

NORTH COAST E ZONES REVIEW INTERIM REPORT – TWEED SHIRE

This submission has been prepared on behalf of Team Koala Inc. Team Koala is 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 revegetation on local public and private land.

Our president is a member of the Koala Advisory Group, a committee set up to aid the Tweed Shire Council to implement practical ways to reverse the documented precipitous decline of the Koala in our area.

We estimate the Tweed Coast Koala population is now about 120 and, as is also happening in the Byron Shire, it is found that most rescued koalas (usually from car strikes and dog attacks) are suffering from Chlamydia which is often fatal and renders almost all infected females infertile. Scientific studies estimate an 80% rate of Chlamydia in the wild population. Over the past three weeks alone, a Black Rocks koala died from this disease, and another is in hospital fighting for his life.

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.

Such actions as the development of a chlamydia vaccine and a viable method of its application and the establishment of koala corridors to enable koala movement and interaction which establishes genetic diversity and enhanced immunity to disease are longer term measures because of the time it will take to put them into practice. The seedlings we are planting now will not save the koalas of the present generation and the chlamydia vaccine has already been in development for seven years and will take many more to be effective.

Therefore, 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.

Submissions due Thursday 5th June 2014

Website for submissions

www.planning.nsw.gov.au/proposals

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 fulfil 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 eucalypt 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 co-wrote this submission and only wish to add that this is a very serious issue and as an educational organization I feel that we need more time to inform the public of the significance of the changes to the zoning system. Community consultation is an important topic and not just for the mining industry.