



Greenloaning Biostudies Pty Ltd

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Director, Planning Frameworks
NSW Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

To Whom it may Concern

RE: Review of, and amendments to, State Environmental Planning Policy 44
(Koala Habitat Protection) (SEPP 44)

Please find following some brief comments we consider relevant to the proposed review and amendments to SEPP 44.

Recommendations from the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer's report

The recommendations from the above report appear to be highly relevant and appropriate. In particular the overall focus needs to be *that Government improve outcomes for Koalas* and the implementation of all recommendations must adopt this approach for overall measures and outcomes to be effective. The involvement of the community in the process is considered to be an excellent concept, as is the encouragement of facilitating the exchange of information.

Proposed Approach to the Amendment Process

1. *Updating the content of the policy, including the names of the councils to which it applies, the list of tree species and the definitions of koala habitat;*

This process is well overdue and is fully supported, providing the inclusion of tree species can be fully supported by the research. There also should be provision for regular updates /amendments to this list as new information becomes available (and not waiting another two decades for revisions). The timing of potential updates however, should be standardised to facilitate planning e.g. at six monthly intervals, so that there is less room for confusion for all parties;

2. *Update and transfer the plan making requirements to the Local Planning Directions;*

In concept, this amendment seems practical. However, the process needs to be considered carefully to ensure all protective measures are in place and currently the process does not seem to be clearly defined. Presumably the SEPP provisions would come under the *Environment and Heritage* heading, but there is an obvious overlap with *Housing, infrastructure and Urban Development*, as well as *Local Plan Making*. The process needs to be very clear for Councils, as well as other parties, to ensure effective management of the plan making and positive outcomes.



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3. Simplify the development assessment process; and

Whilst the simplification of assessment processes has positive project management and economic benefits, there is an inherent risk that the simplification process will take precedence over positive benefits for Koalas. It is not entirely clear for instance, as no comprehensive details are provided in the Explanation of Intended Effects, as to how Koala habitat will be managed for positive outcomes if there is no existing Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management for the Local Government Area and the need for an Individual Koala Plan of Management is removed. The assessment process is reliant on updated guidelines, which is a positive step per se, but these guidelines must be very clear as to the standard of assessment required and the types of management measures that must be considered and incorporated into the development process. It seems unlikely that the steps required currently for an Individual Koala Plan of Management will not still be relevant to consider impacts of, and protection of Koala habitat and populations and it must be ensured that the simplification process does not reduce the level of Koala habitat protection currently provided by SEPP 44 and the requirement for Individual Koala Plan of Management.

4. Update the guidelines to better direct the preparation of koala plans of management and instruct development assessment.

We are in agreement with this process, provided the above considerations are incorporated into the development of the Guidelines.

I hope the information contained within this submission is useful

Yours faithfully

Alison Martin

Director
Greenloaning Biostudies
