

South East Qld Koala Conservation Strategy 2026-2036	KAG's Comments
<p>The existing South East Queensland koala habitat regulations support koala conservation by prohibiting clearing in koala priority areas (KPA's).</p> <p>KPA's are large, connected areas that focus habitat protection, habitat restoration and threat mitigation to areas that have the highest likelihood of safeguarding koala populations in SEQ.</p>	<p>The entire region of mainland Redlands is currently designated a 'Koala Priority Area' (KPA) but the many exemptions allow so much clearing that the KPA designation is virtually meaningless.</p> <p>Development in the Redlands is continuing unabated, with current approvals and future development proposals that will result in the loss of many thousands of mature koala trees</p>
<p>It is essential we enhance our monitoring and mapping activities to track progress towards our koala conservation outcomes and measure the effectiveness of our programs.</p>	<p>There is little in the strategy that promotes the enhancement of mapping. There is a great deal of essential koala habitat that is not mapped. Current mapping doesn't capture smaller urban patches of habitat (creek lines, parks etc) and single trees (footpath, paddock), when these are important 'stepping stones' that aid all-important connectivity.</p>
<p>Under the Nature Conservation (Koala) Conservation Plan 2017, koala habitat is defined as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An area of vegetation where koalas live 2. A partially or completely cleared area used by koalas to cross from an area of vegetation where koalas live to another; or 3. An area of vegetation where koalas do not live, if the area primarily consists of koala habitat trees. 	<p>A different koala habitat mapping category should be developed to align with the definition at the left.</p> <p>Local government wildlife corridor mapping could be implemented (for example Redland City Council's 'Wildlife Connections Plan 2018-2028').</p>
<p>Specific larger scale development areas, such as priority development areas (PDA), are in most cases assessed under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Commonwealth Govt).</p>	<p>This is a perfect example of 'passing the buck'. The Commonwealth does not have the local knowledge or capacity to effectively deal with local concerns.</p> <p>A current example is Ormiston College situated in the Redlands who have applied for a Ministerial Infrastructure Designation (MID) to expand their campus and to clear 652 mature koala trees, most of which are mapped 'Core Koala Habitat'.</p>
<p>It is proposed to simplify the koala habitat regulation framework.</p> <p>Landowners will be able to clear for any purpose up to certain limits. These limits are 500m² for lots 1ha or less and 800m² for lots greater than 1ha.</p>	<p>KAG approves the removing of 'loopholes' that allow cumulative clearing beyond the limits. Although, increasing the limit to 800m² for lots greater than 1ha is likely to increase the overall amount of clearing.</p> <p>Additionally, allowing clearing for any purpose without the need to apply for permits makes it difficult to control illegal clearing. Properties that only have 800m² of mapped koala habitat can remove all habitat without any controls.</p>