

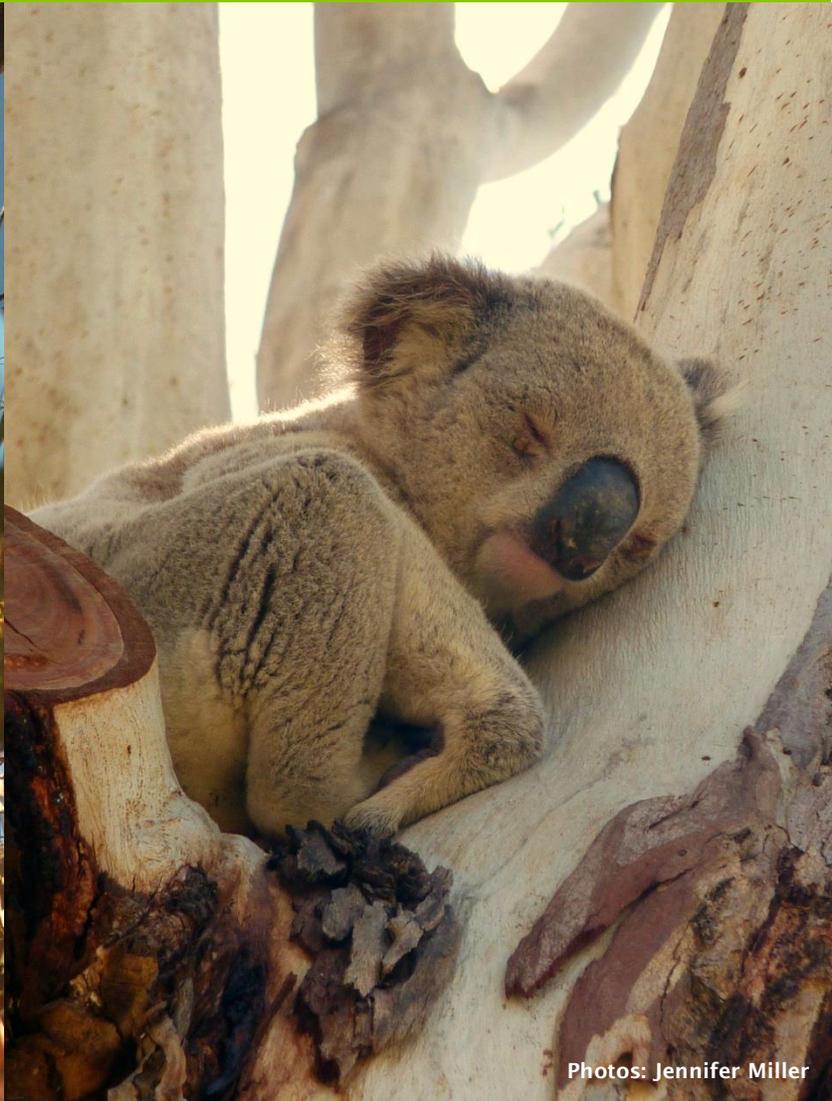


# Koala Management Plan

Facilities Management Services, University of New England

January 2015

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Photos: Jennifer Miller



# Koala Management Plan (approved by the Director, FMS)

## Background

Under the NSW State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) 44, an individual (i.e. site-specific) Koala Management Plan is required to accompany a Development Approval (DA) that affects core Koala habitat, as there is no prior comprehensive plan of management covering all or part of the University of New England (UNE).

The fauna assessment for this site determined that the site is core Koala habitat, and Armidale Dumaresq Council does not have a comprehensive plan for the LGA.

## Scope

UNE Koala Management Plan has been prepared according to the “Procedures for Preparing Comprehensive Koala Plans of Management under State Environmental Planning Policy No. 44 – Koala Habitat Protection”.

This Plan demonstrates the University’s support for management of koala populations within UNE’s boundaries.

The specific elements within this Plan will form an integral part of the Landscape Management Plan which will be the overarching document for protecting and improving bushland areas within the UNE campus.

This Plan applies to lands where UNE is the consent authority and deals with habitat protection and management as the key to conserving koalas through the development process.

## Aims & Objectives

1. To satisfy the conditions for development approval under the NSW SEPP 44;
2. To enable Koalas to continue to utilise the woodland on the UNE site after a dwelling and associated infrastructure are constructed;
3. To increase the university’s capacity to support a greater number of koalas in the future and at least marginally assist in increasing the overall abundance of koalas on the UNE site.

## Distribution of Koalas

### 1. Koala Population

Koala Population is undetermined at this stage. Given the fact that several koala sightings were recorded in the area, habitat is contiguous with potential Koala habitat extending several kilometres to the south and south-east, and to the north-west (Council-owned land on the corner of Bona Vista Road and Burgess Street). The animals on the subject site thus constitute part of a wider local population.

### 2. Koala Feeding & Living Habitat

The area of the subject site to remain under tree cover provides almost 5 ha of woodland dominated by primary and secondary Koala food trees (Manna Gum and Red Gum), contiguous with extensive areas of habitat (tens of hectares) to the south of the UNE campus.

### 3. Distribution of Koala's within UNE Boundaries

The Koala is known to occur widely throughout the Armidale district, including Imbota, Yina and Boorolong Nature Reserves, UNE campus and Kirby Road, the Invergowrie area, bushland from around Armidale State Forest (the 'Pine Forest') to the city limits and PLC, other peri-urban bushland (e.g. Council-owned block on the corner of Bona Vista Road and Burgess Street), and Mt Duval (encompassing Duval Nature Reserve) and the wider Dumaresq Dam/Newholme to Devils Pinch area.

### 4. Alternative Habitat outside UNE Boundaries

Bushland south from the subject site, on private land, provides relevant linkages. Trees on local road verges could provide linkages, under the jurisdiction of Armidale Dumaresq Council which is the appropriate authority to maintain Koala habitat connectivity on public road verges. Useful linkages could be enhanced along the contiguous part of Kelly's Plains Road to Bona Vista Road.

### 5. Relationship between core koala habitat versus other koala habitats

Previous koala sightings indicate that koalas within UNE site area are utilising the species recognised as primary food trees such as:

- Ribbon (Manna) (snow gum) (*Eucalyptus viminalis*)
- Blakely's red gum (*Eucalyptus blakelyi*)
- Mountain white gum (*Eucalyptus dalrympleana*)
- Yellow box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*)
- Apple box (*Eucalyptus bridgesiana*)

Other areas where Koala could inhabit include:

- New England stringybark (*Eucalyptus caliginosa*)
- Rough-barked apple (*Angophora floribunda*)
- Blackwood wattle (*Acacia melanoxylon*)
- Honeysuckle banksia (*Banksia integrifolia*)
- Blackthorn (*Bursaria spinosa*)
- Black sheoak (*Allocasuarina littoralis*)

Variance in koala movements tends to be due to water demands in summer and energy requirements in winter.

## Threats

Major threatening processes in the present context include road kill, dog attack and habitat destruction.

## Response Strategies

Koala habitat and usage of the subject site shall be maintained by the landholders as per Armidale Dumaresq Council guidelines that include:

Placing the building envelopes and driveways in the most open areas of each lot, thus minimising the number of trees to be removed;

Retaining most of the trees, and all of the important food trees (Manna Gum and Red Gum) on the site, and preferentially targeting Rough-barked Apple and wattles for any trees that need to be removed;

Compensatory planting, of locally sourced Manna Gum, Blakely's Red Gum and Yellow Box, at a ratio of at least 2:1 for any Koala food trees removed during development;

Restricting any pet dog(s) to the immediate house yard, contained within a dog-proof fence, and allowing the dog(s) on the wider property only during daytime, under the owner's control and supervision; (refer to Animals at UNE Sites Policy).

Landscaping outside the house yard with local Koala food species;

Using Koala-friendly fencing, e.g. post and rail, to facilitate Koala movement.

## Development Controls

Under SEPP 44 Circular B35, specific development controls which could be imposed within a Local Council development control plan, to apply to areas of core Koala habitat, include the following:

Retention of trees known to be used for feeding by Koalas;

Retention of trees and shrubs known to be used for shelter by Koalas, e.g. wattles (Acacia) and sheoaks (Casuarina/Allocasuarina);

Restriction of maximum speed limits for rural residential roads to 60 km/h, and 40 km/h for residential roads;

Restriction of any activities which require clear-felling;

A minimum of 40% of the site should be landscaped; and

Subdivision plans that incorporate an instrument pursuant to S.88B of the Conveyancing Act 1919, which:

- Prohibits keeping of dogs
- Restricts fence construction to designs which do not hinder Koalas
- Prohibits removal of trees which are regarded as Koala food trees
- Requires the use of Koala feed trees and shrubs in all landscaping

## Core Koala Habitat Improvement Opportunities

Koala habitat and usage of the subject site could be maintained by Armidale Dumaresq Council by:

Erecting Koala warning signs where significant number of koala sightings have occurred (in particular the relevant section of Kelly's Plains Road and on the Judith Street approach to the site, and on any future upgrading of Ross Street and Judith Street adjoining the site);

Enforcing neighbourhood dog regulations with respect to confinement to the owners' property, on properties adjoining the subject site (e.g. suburbia fronting Ross Street and Judith Street);

Landscaping public road verges in the vicinity (especially treeless stretches) with Koala food species;

Maintaining the Council-owned block on the corner of Bona Vista Road and Burgess Street as Council land, and allowing the scheduled Koala food species on that entire block to regenerate.

## Koala Monitoring

UNE and Armidale council users are encouraged to contact UNE Environmental Sustainability Manager in regards to any visual sightings of the koalas which are then recorded as a reference to spatial distributions. Alternatively visual sightings are also logged through KoalaTracker (<http://www.koalatracker.com.au>).

## Reporting & Review

Achievement of the Aim and Objectives of this plan could be measured by the continued sightings of Koalas on the wooded parts of the site, as noted by landholders and reported annually to Council. Monitoring of Koala road kill in the vicinity is more appropriately conducted by Council during routine road-maintenance patrols.

## Administration

**Document Type:** UNE Koala Management Plan - Version 2

**Plan Administrator:** Director, Facilities Management Services

**TRIM reference:**

**Date approved:** Jan 2015

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**Responsible party for review:** Director Facilities Management Services

**Approved by:**

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# Koala Vegetation Survey Map

