

# SYDNEY BASIN KOALA NETWORK

## KOALAS IN LIVERPOOL

### Gandangara and Tharawal Lands

Fact sheet based on BIOLINK and EDO Reports

February 2023



#### Map of Koala Habitat and Long Standing Koala Populations in Liverpool



— LGA border

■ Preferred Koala Habitat

🦘 Long-standing koala population (3 generations)

✗ Loss of long-standing koala population

This is a simplified representation of maps from *Biolink (2023) Sydney Basin Bioregion: Koala habitat and population assessment*. For scientifically rigorous maps see the full report (Biolink 2023). Historical records maps are also at the end of this fact sheet.

## Koala Persistence

Liverpool City Council LGA supports a growing koala population, largely along the Georges River, mainly in the south-east where the LGA abuts Campbelltown. The contiguous habitat between Liverpool and Campbelltown has allowed expansion from Campbelltown. The area where koalas have been found has increased in Liverpool 4 fold since 2002. The areas where koalas are persisting is also expanding.

## Habitat

Over a quarter (27.6.0%) of the vegetation in Liverpool is Preferred Koala Habitat - that's 8,458 ha. Fertile soils along the Georges River support Preferred Koala Habitat.

Koalas in the Sydney Basin have large home ranges so they require more habitat to meet their nutritional needs than in other parts of NSW, as such, protection of this habitat is critical to their survival.

## Threats

Koalas in Liverpool are increasingly vulnerable to the challenges of existing in the peri-urban interface in an area with an increasing human population. Vehicle strikes have increased since 2004, this is a serious concern as it only takes a 3% loss of koalas per year to drive population decline (1).

The relatively recent expansion of the Liverpool koala population, means there is not the longstanding scientific interest in this population. The increasing koala population necessitates planning to manage and conserve the population. Yet the local Council has no known management strategy, leaving this koala population vulnerable to habitat loss and fragmentation by urban development and other associated risks of vehicle strike and dog attack.

February 2023 fact sheet prepared from:

*Biolink. (2023). Sydney Basin Bioregion: Koala habitat and population assessment. Report for Total Environment Centre by Biolink Ecological Consultants.*

*EDO Report - Protecting koalas in the Sydney Basin Bioregion - February 2023.*

Full reports can be viewed at [https://www.sydneybasinkoalanetwork.org.au/policy\\_and\\_research](https://www.sydneybasinkoalanetwork.org.au/policy_and_research)

## How the Law is Failing Koalas

Liverpool has been identified in the [NSW Koala Strategy \(2\)](#) as requiring **Immediate Investment** and contains an **Areas of Regional Koala Significance (ARKS)**.

- Yet **Liverpool Shire LGA** has not developed a **Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management (CKPoM)**, nor any known management strategies.
- Development of CKPoMs is voluntary and in general the CKPoM only applies to local projects approved by council and not other major projects

Although NSW has many laws and policies that aim to protect koalas and their habitat, they are not up to the job. **Planning, environment and natural resource laws continue to enable koala habitat destruction:**

- **Offsets are overused and not ecologically robust:** koala habitat continues to be destroyed through the use of offsets, which allow proponents to set aside other land or pay money into a fund in order to be able to destroy koala habitat.
- **Safeguards are failing:** Important legal safeguards aimed at safeguarding threatened species from high-impact development, are poorly implemented or underutilised.
- **Decision-making is overly discretionary:** For State Significant Projects, decision makers have significant discretion in assessing and determining proposals, meaning **development can often trump koala habitat protection in NSW.**
- The **NSW Koala Strategy** has no legal weight and is not legally enforceable. It does not address the major threat of habitat fragmentation, modification and loss by development.

## Key Recommendations

**Local Level:** Local Council to develop a Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management (CKPoM).

**State Level:** NSW legislation and policy has continued to allow the decline of koalas, but there is an opportunity to create immediate impact and **halt the decline of koala populations** across the state by:

1. **Ensuring laws apply to all koala habitat** by adopting consistent, comprehensive mapping across NSW as a matter of urgency, to identify key areas for conservation.
2. **Reform state laws** to deliver certain protection and strong safeguards for koalas in all environmental, planning and land clearing legislation.

State Government to **adopt the five-point plan in the [Total Environment Centre's Sydney Basin Koala Policy \(3\)](#)** to halt the trajectory for koalas from endangered to extinct.

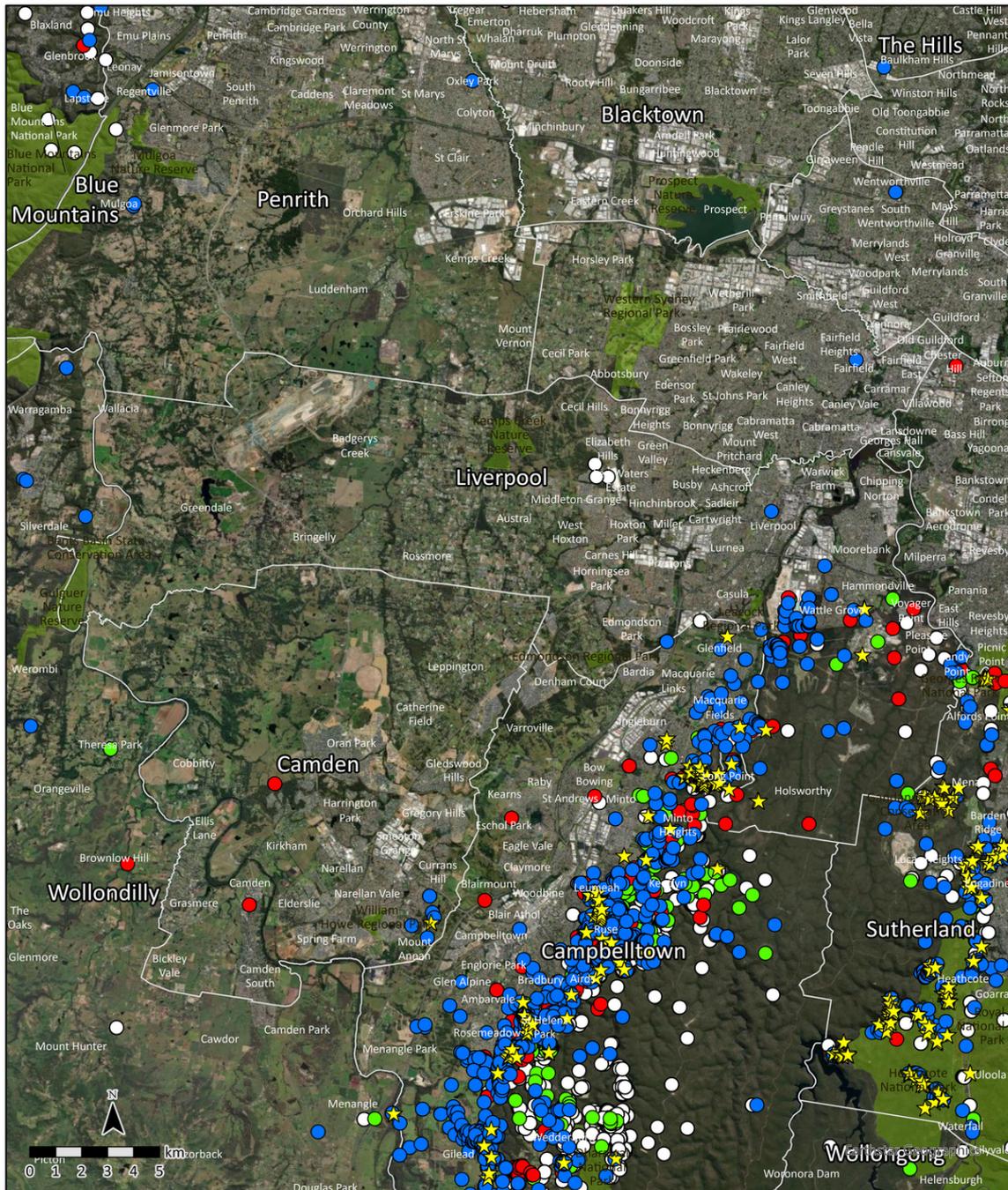
### What is a Koala Generation and why is it important?

A generation time represents the average age of reproducing adults in a population. It is broadly accepted (including by the IUCN) that koala generation time is 6 years.

Generation 1 in this report spans 2016 to 2021 and is the most recent koala generation looked at here. The occurrence of koala sightings in the same area over three consecutive generations tells us that the population is breeding, because koalas are existing here for longer than one koala lifespan. At the time of analysis 2022 sightings did not represent a full year of data so are recorded separately on the map (pg.3).

Loss of long-standing populations is when koalas were seen over three generations before 2003 (i.e. generations 4-6 (1986 - 2003) but were not seen consecutively in the most recent three generations (2004 -2021).

# Liverpool Historical Koala Records



		<b>Sydney Basin Koala Network</b>		
<b>Projection</b> GDA2020 zone 55	<b>Date</b> 31 January 2023	<b>Legend</b> Koala records ☆ 2022 ● Generation 1 (2016-2021) ● Generation 2 (2010-2015) ● Generation 3 (2004-2009) ○ pre 2004	National Parks State Forests Local Government Areas Sydney Basin bioregion	
Imagery ESRI World Imagery 2021		This map remains the property of Biolink Ecological Consultants Pty Ltd and should not be reproduced without permission. Cartographic detail may not be accurate when used for survey purposes.		Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, USGS

Each dot represents a recorded koala sighting. The colours indicate when the record was made, with stars and blue dots representing the most recent sightings.

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Additional References.

(1) Phillips S., Hopkins M. and Callaghan J (2007) Conserving koalas in the Coomera-Pimpama Koala Habitat Area—a view to the future. Report to Gold Coast City Council. Biolink Ecological Consultants, Uki, NSW.

(2) NSW Koala Strategy.

(3) Total Environment Centre's Sydney Basin Koala Policy.