

NSW Koala Strategy Consultation

By email: koala.strategy@environment.nsw.gov.au

To whom it may concern

**Re: Submission to the NSW Koala Strategy**

The impacts of wild dogs on Koalas have been listed as a key threatening process by the NSW Scientific committee however the report by the Chief Scientist and Engineer in my opinion does not place enough emphasis on the impacts of wild dog on Koala populations in NSW. The recommendations to provide greater areas of key habitat for koalas will prove detrimental without adequate management of wild dogs.

Recent studies of the impacts of wild dogs on koalas in Brisbane demonstrated that koalas are extremely susceptible to wild dog predation particularly if they are already suffering impacts from additional key threatening process. While it has often been speculated that wild dogs may have negative impacts on Koalas through predation results from the recent Moreton Bay Rail Link Corridor Koala monitoring and translocation project has provided clear evidence that it doesn't take many wild dogs to cause serious reductions in Koalas populations in coastal peri urban environments. In this instance Koalas being monitored by Endeavour Veterinary Services suffered significant predation by a limited number of wild dogs over a two year period. Over the term of the project 503 koalas were monitored with 289 mortalities recorded during that period, with wild dogs responsible for 154 of these deaths. It is also believed that one wild dog was responsible for killing at least 50 koala deaths recorded during this period. Moreton Bay Regional Council staff have DNA tested each of the 17 wild dog caught during the program with each dog exhibiting at least 70% dingo genetics. Highlighting the need to ensure adequate wild dog management is delivered in those habitat areas.

These results and other observations have prompted prominent wildlife Vet John Hanger to say that he believed that wild dogs may be one of the greatest threats to koala populations in eastern Australia (see attached), particularly given the increase in wild dog populations being recorded in South East Qld and northern NSW. Wild dog impacts are often under reported as many attacks present as motor vehicle trauma due to a lack of externally visible bite marks. Dr Hanger has regularly indicated that unless properly autopsied wild dog attacks may go undiagnosed due to the tough nature of Koala skin preventing penetrations of the teeth during attack. In these instances the canine teeth rarely penetrate the skin resulting in crush injuries that can be misdiagnosed a motor vehicle trauma (see attached Koala report document)

Since provision of my report to the Senate Inquiry into the Status, Health and Sustainability of Australia's Koala population (see Attached) wild dogs have now further expanded their range and are well and truly established in areas of Koala habitat as identified by the Chief

Scientist and Engineers report. In my Question on Notice response to Senator Cameron (attached) I identified a number of strategies to identify key areas where wild dogs and koalas may exist and also a program by which professional pest animal controller may be enlisted to manage wild dogs in those areas. Many of these areas now have wild dog management plans in place in line with the National Wild Dog Action Plan. Further work is under way with communities in eastern Australia to develop wild dog and fox management plans that incorporated a range of control techniques delivered in a strategic and targeted manner to manage fox and wild dog impacts on agriculture and wildlife in those areas. It would be advisable for the Chief Scientist to consider working with the National Wild Dog Action Plan, relevant conservation authorities and local land services to ensure Koala conservation is built into wild dog management plans in areas of conservation significance in addition to livestock and asset protection.

As the National Wild Dog Management Facilitator I would welcome further discussion on how wild dog management impacts may be mitigated through targeted wild dog management programs across the range of Koalas in NSW.

Yours Sincerely

Greg Mifsud

National Wild Dog Management Facilitator

Invasive Animals CRC