



Koala Conservation and Habitat Management Plan

Summary Document

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**The Koala Conservation
and Habitat Management
Plan aims to protect,
enhance, manage and
increase koala habitat.**



Introduction

The protection of native flora and fauna has been identified as one of the top environmental priorities in Advance Ipswich. The koala is one of three fauna species named as an Iconic Species in the Ipswich Nature Conservation Strategy 2015 (NCS), highlighting its importance to our community.

Council is working hard to implement the **Koala Conservation and Habitat Management Plan** to ensure the species and their habitats are maintained for the enjoyment of future generations.

The Facts - Koalas in Ipswich

The koala is an arboreal marsupial that relies almost entirely on trees from the genus Eucalyptus. Koalas spend most of their time in trees, occasionally coming down to disperse or change trees. Although they prefer to stay in large patches of bushland, koalas can often be found in riparian corridors, in strips of roadside vegetation and even in isolated trees in grazing paddocks.

Did you know?

- Koalas are widespread across Ipswich with more than 3,000 sightings recorded since 1997
- Studies indicate Ipswich is today home to more than 4,000 koalas
- While studying in the Mutdapilly area, White (1994) found that koala movements of greater than 2km at a time were common



**KOALAS SLEEP 20HRS
OF THE DAY, AWAKE 4HRS AND
ACTIVE ONLY 4MINS**

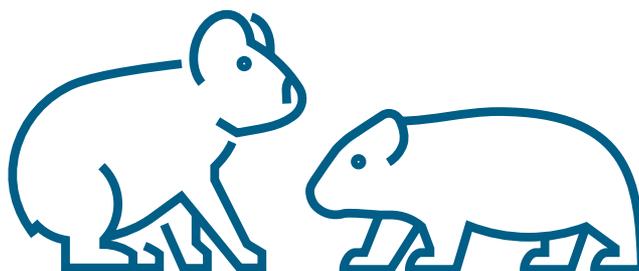
- Koalas in Ipswich and Beaudesert are genetically distinct from those on the Koala Coast and may act as a source population for surrounding areas. Genetic variation is crucial in a koala population as it affects the ability to resist disease, successfully reproduce and adapt to threatening processes
- Studies show Ipswich's koala population is important on a regional scale and Bussey and Ellis (2016) suggest that they may have potential to be listed as significant under the EPBC Act

The Plan

The **Koala Conservation and Habitat Management Plan** aims to protect, enhance, manage and increase koala habitat. Koala habitat extends across most of Ipswich, giving koalas a significant local profile and allowing them to be used as a flagship species for broader biodiversity outcomes.

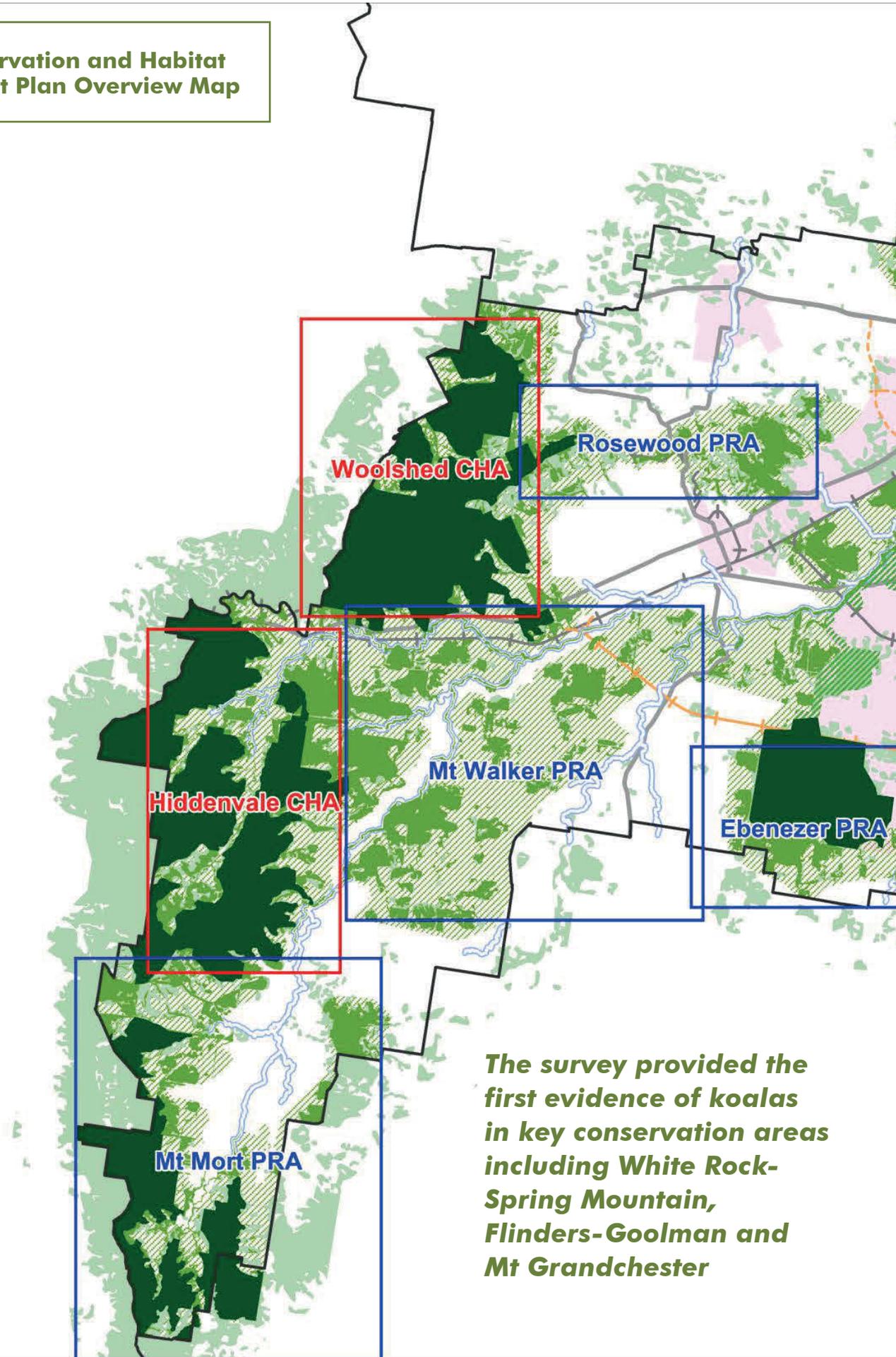
Through this plan, Ipswich City Council has identified a set of prioritised actions for the conservation of koalas. Research including spatial investigations and targeted surveys were undertaken to highlight known populations, existing and future levels of threat and opportunities for regional and local connectivity. The results helped Council form Koala Management Areas (KMAs), which are geographic areas of priority for managing and conserving koala populations.

Specific management actions have been assigned to each KMA type to address the level of threat from wild and domestic dogs, road mortality and the existing level of conservation management.

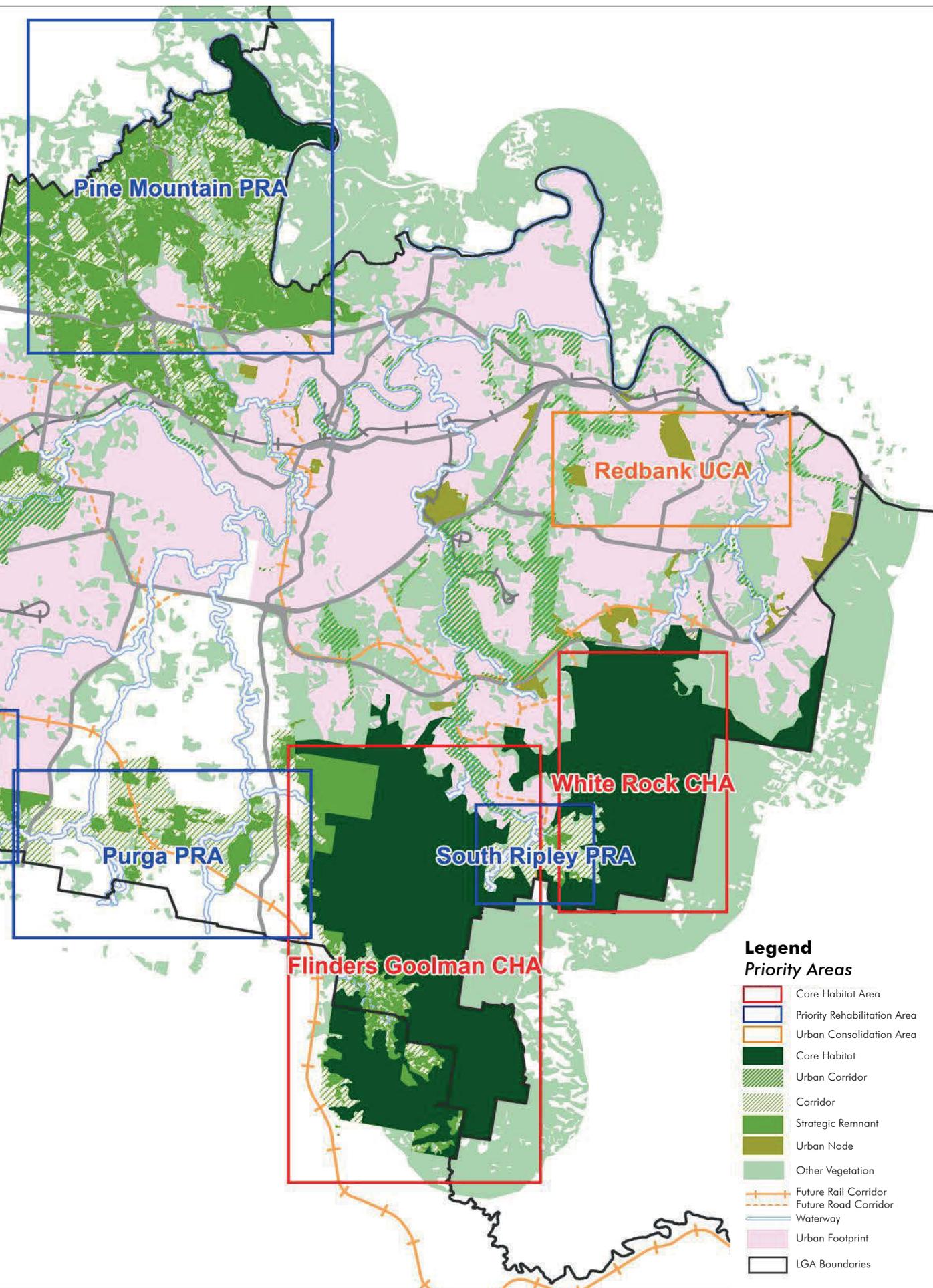


**KOALAS
CLOSEST LIVING RELATIVE IS THE
WOMBAT**

Koala Conservation and Habitat Management Plan Overview Map



The survey provided the first evidence of koalas in key conservation areas including White Rock-Spring Mountain, Flinders-Goolman and Mt Grandchester



Legend

Priority Areas

- Core Habitat Area
- Priority Rehabilitation Area
- Urban Consolidation Area
- Core Habitat
- Urban Corridor
- Corridor
- Strategic Remnant
- Urban Node
- Other Vegetation
- Future Rail Corridor
- Future Road Corridor
- Waterway
- Urban Footprint
- LGA Boundaries

Vision

Protect, enhance, manage and increase the local koala population and koala habitat in Ipswich.

Objectives

1. Increase the amount of koala habitat in rural Ipswich to reduce fragmentation of essential habitat
2. Protect and improve habitat value within large areas of intact koala habitat, including Councils Natural Area Estate (NAE)
3. Enhance and protect key habitat corridors to maintain or increase regional and local connectivity
4. Understand, identify and reduce the impact of major threats to koalas across all areas of Ipswich
5. Implement mechanisms to increase community engagement in koala conservation, monitoring and citizen science
6. Encourage suitable mitigation measures through planning and development assessments

Threats to Koala Populations

The existence of koala populations, face a range of threats across Ipswich. Several areas of the city are earmarked for urban and industrial development, meaning that land clearing remains a significant threat. Master planned areas such as Springfield and Ripley Valley are in the middle of their development cycle.

In these areas there are opportunities to minimise the impact to local koala populations through proactive investigation.

Secondary impacts from road strikes, fragmentation and dog attacks are also evident. Detailed records from the Moggill Koala Hospital have allowed these areas to be mapped and analysed spatially, highlighting hotspots of threats. Major highways appear to have a significant impact on the species locally and in some cases creating a permanent barrier.

Dog attacks also occur and are most frequently reported in urban areas. This is mostly comprised of domestic dogs in suburban backyards, and whilst domestic dog attacks appear less of a threat than road strikes, it is likely that the true number goes underreported. The influence of wild dog predation and rural and bushland areas of Ipswich is largely unknown.

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Research and Survey Work

To consolidate the extensive records provided by the the Moggill Koala Hospital, Council conducted survey work in 2015 using a scat detection dog. This provided evidence of koalas in some of the most remote areas of Ipswich along with activity levels in a number of bushland reserves. The survey provided the first evidence of koalas in key conservation areas including White Rock-Spring Mountain, Flinders-Goolman and Mt Grandchester.

These findings were followed by monitoring camera and acoustic recording work which confirmed koala sightings in each estate. This data was analysed in combination with historic records, painting a comprehensive picture of koala populations across Ipswich. The analysis also highlighted knowledge gaps and threat hotspots.

Strategies to Achieve the Plan

To ensure the vision and objectives of the plan are achieved Council has developed comprehensive strategies and tactics that can be used to facilitate koala habitat protection and threat management.

Partnerships

Council is committed to partnering with residents and land owners to offer support, education and access to tools that assist in conserving koala populations. Council currently offers six types of partnerships to landholders including Land for Wildlife and numerous Volunteer Conservation

Agreements. All of the existing partnerships are focused on protecting intact bushland over one hectare with the exception of Habitat Gardens which is suited to small urban backyards. Partnerships are designed to provide incentives and advice to landholders with high biodiversity on their property, with aim of retaining and improving values.

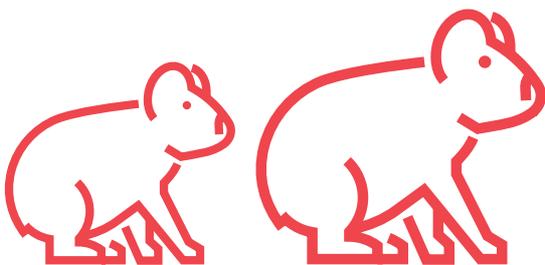
- **Koala Conservation Agreement:** The koala Conservation Agreement (KCA) provides a unique opportunity to assist landholders that don't meet the requirements for other Council partnerships. The KCA offers increased assistance for the revegetation and protection of koala habitat, allowing more properties to become eligible for a high level agreement and helping to rehabilitate koala habitats in key areas.

Reducing Road Mortality

Strategies to help reduce the impact of road kill hotspots include fauna sensitive road design; innovative road and wildlife signage; increased advertising of wildlife carers; installation of suitable fauna passage infrastructure; and retrofitting existing fauna infrastructure or culverts to be koala friendly.

Control of Domestic and Wild Dogs

Education is the key in reducing the impact of domestic dog attacks. Council has an existing pest management program that targets wild dogs on Council land. Additional control programs can be delivered on Council land in partnership with adjoining landholders.



**KOALAS IN QUEENSLAND
AVERAGE 7-9KGS
COMPARED WITH THEIR SIBLINGS
IN VICTORIA WHICH
CAN REACH 15KGS**



**KOALAS ARE WIDESPREAD
ACROSS IPSWICH WITH
3,000+
SIGHTINGS
RECORDED SINCE 1997**

Education

As urban development continues the risk of domestic animal escapees increases. To prevent this, education and awareness for new residents on responsible dog and cat ownership is essential. The following educational initiatives will be delivered through the plan:

- Comprehensive education packages
- Awareness of how to best report koala sightings
- Updated and interactive information on the Council website
- Dog awareness and responsible pet ownership
- Interpretive koala signage in strategic locations
- Innovative road safety signage
- Displays and educational material in the Queens Park Environmental Education Centre
- Habitat Gardens Workshops

Council has purchased almost 6,500 hectares of bushland habitat under the Ipswich Enviroplan levy.



Pastel Morning by S Gardner

Enviroplan Photographic Competition Entrant

Land Acquisition

Council has purchased almost 6,500 hectares of bushland habitat under the Ipswich Enviroplan levy. Land is acquired for the primary purpose of biodiversity conservation, with koala habitat being a major consideration.

Offsets

Offsets present an opportunity to protect additional areas of koala habitat with funding and support that was otherwise not available. Offsetting for koalas should not be used to allow an unsuitable development to go ahead; should never be considered as a substitute for existing habitat and populations; and should always be delivered in a way that enhances or increases the amount of pre-existing habitat rather than attempting to create habitat from scratch.

Citizen Science

Citizen Science is a recognised way of monitoring koala populations across the city. Citizen run population censuses have been conducted on numerous occasions across the country. Any future Queensland or National census will be actively advertised by Council as they present an opportunity to present a yearly snapshot of trends and numbers. Data obtained from a koala census should be communicated back to the community through a report and advertised in the media.

KMA Development

Council has created a spatial representation of the koala conservation scenarios and management requirements across Ipswich. KMAs highlight what actions are required for an area to be successful in achieving the objectives of the plan. Areas selected were based on:

- Planning scheme zoning and other planning legislation
- Historic data provided by Moggill Hospital and State Government
- Knowledge gained through koala survey work
- Strategic considerations within Council's NCS
- Current land use and level of protection
- Level of threat and other influencing trends

Koala Management Area Specifics and Actions

Four specific types of KMAs have been developed including Urban Consolidation Areas; Core Habitat Areas; Priority Rehabilitation Areas and Impact Mitigation Areas. The following table highlights these KMA types, associated locations, recommended actions and priorities.

KMA Type	Location	Action	Priority	Timing
1 - Urban Consolidation Areas UCAs can provide long term refuge for koalas despite being located within the urban footprint. While these areas can often be fragmented there is potential to increase connectivity in key areas.	Redbank Collingwood Park	Develop promotional material for koala friendly backyards	High	December 2017
		Identify locations to install effective road management tools	High	June 2018
		Confirm the management of Redbank Rifle Range	High	June-December 2018
		Control Lantana camara in Tofa Mamao A Samoa Park and Banjo Paterson Park	Medium	June 2018
		Increase awareness of koalas in the area	Medium	June 2018
		Increase connectivity along Gibbs Avenue Transmission Reserve	Medium	June 2020
		Target increased participation in the Habitat Gardens Program	Medium	December 2017
2 - Core Habitat Areas CHAs occur where koalas are present alongside a high level of protection through zoning, land acquisition and active management. Threats are likely to be minimal in these areas. CHAs act as hubs for conserving koala populations in the long term.	White Rock-Spring Mountain Flinders-Goolman Woolshed Hiddenvale	Conduct ongoing trapping programs to control wild dogs within the NAE	High	Ongoing
		Conduct a prescribed burn program to reduce wildfires	High	Ongoing
		Work with neighbouring property owners to coordinate management approaches	High	Ongoing
		Establish a prioritised list of sites and actions to increase koala habitat quality	High	December 2017
		Create a list of suitable release sites for koalas within the NAE	Medium	June 2017
		Install information signage: Report healthy and injured koala sightings	Medium	June 2018
		Continue local government koala conservation working group	Medium	6 Monthly



GUM LEAVES ARE TOXIC BUT CONTAIN ABOUT 55% WATER SO KOALAS RARELY NEED TO DRINK

A WILD KOALA TYPICALLY LIVES FROM 13-18 YEARS IN THE WILD





Retention of linear open space corridors through urban areas can help mitigate impacts, especially where they link existing parks, reserves and remnant habitat patches large enough to maintain koala populations.

KMA Type	Location	Action	Priority	Timing
3 - Priority Rehabilitation Areas PRAs can increase the quality and quantity of koala habitat on a landscape level. Koalas often don't need large tracts of remnant vegetation to be present and can often be found in smaller patches of bushland and even cattle shade trees. Many of the koalas found in these areas are likely to be transient and will require larger patches of habitat to sustain populations.	South Ripley	Implement the KCA within targeted areas	High	Yearly and ongoing
	Pine Mountain	Implement mechanisms to reduce risk of vehicle strikes for koalas	High	June 2019
	Purga	Provide educational material to private residents	High	December 2017
	Rosewood	Reduce the risk of wild and domestic dog attacks	High	December 2017
	Mt Walker/ Ebenezer	Prioritise areas for rehabilitation and implementation of the KCA	Medium	December 2017
	Mt Mort	Develop a register of properties suitable for acquisition or offsets	Medium	December 2017
		Develop fauna infrastructure and koala crossing guidelines for use by Council	Medium	June 2018
		Reduce weed infestation to increase koala movement on identified Council land	Medium	Ongoing and where funds available
4 - Impact Mitigation Areas Areas of Ipswich that are earmarked for future urban development include Greater Springfield and Ripley Valley. Retention of linear open space corridors through urban areas can help mitigate impacts, especially where they link existing parks, reserves and remnant habitat patches large enough to maintain koala populations. Offsetting in a proactive and strategic way, following principles outlined in this plan, will also help to conserve koalas on a regional level.	Springfield (Master Planned Residential)	Continue to monitor Federal referrals and identify opportunities to mitigate impacts	High	Ongoing
	Ripley Valley (Master Planned Residential)	Provide input and consideration to fauna management solutions being implemented in developments	High	Ongoing
	Ebenezer (Industrial Investigation)	Distribute koala educational material to new residents	High	Material by December 2017
	Rosewood (Future Urban)	Reduce the risk of vehicle strike for koalas on high impact roads and road kill hotspots	High	Ongoing
	Calvert (Investigation)	Develop fauna infrastructure and koala crossing guidelines for use by Council	Medium	June 2018
	Grandchester (Investigation)	Promote the importance of planting native species in local backyards	Medium	Material by December 2017
		Monitor the usage and effectiveness of fauna management solutions	Low	Ongoing

Plan Life and Review

The vision of this plan sets long term objectives for managing koala populations and their habitat. Many of the objectives are ongoing and will require long periods of time and dedication to achieve. As such this plan's vision is for 25 years.

The plan will progress in five yearly stages, with a review every five years, to assess the success of implementation, new knowledge, changes to legislation of policies and monitor results.

How Can You Help?

- Report any koala sightings to Ipswich Koala Protection Society (07) 5464 6274
- Make your backyard koala friendly by installing suitable fences and planting native trees
- Tie up your dog at night
- Reduce your speed at night, especially in high vegetation areas during the August-February breeding season
- Contact a local Landcare group to help them replant koala habitat
- Join a Council partnership such as Land for Wildlife or Habitat Gardens



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