



## SYDNEY BASIN KOALA POLICY

From the western edge of Sydney, spreading outwards north, south and west – there are little-known but irreplaceable Koala colonies. Now officially classified as “endangered” under state and federal legislation, they are facing extinction in a few decades – unless we act!

The Basin contains seven ARKS – areas of koala significance – which face multiple threats:

- Campbelltown/Wingecarribee/Goulburn
- Goodman Ford/Wiarborough
- Goulburn/Shoalhaven west
- Hawkesbury
- Hunter region North
- Hunter region south/Sydney region north/Central Coast region
- Putty/Megalong

Koalas have declined in the Sydney Basin Bioregion by an estimated 22% in the last 20 years. Protection of remaining habitat including near urban areas; in proposed urban expansion sites and on public, leased and private lands - is critical.

Recent Yougov polling found 91% of NSW residents support the creation of a koala green belt across Sydney. 84% want koala habitat protected from development. Our urban and regional areas must marshal all available legal, financial and scientific resources to protect their habitat and linking corridors on public and private lands, so Koalas can survive.

Closer to election day on 25 March 2023, we will issue a review of each party’s Sydney Basin Koala Policy.



# **POLICY**

## **1. PROTECT EXISTING HABITAT**

- Sydney Koala Greenbelt: a contiguous area via dedicating public land and supporting conservation on private land through both targeted private land conservation programs, acquisition and stricter clearing safeguards.
- New conservation areas on public and private land in other parts of the bioregion
- Impose stricter controls on land clearing throughout the bioregion
- Exclude logging in koala habitat on private and public land
- Mandate the making of Koala Plans of Management across the bioregion council areas, to be gazetted by 2024

## **2. MAINTAIN, EXPAND AND RESTORE LINKING CORRIDORS**

- Mandate min 250m wide with average of 425m through strategic and local plans and planning policies generally
- Where there are Koala travel obstructions, work to remove or bypass them
- Plant local species used by Koalas to regenerate corridors and buffer zones

## **3. REMOVE DEVELOPMENT LOOPHOLES (ie, discretions)**

- Gazette an environmental veto (Koala gateway) for Koala habitat on all development applications, including state significant development by bolstering safeguards in assessment and determination processes:
  - Addressing ongoing concerns with the operation and implementation of the Koala SEPP
  - Strengthening the 'serious and irreversible impacts' mechanism
- Prevent the use of offsets for development in the habitat of endangered and critically endangered species
- Improve community/environment appeal rights on developments
- Translocation of Koalas is not an alternative to allow clearing of habitat
- Review development applications, LEPs and strategic plans in train for Koala protection implications

## **4. AVOID VEHICLE, DOG AND FIRE THREATS**

- Construct underpasses or land bridges at key danger points to enable Koala movement
- Fence corridors to protect Koalas from human-koala conflict, especially in habitat corridors adjoining high density urban development
- Manage hazard reduction burns to prevent degradation of Koala trees and plan for escape routes from high intensity fires

## **5. CONTINUE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH THAT LEADS TO PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS**

- Upgrade surveys to monitor Koala colony generational persistence across all land tenures
- Ensure tree species planted for regeneration are suitable for the local population and are consistent with naturally occurring vegetation