

Koala conservation – regulatory exemptions

Introduction

The koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) is listed as vulnerable under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

A 2015 report on the status of koalas in South East Queensland found that koala numbers had decreased by 50-80 per cent in key habitat areas over the last 20 years¹.

New koala maps

The Queensland Government has developed new koala habitat mapping, which will support implementation of the South East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy and koala conservation protections.

This koala habitat mapping uses regional ecosystem and high-value regrowth mapping, provided by the Queensland Herbarium.

Find out about koala mapping on your property by downloading a free [vegetation management report](#).

A new planning framework

On 7 February 2020 the Queensland Government amended the planning framework to address one of the key threats to koala populations in South East Queensland – loss of habitat.

The framework now applies consistently across the South East Queensland region and establishes where clearing may be prohibited, where it is assessable by the State, where koala conservation outcomes will be considered by local governments and what exemptions may apply.



Inside a Koala Priority Area, clearing of koala habitat areas will be prohibited. Development, that doesn't involve clearing, will be assessed by local governments for koala conservation outcomes, such as safe koala movement.

Outside of a Koala Priority Area, developments involving the clearing of koala habitat areas will be assessed by the Queensland Government.

Certain exemptions do apply.

References

¹ Rhodes, J.R., Beyer, H.L., Preece, H.J. & McAlpine, C.A. (2015). *South East Queensland Koala Population Modelling Study*. UniQuest, Brisbane, Australia

Koala exemptions

The new koala conservation protections contain exemptions for the clearing of koala habitat areas in order to balance the need to protect koala habitat with the need to allow some clearing to cater for growth and essential services.

Exemptions for clearing of koala habitat are listed in Schedule 24 of the [Planning Regulation 2017](#), and include (but are not limited to) the following examples:

- a one off exemption of clearing up to a total of 500m² per lot, which allows landholders to build a house on their block, if no other existing cleared area is available
- authorised clearing under a development approval for applications made prior to 7 February 2020
- clearing for safety – establishing a necessary fire break or management line, and removal of dangerous trees
- clearing for a necessary fence or road. If your lot is less than 5ha, the maximum width of clearing is 5m. For lots over 5ha, the maximum width allowed is 10m.

This exemption only applies to regulated regrowth or least concern Category B vegetation, under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*. To see the mapping for your property and to find out more about the *Vegetation Management Act*, see www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/vegetation

- For clearing that is shown on a Property Map of Assessment Vegetation, made before 7 February 2020, as Category X vegetation.
- Low risk clearing of koala habitat, under amended [Acceptable Development Vegetation Clearing Codes](#), however some additional clearing limits to those stated in the codes may apply.



Please note:

This document is not designed to constitute technical or legal planning advice. Please contact your local government or the [Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Manufacturing and Planning](#) for more information on how planning rules apply to your proposed development.

For the full list of exemptions, see Schedule 24 of the [Planning Regulation 2017](#).

Further information

More information on the Queensland Government's koala conservation measures is available at www.qld.gov.au/seqkoalas.