



**PORT STEPHENS**  
C O U N C I L

Koala Strategy Submissions  
PO Box A290  
Sydney South NSW 1232

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2017

Dear Strategy Developers

**DEVELOPMENT OF NSW KOALA STRATEGY**

Thank you for meeting with Council in February and for the further opportunity to provide initial comments on the development of the NSW Koala Strategy. Council looks forward to working with the NSW Government in the eventual development of this essential strategy.

Please note that this submission has not been endorsed by Council due to the lack of detail to allow consideration of implications. Further consultation with local government is requested during the development of the strategy. This submission also includes consideration of the review of SEPP 44. It is essential that the two initiatives are integrated through the NSW Government's role to manage threatened species.

Council is supportive of the Chief Scientist's recommendation for a whole of government strategy. Council notes that this must include all state agencies, federal agencies and not be limited to just the Office of Environment and Heritage.

Council supports the following statements from the report:

- That there is **sufficient evidence** from which the government can **act now**;
- **Objective** of NSW Strategy: **stabilising** and then starting to **increase** koala numbers;
- Strategy should be based on strong **evidence base** including: direct **detection**, **habitat mapping**, likelihood of **occurrence**, and **threat** mapping;
- An **effective strategy** should (amongst other things) **manage and mitigate threats**; manage **cumulative impacts**, and **improve connectivity**;
- Periodic **reporting** on implementation **outcomes** and future **priorities** of NSW **Strategy** to be made **public**;

Council is committed to providing certainty to all stakeholders, most importantly local communities. This includes certainty to individual landholders; prospective developers and proponents; conservation groups; carer groups; the tourism industry; and partners in NSW state agencies. Further to developing and then adopting the Port Stephens Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management (PS CKPoM) in 2002, Council is still leading koala conservation in Port Stephens but desperately needs a state strategy in conjunction with complimentary and consistent planning tools with which to work.

Whilst clear statewide objectives from the NSW Government are critical, as is support for local government actions, local governments' desperately need further practical support and tools from the state. The following comments are provided to both support the development of the strategy and ensure necessary tools are developed to assist local governments in their on ground role in koala conservation.

- There remains uncertainty as to the NSW Government's commitment to both develop and finalise a draft integrated koala strategy for NSW, as well as a commitment to endorse, implement and adequately resource the strategy.
- There must be clear integration across levels of government (national, state and local). A National Recovery Plan for koalas appears to be a missing piece in the koala conservation puzzle. The NSW Government's needs to establish and communicate a position on the need for a National Recovery Plan.
- The NSW Government should provide clarity on NSW legislative frameworks as they relate to the koala, in particular how each piece of the koala conservation puzzle currently works and how they are proposed to work together in the future. More specifically the Government needs to clarify links between legislation; regulations; strategies; CKPoMs; Save Our Species(SOS) program & other related projects;
- There needs to be clarification regarding acceptability of datasets in planning controls (e.g. vegetation mapping, habitat mapping, sightings etc.) to avoid duplication and rework, and to provide certainty to all stakeholders;
- Ongoing and substantial funding support is required to adequately implement the NSW strategy to ensure that Port Stephens koalas survive and thrive into the future;
- The State's biobanking and biodiversity offsets methodology should be clarified to ensure all stakeholders fully understand the implications for biodiversity conservation, and amended as necessary to ensure genuine conservation outcomes can be achieved. For example the value of even small parcels of degraded land to biodiversity connectivity should be reflected in the methodology to incentivise the conservation of such land.

Whilst many councils have provided leadership in the past and in many instances continue to do so, many would argue that this is a role that state agencies should be directly leading to conserve iconic and listed threatened species such as the koala.

Council notes that SEPP 44 is currently under review and seeks clarification on the following SEPP 44 matters that it believes are integral in establishing an integrated NSW Koala Strategy:

- Clarification of both the timing and alignment of the SEPP 44 review with the impending introduction of Biodiversity Reforms regulations, development of the NSW Koala Strategy and SOS program.
- Implementation of the revised SEPP 44 in regards to:
  - Transitional arrangements;
  - Consideration of the revised SEPP 44 in environmental assessments conducted under Part 5 of the EP&A Act;
  - Consistency with existing Comprehensive Koala Plans of Management, specifically the PS CKPoM;
  - Alignment and interaction between State and Commonwealth planning and regulatory frameworks and associated tools.
- Consideration of movement corridors, or other threats established by research including SOS programs, as core koala habitat to provide for meaningful protection through the planning system.
- How emerging research, most significantly the work of the SOS program can be incorporated into the planning system in the future.
- Inclusion of *Eucalyptus glaucina* as a listed feed tree.

Council has requested that the SEPP 44 review provide guidance for identifying connectivity corridors to address habitat fragmentation resulting in threat encounters, and that koala habitat definitions include provisions for protecting connectivity corridors.

Council looks forward to the opportunity to provide more input into the eventual development of the essential NSW Koala Strategy.

Yours sincerely,



David Rowland  
**Strategy and Environment Section Manager**

Telephone enquiries  
(02) 4980 0255  
Please quote file no: PSC2005-4448