



NSW Koala Strategy 2019–20 Annual Report

Stabilising and increasing koala populations in NSW



Foreword



The Hon. Matt Kean MP

Minister for Energy and Environment

Koalas are Aussie icons. There is something special about them that brings us together and sparks passion for valuing and protecting our natural environment.

In 2018, the NSW Government released the NSW Koala Strategy — a \$44.7 million commitment to ensure our koalas not just survive, but thrive across the State.

This second annual progress report comes at an unprecedented time for the people of New South Wales including the worst bushfire season on record followed closely by a public health crisis. I am awed by the resilience of our communities in the face of these disasters.

We saw a huge outpouring of support for koalas, immense courage and tireless effort in response to the 2019–20 bushfires, which affected more than a quarter of the koala habitat in New South Wales. Individuals, organisations and NSW government agencies have subsequently adapted to new ways of working to minimise the impacts of COVID-19 on the delivery of our programs, including the NSW Koala Strategy.

Despite these challenges, all actions under the NSW Koala Strategy are now either in progress or complete and we remain resolute in our commitment to securing koalas in the wild in New South Wales.

This year, we launched professional training for vets and vet nurses in wildlife care, building our capacity to respond to future emergencies. We also purchased four new properties to add to the national park estate.

Another key highlight of the past year has been increasing our partnerships with Indigenous communities to restore and protect koala habitat. Learning from Aboriginal people about how to care for our environment has never been more important.

I recently made a commitment to double the number of koalas in New South Wales by 2050. I have engaged the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer and a team of experts to develop a 30-year plan for delivering this commitment. I look forward to sharing this plan with you and to continuing to work with you to protect koalas in New South Wales into the future.

I thank everyone involved in koala conservation in New South Wales for their immense contribution to our progress to date. There is a lot of work to be done, and I am proud to be part of these efforts to conserve and protect our precious koalas.

The Hon. Matt Kean MP

Minister for Energy and Environment



Dr Chris Armstrong PSM
Deputy Chief Scientist & Engineer,
Chair, Koala Strategy Independent
Expert Advisory Panel

Statement of the Expert Advisory Panel

The Koala Strategy Independent Expert Advisory Panel recognises the considerable progress made in the implementation of the NSW Koala Strategy over the past year. Highlights include:

- more habitat protected
- release of the Koala Habitat Information Base which has been used to inform government policy and determine habitat protection and investments, as well as to understand the bushfire impact, and determine response and recovery actions
- release of the Community Wildlife Survey, which will also be undertaken this year and will provide information to better understand the impact of the bushfires on koalas.



Professor Kathy Belov AO
Professor Comparative Genomics,
Pro Vice-Chancellor Global Engagement,
School of Life and Environmental
Sciences, The University of Sydney

The impact of the extended 2019-20 bushfire season on koalas and other wildlife has been severe, this is of particular concern given populations were already under stress from the ongoing drought conditions and other threats such as habitat loss, vehicle strike, disease and dog attacks.



Dr Carolyn Hogg
Manager, Australasian Wildlife Genomics
Group, School of Life and Environmental
Sciences, The University of Sydney

The strategy was developed to be adaptive and actions under the strategy were adapted to support koala populations and carers during and after the bushfires. This included funding rehabilitation and veterinary care, installation of drinking stations, releasing fire severity maps and conducting post fire surveys.

An extraordinary meeting of the Panel was held in early February 2020 along with representatives from across government, non-governmental organisations, community groups and research organisations. This meeting led to the development of actions to help us respond to the current situation and better prepare for future bushfires and climate risks to improve outcomes for koala populations.



Dr Rebecca Johnson AM
Chief Scientist and Associate Director
of Science, Smithsonian Institution
National Museum of Natural History

The Panel would like to acknowledge the considerable effort and generosity of community members and volunteer groups, government agencies, non-governmental organisations and wildlife hospitals in their actions before, during and after the bushfires including emergency response, ongoing care, rehabilitation for koalas, other wildlife and their habitat.

The Panel also acknowledges the critical financial situation that has occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In a reduced funding environment, ongoing monitoring of koala populations and their habitat is essential to our ability to implement the strategy.



Professor Jonathan Rhodes
School of Earth and Environmental
Sciences, The University of Queensland

Given the devastating impact of the bushfires and drought the task to stabilise and increase koala populations in New South Wales is now even more challenging, and the third year of the strategy and the development of the next strategy phase will be critical to overall success. Fundamental to this will be monitoring to determine and track koala populations, reducing threats and increasing koala numbers through local actions, and strategies to protect, restore and revegetate koala habitat.

NSW Koala Strategy at a glance



Koala habitat conservation

- Permanently conserve priority koala habitat as national parks
- Protecting koala habitat through new koala reserves
- The Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) to prioritise koala habitat for funding
- Management of Crown land, travelling stock reserves and other public land to conserve high-quality koala habitat
- Government agencies will assess koala habitat values to guide the future use of excess land



Conservation through community action

- Deliver local actions to protect koala populations
- Learn from Aboriginal communities on protecting koala habitat
- Develop an online community portal on koalas



Safety and health of koala populations

- Create a network of koala and wildlife hospitals and vet services across NSW
- Research project on chlamydia in koalas
- Fix priority koala road kill hotspots across NSW
- Relocation of koalas to unoccupied koala habitat
- Support koala rehabilitators
- Train vets in native wildlife care
- Develop a best practice planning guideline for koalas
- Australian Museum is designated as the biobank to store koala genetic information in NSW



Building our knowledge

- Create a statewide koala habitat information base to inform koala conservation decisions
- Statewide citizen science koala survey
- Pilot an app to collect information about koalas
- Koala Strategy monitoring program
- Information collected about koalas can be easily accessed by the community
- Supporting priority koala research
- Research on koala responses to native forest harvesting
- Improving our approach to fire management to protect koalas and their habitat

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Purpose of this report



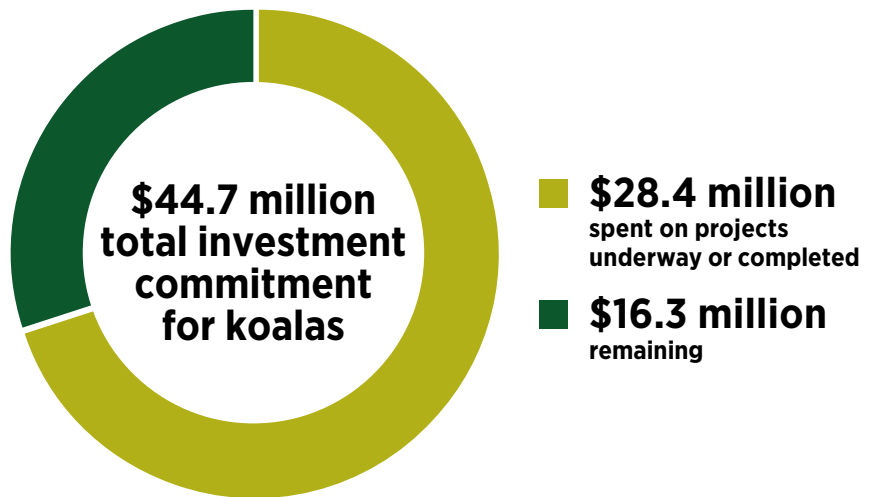
The NSW Koala Strategy is the biggest commitment by any state government to secure koalas in the wild. It sets the foundation for the Government's longer-term vision to stabilise and increase koala populations across New South Wales.

The NSW Koala Strategy supports a range of conservation actions, to be delivered over three years. The actions are organised under four pillars:

- koala habitat conservation
- conservation through community action
- safety and health of koala populations
- building our knowledge.


This is the second annual report on implementation of the NSW Koala Strategy. The NSW Koala Strategy is a whole-of-government strategy based on the principles of action, ongoing monitoring and continuous learning. We will continue to consider the advice of the Expert Advisory Panel, findings from research and monitoring, and ongoing input from implementation partners and the community, to achieve an adaptive management approach. This will help ensure we maximise outcomes for koalas.

For further information about the strategy see [NSW Koala Strategy](#) on the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment website.



NSW Koala Strategy interagency committee

The Environment, Energy and Science Group (EES), part of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, coordinates implementation of the NSW Koala Strategy through an interagency committee of senior officers from NSW Government agencies. The committee met four times during the second year of implementation. Summaries of the discussions from these meetings are available from the [NSW Koala Strategy interagency committee webpage](#).



How to get involved in helping koalas



You can report koala sightings

- You can participate in the [Community Wildlife Survey](#) to report koalas and nine other species. Data from the survey can help identify sites for priority action and is part of long-term koala monitoring across the State.
- You can download the *I Spy Koala* app, which allows community members to record their sightings of koalas in the wild. This app is available for download for Apple and Android devices. You can also contribute your wildlife sightings to the NSW Government's [BioNet Atlas](#) database. All information in the database is made publicly available through the NSW Government's [Sharing and Enabling Environmental Data \(SEED\)](#) portal.



You can protect koala habitat on your land

- If you have koala habitat on your property and are interested in selling, you can contact the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) at: reserve.establishment@environment.nsw.gov.au
- You can get in touch with your Local Land Services office for advice and support about how to manage koala habitat on your land. To contact Local Land Services, send an enquiry online via [Local Land Services: Contact my local office](#) or call 1300 795 299
- You can enter into a voluntary private land conservation agreement with the Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT). There are three types of voluntary private land conservation agreements:
 - wildlife refuge agreements
 - conservation agreements
 - biodiversity stewardship agreements.
- The BCT can advise you about the type of agreement that might be right for you. More information is available from the [Biodiversity Conservation Trust](#) website.



You can help koalas and other wildlife during an emergency

- During an emergency, such as drought, fire or flood, some native animals may need short-term help. For more information see [Helping wildlife in emergencies](#).

You can contact us at koala.strategy@environment.nsw.gov.au to learn more about NSW Koala Strategy actions in your area, or to share your thoughts on opportunities for implementing the strategy.



As part of the NSW Koala Strategy, the community has worked together with government to develop a koala community website, [NSW Koala Country](#), which includes a range of resources and opportunities to get involved. Visit [NSW Koala Country](#) for more information.

Responding to the 2019–20 bushfires



The 2019–20 bushfire season was the worst on record for New South Wales. These fires took a terrible toll on the livelihoods of many communities and had a significant impact on native plants and animals including koalas.

The 2019–2020 bushfires affected over 3.6 million hectares or 25.9% of all moderate to very high suitability koala habitat in eastern NSW.

Of this, 1.9 million hectares was high or very high suitability koala habitat. Figure 1 shows the regional breakdown of areas affected in eastern NSW.

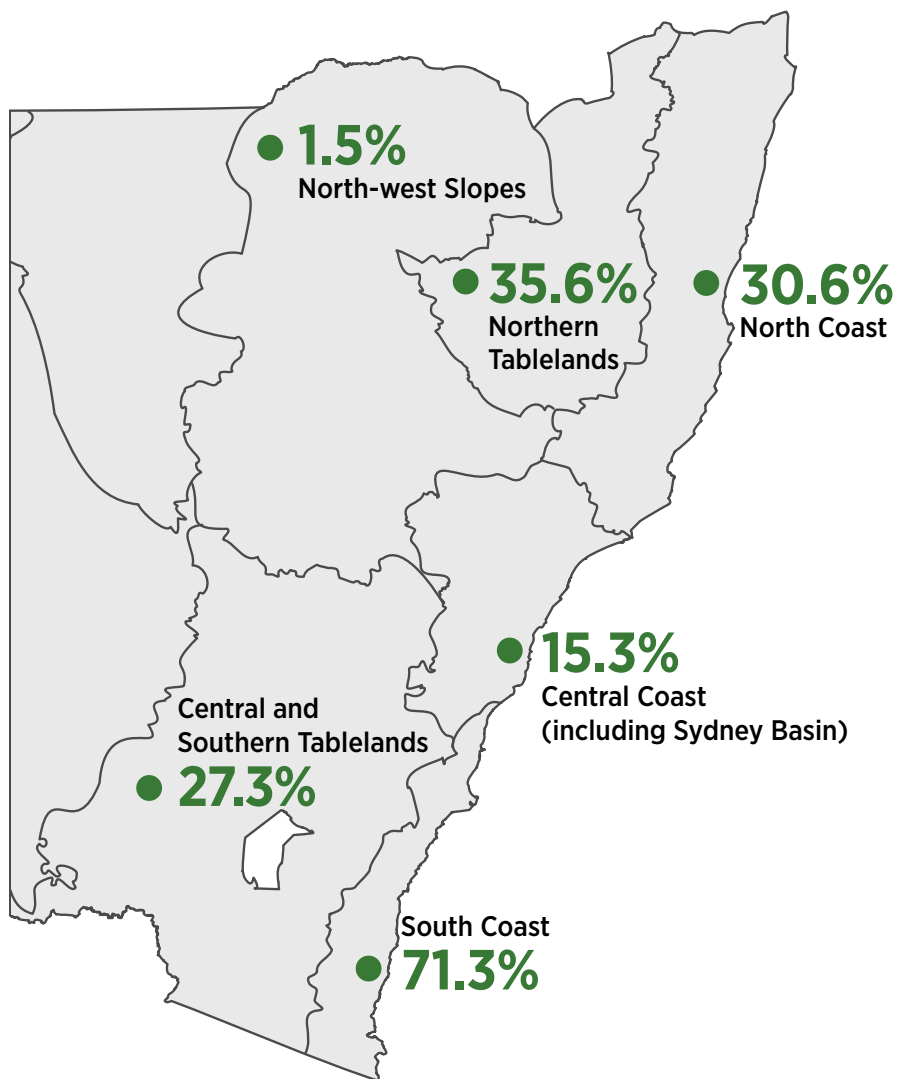


Figure 1 Percentage of high to very high suitability koala habitat affected by fire in eastern koala modelling regions.

In January 2020, the NSW Government released *Wildlife and Conservation Bushfire Recovery: Immediate Response January 2020* (available from the webpage [Recovering from the 2019–20 fires](#)). The response outlines the immediate actions taken to support the recovery of NSW wildlife, including koalas, impacted by the 2019–20 bushfires.

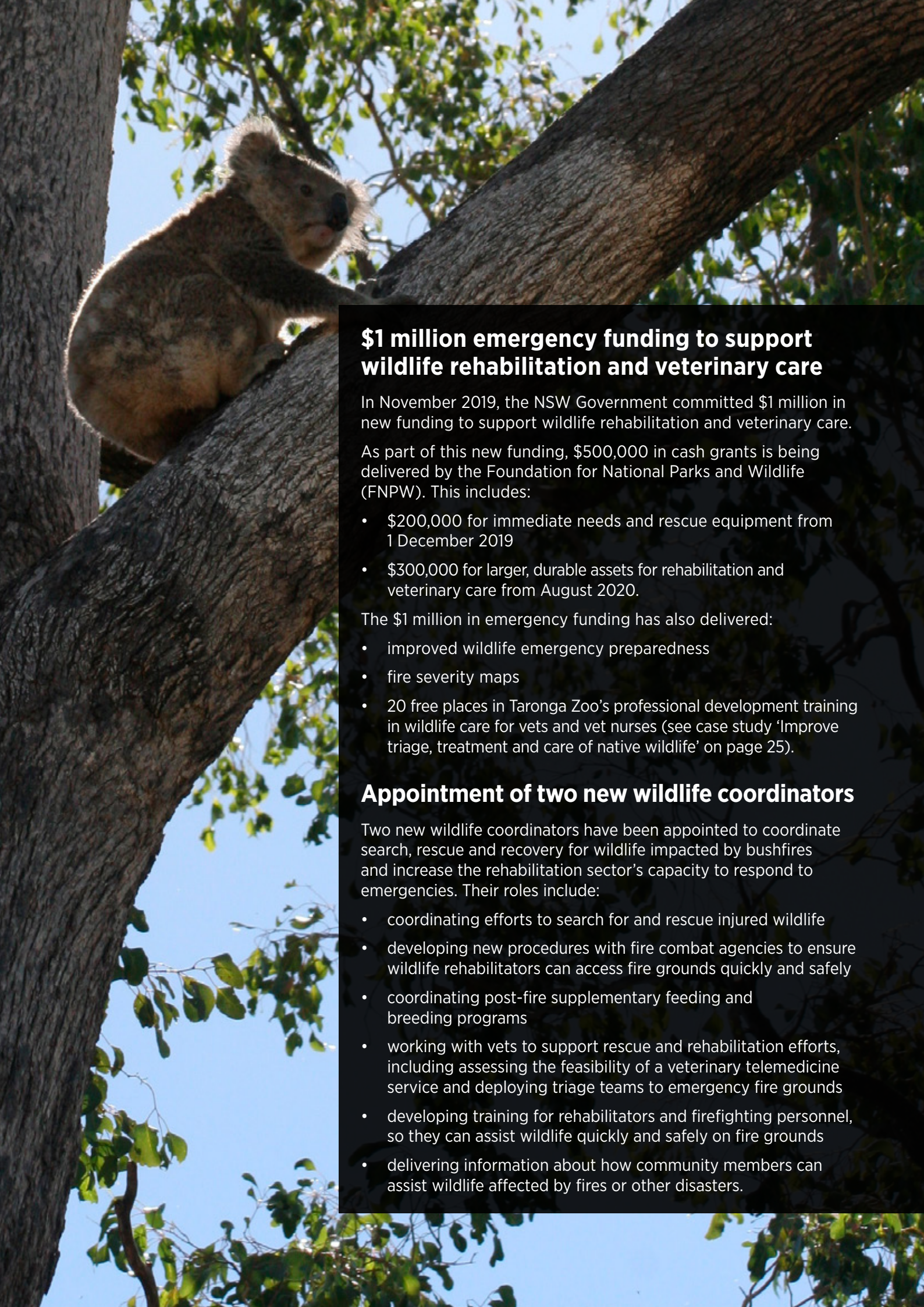


The Expert Advisory Panel met in early February 2020 with representatives from community groups, non-government organisations, research organisations and government agencies. The meeting identified actions to support bushfire recovery and inform the ongoing delivery of the NSW Koala Strategy. These actions will also be pursued as part of the next phase of the strategy.

Immediate actions to support bushfire recovery

We took immediate action to help koalas recover from the 2019–20 bushfires, including:

- providing new funding to support the rehabilitation sector (see ‘\$1 million emergency funding to support wildlife rehabilitation and veterinary care’ on the next page)
- coordinating the installation of drinking stations in fire-affected areas
- releasing fire severity maps to help identify refuges for our native fauna and estimate impacts on known koala locations
- conducting post-fire on-ground surveys and monitoring in fire-affected koala habitat in the South Coast, Southern Highlands, Mid North Coast, Far North Coast and Northern Rivers
- working with the Australian National University to compare the outcomes for rehabilitated and resident koalas in a fire-affected landscape on the Southern Tablelands
- offering expert wildlife care training in partnership with Taronga Conservation Society Australia to vets and vet nurses
- providing treatment and care for over 100 koalas impacted by drought and bushfires at Taronga’s wildlife hospitals
- undertaking research to improve our understanding of the impacts of fires on koalas.



\$1 million emergency funding to support wildlife rehabilitation and veterinary care

In November 2019, the NSW Government committed \$1 million in new funding to support wildlife rehabilitation and veterinary care.

As part of this new funding, \$500,000 in cash grants is being delivered by the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife (FNPW). This includes:

- \$200,000 for immediate needs and rescue equipment from 1 December 2019
- \$300,000 for larger, durable assets for rehabilitation and veterinary care from August 2020.

The \$1 million in emergency funding has also delivered:

- improved wildlife emergency preparedness
- fire severity maps
- 20 free places in Taronga Zoo's professional development training in wildlife care for vets and vet nurses (see case study 'Improve triage, treatment and care of native wildlife' on page 25).

Appointment of two new wildlife coordinators

Two new wildlife coordinators have been appointed to coordinate search, rescue and recovery for wildlife impacted by bushfires and increase the rehabilitation sector's capacity to respond to emergencies. Their roles include:

- coordinating efforts to search for and rescue injured wildlife
- developing new procedures with fire combat agencies to ensure wildlife rehabilitators can access fire grounds quickly and safely
- coordinating post-fire supplementary feeding and breeding programs
- working with vets to support rescue and rehabilitation efforts, including assessing the feasibility of a veterinary telemedicine service and deploying triage teams to emergency fire grounds
- developing training for rehabilitators and firefighting personnel, so they can assist wildlife quickly and safely on fire grounds
- delivering information about how community members can assist wildlife affected by fires or other disasters.



Koala habitat conservation

7918 hectares
of koala habitat protected



3613 hectares¹
of land purchased



4051 hectares
of state forest transferred
(and another
20,000 hectares
in progress)



254 hectares
of private land covered by
new conservation
agreements (BCT) and a
third tender in Southern
Highlands close to
completion

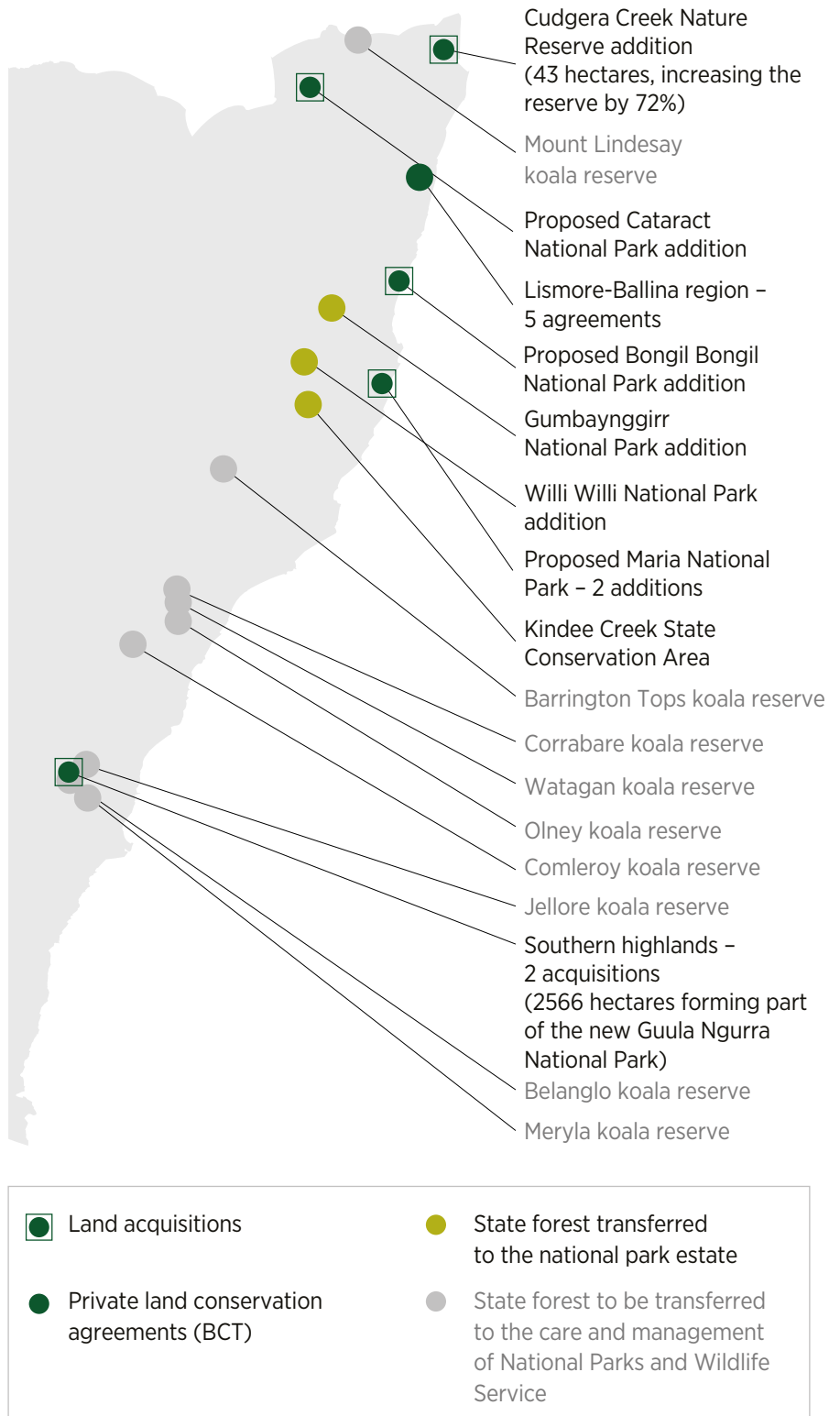


Figure 2 Koala habitat conservation.

¹ This is a rounded total.



Koala habitat conservation

Protecting koala habitat creates opportunities for koala populations to be resilient and grow over the long term.

Our key achievements under the koala habitat conservation pillar during the second year of the NSW Koala Strategy include:

- National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) purchased four properties containing **priority koala habitat to be permanently conserved in the national park estate**. One purchase is a large 912-hectare property in the New England Region (see case study ‘Land acquired for addition to Cataract National Park’ on the next page). Two purchases, of 41 and 20 hectares, fill in an inholding in Maria National Park, located east of Kempsey on the Mid North Coast. The fourth purchase is a 31-hectare property adjacent to Bongil Bongil National Park which is a stronghold for koalas located south of Sawtell.
- The Biodiversity Conservation Trust ran a tender process in the Southern Highlands to establish private land conservation agreements to **conserve and manage koala habitat on private land**. The Southern Highlands is home to over 3000 koalas, making it the largest koala colony in southern NSW.
- The Bushfire Behaviour and Management Group at the University of Melbourne applied fire risk modelling methods to help inform the fire management planning process as part of a pilot project to **improve the management of koala habitat across public lands** in the Wingecarribee region.
- The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and Crown Lands commenced work to establish processes for **assessing and considering koala habitat values of lands excess to agencies’ needs**, to help inform if it should be permanently reserved or have protections in place.

Understanding the impacts of the 2019–20 bushfires on koala habitat conservation

The Koala Habitat Information Base, developed as part of the NSW Koala Strategy, delivers the best available statewide spatial data on koala habitat and koala occurrence.

Combined with fire intensity maps, the Koala Habitat Information Base has helped us to understand the impacts of the fires on koalas and their habitat.

We have assessed the impacts of the fires on the six properties purchased under the NSW Koala Strategy. The property located in the New England region was the only property affected by fire (see case study ‘Land acquired for addition to Cataract National Park’).

| Action | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|
| Permanently conserve priority koala habitats as national parks | | | |
| Protecting koala habitat through new koala reserves | | | |
| The Biodiversity Conservation Trust to prioritise koala habitat for funding | | | |
| Management of Crown land, travelling stock reserves and other public land to conserve high-quality koala habitat | | | |
| Government agencies will assess koala habitat values to guide the future use of excess land | | | |

Work in progress Completed



Case study:

Land acquired for addition to Cataract National Park

We are adding land containing priority koala habitat to the national park estate through the \$20-million land acquisition program.

This year, a 912-hectare property was acquired north east of Tenterfield. It adjoins the south-west boundary of Cataract National Park and links to the Gilgurry State Forest harvest exclusion zone to the south.

Adding this land to Cataract National Park will secure connectivity within a valuable regional corridor significant for wildlife adaptation to climate change threats.

Most of the property contains a diversity of habitat. The property is occupied by koalas and has an abundance of tallowwood, a primary koala feed tree, along with other major koala feed trees. It also provides habitat for more than 10 other threatened fauna species, including the yellow-bellied glider and glossy black-cockatoo.

Although the property was affected by the 2019–20 bushfires, the moist east- and south-facing slopes provided refuges for fauna.

Department fire extent severity mapping indicates significant refuges, including rainforest and moist eucalypt forest, were either unburnt or impacted by a low-intensity fire regime. The moist forest contains significant stands of tallowwood.

Post fire field inspection confirmed that significant areas of intact unburnt rainforest remain on the property and areas of moist forest containing stands of tallowwood provided refuge for survival of individual koalas. NPWS officers found fresh koala scats (faecal pellets) at the base of tallowwood and grey gum and it is expected the remaining koala habitat will be recolonised as the vegetation recovers.

Additional koala land purchases

In addition to the NSW Koala Strategy land acquisition program, we have purchased approximately 2457 hectares of land that contains koala habitat and koala records through the general NPWS land acquisition program since the NSW Koala Strategy was launched. The properties are located near Kempsey, Hastings Point (Tweed), Grafton and Guyra.

New koala national park

Important koala habitat has been protected through the creation of the new Guula Ngurra National Park in the NSW Southern Highlands.

Gundungurra Aboriginal Traditional Owners recommended the park be named 'Guula Ngurra' which means 'Koala Country' because of the importance of the habitat. Located about 25 kilometres northwest of Bowral, the 3358-hectare Guula Ngurra National Park includes two properties purchased through the NSW Koala Strategy, known as Tugalong Station and Little Forest West, as well as an outlier of Bangadilly National Park.

Habitat conservation priorities for 2020–21

We will continue to use the best available information to identify strategic areas within the landscape to **purchase and permanently conserve koala habitat as national parks**, including areas important to the recovery and persistence of koala populations.

The Biodiversity Conservation Trust will announce results from its Southern Highlands tender to **conserve and manage koala habitat on private land**.

We will also **protect koala habitat through new koala reserves** managed by National Parks and Wildlife Service.

We will continue working together to establish processes for **assessing koala habitat values to guide the future use of excess Crown land**. This includes considering how government agencies can make use of the Koala Habitat Information Base to inform decisions about whether to divest land.

Further discussions will be held about how the potential fire management scenarios could inform the **management of koala habitat on public land** across the Wingecarribee region. A working group will also consider the broader lessons and implications of this plan for other parts of the State.





Conservation through community action

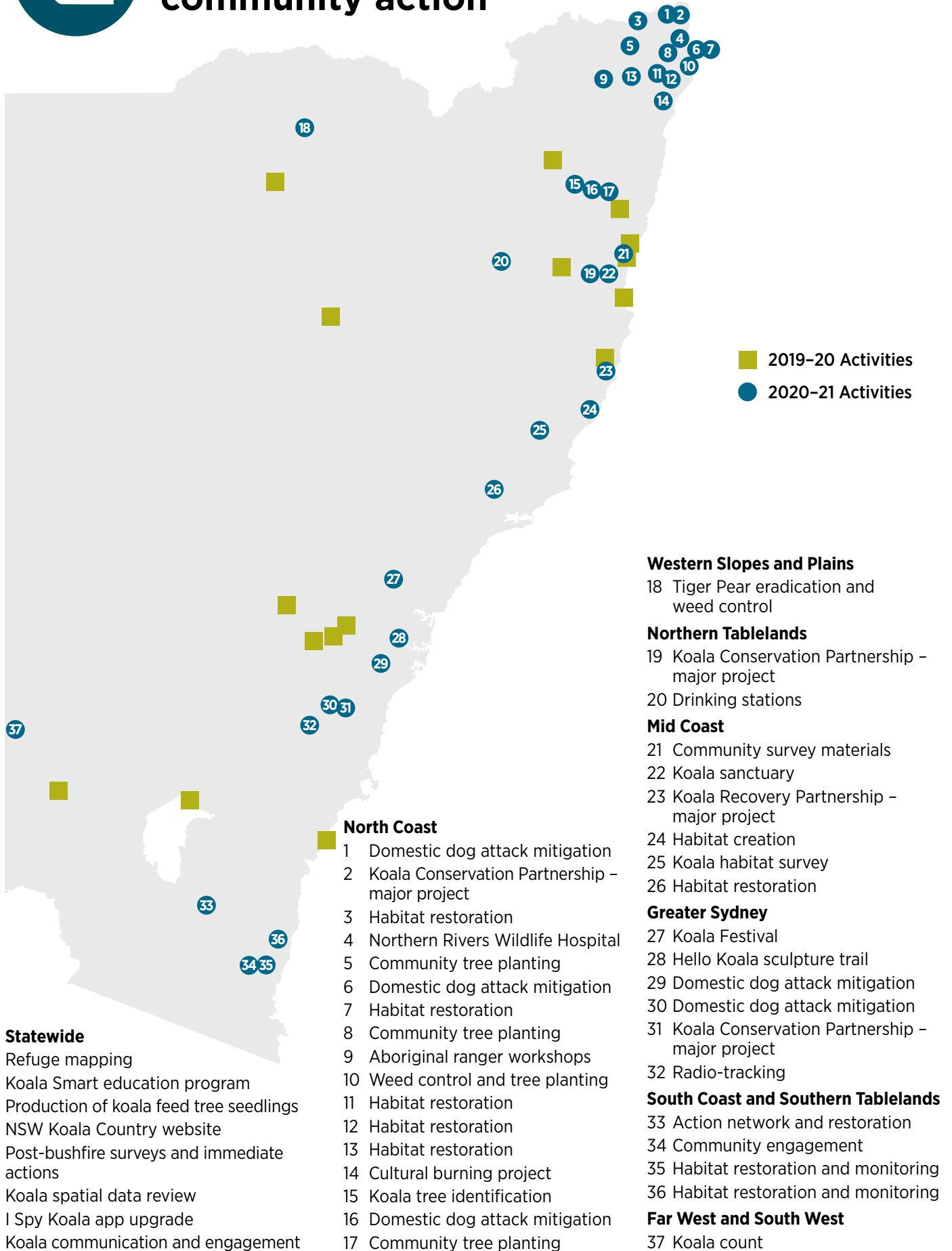


Figure 3 Community action supporting koala conservation.



Conservation through community action

Across New South Wales, communities are working hard to protect their koalas. The NSW Koala Strategy recognises and builds on this commitment, partnering with community groups to share information and deliver actions to make a difference to koala conservation at the local level.

Our key achievements this year include:

- working with community partners to deliver **local on-ground actions** around New South Wales (Table 1)
- supporting a series of **Aboriginal ranger workshops** on the North Coast, with a launch event held at Port Macquarie Koala Hospital (see case study ‘Good Gumbaynggirr Koala Country Plan’ on page 21)
- working with the Gumbaynggirr community to include new content celebrating Aboriginal connections with koalas on the **NSW Koala Country website**.

62

on-ground actions funded by the NSW Koala Strategy

6

Aboriginal community partnerships



450

sites surveyed for koalas with trained detection dogs in 15 burned national park areas



15,205

visitors to the NSW Koala Country website



32,000+

page views the NSW Koala Country website

How has the NSW Koala Strategy helped us respond to the 2019–20 bushfires?

We supported community groups and engaged contractors to undertake on-ground surveys to assess the impacts of the fire on local koala populations and to look for injured koalas.

We are also working in partnership with community stakeholders to ensure a coordinated deployment and maintenance of drinking stations in fire and drought affected areas across the State.

We are working with Aboriginal communities to support the regeneration and protection of koala habitat through cultural land management activities including cultural burning.

The partnerships developed with community groups and wildlife rehabilitators through the NSW Koala Strategy helped us to respond quickly to community needs for supporting koalas during this unprecedented bushfire season.

| Action | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|
| Deliver local actions to protect koala populations | | | |
| Learn from Aboriginal communities on protecting koala habitat | | | |
| Develop an online community portal on koalas | | | |



Work in progress



Completed

Table 1 Local actions funded by the NSW Koala Strategy

| Local action | Description |
|---|--|
| Good Gumbaynggirr Koala Country Plan | A series of events are enabling Aboriginal ranger groups on the North Coast to build skills and share knowledge on protecting koala habitat. |
| Identification of refuge areas in inland NSW | A new methodology is being developed in partnership with Macquarie University to map refuge habitat for inland koalas. |
| Expansion of the Lions Club Koala Smart program | A curriculum framework and support materials have been developed to encourage teachers to implement the Koala Smart program in their school. |
| Production of koala feed tree seedlings | 60,000 koala feed tree seedlings have been distributed to community groups to support habitat restoration projects. |
| Post-fire surveys in national park properties across north-east NSW | 24 national park properties from Crowdy Bay National Park to the Queensland border have been surveyed to determine koala presence after the recent bushfires. Surveys were targeted to areas where we have good pre-fire survey information. |
| Weed control and tree planting in Clunes and Broken Head | Restoration work is being undertaken to control weeds, plant trees and ensure maintenance of important koala habitat in Clunes and Broken Head. |
| Koala habitat restoration on Aboriginal-owned lands near Lismore | Aboriginal rangers are restoring a core koala corridor and installing walkways and signage for school and community education. |
| Take the Lead | A behavioural change program is being delivered by Tweed Shire Council to reduce the impacts of domestic dogs on threatened fauna, including koalas. |
| Tiger Pear eradication and weed control in Moree | A contractor is spraying tiger pear and other weeds damaging koala habitat, and local farmers and landholders have been informed about weed control. Four koala drinking stations were installed. |
| Healing Koala Country in Casino | Aboriginal rangers are restoring koala habitat recently affected by fire. |
| Koala conservation in the Far South Coast | The Far South Coast Landcare Association is delivering a series of actions to engage the community in koala habitat restoration and conservation in Bega. This has included establishing a local Koala Action Network and undertaking tree planting on private land adjacent to the existing population area on public land. |
| Community engagement on the Far South Coast | Koalas on the Far South Coast are being conserved through community engagement and the provision of drinking stations in drought-affected habitat. |
| Koala tree identification in the Clarence Valley Region | A booklet has been developed in partnership with the community to assist landholders and council staff in identifying important koala trees in the landscape. |
| Minyumai Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) cultural burning project | This post-fire cultural burning and monitoring program on the Minyumai IPA will integrate five years of existing baseline data into a bushfire impact assessment and fire recovery project. |
| Koala habitat restoration in Lismore | Friends of the Koala is restoring koala habitat on floodplains near Lismore. |

| Local action | Description |
|---|--|
| Radio-tracking of wild koalas in the Southern Highlands | 10 wild koalas have been radio-tracked in the Wingecarribee region to gain a better understanding of habitat usage. |
| Community tree planting in Rosebank | A community tree planting event is extending a koala corridor in Rosebank. |
| Drinking stations in Armidale | Six koala drinking stations have been installed in priority locations around Armidale. |
| Survey of koala habitat in the MidCoast Local Government Area (LGA) | A contractor has surveyed koala habitat to confirm the potential expansion area of the Bootawa koala hub within the MidCoast LGA. |
| Hello Koalas sculpture trail in the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney | An interactive koala sculpture trail in the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney has helped raise awareness about the decline of koalas in the wild. |
| Koala habitat restoration near the Border Ranges National Park | Aboriginal rangers are restoring a core koala corridor near the Border Ranges National Park. |
| Community tree planting in Kyogle | Community planting activities have extended koala habitat and created a corridor between Richmond Valley and the Border Ranges National Park. |
| Northern Rivers Wildlife Hospital | Funding has helped develop the business case and fundraising efforts to establish the proposed wildlife hospital. |
| Bongil Bongil National Park community survey materials | Equipment has been purchased to support the ongoing koala community survey in Bongil Bongil National Park. |
| Habitat restoration on private land in Byron Shire | Byron Shire Council is extending koala habitat and creating corridors on private property across the Byron region. |
| Aboriginal traditional owners create a sanctuary for koalas | Habitat at Bollanolla Mountain is being restored by Aboriginal traditional owners to create a koala sanctuary. |
| Narrandera Koala Count | The survey effort and design of the Narrandera Koala Count has been captured to share with other communities. |
| Hawkesbury Koala Festival | The annual Hawkesbury Koala Festival to promote awareness, action and conservation for koalas and the natural environment around the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury areas is being supported. |
| NSW Koala Country website | The NSW Koala Country website is being managed and maintained, including developing new content celebrating Aboriginal connections with koalas. |
| Koalas of Mansfield Portrait Gallery | Wingecarribee Shire Council is installing signage with local community photos and quotes to reduce the impacts of domestic dogs on koalas and other threatened fauna. |
| Koala signage in off-leash and council reserves | Clarence Valley Council is installing signs in off-leash areas and council reserves to reduce the impacts of domestic dogs on koalas and other threatened fauna. |

| Local action | Description |
|--|---|
| Leash-up Pilot Communication Project | A behavioural change program is being delivered by Byron Shire Council to reduce the impacts of domestic dogs on koalas and other threatened fauna. |
| Domestic dog bus shelter signage | Campbelltown City Council is trialling bus shelter advertisements to influence behaviour change aiming to reduce the impacts of domestic dogs on koalas and other threatened fauna. |
| Hastings–Macleay Koala Recovery Partnership – major project | This is a three-year partnership between Port Macquarie-Hastings and Kempsey Shire councils, Mid North Coast Joint Organisation, Port Macquarie Koala Hospital and SoS. The project is delivering habitat restoration, veterinary care, reduction of vehicle strikes, landholder and community engagement and koala monitoring. |
| Southern Highlands Koala Conservation Partnership – major project | A three-year partnership between Wingecarribee Shire Council and SoS is delivering habitat restoration, private land conservation, landholder and community engagement and koala monitoring. |
| Northern Rivers Koala Conservation Partnership – major project | A three-year partnership between Tweed, Byron, Ballina and Lismore councils, Friends of the Koala and SoS is delivering private land conservation, veterinary care, habitat restoration, landholder and community engagement and koala monitoring. |
| Koala conservation in the Southern Tablelands | Funds have been provided for fire planning and management and ongoing koala population monitoring. |
| Koala conservation in southern coastal forests | Funds have been provided for fire planning and management, habitat restoration trials and ongoing koala population monitoring. |
| Clarence Valley community tree planting | Funds have been provided for planting 5000 trees and creating an inspirational video to encourage the community to use the <i>I Spy Koala</i> app and take part in koala conservation. |
| Review of spatial data related to koalas | The spatial framework for koala conservation is being reviewed. These Areas of Regional Koala Significance (ARKS) are used to inform priority conservation actions across New South Wales. |
| Habitat creation in Bongil Bongil National Park | Funds have been provided to regenerate, weed and plant cleared blocks of ex-banana plantations with tallowwood, grey gum and forest oak. |
| I Spy Koala app upgrade | SoS has contributed funding to ensure the <i>I Spy Koala</i> app is available for Apple and Android devices. |
| Northern Tablelands Koala Conservation Partnership – major project | Funds were provided to establish a koala conservation partnership in the Northern Tablelands, recognising an important koala population around Armidale. |
| Glen William habitat restoration project | Private landholders and Glen William School have planted 1000 koala feed trees. |
| Koala communication and engagement | Lessons from each of the koala projects will be documented and shared with the community. |

More details about actions delivered under the Saving our Species program are covered in the Saving our Species annual reports available on the Department's website: see [Saving our Species reports](#).



Case study: Good Gumbaynggirr Koala Country Plan

The Coffs Harbour and District Local Aboriginal Land Council partnered with Southern Gumbaynggirr land councils and Indigenous protected areas to lead a project 'Durruy Gumbaynggirr Dunggirr Jagun Mangga-Bayilaygam' (Good Gumbaynggirr Koala Country Plan).

Four gatherings of Aboriginal rangers and a launch event were held early in 2020. The gatherings lasted two days and were held at various locations on the North Coast. The workshops enabled Aboriginal ranger groups to network, share knowledge, build skills and workshop ideas and concepts toward a good koala country plan for Gumbaynggirr Country.

The workshops focused on managing Country for koalas but also included a broader range of biodiversity considerations, including post-fire survey, environmental restoration and the use of Local Aboriginal Land Council lands as koala refuges. The project also focused on capacity building and empowering Aboriginal rangers to manage Country with reference to Gumbaynggirr ideology and lore.

Lessons learned will be shared with other Aboriginal communities and government agencies, helping deliver the NSW Koala Strategy's commitment to learn from Aboriginal communities on protecting koala habitat.

Partnerships for koala conservation

Four major **partnerships for koala conservation** have been established by the Saving our Species (SoS) program as part of the NSW Koala Strategy. Each partnership involves an investment to continue the project and support a dedicated koala conservation officer.

The recently established **Northern Tablelands Koala Conservation Partnership** will increase awareness of koalas and engage local landholders to help protect koalas and koala habitat on their properties.

The **Southern Highlands Koala Conservation Partnership** is securing koala habitat on private properties, restoring koala habitat, seeking to reduce wildfire impacts, and engaging the community to increase awareness of koalas in the region.

The **Hastings–Macleay Koala Recovery Partnership** is improving koala conservation across the Hastings–Macleay region by engaging with landholders, the community, research groups and government sectors to achieve better on-ground outcomes and ongoing viability for koalas.

The **Northern Rivers Koala Partnership** is building on longstanding koala conservation efforts in the region, delivering private land conservation agreements, habitat restoration, veterinary care, reduction of vehicle strikes, landholder and community engagement, and monitoring data collection.



Community action priorities for 2020–21

Over the next year, we will continue engaging and partnering with the community to **deliver local koala conservation actions**. This will include continuing **partnerships for koala conservation** to support koala populations in the Northern Tablelands, Southern Highlands, Port Macquarie and Northern Rivers regions.

We will also continue to support community-led projects that empower **Aboriginal communities to protect koala habitat** and to share knowledge and skills. We will also publish the Good Gumbayngirr Koala Country Plan.

We will keep the **Koala Country website** regularly updated and continue to seek opportunities to share lessons and opportunities from on-ground community actions.





Safety and health of koala populations

Australian Museum is the genetic biobank for koalas

1637
genetic samples received since establishment, including 1276 from NSW



Create a network of wildlife hospitals

September 2020
Port Stephens koala hospital officially opened



1380+
downloads of Taronga training on the rescue, treatment and rehabilitation of bushfire-affected wildlife



\$300,000
provided to wildlife rehabilitation groups and koala carers for koala rescue and rehabilitation equipment

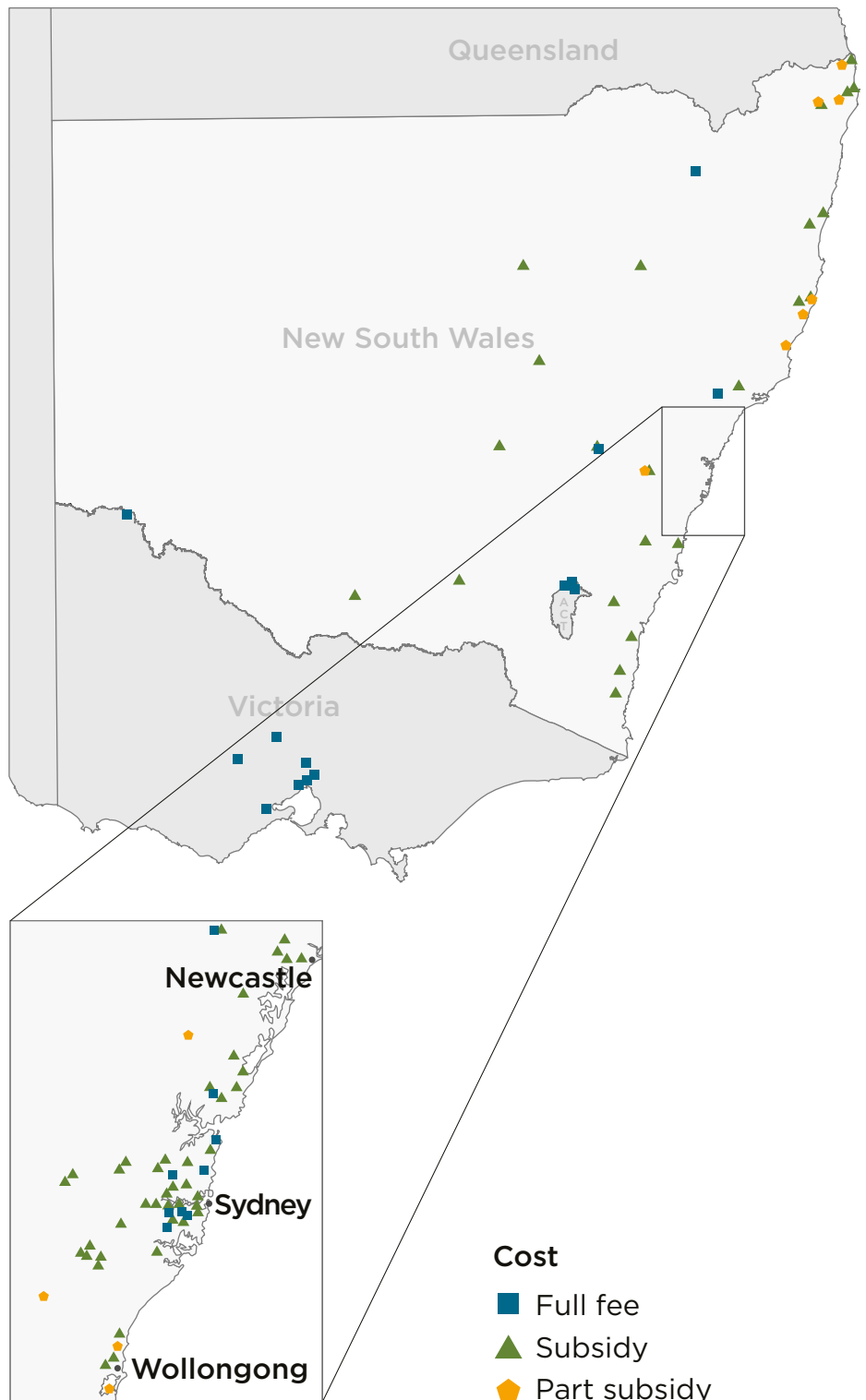


Figure 4 Distribution of 2020 enrolments in Taronga Zoo’s professional training for vets and vet nurses across NSW - see case study on page 25.



Safety and health of koala populations

The **NSW Koala Strategy is focused on minimising key threats** such as vehicle strike and disease to reduce the number of koalas that need care, as well as supporting the wildlife rehabilitation sector to increase the proportion of sick and injured koalas that are successfully rehabilitated and returned to the wild.

This year, key achievements include:

- We have released **guidelines for licensed wildlife rehabilitators** on assessment and first aid treatment principles for the initial treatment and care of rescued koalas. The guidelines are available online: [Initial treatment and care of rescued koalas](#).
- We have developed koala sampling protocols in partnership with The University of Sydney to support the **Australian Museum koala biobank**. The protocols are available online: [Koala Health Hub sampling protocols](#).
- We have released **training standards and a trainers' guide for koala rehabilitators** to ensure minimum training standards are in place and give greater certainty about the quality of care provided to koalas in rehabilitation. The standards are available online: [Koala Rehabilitation Training Standards](#).
- We have established three **post-release monitoring projects** to improve the suitability of release criteria. Following release, koalas are tracked and the areas they move through observed, as well as the tree species they use.
- We have developed and are testing a prototype for the **single wildlife rescue call number**.

Helping the rehabilitation sector respond to the 2019–20 bushfires

The activities we have delivered to support rehabilitators since the launch of the NSW Koala Strategy have helped increase our preparedness for disasters and recovery.

Taronga Conservation Society Australia created an e-learning module to provide expert knowledge to vets and vet nurses to rescue, treat and rehabilitate bushfire-affected wildlife, including koalas.

The \$4.05 million committed under the NSW Koala Strategy to support wildlife rehabilitators was enhanced through \$1 million in new funding to support wildlife rehabilitation and veterinary care (see page 11) and a \$1.47-million Wildlife Heroes initiative that will increase volunteer support and engagement and improve training.

Find out more about [Wildlife Heroes](#) on the [Backyard Buddies](#) website.

| Action | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|
| Create a network of koala and wildlife hospitals and vet services across NSW | | | |
| Research project on chlamydia in koalas | | | |
| Fix priority road kill hotspots across NSW | | | |
| Relocation of koalas to unoccupied koala habitat | | | |
| Support koala rehabilitators | | | |
| Train vets in native wildlife care | | | |
| Develop a best practice planning guideline for koalas | | | |
| Australian Museum is designated as the biobank to store koala genetic information in NSW | | | |

Work in progress Completed



Case Study: Improve triage, treatment and care of native wildlife

Taronga Conservation Society Australia is delivering a continuing education program in wildlife treatment and care for vets, vet nurses and vet science students. This world-class professional development course covers the triage, treatment and care of native wildlife and provides veterinary professionals with knowledge and skills to effectively treat and manage wildlife patients.

The peer-reviewed course includes a general introduction to the treatment and care of wildlife and four modules dedicated to the treatment and care of specific species, including the koala. The koala module was developed by the Koala Health Hub at The University of Sydney.

The online component of the course commenced on 1 June 2020. Over 130 vets, vet nurses and vet students have enrolled, with 65 full and nine partially subsidised places provided through NSW Government funding to ensure vets and vet nurses will be trained across the State. Five face-to-face workshop dates have been set for October–November 2020 in Sydney and Dubbo. The course will run again in 2021.

Safety and health priorities for 2020–21

We will continue to implement mitigation methods to **address priority vehicle strike hotspots**.

We will develop **best practice planning guidelines for koalas** to assess and mitigate impacts on koalas from development proposals. The guideline will also provide best practice urban design planning guidance to ensure developments can be designed to avoid koala habitat and limit the indirect impacts on koalas.

We will finalise a **review of koala translocation practices** in collaboration with our research partner Endeavour Veterinary Ecology and seek expert and stakeholder input on developing a conservation framework for koala translocation in New South Wales.

We will also continue to encourage the storing of koala genetic information in the **Australian Museum biobank** to build best practice guidelines for scientists to learn more about our koalas.



Koala fencing

Koala fencing was installed on Picton Road in south-west Sydney through the NSW Koala Strategy to address two known koala vehicle strike hotspots by channelling koalas towards existing crossings under the road. As part of ongoing monitoring of the crossings, we now have photographic evidence of koalas using this infrastructure to cross safely.



Building our knowledge

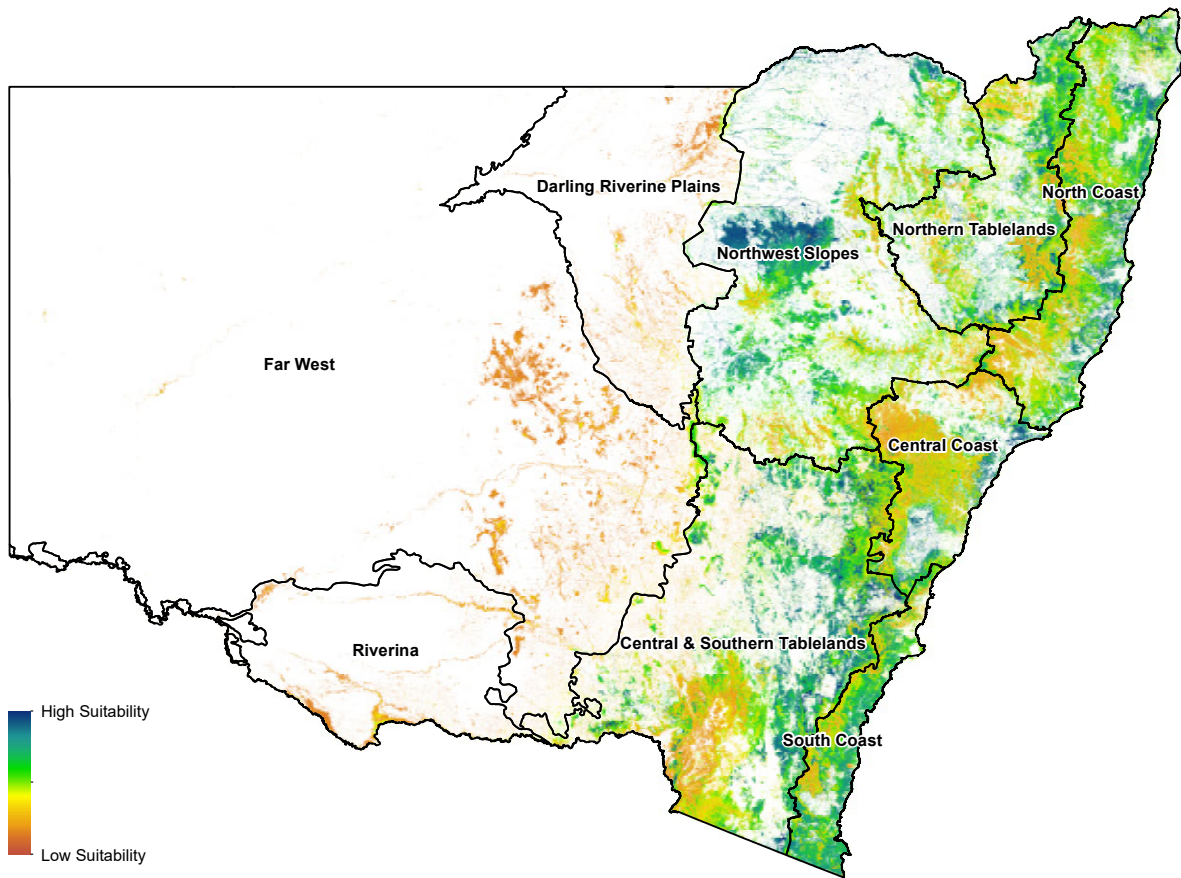


Figure 5 Koala Habitat Suitability Model from the Koala Habitat Information Base.

Building our knowledge about koala populations

2226

I Spy Koala apps downloaded



431

koala sightings added to BioNet via the *I Spy Koala* app

80,391

koala records currently in BioNet



2170

Community Wildlife Survey responses



4200

page views of Koala Habitat Information Base datasets on the SEED portal



6

koala information layers in SEED





Building our knowledge

Improving our understanding of koala populations is key to mitigating threats, including droughts, bushfires and diseases.

This year:

- We released the **Koala Habitat Information Base** and have used it to inform conservation actions and policy decisions to protect koalas including for the development of the new State Environmental Planning Policy (Koala Habitat Protection) 2019 (see case study ‘Using the Koala Habitat Information Base to inform koala conservation decisions’ on the next page).
- We released the *I Spy Koala* App to capture data collected through field surveys and koala sightings and contribute the data to the NSW Government’s BioNet Atlas database. All information in the database is made publicly available through the NSW Government’s Sharing and Enabling Environmental Data (SEED) portal.
- We ran the statewide **Community Wildlife Survey** from May to December 2019. This survey allowed the community to tell us about koalas in their area. The results will improve our understanding of the distribution of koalas in New South Wales and allow us to compare information with the previous community survey in 2006.
- We have developed the **NSW Koala Monitoring Framework** under the NSW Koala Strategy. We are now building partnerships at different monitoring sites in a range of tenures across the State.
- The first annual report of the research overseen by the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to better understand how **koalas are responding to native forest harvesting** on the NSW North Coast has been released. It is available on the NRC website: [Koala research](#).

Building our knowledge to respond to bushfires

The NSW Koala Monitoring Framework guides the design and coordination of monitoring programs across the State. This helps us to understand the impacts of fire on koala populations.

To understand the impacts of the 2019–20 bushfires on koala populations, and the expected time frame for recovery, we need to understand trends in population dynamics, reproduction, disease and genetic diversity across New South Wales.

Gaining a better understanding of the effects of these fires and drought on koala populations will help inform and prioritise management actions in the future.

Community Wildlife Survey

We reopened the Community Wildlife Survey in September 2020 to capture important pre- and post-fire information about koalas and increase the number of community contributions.

| Action | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|
| Create a statewide koala habitat information base to inform koala conservation decisions | | | |
| Statewide citizen science koala survey | | | |
| Pilot an app to collect information about koalas | | | |
| Koala strategy monitoring program | | | |
| Information collected about koalas can be easily accessed by the community | | | |
| Supporting priority koala research | | | |
| Research on koala responses to native forest harvesting | | | |
| Improving our approach to fire management to protect koalas and koala habitat | | | |

Work in progress Completed



**Case Study:
Using the Koala Habitat Information Base to
inform koala conservation decisions**

The Koala Habitat Information Base provides the best available statewide data on koala habitat, koala preferred trees and koala occurrence for New South Wales.

The Koala Habitat Information Base was reviewed by independent experts, including a peer review panel of four independent experts and two koala experts from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. Local experts were also consulted on the Koala Tree Species Index.

The information base is available through the NSW Government’s [SEED portal](#).

The NSW Koala Strategy commits to using the information base to inform relevant parts of the planning system and conservation actions to protect koalas.

The information base has informed several key pieces of work since it was launched in September 2019. These are summarised in the table below.

| Information base use | Description |
|---|---|
| <p>State Environmental Planning Policy (Koala Habitat Protection) 2019</p> | <p>The new State Environmental Planning Policy (Koala Habitat Protection) 2019 (the SEPP) includes a regionalised koala tree species list that has been informed by extensive scientific research over recent years. The list removes the North Coast bias in the former State Environmental Planning Policy No 44 – Koala Habitat Protection (SEPP 44) and includes tree lists tailored to each region. The enhanced tree list and other data from the Koala Habitat Information Base was also integral to the preparation of the Site Investigation Area Map for Koala Plans of Management. This map layer is part of the SEPP and is made available to councils to identify areas that are considered relevant for koalas and to reduce costs when preparing or updating a Koala Plan of Management.</p> |
| <p>Koala habitat additions to the national park estate</p> | <p>NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service uses the layers in the information base to identify lands with koala habitat values and to prioritise areas suitable for assessment.</p> |



| Information base use | Description |
|---|---|
| <p>Prioritise investment in koala habitat protection and restoration</p> | <p>The information base layer, Areas of Regional Koala Significance (ARKS), was recently used by the Australian Government and Local Land Services to identify and prioritise the most cost-effective areas to invest in koala protection and restoration activities in northern New South Wales. Used in conjunction with cost-benefit analysis, the dataset has allowed project partners (Local Land Services, NSW and Australian governments) to rank and target ARKS with the most potential to secure koala populations within an available project budget and time frame.</p> |
| <p>Help local communities develop responses to bushfire</p> | <p>As the fires progressed through the 2019–20 summer, we were tracking both the extent of the fires as well as their severity. We released fire severity maps every two weeks on SEED. We used the fire severity maps in combination with the information base to identify areas of koala habitat less severely burnt or unburnt that could potentially act as refuges for koalas that survived the fires. These maps helped guide where the community should undertake search and rescue operations of koalas during and after bushfire emergencies (Figure 6).</p> |
| <p>Understand the effects of the 2019–20 fires on koalas</p> | <p>Combined with fire severity maps, the information base data layers were used to calculate the area of moderate to very high suitability koala habitat that was affected by the 2019–20 fires, and how fire severity varied across koala habitats. These maps helped demonstrate the scale of the impact on known locations of koalas and inform recovery efforts.</p> |

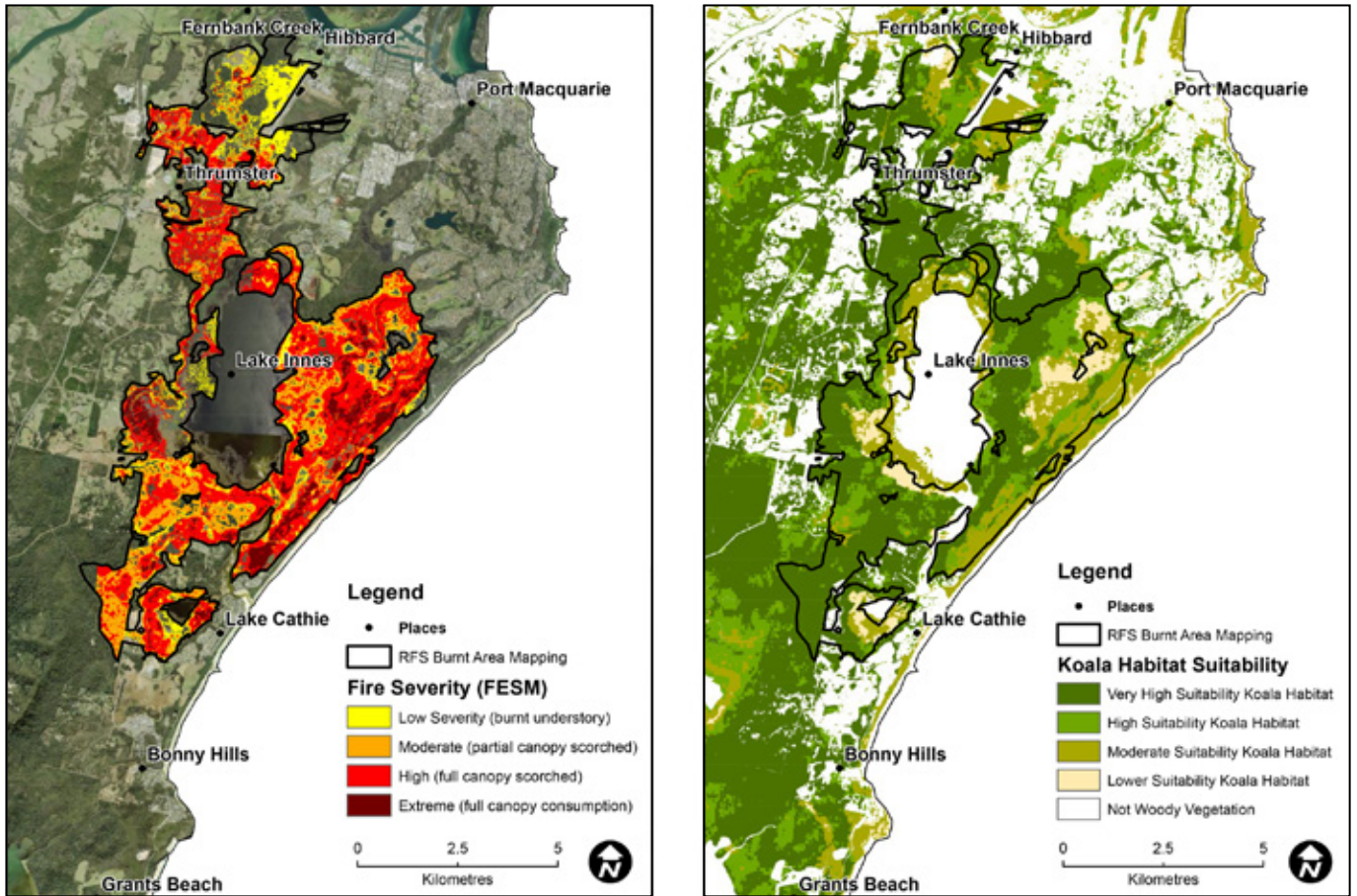


Figure 6 Using the Koala Habitat Information Base along with fire mapping to identify koala habitat affected by fire in the Port Macquarie region (3 February 2020).



Knowledge priorities for 2020–21

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will continue to work in partnership with the NSW Rural Fire Service to develop bushfire management guidelines for landholders, councils and government agencies to **improve our approach to fire management to protect koalas and their habitat**.

We will also implement the **NSW Koala Monitoring Framework** to ensure we are gaining valuable information on trends in koala populations, koala habitat, genetic diversity, disease, reproduction and threats over time. The Framework will also guide monitoring the effect of management and conservation actions.

We will continue to use the **Koala Habitat Information Base** to inform policy development and koala conservation decisions.

We will hold the next biennial **Koala Research Symposium** to present and review the progress of research initiated under the NSW Koala Research Plan, as well as review and revise the key knowledge gaps and research priorities.

How can I find out more?

We look forward to continuing to work with the community and other project partners to implement the NSW Koala Strategy over the coming year. Together we can make a real difference and help our treasured koalas survive in the wild.

Further information about the NSW Koala Strategy can be found at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/koalas

To learn more about NSW koalas, share information, and find ways to get involved in koala conservation, visit the NSW Koala Country community website at www.koala.nsw.gov.au

To learn more about how the NSW Government is working to secure other threatened species in the wild, visit the threatened species webpages at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/threatened-species



Koala Strategy actions: Status update

The NSW Koala Strategy can be found on the Department's Environment, Energy and Science group website: [NSW Koala Strategy](#).

This table provides a consolidated summary of the status of all 24 strategy actions. As at August 2020, all actions are complete or in progress.



Koala habitat conservation

| Action | Status |
|---|-------------|
| <p>Permanently conserve priority koala habitat as national parks</p> <p>Seven properties have been purchased, totalling 3613 hectares². Four purchases have been made this year: three properties on the Mid North Coast and one in the New England Region. These purchases are in addition to the three properties purchased last year, two in the Southern Highlands and one on the Tweed Coast. Further property assessments and purchases are anticipated.</p> | In progress |
| <p>Protecting koala habitat through new koala reserves</p> <p>4051 hectares of koala habitat has been added to the conservation estate, with more areas in progress. Information about new areas for conservation in New South Wales is available online: New areas for conservation in NSW.</p> | In progress |
| <p>The Biodiversity Conservation Trust to prioritise koala habitat for funding</p> <p>A koala-focused conservation tender for the Southern Highlands region has now been completed.</p> <p>Last year 254 hectares of regionally important koala habitat was protected through the Biodiversity Conservation Trust's Conservation Management Program: 173 hectares in the Port Macquarie region and 81 hectares in the Lismore–Ballina area.</p> | In progress |
| <p>Management of Crown land, travelling stock reserves and other public land to conserve high-quality koala habitat</p> <p>An initial 12-month pilot project has been completed. This pilot has developed a collaborative, cross-tenure approach to koala habitat management on public land in the Wingecarribee region. A final report from the University of Melbourne has been received and circulated to land and fire management agencies. The report suggests potential management scenarios to protect important koala habitat without adversely impacting the risk of fire to life, property and other important assets. A multi-agency working group is continuing to explore ways of integrating the findings into local bushfire and park management plans.</p> | In progress |
| <p>Government agencies will assess koala habitat values to guide the future use of excess land</p> <p>The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has commenced work with other NSW Government agencies, including Crown Lands, to explore ways to assess the koala habitat values of land excess to the agencies' needs.</p> | In progress |

² This is a rounded total.



Conservation through community actions

| Action | Status |
|--|-------------|
| <p>Deliver local actions to protect koala populations</p> <p>Sixty-two local actions have been funded in total through the NSW Koala Strategy, including 39 actions that commenced during the second year of implementation. Some are complete and others are in progress. The projects include koala conservation projects, and education and engagement initiatives. Thirteen local community workshops were held during the first year of delivery to inform local actions.</p> | In progress |
| <p>Learn from Aboriginal communities on protecting koala habitat</p> <p>This year the Coffs Harbour and District Local Aboriginal Land Council is partnering with Southern Gumbaynggirr land councils and groups managing Indigenous protected areas to lead the ‘Durruy Gumbaynggirr Dunggirr Jagun Mangga-Bayilaygam’ project. Four Aboriginal ranger workshops and a launch event have been held.</p> <p>Aboriginal rangers are also restoring koala habitat, including land recently affected by fire in Casino, a core koala corridor through state forest near the Border Ranges National Park and a core koala corridor near Lismore. Aboriginal Traditional Owners are also undertaking habitat restoration of the Bollanolla Mountain.</p> <p>Cultural burning activities are being supported, including a post-fire cultural burning and monitoring program on the Mynyumai Indigenous Protected Area.</p> <p>New content about Aboriginal connections with koalas has also been included on the NSW Koala Country website.</p> | In progress |
| <p>Develop an online community portal on koalas</p> <p>The NSW Koala Country community website was released in May 2019 and is updated regularly.</p> | Complete |



Safety and health of koala populations

| Action | Status |
|---|-------------|
| <p>Create a network of koala and wildlife hospitals and vet services across New South Wales</p> <p>The Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary officially opened in September 2020.</p> <p>More information is available on the Port Stephens Council website: Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary.</p> | In progress |
| <p>Relocation of koalas to unoccupied koala habitat</p> <p>This is a priority for research under the NSW Koala Research Plan. Endeavour Veterinary Ecology Pty Ltd is currently delivering a research project under the NSW Koala Strategy, titled ‘Reviewing koala relocation practices to maximise prospects for successful koala translocation programs’. The outcomes of this project, along with expert and stakeholder input, will help inform and progress this action.</p> | In progress |
| <p>Develop a best practice planning guideline for koalas</p> <p>The Environment, Energy and Science Group (EES), part of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has commenced work developing the guideline. The guideline will be informed by the Koala Habitat Information Base and other resources.</p> | In progress |

| Action | Status |
|---|--------------------|
| <p>Research project on chlamydia in koalas</p> <p>Chlamydia has been identified as a priority for research under the Koala Research Plan. Four research projects are currently being funded under the NSW Koala Strategy and are entering their second year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • impacts and drivers of chlamydial disease in the koala: relationships between the host, pathogen and environment (The University of Sydney) • vaccination against chlamydiosis: an effective disease management tool in wild populations? (The University of Sydney) • testing a combination vaccine to protect koalas against the dual threats of chlamydia and koala retrovirus (University of the Sunshine Coast) • new and improved chlamydial treatment to reduce disease burden (University of Technology Sydney). | <p>In progress</p> |
| <p>Support koala rehabilitators</p> <p>Training standards on protocols for the triage and treatment of koalas have been completed and disseminated to the wildlife rehabilitation sector. NPWS is seeking to introduce a train-the-trainer workshop to guide implementation of the standards.</p> <p>Approximately \$125,000 has been allocated for rehabilitators equipment and access to transport for injured koalas this year, focusing on larger assets. This builds on the \$185,000 in funds expended during the first year of delivery with the focus on rescue equipment.</p> <p>Three projects on the post-release monitoring of koalas are now underway.</p> <p>A prototype for the single wildlife rescue call number has been developed and is being tested.</p> <p>Guidelines for licensed wildlife rehabilitators on the treatment and care of rescued koalas have been developed and are available online: Treatment and Care of Rescued Koalas.</p> <p>Protocols for collecting samples and data from koalas and accompanying forms and instructions have been developed and are available from the Koala Health Hub.</p> | <p>In progress</p> |
| <p>Train vets in native wildlife care</p> <p>Taronga Zoo led the creation of a professional development training course for vets and vet nurses in native wildlife care. All five modules have now been completed and the course opened in June 2020.</p> | <p>In progress</p> |
| <p>Fix priority koala road kill hotspots across New South Wales</p> <p>The completion of koala fencing on Picton Road was announced on 13 September 2019. The 2019–20 hotspot to be addressed through the NSW Koala Strategy has been delayed due to the bushfires and COVID-19 restrictions; it will be delivered alongside the 2020–21 hotspot project.</p> | <p>In progress</p> |
| <p>Australian Museum is designated as the biobank to store koala genetic information in New South Wales</p> <p>The Australian Museum is now the designated biobank. Work is continuing to grow the biobank through the donations of samples. NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service has provided training to wildlife rehabilitators on the protocol for collecting genetic material.</p> | <p>Complete</p> |



| Action | Status |
|--|-------------|
| <p>Create a statewide Koala Habitat Information Base to inform koala conservation decisions</p> <p>The Koala Habitat Information Base is publicly available on the SEED portal: Koala Habitat Information Base.</p> <p>The Koala Habitat Information Base has informed conservation actions and policy decisions to protect koalas, including the development of the new State Environmental Planning Policy (Koala Habitat Protection) 2019. The information base will also be a helpful resource for future policy developments to protect koalas.</p> | Complete |
| <p>Statewide citizen science koala survey</p> <p>The Community Wildlife Survey ran from May–December 2019. It reopened in September 2020 following the 2019–20 bushfires and can be completed online: Community Wildlife Survey.</p> | In progress |
| <p>Pilot an app to collect information about koalas</p> <p>The <i>I Spy Koala</i> app is complete and has been released for use on Apple and Android devices.</p> | Complete |
| <p>Koala Strategy monitoring program</p> <p>The NSW Koala Monitoring Framework has been developed, reviewed internally and presented to the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer and NSW Koala Strategy Independent Expert Advisory Panel. Collaborations are now being built with koala monitoring partners across the State.</p> | In progress |
| <p>Information collected about koalas can be easily accessed by the community</p> <p>Over 25,000 records have been transferred into the NSW BioNet Atlas database since the launch of the Strategy, including over 12,000 records collected by the wildlife rehabilitation sector. Other koala data will continue to be added as it is collected. A koala data strategy has been developed to ensure koala data is managed appropriately.</p> <p>Information continues to be added to the NSW Government SEED portal including data from the Koala Habitat Information Base, koala sightings in the NSW Bionet Atlas entered using the <i>I Spy Koala</i> app, the Community Wildlife Survey and data from fauna rehabilitators and wildlife hospitals.</p> | In progress |
| <p>Supporting priority koala research</p> <p>A Koala Research Symposium was held in November 2018, which informed development of the NSW Koala Research Plan 2019–28. Following a call for research proposals in May 2019, grants have been awarded to 10 projects under the research plan. Projects are currently in their second year with one project nearing completion. More information on the projects and plan is available online: NSW Koala Research Plan.</p> <p>The next biennial research symposium planned to be held by mid-2020 has been postponed. The symposium will inform any revisions to the research plan by reviewing and revising the key knowledge gaps and research priorities identified in the plan.</p> | In progress |
| <p>Research on koala responses to native forest harvesting</p> <p>An update on the progress of the koala research program being overseen by the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) was presented at an annual forum with program researchers, the Commission’s expert panel and other agency scientists in December 2019. More information about the research program, including the annual progress report published in February 2020, is available from the NRC website: Koala research.</p> | In progress |
| <p>Improving our approach to fire management to protect koalas and koala habitat</p> <p>Key areas for delivery have been agreed and progressed. Discussions have been temporarily put on hold while agencies focus on responding to the 2019–20 bushfires.</p> | In progress |

Find out more about your environment at:

www.environment.nsw.gov.au

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Cover photo: Koala, *Phascolarctos cinereus*, between the Tweed and Brunswick Rivers east of the Pacific Highway (Scott Hetherington/DPIE); **Contents:** Koala, *Phascolarctos cinereus*, in tree river red gum (Dan Lunney/DPIE); **Page 6:** Koala, *Phascolarctos cinereus* (Dan Lunney/DPIE); **Page 7:** Koala, *Phascolarctos cinereus*, monitoring (Jim Malecki/DPIE); **Page 8:** Koala at the Koala Hospital, Port Macquarie (David Finnegan/DPIE); **Page 9:** Koala trapping and tagging (Marie-Claire Demers/DPIE); **Page 10:** Koalas, *Phascolarctos cinereus*, in the Koala Hospital in Macquarie Nature Reserve, Port Macquarie (John Spencer/DPIE); **Page 11:** Koalas, *Phascolarctos*

cinereus (Dan Lunney/DPIE); **Page 14:** Tallowwood forest (Kerrie Metzler, NPWS); **Page 15:** Koala, *Phascolarctos cinereus*, (Dan Lunney/DPIE); **Page 21:** Gumbaynggirr rangers visiting the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital (Jim Malecki); **Page 22:** Koala, Macquarie Nature Reserve (John Spencer/DPIE); Family, friends and community members gathered recently at Myocum to plant 1000 trees, contributing to creating an important corridor connection between hinterland and coastal koala populations as part of the Northern Rivers Koala Project (Georgina Jones); **Page 25:** A rehabilitated koala named Lucas (Amy Hockings); Koala crossing under the road (Road and Maritime Services); **Page 28:** Koala, *Phascolarctos cinereus*, on Narrandera Koala Spotting Day (Zachery Wells); **Page 29:** Koala, *Phascolarctos cinereus*, release (Marie-Claire Demers/DPIE); **Page 30:** Koala trapping and tagging (Marie-Claire Demers/DPIE); **Page 31:** Koala, *Phascolarctos cinereus*, on Narrandera Koala Spotting Day (Zachery Wells);

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