

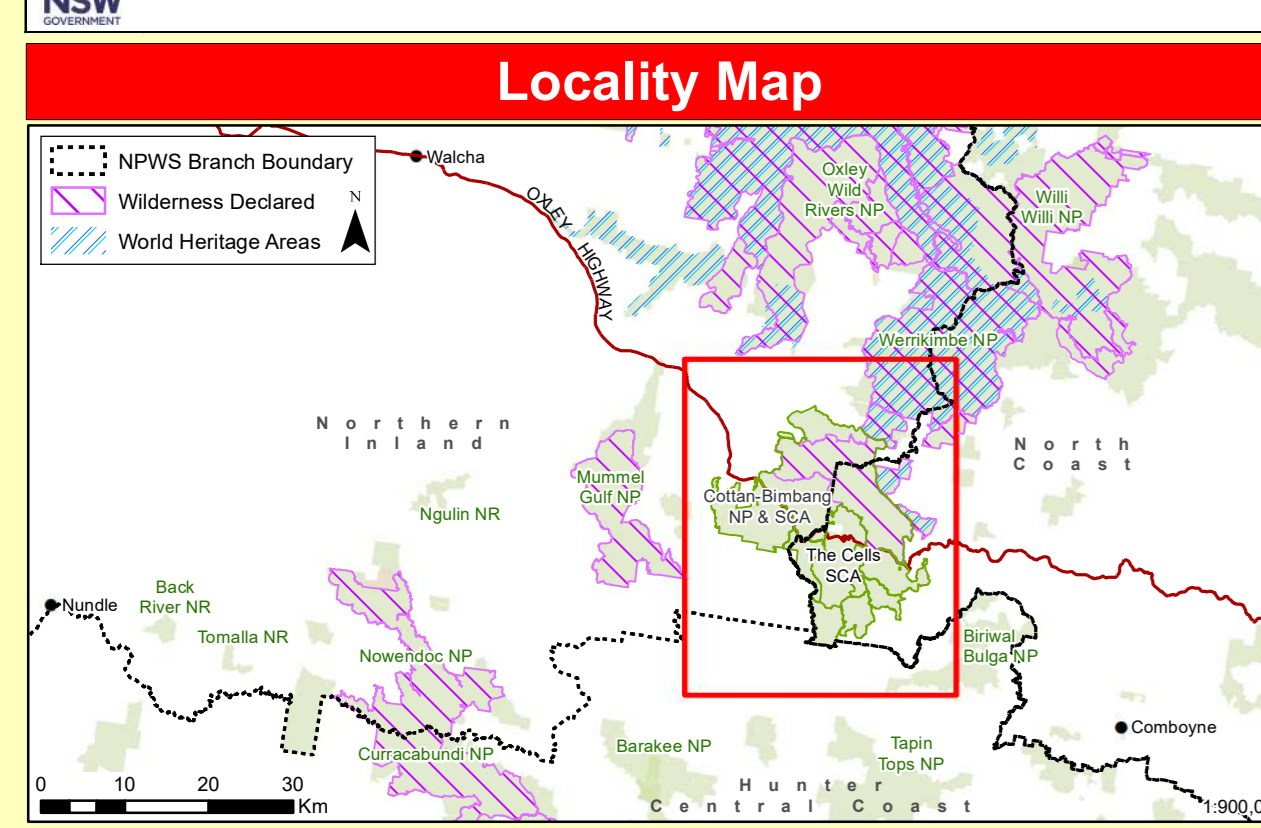
**Cottan-Bimbang NP, SCA & The Cells SCA**  
Northern Inland Branch  
Fire Management Strategy (Type 2)  
2022 - 2027

This strategy should be used in conjunction with aerial photography and field reconnaissance.

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This strategy is a relevant Plan under Section 38 (4) and Section 44 (3) of the Rural Fires Act 1997.

**Local Government Area: Watch the Macarthur**



Map scale: 1:100,000  
Datum: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 56  
Geographic Coordinate System: GCS\_GDA\_1994  
North scale: True when printed on A5 size paper

### Contact Information

Agency	Position / Location	Phone
National Parks & Wildlife Service	Area Manager - Aaron Simonson	0428 364 525
	Duty Officer Northern Inland Branch (24 hour)	0272 7142
	New England Area Office (9am-5pm)	0738 9100 Armidale
	New England Area Office (9am-5pm)	0272 4300 Walgett
NSW Rural Fire Service - New England	Area Manager - Shane Robinson	0419 2222
	Duty Officer North Coast Branch (24 hour)	0275 7744
NSW Rural Fire Service - Mid Coast Team	Headquarters Area Office (Port Macquarie)	0658 6555
	New England Duty Office	0739 6911
Forest Corporation of NSW	New England Zone Office	0771 2400
	Mid Coast Duty Office	1800 737 677
Fire & Rescue NSW	Mid Coast Office	0688 0000
	Watcha	0777 4100
Emergency Services	Coastal	0662 0111
	Coastal	0640 2222
SES	State Duty Office	0665 3175
	Newcastle Centre, Centre	4909 7177
Police	Police, Fire, Ambulance	000
	Watcha or State-wide	0777 2208 or 132 500
Council	Watcha (WV Agency 80)	0685 1404
	Watcha Shire Council	0685 1199
Local Aboriginal Land Council	State Duty Office	0774 2500
	State Duty Office	0688 1511

### Communications

Service	Channel	Location and Comments
NPWS Repeaters - New England	342	Pharfax Camp
NPWS Repeaters - Hastings-Macarthur	181	Spoken
Forest Corporation of NSW	155 (NP 99) (20MHz radio)	Spoken
RFES	155 (NP 99) (20MHz radio)	Middle District
UHF - CB	AMOX	Handheld 80MHz radios stored at New England Area Office
Aviation - CTAF	134.70	Digital Votling
Cellphone	0147 142 505	Small fires channel 10, large fires determined by IRT
Satellite Phone	0147 186 687	NB frequency unless another frequency is allocated on an incident

### Fire Season Information

The critical wildfire season occurs during October and December. This period may extend into the first half of January in some areas. Fires have been known to start as early as August. Particular care is required during periods of relative Southern Oscillation Index. The end of the critical fire season is often marked by well soil and low humidity. In general, Cottan-Bimbang NP is not regarded as a fire prone reserve because of its location on the relatively high rainfall escarpment and significant areas of rainforest.

- ### Operational Guidelines
- Hazard Reduction Burning**
    - Landscape scale wildfires have occurred across this reserve. Hazard Reduction activities in Land Management Zones should be limited to hazard reduction burning which aims to normalise extensive areas of single fire age classes since the last extensive wildfire event.
  - Aerial Operations**
    - Aerial operations will be managed by trained and competent personnel. This includes directing aerial bombing and aerial ignition operations.
    - The use of bombing aircraft without the support of ground based suppression crews should be limited to very specific circumstances.
    - All aerial ignition operations require the consent of a senior NPWS officer or the Section 44 Appointee.
    - Threatened species are associated with rocky outcrops. Aerial ignition should be avoided within 50 metres of rocky outcrops and lighting patterns should be used to minimise the impacts of fire and radiant heat on these outcrops (i.e. ignition on the uphill side of rocky outcrops to create a low intensity banking fire whenever possible).
  - Back-burning**
    - All personnel must be fully briefed before back-burning operations begin.
  - Command & Control**
    - The first combatant agency on site may assume control of the fire, but then ensure the relevant land management agency is notified promptly.
    - The initial Incident Controller will liaise with the RFS to ensure that the agency in command is determined and an Incident Controller is appointed.
  - Containment Lines**
    - New containment lines require the prior consent of a senior NPWS officer.
    - Construction of new containment lines should be avoided, where practicable, except where they can be constructed with minimal environmental impact.
    - All personnel involved in containment line construction should be briefed on and must consider both natural and cultural heritage sites at the location.
    - All containment lines not required for other purposes should be closed immediately at the cessation of the incident.
  - Earthmoving Equipment**
    - Plant may only be used with the prior consent of a senior NPWS officer.
    - Plant must always be guided and supervised by an experienced officer, and accompanied by a spot vehicle (NPWS). When engaged in direct or parallel attack, the vehicle must be a fire fighting vehicle.
    - Plant must be washed down, where practicable, prior to entering NPWS estate and again on exiting NPWS estate.
  - Fire Suppression Chemicals**
    - The use of foam, wetting agents and retardants will NOT be permitted within 50 metres of dams and watercourses holding water.
    - The use of salt and retardants should be approved by a senior NPWS officer.
    - The use of retardants requires the approval of a senior NPWS officer.
  - Rehabilitation**
    - Where practicable, containment lines should be established and rehabilitated as part of the wildfire suppression operation.
  - Water Points**
    - Consider deployment of a bulk water carrier to support fire operations.
    - Water is generally available from creeks and river crossings at lower elevations.
    - Consideration should be given to provision of water from boreholes or bulk water tankers for fires occurring along the Oxley Highway.
  - Smoke Management**
    - Potential smoke impacts and mitigation tactics will be assessed during the planning of fire operations.
    - Smoke plume modelling is required for burns of greater than 50 hectares.
    - If smoke plumes are a hazard on local roads or the Oxley Highway, the Police, RTA and relevant media must be notified.
  - Visitor Management**
    - In Extreme + Fire Danger at the Branch Directors discretion, reserves or sections of the reserve may be closed or restricted.
    - Ensure the closure is advertised on the NPWS website.

### WARNINGS

- Cottan-Bimbang NP & SCA, Oxley Wild Rivers NP, WV Wild NP and Werrimoo NP & SCA are geographically proximate to landscape scale fire events. In the circumstance the planning needs to carefully consider adjacent threats and fire advantages in these reserves.
- Fire risks should be anticipated with wind from the west.
- Wildfires in Cottan-Bimbang NP & SCA are usually associated with El Niño drought events. During this period in dry seasons fires may exhibit high intensity behaviour under windy conditions.

### Heritage Guidelines

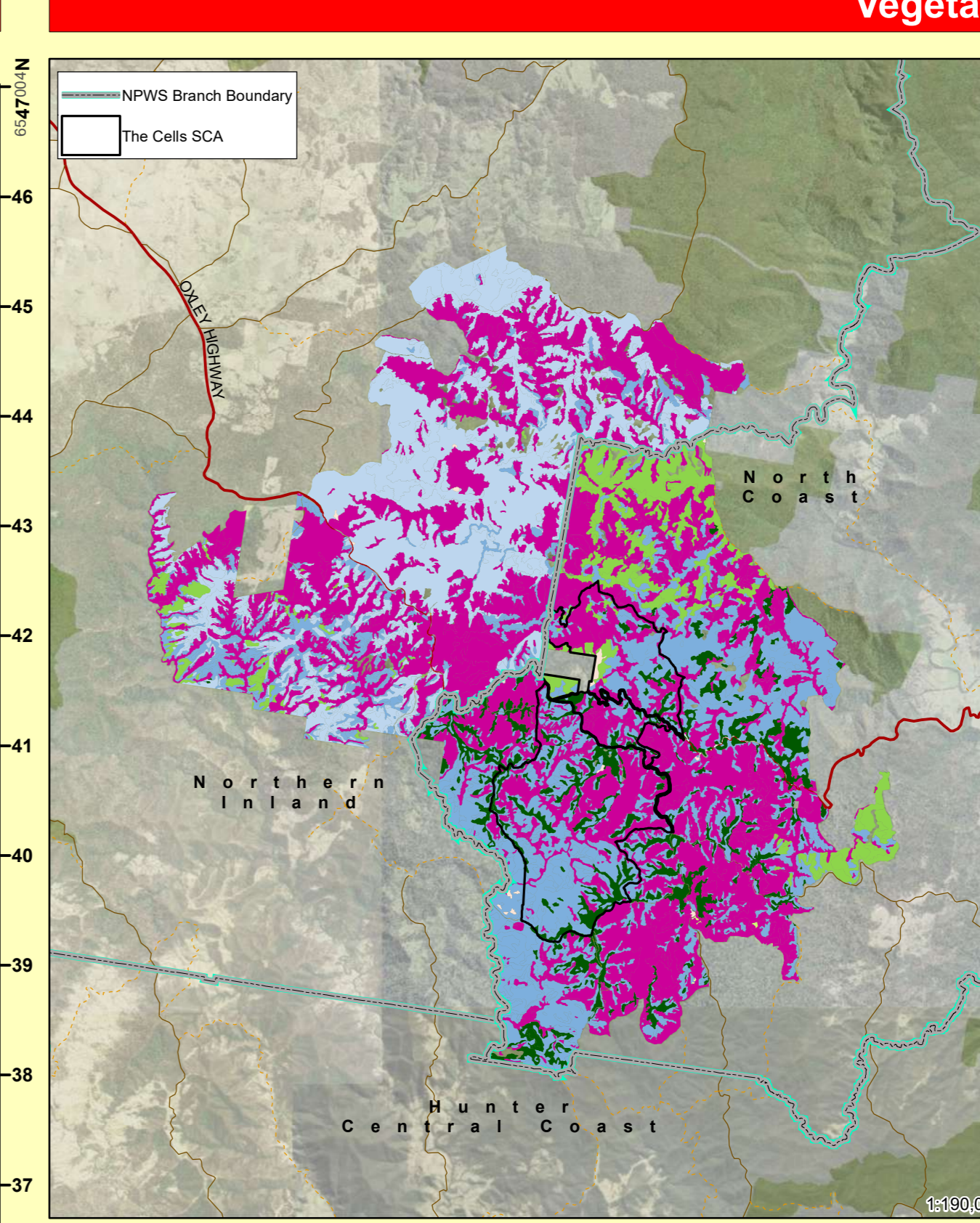
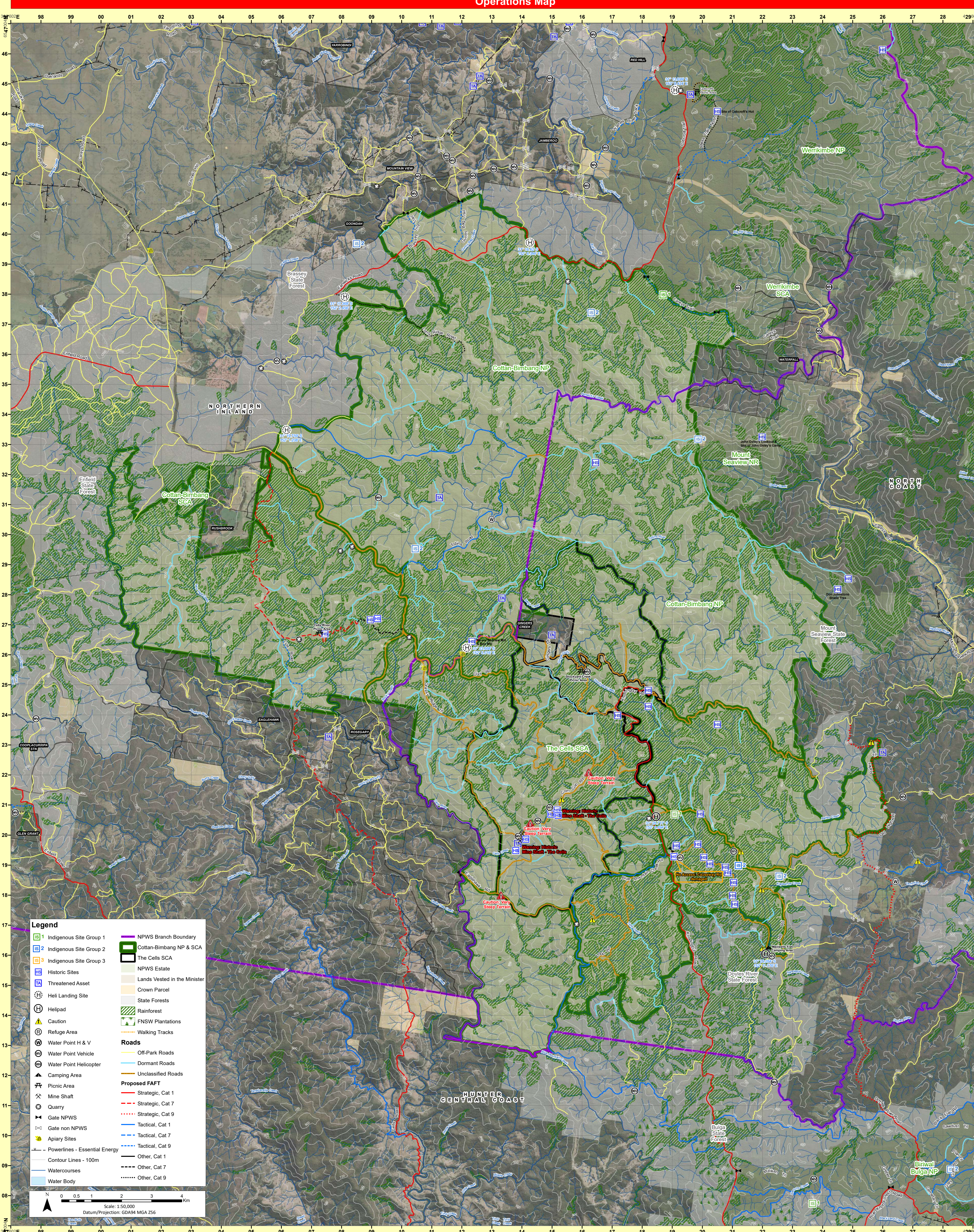
IS 1 - As far as possible protect site from fire. Do not cut down trees.

IS 2 - As far as possible protect the site from fire. Avoid all ground disturbance and driving over site. Avoid water bombing which may cause ground disturbance.

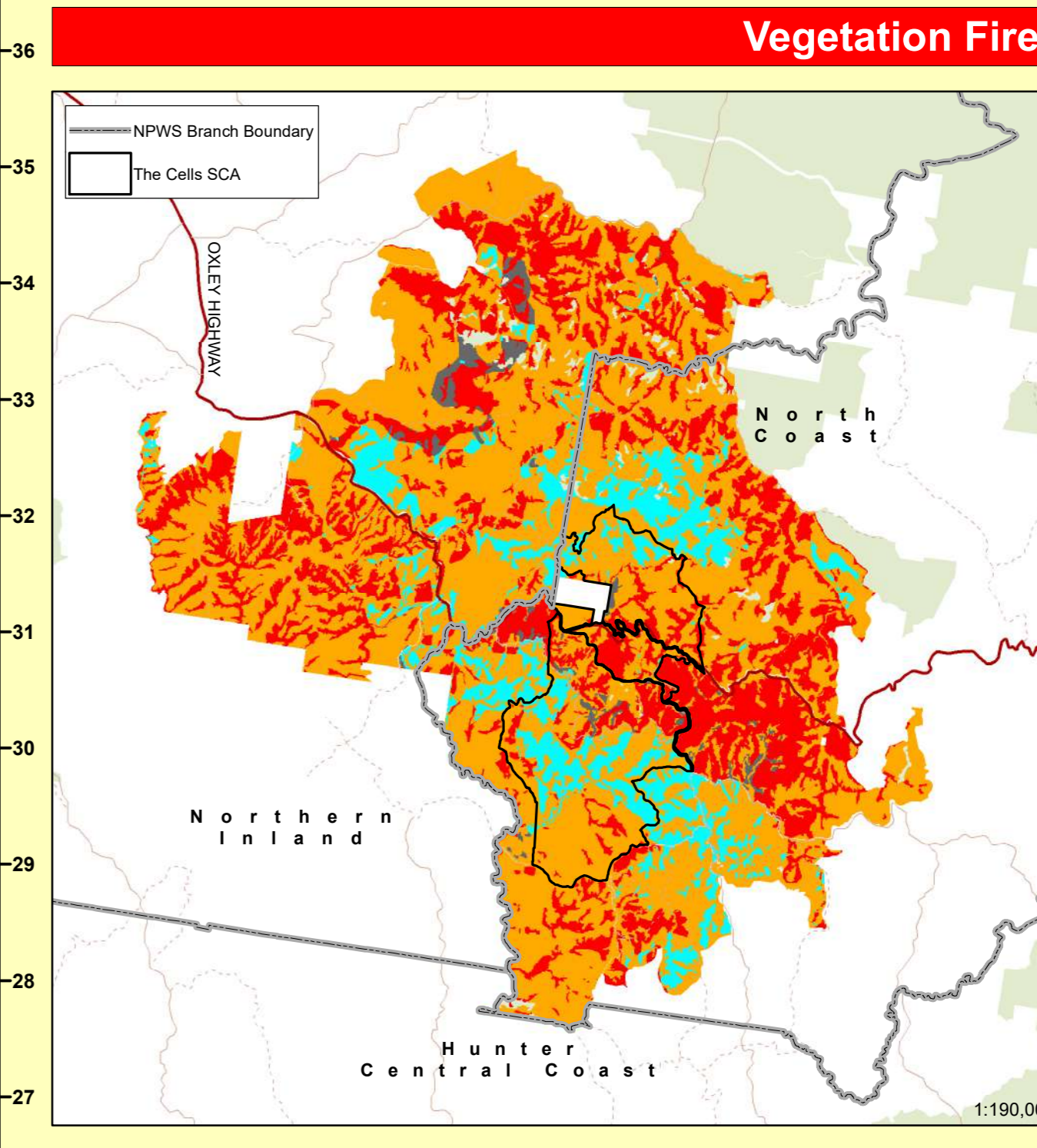
- ### Aboriginal Cultural Heritage
- Modified trees**
  - As far as possible, protect the site from fire, and do not cut trees
  - Use of trees and related material is acceptable
- Historic sites in Cottan-Bimbang NP and SCA relate to logging and mining activities.
  - Sections of the convict-built road linking Port Macquarie with Watcha are still present, as are other early roads built by the cedar getters.
  - Sawmills were established in the late 1820's at Myrtle Scrub, Stockyard Creek and Glen Oxley Gables and Commonwealth (Blakers) Blanks were established in the 1820's.
  - 13 bridges have been assessed as being of high historic value and are located along Myrtle Scrub, Caudery, Seaview and Tabbalade.
  - For information on these sites, consult the Historic Heritage Information Management System (HHIMS).
  - Brief all personnel involved in containment line construction and/or vehicle-based fire suppression operations, on site locations and the required management strategies appropriate to the site type.
  - If new sites are located consult with a senior NPWS officer.

### Soil Erosion Management

The soils within the reserve are mainly shallow, rocky and generally stable. Soils are skeletal in steep terrain and susceptible to erosion after disturbance. Fire trials used in fire operations should be drained as soon as possible after use.

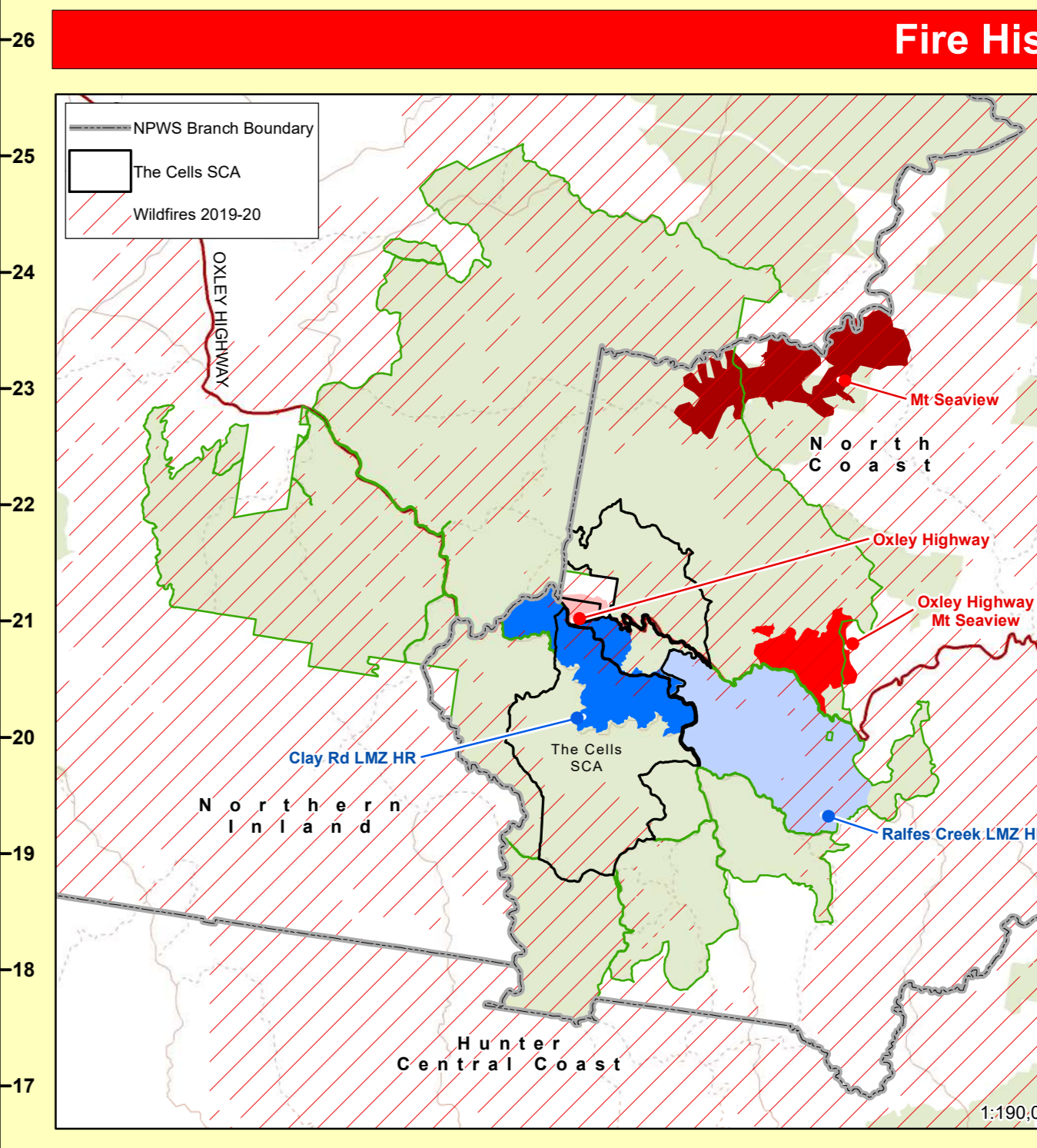


Vegetation Formation (RFS)	Vegetation Management Guidelines	Fire Behaviour
<b>Cleared Land</b>	• Continuous grasslands may occur following seasons with above average rainfall.	• Potential rate of spread is usually Low due to Low-Med OFH • Continuous grass cover, following above average rainfall can carry fire with a High ROS
<b>Dry Sclerophyll Forests (Shrubgrass sub-formation)</b>	• The minimum interval between low intensity fires is more than 5 years. • The maximum interval between high intensity fires should be less than 10 years. • Many sites in this vegetation class have been exposed to frequent fires for extended periods.	• This class of vegetation is often associated with hilly and steep terrain which cause variable fire behaviour due to terrain driven factors. • The potential rates of spread during extended dry seasons can be very high due to terrain factors. • The very steep terrain, skeletal soils and rough nature of these escarpment sites mean OFH is normally in the range of Moderate to Very High • Spotting associated with uphill fire runs can be severe.
<b>Dry Sclerophyll Forests (Shrubby sub-formation)</b>	• Avoid fire intervals of less than 7 years and greater than 30 years. • The minimum interval between high intensity fires should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. • A diversity of fire intervals across the local landscape should be maintained.	• OFH is highly dependent on time since fire. • The potential rates of spread can vary from Moderate to Very High due to steep OFH • The fuels in these communities can carry very short interval fires.
<b>Grasslands</b>	• The minimum interval between fire events should be 2 years. • The maximum interval between fire events should be 10 years.	• Potential rates of spread are dependent on seasonal conditions. • Low OFH and hence low rates of spread occur in dry years. • A Moderate to High OFH may develop after successive wet seasons producing conditions where potential rates of spread may be Moderate to Very High.
<b>Grassy woodlands</b>	• The minimum fire interval in healthy stands of these grassy woodlands is five years. Where fuel health of the woodlands is compromised through dieback the minimum fire interval should be increased to 10 years. • The maximum fire interval is 40 years.	• Potential rates of spread are High due to the grassy nature of the flameable elements in generally Moderate OFH.
<b>Rainforest</b>	• No prescribed burning should be conducted. • Avoid high intensity fires close to rainforest boundaries.	• Potential rates of spread are usually very low to zero rate of spread.
<b>Wet Sclerophyll Forests (Grassy sub-formation)</b>	• The minimum interval between low intensity fires is less than 10 years. • The minimum interval between high intensity fires should be more than 10 years. • A diversity of fire intervals across the local landscape should be maintained.	• The potential rates of spread during extended dry seasons can be High due to Moderate to Very High OFH. • There is a high potential for spotting in this vegetation type. • Fires are often of high intensity.
<b>Wet Sclerophyll Forests (Shrubby sub-formation)</b>	• The minimum interval between moderate intensity fires is 25 years. • The minimum interval between high intensity fires should be more than 25 years. • A diversity of fire intervals across the local landscape should be maintained.	• The potential rates of spread during extended dry seasons can be High due to High to Extreme OFH. • There is a high potential for spotting in this vegetation type. • Fires are often of high intensity.

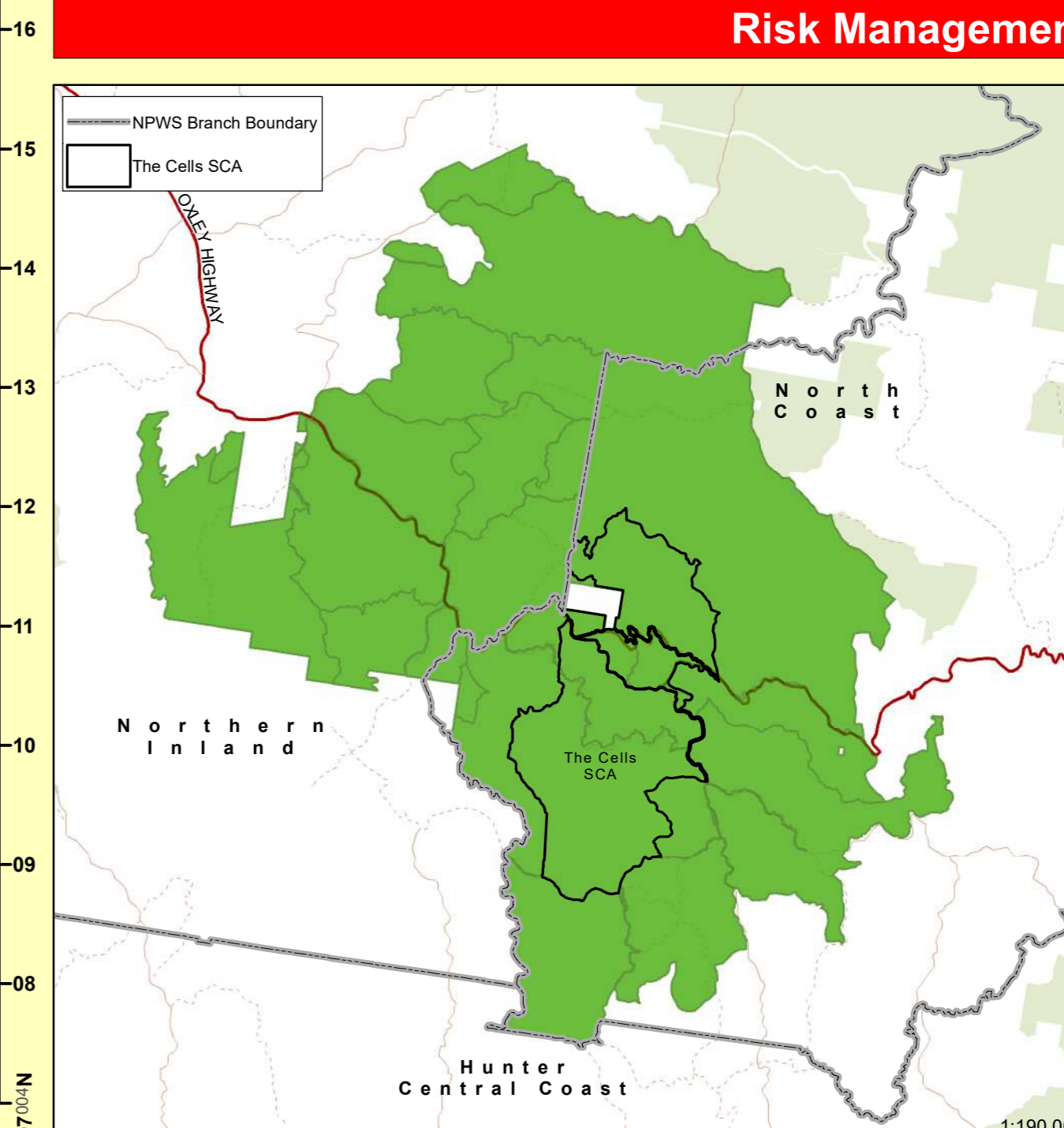


Vegetation Threshold	Treatment
<b>Too Frequently Burnt</b>	Fire thresholds have been exceeded. Protect from fire as far as possible.
<b>Vulnerable to Frequent Fire</b>	The area will be Too Frequently Burnt if it burns this year. Protect from fire as far as possible.
<b>Within Threshold</b>	Fire history is within the threshold for vegetation in this area. A burn is neither required nor should one necessarily be avoided.
<b>Long Unburnt</b>	Fire frequency is below fire thresholds in the area. A prescribed burn may be advantageous. Consider allowing unburned areas to burn.
<b>Unknown</b>	Insufficient data to determine fire threshold.
<b>No Regime Assigned</b>	Areas which do not have recommended fire intervals assigned to them eg. cleared land, rock.

NB. Fire thresholds are defined for vegetation communities to conserve biodiversity



Fire Type	Fire Details
<b>Prescribed Burn</b>	2014-15: Clay Rd LMZ
	2014-15: Raffes Creek LMZ
<b>Wildfires</b>	2019-20: Murrell Fire - wildfire started by lightning
	2019-20: Carral Creek - ignition source was lightning
	2019-20: Rumba Gap Complex - originated from arson.
	2019-20: Stockyard East - wildfire started by lightning.
	2019-20: Oxley Hwy, Yarrolloch - a 4ha wildfire that resulted from arson.
	2018-19: Mt Seaview - originated from legal burning which escalated into a 1295ha wildfire.
	2016-17: Oxley Highway Mt Seaview - a 537ha wildfire started by lightning.
	2014-15: Oxley Highway - wildfire was a result of suspected arson which burnt through 120ha.



Fire Management Zone	Treatment
<b>Asset Protection Zones</b>	The objective of APZs is the protection of human life and property. This will have precedence over guidelines for the management of biodiversity. Maintain Overall Fuel Hazard at Moderate or below.
<b>Strategic Fire Advantage Zones</b>	The objective of SFZs is to reduce fire intensity in locations to assist containment of wildfires, by maintaining the Overall Fuel Hazard at High or below.
<b>Land Management Zones</b>	The objective of LMZs is to conserve biodiversity and protect cultural heritage. Manage fire consistent with fire thresholds.