



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

**National Recovery Plan for the Koala *Phascolarctos cinereus*  
(combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and  
the Australian Capital Territory)**

**National Koala Recovery Team, May 2024**

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The National Koala Recovery Team acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country in Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea, and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to their elders both past and present.

We are committed to working respectfully with First Nations peoples and acknowledge their use, knowledge and custodianship of Australia's native plants and animals including the koala over countless generations. We support First Nations peoples and their aspirations to maintain, protect and manage their culture, language, land and sea, and heritage.



# Foreword

On behalf of the National Koala Recovery Team Board, I present the second annual report on the implementation of the National Recovery Plan for the Koala, demonstrating a collective effort to protect this unique and iconic species.

Over the last 12 months we have continued the momentum in implementing the National Recovery Plan for the Koala, thanks to our collaborative work to progress towards the goal to stop the declining population size of the listed koala. The foundations that have been formed will continue to underpin our ongoing investment and efforts.

Among our key focuses has been improving knowledge about koalas and providing robust data over time, with the National Koala Monitoring Program delivering a standardised suite of koala monitoring methods and creating a user-friendly single-site portal for the public to report koala sightings. We are also encouraged to see the community's increasing involvement in citizen science and large-scale habitat restoration work.

The National Koala Recovery Team remains committed and continues to provide strong oversight and guidance to this work, ensuring a collaborative and coordinated approach to the long-term recovery of the koala – working together, and recognising and harnessing the skills, expertise and capacity of government agencies, First Nations peoples, natural resource management groups, research organisations, conservation groups and the community.

While the koala still faces challenges such as disease, habitat loss and a changing climate, we urge everyone to continue to work together and take actions to support and protect this species. Only through sustained commitment and effort can we ensure that our iconic koala recovers, survives and thrives.



**Le Trac**  
**Chair, National Koala Recovery Team**

# 1. Introduction

In February 2022<sup>1</sup> the koala (combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory) was listed as endangered. In April 2022, the [National Recovery Plan for the Koala \*Phascolarctos cinereus\* \(combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory\)](#) (recovery plan) was published, setting a pathway for koala recovery action over a 10-year timeframe.

In October 2022, the first national recovery team for the koala was established, bringing together First Nations people, government, community groups, non-government organisations and scientists with a common purpose: to stop the decline in the population size of the listed koala. The recovery team structure represents the broad interest in koalas across the conservation community. The team commits to best-practice approaches to governance, data-sharing, and transparency.








This 2024 annual report for the recovery plan considers progress on the implementation of the recovery plan, and on the status of the listed koala, for the period May 2023 to May 2024, as well as what has been achieved since the plan was published in 2022.

The summary assessment of koalas highlights their continued poor condition. This report also documents progress against each of the 37 actions in the recovery plan. It shows the significant and concerted effort by governments, conservation organisations and the community to reverse the decline of this iconic species.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (2022) [Conservation Advice for \*Phascolarctos cinereus\* \(Koala\) combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory](#), Attachment A: Listing Assessment for *Phascolarctos cinereus* combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. Canberra.

## 2. Summary assessment of progress

EPBC Act Status	Endangered		
Recovery plan	<a href="#">National Recovery Plan for the Koala <i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i> (combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory)</a>		
Listed range			
State/condition <sup>2</sup>	 Poor	 High consensus	
		 Limited evidence	
Conservation trajectory <sup>3</sup>	 Deteriorating	 High consensus	
		 Limited evidence	
Further information	Email: <a href="mailto:Koala.recovery@dcceew.gov.au">Koala.recovery@dcceew.gov.au</a>		
	Web: <a href="https://www.dcceew.gov.au/koalas">https://www.dcceew.gov.au/koalas</a>		

<sup>2</sup> See [Reference Guide](#) for detailed criteria.

<sup>3</sup> See [Reference Guide](#) for detailed criteria.



At the time of listing as endangered, there were estimated to be 92,184 mature individual koalas, with a contracting trend. They were estimated to occur across 1,665,850 km<sup>2</sup> with a contracting trend, and occupying 19,428 km<sup>2</sup> with a contracting trend. Less than 10 subpopulations were listed, with a declining trend as climate-suitable koala habitat shrinks.

Significant effort and investment continues to improve knowledge about absolute koala numbers, distribution and occupation areas. This work will provide robust data over time to help inform future consideration of the state and condition of the listed koala, with improving confidence intervals. Current population estimates based on the National Koala Monitoring Program modelling work are outlined in Section 5.

Funding and significant effort also continue to contribute to the National Recovery Plan for the Koala, with approximately \$466 million invested by contemporary governments in koala conservation. This includes an additional \$172 million committed by the NSW Government in 2023. There is also investment by non-government organisations such as the WWF Koalas Forever program (noting that elements of this are funded by the NSW Koala Strategy), and local community investments, either independent or working with funding partners.

Since the last report, there has also been a focus on evaluating koala recovery approaches, with publication of a new Native Species Conservation Plan for the Gula (Koala) in the ACT, consideration of planning regulations in Queensland, and a review of the NSW Koala Strategy underway.

While these investments and reforms will have a positive impact over time, this does not arrest the long-term trend of declining koala populations. The state and condition of listed koalas for this report remains poor with the conservation trajectory deteriorating in line with the Threatened Species Scientific Committee listing advice.

## Delivery highlights

The publication of the National Recovery Plan for the Koala in 2022 has strengthened collaboration between key partners in koala conservation, including national, state and territory governments, First Nations peoples, non-government organisations, researchers, wildlife carers and community groups. Working together and harnessing the expertise and knowledge of each stakeholder is critical to implement recovery plan actions and support the koala's long-term survival.

Since the last annual report in May 2023, the NSW Government has committed an additional \$172 million to support koala recovery actions. The funding is supporting regional wildlife hospitals, the establishment of a koala care facility in southwest Sydney, wildlife rehabilitators, the creation of koala-friendly crossings, and the establishment of a Great Koala National Park on the mid North Coast of NSW and a Georges River National Park in Sydney's south. This brings the total NSW Government investment in koala recovery since 2021 to approximately \$365 million.

There has also been significant progress against several recovery plan actions over the last 12 months:

## Coordination

**Action 1J:** Establish and support an active National Koala Recovery Team

This action is now complete. The recovery team structure is based on a program delivery model and follows recovery team best practice guidelines (refer Section 6 for further information).

Since 2022, the National Recovery Team Board (the Board) has met 4 times to provide guidance and coordinate recovery plan delivery. The Strategy and Coordination Group has met 6 times to discuss and coordinate implementation of recovery plan actions and provide advice to the Board on strategic issues. The two community advisory groups, the Community Advisory Committee and the First Nations Reference Group, have each met twice, ensuring community and First Nation perspectives are considered in delivery of actions.

The recovery teams will meet on an ongoing basis, with coordination provided by the Australian Government.

## Monitoring

**Action 1G:** Coordinate pre-existing koala datasets and improve data management and standards including survey and sampling design standards.

Strong progress has been made against this action over the last 12 months, including:

- the National Koala Monitoring Program (NKMP) has published a standardised suite of koala monitoring methods. This is available on the NKMP [website](#)
- the NSW Government is working with the Australian Museum to establish a biobank for NSW koala genetic material
- the Queensland Government is working with CSIRO to develop a koala habitat assessment tool and online database/hub for storage and management of koala datasets.

## Engagement

**Action 2F:** Develop a user-friendly single-site portal for the general public to report koala sightings

This action is nearing completion. There are multiple avenues for the public to report koala sightings, including through local and state government initiatives. A single portal has been developed through the National Koala Monitoring Program – the [Koala Spotter](#) mobile app, and the app has been updated in the last 12 months.



## Delivery risks

The Recovery Plan sets out an ambitious pathway for koala recovery, and successful implementation is challenged by a range of risks. The National Recovery Team Board has developed a risk framework to address risks, which include process-based risks, such as lack of stakeholder coordination, as well as threat-based risks, such as habitat loss and wildfire. Controls are identified for each risk, and these are typically the responsibility of a number of stakeholders. The Board regularly monitors risks and identifies where additional treatments may be required.

Over the last 12 months some specific risks have arisen with implications for recovery plan delivery.

There was reduced national coordination of the recovery plan for 5 months due to a loss of personnel. This in turn delayed meetings of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and the First Nations Reference Group. This has now been addressed. A new National Recovery Team Coordinator was recruited and commenced in late January, providing additional resourcing to support the recovery team. The Community Advisory Committee met for a second time in April 2024, and the First Nations Reference Group met again in May 2024.

There have been delays in firming up the national koala population estimate due to data sharing challenges. This work is being progressed by CSIRO through the National Koala Monitoring Program. CSIRO has worked closely with the relevant agencies to progress data sharing agreements.

It is acknowledged that threat-based risks to the listed koala's recovery, such as habitat clearance and disease, are ongoing. Actions to address these are included in the recovery plan, and will require continued collaboration, resourcing and effort.

### 3. Recovery plan goal and objectives

The goal of the recovery plan is to stop the trend of decline in population size of the listed koala. Measuring progress towards this goal (Table 1) will only be possible in 5- to 10-year intervals because long-term data is needed to assess trends.

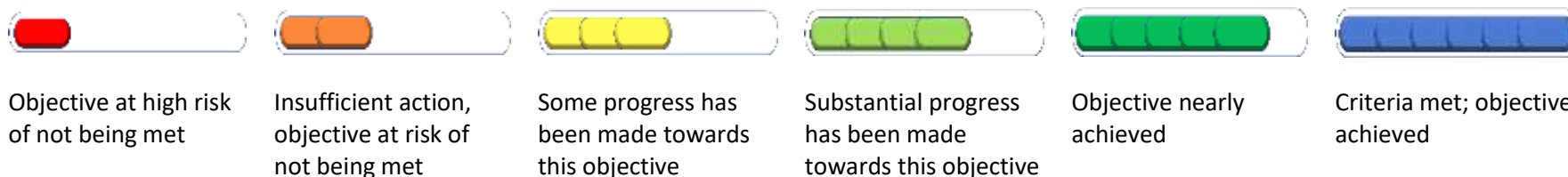
The objectives of the recovery plan are 10-year outcomes, and there may appear to be limited progress in the early years of the recovery plan for the same reason (Table 2). The data needed to assess progress takes time to collect and analyse.


Information in the tables below provides a qualitative assessment of progress against the recovery plan goal and objectives.



**Table 1:** Progress towards the goal of the National Recovery Plan for the Koala

Goal	Comments
To stop the trend of decline in population size of the listed koala, by having resilient, connected, and genetically healthy metapopulations across its range, and to increase the extent, quality and connectivity of habitat occupied.	<p>Significant investment and effort have been committed by governments which contributes to delivery of the National Recovery Plan for the Koala. This includes more than \$365 million to support koala recovery in NSW, the Australian Government's \$76.9 million Saving Koalas, and the \$24 million South East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy.</p> <p>This investment is supporting activities such as koala survey and monitoring, habitat restoration, health research and threat management.</p> <p>While these investments will have a positive impact over time, the state and condition of listed koalas for this report remains poor, with the conservation trajectory deteriorating in line with the Threatened Species Scientific Committee listing advice.</p>

**Table 2:** Progress towards the objectives of the National Recovery Plan for the Koala including status indicators



Recovery plan objectives/ criteria	Comments	Status
<p><b>Objective 1a</b></p> <p>The area of occupancy and estimated size of populations that are declining, suspected to be declining, or predicted to decline are instead stabilised then increased.</p> <p><b>Performance Criteria</b></p> <p>By 2032,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>indices of population size (abundance) of a representative sample of populations show that population size has increased</li> <li>the area of occupancy of a representative sample of populations has increased</li> <li>the area and quality of refugial habitat of populations whose primary threat is climate change, and indirectly drought and heatwaves, has increased.</li> </ul>	<p>Results from the National Koala Monitoring Program and state-based initiatives are providing robust data and improving our understanding of koala population numbers and area of occupation across the listed range. Ongoing investment and collaboration in this program will improve the evidence available to assess population status and trend over time.</p> <p>However, there remains a high level of confidence that the listed koala population is in a poor condition, with the conservation trajectory deteriorating.</p> <p>Establishing baselines for this objective and associated performance criteria is a key task to allow for interim reporting at the 5-year recovery plan review, and for final reporting in 2032, and still needs to be progressed.</p>	 Some progress

Recovery plan objectives/ criteria	Comments	Status
<p><b>Objective 1b</b> The area of occupancy and estimated size of populations that are suspected and predicted to be stable are maintained or increased.</p> <p><b>Performance Criteria</b> By 2032,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>indices of population size (abundance) of a representative sample of populations show that population size are maintained or increased</li> <li>the area of occupancy of a representative sample of populations is maintained or increased.</li> </ul> <p>Performance Criteria (1a and 1b): By 2032,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>across all representative populations, there is a total net increase of habitat (excluding offset areas) five-yearly.</li> </ul>	<p>Results from the National Koala Monitoring Program and state-based initiatives are providing robust data and improving our understanding of koala population numbers and area of occupation across the listed range.</p> <p>Establishing baselines for this objective and associated performance criteria is a key task to allow for interim reporting at the 5-year recovery plan review, and for final reporting in 2032, and still needs to be progressed.</p>	 Some progress
<p><b>Objective 2</b> Metapopulation processes are maintained or improved.</p> <p><b>Performance Criteria</b> By 2032,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>indicators of population health (genetic and disease) are maintained or improved</li> <li>indicators of ecosystem health are maintained or improved.</li> </ul>	<p>Work has commenced in exploring suitable koala health indicators and metrics as part of the National Koala Monitoring Program.</p> <p>Funding for the development of agreed protocols and guidelines for disease evaluation and response is key to progressing health and welfare actions.</p> <p>Establishing baselines for this objective and the performance criteria is a key task to allow for interim reporting at the 5-year recovery plan review, and for final reporting in 2032.</p>	 Some progress



Recovery plan objectives/ criteria	Comments	Status
<p><b>Objective 3</b></p> <p>Partners, communities, and individuals have a greater role and capability in listed koala monitoring, conservation, and management.</p> <p><b>Performance Criteria</b></p> <p>By 2032,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is an increase in the number, locations and activities of Indigenous Australians participating in recovery for the listed koala, including leadership, agenda setting, citizen science, training and capacity building and on-ground works across the range of the listed koala</li> <li>• there is an increase in the number, locations and activities of the general community participating in recovery for the listed koala, including leadership, agenda setting, citizen science, training and capacity building and on-ground works</li> <li>• there is an increase in the number, locations and activities of the partners participating in recovery for the listed koala, including leadership, agenda setting, citizen science, training and capacity building and on-ground works across the range of the listed koala.</li> </ul>	<p>There are hundreds of organisations involved in koala conservation across the listed range, including First Nations groups, Landcare, wildlife care, local governments, researchers, community groups, wildlife advocacy groups and NGOs.</p> <p>Establishing baselines for this objective and the performance criteria is a key task to allow for interim reporting at the 5-year recovery plan review, and for final reporting in 2032.</p>	 <p>Some progress</p>

## 4. Implementing actions

In the second year of this 10-year recovery plan, there is continued progress against each of the 37 actions. Significant headway has been made on some actions, with 2 actions complete and 2 actions nearing completion. The indicators are arranged according to the six strategies of the recovery plan:

1. Build and share knowledge
2. Engage and partner with the community in listed koala conservation
3. Increase the area of protected habitat for the listed koala
4. Integrate listed koala conservation into policy, statutory and land use plans
5. Strategically restore listed koala habitat
6. Actively manage listed koala metapopulations.































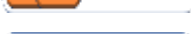


The status indicators show progress against each recovery plan action. Table 3 provides a summary of progress.

Projects led by the [NSW Koala Strategy](#) are referenced as (NSW Action x.x), and the [Southeast Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy](#) are referenced as (QLD Action x.x), using action numbers from the respective strategies. Recommendations from the [Koala Disease Risk Analysis](#) (KDRA) are referenced as (KDRA x.x), using reference numbers from that document. Projects by the Australian Capital Territory Government are referenced as (ACT), and Victorian Government as (VIC).







Additional activities and projects conducted through the year have been included, including those identified by the Community Advisory Committee. It is important to note these are representative of action by stakeholders, rather than being a comprehensive list of every activity, achievement, or outcome during the year. It is recognised that some organisations and individuals also undertake advocacy work to support koala conservation. While this may not be reflected in specific recovery plan actions, it nonetheless contributes to recovery efforts.

Actions taken outside of the listed koala range, for example in Victoria or South Australia, are not included in this annual report unless they contribute more broadly to an understanding of koala metapopulations, distribution and health, or national standards.

**Table 3:** Overview of status indicators for each of actions in the recovery plan, arranged by strategy, current at the time of publishing.

Action	Status	Action	Status	Action	Status	Action	Status	Action	Status	Action	Status
STRATEGY 1		STRATEGY 2		STRATEGY 3		STRATEGY 4		STRATEGY 5		STRATEGY 6	
1a		2a		3a		4a		5a		6a	
1b		2b		3b		4b		5b		6b	
1c		2c		3c		4c		5c		6c	
1d		2d				4d		5d		6d	
1e		2e				4e				6e	
1f		2f									
1g		2g									
1h		2h									
1i											
1j											
1k											
1l											

#### Legend


	No progress
	Limited progress
	Some progress
	Substantial progress
	Nearing completion
	Complete

#### STRATEGIES

1. Build and share knowledge.
2. Engage and partner with the community in listed koala conservation.
3. Increase the area of protected habitat for the list koala.
4. Integrate listed koala conservation into policy, statutory and land use plans.
5. Strategically restored listed koala habitat.
6. Actively manage listed koala metapopulations.

## Strategy 1 – Build and share knowledge

These actions involve knowledge-based inputs or activities that support direct actions in the recovery plan. They will provide information for a strategic and coordinated approach to conservation for the listed koala.

ACTION 1a	
Identify nationally important populations and habitat for recovery across the listed koala range under current and future conditions	
<p><b>Achievements</b></p> <p>Substantial work has been completed which assists in identifying nationally important koala habitat. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identification of nationally important koala areas (NIKAs) to guide implementation of the recovery plan, published by the Australian Government</li> <li>• completion of the Koala Conservation and Protection Investment Framework for Environmental Resources (<a href="#">INFFER</a>), an analysis of priority areas for investment in 2022 looking at the entire listed koala range (Australian Government)</li> <li>• an update of the NSW koala habitat information base, including refinements to the vegetation extent layer, the koala habitat suitability model, the koala tree index, and development of a Priority Populations Layer (ARKS) (NSW Action 4.4)</li> <li>• production of a range-wide map of koala genomic variation, diversity and inbreeding (University of Sydney).</li> </ul> <p>In the last 12 months, examples of additional activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an annual update of koala habitat mapping for South East Queensland (QLD Action 1.1, 4.2), resolving community input on habitat mapping (QLD Action 5.7), and resolving locally refined koala habitat areas (QLD Action 4.3)</li> <li>• a Koala Arcs project in South East Queensland, which extends existing Koala Habitat and Priority Area mapping to identify areas where investment in conservation measures would be most strategic (Healthy Land and Water)</li> <li>• landscape-scale data collection on koala distribution, density and health (University of the Sunshine Coast).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Status</b></p>  <p>Substantial progress</p>
<p><b>Implications and next steps</b></p> <p>Work done to date provides a sound basis to consider nationally important habitat under current and future conditions. To complete the action, additional work is needed to understand nationally important koala populations, which can support decision-making.</p> <p>Other activities that will progress this action include genetic analysis across the listed range, the ongoing National Koala Monitoring Program, the NSW baseline koala survey including genetic baseline (NSW Action 4.2) and a new NSW Koala Habitat Suitability Model and Koala Tree Index incorporating new koala and tree species records since 2018 (NSW Action 4.4). Updated mapping for the northern section of the South East Queensland bioregion has commenced and will also assist in delivering this action. The Queensland Government will also review koala habitat mapping for southern South East Queensland at the conclusion of the Koala Strategy period in 2025 (QLD Action 4.1).</p>	<p><b>Contributors</b></p> <p>Australian, Queensland and NSW governments and others</p>



**ACTION 1b**

Identify spatially and temporally strategic areas of high priority for: a) restoration and revegetation based on koala and eucalypt population viability, b) climate and fire refugia, and c) corridors facilitating movement and metapopulation processes of koalas

**Achievements**

Progress includes:

- nationally important koala area (NIKA) analysis which includes identification of important restoration areas and connectivity corridors, based on future climate scenarios (Australian Government); there is ongoing work to refine these
- strategic regional habitat restoration prioritisation mapping identifies areas within priority koala populations under the NSW Koala Strategy for protection, creation and restoration (using similar techniques to those developed for the NSW Northern Rivers Regional Koala Strategy 2023) (NSW Action 1.4)
- identification of priority areas for protection, restoration and creation of koala habitat in the [NSW Northern Rivers Regional Koala Conservation Strategy](#) (2023)
- an examination of the importance of the Clarence Valley region, NSW for koala populations (Clarence Environment Centre)
- investigation into the koala's use of the landscape under different environmental conditions at 2 study sites in the Blue Mountains region, which includes longer term impacts of bushfires based on different fire intensities to inform fire refugia (Science for Wildlife)
- connectivity mapping based on landscape, genetic and koala density data, ranking locations based on koala health and threats; this includes an investigation of climate refugia (University of the Sunshine Coast).

**Status**

Some progress

**Implications and next steps**

This is an ongoing action. Substantial work is planned to identify strategic areas for restoration, refugia and connectivity. Results of genetic analysis across the listed range and refinement of the NIKA analysis will also help progress this action. Additional effort by the NSW Government will also assist in delivering this action, including:

- mapping baseline area of total koala habitat, including core and locally refined areas (NSW Action 4.2)
- identification of priority restoration areas (NSW Action 1.4)
- identification of 5,000 ha of Box-gum woodland for restoration and rewilding (NSW Action 1.8)
- working with Singleton Council and Hunter Joint Organisation to develop habitat mapping of priority areas and connectivity across the northern section of Singleton Local Government Area.

**Contributors**

Australian and NSW governments and others

**ACTION 1c**

Develop prioritisation at regional or other appropriate scales for the long-term implementation of actions

**Achievements**

- Prioritisation at regional scales has been completed for NSW and South East Queensland under the respective state strategies.
- The [NSW Northern Rivers Regional Koala Strategy](#) (2023) includes prioritised actions. This strategy has been developed through a collaborative partnership of six regional councils (Byron, Ballina, Kyogle, Lismore, Richmond Valley, and Tweed) and Friends of the Koala.
- The [koala disease risk analysis](#) (KDRA) prioritised koala health and welfare recommendations (Australian Government).
- Completion of the second Koala Conservation and Protection Investment Framework for Environmental Resources (INFFER) report 2022 across the entire range of the listed koala, identifying priority areas for investment (Australian Government)

In the last 12 months, examples of additional activities include:

- use of KoalaBASE to help identify threat hotspots in Queensland for threat reduction (QLD Action 3.8)
- strategic assessment for South East Queensland (QLD Action 6.2)
- advocacy work by North East Forest Alliance aimed at protecting existing habitat and koala populations, including commissioning pre-logging surveys on state forest to identify resident koala populations, develop a methodology for this work and identify areas for protection.

**Status**

Some progress

**Implications and next steps**

Additional analysis of koala recovery at regional scales will further advance this action. Stakeholders have committed to a range of projects that will help to deliver this action, including:

- use of monitoring data to guide future koala conservation actions in NSW (NSW Action 4.1)
- development of regional koala conservation partnerships (NSW Action 2.1)
- ongoing review of local government planning instruments when these become available for review (QLD Gov).

**Contributors**

Australian,  
Queensland and NSW  
governments and  
others

**ACTION 1d****Establish a fit-for-purpose long-term National Koala Monitoring Program (NKMP)****Achievements**

The Australian Government has committed \$10 million for the implementation of the National Koala Monitoring Program. The program aims to fill knowledge gaps for future koala recovery and management efforts. CSIRO led the co-design of the 4-year program and is facilitating the roll out of the program with the broader Australian community. Phase 1 of the NKMP is now complete, with phase 2 underway.

**Status**

Complete

**Implications and next steps**

CSIRO has established the National Koala Monitoring Program. Phase 2 is now underway (see Recovery Plan Action 1e)

**Contributors**

CSIRO, Australian, Queensland and NSW governments and others

**ACTION 1e****Implement National Koala Monitoring Program and review design****Achievements**

Phase 2 of the National Koala Monitoring Program (NKMP) is underway. The program design is iterative, and CSIRO works closely with the NSW Koala Strategy baseline koala study and the Queensland Government's population monitoring programs to ensure compatibility.

**Status**

Some progress

In the last 12 months, activities which support the NKMP include:

- 214 sites surveyed (walking or drone) by CSIRO, covering 1,057 km
- an update to the koala population estimate, provided in May 2024
- ongoing monitoring in South East Queensland (QLD Action 4.8), including investigating use of air eDNA as a koala survey methodology (Logan City Council)
- completion of on-ground koala surveys (double observer transects and audio recorders) of 133 sites (105 native forest, 28 plantation) by the Victorian Government, with results expected Nov-Dec 2024
- progress on the NSW statewide koala baseline assessment of koala distribution occupancy and relative abundance (NSW Action 4.2)
- the inclusion of Queensland koala health data in the monitoring program
- completion of the NSW baseline map of genetic diversity in koala populations (NSW Action 4.8)
- commencement of the Koala Population Sentinel Program to evaluate the influence of genetics on koala population dynamics (NSW Action 4.8)
- ongoing baseline monitoring in the ACT to support the NKMP
- habitat condition monitoring (QLD Action 4.4).

<p>Other monitoring activities undertaken since the recovery plan commenced include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitoring by Campbelltown City Council under the Campbelltown Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management</li> <li>• drone monitoring to identify suitable areas to capture breeding koalas and release future joeys (Koala Conservation Australia)</li> <li>• a second city-wide koala survey using trained detection dogs, identifying koala presence and information on koala health and genetics (Brisbane City Council).</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Implications and next steps</b></p> <p>This is an ongoing action. The National Koala Monitoring Program design allows for the collation and comparison of various survey methods. This maximises the amount of data that can be used as part of national koala population modelling. Reviewing the project design to include additional surveying methods, and metrics for koala health assessment will further improve the NKMP.</p>	<p><b>Contributors</b></p> <p>CSIRO, Australian, Queensland, NSW and ACT governments and others</p>



*Detection dog Billie-Jean getting her reward after finding some koala scats with USC Detection Dogs for Conservation researcher Riana Gardiner, southern Queensland*



## Community crusade – Eurobodalla Koala Recovery Project leads the charge in koala conservation

Coastwatchers Association launched the Eurobodalla Koala Recovery Project (ERKP) to tackle the declining koala population in Eurobodalla area, on the NSW South Coast. The project started in September 2023, funded by the Australian Government's Saving Koalas Fund. It takes a multi-pronged approach to building and sharing knowledge, with:

- Geographic Information System (GIS) modelling – ERKP uses GIS technology to carry out analyses to identify good koala habitats, map home ranges, and pinpoint areas affected by land clearing
- drone and song meter surveys – aerial surveys of 15 sites, together with song-meter analysis, are carried out to locate koalas, assess habitat conditions, and identify potential breeding sites. Three koalas have been spotted midway through the drone surveys, which is a great result so far.
- revegetation – using information from GIS mapping and drone survey, Coastwatchers Association is strategically planting 6,000 koala-friendly tree species across private sites to restore habitat connectivity and breeding corridors.

Community involvement and awareness are central to ERKP's mission. Collaboration with Yuin elders has resulted in the creation of a captivating story map – "*Seeding Connections between Koala (Gumbaawar) Home Ranges across Yuin Country*". This interactive platform educates and engages the local community by highlighting koala sightings, habitat locations, biodiversity hotspots, and ongoing conservation efforts.

The Eurobodalla Koala Recovery Project takes a holistic approach to koala conservation, integrating technology, citizen science, and community collaboration. By prioritizing habitat restoration, climate resilience and connectivity, the project lays the groundwork for a sustainable coexistence between humans and koalas in the Eurobodalla region.



**ACTION 1f**

Review mapping of key metrics (distribution, habitat restoration, habitat condition and habitat loss) at appropriate timeframes to detect changes, coordinated across jurisdictions

**Achievements**

Some progress has been made on this action, including:

- development of the [Habitat Condition Assessment System](#) (Australian Government)
- review of the Nationally Important Koala Areas (NIKA) (Australian Government)
- supported development of the Habitat Restoration HUB (NSW Action 1.6) for standardised data management of habitat restoration in NSW, including upload of data and mapping of habitat specifically restored for koalas collected using NSW Koala Strategy ArcGIS Survey123 forms
- development of a koala genomic vulnerability assessment that compares whole genome data across the species' range with environmental variables and assesses population vulnerability under different climate models (University of Sydney).

The National Koala Monitoring Program and the NSW Koala Strategy baseline assessment and a state-wide monitoring program will provide the data for koala distribution analysis over time.

In the last 12 months, additional activities include:

- finalised criteria for the ongoing protection of Locally Refined Koala Habitat – this mechanism will exist until the end of the South East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy and koala habitat map is reviewed in 2025 (QLD Gov)
- establishment of NKMP Health Metrics Working Group (Australian Government and CSIRO).

**Status**

Some progress

**Implications and next steps**

Additional information on habitat quality and condition as part of regional planning and local planning will assist in setting baselines for this action. Stakeholders have committed to a range of projects that will contribute to the ongoing delivery of this action, including:

- habitat condition monitoring in South East Queensland (QLD Action 4.4)
- supporting councils on the data and methods for koala habitat mapping (NSW Action 2.3).

This is a long-term action that requires review in 2027.

**Contributors**

CSIRO, Australian, Queensland and NSW governments and others

**ACTION 1g**

Coordinate pre-existing koala datasets and improve data management and standards

**Achievements**

Substantial progress has been made in the coordinated management of koala monitoring data.

- The National Koala Monitoring Program has developed a standardised suite of koala monitoring methods which are available on [the NKMP website](#).
- The NKMP has designed a methodology to allow the inclusion of pre-existing data sets into the NKMP, regardless of survey type.
- There is centralised data management for koala habitat restoration data and mapping using NSW Koala Strategy ArcGIS Survey123 forms and upload to the standardised data management [Habitat Restoration HUB](#) (NSW Action 1.6).

**Status**

Substantial progress

**Implications and next steps**

This will be an ongoing action that involves development of new standards for emerging surveying and sampling methods and promotion of these standards to encourage take up in the conservation communities. Stakeholders have committed to a range of projects that will contribute to the ongoing delivery of this action, including:

- developing an online public notification tool to report interferences with koala habitat (QLD Gov)
- working with CSIRO to develop a koala habitat assessment tool and online database/hub for storage and management of koala datasets (QLD Gov)
- working with SocialPinpoint and other providers to explore establishment of a central hub for information, consultations and management for koala conservation, incorporating private/public access and allowing dedicated collaboration and space sharing (QLD Gov)
- engaging with the Australian Museum on the establishment of a biobank for NSW koala genetic material (NSW Action 4.7).

**Contributors**

CSIRO, Australian, Queensland and NSW governments and others

**ACTION 1h**

Establish national research priorities

**Achievements**

Limited progress has been made on the development of national research priorities. However, important research is being undertaken by many organisations. This includes:

- funding of 18 research projects under the NSW Koala Research Plan, following calls for proposals in early 2019 and 2022 (NSW Gov)
- identification of research priorities for koala health hazards at a national scale in the national Koala Disease Risk Analysis (Australian Government)
- delivery of health-focused research projects that provided immediate advice for koala management and recommendations for further research through the National Koala Health Research Initiative (undertaken by University of Sydney, funded by the Australian Government)
- applied koala research to inform on-ground and practical investments that are being made in koala conservation (Brisbane City Council in partnership with several universities).

**Status**

Limited progress

<p>In the last 12 months, the Queensland Government has provided funding via grants for practical and applied research into koala habitat protection and restoration, threat mitigation and community partnerships (QLD Action 4.6). Eligible applications from Round 7 include assessing the benefits of urban koala rehabilitation, researching socio-economic factors effecting koala corridors on agricultural land and drone-enabled community engagement.</p>	
<p><b>Implications and next steps</b></p> <p>This is an ongoing action. More focus is needed to consider additional research needs, as well as reviewing the value of developing national research priorities. Support is also needed to implement that research. Providing a central hub for all current or pending koala research will also be explored. Stakeholders have committed to a range of projects that will contribute to the ongoing delivery of this action, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">research</a> into koala responses to harvesting of native forests is underway (NSW Action 4.5)</li> <li>• work on recognising the economic and cultural value of koalas is underway (NSW Action 4.10).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Contributors</b></p> <p>Australian, Queensland and NSW governments and others</p>

<b>ACTION 1i</b> Establish national-level recurring koala forums to enhance collaboration and knowledge sharing	
<p><b>Achievements</b></p> <p>There are a number of recurring koala forums that provide the opportunity to coordinate and collaborate on koala conservation. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the biennial NSW Koala Research Symposium</li> <li>• the National Koala Conference, last hosted by Koala Conservation Australia in Port Macquarie in May 2023.</li> </ul> <p>There have also been national or state-based forums to explore specific themes, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• workshops for the Koala Disease Risk Analysis</li> <li>• workshops for the National Koala Monitoring Program</li> <li>• the NSW Koala Summit, held in March 2024 with NSW Government, Australian Government and external stakeholders to review and refocus the NSW Koala Strategy.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Status</b></p>  <p>Substantial progress</p>
<p><b>Implications and next steps</b></p> <p>This will be an ongoing action. A regular review is needed to consider what forums are ongoing and evaluate whether there are any significant gaps in the coverage of the forums.</p>	<p><b>Contributors</b></p> <p>Queensland, NSW and Australian governments, CSIRO and others</p>

**ACTION 1j****Establish and support an active National Koala Recovery Team****Achievements**

The inaugural meeting of the National Recovery Team Board occurred in October 2022, with a focus on establishing the structure and governance of the recovery team, (including a Strategy and Coordination Group [SACG]) and agreeing priorities for the delivery of actions in the first year of the recovery plan.

- The Board has met 4 times and the SACG has met 6 times in the first two years of the recovery plan.
- A Community Advisory Committee met in April 2023 and April 2024.
- The First Nations Reference Group met in June 2023 and May 2024.

**Status**

Complete

**Implications and next steps**

Supporting and maintaining an active recovery team will be an ongoing action throughout the life of the plan. This action is considered complete now that standing groups under the recovery team structure have met and agreed terms of reference.

**Contributors**

Australian,  
Queensland and NSW  
governments and  
others

**ACTION 1k****Share knowledge through regular koala workshops including a national koala conference****Achievements**

There are several koala forums that provide the opportunity to coordinate and collaborate on koala conservation at different scales. These include:

- biennial NSW Koala Research Symposium (NSW Action 4.3)
- KoalaCollab, a koala conservation event hosted by Queensland Government every 2 years: 2 events have been held so far (QLD Action 5.1)
- the National Koala Conference, last hosted by Koala Conservation Australia in Port Macquarie, NSW in May 2023
- SEQ Region Local Government Koala Working Group, which meets regularly to coordinate activities and support delivery of actions in the South East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy
- Northern Rivers Regional Koala Network, a group of government and not-for-profit organisations who meet regularly to share information and resources, plan strategically and share progress
- Central Queensland Koala Advisory Group, supporting active engagement with stakeholders to guide recovery actions
- Victorian Koala Management Strategy Implementation Working Group, which provides a collaborative forum to share knowledge and assist in the delivery of the Victorian Koala Management Strategy. This can in turn inform recovery efforts for the listed koala. The group meets quarterly and includes representatives from NGOs, First Nations groups, experts, the timber industry, wildlife carers and vets.

**Status**

Substantial progress

<p>In the last 12 months, examples of additional activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• theme-specific workshops for the Koala Disease Risk Analysis, and koala health metrics under the NKMP</li> <li>• NSW Koala Summit in March 2024, to gain input into the review of the NSW Koala Strategy</li> <li>• South Burnett Koala Forum, Queensland in April 2024.</li> </ul> <p>The national koala recovery team First Nations Reference Group and Community Advisory Committee also assist in disseminating information.</p>	
<p><b>Implications and next steps</b></p> <p>This is an ongoing action. Koala workshops will continue to be an important means to share knowledge.</p>	<p><b>Contributors</b></p> <p>Australian, Queensland and NSW governments and others</p>

## ACTION 1I

### Facilitate the capture, storage and sharing of traditional knowledge on the koala

#### Achievements

There is progress on this action, with First Nations knowledge and perspectives incorporated into decision-making and recovery implementation.

- A First Nations Reference Group has been established, and there are First Nations representatives on the National Recovery Team Board, and on expert advisory panels for the South East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy.
- The NSW Government established the NSW Aboriginal Advisory Panel to provide First Nations input to the NSW Koala Strategy (NSW Action 4.6).
- CSIRO established a First Nations community of practice as part of the National Koala Monitoring Program (Australian Government).
- NSW Government has established four partnerships with Aboriginal communities: with the Gumbaynggirr community and Coffs Harbour and District Local Aboriginal Land Council; Firesticks Alliance Indigenous Corporation on Yuin Country; Hunter Local Land Services and Taree Indigenous Development and Employment (TIDE) in the Hunter-Mid Coast; and North Coast Regional Landcare Network in the Far North Coast (NSW Action 2.1).
- CSIRO published [Australia's Megafires: Biodiversity Impacts and Lessons from 2019-2020](#), including a chapter on [Empowering Indigenous leadership and participation in wildfire recovery, cultural burning and land management](#). This highlighted the importance of cultural fire management and supporting Indigenous leaders and fire practitioners to be involved in all aspects of landscape fire management (Australian Government).

In the last 12 months, examples of additional activities include:

- the ACT Government supported Ngunnawal community members to attend a traditional knowledge workshop on koala conservation, and a visit to the Yuin Nation to exchange knowledge on cultural burning for koala conservation
- the Queensland Government has developed a First Nations koala action plan for South East Queensland.

#### Status



Some progress



**Implications and next steps**

This is an ongoing action - First Nations perspectives and knowledge should be included in all levels of koala conservation. It is important that First Nations groups are effectively influencing decision-making and can share traditional knowledge as appropriate. Projects that support the delivery of this action include:

- establishment of 4 Aboriginal partnerships with First Nations communities as part of the NSW Koala Strategy (NSW Gov)
- engaging with Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation about jointly hosting a workshop to discuss delivery of the First Nations koala action plan (QLD Gov).

**Contributors**

Australian,  
Queensland, ACT and  
NSW governments and  
others



*Rock carving of a koala at Westleigh in northern Sydney, NSW*

## Strategy 2 – Engage and partner with the community in listed koala conservation

Successful conservation for the listed koala relies on collaboration across sectors and levels of government. Communities have a key role to play in protecting local koalas. These actions contribute to shared goals, from formal partnerships for habitat protection, to training professionals and community koala rehabilitation carers, to education and awareness raising.

### ACTION 2a

Grow partnerships with Indigenous and community groups and local government for citizens to be involved in long-term koala monitoring programs and research

#### Achievements

There has been good progress on this action, with different organisations and governments investing in partnerships with citizen scientists. Various examples are provided below, noting that some of these are ongoing activities.

- CSIRO has developed two national [koala apps](#) to capture citizen monitoring data which can be included in long-term modelling efforts: Koala Spotter (reporting sightings) and Koala Counter (collecting survey data).
- The Australian Government approved 32 community grants to the value of \$5 million, which include support for community monitoring programs (some of these may be referred to separately in this report).
- Logan City Council collects and manages koala sightings through an internal wildlife sightings database and encourages use of iNaturalist.
- Redland City Council coordinates the Koala Guardians citizen science program, monitoring individual koalas post-release to gain data on movement and wellbeing, for use in the National Koala Monitoring Program. It also supports the Koala Ambassador program to monitor koala population dynamics and Redlands Coast Koala Watch to record koala sightings.
- OWAD Environment provided training and mentoring programs to build community capacity to participate in koala research.
- Science for Wildlife conducted various citizen science partnerships including scat surveys, radio-tracking and acoustic survey.
- Mid Coast Council conducted a Safe Spaces program for koalas, which engages private landholders to participate in koala conservation and / or citizen science programs. Council also has an online koala sighting reporting system.
- Tweed Shire Council set up a user-friendly portal through Atlas of Living Australian to support public submission of koala records.
- The Central Queensland Coast Koala Advisory Group encourages community members to record koala sightings using “Koala mapping Mackay, Whitsundays and Central Queensland Areas” [Biocollect](#).
- Wingecarribee Shire Council engaged their Land for Wildlife property owners in Koala Karaoke, an interactive program involving bioacoustic monitoring. During this reporting period Council launched Wild West Koala Quest, with bioacoustic monitoring on private properties west of the Hume Motorway. A koala hotline supports community reporting of sightings.
- Campbelltown City Council engaged community members in rapid-SAT koala survey efforts in Campbelltown.
- The Clarence Environment Centre funded koala detection dog surveys that confirmed koalas within the South Grafton Area of Regional Koala Significance around Shannondale.
- Clarence Valley Council maintains a dedicated community koala sighting register on their [Clarence Conversations](#) website.
- The University of the Sunshine Coast Detection Dogs for Conservation taught koala scat identification to community members.

#### Status



Substantial progress

### Implications and next steps

This is an ongoing action, ensuring that engagement of citizen scientists is helping to capture important data for long-term koala monitoring, habitat protection from threats, and research. Other commitments or work underway include:

- the Queensland Government will use citizen science to support participation in koala conservation outcomes (QLD Action 5.3)
- Redland City Council is engaged in a research program with University of the Sunshine Coast to develop solar-powered Bluetooth koala ear tags paired to a smartphone application, enabling the public to report koala sightings ([ARC Linkage Grant awarded Dec 2023](#)). This will advance the Koala Guardians and Redlands Coast Koala Watch programs
- Landcare Australia's [WildSeek Project](#) with WIRES and QUT has commenced thermal drone surveys using 5 Hubs (Noosa, Tamworth, MidCoast, Sydney and Gippsland) to conduct thermal drone surveys for baseline studies.

### Contributors

Australian, Queensland and NSW governments, CSIRO, local governments and others

## ACTION 2b

Promote existing programs and grow new partnerships to restore priority areas of koala habitat

### Achievements

Significant work by partner organisations has contributed to the establishment of many large-scale partnerships to restore koala habitat.

- \$27.5 million has been invested in large scale projects identified by an INFFER cost-benefits analysis as high priority (Australian Government).
- The Queensland Government is investing in targeted habitat restoration in South East Queensland and in the Brigalow Belt (\$8.6 million) (QLD Actions 2.1, 2.3).
- 7 partnerships for koala habitat conservation have been developed as part of the WWF Koalas Forever program.
- Habitat is being restored under the NSW Koala Strategy in priority koala populations through the NSW regional partnerships model (NSW Action 1.4 and 2.1). Regional koala conservation partnerships are developed with councils, conservation groups, Aboriginal communities, and other partners to ensure community expertise and knowledge informs on-ground actions (NSW Action 1.4).
- \$4.48 million is invested in the Koala Habitat Restoration Partnership Program targeting high value koala areas in South East Queensland, delivered in partnership with Queensland Trust for Nature. The program is actively restoring more than 400 ha of new and existing koala habitat (QLD Action 2.1).
- Redland City Council is partnering with the Australian National University to propagate select seeds from preferred koala food trees for planting on private and council land to increase nutritional carrying capacity at a landscape level.
- Science for Wildlife partnered with Landcare groups to inform strategic habitat restoration, including what and where to plant/restore on mixed land tenures next to the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.
- Brisbane City Council partners with about 700 landowners through Land for Wildlife.
- Bangalow Koalas partnered with national and state governments, local councils and WWF-Australia to restore habitat across the Northern Rivers of NSW.
- Mid Coast Council developed active partnerships with stakeholders in the area under the Mid Coast Regional Partnership.
- Conservation Volunteers Australia collaborated with landholders in Lismore Shire to restore and connect koala habitat along the river corridors in primary habitat areas.

### Status




Some progress

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campbelltown City Council is a Land for Wildlife provider, working with residents and incorporating partnerships with Greater Sydney Landcare to restore priority area of koala habitat.</li> <li>• Koala Conservation Australia is working with the Koala Recovery Project, councils, landowners, Landcare, and NSW Local Land Services to undertake habitat restoration on private lands that are close to national parks and identified as priority areas for recovery.</li> <li>• Reef Catchments delivers the Sarina Koala Habitat Restoration project, engaging local landholders and landcare groups to undertake on-groundwork to protect and enhance koala habitat and corridors (funded through the Australian Government Saving Koalas Fund).</li> <li>• Wingecarribee Shire Council facilitates a Private Land Conservation Working Group with Local Land Services, NSW Biodiversity, Conservation Trust, NSW DCCEEW, Greening Australia and others to share information and build capacity. A recent partnership has developed with the Southern Highlands Landcare Network to support tree planting on private land.</li> <li>• ACT Government launched the Native Species Conservation Plan for the Gula (Koala) 2023, a collaboration between the Ngunnawal community and government, which includes identification of habitat restoration opportunities.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Implications and next steps</b></p> <p>This is an ongoing action. Significant investment is going into habitat restoration partnerships at all scales. Strong partnerships will be critical to their delivery.</p>	<p><b>Contributors</b></p> <p>Australian, Queensland and NSW governments and others</p>

## ACTION 2c

Develop active communication, education and extension strategies for businesses (developers, industry and rural landowner enterprises) aimed at koala habitat protection, incentives, partnerships and compliance

<p><b>Achievements</b></p> <p>Progress towards this action includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSW Government continues to work collaboratively with partners, including the Country Women's Association, to develop communication and engagement campaigns (NSW Action 2.5)</li> <li>• improving web and guidance material on the environmental offsets framework and how it applies (QLD Action 1.10)</li> <li>• delivering the Land for Wildlife Program, which supports landholders with land management planning and advice on wildlife habitat protection, including koala habitat, on private properties (Sarina Landcare CMA Inc).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Status</b></p>  <p>Some progress</p>
<p><b>Implications and next steps</b></p> <p>This is an ongoing action. Greater focus is required to ensure active engagement of businesses. Projects that will contribute to the ongoing delivery of this action include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• working with private sector partners to deliver ground-breaking premium carbon market projects; projects will actively regenerate areas of degraded koala habitat (NSW Action 1.7)</li> <li>• investing in carbon farming projects that deliver koala outcomes as a priority (QLD Action 2.4)</li> <li>• upscaling of WWFs Koala Friendly Carbon program to increase private investment in habitat restoration</li> <li>• establishment of the Nature Repair Market (Australian Government).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Contributors</b></p> <p>Australian, Queensland and NSW Governments and others</p>

## ACTION 2d

### Indigenous knowledge:

- integrate traditional ecological knowledge and vision, monitoring and land management practices with koala conservation, citizen science and research activities
- strengthen cross-cultural knowledge exchange and develop partnerships for conservation by holding a national Indigenous Koala Knowledge Festival.

### Achievements

There has been some progress towards this action, including:

- establishment of the NSW Aboriginal Advisory Panel, providing First Nations input to the NSW Koala Strategy (NSW Action 4.6)
- development of a Caring for Country Working Group to advise on delivery of the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan (NSW)
- establishment of a First Nations community of practice to ensure traditional knowledge sharing and partnership protocols are integrated into the National Koala Monitoring Program (Australian Government)
- preparation and implementation of an Aboriginal Cultural Burning Strategy in local bushland reserves in partnership with Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council and Gundungurra Aboriginal Heritage Association Incorporated (Wingecarribee Shire Council)
- establishment of Aboriginal partnerships with the:
  - Gumbaynggirr community and Coffs Harbour and District Local Aboriginal Land Council
  - Yuin community and Firesticks Alliance Indigenous Corporation on the far south coast
  - Aboriginal communities on the traditional lands of the Bundjalung Aboriginal Nation of the far north coast through the North Coast Regional Landcare Network
  - local Aboriginal land councils and the Awabakal, Worimi and Birpai communities in the Mid Coast and Lower Hunter coastal regions through Local Land Services and Taree Indigenous Development and Employment (NSW Action 2.1)
- production of a First Nations koala action plan for South East Queensland (QLD Action 5.6)
- training in koala research to inform effective management (OWAD Environment)
- delivery of projects associated with First Nations burning of koala habitats to improve habitat condition and function and decrease impacts of unplanned high intensity fire (Mid Coast Council).

In the last 12 months, examples of additional activities include:

- release of the Native Species Conservation Plan for the Gula (Koala), developed in collaboration with Dharuwa Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee (ACT)
- an assessment of impacts of cultural burning practices on koala populations on Quandamooka country through a partnership between University of the Sunshine Coast and First Nations people
- exploring fire and koalas, population density, health assessments, and scat analysis on Ngunya Jargoan Indigenous Protected Area through a partnership between Friends of the Koala, Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council, IFAW and University of the Sunshine Coast
- a partnership with Biripai Traditional Owners in the Cowarra Tourism precinct where Koala Conservation Australia is building a wild koala breeding facility (Koala Conservation Australia).

### Status



Some progress



### Implications and next steps

This is an ongoing action. While there is some progress, improvements in the integration of traditional ecological knowledge into koala conservation actions is needed. The Recovery Teams First Nations Reference Group will help progress this action.

Examples of projects that will contribute to the ongoing delivery of this action include:

- First Nations-led [Boorubee Monitoring and Recovery project](#) on Minyumai Indigenous Protected Area, supported by WWF-Australia
- A collaboration between Singleton Council, Hunter Local Land Services and First Nations people to investigate cultural cool burns to enhance koala habitat
- Landcare Australia's [WildSeek Project](#) with WIRES and QUT, which has engaged with Traditional Owners to work together on baseline surveys on Aboriginal-owned land.

### Contributors

Australian, Queensland, NSW and ACT governments and others

## From poo to proof: Working with Traditional Owners to investigate which predators eat koalas

Traditional Owners co-designed a project with the NSW Koala Strategy to investigate their traditional ecological knowledge of the koala's native predators.

The project is targeting all known and possible predators of koalas, including foxes, cats, dingoes, goannas, powerful owls and wedge-tailed eagles.

Aboriginal community and citizen scientists have collected hundreds of predator scats for eDNA analysis. eDNA technology allows all birds, mammals, frogs and reptiles and fish eaten to be identified for the first time.

Taking the lead from our Aboriginal partners, the project looks at the entire ecosystem in which the koala lives. Preliminary results appear

to support the traditional ecological knowledge that native predators are not regularly preying on koalas when Country is healthy and intact.





**ACTION 2e**

Implement a comprehensive communication strategy for the plan's realisation

**Achievements**

Progress towards this action has been mindful of existing communication efforts, to avoid duplication.

- The Australian Government has developed a high-level communication plan for the national recovery plan. Activities have included setting up a [website for the National Koala Recovery Team](#) and publishing the implementation pathway and first annual report.
- The Board has issued communiques after each meeting.

Supporting communications efforts include:

- development of a NSW Koala Strategy communications plan, including a [dedicated website](#) and extensive engagement with a range of stakeholder groups (NSW Action 2.2)
- NSW Local Land Services' [dedicated web landing page](#) and state-wide fact sheet with key information and resource links for landholders and community groups
- the Queensland Government's [online hub](#) of koala-related information (QLD Action 6.3), development of a stakeholder engagement strategy (QLD Action 6.8) and engagement with landholders and the community on ways to manage land for improved koala conservation outcomes (QLD Action 5.2 and 5.5)
- the National Koala Monitoring Program's [website](#) which provides updated information on Australia-wide efforts to improve our understanding of koala population status and trends
- the Northern Rivers Regional Partnership communications material, developed by behaviour change specialists, which is providing consistent and relevant messaging across the region
- Campbelltown Council's communications plan
- Mid Coast Council's dedicated communications strategy to guide detailed community education and engagement programs, developed through a regional partnership under the NSW Koala Strategy.

**Status**

Substantial progress

**Implications and next steps**

This is an ongoing action. Ongoing communication about the recovery plan and koala conservation in general will ensure all stakeholders are collaborating and making the most of shared knowledge and capacity. The Community Advisory Committee of the National Recovery Team provides an important avenue for communication of recovery plan progress. Publication and promotion of this annual report is also an important part of communicating progress.

**Contributors**

Australian, Queensland and NSW governments, local government and others.

**ACTION 2f**

Develop a user-friendly single-site portal for the general public to report koala sightings

**Achievements**

Progress towards this action has involved multiple avenues for the public to report koala sightings. Integration of these systems will mean the public can use any of the applications and be confident they are all connected.

- The National Koala Monitoring Program has developed a community sightings mobile app - [Koala Spotter](#) - to facilitate data into the program and allows for capture from other data platforms (Australian Government).
- The NSW Government is continuing to support the I Spy Koala app for community sightings.
- A koala sighting app on the QWildlife platform is now in use by the public (QLD Action 5.3).

A number of local councils have also developed ways for the public to report koala sightings. Connection of data will be important: for example Koala Conservation Australia (KCA) has worked with Port Macquarie Hastings Council to ensure koala sightings entered on the KCA website go directly to BioNet.

**Status**

Nearing completion

**Implications and next steps**

This action will be complete once data sharing and integration protocols are confirmed, to ensure these datasets are all captured as part of the National Koala Monitoring Program and shareable between partners.

**Contributors**

Australian, Queensland, NSW and ACT governments and others

**ACTION 2g**

Facilitate coordination and national consistency in codes of practice for koala care, ethics, monitoring and compliance

**Achievements**

There has been some progress towards this action, including:

- scoping work through the Australian Government funded [Koala Disease Risk Analysis](#) (KDRA) for the identification of priorities for development of koala health guidelines and protocols
- coordination of monitoring practices across the country as part of the National Koala Monitoring Program, to aid data integration. This includes standard monitoring methods available on the National Koala Monitoring Program [website](#)
- Taronga Conservation Society's (TCSA) online training course for veterinary professionals supports nationally consistent best practice training for veterinary professionals in the care and treatment of diseased koalas. TCSA has been funded to provide free and subsidised access nationally to their 'Veterinary Professional Training in Wildlife Treatment and Care' program, which includes a module on koala care (Australian Government and NSW Action 3.4).

**Status**

Some progress

<p>In the last 12 months, additional activities include the release of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a <a href="#">code of practice</a> for the rehabilitation of sick, injured and orphaned koalas in Queensland (June 2023)</li> <li>• a <a href="#">code of practice</a> for injured, sick and orphaned koalas in NSW (July 2023)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Victorian Wildlife Rehabilitation Guidelines</a>, which includes a chapter on koala care.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Implications and next steps</b></p> <p>Projects that will contribute to the ongoing delivery of this action include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• development of standardised national advice on koala health monitoring, through the National Koala Monitoring Program</li> <li>• supporting koala rehabilitators through ongoing training and providing rehabilitation groups with equipment and access to transport for injured koalas and other wildlife (Action 3.3)</li> <li>• undertaking koala health and genetic surveys and a disease surveillance project using deceased koalas to improve understanding of koala health across the state, including disease prevalence and cause of death (VIC)</li> <li>• providing support for training and development of koala carers (QLD Action 3.7)</li> <li>• collating data on the rates of disease, injury and mortality in koalas from KoalaBASE and other databases (QLD Action 3.8)</li> <li>• exploring options for national guidance on the treatment and care of koalas in natural disasters and national guidance for chlamydia vaccination administration (Wildlife Health Australia).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Contributors</b></p> <p>Australian, Queensland, NSW and Victorian governments and others</p>

## ACTION 2h

Expand and build on existing community education and engagement programs in urban and peri-urban areas

### Achievements

There has been some progress on this ongoing action, with a range of state and local level initiatives. Various examples are listed below.

- The NSW Government has developed regional koala conservation partnerships with councils, conservation groups, Aboriginal communities and other partners to ensure community expertise and knowledge are informing on-ground actions (NSW Action 2.1).
- The NSW Government is implementing vehicle strike mitigation measures at vehicle strike hotspots statewide, including variable message signage, to encourage behaviour change (NSW Action 3.1).
- The NSW Government Koala Smart program supports NSW teachers to inspire the next generation of koala conservationists with curriculum-aligned activities (NSW Action 2.6).
- The Queensland Government has developed and released *Teacher Pack: Koala Bushland Education* for both Prep-Year 6 and Secondary studies which includes lesson plans, activities and resources.
- The Queensland Government has developed [guidelines](#) on koala-sensitive design measures for planning and development activities (QLD Actions 3.3, 5.4) and is updating the Queensland Fauna Sensitive Road Design Manual (QLD Action 3.3).
- The Queensland Government is partnering with local governments and other organisations to deliver breeding-season community engagement activities to reduce vehicle-related koala injuries (QLD Action 5.4).
- Logan City Council delivers community education events with a koala focus, including Wildlife Awareness workshop and Koala Kids Education Stall at the Imagination Festival, Kingston.

### Status



Some progress

- Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Association encourages community members to record koala sightings around Mackay, the Whitsundays and Central Queensland using Biocollect.
- Redland City Council conducts an annual community Science in Action Forum, reporting on koala research and development of koala safe neighbourhoods. This includes sessions on driver wildlife awareness training, dog owner behaviour-change programs, and the Koala Watch App to report sightings and/or sick and injured koalas.
- Redland City Council and the University of the Sunshine Coast delivered the Koala Safe Neighbourhood program, and run the Koala Guardians program. Koalas are given ear tags and the community can track them via an app. It also runs guided community koala walks with its research team to educate locals.
- Griffith University in collaboration with the Queensland Government has been running a range of community engagement activities including Koala Forums and community co-design events which are promoted and complemented by social media information on the Wildlife Watcher platform. One example, the "Leave it" program has been running since 2017 collecting data and working on reducing dog and koala interactions with community engagement programs in South East Queensland. Redland City Council is working with the university to test the 'barking app' as an extension of this program.
- Science for Wildlife conducted community attitude surveys to identify knowledge needs in Blue Mountains Region and is now delivering awareness campaigns based on the results. This includes community education booklets on local koala populations, with information on preferred koala habitat, tree species, koala detection, conservation and threat mitigation.
- Campbelltown City Council continues to deliver its Koalatown education and Koala Certified Schools programs.
- Koala Conservation Australia held guided tours at the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital, which include education about habitat, threats and local actions. They also held their annual tree giveaway to engage the community in planting koala food trees.
- Koala Action Inc. conducted a range of community education and koala awareness programs using in person, social media, brochures, newspaper articles, radio, television and film in the Moreton Bay region.
- Kyogle Council runs an annual event [Boodahbee – Festival of the Koala](#) to share and celebrate koala conservation efforts in the local government area and raise public awareness.
- Hawkesbury City Council runs a community nursery and educates customers about koala feed trees and how the public can replant and access funds to create corridors on their property.
- Brisbane City Council installs permanent and temporary electronic signs on busy roads that intersect with koala habitat to alert drivers.
- Wingecarribee Shire Council runs community engagement activities through its Southern Highlands Koala Conservation Project including information kiosks, wildlife spotting, Wild West Koala Quest bioacoustics monitoring on private land, Koala Karaoke and Koala Smart. Vehicle strike mitigation actions have been installed at 3 locations and a vehicle strike marketing toolkit developed ready for the spring breeding season.
- WIRES has run several campaigns (TV and social media) on koala community education and engagement, plus responsible pet ownership.
- University of the Sunshine Coast Detection Dogs for Conservation has delivered 20 educational talks and engaged with media.
- Scenic Rim Regional Council has partnered with environmental organisations to deliver koala conservation workshops.
- Trust for Nature Queensland ran a koala education workshop with the Watergum Community.

### Implications and next steps

This is an ongoing action. Threats to koalas in urban and peri-urban areas remain difficult to mitigate. Delivering on this action will draw together best practice approaches from across the range and share knowledge with partners operating at the local scale. There will be benefits from community organisations and koala experts engaging in awareness raising and decision making around urban and infrastructure development in koala habitat. Projects that will contribute to the ongoing delivery of this action include:

- reducing attacks on koalas by domestic dogs by working with local councils to engage dog owners in key areas where attacks occur (NSW Action 3.2)
- identifying priority areas for threat reduction that address all threats to koalas (QLD Actions 3.1, 3.2)
- supporting the mitigation of threats of domestic dogs (QLD Action 3.5)
- supporting communities to improve connectivity of potential koala habitat across property boundaries (QLD Action 5.5)
- providing community education on chlamydia (University of Sunshine Coast Detection Dogs for Conservation).

### Contributors

Australian,  
Queensland and NSW  
governments and  
others

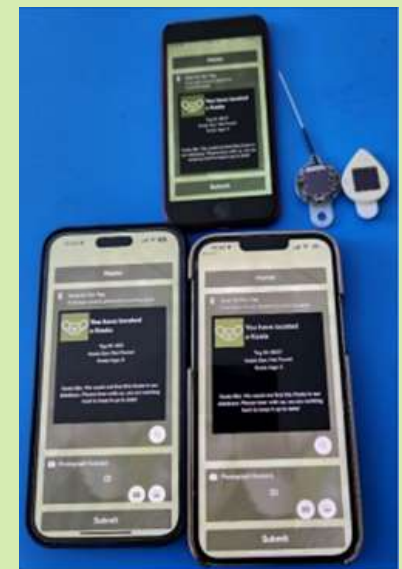
## Supporting urban koalas through community action

Koalas have a challenging time living alongside people in urban landscapes, as they face threats from dog attacks, vehicle strikes, disease and habitat loss. In response to this, Redland City Council in South East Queensland is undertaking a unique research and community-based approach to protect and conserve its local population of koalas, as part of its *Koala Conservation Plan 2022-2027*. As well as supporting applied research programs which address threats to koalas, Redland City Council is engaging and activating the Redlands Coast community to become the custodians of their local neighbourhood koalas.

One initiative has been the development of community tools to spot and record koalas. This includes the Redlands Coast Koala Watch, which allows the public to record sightings of koalas and report sick and injured koalas, and a Bluetooth koala ID tag. The ID tag allows users to uniquely identify and automatically record local koalas using a phone app.

In 2023, the pilot Koala Guardian program was created to allow community citizen scientists to monitor and report on their 'own' koala once it was released from care or a wildlife hospital. This program will be a major step forward in community action to collect and record important koala population dynamics data, as well as fostering deeper community connections to local koalas.


In December 2023 Redland City Council was co-awarded an \$800,000 Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grant to extend its koala initiatives. Council will work with partner organisations over the next four years to further test and develop concepts such as the Bluetooth koala ID finder app, commercialization of a Bluetooth koala ID ear tag, and a koala information dashboard. The ARC grant will also support the co-design of a framework for sustainable community-based citizen science actions, to progress Redlands Coast Koala Watch and pilot programs such as Koala Guardians. This will create a working blueprint for urban community conservation actions to protect the koala.





## Strategy 3 – Increase the area of protected habitat for the listed koala

Increasing the total area of protected, connected quality koala habitat in priority areas will be important to protect and recover listed koala populations. This will require a range of incentive mechanisms, including direct land purchase. Improvements in land management practices can also increase habitat protection without changing land use.

ACTION 3a	
Increase the overall area of protected koala habitat	
<p><b>Achievements</b></p> <p>There is progress towards this action, with policy positions and funding programs supporting increases in the overall area of protected koala habitat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NSW Government is finalising the purchase of 2,175 ha of koala habitat for the 2023/24 period to add to the national park estate.</li> <li>• Koala Conservation Australia co-purchased 194 ha of koala habitat with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service at The Ruins Way in Port Macquarie.</li> <li>• The NSW Government has retired 2,217 Koala Species Credits from the Biodiversity Offset Scheme as of June 2023 (NSW Action 1.3).</li> <li>• The Australian Government has committed to 30% of the Australian landmass being managed for conservation by 2030.</li> <li>• Moreton Bay Council purchased 13 ha of key koala habitat at Eatons Hill in 2022.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Status</b></p>  <p>Some progress</p>
<p><b>Implications and next steps</b></p> <p>Implementation of this action will be ongoing throughout the life of the recovery plan. Projects that will contribute to the ongoing delivery of this action include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the NSW Government is working on its commitment to establish the Georges River National Park and a Great Koala National Park to protect areas of koala habitat (NSW Action 1.1)</li> <li>• Queensland Trust for Nature is investigating possible koala habitat land purchase in the Brigalow Belt, Queensland.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Contributors</b></p> <p>Australian, Queensland and NSW governments and others</p>

## Celebrating permanent protection for koala habitat

An important area of koala habitat at Kybeyan, NSW will be permanently protected after the NSW Government bought the 525 ha property in November 2023, under the NSW Koala Strategy.

Situated on the edge of the Southern Tablelands Koala Priority Population Area, over two thirds of the property is mapped as high or very high koala habitat. Surveys have found evidence of koalas in 5 different locations and confirmed that there are koala use and feed tree species on the site.

The property also has other conservation values, such as areas of the NSW listed critically endangered ecological community, Monaro Tableland Cool Temperate Grassy Woodland in the South Eastern Highlands Bioregion. There is suitable habitat for threatened fauna such as the Powerful Owl, Greater Glider and woodland birds, and threatened plants such as the summer leek orchid and hoary sunray.

The property will become a new reserve managed by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. It forms an important 'stepping stone' for koalas and other species, linking the coastal ranges and Monaro Tablelands reserves.



**ACTION 3b**

Establish or expand existing targeted private or leasehold land incentive mechanisms and programs

**Achievements**

Progress towards this action is ongoing, with private land conservation organisation's like the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust delivering conservation outcomes on private land.

- 4,500 ha of koala habitat has been permanently protected on private land, through the establishment of 55 conservation agreements with private landowners in the 2022/23 financial year (NSW Action 1.2).
- The Queensland Government continues to invest in the Koala Habitat Restoration Partnership Program collaborating with Queensland Trust for Nature to support private landholders in protecting and restoring koala habitat in South East Queensland (QLD Action 1.8).
- 50 Land for Wildlife conservation agreements have been signed covering 2,464 ha of koala habitat through the WWF Koalas Forever program.
- NSW Local Land Services is delivering targeted incentives programs (aligned to NSW Koala Strategy priority populations) for landholders and community groups to implement on-ground habitat restoration and protection work through state, federal and other investment.
- Campbelltown City Council developed Koalatown Certified Properties, an extension of the Land for Wildlife Program.

**Status**

Some progress

**Implications and next steps**

This is an ongoing action. Existing private land conservation programs are delivering koala conservation outcomes on private land.

A review of existing private land conservation programs may provide insights to help expand existing or establish new mechanisms and programs. Investigation of how to integrate koala conservation with the generation of carbon credits will also support expanding the available incentives for koala conservation on private land.

Projects that will contribute to the ongoing delivery of this action include:

- the Queensland Government will explore investment in carbon farming projects (QLD Action 2.4), and undertake an analysis of properties to prioritise for purchase. It will also support stakeholder understanding of environmental offsets (QLD Action 1.10)
- the Australian Government is exploring options for standardising private land conservation frameworks.

**Contributors**

Australian, Queensland and NSW governments and others

**ACTION 3c**

Investigate the potential to increase the protection of priority koala habitat through identification and registration of Critical Habitat

**Achievements**

Limited progress has been made so far on options for increasing protection of priority koala habitat. Consideration of how to better protect habitat is part of the Australian Governments review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

- The NSW Government declared 24 Assets of Intergenerational Significance Sites, with associated Conservation Action Plans for koalas under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NSW Action 1.11).
- In Queensland the Koala Habitat Area mapping methodology deployed across the South East Queensland planning region is being expanded to the South East Queensland Bioregion to supported improved identification and protection of koala habitat outside of the

**Status**

Limited progress



area covered by the new habitat protections introduced in 2020. Annual map updates contribute to the accurate identification and protection of the best habitat (QLD Action 1.2).

**Implications and next steps**

The Australian Government's *Nature Positive Plan: better for the environment, better for business* includes updating environment legislation. This process will guide consideration of increasing protection of priority koala habitat and the critical habitat classification. This does not preclude investigation of other ways to increase protection.

**Contributors**

Australian,  
Queensland and NSW  
Governments and  
others



## Strategy 4 – Integrate listed koala conservation into policy, statutory and land use plans

Action is needed to harmonise existing and future planning and policy settings, so that they contribute to the chances of long-term survival of koalas in the wild.

ACTION 4a	
Review and update environmental impact guidance for the listed koala to support regulatory decision making	
<b>Achievements</b> <p>There has been strong progress on this action, in support of the new listing status of the koala. The Australian Government has updated its <a href="#">referral guidance</a> for the koala following the revised listing status of the koala in 2022. This provides support to proponents, project managers and consultants when deciding how to engage with the referral and assessment of the koala under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.</p>	<b>Status</b>  Nearing completion
<b>Implications and next steps</b> <p>Next steps include review of the guidance and further update to referral guidelines for the koala to assist proponents to understand when actions should be referred to the Federal Environment Minister. The Australian Government's <i>Nature Positive Plan: better for the environment, better for business</i> includes updating environment legislation, which may lead to additional updates to this guidance.</p>	<b>Contributors</b> Australian Government

ACTION 4b	
Review, revise, and, where appropriate, strengthen statutory planning instruments and policies	
<b>Achievements</b> <p>Some progress has been made on this action including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">new guidance documents</a> for koala conservation protections in Queensland, developed in consultation with the Local Government Association of Queensland and councils (QLD Action 1.7)</li> <li>• support by the Queensland Government to integrate koala conservation policy into local planning schemes (QLD Action 1.9) and reflect koala conservation in the planning framework (QLD Action 1.7)</li> <li>• amendments to the planning framework for koala habitat protection, which increased the extent and level of protections for koala habitat areas across South East Queensland (QLD Action 1.2)</li> <li>• integration of koala conservation into biosecurity plans (QLD Action 1.3)</li> <li>• a review of locally refined koala habitat areas for inclusion in core koala habitat areas (QLD Action 4.3)</li> <li>• support by the NSW Government for councils to ensure koala habitat values are included in land-use planning decisions through regional plans, local strategic planning statements and local environmental plans (NSW Action 1.9)</li> </ul>	<b>Status</b>  Some progress

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support by the NSW Government to councils to deliver koala habitat maps and strategically conserve koala habitat in their local area (NSW Action 2.3).</li> </ul> <p>In the last 12 months, additional activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Queensland Government has reviewed the State Planning Code 25: Development in South East Queensland Koala Habitat Areas and the associated guidelines to ensure development does not cause unacceptable impact on mapped koala habitat areas. There has also been a new model conditions package established for developments within mapped koala habitat areas (QLD Action 1.3)</li> <li>• the ACT Government has released the Native Species Conservation Plan for the Gula (Koala), developed in collaboration with Dharuwa Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee (ACT).</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Implications and next steps</b></p> <p>This action will be iterative and ongoing through the life of the plan. Projects that will contribute to the ongoing delivery of this action include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSW Governments response to the review of the <a href="#">NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</a> and the native vegetation provisions of the Local Land Services Act 2013</li> <li>• publishing a decision report on the review of the koala habitat regulations in South East Queensland and implementing finds of the review (QLD Action 1.3)</li> <li>• avoiding expansion of the urban footprint into areas of koala habitat (QLD Action 1.6)</li> <li>• undertaking a review of the Nature Conservation Strategy (ACT Government)</li> <li>• developing national environmental standards as part of delivery of the Australian Government's <i>Nature Positive Plan: better for the environment, better for business</i>.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Contributors</b></p> <p>Australian, Queensland and NSW governments</p>



## Using local knowledge to bring back the Gula (koala)

Koalas have been spotted close to the ACT border, providing hope that they will make Canberra their home once again.

The ACT Government has collaborated with the local Ngunnawal community to create a new Native Species Conservation Plan for the Gula (koala). It combines scientific methods with traditional Ngunnawal knowledge and values to protect and revive koala populations across Ngunnawal country.

Surveys are underway to monitor sites for the presence of koalas. Ngunnawal community members and the ACT Government are also exploring ways to better manage koala habitat. In March 2024 they visited Yuin Country on the NSW South Coast to learn how the local mob maintain healthy koala habitat through cultural burning.

This was a great opportunity to reinvigorate traditional pathways for the Ngunnawal community, allowing for exchange of knowledge, values and practices to care for Gula into the future. It also provided a platform for future collaboration between the Ngunnawal and Yuin communities. This will ensure that cultural responsibility is maintained between both Nation groups and support a strong relationship for future generations to come.



**ACTION 4c**

Ensure identification and implementation of any offset decisions are strategic at a landscape scale and informed by the recovery plan

**Achievements**

Some progress has been made towards this action, including:

- the Queensland Government has revised the [General Guide to the Environmental Offsets Framework](#) to improve guidance on offsets, including for koala habitat offsets (QLD Action 1.5)
- the Queensland Government has strategically identified environmental offset locations (QLD Action 1.5) and is supporting stakeholder understanding of environmental offsets (QLD Action 1.10).

**Status**

Some progress

**Implications and next steps**

In practice, the suitability of offsets for impacts on koalas are considered in detail at the project level. Nationally Important Koala Areas (NIKAs) may help to better identify strategic areas for offset decisions, ensuring that habitat that is likely to support koala populations for decades to come is better protected and managed. Projects that will contribute to the ongoing delivery of this action include:

- the Australian Government's *Nature Positive Plan: better for the environment, better for business* includes updating environment legislation, which may impact on the way that offsets are considered
- the University of the Sunshine Coast Detection Dogs for Conservation is researching koala offset implementation and effectiveness.

**Contributors**

Australian, Queensland and NSW Governments and others

**ACTION 4d**

Incorporate the impacts of projected climate change into all strategic koala planning and actions

**Achievements**

Some progress towards this action has begun to model and understand the impacts of projected climate change as a first step in delivering this action.

- The Australian Government developed Nationally Important Koala Areas (NIKAs) including projected climate change modelling to guide implementation of the recovery plan.
- Science for Wildlife studied the characteristics of climate refugia for koalas in the Blue Mountains and future proofing of vegetation restoration.
- Border Ranges Richmond Valley Landcare Network conducted trials helping 11 landholders to source suitable climate-ready seed for habitat revegetation.

**Status**

Some progress

**Implications and next steps**

Analysis of NIKAs and inland refuge areas in NSW provide an information base for considering impacts of climate change on koalas. The NIKA is being reviewed and updated to include known habitat, connectivity and restoration. Additional research is also underway on the impacts of climate change on koalas, such as changes to leaf nutrition. Results from this research can be used to inform future actions, such as revisions to tree lists for habitat restoration based on future viability under climate change. Next steps require the incorporation of this climatic modelling into planning tools and decisions.

**Contributors**

Australian, Queensland, NSW and ACT Governments and others

Projects that will contribute to the ongoing delivery of this action include:

- commitment to apply Queensland-specific climate projection data to guide koala conservation (QLD Action 3.9)
- commitment to prioritise threat reduction opportunities addressing all threats to koalas, including climate change (QLD Action 3.1 and 3.2)
- modelling the future distribution of locally important koala trees using NARCLIM regional climate change projections, which will guide strategic koala planning and actions (ACT)
- Royal Botanic Gardens (RBG) research into genetically diverse and climate ready seed for use in restoration projects ([Restore and Renew project](#)), with a Site Matching Tools that enables environmental matching of restoration sites to potential seed collection areas, taking into account future climate change impacts. As an example, RBG is working with Singleton Council on seeds for use in koala feed tree plantings in the Hunter region.

## ACTION 4e

### Develop national guidelines or standards for koala-friendly urban design

#### Achievements

There has been some progress against this action.

- The Queensland Government published a [koala-sensitive design guideline](#) to help retain and protect koala habitat values in their natural state, ensure the safe movement of koalas within and across a site, and reduce threats to resident and transient koalas.
- The NSW Government published [advice](#) regarding vehicle strike mitigation (NSW).

#### Status



Some progress

#### Implications and next steps


Good progress has been made, including lessons from the Koala Beach development on the NSW north coast. The Australia Government is drafting national guidelines based on existing materials.

#### Contributors

Australian,  
Queensland and NSW  
Governments

## Strategy 5 – Strategically restore listed koala habitat

Restoration increases the overall habitat available for koalas and increases the connectivity between areas of habitat, important for the long-term survival of listed koala populations. These actions aim to ensure that resources are targeted to the most strategic areas.

ACTION 5a	
Build on and implement landscape-scaled habitat restoration plans	
<p><b>Achievements</b></p> <p>Some progress has been made against this action. Habitat restoration plans are being generated at differing scales as required. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exploration of priority habitat restoration areas as part of NIKA mapping (Australian Government)</li> <li>• development of a habitat restoration plan for koala habitat at the state scale (NSW Action 1.4) as well as regional scale mapping that highlights areas for protection, restoration, creation or connectivity efforts</li> <li>• prioritisation of habitat restoration in koala priority areas (QLD Action 2.1).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Status</b></p>  <p>Some progress</p>
<p><b>Implications and next steps</b></p> <p>The next step for the delivery of this action is to draw this diverse information together in a way that facilitates communication and decision making. More work is required to identify areas at the landscape scale that should be prioritised for restoration, including across private land and state borders. Projects that will contribute to the ongoing delivery of this action include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a Box-gum woodland restoration and rewilding project, a partnership between the NSW Government and Taronga Conservation Society Australia to create more than 5,000 ha of climate-change-resilient habitat for koalas and other threatened species (NSW Action 1.8). This project is underway, with restoration and climate resilience planning in train</li> <li>• Restore and Reconnect: SEQ Koala Habitat, which includes engagement and analysis to identify and prioritise sites for strategic restoration and assisted regeneration of koala habitat. This is being delivered by Healthy Land and Water, the official NRM group for South East Queensland and funded by the Queensland Government.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Contributors</b></p> <p>Australian, Queensland and NSW Governments and others</p>

**ACTION 5b**

Develop and implement best practice revegetation and restoration guidelines appropriate to local conditions

**Achievements**

Substantial progress has been made against this action, with new guidelines being published.

- The Australian Government published koala habitat revegetation [guidelines](#) in 2022.
- The NSW Government published koala habitat restoration [guidelines](#) in 2022 (NSW Action 1.4) and supported standardised data management for koala habitat restoration in NSW through the Habitat Restoration HUB (NSW Action 1.6).
- The Armidale Tree Group has written a number of guides about koala habitat tree species and guidelines for the local area.
- Gympie Regional Council published koala habitat rehabilitation [guidelines](#) in 2022.

**Status**

Substantial progress

**Implications and next steps**

To complete this action, uptake of these guidelines will need to be encouraged and assessment made of whether they are fit for purpose and provide guidance that is appropriate for local conditions. The National Recovery Team will consider these guidelines and discuss whether additional work is required or focus should be on promoting the guidance available.

**Contributors**

Australian and NSW governments and others

**ACTION 5c**

Implement on-ground revegetation or restoration programs in previously cleared areas of koala habitat

**Achievements**

Some progress has been made against this action. On-ground programs are being designed or implemented in NSW and Queensland that support the revegetation or restoration of previously cleared land, with significant investment from the Australian, NSW and Queensland Governments in koala habitat restoration projects.

It also includes investments made by non-government organisations such as WIRES and the \$11 million WWF Koalas Forever program and local community investments, either independent or working with funding partners. Examples of efforts<sup>4</sup> include:

- WWF's Koala Friendly Carbon initiative has begun a pilot program aimed at using carbon finance to scale up koala habitat revegetation
- the Scenic Rim branch of Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland has planted corridors to connect koala habitat
- Brisbane City Council is implementing a large-scale habitat restoration program with a focus on re-establishing cleared and degraded koala habitat and corridors within key areas in Brisbane, covering around 400 ha. Council is also investing in artificial habitat structures (e.g., crossing structures over roads) to help improve habitat connectivity and support safe movement for koalas and other wildlife

**Status**

Some progress

<sup>4</sup> Note that these examples may include both restoration of previously cleared areas of habitat as well as improvement of existing areas of koala habitat.



- South East Local Land Services is running the Cold Country Koala Project for the Numeralla Area of Regional Koala Significance, which includes fencing, revegetation, feral animal control and weed management
- Mid Coast Council is delivering various on-ground projects on Council-owned and managed properties and devolved grant projects for private properties. Council is also mapping priority revegetation areas, assisting with habitat enhancement programs through weed control, and increasing representation of preferred koala food trees
- Tweed Shire Council provides annual funding for a koala habitat restoration program supporting private landholders, under the Tweed Coast Koala Plan of Management
- the Armidale Tree Group is engaging landholders to establish koala and native fauna habitat in the Boorolong area, offering landholders koala habitat tree planting packs
- Wingecarribee Shire Council attracted 20 landholders for koala habitat restoration through the Southern Highlands Koala Habitat Restoration Project. Through this project and biannual Land for Wildlife tree giveaways, over 50 ha of koala habitat has been restored or reconstructed over the last few years
- Friends of the Koala ran its East Coraki Project, integrating planting, weed control, education, monitoring and citizen science
- the Northern Rivers Regional Koala Partnership is working to map and prioritise koala habitat restoration. Coordinated by Friends of the Koala, the majority of koala restoration projects across the region have been mapped over the last 5-10 years
- the Southwest Sydney Koala Project is implementing onground works on land that was previously cleared
- Koala Conservation Australia collaborated with Forestry NSW, Councils, and Landcare to give away free koala food trees to community members to plant on their private properties
- Lismore Council provides annual funding to landholders to undertake koala habitat restoration on rural lands
- the Clarence Environment Centre works with the community to restore koala habitat on private lands. They employ a team of contractors for ongoing weed removal, resulting in restoration of large tracts of koala habitat
- Redland City Council organises community koala plantings twice yearly
- Moreton Bay Council has invested in targeted tree planting to restore key koala corridors. Over 100,000 trees have been planted at more than 60 strategic sites across Morton Bay under the Green Infrastructure Program: most trees are selected to be koala friendly.
- Greenfleet is restoring 259 ha at [Ivory Creek](#), Queensland including planting koala habitat and food trees to support known populations.

In the last 12 months, the Queensland Government has provided additional funding to expand the existing Koala Habitat Restoration Partnerships Program in collaboration with the Queensland Trust for Nature, supporting a third round expression of interest to engage more landholders in the program.

### Implications and next steps

There is substantial investment in habitat restoration across the listed range which will over time support slowing the decline of koalas. Significant habitat restoration efforts will be required to arrest koala declines driven by climate change and habitat loss and achieve the objectives of the recovery plan.

### Contributors

Australian, Queensland and NSW governments and others



## Restoring koala habitat in Northern NSW

Efforts are underway to improve important habitat for koala populations in Northern NSW. Since 2021, North Coast Local Land Services have been working in four Areas of Regional Koala Significance. Working with landholders, Traditional Owners and community groups, they are protecting and restoring koala habitat on private land. The program receives funding from the Australian Government.

Activities include revegetation, weed control and fencing, as well as research such as koala scat analysis, knowledge sharing and cultural burning. A key to success has been supporting landholders to achieve their conservation goals, whether this is integrating farming and native wildlife protection, or creating a koala habitat sanctuary. The project allows landholders to feel that they are part of the bigger goal of conserving Australia's iconic koala for the future.

Brett and Lisa Verco purchased 'Narlu' in 2020 to rewild the past cattle station. Today, with assistance from North Coast Local Land Services they have planted over 30,000 trees, which includes 16.4 ha of regeneration. Brett says he is grateful to Local Land Services for assistance with their goal to provide quality wildlife habitat and to leave a legacy for future generations.



### ACTION 5d

Improve the condition of existing koala habitat on both private and public land through best-practice land management

#### Achievements

On-ground programs are being designed or implemented in NSW and Queensland that support improving habitat condition through weed control and fire management, with significant investment by the Australian, NSW and Queensland governments. It also includes investments made by local governments and non-government organisations such as the WWF Koalas Forever program and local community investments, either independent or working with funding partners. Examples include:

- the Wildlife Land Trust managed by Humane Society International has signed up over 200 members providing sanctuaries for koalas either on their property or on neighbouring land

#### Status



Some progress

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid Coast Council is delivering koala habitat condition improvement on Council-owned land and private land, particularly relating to control of priority weeds</li> <li>• Campbelltown City Council delivered habitat restoration activities and re-vegetation under the Campbelltown Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management</li> <li>• Tweed Shire Council funds a habitat restoration program under the Tweed Coast Koala Plan of Management to support revegetation on private land in priority koala habitat areas</li> <li>• Conservation Volunteers Australia held best practice revegetation workshops for landholders in Northern Rivers (NSW) and Somerset (South East Queensland)</li> <li>• Wingecarribee Shire Council's environment levy funded Land for Wildlife and Rural Partner Programs to support private landholders. A team of five bushland field officers and contractors conducted natural area restoration work in council-owned or managed community and Crown Land natural areas reserves (~30 reserves across 3,000 ha)</li> <li>• Koala Conservation Australia is working with the Koala Recovery Project, councils, landowners, Landcare, and Local Land Services to undertake habitat restoration on private lands that are close to national parks and identifies as priority areas for recovery. Signups to date cover 70 ha</li> <li>• Logan City Council managed revegetation projects across 9 Council parks that have mapped koala habitat or restoration values</li> <li>• Hawkesbury City Council undertakes bush regeneration on council reserves with identified koala habitat in the Kurrajong area</li> <li>• Singleton City Council is developing a local biodiversity values map which will help to inform areas for koala habitat management</li> <li>• Koala Action Inc. is working with USC Detection Dog Unit and others to support replanting in areas of suitable koala habitat.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Implications and next steps</b></p> <p>There is substantial investment in improving habitat across the listed range which will support slowing the decline of koalas. Ongoing best-practice land management, including management of vegetation, fire, weeds, and introduced species, will be required to deliver this action, and achieve the objectives of the recovery plan.</p>	<p><b>Contributors</b></p> <p>Australian, Queensland and NSW Governments and others</p>

## Koala conservation builds momentum in Central Queensland

Central Queensland is an important hub for koalas. Unfortunately koala populations are in decline, largely due to clearing and fragmentation of habitat. Queensland's Natural Resource Management (NRM) organisations, with the support of the Australian Government's Saving Koalas Fund, are working to reverse this trend.

Reef Catchments NRM are supporting local landholders to tackle invasive weeds in the Sarina area. Species such as lantana and guinea grass choke out native trees and pose a significant fire threat to koala habitat. By removing the weeds and planting koala food and habitat trees, landholders are creating koala friendly corridors and improving existing habitat. The project is made possible by the Sarina community's commitment to build and maintain connected landscapes for koalas.



*Before and after at one Sarina property, thanks to the efforts of Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group. Three koalas were spotted on the property over the last 6 months.*




*Reducing dense weeds to help koala movement, Nebo area, Clarke-Connors Range*

Further south, Fitzroy Basin Association (FBA) is working with landholders to restore and protect koala habitat in the Clarke-Connors Range. Over the last few years FBA has worked with passionate land managers and a local koala advisory group. This has helped to better understand the area's koala population and habitat. Invasive weeds are a key threat to the condition of koala habitat. This project targets weed control to improve koala movement and promote the growth of native koala-friendly species. It provides a great opportunity to collaborate with graziers who are keen to improve the health of their local environment for their business and koalas.

## Strategy 6 – Actively manage listed koala metapopulations

Metapopulation managements relates to the movement of individuals and their genes between populations to maintain and potentially improve genetic diversity. It is a complex process. Management of fire, forest harvesting and human activities and developments all influence koala metapopulation processes, and must be managed to mitigate adverse impacts.

ACTION 6a	
Develop meaningful and measurable metrics of health, genetics, population and distribution, and climate at relevant planning scales	
<p><b>Achievements</b></p> <p>Some progress against this action has begun to develop metrics to measure the status and trend of koalas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Koala Monitoring Program (NKMP) is developing population and distribution metrics and will also support the development of koala health metrics.</li> <li>• The NSW Government is undertaking a baseline survey of koalas. This work will also collect baseline health and genetics status in a number of koala populations (NSW Action 4.2).</li> <li>• The Queensland Government is undertaking a comprehensive koala survey and monitoring program across South East Queensland.</li> <li>• The Australian and NSW Governments are supporting the development of a koala genome survey, an open data resource to improve koala conservation; the <a href="#">first publication</a> of this project is now available.</li> <li>• Nationally Important Koala Areas (NIKAs) analysis considers climate metrics for future habitat suitability.</li> <li>• The University of Sydney Koala Genome Survey developed six primary genetic metrics for koalas across the country.</li> </ul> <p>In the last 12 months, additional activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Health Metrics Working Group has been established and a workshop held with experts to support the NKMP developing health metrics.</li> <li>• The NKMP has collected and curated koala health data in Queensland, providing intelligence on the various impacts on koala health in South East Queensland.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Status</b></p>  <p>Some progress</p>
<p><b>Implications and next steps</b></p> <p>Future work will see the development of suitable metrics to help assess progress against the recovery plan. A draft program logic has been developed for the recovery plan and will be finalised in the near future, to include key performance indicators for each of its objectives.</p> <p>Projects that will contribute to the ongoing delivery of this action include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Victorian statewide koala population health and genetic survey, commencing in March 2024</li> <li>• health and disease research on South Australian koalas, being undertaken by the South Australia Health Research Group, which will contribute to development of health metrics</li> </ul>	<p><b>Contributors</b></p> <p>Australian, NSW and Queensland governments and others</p>

- koala research in the Greater Blue Mountains, NSW led by Science for Wildlife: genetics research is a collaboration with James Cook University; disease research is being undertaken with University of Sydney Koala Health Hub; and research into koala distribution and ecology work is a partnership with San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance and the NSW Koala Strategy
- CSIRO is working with the Queensland Government to integrate and improve access to information on koala health incidents, habitat and potential release sites, which will assist in the collation of health data.

## ACTION 6b

### Develop national principles for conservation translocation decisions

#### Achievements

Some progress on this action has been made, with important foundational work begun on the principles for conservation translocations.

- The NSW Government has completed a detailed review of koala translocations, developing recommendations for use in forthcoming trial translocations (NSW Actions 3.6, 3.9). One successful translocation has been completed to date in NSW with several more trials planned.
- The Queensland Government has developed and published a Protected Animal Translocation Policy which sets out key principles for deciding when translocation may be suitable. The policy aligns with the International Union for Conservation of Nature Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations and the Australian Government policy statement Translocation of Listed Threatened Species (QLD Action 3.6).
- The [Koala Disease Risk Analysis](#) developed several recommendations that will inform national principles for conservation translocation decisions (KDRA G2, G16, 1.9, 9.5a).
- Genetic analysis of the national koala population has been completed, which will provide an important input into conservation translocation decisions.

#### Status



Some progress

#### Implications and next steps

The detailed review and trial translocations undertaken at the state level will provide excellent source material for national guidelines to be developed in the future. Projects that will contribute to the ongoing delivery of this action include:

- delivery of the Native Species Conservation Plan for the Gula (Koala) 2023 which includes captive breeding considerations and a technical working group, led by ACT Government, will consider principles for active koala management
- various projects/developments in NSW, including a NSW Framework for koala translocations; a NSW Koala Translocation Working Group; a NSW Koala expert panel for koala translocation proposal review; and development of a modelling tool for koala translocations, in collaboration with Flinders University
- Brisbane City Council has completed the first stage of a research project with University of Queensland to re-establish koalas into Brisbane's south-western suburbs, with Stage 2 underway
- the Koala Disease Risk Assessment ([KDRA](#)) includes health considerations relevant to translocations.

#### Contributors

Australian, Queensland and NSW governments and others



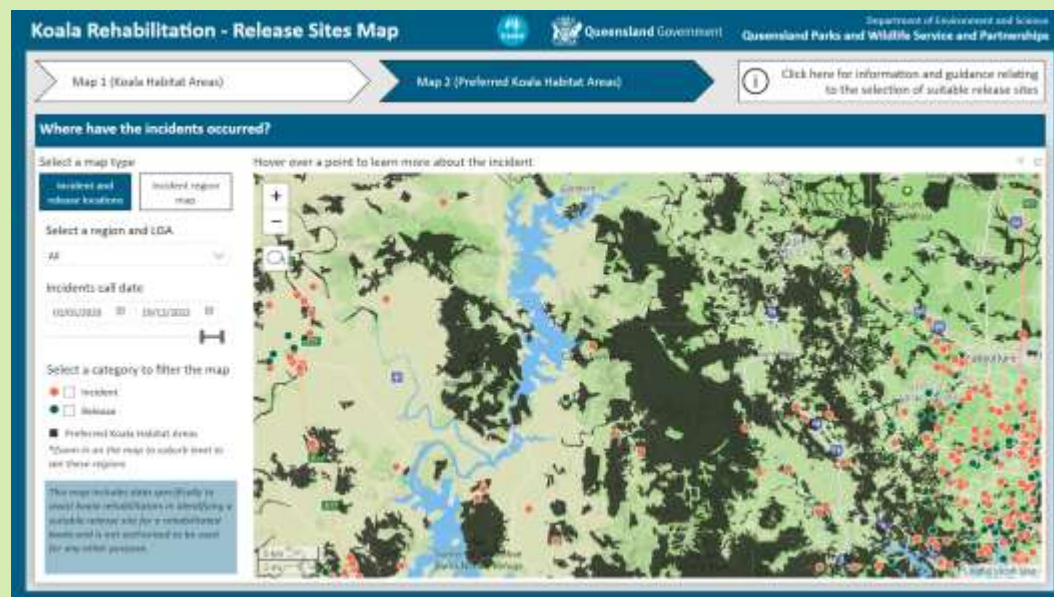
## Mapping koala release and health incidents

The National Koala Monitoring Program (NKMP) has been working in partnership with the Queensland Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI). The project aims to integrate and improve access to information on koala health incidents, habitat and potential release sites.

In 2023 DESI updated their guidance on koala rescue and rehabilitation. As part of this, the NKMP and DESI worked together on an interactive [mapping tool](#), based on the Queensland Government's koala habitat mapping work, that quickly shows people:

- the location of suitable koala habitat patches for release of rehabilitated koalas
- where previous health incidents have occurred (koalas that have been brought into care or reported killed)
- where koalas have been released.

This mapping tool connects with the QLD KoalaBase, a database which stores veterinary reporting for koalas in Queensland and forms part of the Queensland government's release site assessment tool. The new mapping tool provides data which wildlife carers, vets and local councils can use to get better outcomes for koalas released from care. Insights offered by the dashboard also help support the best practice guidelines and codes of practice that have been developed for koala release in Queensland.





**ACTION 6c**

Regionally assess the feasibility, risks, and cost-effectiveness of fire management options

**Achievements**

While there has been limited progress on this action, activities include:

- the NSW Government has published [guidelines](#) for considering koalas in planned burns, to provide guidance on ways to reduce the risks of injury and mortality of koalas from low intensity fires. and is developing a risk management protocol for conducting hazard reduction burning operations in areas of known koala occupancy (NSW Action 3.7)
- other cultural burning approaches are being implemented in the Northern Rivers region of NSW through the Northern Rivers Regional Koala Conservation Strategy.

**Status**

Limited progress

**Implications and next steps**

There has been limited progress towards this action at a national level. The National Recovery Team Board has prioritised this action for greater focus. Projects that will contribute to the ongoing delivery of this action include:

- exploring options for undertaking bushfire and climate change refugia mapping as part of the Nationally Important Koala Areas (Australian Government)
- developing bushfire management approaches to better protect koalas and their habitat while also protecting people and property. The government will incorporate traditional ecological knowledge and cultural burning practices into these approaches. Improved understanding of the impacts of hazard reduction burns on koalas will also help inform future hazard reduction burns (NSW Action 3.1)
- prioritising threat reduction opportunities that address the threat of fire to koalas (QLD Actions 3.1 + 3.2).

**Contributors**

NSW Government,  
with additional action  
proposed by  
Australian and  
Queensland  
governments

**ACTION 6d**

Develop and implement fire management that effectively secures and promotes protection of known populations and suitable habitat

**Achievements**

There has been limited progress made on this action. Examples of actions that contribute to this include:

- Rangers in Minyurni Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) NSW carried out traditional land management techniques to look after country (NSW Action 3.7)
- Rangers in Mid Coast NSW carried out traditional land management techniques to look after country and bio-cultural koala monitoring training programs. This involved the Taree Indigenous Ranger Team, the Local Land Services/Firesticks Alliance, and Tocal College Aboriginal Land Management (NSW Action 3.7)
- WWF is supporting Indigenous ranger groups and organisations including Firesticks Alliance to undertake and monitor the effects of cultural burning in koala habitat in South East Queensland, the Border Ranges and South Coast NSW
- the Queensland Fire and Biodiversity Consortium (QFBC) is a collaborative network of land managers and stakeholders who are committed to improving fire and biodiversity management, supporting applied fire research, facilitating partnerships and building land manager and landholder capacity

**Status**

Limited progress

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science for Wildlife completed short-term post-fire surveys on koala occurrence and characterised main predictors of koala fire refugia</li> <li>• Wingecarribee Shire Council conducted bushfire risk management planning to incorporate koala habitat</li> <li>• Curtin University conducted research into the way in which disturbance affects the risk posed by fire and developed a tool to calculate threats to fauna from fire (Zylstra 2023)</li> <li>• the University of the Sunshine Coast is assessing the impacts of cultural burning practices on koala populations, in partnership with First Nations on Quandamooka country</li> <li>• WaterNSW manages fire ecology in its catchments to support the protection of known koala populations, include through strategic mosaic burning, providing refuge and escape routes for wildlife during burning operations, and implementing Indigenous burning methods where practical.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Implications and next steps</b></p> <p>There has been limited progress towards this action at a national level. The National Recovery Team Board has prioritised this action for greater focus. Cultural burning as a means of protecting and enhancing koala habitat was included in the INFFER cost-benefit analysis and will be considered as part of Australian Government funding for habitat restoration.</p> <p>In addition to guidelines for reducing the impact of planned burns on koalas (for example those published by the NSW Government), consideration of how hazard reduction burns can be augmented to support the long-term protection of koala populations is required to advance this action.</p> <p>Projects that will contribute to the ongoing delivery of this action include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the NSW Government is testing and improving the new technology Prescribed Burn Fire Severity Prediction to inform hazard reduction burning operations in areas of known koala occupancy (NSW Action 3.7)</li> <li>• the NSW Government is developing a Fire Severity Modeling Report for hazard reduction burning operations in known koala habitat (NSW Action 3.7)</li> <li>• enacting traditional burning practices as part of bushfire recovery projects in koala habitat (NSW Action 3.7)</li> <li>• prioritising threat reduction opportunities to reduce impacts on koalas from wildfire (QLD Action 3.1)</li> <li>• reviewing barriers to fire management for koalas in the ACT</li> <li>• Science for Wildlife is working with NPWS using fire refugia research to inform local annual burning plans in the Blue Mountains region.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Contributors</b></p> <p>Australian, Queensland and NSW governments and others</p>

## Supporting koala recovery with cultural fire

Murrah Flora Reserve and Biamanga National Park are home to one of the last remaining coastal koala populations from the Illawarra region to Victoria. Supported by the Firesticks Alliance, Southern Yuin Traditional Owners are gathering evidence to better understand how koalas are moving across Country. This will inform how cultural fire can be applied to improve koala habitat.

Over 80 Yuin community members are being mentored to conduct on-Country scat surveys, audio monitoring, genetic testing, plant and Country identification. The crew are also using sophisticated thermal imaging and infrared drone technology to survey koala populations. Cultural burn workshops run by Djiringanj Yuin Traditional Custodian, Dan Morgan, are revitalising local traditional fire knowledge, and there have been exciting signs of koala activity after a cultural burn.

The Southern Yuin Firesticks team are also sharing learnings and cultural knowledge with other Indigenous communities where cultural fire is being used in koala habitat.

The evidence gathered will help to produce a long-term cultural fire management plan for the Gulaga and Biamanga Cultural Landscape. This plan will support mob to manage public lands with a cultural fire regime that promotes healthy country, healthy Koala habitat and healthy Aboriginal communities.



**ACTION 6e**

Develop and implement response and decision-support tools for individual and population management in emergencies

**Achievements**

Some progress has been made against this action at various scales:

- the Australian Government provided \$1 million for training vets and vet nurses in treatment and triage of sick and injured koalas
- the NSW Government is working to improve emergency response actions for koalas, including an online training course and publication of guidance for wildlife first response for NSW firefighters (NSW Action 3.8)
- the Queensland Government continues to support wildlife hospitals so that koalas rescued from emergencies have the best chance of recovery and survival; this includes expanded funding for the SEQ Wildlife Hospital Network and funding to develop and deliver best practice training for wildlife carers, veterinarians and veterinary nurses
- Koala Conservation Australia drafted guidelines for the search and rescue of koalas from firegrounds
- Humane Society International supported seven koala rescue and rehabilitation groups in Queensland, NSW, Victoria and South Australia in response to natural disasters
- Science for Wildlife developed an [app](#) that shares evidence-based information from stakeholder organisations with communities for wildlife emergency response. Local testing is underway, with further development proposed to support rollout. The app will reduce misinformation via social media and create a more reliable source of information during emergencies
- SA koala health research group has analysed koala rescue data from South Australian bushfires to inform responses, which has wider application.

**Status**

Some progress

**Implications and next steps**

Ongoing delivery of this action throughout the life of the plan will be needed to ensure ongoing capability to respond to emergencies.

Guidelines to improve emergency response for koalas will assist in improving responses and build on lessons learned in the wake of recent bushfires and floods. The NSW Government is looking at enhanced coordination of emergency response for koalas and other wildlife due to bushfire or extreme weather events (NSW Action 3.8).

**Contributors**

Queensland, NSW and SA governments and others



## 5. Koala population estimate

Investment and collaboration on the National Koala Monitoring Program is providing data and improving modelling to help inform our understanding of the state and condition of the koala across its range. CSIRO's data-driven population model has been built based on tens of thousands of data points, combining historic data with contemporary data from on-ground monitoring efforts.

Information on the koala population at the time of listing, and updated figures from modelling undertaken through the National Koala Monitoring Program are outlined in Table 4 below. It is important to note that:

- the population range estimates are derived from data-driven models, which will be improved by collecting and analysing additional data over time.
- changes in the population estimates year-on-year do not indicate a change in actual koala populations; at this stage of the program it indicates a refinement of the modelled estimate
- more data is needed from regional and remote areas in eastern Australia where it is strongly suspected that there are no koalas. To help address this, a combined survey transect distance of 1,057km has been completed in regional Queensland since 2023, focusing on areas where there was previously little or no data. Additional data from NSW will also be included in the future.



*Queensland Murray-Darling Rangers undertaking surveys for the koala as part of the National Koala Monitoring Program*

**Table 4:** National population estimates of the koala

Estimate (date)	Method	National population range	Listed population range (QLD, NSW, ACT)	Unlisted population range
TSSC (2021) used for Koala Recovery Plan	Expert elicitation	Not estimated	92,184	-
NKMP 1st annual estimate (March 2023)	Data-driven NKMP model	287,830 – 628,010	117,050 – 244,440	170,780 – 383,570
NKMP 2nd annual estimate (March 2024)	Data-driven NKMP model	224,000 – 524,000	95,000 – 238,000	129,000 – 286,000
Adjusted NKMP estimate (2023) <sup>5</sup>	Data-driven NKMP model, adjusted for known data gaps	-	86,000 and 176,000	-

The next national koala population estimate is due in March 2025. Further information about the model and approach is available at the NKMP [website](#).

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<sup>5</sup> The adjusted estimate accounts for areas where there is little or no data. The latest population estimate generated using the NKMP moves closer to the 2023 adjusted population estimate.



## 6. Supporting information

### Recovery team operation and forward workplan

The National Recovery Team structure is based on a program delivery model and follows recovery team best practice guidelines, shown below:



Currently 4 groups are running:

- **the Board** provides strategic oversight and coordination of recovery plan delivery. More information about the Board, including membership and meeting communiqués is available on the [recovery team website](#).
- **Strategy and Coordination Group** provides strategic analysis of recovery plan actions, and recommendations for coordinating implementation of those actions.
- **Community Advisory Committee** has almost 80 organisations represented across local government, research institutions, NGOs and community groups. It provides advice from a community perspective on recovery plan progress and implementation.
- **First Nations Reference Group** makes sure that First Nation perspectives are included in recovery plan delivery. It also encourages local level engagement in delivery.

The Recovery Team's forward workplan for the next 12 months is outlined in the Annual Implementation Plan 2024, available on the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water koala [website](#) pages.







*National Koala Recovery Team Board members, representatives from Reef Catchments and Fitzroy Basin Association, Yuwi Land and Sea Rangers, and landholders in the Mackay region who are supporting koala conservation (March 2024)*

# Appendix 1: Reference guide for summary assessment





## State/condition and prospects for long term survival

How do you rate the state/condition of the species or ecological community and its prospects for long term survival of the koala, based on current information? If there are limited data available, it may be appropriate to make a qualitative assessment based on expert assessment. The information below is a guide how an assessment is made.

State/condition grades	Criteria
 <b>Very good</b>	The species appears to have <b>very good</b> prospects for long term survival in the wild, based on an evaluation of the parameters such as abundance, distribution, habitat condition or the impact of threats.
 <b>Good</b>	The species appears to have <b>good</b> prospects for long term survival in the wild, based on an evaluation of the parameters such as abundance, distribution, habitat condition or the impact of threats.
 <b>Poor</b>	The species appears to have <b>poor</b> prospects for long term survival in the wild, based on an evaluation of the parameters such as abundance, distribution, habitat condition or the impact of threats.
 <b>Very poor</b>	The species appears to have <b>very poor</b> prospects for long term survival in the wild, based on an evaluation of the parameters such as abundance, distribution, habitat condition or the impact of threats.




## Conservation trajectory

What is the conservation trajectory of the species or ecological community in terms of whether it is improving, deteriorating, or stable? If possible refer to the [national listing criteria for species and ecological communities](#) and make a determination of the conservation trajectory using at least one criteria.

Recent trend	Criteria
 <b>Improving</b>	Increase in the population or the geographic distribution of the species or ecological community, or another relevant parameter.
 <b>Deteriorating</b>	Decrease in the population or the geographic distribution of the species or ecological community, or another relevant parameter.
 <b>Stable</b>	The population or the geographic distribution of the species or ecological community, or another relevant parameter are stable.
 <b>Unclear</b>	There is insufficient information to make an estimate of the conservation trajectory of the species or ecological community.

## Level of confidence

What is your level of confidence in these estimates based on the available evidence and the consensus of experts?

Level	Criteria
	Evidence and consensus too low to make an assessment
	Limited evidence or limited consensus
	Adequate high-quality evidence and high consensus



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This publication is available on the [koala recovery team website](#).

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p.23 Ralph Hawkins, circa 1970, sourced from [NSW DCCEEW](#)

p.28 NSW DCCEEW

p.34 University of Sunshine Coast Detection Dogs for Conservation

p.36 Michael Pennay, NSW DCCEEW

p.38 Sari Bridgeman, Commonwealth DCCEEW

p.41 Top right: Mark Mohell, Department of Environment.

Bottom: Elisha Donkin

p.47 North Coast Local Land Services

p.49 Top: Reef Catchments. Bottom: Mark Schultz, Fitzroy Basin Association

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p.57 CSIRO and QMD Catchment Limited

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**The National Koala Recovery Team is a collaboration of many dedicated partner organisations, coordinated by the Australian Government.**

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