

I am writing from Tilligerry Habitat a 9ha crown reserve on the shore at Tanilba Bay. Today we have 3 koalas on site; a mum with a baby in the pouch and fluffy ears, a brown male and a darker perhaps female.

Half Tilligerry Habitat was **sand mined** for rutile etc in 1960s and the other 'half' is the endangered ecological community wetland. The Tilligerry Habitat Association has managed the land for 20 years attempting to revegetate the sand mined areas with some success as koala habitat. We fund our work by growing plants for revegetation projects including nearby glass sand extraction and local projects like the Envirotrust project on local bushland, community BBQs and morning teas, guided walks and tourism largely based on the koala. Up to 50 people a day come to see the koalas and they make a donation to our project.

The Tilligerry Peninsula like our patch is mostly sand and has been extensively sand mined and sand extracted and quarried with a significant area of residential land and limited growth potential we hope because of low lying land, being aircraft noise affected on Tomago sand beds.

We now have extensive **areas of bushland** that is protected but under **multiple ownership** with council, Hunter Water, Worimi land, national parks and crown reserves but not well cared for being subject to illegal vehicle access, a lot of burning, weeds, most not even labelled as to its status. We started a project in 2016 called Tilligerry Wildlife Corridors and met with most of the land holders to try to deal with the issues above. We took on the koala as an umbrella species; anywhere the koala can live provides habitat for other fauna particularly birds and retains some native flora. We have drawn up a map of the corridors and have a large revegetation project planned for winter this year on a land once designated sportsground now deemed to be going on the land fill.

A couple of us went to the OEH display and that is why I write this submission.

*We thought it was a shame that there wasn't some attempt to generate some **discussion and reach consensus** on the afternoon as it was the best possible gathering of people interested in the koala in Port Stephens and no use was made of this. There was a little networking but no introduction of key people as many people would not have known most of the people in the room.

*Port Stephens may have the koala habitat but the council is perceived as being extremely **pro development** and tree loss is rampant under the current long term mayor who has removed most tree protection processes so whole of government in your program will have to deal firmly with local government on koala hazards like **fire, road deaths, dog injuries, tree loss**.

*Ironically the same council voted to put funds to a **koala hospital** and the state member has followed up with a large grant. Also ironically Port Stephens had one of the **first koala management processes**.

*With the provisos above we support the direction of your 11 point plan

We particularly feel that point 8 and 11 – conferences on koala rehabilitation and sharing info with local communities are critical. Everyone talks about wildlife corridors but no one appears to have them as their central focus... except the local community. It is only the local community (not necessary council) that is likely to identify the corridors and work on the missing links in between. Grants and tools such as the vanishing Green Army must be available to enable community action. We look forward to being a part of this process.

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