

Information Sheet – Nature Conservation (Koala) Conservation Plan 2017

Koala Conservation Plan clearing requirements

This information sheet outlines the clearing requirements prescribed in Part 3 of the Nature Conservation (Koala) Conservation Plan 2017 that must be complied with when clearing koala habitat in particular areas to prevent the injury or death of koalas as a result of the clearing.

1 Background

In Queensland, koalas and their habitat are protected by a number of pieces of Commonwealth, State and local government legislation. At a State level, koalas are protected by the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and their habitat is protected by clearing controls prescribed in the *Planning Regulation 2017*.

There are also independent clearing requirements prescribed in Part 3 of the *Nature Conservation (Koala) Conservation Plan 2017* (Koala Conservation Plan) which apply when clearing koala habitat in particular areas.

Unlike the clearing controls prescribed in the *Planning Regulation 2017* that are to protect koala habitat, the clearing requirements prescribed in the *Koala Conservation Plan* are in place to prevent the injury or death of koalas when koala habitat is being cleared.

2 Sequential clearing requirements

Under Part 3, Section 10 of the *Koala Conservation Plan*, a person clearing koala habitat trees (refer to 2.2) in koala district A or koala district B (refer to 2.1) must ensure the clearing is carried out in a way that complies with the prescribed sequential clearing conditions (refer to 2.3). This requirement must be complied with irrespective of any approvals or exemptions offered under other legislation.

2.1 Koala districts

Under the *Koala Conservation Plan*, the parts of Queensland where koalas are known to occur are divided into three koala districts – koala district A, koala district B and koala district C (Figure 1). Each koala district is made up of areas with comparable koala populations (e.g. density, extent and significance of threatening processes affecting the population) which require similar management regimes (Table 1).

The sequential clearing requirements prescribed in Section 10 of the *Koala Conservation Plan* only apply to the clearing of koala habitat trees in koala district A and koala district B.

To determine whether your property is in koala district A or B you can request a *Vegetation Management Report* here: <https://www.dnrme.qld.gov.au/qld/environment/land/vegetation/vegetation-map-request-form>. The report that is sent to you will include information on which koala district your property is in.



Table 1: Summary of koala districts

Koala District	Local Government Area	Koala Population
Koala District A	SEQ region Brisbane, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Lockyer Valley, Logan, Moreton Bay, Noosa, Redland, Scenic Rim, Somerset, Sunshine Coast and part of Toowoomba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest koala population densities in Queensland • Highly threatened as a result of habitat loss and human impacts • Habitat often in areas zoned for urban and rural purposes
Koala District B	Northern portion of the SEQ bioregion: Bundaberg, Cherbourg, Fraser Coast, part of Gladstone, Gympie, part of North Burnett, part of South Burnett and part of Toowoomba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koala population density generally lower than 0.2 koalas per hectare • Moderately to highly threatened • Habitat often in areas zoned for rural purposes
Koala District C	Remaining extent of QLD where koalas occur including: Balonne, Banana, Barcaldine, Barcoo, Blackall Tambo, Burdekin, Cairns, Cassowary Coast, Central Highlands, Charters Towers, Etheridge, Flinders, part of Gladstone, Goondiwindi, Hinchinbrook, Isaac, Livingstone, Longreach, Mackay, Maranoa, Mareeba, Murweh, part of North Burnett, Paroo, Quilpie, Rockhampton, part of South Burnett, Southern Downs, Tablelands, part of Toowoomba, Townsville, Western Downs, Whitsunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koala population density generally low • Evidence of decline but generally perceived as having lower threats

Koala Conservation Plan Map

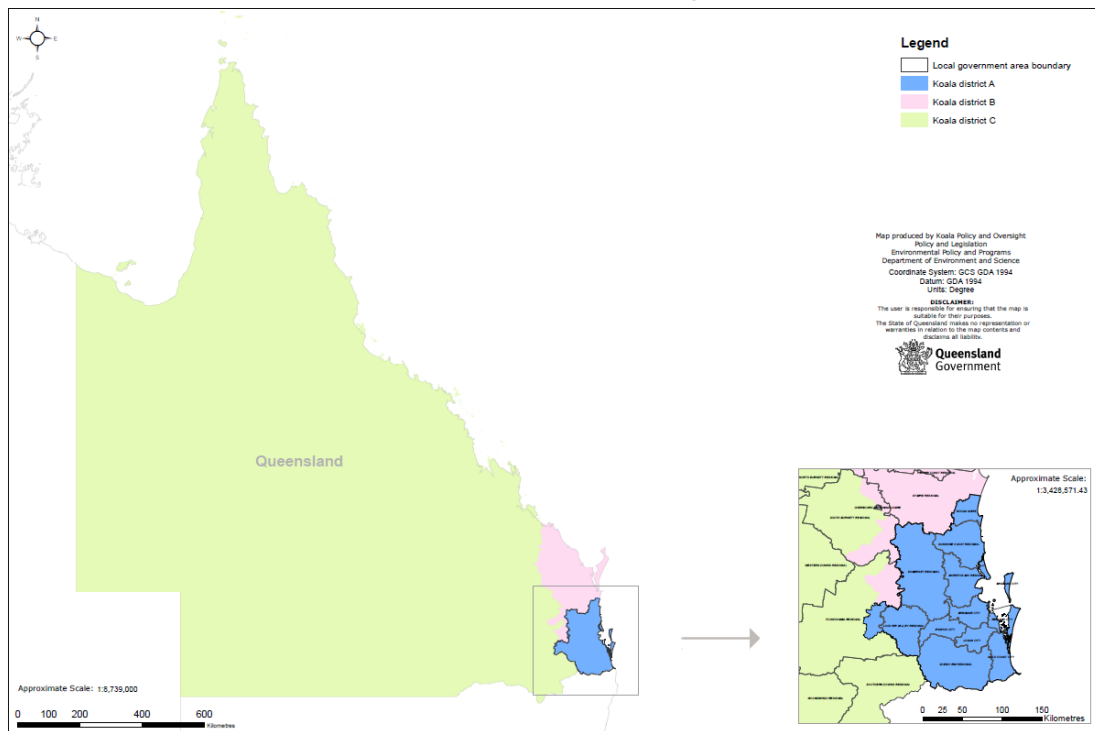


Figure 1: Map of koala districts

2.2 Koala habitat trees

The sequential clearing requirements prescribed in Section 10 of the Koala Conservation Plan only apply to the clearing of koala habitat trees in koala district A and koala district B.

Koala habitat trees means:

- (a) a tree of the *Corymbia*, *Melaleuca*, *Lophostemon* or *Eucalyptus* genera that is edible by koalas; or
- (b) a tree of a type typically used by koalas for shelter, including, for example, a tree of the *Angophora* genus.

If you are unsure whether a particular tree that is proposed to be cleared is a koala habitat tree, it is recommended you seek confirmation from a qualified botanist, ecologist or arborist.

2.3 Sequential clearing conditions

If the proposed clearing is located within koala district A or B and will result in the clearing of koala habitat trees, the following sequential clearing conditions must be complied with:

- Clearing of koala habitat trees is carried out in a way that ensures koalas occupying the area that is being cleared have enough time to move out the area being cleared without human intervention; and
- If the area being cleared is more than 3 hectares:
 - The clearing must be carried out in stages; and
 - If the area being cleared is less than 6 hectares, no more than 50% of the area being cleared can be cleared in any one stage; and
 - If the area being cleared is more than 6 hectares, no more than 3 hectares or 3% of the area being cleared (whichever is the greater) can be cleared in any one stage; and
 - Between each stage and the next there is at least one period of 12 hours (starting at 6pm on a day and ending at 6am on the following day) during which no trees are cleared on the site; and
- While the clearing is being undertaken, the clearing of koala habitat trees must be carried out in a way that ensures appropriate habitat links are maintained within the area being cleared and the adjacent area to ensure any koalas occupying the site can safely move off of the site; and
- If a koala is in a tree, that tree is not to be cleared; and
- If the crown of a tree overlaps with a tree that a koala is in, that tree is not to be cleared.

3 Koala spotter requirement

Under Part 3, Section 11 of the Koala Conservation Plan, a person that is undertaking clearing in a koala habitat area (refer to 3.1) that involves the clearing of koala habitat trees with a trunk diameter of more than 10 centimetres at 1.3 metres above the ground (refer to 3.2), must ensure the clearing is carried out in the presence of a koala spotter (refer to 3.3). This requirement must be complied with irrespective of any approvals or exemptions offered under other legislation.

3.1 Koala habitat areas

Under the Koala Conservation Plan, parts of Queensland have been identified as koala habitat areas. These are areas that, based on the combination of biophysical measures and the suitability of the vegetation, have been

determined to contain koala habitat¹ and the koala habitat is essential for the conservation of a viable koala population in the wild.

Currently, koala habitat areas have only been identified in the South East Queensland region and have been separated into two different categories – core koala habitat areas and locally refined koala habitat areas². The koala spotter requirements prescribed in Section 11 of the Koala Conservation Plan apply in both core and locally refined koala habitat areas.

To determine whether your property is in a koala habitat area you can request a Vegetation Management Report here: <https://www.dnrme.qld.gov.au/qld/environment/land/vegetation/vegetation-map-request-form>. The report that is sent to you will include a map showing any part of your property that is a koala habitat area.

3.2 Koala habitat trees with a trunk diameter of more than 10cm at 1.3m above the ground

The koala spotter requirements prescribed in Section 11 of the Koala Conservation Plan only apply if the clearing is in a koala habitat area and involves the clearing of koala habitat trees that have a trunk diameter of more than 10 centimetres at 1.3 metres above the ground.

Koala habitat trees means:

- (a) a tree of the *Corymbia*, *Melaleuca*, *Lophostemon* or *Eucalyptus* genera that is edible by koalas; or
- (b) a tree of a type typically used by koalas, including, for example, a tree of the *Angophora* genus.

While there are specialty tools that can be used to determine whether a koala habitat trees has a trunk diameter of more than 10 centimetres at 1.3 metres above the ground this can also be determined using a tape measure by following these steps:

1. Using the tape measure, measure 1.3 metres from the base of the tree and place a small mark on the tree that identifies where the 1.3 metre mark is.
2. At the 1.3 metre mark, wrap the tape measure around tree and record the circumference at the point where the two ends of the tape measure meet. This is the circumference of the tree at 1.3 metres above the ground.
3. Divide the circumference by 3.1416 to calculate the diameter of the tree at 1.3 metres above the ground.

If you are unsure whether a particular tree that is proposed to be cleared is a koala habitat tree or whether it has a trunk diameter of more than 10cm at 1.3m above the ground, it is recommended you seek confirmation from a qualified botanist, ecologist or arborist.

¹ Koala habitat is defined in the Nature Conservation (Koala) Conservation Plan 2017 as:

- (a) an area of vegetation in which koalas live and that includes a koala habitat tree; or
- (b) an area of vegetation that consists primarily of koala habitat trees and which is reasonably suitable for sustaining koalas; or
- (c) a partially or completed cleared area used by koalas to cross from an area mentioned in (a) or (b) to another area mentioned in (a) or (b).

² The document *Spatial modelling for koalas in South East Queensland* (available here: https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/102893/spatial-modelling-koalas-seq.pdf) provides the methodology for how core and locally refined koala habitat areas are determined.

3.3 Koala spotter

If the proposed clearing is located within a koala habitat area and will result in the clearing of koala habitat trees that have a trunk diameter of more than 10cm at 1.3m above the ground, the clearing must be undertaken in the presence of a koala spotter who has the primary role of locating koalas in trees.

A koala spotter is a person who has qualifications and experience, or demonstrated skills and knowledge in locating koalas in koala habitats or conducting arboreal fauna surveys. This may include, for example, a qualified zoologist or ecologist who has experience in undertaking koala surveys.

4 Further information

If you have any further queries about the clearing requirements under the Koala Conservation Plan please contact the Koala Assessment and Compliance team at koala.compliance@des.qld.gov.au or 13 QGOV (13 74 68).

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Approved:



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Enquiries:

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