

MEETING NOTES

MidCoast Koala Reference Group

Date	5 June 2023	Time	12-2pm
Venue	Barrington Room, Yalawanyi Ganya	Note-taker	Donna Hudson
Present	Cr Claire Pontin, Cr Dheera Smith, Paul De Szell (MCC), Gerard Tuckerman (MCC), Mathew Bell (MCC), Tanya Cross (MCC), Caitlin Orr (MCC), Rye Gollan (LLS), Doug Beckers (NPWS), John Turbill (DPE), Reegan Walker (DPE), Jessica Leck, Ian Morphett, Chris Sheed, Megan Benson, Paul McLeod, Shaun Tamplin, Deborah Willis		
Apologies	Cr Peter Epov, Phil Lidbury		
Absent	Nick Godfrey-Smith		

Meeting Items

Item	Key points/actions
1	Acknowledgement of Country Mayor Pontin read the Acknowledgement of Country.
2	WHS & Housekeeping
3	Welcome and Introductions Mayor Pontin welcomed everyone. Each member introduced themselves to the group.
4	Purpose of Reference Group Gerard Tuckerman (Manager Natural Systems) provided an introduction and an overview of the purpose of the group.
5	Governance Induction Donna Hudson provided an induction to the group that included the MidCoast Committee Guidelines, MidCoast Koala Reference Group Terms of Reference, MidCoast Code of Conduct, WHS Policy, Gifts & Benefits Policy, Disability Inclusion Action Plan, MidCoast Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and member requirements.

	<p>The induction included an overview of these documents and key areas for the members to be aware of such as the responsibilities, expectations, priorities included in the CSP, conflicts of interest, confidentiality, insurance and media protocol.</p> <p>Each member signed and returned their confidentiality agreement.</p> <p>The induction is now available online.</p>
6	<p>Group distribution</p> <p>Each member of the group agreed to be part of the email distribution list. Group emails are not to be shared or forwarded.</p>
7	<p>Overview of the NSW Koala Strategy</p> <p>Reegan Walker (DPE) provided an overview of the NSW Koala Strategy, how it applies to the MidCoast region, and the MidCoast Regional Partnership (presentation attached).</p>
8	<p>Overview of koalas on the MidCoast</p> <p>Mathew Bell (Council's Senior Ecologist) provided an overview of the status of the local koala population, the threats, and some of the actions we can undertake to protect and conserve our koalas (presentation attached).</p>
9	<p>Close meeting</p> <p>Chair closed meeting at 2pm.</p>

Next meeting

Date	Monday 31 July 2023	Time	2 - 4pm
Venue	Barrington Room, Yalawanyi Ganya	Note-taker	TBC

Koalas on the MidCoast



Presentation to the:

**MidCoast Koala
Reference Group**

5 June 2023



The koala is in trouble:

- First listed as threatened in NSW in 1992
- 26% decline in NSW over the last 3 koala generations
- Substantial impacts of the 2019 bushfires
- Listed as Endangered nationally in 2022
- Status in NSW elevated to endangered in 2022

The MidCoast trends mirror the NSW trends

A high level of community concern and a Government commitment to recovery of the species

Recovery relies on coordinated, targeted, collective action



Threats on the MidCoast

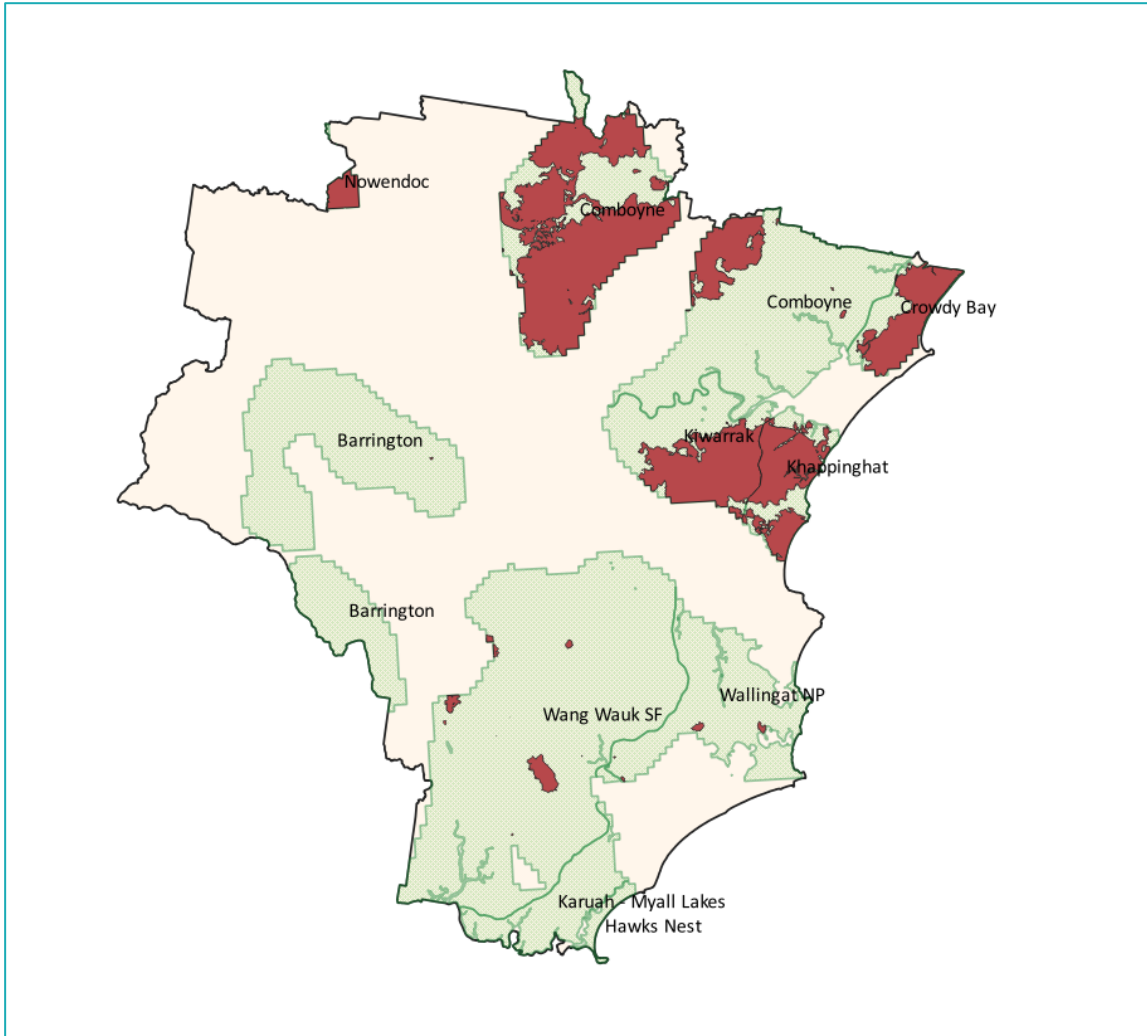


- **Clearing and modification of habitat**
- **Habitat fragmentation**
 - **Disease**
 - **Vehicle strike**
- **Domestic dog attack**
- **Cattle / horse attack**
- **Drought / heatwave (climate change)**
 - **Intense bushfire**
 - **STRESS**



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2019 bushfires



- 21% of all mapped Areas of Regional Koala Significance in MidCoast burnt
- Significant fire impacts in the **Crowdy Bay, Comboyne, Khappinghat and Kiwarrak** populations

What does koala conservation need?

Conserving the koala:

- Enhance + conserve existing habitat
- Create new habitat and connections in the landscape
- Manage + prevent the threats to adult survival and juvenile recruitment
- Manage stress



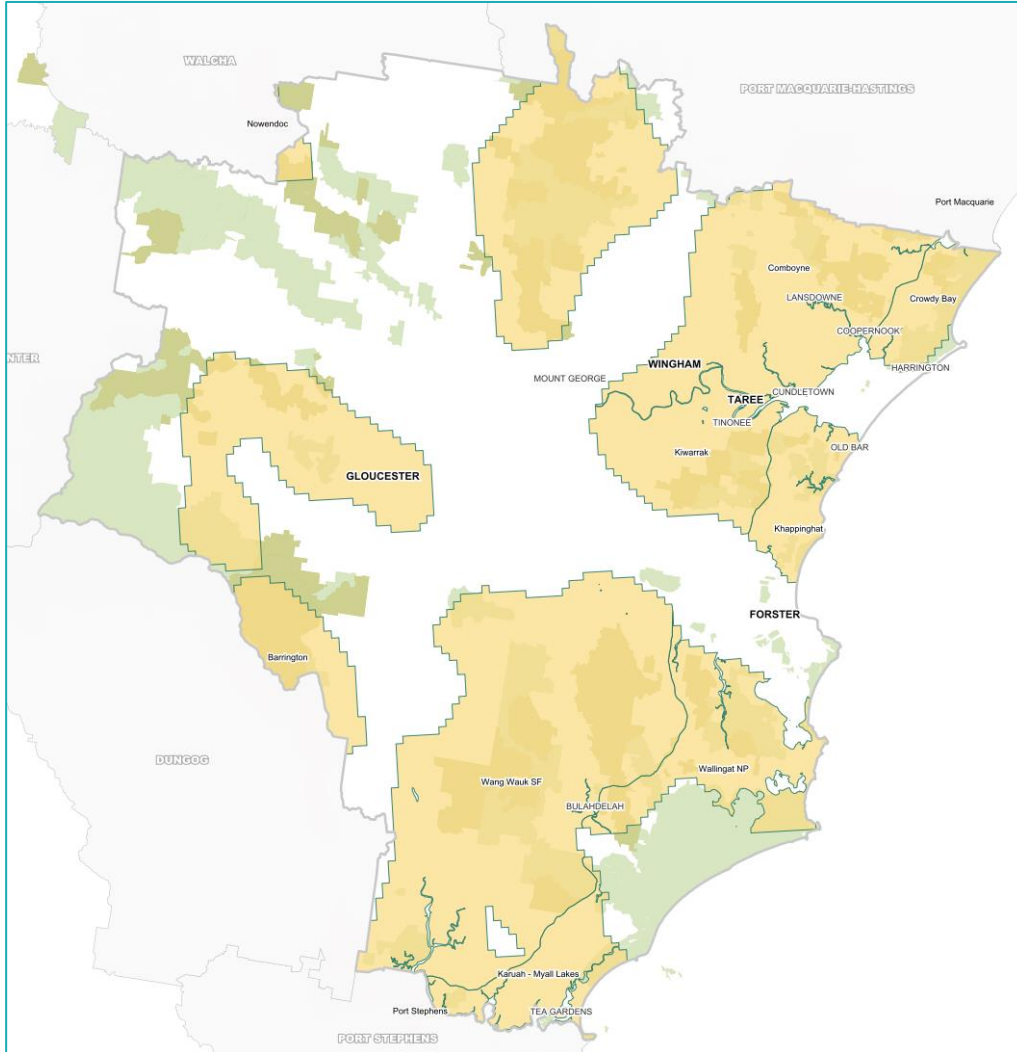
The koala is a LANDSCAPE SPECIES.
It requires the coordinated management of habitat across landscapes

The koala is an UMBRELLA species.
Koala conservation benefits many other species





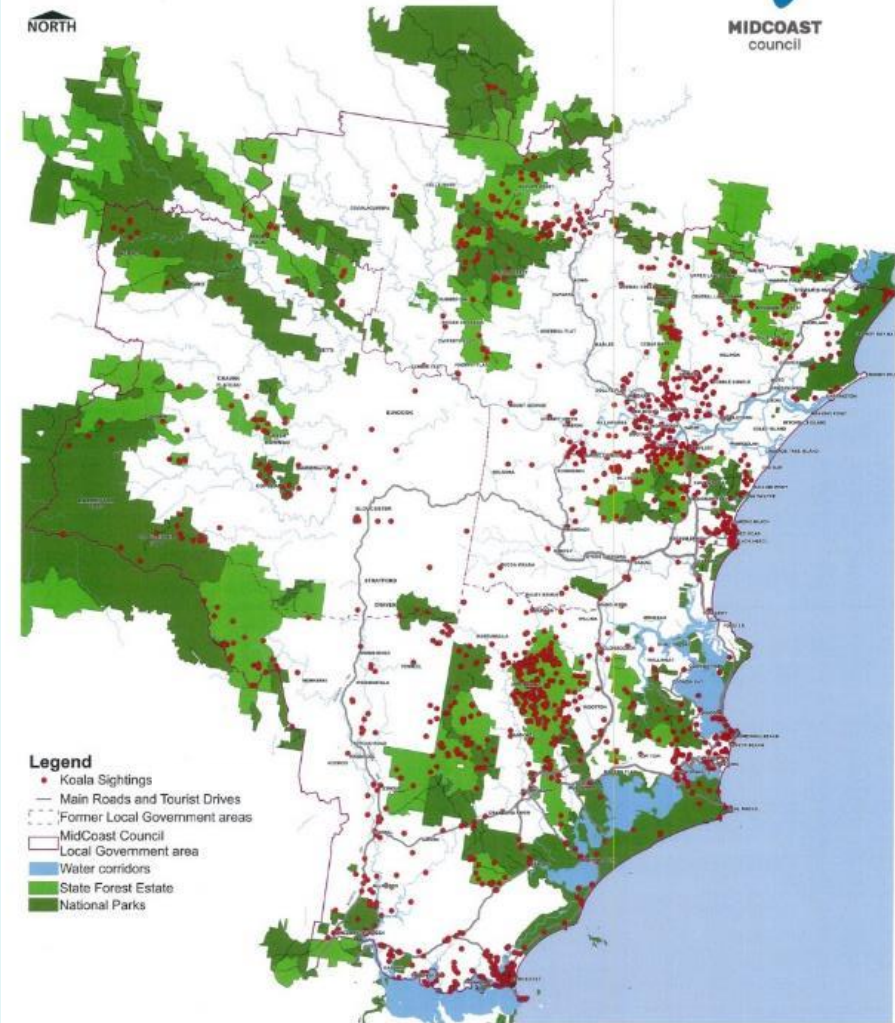
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Koala Sightings - BioNet Atlas of NSW Wildlife



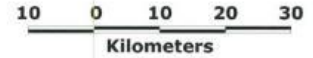
NORTH



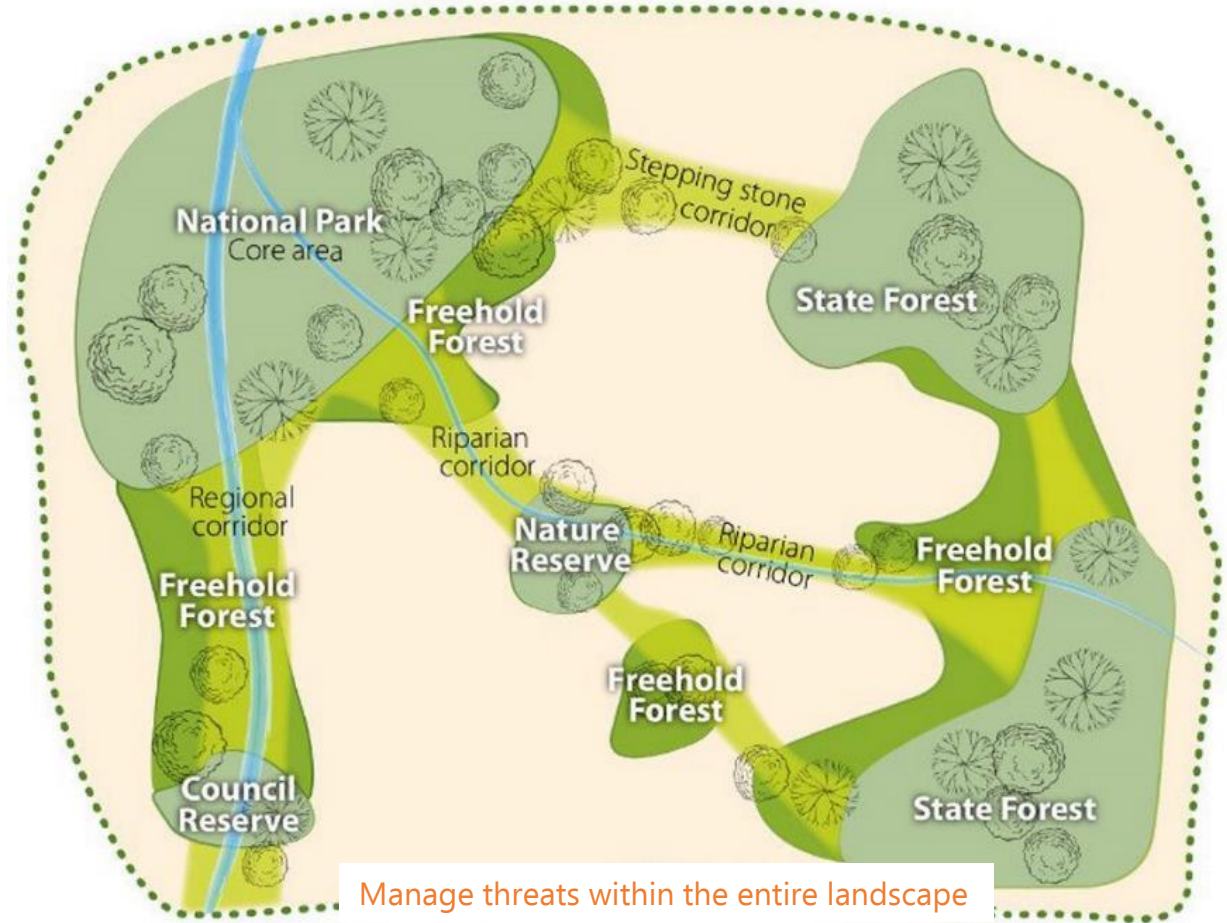
Legend

- Koala Sightings
- Main Roads and Tourist Drives
- - - Former Local Government areas
- MidCoast Council
- Local Government area
- Water corridors
- Slate Forest Estate
- National Parks

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Manage threats within the entire landscape

Schematic representation of corridors as part of a broader consideration of connectivity conservation

-  Landscape Corridors
-  Freehold Forests

Core areas

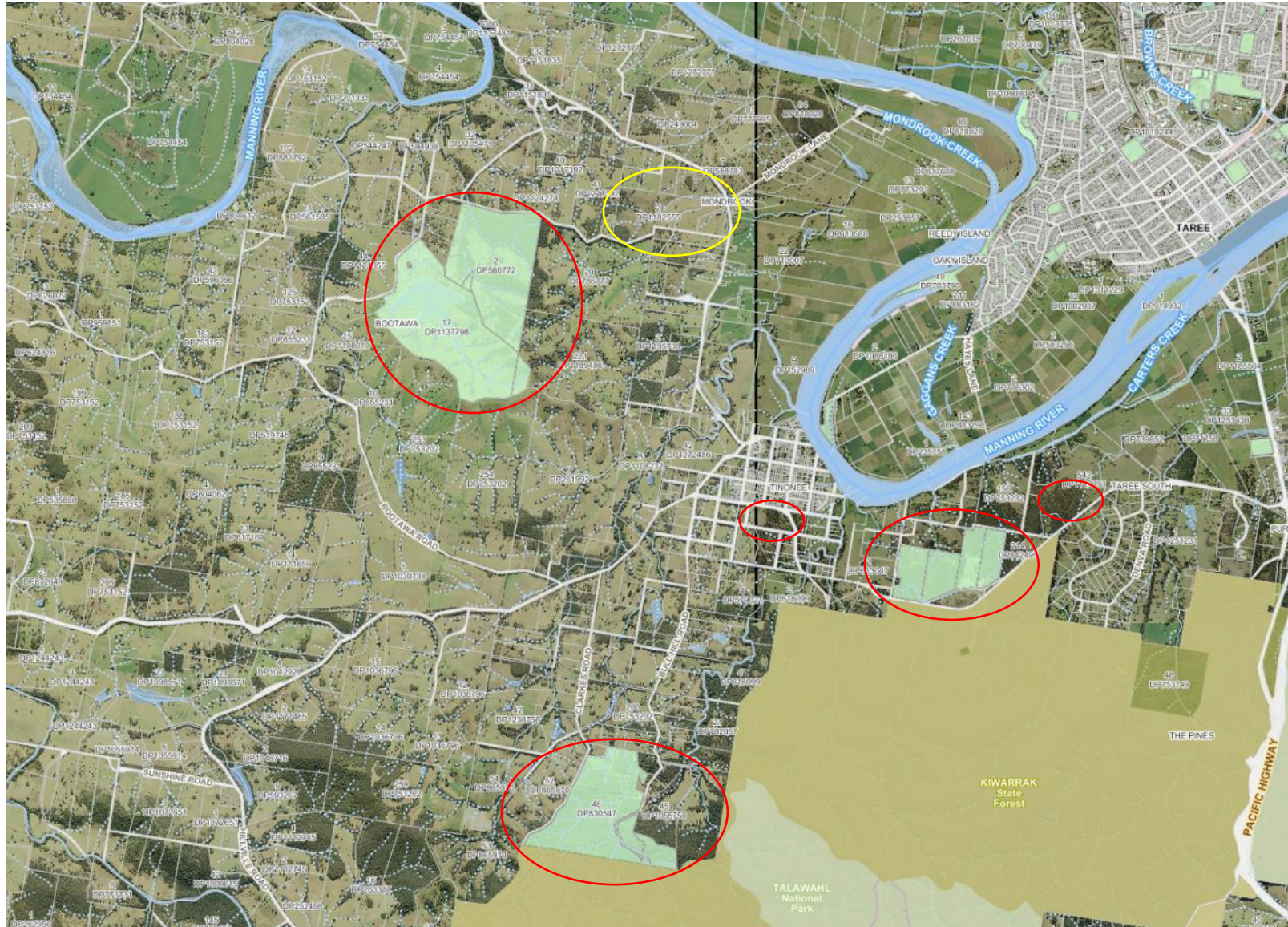
-  National Parks, Nature Reserves, Council Reserves & State Forests



Safe Spaces concept - Kiwarrak

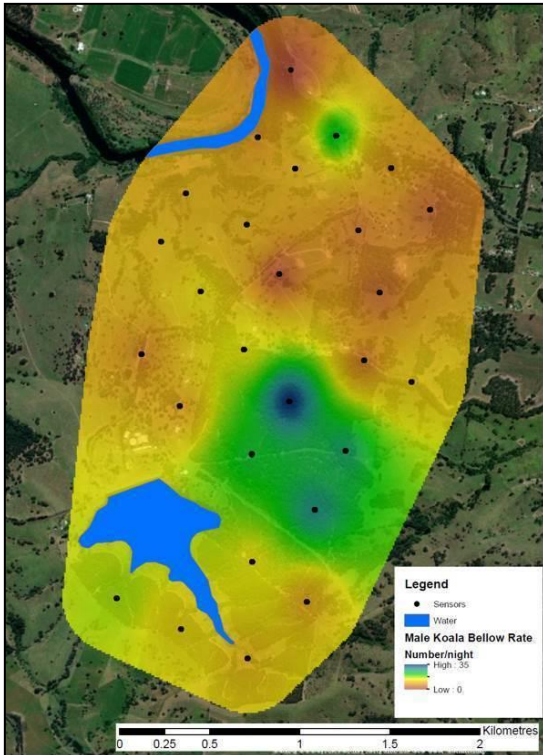
1. Council safe spaces

2. Government agency partnerships
3. Tinonee Urban Safe Space
4. Koala safe travel-ways on unformed road reserves
5. Private land partnerships / incentives to protect and create safe spaces and safe travel-ways
6. Koalas in Care partnership – koala sanctuary
7. Tree giveaways
8. Threat management
9. Monitoring





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KOALA SAFE SPACES PROGRAM

MIDCOAST council NSW Planning & Environment



Possible MidCoast Koala Project Map

HABITAT RESTORATION

- *Safe Spaces*
- *Landholder devolved grants*
- *Gloucester KoalaWays*
- *Koalas in Care Sanctuary*
- *Seed collection / nursery*

HABITAT PROTECTION

- *Private land devolved grants*
- *NP/BCT reserve establishment*
- *Iconic joint projects*
- *Koala plans of management*
- *Tinonee urban safe space*

EDUCATION

- *Branding / messaging*
- *Community of practice*
- *Vehicle strike awareness*
- *Communications plan*

KOALA HEALTH

- *Food tree farms*
- *Disaster recovery area (KIC)*
- *Disease vaccination trials*
- *Emergency Response Plan*
- *Messaging – emergency care*

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- *Development assessment*
- *Planning proposals*
- *Reserve management*
- *Compliance*

THREAT MANAGEMENT

- *Vehicle strike mitigation*
- *Scat analysis – dingoes*
- *Dog attack response*
- *Bushfire trials (FC/LLS)*
- *Habitat loss*

RESEARCH

- *Knowledge group*
- *Habitat mapping*
- *Synthesis of knowledge*
- *Genetics*
- *Presence and density*

PROJECT PLANNING

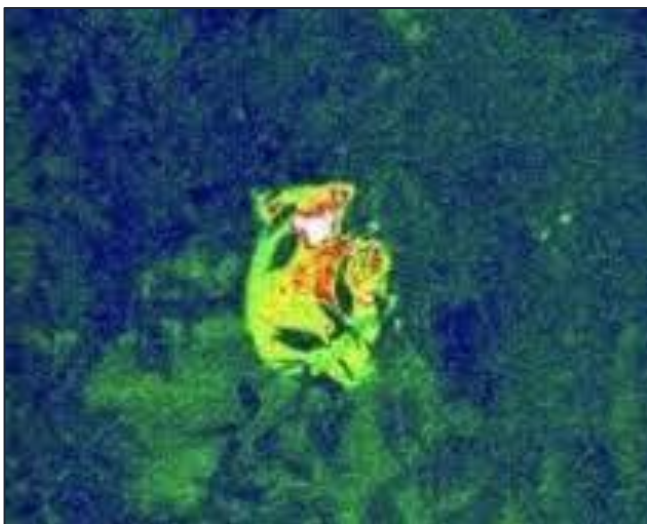
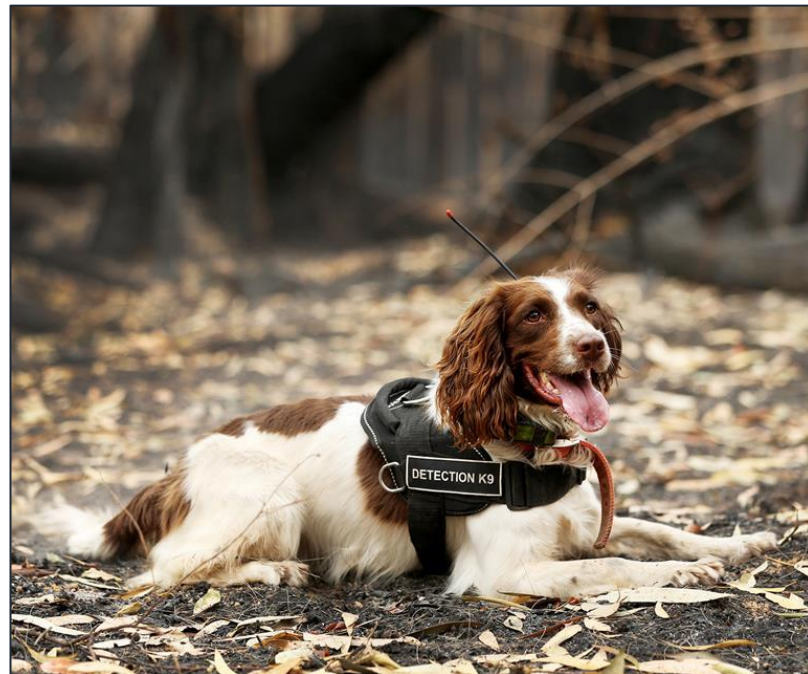
- *Project plans*
- *Annual work plan (officer)*
- *Vision*
- *Goals + success measures*



Looking for koalas?

Koala survey methods:

- **Spotlighting**
- **Searching for scats / scratches**
- **Song meters (koala bellows)**
- **Koala detection dogs**
- **Drones with thermal cameras**





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