

Closing The Loop

Squirrel Glider Management Plan 2025

Public exhibition feedback

Summary

The draft Squirrel Glider Management Plan was on public exhibition for four weeks between 20/08/2025 and 16/09/2025.

A total of 39 submissions or comments were received on the Your Voice our Coast website. In addition, three submissions were received via email which were from

- 1. Lake Macquarie City Council
- 2. Urban Development Institute of Australia, NSW
- 3. Conservation Programs, Heritage & Regulation Group (CPHR) which sits in the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Matters raised and responses are summarised in Table 1.

A survey was also conducted on the Your Voice our Coast website to check which recovery/management actions in the plan were identified of greatest value. A total of 64 responses were received (refer to Figure 1).

What we heard and how we responded

Table 1 below captures the themes of feedback received and identifies how that feedback has been incorporated into the final document, where appropriate.

Table 1: Matters raised and responses

Theme	Summary of theme / Example of comment	How it has influenced the project
Cat control	Cat containment required to help conserve Squirrel Gliders	Predation risk is acknowledged in the SMP. Unfortunately, under the <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i> , Council has limited options to contain roaming cats.
Development assessment	Council should ensure developments retain Squirrel Glider habitat and mature trees. Wildlife corridors should be recognised in the LEP/DCP.	The SMP is required to be considered by Council during development assessment, as detailed in Section 7.2. Council has an internal wildlife corridor mapping layer it refers to during DA assessment.

Education	Council should educate the community about the Squirrel Glider through workshops, school visits and installation of interpretive signage at Council reserves	Increasing Squirrel Glider awareness is identified as recovery action 8 under the SMP.
Supply of nest boxes	Council should provide a service to install nest boxes on private land.	Recovery action 1 provides for an artificial hollow program to be undertaken on Council reserves. Inclusion of private land is difficult due to liability issues, etc.
Barb wire removal	Barb wire should be removed from fencing in Squirrel Glider habitat.	This matter is considered during assessment of DAs and when habitat is required to be retained or restored (as per recovery action 3 and 7).
Mitigation plantings	Maintenance criteria should be established for mitigation plantings	Maintenance criteria for mitigation plantings was not originally specified. A new section (7.2.6) has been inserted into the SMP to simplify and clarify maintenance criteria.
Mitigation	The SMP should align with the hierarchy steps established in the BC Act and remove reference to a separate mitigate step.	Parts of the SMP reference the BC Act hierarchy, established under Section 6.3A as 1) avoid, 2) minimise and 3) mitigate. To align with the BC Act, mitigate has been removed when the BC Act hierarchy has been referred to. Mitigation of impacts on the Squirrel Glider is still required, as detailed and expanded in Section 7.2.6.
Biocertification	Removal of requirement that biocertification is sought/ submission of a BCAR with a planning proposal.	Section 7.2.1 of the SMP refers that 'biocertification must be sought'. Council does not have authority to govern when biocertification must be sought, but can recommend when it should occur. Section 7.2.1 has been updated to provide guidance on when biocertification should be sought, which is rezoning proposals that impact on Squirrel Glider habitat.
Corridors	Clarify the function of corridors and consider flexibility in corridor design (i.e. stepping-stone habitat, canopy	Section 6 has been updated to clarify that each corridor type listed (local, sub-regional and regional) are for the purposes of connectivity (movement) and habitation. Flexibility in corridor design (i.e

	connectivity solutions, or alternate offset arrangements).	consideration of existing land use constraints) is already acknowledged in Section 6.5.
Support tool	Develop a landholder-facing assessment tool or decision tree to determine corridor requirements.	The development of a support tool is out of the scope of the SMP to develop. Additionally, the development of a support tool is likely to be of limited use. There are many ecological and other influences that determine the type, nature and width of corridors, including habitat requirements of other species.
Field surveys	Align survey requirements with the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM).	The field surveys detailed are aligned with the BAM.
Assumed presence – species credits	Do not require assumed presence if a BAM compliant survey is undertaken.	This requirement relates to recovery action 6. Revised wording has been inserted into section 7.1 to ensure it only captures sites where Squirrel Gliders are likely to occupy the local habitat.
Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC) Guideline reference	Unclear why the LMCC guidelines have been referenced as the SMP does not otherwise refer to them.	Reference to the LMCC guidelines (section 2) has been deleted.
Squirrel Glider population review	Lack of information about the actual Squirrel Glider population size, area of occupation and viability. A genetic study should be undertaken to determine population viability and indication of potential sub-populations.	It is acknowledged there are scientific gaps in our understanding of the species in the local government area and further research would strengthen the rigour of the SMP, particularly considering the Squirrel Glider population spans both Central Coast Council and Lake Macquarie City Council local government areas. A new management action (#11) has been included that states: Through consultation with internal and external stakeholders, determine key scientific research priorities and conduct or support research to understand occupied remnants, patch size, population size, and gene flow.
Sugar Glider co-occurrence	Discussion needed about the implications for management of co-occurrence between Squirrel Gliders and Sugar Gliders.	Two peer-review based mitigation measures are included in section 7.2.6 on how co-occurrence needs to be considered. There are limited scientific studies on the co-occurrence of the two species, hence it is difficult to discuss evidence based implications in detail.
Connectivity and minimum patch size	Unclear wording in Section 6.1 (minimum patch size) and not clear how connectivity recommendations are	The section has been re-written, and recommendations are based on peer review research.

	informed by scientific data	
Avoid and minimise	A specific section should be included that articulates what matters need to be considered in demonstrating avoidance.	New section 7.2.5 has been inserted which provides measures to achieve genuine avoidance and minimisation.
Recovery actions	Actions are general, not related to clear objectives, or to specific geographical locations and will be difficult to apply.	Wording in the actions has been revised to be more specific.
Species distribution modelling (SDM)	The LMCC SDM, previously prepared should be considered.	The LMCC SDM was completed in 2014, using similar environmental variables. Both models show areas where predicted occurrence meets the border of both LGAs.

What recovery actions were identified as most important

There are 10 recovery/management actions in the SMP. A survey on the Your Coast Our Voice website asked the following question: *Out of the 10 identified recovery actions, which do you think are the top three most important for Council to implement?*

Figure 1 shows that recovery action 10, 3 and 5 (which all relate to conservation of Squirrel Glider habitat) were ranked as most important by respondents. Whilst the feedback received did not change the management actions, the revised version of the SMP provides better guidance on how conservation outcomes are to be achieved through addition of the avoid and minimise and mitigation measure sections.

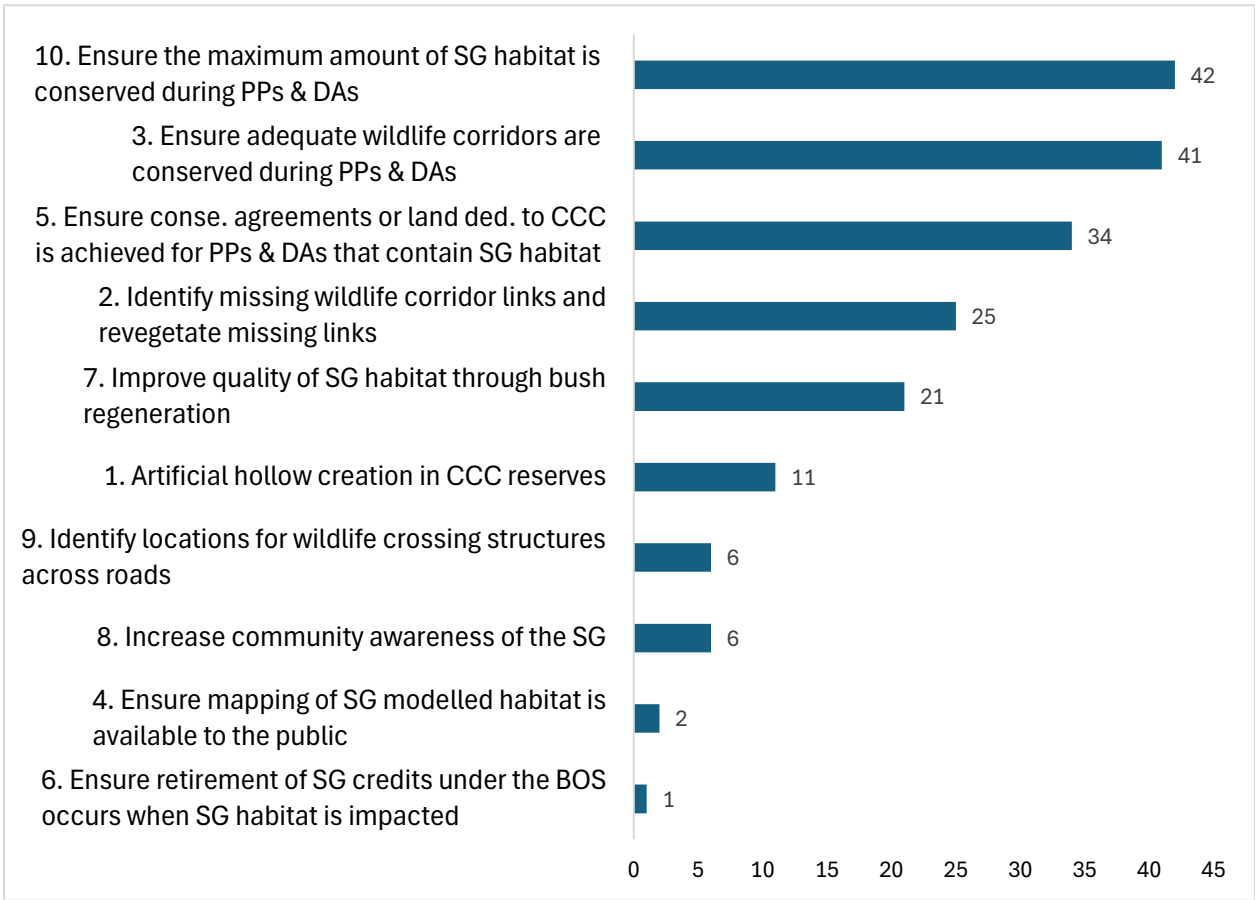


Figure 1: Survey responses in order of what recovery action received the most votes