

enquiries refer

Matthew Wood

in reply please quote

NSW Koala Strategy (17/13973)

3 March 2017

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Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Initial Submission - NSW Koala Strategy

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in relation to the planned NSW Koala Strategy. The following comments are provided as initial points for consideration in the development of the Strategy and have been compiled with regard for the recommendations provided in the Chief Scientist's Report.

- A State wide Strategy addressing koala retention and recovery will likely be most effective where it has a statutory basis and applies to State agencies and other decision making bodies (such as planning authorities) consistently. Given this, it is important that the preparation of the Strategy involves extensive consultation with agencies and other decision making bodies to determine how the Strategy and the achievement of its overarching aims might be coordinated and practically impact on decision making.

For example, when considering implications for decision making, how would a NSW Koala Strategy influence decisions relating to large infrastructure projects undertaken by or on behalf of the NSW Government or existing processes relating to forestry such as those associated with private native forestry.

- It is suggested that a fundamental aspect of any Strategy is the retention and expansion of available koala habitat in NSW. Retention of existing populations as well as recovery and improvement in koala numbers is considered to be directly related to available habitat. In this regard, land use and clearing activities that result in impacts to koala habitat and lag times associated with habitat compensation measures should be considered as an integral part of the Strategy's development. In particular, the decision making framework around private native forestry approvals is considered to be a significant issue in relation to impacts on koala habitat.
- Key threats to koala populations (aside from habitat loss and fragmentation) such as dog attack, bushfire, disease and vehicle strike require integrated consideration having regard for both the specific issue as well as overall habitat availability and connectivity.
- Where land is proposed for incorporation into the public reserve system (e.g. through additions to the National Parks estate), it is important that corresponding resources including expertise and funds are made available for the ongoing management of such areas.

Council looks forward to the opportunity for additional and more detailed discussion in relation to the Strategy. In the meantime, if you have any enquiries in regard to this matter please contact me on telephone 6686 1284.

Yours faithfully

Matthew Wood

**Manager Strategic Planning
Strategic and Community Facilities Group**