the Richmond Range still carry extensive areas of rainforest and include 14 of the listed World Heritage Areas. Lowland areas, including 'The Big Scrub', once the largest area of subtropical rainforest in Australia, are now largely cleared but important remnants of lowland subtropical and littoral rainforest still remain in this area of scenic beauty.



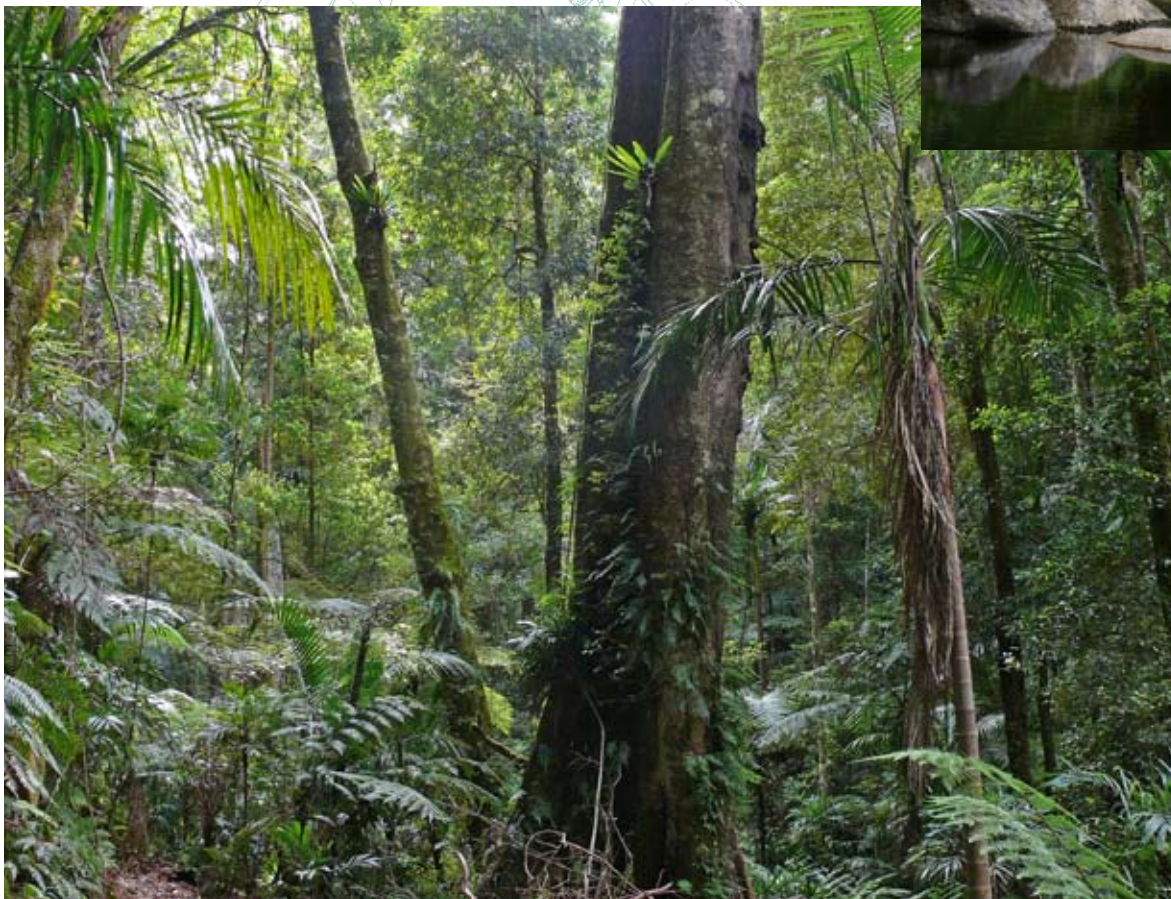
Washpool & Gibraltar

RAINFOREST WILDERNESS OF THE CLARENCE VALLEY

Both Washpool and Gibraltar Range National Parks are World Heritage areas.

Grafton and Glen Innes provide the starting points for visitors to the rainforests of this area. Most spectacular and easily reached are the rainforests of Washpool. Coombadjha Camping Area and North Washpool Camping Area are located on the edge of the Washpool Wilderness Area and from these locations one can experience a taste of this wild region of tall trees and clear waters including both warm temperate and subtropical rainforests.

The wilderness area itself includes the largest remaining area of Coachwood warm temperate rainforest in the world, the Willowie Scrub. Smaller areas occur in adjoining Gibraltar Range where over 140 species of birds have been recorded and it is expected that at least 180 occur.





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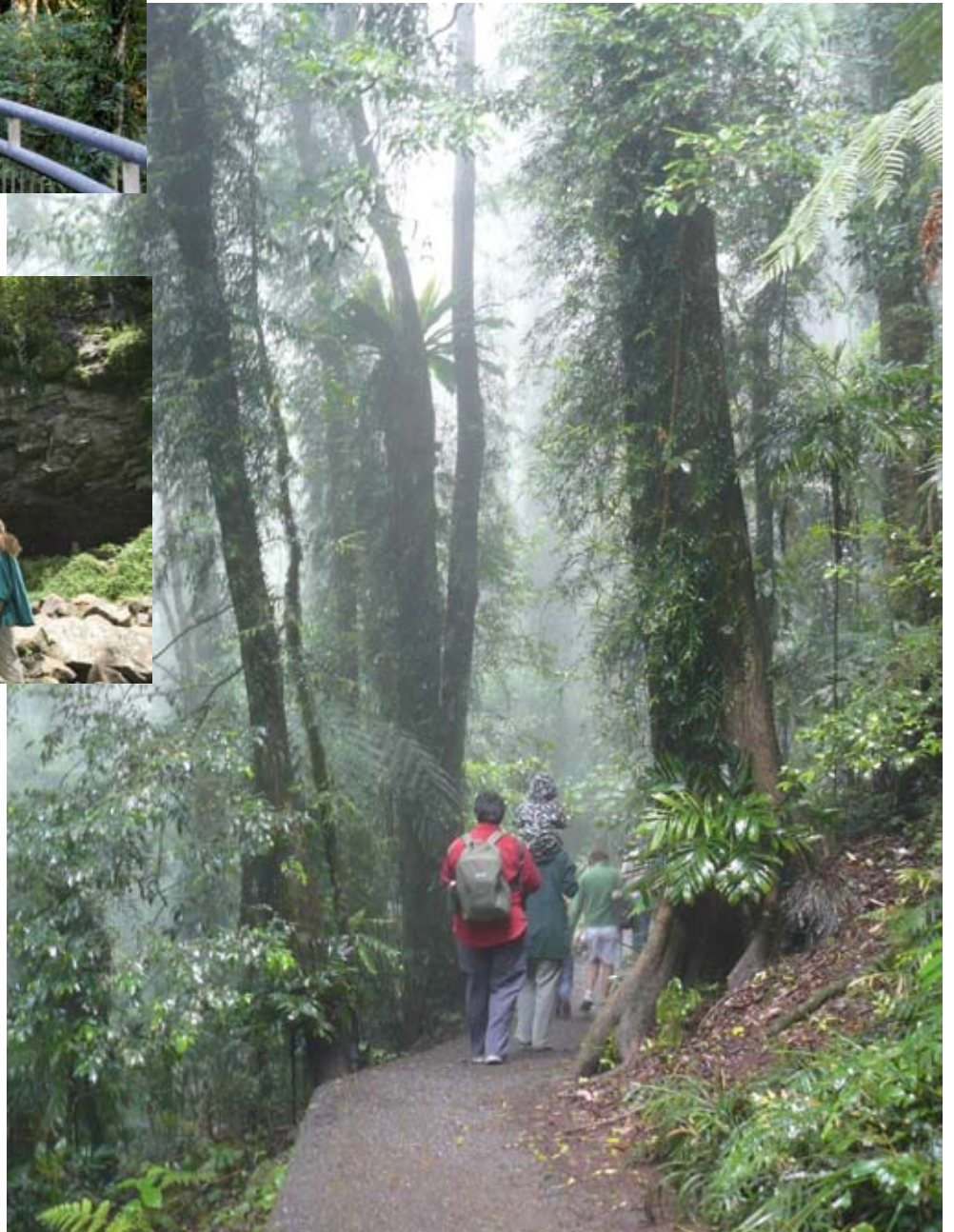
Rainforest is limited in extent elsewhere in the Clarence area. Iluka Nature Reserve just north of the mouth of the Clarence River includes the finest littoral rainforest in New South Wales and is listed as part of the World Heritage area. Susan Island Nature Reserve within the City of Grafton protects one of the few remaining remnants of lowland rainforest for the Clarence Valley.



Dorrigo - New England

RAINFORESTS OF THE GREAT ESCARPMENT

Dorrigo Rainforest Centre sits on the edge of the Dorrigo Plateau, an hour's drive from Coffs Harbour. The centre has interpretive exhibits, theatre, National Parks shop, Canopy Cafe, and provides access to the magnificent adjoining rainforests of Dorrigo National Park. The Skywalk allows an above-canopy rainforest experience with panoramic views across the forested expanses of the park, to the ocean beyond. Walk With the Birds is a raised boardwalk which provides views through the mid-levels of subtropical rainforest. Other walks in the Never Never section of the park offer walks through warm temperate rainforests and lead to spectacular waterfalls.





To the west of Dorrigo rainforest occurs in Nymboi Binderay and Chaelundi National Parks, and the World Heritage areas of New England National Park and Mount Hyland Nature Reserve, which both have extensive areas of rainforest. Further west still, rainforest is less common but important areas of dry rainforest can be seen in the gorges of Guy Fawkes River National Park and Oxley Wild Rivers National Park.

Travelling east from Dorrigo one can visit examples of lowland and subtropical rainforest at Bellinger Island or Coramba Nature Reserve. Littoral rainforest occurs at Moonee Beach Nature Reserve and Bongil Bongil National Park.

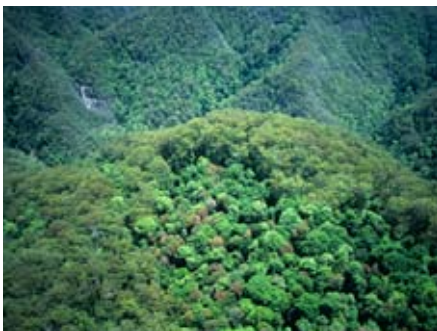


AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HASTINGS VALLEY

The Hastings Valley offers a complete sample of five types of rainforests, from littoral rainforest at the edge of the ocean to subtropical rainforest on the eastern fall of the tablelands.

Sea Acres Rainforest Centre enables one of the most relaxed experiences of New South Wales rainforest and offers a National Parks shop, theatrette and Rainforest Cafe. Only 4 kilometres from Port Macquarie, the visitor centre is set on the edge of an expanse of subtropical and littoral rainforest which stretches from the ridge-top to the ocean shore. An elevated boardwalk loops for 1.3 kilometres, allowing good views and close contact with all aspects of these spectacular rainforests.





Sea Acres is also a good starting point for exploration of the Hastings Valley rainforests. Big Hill in Limeburners Creek National Park and Gap Beach in Arakoon National Park include other areas of littoral rainforest.

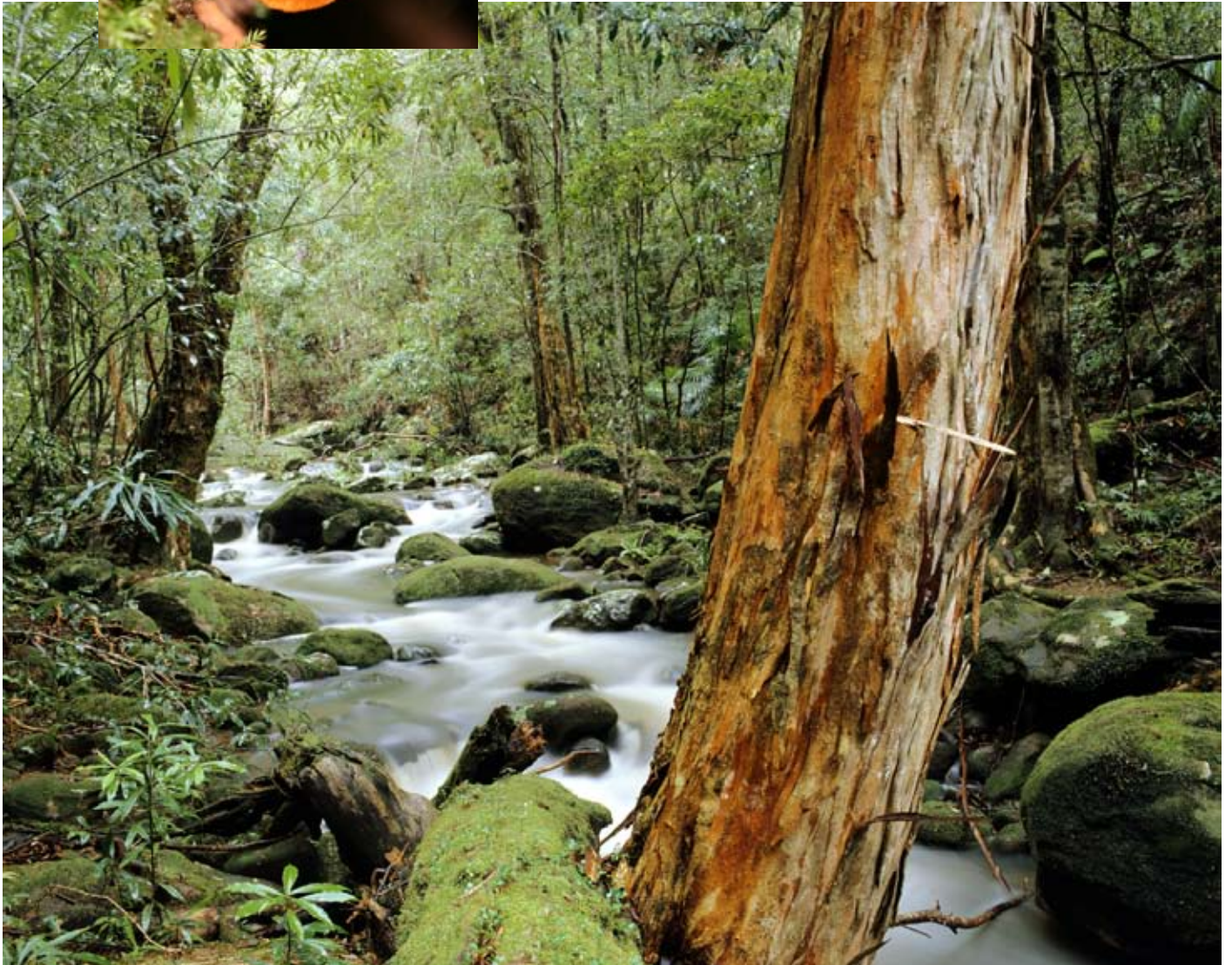
Remnants of the once extensive lowland subtropical rainforest can be seen at Coocumbac Island Nature Reserve at Taree and at Wingham Brush, with its self-guided walking tracks, Boorganna Nature Reserve samples the best remaining area of the rainforests of the Comboyne Plateau.

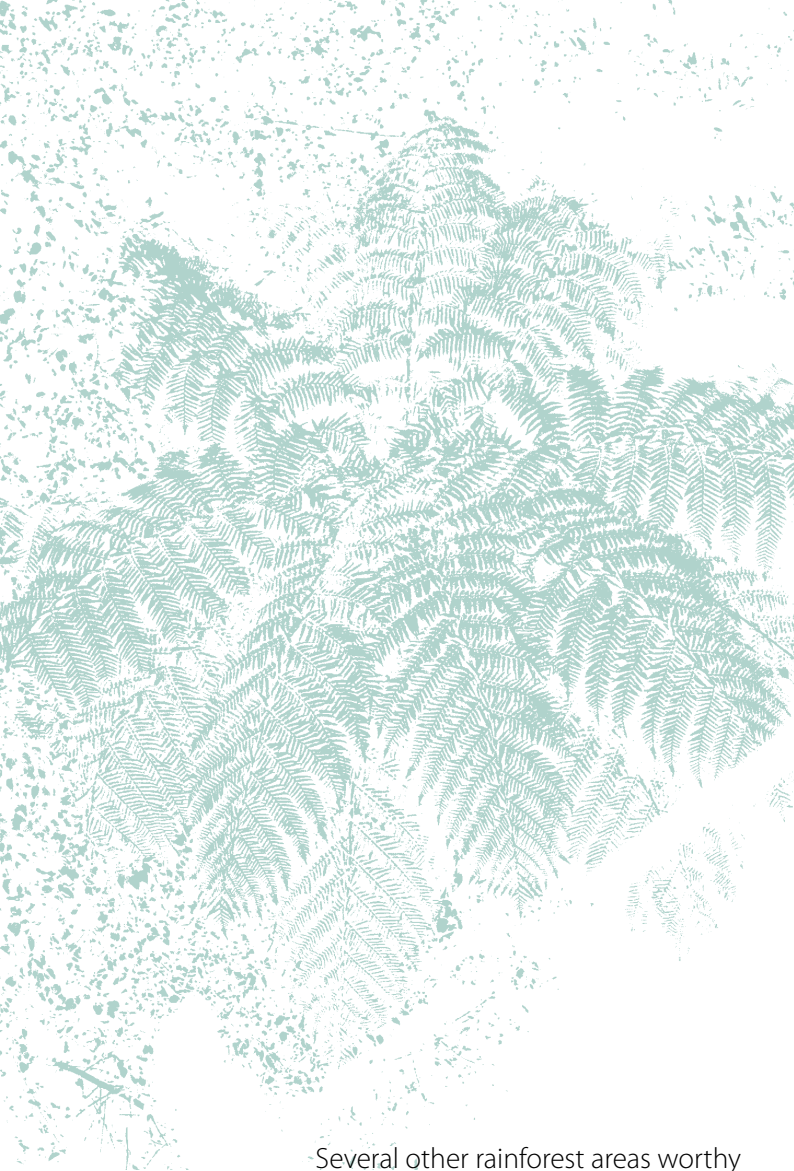
For those wishing to experience the most extensive areas of the Hastings rainforests the destination should be the World Heritage areas of Werrikimbe National Park and Mount Seaview Nature Reserve. These are truly outstanding areas where cool, warm, dry and subtropical rainforests integrate with eucalypt forests, woodlands, grasslands and heath in a wilderness setting. Further west Oxley Wild Rivers National Park contains areas of dry rainforest.

Barrington & Gloucester Tops

MOUNTAIN STRONGHOLD OF RAINFOREST

The Barrington Tops clearly demonstrate the relationship between the Barrington volcano and subsequent erosion which has produced the Great Escarpment. The plateau and rugged eastern fall of Barrington and Gloucester Tops have been relatively little affected by clearing and this area contains an unsurpassed series of gradations between eucalyptus forests and rainforest types, plus alpine woodlands, swamps and grasslands. Cool temperate and subtropical are the major rainforest subforms present. Access to the area is via Gloucester. From there the Barrington Tops Forest Road crosses Barrington Tops to Scone, and Gloucester Tops Road gives access to picnic areas and walking tracks at the base of the plateau and on the plateau itself.





Several other rainforest areas worthy of a visit occur in the vicinity of Gloucester and Barrington Tops. These include littoral rainforest at Mungo Brush in Myall Lakes National Park and the dry rainforests of Woko National Park



Minnamurra

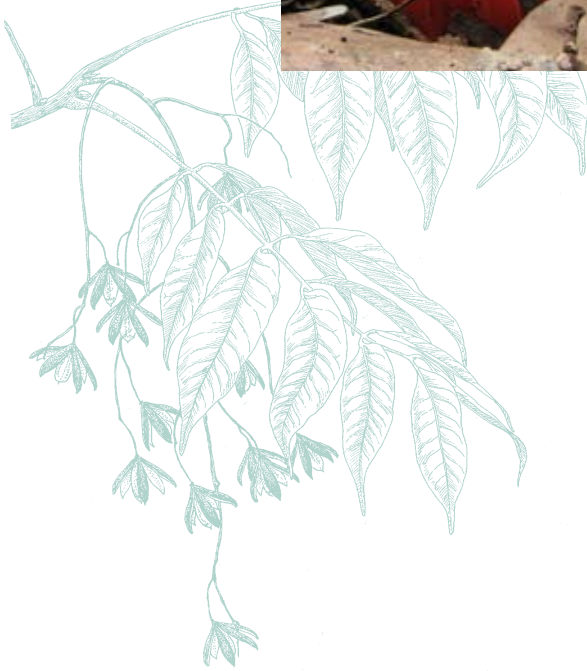
A REMINDER OF THE ILLAWARRA RAINFORESTS

The Minnamurra Rainforest situated in the escarpment foothills of the beautiful Jamberoo Valley is the most accessible remnant of the once extensive rainforests of the Illawarra region. The site supports moist subtropical rainforest and mixed subtropical / warm temperate rainforest. Illawarra Subtropical Rainforest is a complex rainforest community that occurs on high nutrient soils in the Illawarra region, and is a major component of the Minnamurra Rainforest community.

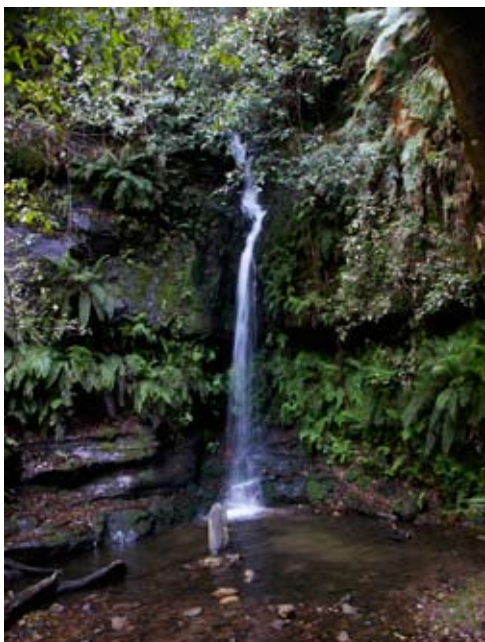
Several subtropical rainforest plants and animals occur near their natural southern limit here. Minnamurra rainforest is also home to more than two thirds of all fern species found in NSW. Nearly 300 plant species have been identified, of which three per cent are known as rare or listed as threatened species. The Illawarra subtropical rainforest is itself an endangered ecological community in NSW. Less than 10% of the original extent remains and processes such as clearing, weed invasion and climate change may further threaten the remainder. As such the Illawarra rainforest communities are a precious part of our natural heritage and require special protection and management attention.

Minnamurra rainforest is accessible via a raised walkway which meanders through the rainforest enclosing the Minnamurra Rivulet. On the lower sections of the walkway subtropical rainforest dominates but as elevation increases and soils change and the upper Falls are approached the vegetation grades into a warm temperate rainforest type. Visitors will experience the impressive specimens of many rainforest trees and the visual splendor of the combination of forest, rock and stream. The visitor centre has displays, National Park shop, Café and BBQ Picnic area.





It is a short drive from Minnamurra Rainforest to other examples of south coast rainforests. Subtropical and warm temperate rainforests occur in Macquarie Pass National Park and along the escarpment of Barren Grounds Nature Reserve. Robertson Nature Reserve conserves a significant remnant patch of the “Yarrawa Brush”, a cool-temperate rainforest community above 500m on basaltic soils. Robertson Rainforest is listed as endangered ecological community.



Further away, fine examples of littoral rainforest, a dry rainforest community growing near the sea, can be found at Seven Mile Beach National Park, Comerong Island Nature Reserve, the Dept of Defense Beecroft Weapons Range near Cabbage Tree Point, and Booderee National Park. Littoral rainforest is also an endangered ecological community in NSW. Morton National Park has an abundance of warm temperate rainforests growing along escarpments and in sheltered gullies whilst Budawang National Park is noted for its higher altitude cool temperate Pinkwood rainforests.

Further south, Deua National Park includes areas of dry and cool temperate rainforest and Gulaga National Park near Tilba Tilba has areas of cool temperate and subtropical rainforest.

Where can I find out more?

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