

Department of Planning and Environment
Northern Councils E zone Review Interim Report

I would like to submit the following points;

Team Koala supports the endorsement of E zones to protect areas with important environmental values. We consider that the areas of Koala habitat as identified in the Tweed Coast Koala Habitat Study (2010) definitely fulfill this criteria. These areas include core Koala Habitat and corridors which link the areas and extend to habitat to the west and south.

The E2 criteria which includes Endangered Ecological Communities (such as lowland eucalyptus communities), Threatened Species habitat, Mitchell Landscapes and over-cleared coastal vegetation communities **are supported**.

The E2 criteria **requires inclusion** of Core Koala Habitat as defined in SEPP44, linkages in rural landscapes, public bushland reserves, vegetation with conservation covenants and vegetation identified for conservation as negotiated through the development process e.g Kings Forest, Koala Beach.

The E3 criteria appears to have overlap with E2 when applied in Tweed Shire. Land with environmental values which remains after mapping of the E2 land as per the criteria should then be considered for inclusion as E2 to provide essential links for movement of fauna and flora.

The Tweed Shire Terrestrial Biodiversity Overlay is supported for inclusion as part of the Review.

Tweed Shire Council has detailed mapping and documentation to support the inclusion of all Koala habitat and corridors.

The outcome of the Ezone review is critical to the long term survival of Koalas in Tweed Shire.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment to the E zone Review

Yours sincerely

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Comments

*I am a member of Team Koala, a non-aligned **registered charity with 630 members that has been working since 2009 for the preservation of the critically threatened koalas on the Tweed Coast.** We are actively involved in educational and networking activities, and koala habitat restoration and re-vegetation on local public and private land
We estimate the Tweed Coast Koala population is now about 120.*

The three remaining colonies on the Tweed Coast occur at:

- Kings Forest to Round Mountain where a major development is about to take place*
- Round Mountain to Pottsville where koalas are regularly killed on Clothiers Creek Rd, a connecting road from Murwillumbah to the coast and the Pacific Highway*

- *Pottsville to Black Rocks near Pottsville. There have been 31 documented koala sightings over the last 2½ years in this area, including significant daytime, on-ground breeding activity adjacent to and on an access road to the Black Rocks Sportsfields.*

The Black Rocks area is being threatened by the development of an existing council sports ground which is rarely used but has put the koalas there under serious threat from stressors caused by illegal events, which persist in spite of prohibitive signs and Council ranger surveillance. This site is surrounded by core koala habitat and endangered ecological communities, and is strategically located at the junction of three wildlife corridors.

Team Koala is convinced that for the next few years, measures must be put in place for the protection of the remaining koalas and their existing habitat until longer term measures can come into play to return the koala to a viable breeding population that will ensure their survival.

Environmental measures such as the establishment of E zones for the protection of the existing Koala population, its habitat and buffer zones are of paramount importance at the present time.