

Meeting minutes Koala Advisory Council

Subject	Koala Advisory Council – Meeting #14
Chair	Mark Townend
Meeting Type	Council Meeting
Date and location	23 November 2021 – Hybrid: 400 George St and on Microsoft Teams
Timing	10am-12pm

Attendees

Name (Online)	Organisation
Mark Townend	Spinal Life Australia
Anita Cosgrove	The Wilderness Society
Al Mucci	University of Queensland, School of Agriculture and Food Sciences
Kirsty Chessher-Brown	Urban Development Institute of Australia
Kirstin Kenyon	Executive Director, Wildlife and Threatened Species Operations, DES
Kristy Gooding	Natural Assets and NRM, Local Government Association of Queensland
Crystal Baker	Local Government Association of Queensland
Chris Aston	Planning Group, Queensland Treasury
John Schiavo	Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
Rob Hughes	Director, Conservation Policy and Planning, DES
Catherine George	Manager, Koala Policy and Oversight, DES
Matthew Roetteler	Senior Policy Officer, Koala Policy and Oversight, DES (Minutes)
Jessica Pinder	Senior Policy Officer, Koala Policy and Oversight, DES
Marina Vit	MOSAIC Property Group
Ramses Zietek	Director, Program Delivery and Operations, Department of Transport and Main Roads
Rosie Booth	Australia Zoo
Cameron Costello	Costello Consultancy
Alex Graham	Executive Director, Environmental Policy and Planning, DES
Geoff Lundie-Jenkins	Department of Environment and Science

Speakers

Name	Organisation
Steven Howell	Department of Environment and Science
Catherine George	Department of Environment and Science
Jessica Pinder	Department of Environment and Science
Geoff Lundie-Jenkins	Department of Environment and Science

Apologies

Name	Organisation
Jonathan Rhodes	University of Queensland - School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Science
Bill Ellis	University of Queensland, School of Agriculture and Food Sciences
Julie McLellan	Healthy Land and Water
Mick Stephens	Timber Queensland

Items

Item #	Discussion
	Welcome from Chair and other business <i>Mark Townend</i>
1.	Conflict of interest None Minutes from previous meeting Minutes endorsed.
2.	Opening address to the Koala Advisory Council from Honourable Meaghan Scanlon MP, Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs
3.	Acknowledgement of Country <i>John Schiavo</i> acknowledged Country.
4.	Identification and mapping of KTPAs <i>Steven Howell</i> <p>An overview of the Koala Threat Priority Area (KTPA) mapping progress to date and an explanation of the development of the Koala Priority Areas (KPAs) was provided. This work is specifically relevant to Action areas 3.1 and 4.5 of the SEQ Koala Conservation Strategy.</p> <p>Progress to date includes threat criteria review including an independent consultant report which provide recommendations for refinement (combine threats into single layer, using a risk assessment approach, incorporation of Local Government information)</p> <p>Next steps involve developing an implementation plan, targeted partner consultation, refinement of existing measures and development of additional threat measures with a deadline of June 2022 for the mapping. DES will request LGA threat mapping data by end of January.</p> <p>Feedback from the Council included highlighting the importance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">ground truthing mapping and liaising with Council about high-risk/threat areas within their LGAs.strategically linking the threat mapping to translocation policy.

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- splitting up threats versus constraints within the risk mapping, e.g. linear infrastructure as a threat and urban development as a constraint.
 - risk mapping timeframes being met to progress other strategy actions.
 - LRKHA mapping update and finalisation – 2-year transition process exists for local governments and updating to planning schemes would require an additional two years.
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Koala Operations Update *Geoff Lundie-Jenkins*

An update on establishing Koala Technical Advisory Group (KTAG) including terms of reference, appointment process, and drafting a written guideline was provided. KTAG appointments will occur early 2022 with the written guideline following shortly after.

A map of the workflow for KHA mapping updates was presented and the role of KAC to review technical submissions was discussed along with the KTAG's purpose of independent reviews.

5. KTAG terms of reference included provide independent scientific technical advice, not to alter mapping but independently assess data and submissions into current methodology and provide advice to DG.

The option of a trial council was discussed, and it was agreed that the guideline would be reviewed by KAC and through LGAQ networks. DES will also continue to release updated reporting documentation on strategy, PIR and KHA mapping update status and a more holistic timeline will be worked on.

Council members stressed the importance of having the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning review the mapping and provide feedback to help assess e.g., impact on dwelling supply area, urban footprint, etc. A suggestion was put forward to have overlays readily available on the mapping e.g., dwelling supply and to ensure that the mapping is considered through a broader policy lens.

Koala Translocation Policy *Geoff Lundie-Jenkins*

The draft policy outline and objectives were presented to the Council, while stressing that translocation isn't the answer on its own. Translocation was considered favourable when removing Koalas from a location, due to it leading to better conservation outcomes. The current regulatory nature for Koalas was discussed as limits exist on how Koalas are to be translocated to maintain integrity of local Koala populations.

6. Next steps involved targeted consultation to refine policy including using updated KHA mapping to assist release into KPAs, consideration of local knowledge of threats and Koala densities and developing new guidance material for optimum release sites (amending the code of practice).

The Council raised difficulties around releasing Koalas to former habitat – issues with overcrowding e.g., Hays Inlet and the need for timely feedback to carers about where Koalas should be going. DES agreed that greater feedback to hospitals is necessary and is looking into low cost, low maintenance tags to follow/monitor Koalas after release. Translocating Koalas from growing populations trying to disperse, to areas that are more secure and under carrying capacity was raised as an option. The need for a notification process to Local Governments around when and where Koalas are being released was also highlighted as Local Governments have a better understanding of local pressures.

The need for cultural considerations around translocating Koalas between First Nation cultural areas and the need for flexibility and special circumstances e.g., Koalas on Minjerribah being removed for treatment but cannot be returned due to disease risk was also raised.

SEQ Koala Strategy Annual Report *Catherine George*

An outline of the first SEQ Koala Strategy Annual Report was provided.

6. Alongside the progress to date, the report highlights year one's foundational focus and the commencement of 46 Actions under the strategy. Once DES receives and incorporates feedback from the Council the final report will be published in January 2022 on the DES website followed by a newsletter in March

Clarification around the first report covering a longer reporting period than 12 months was outlined, with the following Annual Reports planned to follow calendar years and the timeline for the future milestones in the strategy was presented.

Council members asked about the inclusion of quantitative reporting and the need for traffic light reporting to easily identify if Strategy progress is falling behind.

Post Implementation Review (PIR) Update *Jessica Pinder*

An overview of the legislative requirement behind the PIR was provided. The multi criteria model (regulatory indicators) of the PIR considers koala habitat protections and mapping, stakeholder impacts, cost of regulations, implementation and seeks for continuous improvement across all these criteria.

The project is currently in stage two with the Council's feedback from the July 2021 meeting having been incorporated and UDIA's and the Wilderness society's surveys concluding this week. A contractor was confirmed (GHD) for independent review of control and impact areas across SEQ, control sites will be outside KHA and impact sites, within KHA but outside of KPA and inside KPA. The PIR is intended to test if regulations have been effective and whether outcomes have occurred e.g., an increase in offset use. This report will be publicly released when completed.

7. Challenges identified so far included capturing small scale clearing, costs and effectiveness of schedule 11, minimising biases in site selection and local and state assessment data sourcing. DES will engage with the Council and local government to request data. An inter-agency working group has been formed to collaborate and support the contractor to conduct the independent review and discuss regulatory issues.

Issue identified to be resolved included improved guidance materials, consistent application and clarity of Koala regulations, compliance and enforcement functions (capping exempted clearing, mechanisms to track clearing and offsets, any issues raised during public consultation). Potential policy options were also put forward to either repeal, expand or improve.

The Council raised concerns around selection of control sites e.g., potential bias around areas that are high priority for development and stressed the need to focus on broad scale areas.

Compliance issue update *Geoff Lundie-Jenkins*

Capability to undertake compliance and the need for a more coordinated approach was raised. A call has been sent to local governments for a Koala Regulatory Compliance

group which will include training and education materials to provide more effective compliance as well as information sharing and support.

Coomera Connector update *Al Mucci*

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- Using offsets to acquire land: City of Gold Coast is already looking at purchasing land.
 - Coomera Koalas: lots of urban expansion in this area, 100's of individuals may be at risk, lots of connected habitat nearby e.g., Greenridge.
 - Community and indigenous groups are aware of the vulnerability of the Koalas in the area
 - It was noted that the Council is an advisory body and do not influence individual projects but should still advocate for best possible koala outcomes
 - \$1.6 billion project, which will include investing time and resources into koala conservation measures.
 - TMR will continue to engage with KAC on this project
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Next meeting:

- 9.
- Agenda to include:
 - Locally Refined Koala Habitat Mapping
 - State Supported Infrastructure Policy Review
 - Koala Habitat Restoration Partnerships Program: Presentation by Queensland Trust for Nature
 - Coomera Connector
 - PIR update
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10. **Closing remarks**

Mark Townend

Actions

Reference	Action	Responsible	Status	Due Date
14.1	Council members will provide DES with individual feedback on Draft Annual Report	The Council		17 December
14.2	Council members may provide DES with individual feedback on PIR.	The Council		17 December
14.3	Legend/key to be included in the KHA mapping workflow map along with timelines for map advancement process	DES		Prior to release
14.4	UDIA and DES to meet to further refine the PIR	DES & UDIA		Before next meeting of the Council

Actions carried over from previous meetings

Reference	Action	Responsible	Status	Due Date
13.1	DES to provide the Council with paper on criteria for resolving local koala habitat mapping.	DES		Next meeting of the Council
13.2	DES to provide finalised versions of both the MERI Framework and Implementation Plan prior to release for noting.	DES		October
13.6	DES to prepare presentation on current approach to koala conservation outside of SEQ	DES		Future meeting of the Council - TBD