

Private Land Conservation

- Options for private land owners.
- Experience on Tarcutta Hills reserve.



BUSH HERITAGE
AUSTRALIA

Key programs in NSW

- Nature Conservation Trust, NSW
- Conservation Partners Program, Office of Environment & Heritage



Biodiversity Legislation Changes

- The NCT will cease to exist but will be replaced by the new **Biodiversity Conservation Trust**
- **BCT** will be the legal entity establishing and managing private land conservation agreements in NSW.
- The transition is expected to be completed by 1 July 2017.



What should be protected?

- Areas of high conservation value usually refer to areas that have never been cleared, or land cleared long ago that has recovered.
- Threatened species habitat.
- In farming landscapes the remnant patches are all vital (usually).
- Even small patches have values and can be restored and enhanced over time.



Options for Landowners

- All options are voluntary to enter into but some bind current and future land owners.
- Legally binding (and on land title):
 - Wildlife Refuge Agreements
 - Conservation Covenants / Conservation Agreements / Trust Agreements
- Not Legally binding:
 - E.g. Land for Wildlife

Land for Wildlife

- Land for Wildlife is free to join and is not recorded on the land title and you don't sign a legal agreement.
- Land for Wildlife encourages landholders to conserve nature.
- The benefits include: basic advice on management strategies and actions.



Wildlife Refuge scheme

- The Wildlife Refuges can apply to private and public land in NSW.
- Refuges may be remnant native vegetation or wildlife corridors, or even windbreaks, woodlots & farm dams.
- The landholder nominates which part(s) of the property the agreement applies (or whole of property).

Wildlife Refuge (page 2 of 2)

- A tailored property report & management plan is prepared. These plans are flexible.
- A Wildlife Refuge declaration is free. The land is declared as a Wildlife Refuge, under the *National Parks & Wildlife Act 1974* and it's recorded on the land title.
- There are options for landholders to change the Wildlife Refuge status when required.

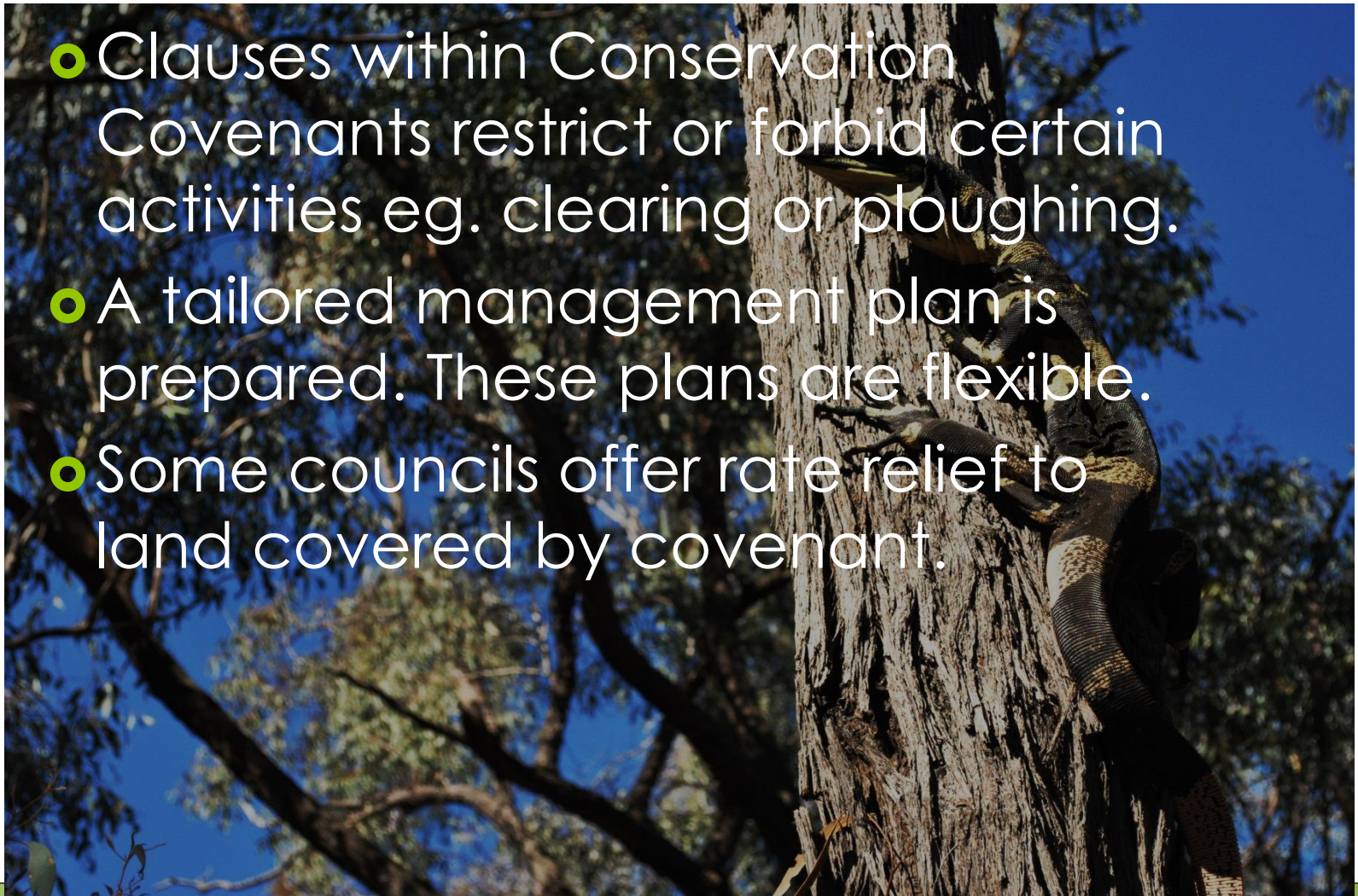
Conservation Covenants

- Covenant is a legal instrument that is registered with a land title. The landholder nominates which part(s) of the property the covenant applies.
- Covenants run in perpetuity, meaning they bind all future land owners. They can be varied but only under exceptional circumstances.
- The covenant sets out the landholder's and NCT's / Government's legal obligations.



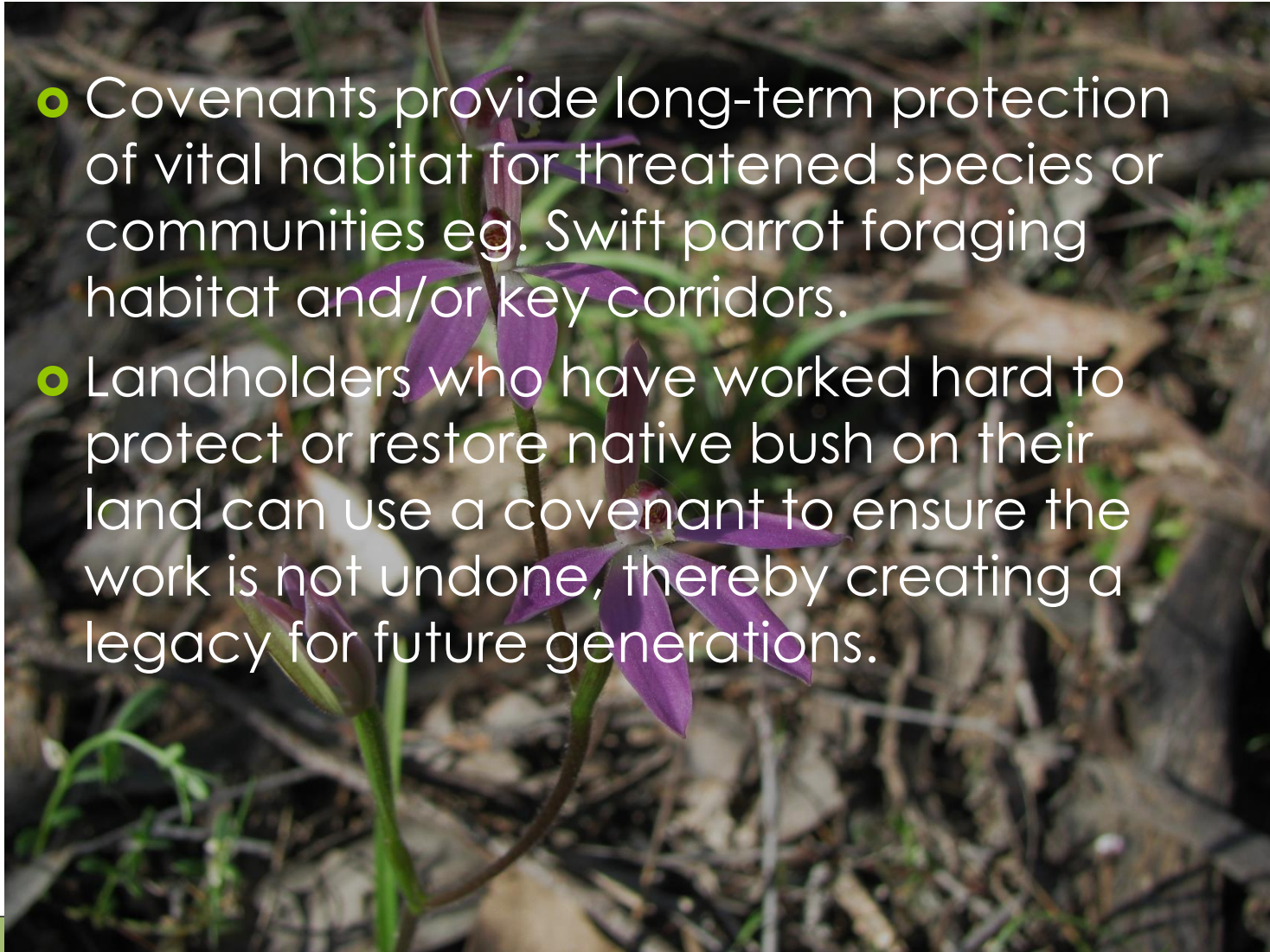
Covenants (page 2 of 2)

- Clauses within Conservation Covenants restrict or forbid certain activities eg. clearing or ploughing.
- A tailored management plan is prepared. These plans are flexible.
- Some councils offer rate relief to land covered by covenant.



The benefits of a covenant

- Covenants provide long-term protection of vital habitat for threatened species or communities eg. Swift parrot foraging habitat and/or key corridors.
- Landholders who have worked hard to protect or restore native bush on their land can use a covenant to ensure the work is not undone, thereby creating a legacy for future generations.



In perpetuity?

- While Conservation Covenants and Wildlife Refuge agreements are established in perpetuity, they retain sufficient flexibility to enable adaptive management.
- Any variations to are negotiated with the aim of achieving conservation gains.

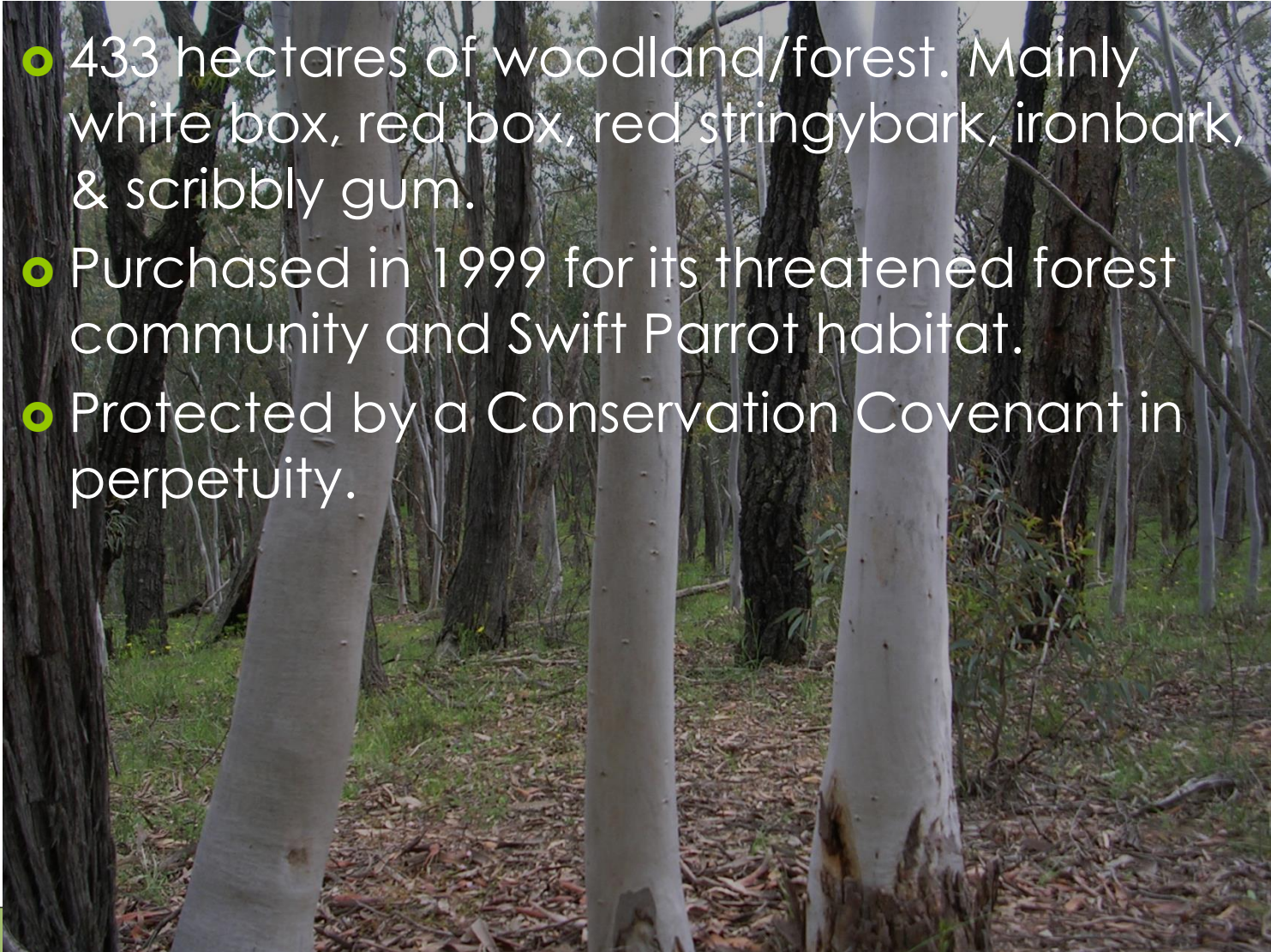
Benefits of all private land conservation agreements

- planning advice on property management.
- assistance with biodiversity surveys and assessments.
- information about wildlife management
- access to information & education programs and activities.
- assistance programs to support implementation of management plans.



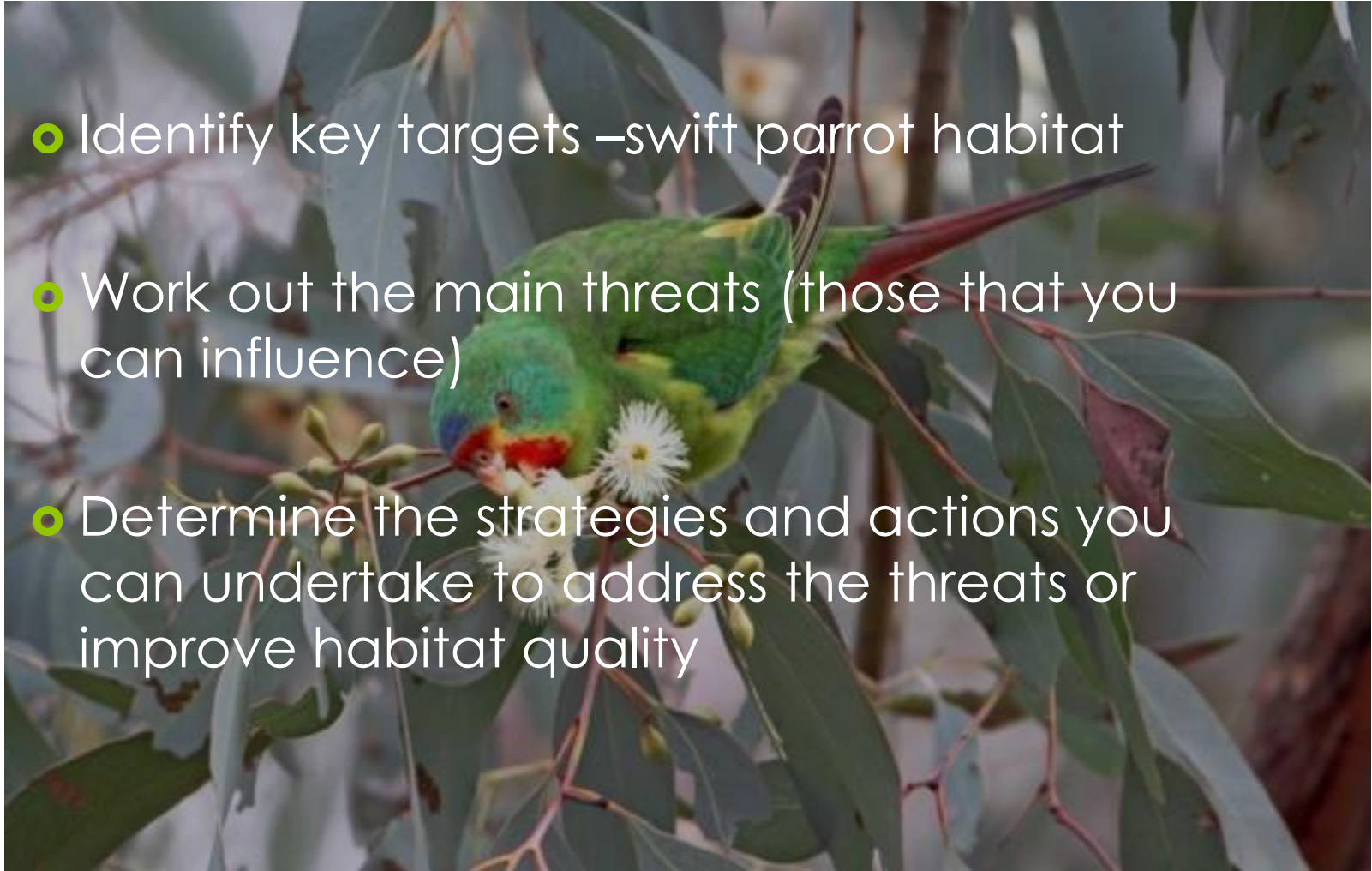
Tarcutta Hills reserve

- 433 hectares of woodland/forest. Mainly white box, red box, red stringybark, ironbark, & scribbly gum.
- Purchased in 1999 for its threatened forest community and Swift Parrot habitat.
- Protected by a Conservation Covenant in perpetuity.



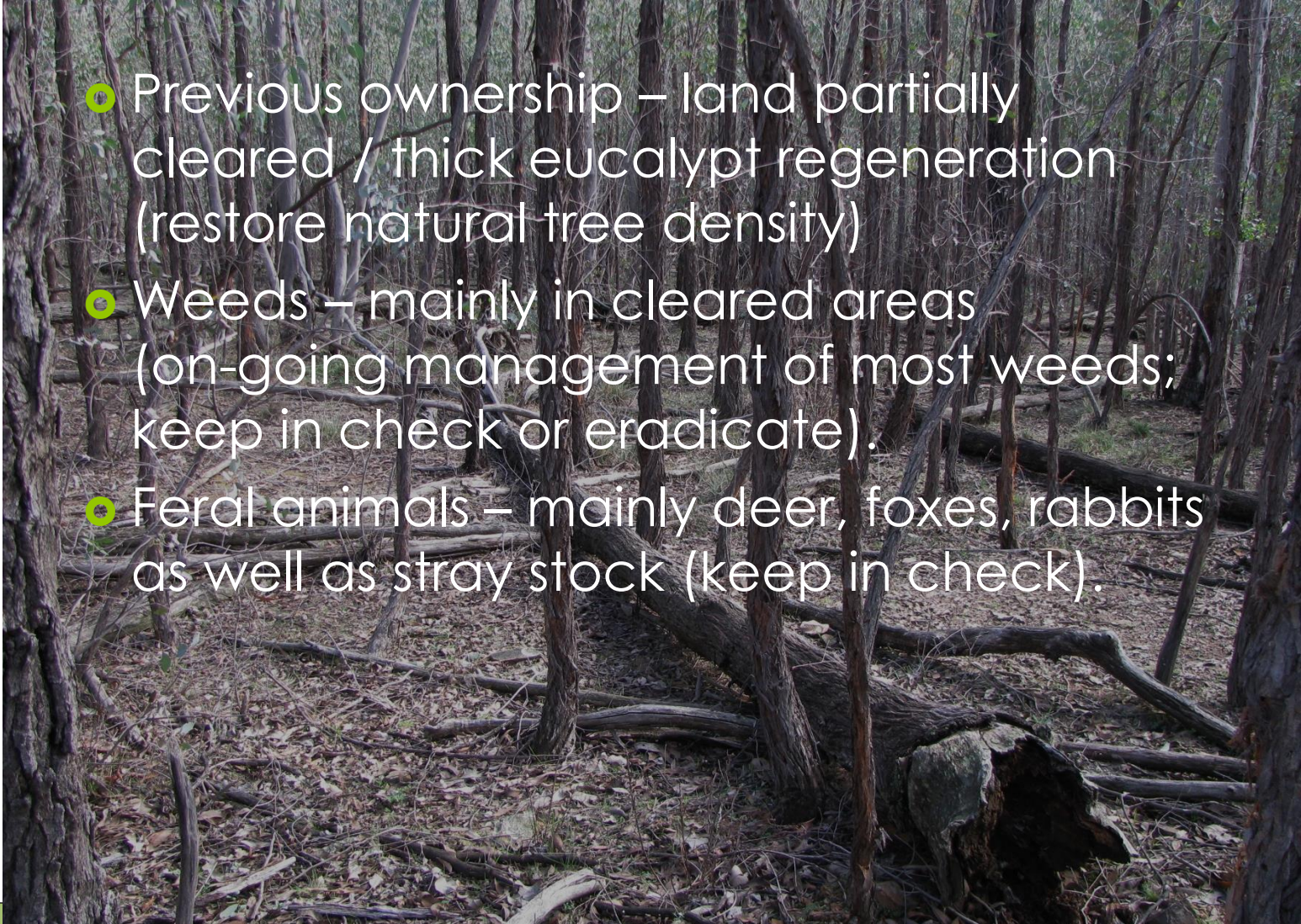
Set goals

- Identify key targets –swift parrot habitat
- Work out the main threats (those that you can influence)
- Determine the strategies and actions you can undertake to address the threats or improve habitat quality



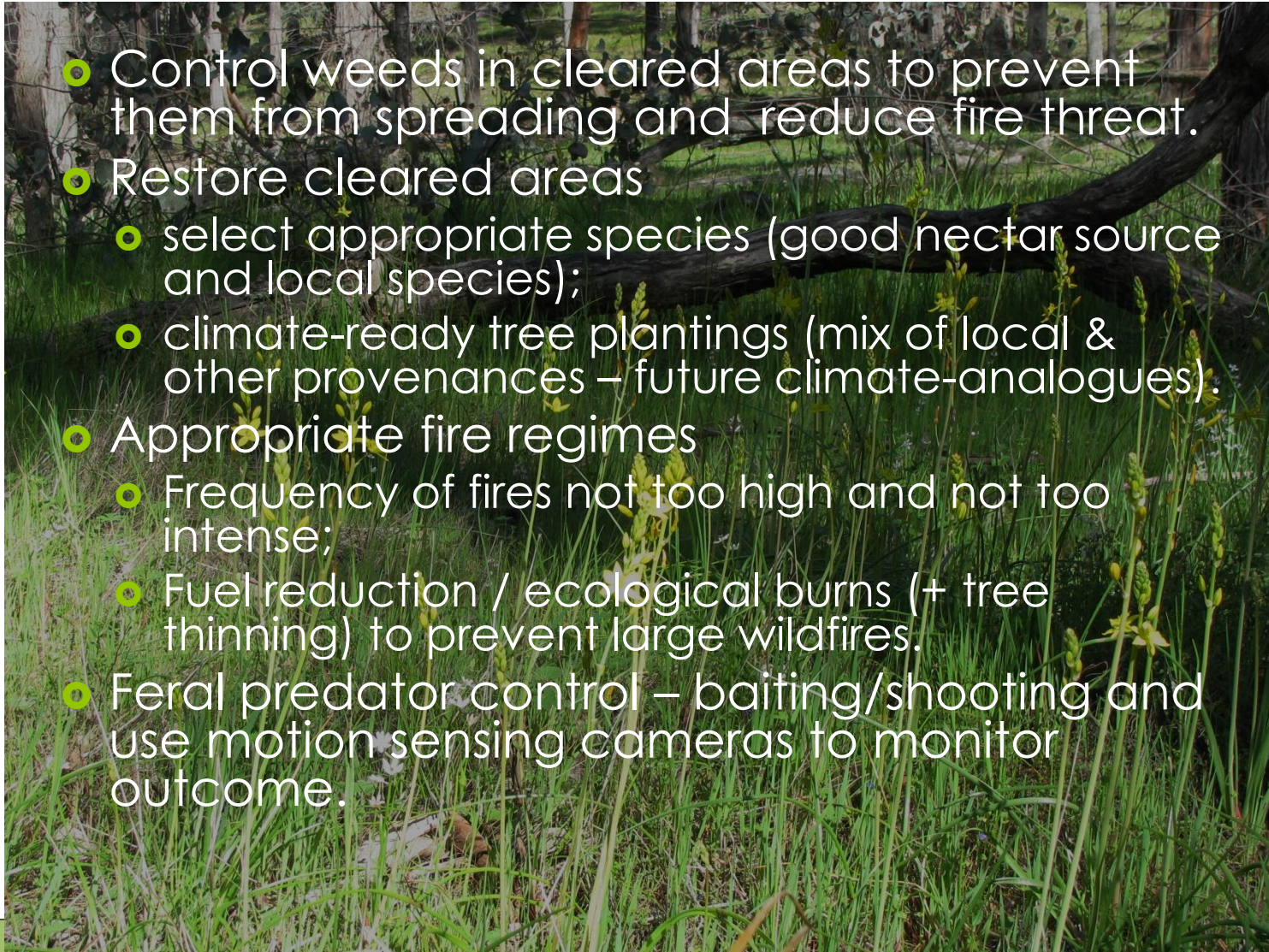
Tarcutta management

- Previous ownership – land partially cleared / thick eucalypt regeneration (restore natural tree density)
- Weeds – mainly in cleared areas (on-going management of most weeds; keep in check or eradicate).
- Feral animals – mainly deer, foxes, rabbits as well as stray stock (keep in check).



Swift Parrots & Tarcuttia

- Control weeds in cleared areas to prevent them from spreading and reduce fire threat.
- Restore cleared areas
 - select appropriate species (good nectar source and local species);
 - climate-ready tree plantings (mix of local & other provenances – future climate-analogues).
- Appropriate fire regimes
 - Frequency of fires not too high and not too intense;
 - Fuel reduction / ecological burns (+ tree thinning) to prevent large wildfires.
- Feral predator control – baiting/shooting and use motion sensing cameras to monitor outcome.





Choose the option that best suits your property

- There are a range of options to suit each circumstance.
- All options are flexible but it pays to have a clear long-term plan
- Ask yourself, what will happen to the property and the native species on it when I leave?
- Questions?