

To whom it may concern

Please find attached Bellingen Shire Councils submission in respect of the NSW Koala Strategy, as resolved at its meeting of 22 February 2017.

Unfortunately, despite Council resolving this at their meeting of 22 February 2017 the subsequent lodgement of the submission has been overlooked. I apologise for the lateness of the response and sincerely hope that this can still be taken into consideration. Could you please let me know accordingly?

ITEM: 9.2

SUBJECT: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NSW KOALA STRATEGY

FILE/INDEX: STRATEGIC PLANNING

PRESENTED BY: DANIEL BENNETT, ACTING MANAGER LAND USE SERVICES

010/17

RESOLVED (Cr Klipin/Cr Carter)

1. That Council resolves to make a submission to the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) thanking them for the opportunity to be involved in this process, noting that Council looks forward to further collaboration in the development of koala conservation measures in NSW, and requesting that the following matters be taken into consideration as part of the development of the NSW Koala Strategy.
2. That Council advises the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) that it has adopted 31 management objectives via the Bellingen Shire Council Coastal Area Koala Management Strategy, and that it requests that these objectives are taken into consideration as part of the development of the NSW Koala Strategy.
3. That Council advise the OEH that the landscape based and tenure neutral approach advocated in the Report is consistent in particular with Management Action 27 of the Bellingen Shire Council Coastal Area Koala Management Strategy, which recommends as follows regarding this matter. "To ensure that the responsibility for koala habitat management occurs across all landscapes, Council and the Koala Advisory Group are to advocate for an integrated management approach across all land tenures and land managers."
4. It is recommended that Council advise the OEH of its concern that the numerical focus on stabilising and then increasing koala numbers cross the State should not necessarily be used to justify reduced investment in areas with localised patterns of decline. Focusing solely on a state-wide ambition for increase has the potential to place an undue positive emphasis on population growth in areas that may be overpopulated, and to obscure the negative impacts of range contraction or localised extinctions in areas where koalas had been formerly known to exist.
5. That Council requests that the methodology for development of any state-wide predictive koala habitat map must not result in that map covering less area than the core koala habitat map in an approved KPOM, if that map is to be used as the determinant of a regulatory response.

6. That Council advise the OEH that it considers that any land mapped as core koala habitat in an approved KPOM should, by default, and in accordance with the precautionary principle, be afforded the highest level of protection in any proposed legislative amendments that deal with the clearing of native vegetation in NSW.

7. That Council advise the OEH that any proposal to permit a more permissive regulatory regime for the removal of koala habitat should only evolve out of the process and evidence base for developing the NSW Koala Strategy, rather than being formulated prior to the completion of the Strategy, as has occurred with the review of State Environmental Planning Policy 44 – Koala Habitat Protection, and the introduction of the Biodiversity Conservation Bill 2016 & Local Land Services Amendment Bill 2016.

8. That Council offers specific support for Recommendation 6 of the Chief Scientists report, and notes that an excellent opportunity exists to develop a best practice koala corridor project in areas of known koala populations across tenures, industries and land users, in Bellingen Shire. This project would look at corridor establishment, protection and rehabilitation in areas depicted on Map 3 of the Bellingen Shire Council Coastal Area Koala Management Strategy, and would look to provide habitat connectivity from the coast to the escarpment.

9. That council advise the OEH that it supports moves to provide financial incentives for owners of private property with preferred koala habitat to preferentially make the decision to retain, rehabilitate or reinstate koala habitat, rather than to remove the habitat as part of any permissible clearing or private native forestry operation.

10. That Council notes that the adoption of the NSW Koala Strategy is likely to provide opportunities for the development of projects that run across a variety of land tenures, and tiers of government. This may require future budgetary allocations from Council in order to participate in the collaborative approach to koala conservation likely to be embodied in the strategy.

UNANIMOUS

Regards, Daniel

Daniel Bennett

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