

Some implications of LEP changes for the GBMWhA

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Concerns of the IUCN with GBMWhA Nomination in 1999

“...the central corridor occupied by the City of the Blue Mountains and a national transport artery that splits the nominated area in two....all of this corridor is upslope from the nominated area and poses a number of threats to the site... With a major city running along a rocky ridge above the nominated area runoff into the Grose and Nepean rivers will always be a problem and will always detract from the integrity of the site” (IUCN 1999 pp. 175–176).

The BMCC's LEP (1991 & 2005) & the SI

- NSW Government has indicated a desire to include 7,000 new dwellings in the Blue Mountains LGA by 2031 (Department of Planning NSW 2007)
- Presently site coverage requirements vary by precinct and are given in Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 of LEP 2005. A precinct in Winmalee, for example, is prescribed a maximum site cover for buildings as 55% of the total site area, and a minimum area to be retained as soft, pervious or landscaped area (excluding hard surfaces) as 35% of the total site area.
- Catchment urbanisation is known to degrade downstream ecosystems, with the level of degradation increasing dramatically as catchment imperviousness increases because of the impact of impervious surfaces on groundwater recharge and stormwater runoff.

BMCC's Residential Subdivision Study: Supporting the draft LEP - 2002

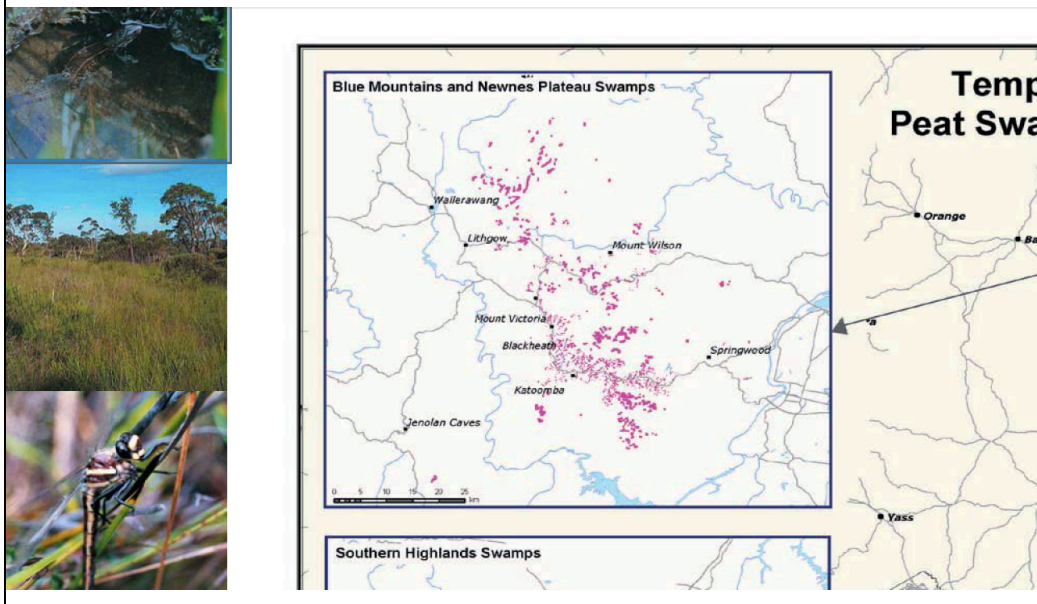
“ The increasing urbanisation of water catchments usually results in:

- increased peak stormwater discharges
- increased downstream flooding
- declining stormwater quality
- decreased groundwater recharge

All these impacts are directly related to the amount of hard surfaces present in the catchment, which increase as lot sizes decrease”.



Upland Swamps of the Blue Mountains

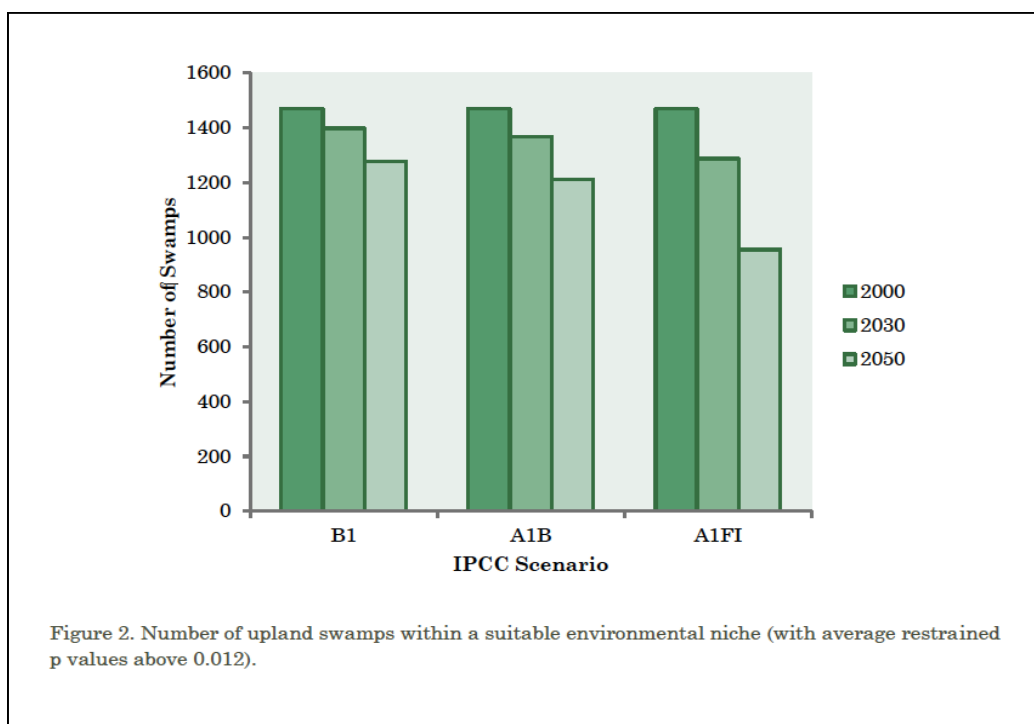
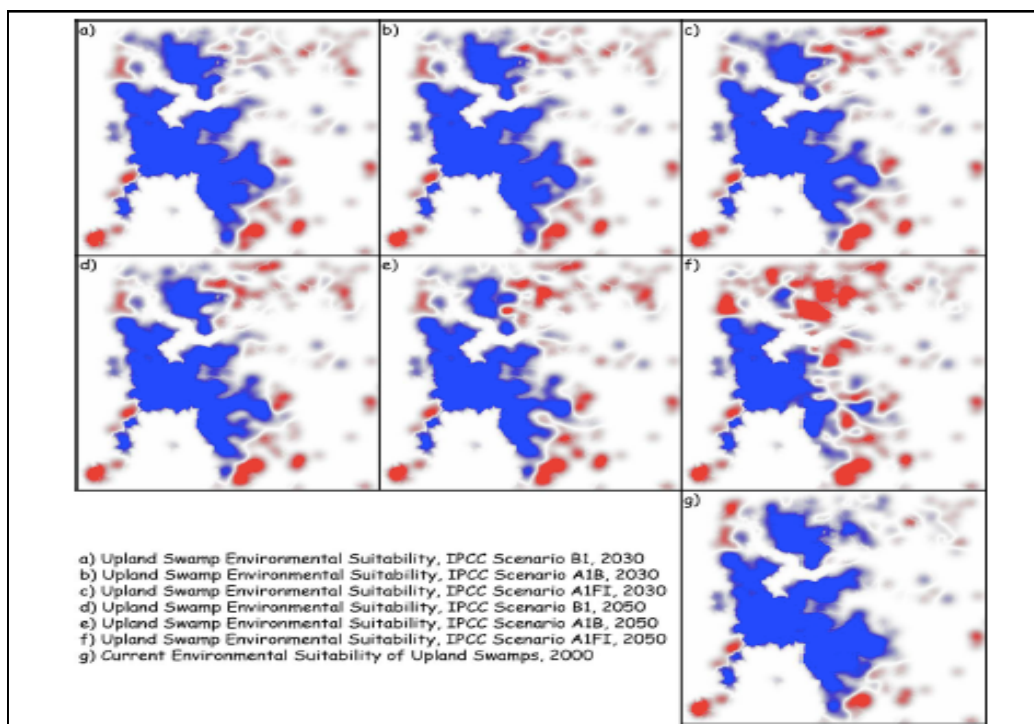


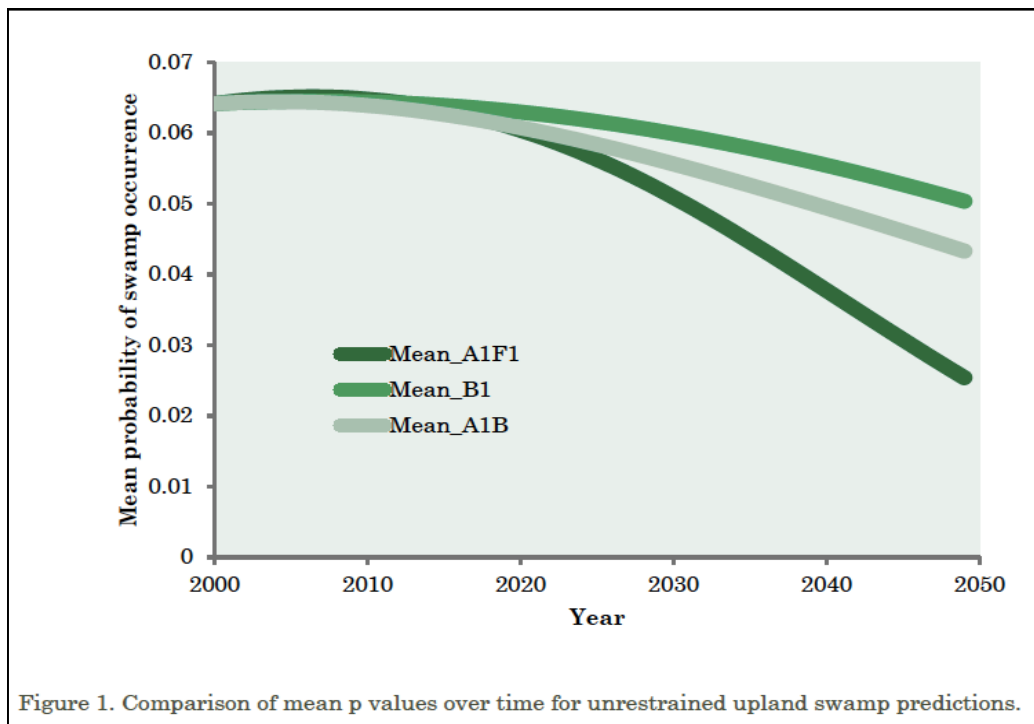


Climate Change Impacts on LGA Swamps



Scenarios	2030		2050	
	Suitable	Threatened	Suitable	Threatened
B1	1.1	5.3	1.2	11.0
A1B	1.1	7.0	1.1	14.7
A1FI	1.6	10.8	0.9	28.0







Climate and LEP changes on the Adaptive Capacity of BM Swamps

- The adverse impacts of climate change induces drying, fire frequency and extreme weather events such as severe storms.
- Increased urban pressure such as increased land clearance, housing density, siltation and storm water run off .
- The latter increases the negative impacts of the former leading and increasing the loss of swamps and therefore water retention in the landscape.
- This will have flow on effects on the vulnerability and loss of biodiversity in the GBMWhA

Conclusion

- Within the World Heritage Convention, UNESCO reserves the right to list a property on the List of World Heritage as *"in Danger"* if it becomes threatened with urban development, among other serious and specific dangers.
- The adaptive capacity of the GBMWHa is dependent on the strong provisions of LEP 2005 and LEP 1991 that restrict and regulate development within the urban corridor.
- Should these provisions not be carried over to the SI-LEP and especially if BMCC is pressured by the State Government to accommodate increased levels of development, the adaptive capacity of the GBMWHa will be reduced.
- While the future impacts of climate change on the GBMWHa are uncertain, the prudent way forward would be to maintain or enhance its adaptive capacity to account for the uncertainty rather than diminish its adaptive capacity by reducing development standards in the urban corridor.
- Should climate change bring a stressful, hotter, and drier climate to the GBMWHa, any weakening of development controls at the hands of the current SI-LEP would only serve to exacerbate the impacts of such change.
- Should the local vegetation be unable to adapt, and suffer from collapsed hydrological function upstream, the initial fears of the IUCN regarding the urban corridor may be realised, and open up a debate over whether the GBMWHa belongs on the List of World Heritage as *"in Danger."*

Article 11(4) of the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (also known as simply the *World Heritage Convention*).