

## Nationally threatened species and ecological communities

### BLACK GUM – SOUTH ESK PINE FOREST (TASMANIA)

#### What is the Black Gum – South Esk Pine Forest?

The Black Gum – South Esk Pine Forest, also known as the *Eucalyptus ovata* – *Callitris oblonga* Forest, is a type of forest that occurs along the banks of the St Pauls, Apsley, South Esk, Swan, Brushy, Cygnet and Wye Rivers in Tasmania. Two outlying patches also occur in Trevallyn, near Launceston, and near Cranbrook, on the East Coast.

The Black Gum – South Esk Pine Forest is characterised by:

- an overstorey of eucalypts, typically Black Gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*), but also with White Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) or Black Peppermint (*Eucalyptus amygdalina*) in some patches;
- a midstorey of South Esk Pine (*Callitris oblonga* subspecies *oblonga*); and
- a shrubby understorey, where Native Blackthorn (*Bursaria spinosa*), Slender Honey Myrtle (*Melaleuca gibbosa*) and Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*) are common.

On rocky slopes this ecological community may lose its overstorey, and form tall open shrubland.

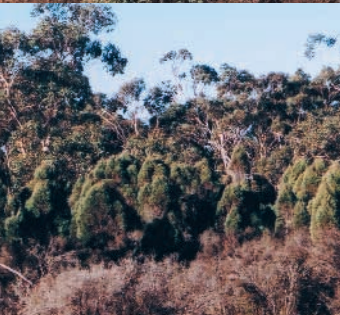
The distribution of South Esk Pine is related to flood and fire frequency. Fire enhances the release of seeds from cones, while periodic flooding is necessary to disperse the seeds. However, too frequent fires will kill trees before they have reseeded, while the absence of flooding stops the seeds from dispersing widely and establishing new populations.

#### Why is the Black Gum – South Esk Pine Forest included on the list of nationally threatened ecological communities?

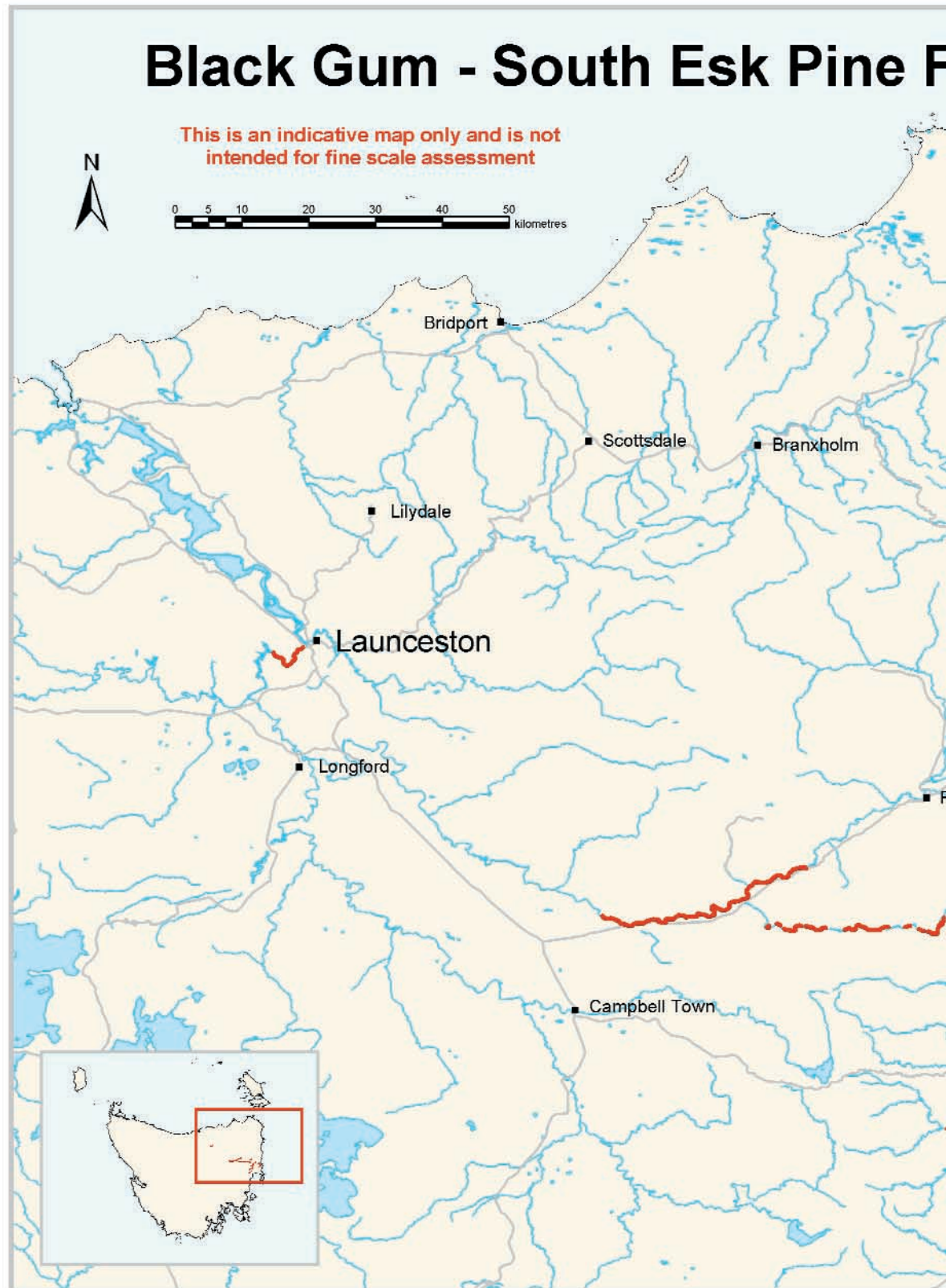
The Black Gum – South Esk Pine Forest is listed as a vulnerable ecological community under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) due to its very restricted distribution, its vulnerability to ongoing threats, the loss of key species, and a reduction of the integrity of the ecological community across most of its range.

There are only 548 hectares of Black Gum – South Esk Pine Forest left, mostly small, isolated patches. Many of these patches have been invaded by woody weeds, particularly Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*). Gorse thickets burn readily, and the high fire frequency resulting from Gorse invasion and some agricultural practices has a detrimental impact. Continual grazing can also impact upon the ecological community, as animals eat seedlings and shoots, preventing regeneration.

The South Esk Pine is listed nationally as an endangered species, and a number of other nationally threatened plants and animals also occur in this ecological community. These include the Spotted-tail Quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus maculatus*), Midlands Wattle (*Acacia axillaris*), Apsley Heath (*Epacris apsleyensis*), South Esk Heath (*Epacris exserta*) and Small-leaf Spyridium (*Spyridium lawrencei*). All of these nationally threatened species are also listed as threatened under the *Tasmanian Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*.













# Forest Ecological Community



## Legend

-  Ecological community known to occur within area
-  Major roads
-  Rivers
-  Lakes and reservoirs

### Source:

The distribution of Black Gum - South Esk Pine Forest (*Eucalyptus ovata* - *Callitris oblonga* Forest) Ecological Community from the Department of Environment and Heritage's Communities of National Environmental Significance Database. In consultation with Threatened Species Unit, Nature Conservation Branch, Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, stream segments where the community is known to occur were buffered by 250 m.

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### Caveat:

The information presented in this map has been provided by a range of groups and agencies. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy and completeness, no guarantee is given, nor responsibility taken by the Commonwealth for errors or omissions, and the Commonwealth does not accept responsibility in respect of any information or advice given in relation to, or as a consequence of, anything contained herein. The map has been collated from a range of sources, with data at various resolutions, and represents the best available knowledge.

Data used are assumed to be correct as received from the data suppliers.

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### What the listing of the Black Gum – South Esk Pine Forest means for landholders

National listing of this ecological community recognises that its long-term survival is under threat. The listing aims to prevent its further decline, and assist community and landholder efforts toward the recovery of the ecological community.

Funding for projects to recover threatened species and ecological communities is available through the Threatened Species Network Community Grants, which are normally opened for application in autumn each year. More information is available at [www.wwf.org.au/tsn](http://www.wwf.org.au/tsn). Small community based projects may also be eligible for funding under Envirofund grants. More information on these grants is available at [www.nht.gov.au/envirofund](http://www.nht.gov.au/envirofund).

You may also wish to participate in the development and implementation of your region's Natural Resource Management Plan. In this case, contact your local land management agency.

Ecological communities that are listed as vulnerable do not trigger the referral, assessment or approval requirements of the EPBC Act. Listing as vulnerable acknowledges that the ecological community is under threat, and dependent upon positive conservation measures for its long-term survival.

While the referral, assessment or approval requirements of the EPBC Act do not apply to ecological communities listed as vulnerable, these provisions still apply to all of the threatened species listed under the Act that occur within Black Gum – South Esk Pine Forest. These species include, but are not restricted to, the South Esk Pine, Spotted-tail Quoll, Midlands Wattle, Apsley Heath, South Esk Heath and Small-leaf Spyridium.

National protection means that any new or intensified activities that may have a significant impact upon any of these threatened species should be referred to the Australian Minister for the Environment and Heritage for assessment and approval. These activities include, but are not restricted to, clearing and burning. For further information about referrals under the EPBC Act, contact the Department of the Environment and Heritage, or visit the website.

### Where can I get further information?

Further information is available from the Department of the Environment and Heritage.

- EPBC Act website: [www.deh.gov.au/epbc](http://www.deh.gov.au/epbc)
- Referral form: [www.deh.gov.au/epbc/assessmentsapprovals/referrals/form.html](http://www.deh.gov.au/epbc/assessmentsapprovals/referrals/form.html)
- Community Information Unit: **1800 803 772**

#### Photography credits

Spotted-tail Quoll -  
Dave Watts/ANTPhoto.com

Black Gum flowers - R Brereton

All other photos -  
Threatened Species Unit,  
Tasmanian Department of  
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