



Commonwealth of Australia

**Amendments to the list of threatened ecological communities under section 181 of the
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EC62)**

I, GREG HUNT, Minister for the Environment, pursuant to paragraph 184(1)(a) of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, hereby amend the list referred to in section 181 of that Act by:

including in the list in the **critically endangered** category **Southern Highlands Shale Forest and Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion**

as described in the Schedule to this instrument.

Dated this.....24th.....day of.....August.....2015

GREG HUNT

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Minister for the Environment

SCHEDULE

Southern Highlands Shale Forest and Woodland of the Sydney Basin Bioregion

The Southern Highlands Shale Forest and Woodland of the Sydney Basin Bioregion ecological community is endemic to New South Wales, occurring within the Sydney Basin Bioregion, as defined by version 7 of the Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia. The ecological community occurs on the Southern Highlands plateau and is typically associated with clay soils derived from Wianamatta Group shales.

The ecological community has a tree canopy dominated by eucalypts and a typically herbaceous understorey. Three ‘forms’ of the ecological community are recognised: ‘typical’, ‘tall wet’ and ‘short dry’.

Characteristic canopy species of the Southern Highlands Shale Forest and Woodland that may be found in all forms of the ecological community include: *Eucalyptus globoidea* (white stringybark), *E. piperita* (Sydney peppermint) and *E. radiata* (narrow-leaved peppermint). In addition to the aforementioned species, the ecological community may be dominated by one or more of the following canopy species:

- In the ‘**typical**’ form - by *Eucalyptus macarthurii* (Paddy’s River box). *Eucalyptus pauciflora* (snow gum) may also be present but not as a dominant species. *Eucalyptus amplifolia* (cabbage gum) and/or *E. tereticornis* (forest red gum) often occur. *Eucalyptus ovata* (swamp gum) is often present at poorly drained sites. In addition, a **Penrose variant** is dominated by *E. blaxlandii* (Blaxland’s stringybark); a **Bundanoon variant** often includes *Angophora floribunda* (rough barked apple); and a **Braemar variant** is often dominated by *E. fibrosa* (red ironbark) and *E. punctata* (grey gum), reflecting a stronger sandstone influence.
- In the ‘**tall wet**’ form - by *Eucalyptus cypellocarpa* (mountain grey gum), *E. elata* (river peppermint), *E. obliqua* (stringybark), *E. ovata* (swamp gum), *E. quadrangulata* (white-topped box), *E. smithii* (gully peppermint, Blackbutt peppermint) and/or *E. viminalis* (manna gum, ribbon gum).
- In the ‘**short dry**’ form - by *Eucalyptus cinerea* (Argyle apple, silver leaved stringybark), *E. dives* (broad leaved peppermint), *E. mannifera* (brittle gum), *E. rubida* (candlebark, ribbon gum). *Eucalyptus pauciflora* may also occur, and while not a dominant species, its frequency in this form reflects the increased exposure to frost and lower rainfall.

Where present, the shrub layer is typically sparse, although it may be dense. The ground layer is typically dense, dominated by grasses and herbs including: *Poa sieberiana* (fine leaved tussock grass), *P. labillardierei* (river tussock), *Themeda triandra* (kangaroo grass), *Rystidosperma* (syn. *Joycea*) *pallida* (red-anther wallaby grass) and *Microlaena stipoides* var. *stipoides* (weeping grass), *Hypericum gramineum* (small St John’s wort), *Poranthera microphylla*, *Lobelia purpurascens* (syn. *Pratia purpurascens*) (whiteroot) and *Viola hederacea* (native violet).

The ecological community supports a diverse range of fauna providing essential resources such as shelter and food including: *Nyctophilus* spp. (long-eared bats); *Cercartetus nanus* (eastern pygmy possum), *Anthochaera phrygia* (regent honeyeater); *Petroica boodang* (scarlet robin); and *Heleioporus australiacus* (giant burrowing frog).