



2022 Koala Conference Statement

We, the parties identified below, join together in recognition of the simple and devastating fact that our national treasure, the koala, once so abundant, is vanishing.

The ongoing destruction and fragmentation of koala habitat caused by logging, land clearing for agriculture, urban development and mining has put the koala on a path to extinction by 2050 on the east coast of Australia. In just 10 years the legal status of koalas in NSW has changed from 'not threatened' to 'vulnerable' to 'endangered'. This alarming rate of decline was occurring before the 2019/20 bushfires that decimated a further third of the remaining population.

The levers to pull the koala back from extinction are largely in the hands of the state government which determines land use and natural resource policy, owns a significant portion of public land containing koala habitat, and can allocate major funding for koala conservation. However, policies and decisions over many years to weaken native vegetation and forestry laws, rely on markets and reduce environmental assessment, compliance and enforcement, have failed to protect the koala and its habitat.

As a result, we gathered on Gumbaynggirr country at the 2022 Koala Conference in Coffs Harbour, to demand that in the 2023 NSW State Election our political leaders prioritise protecting koalas and their habitat by committing to:

1. An immediate moratorium on all logging and clearing in government identified Koala Hubs.
2. Establishing the Great Koala National Park, incorporating 175,000 hectares of native state forests in the Coffs Harbour hinterland, including a comprehensive industry transition and structural adjustment package, and major investment in plantation establishment.
3. Establishing a \$1 billion koala fund over four years for the protection, reservation, restoration and management of koala habitat across all tenures.
4. Legally designating core koala habitat for protection from clearing for agriculture, logging, urban development, mining and infrastructure.
5. Requiring independent surveys prior to any logging, forestry or clearing in potential habitat across all land tenures, to identify and protect any core koala habitat, corridors and feed trees.
6. Requiring councils to prepare Comprehensive Koala Plans of Management before approval of any rezoning or development in known or potential core koala habitat, ensuring appropriate mapping, consultation and protection without enabling further habitat destruction.
7. Identifying opportunities for the transfer of management and control of public land containing important koala habitat to Traditional Owner groups.

8. Allow communities to defend koalas and their habitat in court by reinstating third party appeal rights in forestry laws.
9. By 2025 comprehensively identifying and mapping koala populations and habitat, including core koala habitat, across all land tenures.
10. By 2027 developing comprehensive koala plans for each Area of Regional Koala Significance (ARKS) across all tenures that identify core koala habitat, wildlife corridors, replanting priorities, key road crossings, and site specific management actions.
11. Improving koala welfare through supporting the establishment and operation of wildlife hospitals, supporting and training carers, and reducing mortality from vehicle collisions and dog attacks.

Decisions made in the next few months will be crucial for their survival. We urge all communities and decision makers to act with conviction in the protection of the koala. Only strong action within the coming term of government will take the koala off the pathway to extinction and end the vanishing.

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