

Plan to save Tweed Coast koalas adopted by Council

Koala Plan of Management a blue print to address key issues

A blue print to address all key threats to koalas on the Tweed Coast has been formally adopted by Council.

A meeting of Council of 19 February resolved to adopt The Tweed Coast Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management (KPOM), which aims to recover the Tweed Coast population of koalas.

Council's Senior Program Leader Biodiversity, Scott Hetherington, said the plan was developed to address the findings of a detailed koala study that painted a bleak future for koalas if no intervention was undertaken.

"The KPOM provides the blueprint for addressing each of the key threats to koalas in a coordinated way," Mr Hetherington said.

"Through Council taking a lead role in managing threats to koalas, we are confident we can make a real difference for the Tweed Coast koala population.

"Together with the findings of the koala habitat study, valuable input from key stakeholders and the general community has assisted with development of the plan."

He said this included the Tweed Coast Koala Advisory Group, which actively participated in all phases of preparing the plan.

In addition, a total of 52 submissions were received from the community when the draft plan was on exhibition from October to early December last year, with a very high level of support for the plan and its objectives.

"One of the first things we will be doing under the plan is an initial reassessment of the size and distribution of the Tweed Coast koala population," Mr Hetherington said.

"The key actions will also include habitat restoration and the management of threats from vehicles, dogs and fire."

The plan also includes statutory controls to ensure proposed development can occur without impact to koalas or their habitat.

He said Council would also continue to work with landholders interested in enhancing the koala habitat on their properties, building upon the progress of the ongoing Tweed Byron Koala Connections project.

"With more than 20,000 trees planted in the Tweed already through Koala Connections, we have an amazing headstart on the KPOM goal to add 300 hectares of koala habitat," Mr Hetherington said.

"The KPOM recognises that koalas occur on all land tenures and it highlights the importance of a whole-of-community response.

"Throughout the plan's development, it has been very evident that in all areas of koala management, what is good for koalas will also be good for people on the Tweed Coast," he said.

"Issues such as fire management clearly demonstrate that by getting the balance right between hazard reduction and wildfire management, we can create ideal living conditions for both people and koalas."

The plan is now available on the koalas page of Council's website at www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/koalas

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