

## Meeting minutes Koala Advisory Council

<b>Subject</b>	Koala Advisory Council – Meeting #15
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Townend
<b>Meeting Type</b>	Council Meeting
<b>Date and location</b>	22 March 2022 – Hybrid: 400 George St and on Microsoft Teams
<b>Timing</b>	9:30am-12pm

### Attendees

<b>Name (Online)</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Mark Townend	Spinal Life Australia
Anita Cosgrove	The Wilderness Society
Al Mucci	University of Queensland, School of Agriculture and Food Sciences
Kirsty Chessher-Brown	Urban Development Institute of Australia
Kirstin Kenyon	Executive Director, Wildlife and Threatened Species Operations, DES
Kristy Gooding	Natural Assets and NRM, Local Government Association of Queensland
Crystal Baker	Local Government Association of Queensland
Chris Aston	Planning Group, Queensland Treasury
John Schiavo	Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
Ludo Valenza	Australia Zoo Wildlife Foundation
Alex Graham	Executive Director, Environmental Policy and Planning, DES
Rob Hughes	Director, Conservation Policy and Planning, DES
Catherine George	Manager, Koala Policy and Oversight, DES
Kristen Armour	Senior Policy Officer, Koala Policy and Oversight, DES
Jessica Pinder	Senior Policy Officer, Koala Policy and Oversight, DES
Carole Rayner	Principal Policy Officer, Koala Policy and Oversight, DES
Danielle Shankey	Policy Advisor, Office of the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs
Julie McLellan	Healthy Land and Water
Mick Stephens	Timber Queensland
Marina Vit	MOSAIC Property Group
Ramses Zietek	Director, Program Delivery and Operations, Department of Transport and Main Roads
Cameron Costello	Costello Consultancy
Geoff Lundie-Jenkins	Director, Director Southern Wildlife and Koala Operations, Wildlife and Threatened Species Operations, DES

### Speakers

Name	Organisation
Catherine George	Department of Environment and Science
Geoff Lundie-Jenkins	Department of Environment and Science
Maree Clancy	Queensland Trust for Nature
Malcolm Tilgner and Wade Arthur	Department of Transport and Main Roads

## Apologies

Name	Organisation
Jonathan Rhodes	University of Queensland - School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Science

## Items

Item #	Discussion
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### Welcome from Chair and other business

*Mark Townend*

#### 1. Conflict of interest

None

#### Minutes from previous meeting

Minutes endorsed.

#### 2. Acknowledgement of Country

*Cameron Costello* acknowledged Country.

### Meeting purpose

Alex Graham provided an overview of the purpose of the meeting, including:

- The KAC is now well and truly in the next phase of work in supporting the rollout of actions in the Strategy. Extension letters for KAC membership have also been provided, for an extension until the end of 2022.
- Overview of highlights from 2021, and actions for 2022
- 3. • The agenda included an item on resolving the Locally Refined Koala Habitat Areas.
- Options for the transition are being developed, however before presenting to the whole KAC, DES would like more time to discuss the options in detail with LGAQ and Planning Group.

#### Action:

- DES will organise meetings with LGAQ and Planning Group, and then provide an out-of-session paper to the KAC.

### Uplisting for the koala *Catherine George*

- 4. • On 11 February 2022, the Commonwealth announced the status of koalas under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) has been uplisted from 'vulnerable' to 'endangered' for NSW, the ACT, and Queensland populations.

- The Commonwealth Government’s decision follows the release of scientific information that found koalas are negatively impacted by both acute and chronic stressors including ongoing habitat loss, the 2019-20 bushfires, climate-induced drought, and temperature stress.
- The up-listing announcement follows an earlier announcement of \$50 million investment by the Commonwealth Government to boost the long-term protection and recovery efforts for Australia’s koalas. The Queensland Government will be working with the Commonwealth over the coming months to ensure Queensland is fairly represented in the funding allocation.
- Under State legislation, the koala is currently listed as Vulnerable across Queensland.
- The reclassification of Queensland’s native wildlife species is a regular process, ensuring that species’ conservation status under the Queensland Nature Conservation Act 1992 are kept up to date with current knowledge, including population size and trends, and risk of extinction.
- In Queensland, the Species Technical Committee is a panel of experts responsible for undertaking independent scientific assessments on the classification of wildlife under the Queensland Nature Conservation Act and making recommendations to the Minister.
- The Species Technical Committee assesses species according to the criteria agreed between the Commonwealth Government and the State Government under the “Common Assessment Method for listing threatened species”. The Common Assessment Method provides jurisdictions with the capacity to adopt a species’ status change assessed by another jurisdiction, including the Commonwealth Government.
- The Queensland offset framework does not apply to matters of national environmental significance, such as matters under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, and most offset conditions for impacts on koalas will continue to be imposed by the Commonwealth.

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**State Supported Infrastructure Policy** *Catherine George*

- The purpose of this policy is to outline how Queensland public sector entities will consider koala conservation outcomes in the planning and delivery of Government Supported Infrastructure in South East Queensland (SEQ).
- Working group has been established to consider the proposed amendments.
- Changes include the requirement to use the new koala habitat map, and a 1:6 ratio in Koala Priority Areas.
- The ratio is higher than that of the private sector in recognition that activity can happen in KPAs

**Action:**

- DES to circulate an updated policy and supported guidelines for discussion at the next KAC meeting.

The Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noted</b> the progress of the State Supported Infrastructure Policy review.</li> </ul>

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**Post Implementation Review (PIR) of the koala habitat regulations** *Catherine George*

- 5.
- Work is progressing on the PIR, including through a working group of relevant state government representatives.
  - Analysis of a number of different data sets and survey results is also underway, including outcomes from a survey of local governments and surveys distributed by UDIA and The Wilderness Society.

- A contractor has been engaged to provide analysis of clearing rates, and examples of clearing provided by local government. This report will be released with the consultation PIR.

**Action:**

- DES to circulate the contractor’s report, once finalised.

The Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noted</b> recent progress on the Department of Environment and Science’s (DES) post-implementation review of SEQ’s koala habitat clearing regulations.</li> <li>• That KAC <b>consider</b> opportunities to promote the public consultation process on the koala habitat planning regulations, following the release of the Consultation PIR in Q2 2022.</li> </ul>

**Update on the Koala Technical Advisory Group (KTAG) Geoff Lundie-Jenkins**

- Since the November KAC meeting update on the translocation policy, work has progressed including developing a Terms of Reference (ToR) and draft guideline about how the group will operate
- EOI is due to go out this week (week commencing 21 march 2022), and will be supported by communications and media, including a Vision 6 email to relevant universities, KAC, SEQ local governments and other stakeholders
- A new web page is being created with links to ToR and other resources.
- 6. • Social media posts and a targeted LinkedIn promotion will be used to seek suitable members for the KTAG.
- Recommendations will be made to the Director-General, DES about forming the committee
- First meeting of the KTAG will focus on ToR, guidelines on how the community pathway will operate.

The Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noted</b> the update on the KTAG</li> </ul>

**Translocation Policy update Geoff Lundie-Jenkins**

- Since the last update provided to KAC, updates to the draft policy have been completed and will be available for further consultation shortly.
- The feedback on the supporting guidance material feedback has been positive and includes agreed criteria for alternative release sites, which will be supported by koala sightings app.
- First Nations peoples interests will be embedded in the policy, and the translocation policy will be discussed at a workshop with First Nations representatives on 25 March 2022.
- 6. • Many local governments are also looking at relocation sites, and support engaging with First Nations people.
- Training and other support for carers will also be progressed and this will complement implementation of the policy.
- Feedback from KAC includes:
  - Ludo Valenza supports access to app to allow koalas to be released into areas of suitable habitat
  - TMR would like to be involved with mapping of release sites to see where to invest in infrastructure if they are near state roads and to avoid creating a new

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unplanned hotspots before new koala protection infrastructure can be planned if it is a new release location.

The Council
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Noted</b> the update on the translocation policy</li></ul> |
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**Koala Habitat Restoration Partnerships Program (KHRPP): Presentation by Queensland Trust for Nature** *Maree Clancy*

- KHRPP is a \$4.3M project to restore koala habitat
  - The project aligns with both the Koala Expert Panel report and South East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy
  - By August 2020, the final strategy was released and 7 restoration projects having been developed. Based on the successful results, an extension was granted.
  - Restoration projects align with other actions in the strategy, including importance of koalas to First Nations people.
- 7.
- To maximise the investment, QTFN developed a 6 step process, including local government engagement, public EOI, site assessment, comparative analysis and project selection.
  - There are 7 key project sites on both council and private land.
  - Round 2 project selection, similar to round 1 but with a heavier emphasis on local government engagement and a carbon project to align with LRF

**Action:**

- Circulate QTFN contact details to KAC members:

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**Coomera Connector** *Malcolm Tilgner and Wade Arthur*

- State 1 consists of Coomera to Nerang
  - Future stages include Loganholme to Coomera
  - Stage 1 EPBC approval process includes a Koala Management Plan and considers a number of Matters of National Environmental Significance, including the Koala.
  - The Koala Management Plan aims to provide scientific rigour and an adaptive management framework
  - Koala surveys are also underway, with 700 hectares surveyed
  - KAC encourages TMR to continue working in partnership with City of Gold Coast Council to progress offset opportunities.
- 8.

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**Next meeting:**

**Proposed date: 28 June 2022**

- 9.
- Agenda to include:
    - Locally Refined Koala Habitat Mapping
    - PIR update

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10. **Closing remarks**

*Mark Townend*

## Actions

Reference	Action	Responsible	Status	Due Date
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15.1	Organise meetings with DSDILGP and LGAQ on LRKHA resolution options	DES	8 April
15.2	Circulate the contractors report on the PIR	DES	8 April

### Actions carried over from previous meetings

Reference	Action	Responsible	Status	Due Date
13.1	DES to provide the Council with paper on criteria for resolving local koala habitat mapping.	DES		Next meeting of the Council
13.2	DES to provide finalised versions of both the MERI Framework and Implementation Plan prior to release for noting.	DES		October
13.6	DES to prepare presentation on current approach to koala conservation outside of SEQ	DES		Future meeting of the Council - TBD