

SYDNEY BASIN KOALA NETWORK

KOALAS IN CAMPBELLTOWN - UPDATE

Dharawal, Dharug and Gandangara Lands



Update based on [Progress Report](#) by SBKN, EDO, Biolink and TEC. March 2024

Koalas are classified as endangered in NSW. Our report does not indicate that the situation will change and is indeed likely to get worse.

Koalas in Campbelltown

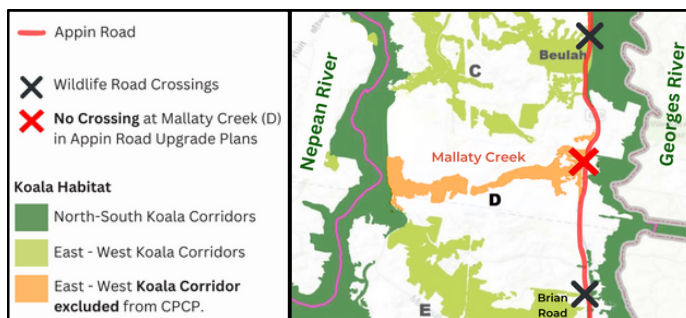
Campbelltown has a large area of koala persistence, where koalas have been found over 3 generations (18 years). Areas of persistence are moving north and west (1). Between 2021 - 2023 there was no significant change in the area occupied by koalas (1). This tells us **Campbelltown is home to long standing breeding populations and the koala population here is currently stable.**

Future in Jeopardy

Imminent threats from development will push this stable population into decline unless there is change.

Appin Road vehicle strikes have surged (2)(3). Current koala strike rates are unsustainable and will push the population into decline (4). This vehicle strike hotspot indicates the population is not coping with existing development and traffic volume (5). A grave concern given anticipated future threats:

CPCP: The Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan will destroy >1700ha of Threatened Ecological Communities (6) (including koala habitat), will allow development across this vital area and **koalas will lose an entire habitat corridor** (7). Inadequate offsets will lead to net loss for koalas.



Appin Road Upgrade: suboptimal crossings and lack of crossing at Mallaty Creek, will severely reduce connectivity for koalas in this vital region (8).

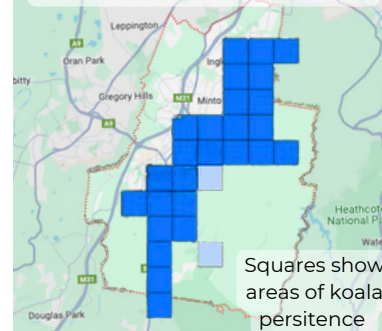
Local Advocacy

Thank you to local collaborators for their advocacy:

- Save Sydney's Koalas
- International Fund for Animal Welfare
- Help Save Appin and Surrounds
- Wilton Action Group
- DoSomething Foundation

If your group would like to join the Network, please contact us: info@sydneybasinkoalanetwork.org.au

Koala Persistence 2006 – 2023



GMGA: Greater Macarthur Growth Area plans includes a Transport Corridor between Appin Road and the Nepean River that will bisect all East West Koala Corridors (9) - a disaster for habitat connectivity and vehicle strikes.

Mount Gilead: approved and proposed developments (10) will encroach on koala habitat, fragment their corridors and exacerbate the threat from dogs and vehicles (11).

Case Study - Mt Gilead not following Chief Scientist advice on koala corridors

The Mount Gilead Stage 2 project by Lendlease seeks to build 3,300 houses (10), directly on and around koala habitat. After receiving Biocertification approval from Campbelltown Council in April 2023, it is now waiting on State Government approval due to its serious impact on one of the only disease free Koala colonies in NSW.

While Lendlease claims to surpass the Chief Scientist's recommendations, examination of their maps reveals significant portions of the corridors are narrower than the prescribed Chief Scientist Recommendations. Furthermore, Lendlease claims to exceed habitat provision standards however significant portions are retained as homestead land, unsuitable for koalas. Transparency is urged, with calls for Lendlease to disclose all transect lengths used in width calculations for all koala corridors.

The Chief Scientist has directly criticised Lendlease's approach (12) to meeting the minimum corridor width requirements. Approval based solely on "Indicative Koala Corridors" is insufficient. Active koala corridors across the Sydney Basin must be urgently recognised, protected, and restored to meet Chief Scientist recommendations (390-425m wide).

Koalas need Connected Habitat

Availability of habitat and connectivity between habitat is so important that **the Chief Scientist has predicted population decline unless safe connectivity is assured and available habitat is increased (13).**

Current plans jeopardise koala habitat and connectivity. Since they are not yet approved, **we have an opportunity to prioritise habitat expansion and improved connectivity, crucial for koalas' survival in this region.**

Legal Reform Needed

Reform state laws to deliver certain protection and strong safeguards for koalas in all environmental, planning, forestry and land clearing legislation (1).

Distribution of Koalas in Campbelltown

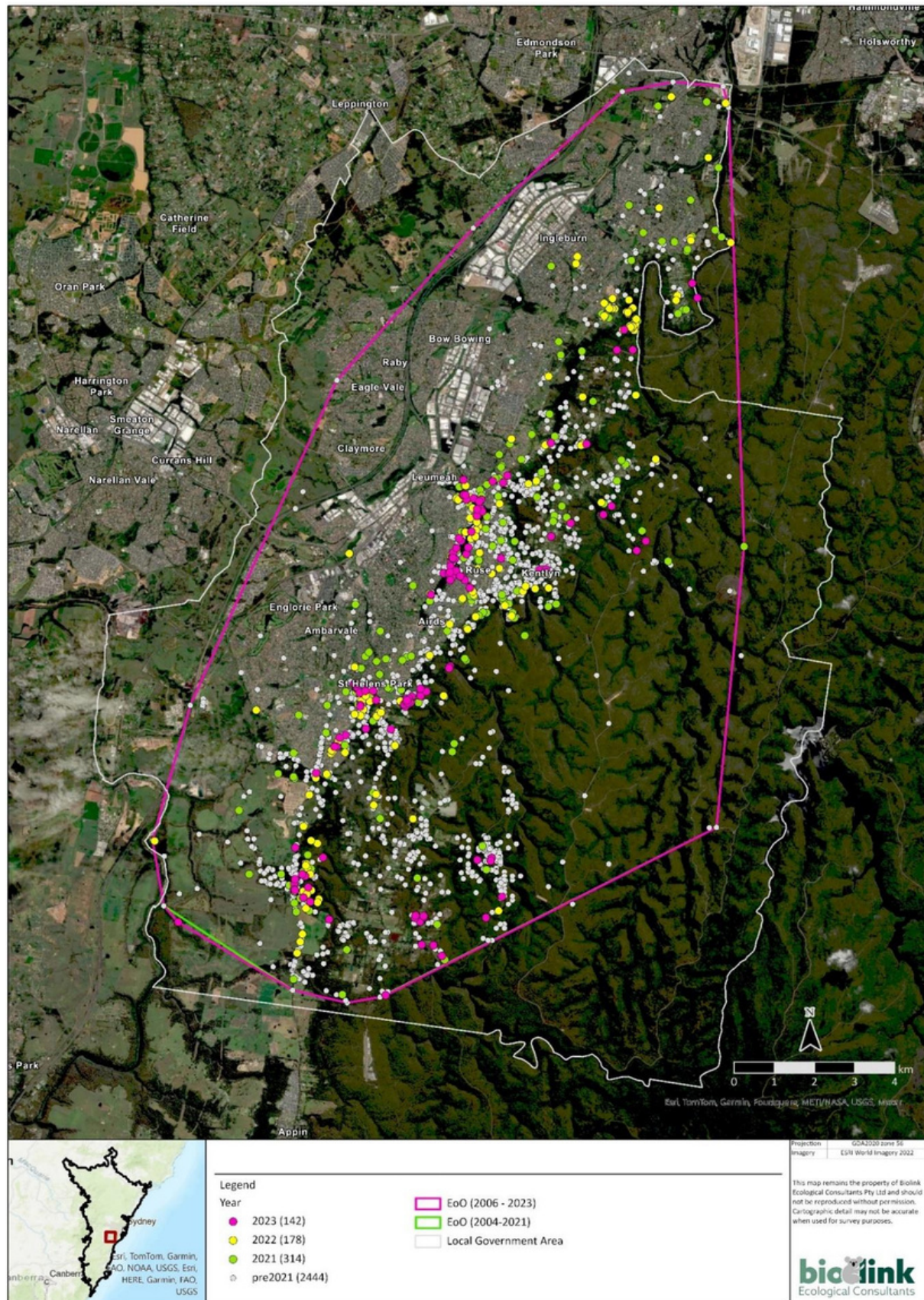


Photo Credit: Koala, Smiths Creek Campbelltown by Les Shearim

References

- (1) SBKN, EDO, Biolink and TEC, 2024; [State of Koalas in the Sydney Basin, First Annual Assessment](#), March 2024
- (2) SW Sydney Koala Project - vehicle strike numbers collated from local wildlife carers.
- (3) Biolink 2023, [Sydney Basin Bioregion: Koala habitat and population assessment](#), Report for Total Environment Centre by Biolink Ecological Consultants
- (4) Biolink, 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
- (5) C. E. Dexter, J. Scott, A. R. F. Blacker, R. G. Appleby, D. H. Kerlin, D. N. Jones (2023) [Koalas in space and time: Lessons from 20 years of vehicle-strike trends and hot spots in SEQ](#)
- (6) [Snapshot – Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan](#)
- (7) [Will Koalas Lose this Corridor](#), SBKN
- (8) [Appin Road Upgrade - ongoing compromises instead of safeguarding koalas](#), SBKN
- (9) [Greater Macarthur Structure Plan \(Land Release Area\) map](#)
- (10) [Mount Gilead Stage 2 NSW Planning Portal](#)
- (11) [Impacts of Mount Gilead Stage 2 on Koalas](#), SBKN
- (12) [Response to questions about advice provided in the Koala Independent Expert Panel Report 'Advice on the protection of the Campbelltown Koala population'](#) Feb 2021
- (13) [Advice on the protection of the Campbelltown Koala population](#), Koala Independent Expert Panel, 30 April 2020