

SYDNEY BASIN KOALA NETWORK

KOALAS IN WOLLONDILLY - 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 Wollondilly

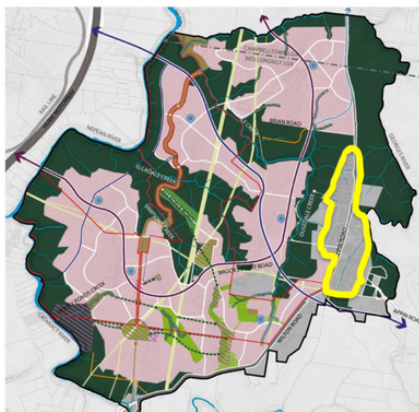
The area occupied by koalas has remained relatively stable between 2021 and 2023 (1). Areas of **long standing breeding populations are predominantly found in the south-eastern part of the LGA, which is also where much current and future development is occurring.** The number of areas showing koala persistence appear to be decreasing - it is unclear if this is a true decrease or due to delays in data being made available in BioNet.

Future in Jeopardy

The koala population in Appin will face massively increased challenges in the coming years that will push this population into decline unless there is change.

Appin Road's surging road strikes (2)(3) 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:

Appin Precinct: developments proposed (6) under the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan (CPCP) will encroach on koala habitat, fragment their corridors and exacerbate the threat from dogs and vehicles (7).



— Current Appin township
— Development allowed under CPCP

Local Advocacy

Thank you to local collaborators for their advocacy:

- [Help Save Appin and Surrounds](#)
- [Wilton Action Group](#)
- [Save Sydney's Koalas](#)
- [International Fund for Animal Welfare](#)

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



2023 - Macquariedale Road, Appin

CPCP: The Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan will remove >1700ha of Threatened Ecological Communities (8) including koala habitat, will allow development across this vital area and **East West Corridor F will be permanently severed** (7).

Appin Road: suboptimal crossings will severely reduce connectivity between the Nepean and Georges Rivers (9).

GMGA: Greater Macarthur Growth Area plan includes a Transport Corridor between Appin Road and the Nepean River that will bisect all East West Koala Corridors (10) - a disaster for habitat connectivity and vehicle strikes.

Zombie development fragments Warragamba's only Koala corridor

In 2023 a zombie development cleared a large tract of koala habitat in Warragamba fragmenting an important wildlife corridor between the north of Warragamba and south of Silverdale. Wollondilly Council's lack of tracking zombie developments exacerbates fragmentation of koala habitat and leads to major impacts on both koalas and their rescuers as koalas are pushed onto the surrounding roads to find new habitat.

While developments approved by councils must be commenced within 5 years, the definition of 'commenced' is grossly inadequate and can result in no substantial building or land clearing for decades. The 'zombie' development then proceeds under outdated environment laws, even when the wildlife living there has been uplisted to endangered.

At a State level, a moratorium should be implemented on all Zombie DAs until they are assessed against updated planning laws, which should include a much stronger definition of "commenced". Local councils should then closely monitor the expiration and completions of developments via a strengthened DA tracking process. A Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management (CKPoM) should also be urgently implemented by Wollondilly Council to recognise and protect koala corridors.

Koalas need Connected Habitat

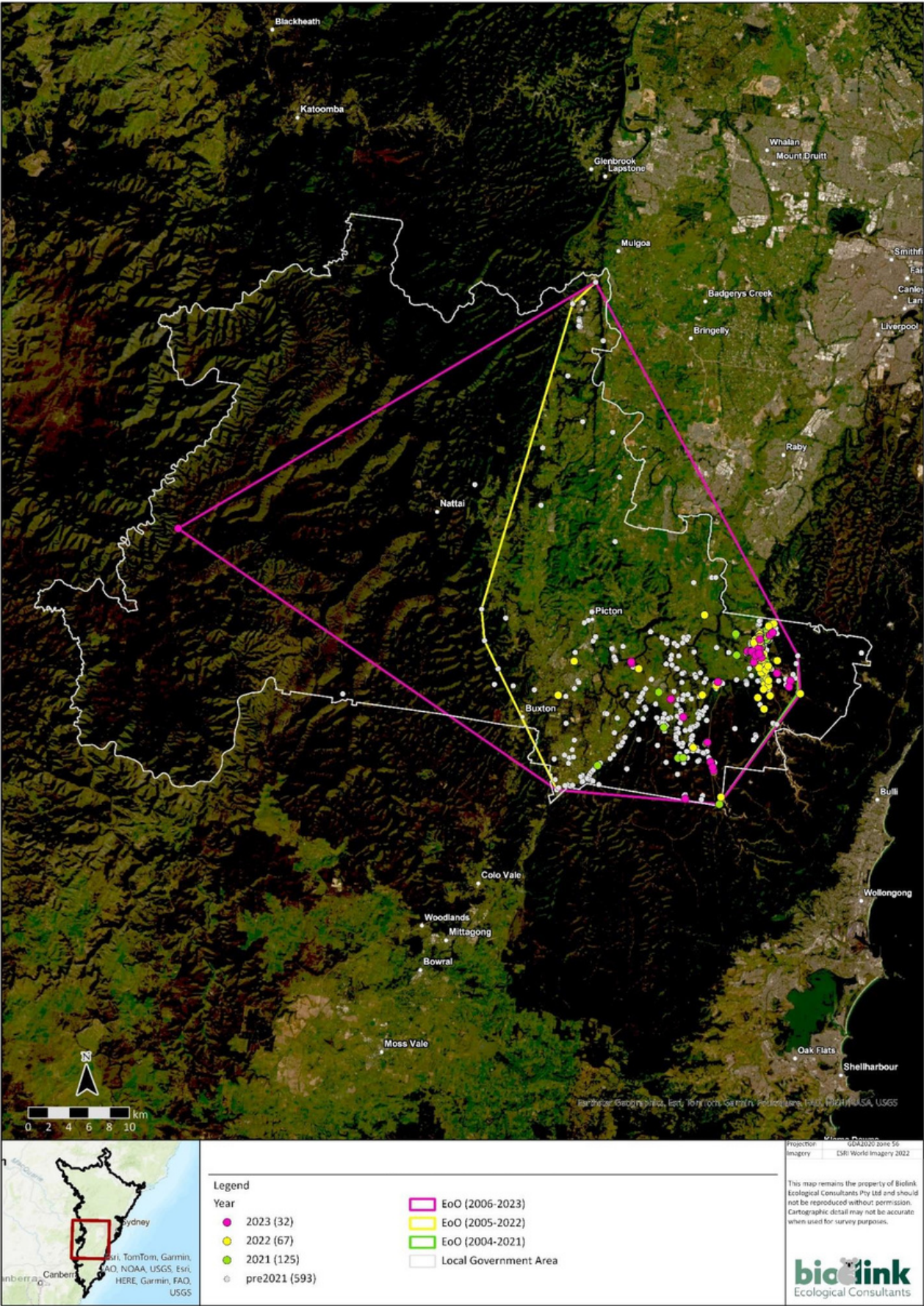
Current plans jeopardise koala habitat and connectivity. Since they are not yet approved, **we have an opportunity to prioritise habitat expansion and improved connectivity, crucial for koalas' survival in this region.**

Legal Reform Needed

1 Support the development of a Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management for Wollondilly LGA (1).

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 Wollondilly



Photos: Koala Sign on Appin Road September 2023 (left), Koala on Macquariedale Road (right).

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) [Appin Part Precinct](#) NSW Planning Portal

(7) [The Koala Crisis in Appin](#), SBKN

(8) [Snapshot – Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan](#)

(9) [Appin Road Upgrade - ongoing compromises instead of safeguarding koalas](#), SBKN

(10) [Greater Macarthur Structure Plan \(Land Release Area\) map](#)