

# Landmark clearing penalty over Appin land

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A PROPERTY developer has been fined \$127,500 for clearing a potential koala habitat and part of a wildlife corridor near Appin.

Kyluk plead guilty in the Land and Environment Court to clearing more than 12 hectares of endangered bushland on its Gilead property to make room for cattle grazing.

Last week, Justice Pain — who included the company's lack of remorse in his decision — ordered the Liverpool company to pay Campbelltown Council \$127,500 and do restoration works for the next 20 years to help the bush regenerate.

The Office of Environment and Heritage said this was one of the largest penalties handed down for clearing land in NSW and the bushland would take more than 20 years to recover. "This is the largest area of illegally cleared endangered bushland we've come across in many years," acting chief executive Sally Barnes stated.

University of Western Sydney koala expert Robert Close said the thousands of trees cleared were part of a wildlife corridor linking the Georges River and the Nepean catchment.

"It's great for people to see the legislation does have teeth and I think future land-holders will be careful," Dr Close said.

"The koalas might not try to cross that area between catchments if there's too big a gap without trees because with trees it means they've got food and protection."

Mayor Anoulack Chanthivong said the money would be used in the Noorumba Reserve Restoration Project.

"I'm glad the court has validated our investigation — the council will not tolerate those who deliberately destroy sensitive environment in our area," he said.

"We take this very seriously because Campbelltown is known for its pristine and very sensitive environmental areas."

Kyluk owner Steve Cenatiempo was the leader of the community campaign against Appin's Leafs Gully power station.

Mr Cenatiempo did not return the Advertiser's calls this week but in 2009 he said he didn't think he had done anything wrong.

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