

SYDNEY BASIN KOALA NETWORK

KOALAS IN WINGECARRIBEE - UPDATE

Gundungurra and Tharawal Lands



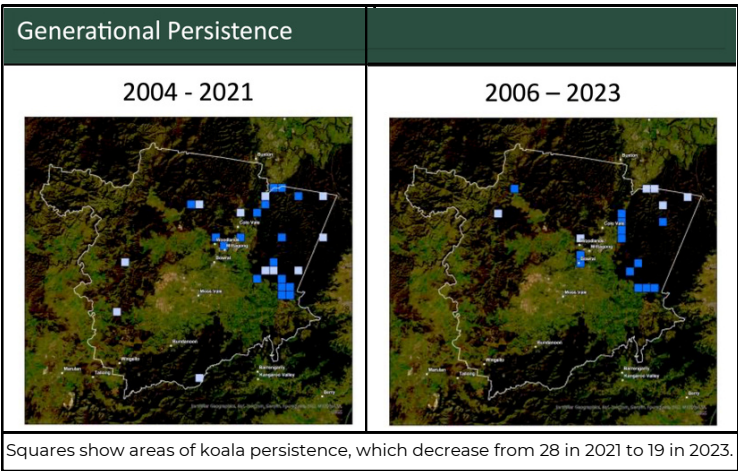
Update based on [Progress Report](#) by SBKN, EDO, Biolink and TEC. March 2024

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 Wingecarribee

Between 2021 - 2023 there was a significant **decline in the area occupied by koalas in Wingecarribee** (1). There has also been a decline in the number of areas showing generational persistence (1). Persistence is when koalas have been found in the same location over 3 generations (18 years). Persistence indicates breeding source populations, which are important for population stability and expansion. Persistence in Wingecarribee is now focused in and around the Upper Nepean State Conservation Area in the north-east corner of the LGA (1).

Concerningly, loss of occupancy and persistence since 2021 indicates that koalas in Wingecarribee are already in trouble.



Future in Jeopardy

Despite current trends indicating koalas in Wingecarribee are in decline, their **habitat is still being threatened with development** - see Sutton Sand Quarry case study.

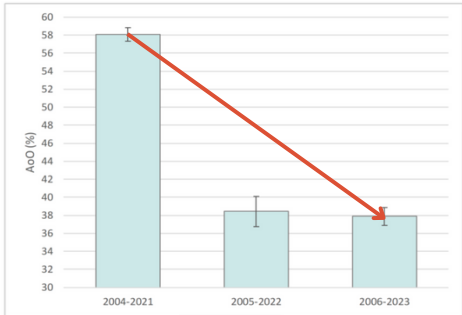
Development will continue to fragment habitat unless connectivity is considered upfront and measures are put in place to prevent habitat loss and fragmentation and to restore lost connectivity.

Local Advocacy

Thank you to local collaborators for their advocacy:

- [WinZero](#) (Wingecarribee Net Zero Emissions)

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



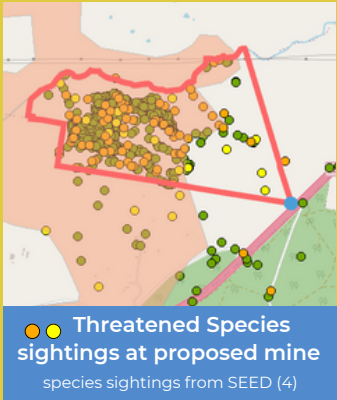
The Area of Occupancy (AoO); the area where koalas are found in Wingecarribee has decreased significantly in the last 2 years **from 58% in 2021 to 38% in 2023.**



► 2024 - Bowral

Sutton Forest Quarry proposal fragmenting recognised wildlife corridor

The proposal for a sand quarry in Sutton Forest (2) on prime koala habitat and within a recognised fauna corridor has raised community concerns. Spanning 177 hectares with plans for extracting up to 1 million tonnes of sand annually for over three decades, the quarry poses significant risks to wildlife. Despite the majority of the site being identified as high-quality koala habitat, the proposal entails clearing over 58 hectares, with over 30 koala sightings recorded in the area. Moreover, the quarry's location within a recognised Wildlife Corridor (Southeast and Tablelands Regional Plan Corridors (3)) and the expected increase in vehicle movements poses additional risks, including vehicle strikes on wildlife.



As a State Significant Development (SSD), it allows for offsets to mitigate Serious and Irreversible Impacts by monetary contributions to a Biodiversity Conservation Fund with no specification that it must protect or restore a similar amount of koala habitat elsewhere. Displacement of koalas due to habitat loss raises concerns about the ability of the colony in Wingecarribee LGA to recover. This case underscores the clash

between development interests and wildlife conservation, emphasising the importance of holistic ecological assessments and robust conservation measures in land use planning.

Koalas need Connected Habitat

Koalas need to move to access resources and find new mates - **connected habitat is key for resilient koala populations. Protecting existing habitat corridors is essential** if we want to halt decline and enable koalas to get off the endangered list.

Legal Reform Needed

- 1 Support the development of a Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management for Wingecarribee LGA.
- 2 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 Wingecarribee

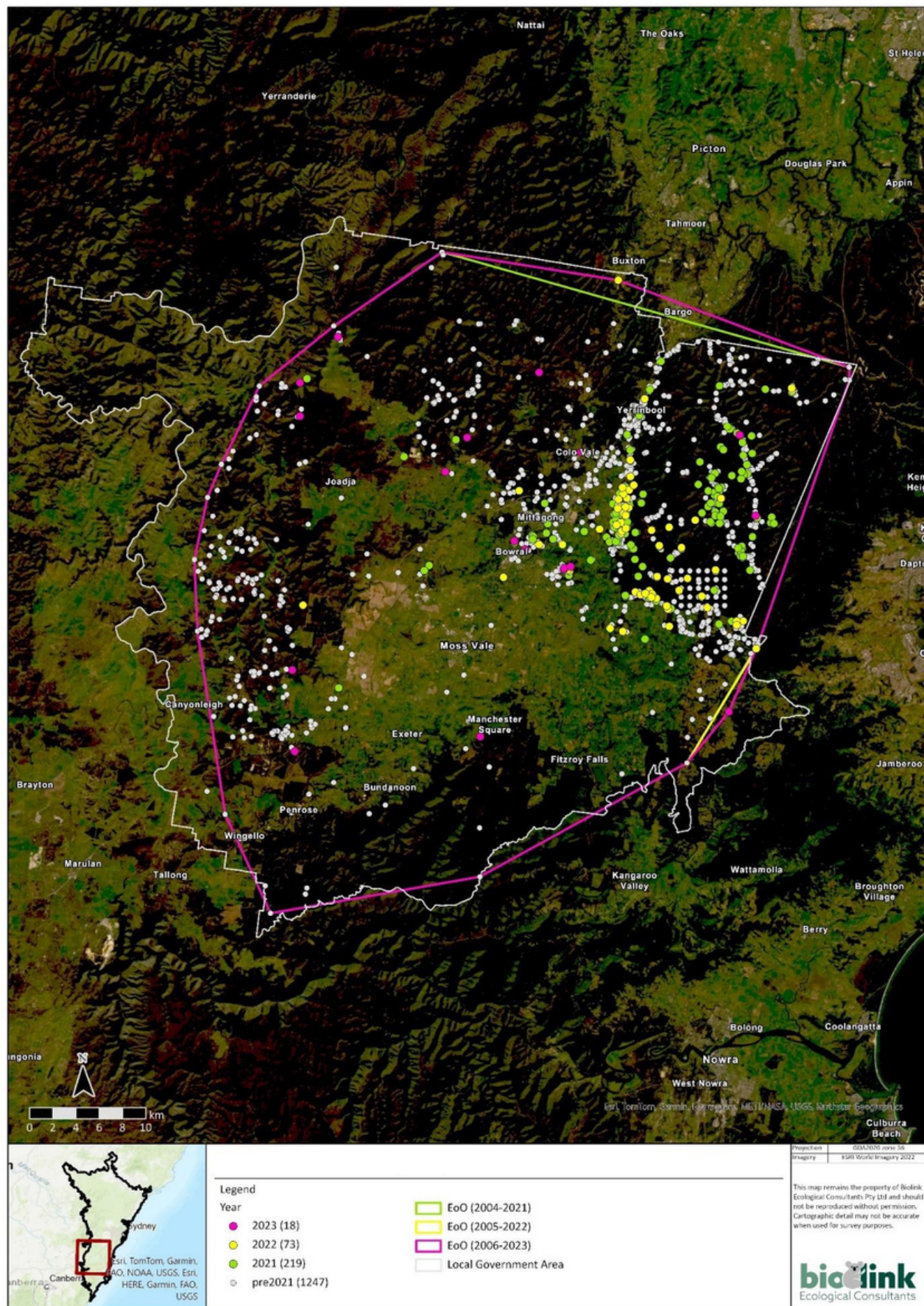


Photo Credit: Koala in Bowral, Wingecarribee by David Debs

References

- (1) SBKN, EDO, Biolink and TEC, 2024: [State of Koalas in the Sydney Basin. First Annual Assessment](#), March 2024.
- (2) [Sutton Forest Sand Quarry Planning Portal](#)
- (3) [Southeast and Tablelands Regional Plan Corridors](#)
- (4) [Sharing and Enabling Environmental Data \(SEED\)](#)