

Stakeholder group:

community member

Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin?

No

Do you consent to your submission being made public?

Yes

The current NSW Koala Strategy

1. Do you think the goal of doubling the number of koalas in New South Wales by 2050 provides a sound foundation for the NSW Government's approach to koala conservation into the future? If not, what do you think the goal should be?

The number of koalas should be taken from the wild, in their native habitat. Too much koala habitat is being cleared for forestry, mining, agriculture, urban development, etc. and the government needs to stop this destruction, fragmentation and degradation of koala habitat.

2. In your area of expertise, what gaps do you think there are in the Strategy?

There needs to be more focus on conserving and protecting koala habitat in the long term. There's no point breeding koalas in zoos or spending funds on koala hospitals if koalas have no sustainable native habitat in which to live and breed.

Prioritising koala populations

3. Are the current categories of strongholds, populations for immediate investment and populations to fill knowledge gaps the right ones for koala conservation? Are there other important koala populations that should be identified for conservation management?

Populations of koalas need protection by stopping clearing of their habitat. Koala populations need to be large enough, connected with each other and have enough good quality habitat to be sustainable and safe from roadkills, dog attacks, forestry operations, etc.

There has been enough mapping of koalas to know where they are. Funding needs to be directed to protecting and conserving koala habitat into the future for the long term.

The importance of Aboriginal ecological knowledge to koala conservation

4. How could a revised Strategy further empower Aboriginal communities? What, if any, are barriers in the current framework?

Knowledge of our First Nations people is important to maintain their connection with viable, healthy and safe koalas populations. Funding for training and managing of aboriginal communities could help with the protection of koala habitat and populations. Barriers are funding as funding first needs to be directed at koala reserves to preserve and maintain koala habitat for current koala populations.

Addressing the impacts of climate change

5. How do you think the NSW Government can more effectively identify and protect climate refuges in a revised Strategy?

The NSW government needs to stop logging in native forests immediately to conserve koala populations and habitat. Native forests are carbon sinks and need to be conserved to reduced dangerous climate change like drought, wildfires and storms and floods.

There have been enough studies to identify climate refuges, now the government needs to set aside and protect native forests for the survival of koalas.

6. What support should the NSW Government provide to koala populations in areas we know will be subject to serious climate change impacts?

The NSW government needs to stop all logging in native forests to protect koala habitat and provide enough area, connectivity and sustainability for the long term survival of koalas. If the NSW government conserves enough koala habitat through permanent protection, there will be enough habitat to counteract areas of forest habitat that will be affected by serious climate change impacts.

7. How could a revised strategy support better adaptive responses to climate change?

The strategy needs to be revised to immediately stop native forest logging in NSW. Older native forests are more resilient to climate change and will support koala habitat and koala populations into the long term. Koala habitat, protected well from logging and other destruction will provide carbon sinks to offset carbon pollution by other means.

Pillar 1: Protecting koala habitat

8. Do you think the combination of habitat acquisition, private land conservation, and habitat restoration is the right approach to protecting important koala habitat? What else should the NSW Government be doing to protect koala habitat?

All of the above would be a good starting point, however the NSW government needs to stop logging native forests immediately. This logging is costing NSW taxpayers in terms of inefficiency, fines for logging breaches, loss of native habitat for all wildlife and plants, erosion control, water contamination, weed spread and release of carbon which is contributing to dangerous and costly climate change.

9. How can landholders be better supported to protect, restore and enhance koala habitat on their land? What are the barriers?

Landholders can be supported with funding as well as education in the benefits of retaining native vegetation at the whole farm and landscape level as well as opportunities for tourism for conserving sustainable koala habitat.

10. How can landholders be supported to participate in natural capital markets and other opportunities that drive improved outcomes for koalas?

Conserving native forests for koalas and other species is beneficial for landholders in terms of reducing the impact of climate change, reducing erosion and other land degradation, improving water quality, increasing tourism opportunities and general amenity.

11. How can the NSW Government better support local councils to identify and protect koala habitat?

Local councils could be funded to provide advisory positions within council to liaise and inform local communities about koalas and koala habitat to improve viability and protection of koala populations. Council development should consider risks to koala habitat, including housing, roads and other infrastructure. The NSW government needs to stop logging koala habitat and protect it into perpetuity to have any chance of maintaining koala population viability.

Pillar 2: Supporting local communities to conserve koalas

12. Do you think the regional partnership model is effective for delivering on-ground koala conservation actions? Do you know who the regional partnership is in your area?

Firstly koala habitat needs conserving in the long term by the NSW government, including stopping native forest logging. After that regional partnerships can be considered. All funds should be directed to koala habitat preservation with as much land as possible conserved and maintained.

13. Are there any threats or issues specific to your region that should be given more attention to?

Threats from logging native forests is destroying and damaging koala habitat and causing koala deaths. Urban, mining and agricultural expansion is destroying and degrading koala habitat and causing koala deaths from starvation, road and dog kills, disease and lack of safe movement through landscapes.

14. How can the NSW Government work better with philanthropic and business partners to leverage investment to deliver outcomes at the local level?

The NSW government needs to stop all native forest logging to protect koalas and their habitat. Tourism is a huge draw card and their may be private operators who would be interested in buying land for koala conservation.

Pillar 3: Improving the safety and health of koalas

15. What else can the NSW Government do to better mitigate vehicle strike?

The NSW government needs to stop native forest logging and other development that causes the destruction and degradation of koala habitat. Koalas are killed on roads that break up their habitat so larger areas of healthy, sustainable habitat is best practice. Koala habitat needs to be protected in perpetuity for long term koala health and survival.

16. What can the NSW Government do to better support the wildlife carer sector?

Stop logging native forests and approving urban, agricultural, mining and other development expansion in koala habitat forests. This will reduce the amount of koalas killed, injured and affected by disease in their habitat and better enable them to take refuge in unburnt areas during and following wildfires.

17. What measures should the NSW Government be taking to address koala disease, including chlamydia?

Stop native forest logging in NSW to better support healthy and sustainable koala populations.

18. How could the NSW Government improve the koala translocation program to ensure conservation outcomes are met?

Koala translocation is expensive and not effective. The best and most effective way to sustain healthy koala populations is stop logging native forests which are koala habitat. The NSW government should stop approving land uses that risk the extinction of koalas such as inappropriate and destructive urban expansion, agriculture, logging and mining operations.

19. How can the NSW Government better protect koalas and their habitat in response to hazard reduction burning and bushfires?

It has been shown in recent scientific research that old growth native forests do not burn as regularly or severely as logged native forest regrowth, recently burned or fragmented native forests. The best way the NSW government can protect koalas and their habitat is conserve and protect native forests as soon as possible and on as large a scale as possible.

Larger, more mature areas of koala habitat are more resilient and provide better protection for koalas during and after wildfires and these should be properly and fully protected and resourced immediately.

20. How can the NSW Government improve emergency coordination with koala carers, vets and other partner organisations during a bushfire or extreme weather event?

Better technology.

Pillar 4: Building our knowledge

21. What do you see as the most critical knowledge gaps in understanding the distribution and relative abundance of koalas across New South Wales?

There has been enough investment by the NSW government into mapping the distribution of koalas. The government needs to act immediately and decisively to stop native forest logging and protect and conserve koala habitat to save as much as possible for future koala survival.

22. What changes should be made to the koala research plan to ensure it delivers research that directly benefits koala conservation?

Enough talk of research, this has already been done and tells us that native forest logging in NSW needs to stop immediately as it's having a direct negative effect on koalas and destroying their habitat and population viability.

23. What data do you need to effectively carry out koala conservation work? What changes would you recommend to how the NSW Government manages koala data?

Enough data has been collected, native forest logging of koala habitat forests needs to cease immediately and these forests need to be conserved and protected into the future before koala populations reach a level where they're unsustainable.

Additional comments

Do you have any other comments or feedback?

It will be very sad if the NSW government is slow in acting to conserve and protect enough good quality koala habitat in NSW. The government needs to stop logging native forests which are koala habitat and stop approving development that degrades and fragments koala habitat. It is a real and present threat that koalas will be extinct in the wild by 2050.