

## Findings

- Finding 1** 12  
That following the 2019-2020 bushfires and the general trend of population decline, the current estimated number of 36,000 koalas in New South Wales is outdated and unreliable.
- Finding 2** 12  
That, given the scale of loss to koala populations across New South Wales as a result of the 2019-2020 bushfires and without urgent government intervention to protect habitat and address all other threats, the koala will become extinct in New South Wales before 2050.
- Finding 3** 35  
That logging in public native forests in New South Wales has had cumulative impacts on koalas over many years because it has reduced the maturity, size and availability of preferred feed and roost trees.
- Finding 4** 51  
That the fragmentation and loss of habitat poses the most serious threat to koala populations in New South Wales.
- Finding 5** 51  
That the future of koalas in the wild in New South Wales cannot be guaranteed unless the NSW Government takes stronger action to prevent further loss of koala habitat.
- Finding 6** 60  
That climate change is having a severe impact on koala populations by affecting the quality of their food and habitat.
- Finding 7** 60  
That climate change is compounding the severity and impact of other threats, such as drought and bushfires, on koala populations.
- Finding 8** 68  
That the current exclusion fence for Appin Road in South Western Sydney is counterproductive and poses a serious danger to koalas.
- Finding 9** 74  
That local koala populations face different threats of varying severity, depending on the region that they are located in.
- Finding 10** 81  
There has been a substantial loss of both suitable koala habitat and koalas across New South Wales as a result of the 2019-2020 bushfires. An estimated 24 per cent of koala habitat on public land has been severely impacted across the State, but in some parts there has been a devastating loss of up to 81 per cent.
- Finding 11** 110  
That the NSW Koala Strategy falls short of the NSW Chief Scientist's recommendation of a whole-of-government koala strategy with the objective of stabilising and then increasing koala numbers.

- Finding 12** 110  
That the NSW Koala Strategy fails to prioritise and resource the urgent need to protect koala habitat across all tenures.
- Finding 13** 111  
That allocating \$4 million over a 5-year period for the government's Saving Our Species Iconic Koala Project has been important but additional funding and support is required in order for it to achieve its stated aims.
- Finding 14** 117  
Translocation is an unproven way of protecting koala populations from the impacts of development and should only be used as a last resort. Further research needs to be undertaken to assess its methodology and effectiveness.
- Finding 15** 134  
Approvals by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment of comprehensive koalas plans of management made by local councils have been too slow. There is an urgent need for them to be approved in a timely and transparent manner.
- Finding 16** 138  
Protecting koala habitat is hampered by the inconsistencies and disconnection between the different planning instruments within the NSW planning system, and there is an urgent need to address this.

## Recommendations

- Recommendation 1** **17**  
That the NSW Government urgently engage the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer to, in consultation with the NSW Koala Advisory Panel and Forestry Corporation of NSW, consider and determine the most appropriate method of surveying koala numbers, and that this method become the standard across all government authorities.
- Recommendation 2** **31**  
That the NSW Government urgently prioritise the protection of koala habitat and corridors in the planning and implementation stages of urban growth areas.
- Recommendation 3** **31**  
That the NSW Government fund and support local councils to conserve koala habitat, including by identifying pockets of urban bushland to include in the State's protected area network.
- Recommendation 4** **32**  
That the NSW Government and Campbelltown City Council ensure the protection of the koala colony and habitat on the Figtree Hill site before allowing any further development.
- Recommendation 5** **32**  
That the NSW Government create a Georges River National Park to provide secure habitat for the South Western Sydney koala population.
- Recommendation 6** **45**  
That the NSW Government rule out opening up old growth forests in the state forest reserve for logging.
- Recommendation 7** **45**  
That the NSW Government consider the impacts of logging in all public native (non-plantation) forests in the context of enabling koala habitat to be identified and protected by a combination of transferring land to national parks or inclusion in Forest Management Zone 2, where appropriate.
- Recommendation 8** **46**  
That the NSW Government establish new plantations on already cleared land of low biodiversity importance to reduce future reliance on native forest logging.
- Recommendation 9** **51**  
That the NSW Government ensure the protection of the koala colony and habitat before allowing any further development at the Shenhua Watermark mine site.
- Recommendation 10** **57**  
That the NSW Government provide additional funding and support to community groups, so that they can plant trees and regenerate bushland along koala and wildlife corridors and explore mechanisms to protect these corridors in-perpetuity.

- Recommendation 11** **61**  
 That the NSW Government factor in climate change as a key consideration in the drafting of all relevant legislation and planning strategies and ensure climate change mitigation is a core component of all strategies to save the koala in New South Wales.
- Recommendation 12** **68**  
 That the NSW Government ensure that the combination of underpasses, overpasses and exclusion fencing along roads is incorporated into both the retrofitting of existing infrastructure and new development in areas of known koala habitat.
- Recommendation 13** **68**  
 That the NSW Government urgently incorporate an underpass and overpass on Appin Road suitable for koalas and other wildlife with appropriate wildlife corridors at both entrance points.
- Recommendation 14** **68**  
 That the Roads and Maritimes Services allocate appropriate and sufficient funds for the ongoing maintenance and management of exclusion fencing along roads.
- Recommendation 15** **81**  
 That the NSW Government urgently investigate the utilisation of core koala habitat on private land and in State forests to replenish koala habitat lost in the bushfires.
- Recommendation 16** **81**  
 That the NSW Government urgently prioritise the restoration and replenishment of koala habitat lost to bushfire in national parks and publicly release a plan to do this.
- Recommendation 17** **87**  
 That the NSW Government ensure that in planning for future bushfires, conservation values and the protection of koala habitat is given greater priority.
- Recommendation 18** **87**  
 That the NSW Government support the establishment of a well-resourced network of wildlife hospitals in key areas of the state, including the North Coast, North-West, Blue Mountains, South West Sydney, Southern Tablelands and South Coast, staffed by suitably qualified personnel and veterinarians, including funding where appropriate.
- Recommendation 19** **91**  
 That the NSW Rural Fire Service, in conjunction with key wildlife organisations, develop statewide standards for access to fire grounds by wildlife rescuers before the 2020-2021 bushfire season and support wildlife rescue groups in completing fire awareness training.
- Recommendation 20** **91**  
 That the NSW Government allocate funding to explore the use of drones and koala detection dogs for the rescue of wildlife from fire grounds, to allow both approaches to be employed in the next fire season
- Recommendation 21** **99**  
 That the NSW Government work collaboratively with Indigenous fire practitioners to document the benefits of cultural burning practices.

- Recommendation 22** 99  
That the NSW Government allocate additional funds to the Hotspots Fire Project and the Firesticks Alliance to address resourcing challenges and to allow these projects to undertake more programs with communities across NSW.
- Recommendation 23** 111  
That the NSW Government ensure that koala habitat selected for conservation on public land is of high quality and needs protection.
- Recommendation 24** 113  
That the NSW Government increase funding to local councils to support the implementation of local koala conservation initiatives.
- Recommendation 25** 135  
That the NSW Government urgently approve comprehensive koala plans of management previously submitted to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment in a timely and transparent manner.
- Recommendation 26** 138  
That the NSW Government, in finalising the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Koala Habitat Protection) 2019* framework, strengthen the ability of consent authorities to protect koala habitat.
- Recommendation 27** 138  
That all councils with koala populations be required to develop comprehensive koala plans of management in a timely manner.
- Recommendation 28** 138  
That the NSW Government publish the final *State Environmental Planning Policy (Koala Habitat Protection) Guideline* as soon as practicable.
- Recommendation 29** 139  
That the NSW Government increase resources to local councils to support them in conducting mapping required for comprehensive koala plans of management.
- Recommendation 30** 145  
That the NSW Government, in the Private Native Forestry Review:
- require consideration to be given to whether private native forestry plans are consistent with the objects of the Private Native Forestry Codes of Practice before such plans are approved; and
  - require that the objects of Private Native Forestry Codes of Practice be amended to refer to the protection of biodiversity, water quality and soil quality.
- Recommendation 31** 145  
That the NSW Government assess the interaction between legacy Private Native Forestry plans and koala plans of management to ensure core koala habitat is protected.
- Recommendation 32** 146  
That the NSW Government provide additional funding to the NSW Environment Protection Authority to expand its compliance capabilities in the area of private native forestry.

- Recommendation 33** 155  
That the NSW Government amend the *Local Land Services Act 2013* to reinstate legal thresholds so that its application improves or maintains environmental outcomes and protects native vegetation of high conservation value.
- Recommendation 34** 156  
That the NSW Government review the impact on koala habitat of the application of regulated land and self-assessment frameworks under the *Local Land Services Act 2013*.
- Recommendation 35** 156  
That the NSW Government adopt all of the recommendations made by the Natural Resources Commission in its 2019 Report on Land Management.
- Recommendation 36** 170  
That the NSW Government investigate the cost of purchasing the 18,565 koala species credits currently available in the biodiversity credit market, and facilitate their purchase and retirement from the market over the next two years.
- Recommendation 37** 171  
That the NSW Government review the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* in relation to the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme with particular regard to:
- amending its objectives to ensure all offsets meet the standard of 'no net loss or better'
  - prohibiting the ability to offset high quality koala habitat
  - ensuring all offsets are 'like for like'
  - imposing location restrictions on koala offsets
  - removing the ability to make payments in lieu of offsets
  - removing the ability of mining companies to delay offsets until project completion.
- Recommendation 38** 178  
That the NSW Government ensure the Biodiversity Conservation Trust is adequately resourced to allow it to meet demand for its services within the area of private land conservation.
- Recommendation 39** 178  
That the NSW Government increase incentives available to private landholders under the Conservation Partners Program.
- Recommendation 40** 179  
That the NSW Government work with willing landholders to identify koala habitat that is of outstanding biodiversity value under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* in order to facilitate more koala habitat on private land being protected.
- Recommendation 41** 191  
That the NSW Government investigate the establishment of the Great Koala National Park.
- Recommendation 42** 196  
That the NSW Government ensure that the NSW Koala Strategy: Bushfire Recovery Plan contains as its key focus, the protection of koala habitat.