

Redlands Coast

Koala Conservation Plan

2022–2027



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Foreword

Redland City Mayor Karen Williams

The Redlands has long been acknowledged as an important part of the South East Queensland Koala Coast and has previously been recognised as one of the most significant natural koala populations in Australia.

Redland City Council has a longstanding commitment to protecting koalas on the Redlands Coast, and part of this commitment is acknowledging that supporting our local koala population will take a concerted and collaborative effort across all levels of government and the community. Conserving our vital koala populations is a challenging and complex task that requires ongoing partnerships, particularly as much of their remaining habitat occurs on private land, requiring the support of the community.

Aligning with *Our Future Redlands – A Corporate Plan to 2026 and Beyond* and our *Natural Environment Policy*, our koala management practices are supported by the *Koala Conservation Plan 2022-2027* and the *Koala Conservation Action Plan 2022-2027*. Together, their primary aims are to guide management actions across the Redlands Coast, to retain a viable koala population, and to conserve and manage suitable habitat.

These aims will be achieved by:

- implementing education programs and collaborative activities to develop a robust understanding of koala population health, ecology and movement, and to inform and strengthen koala conservation planning
- enhancing and maintaining an integrated, connected, high quality network of protected koala habitats, through strategic plantings and restoration projects
- minimising the impact of threatening processes on koala population by undertaking on-ground works that reduce koala mortality
- actively engaging the community to increase the understanding, connection to and participation in koala conservation actions and behaviours.

Community ownership is an integral component of the Plan and Action Plan. Coordinated conservation actions through partnerships with other levels of government, local conservation groups, wildlife carers and researchers are essential to their success.

By keeping koala conservation in the forefront of our minds, we can work together to ensure they remain in our hearts and in the hearts of generations to come.

Regards,

Karen Williams

Mayor – Redland City Council

Head of power



A photograph of a koala clinging to a tree trunk. The koala is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the frame, facing the viewer. It has greyish-brown fur and a large, dark nose. The tree trunk is covered in peeling bark, showing a mix of dark grey and light tan colors. In the upper left, there is a semi-transparent green circle containing the text 'Section 1. Background'. The background behind the koala shows green leaves and branches, slightly out of focus.

Section 1. Background

Background

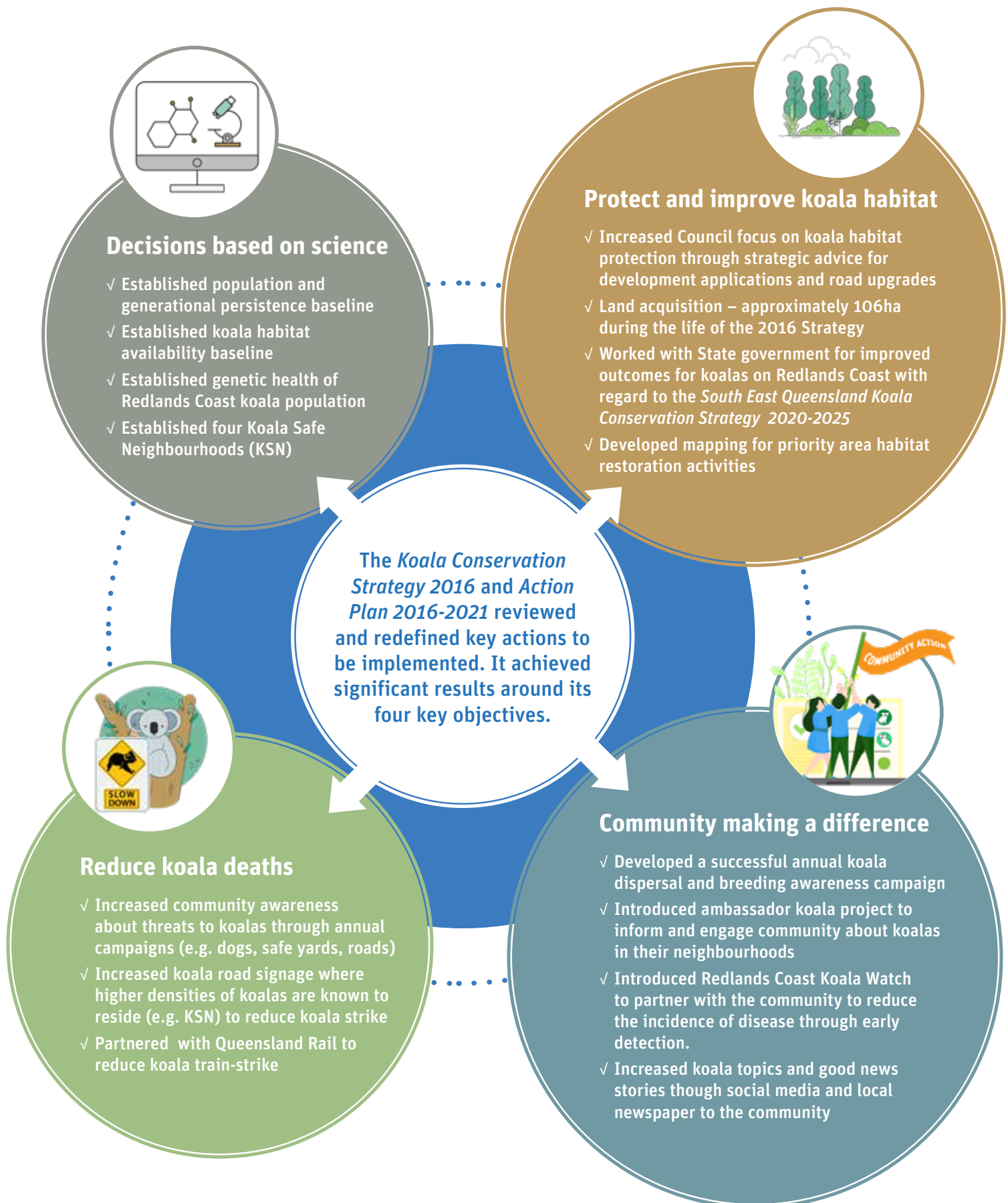
Redland City Council has implemented a number of strategies and policies to protect Redlands Coast koala populations including;

- *Koala Conservation Management Strategy 2002*, aimed to clearly articulate Council's position and actions.
- *Koala Policy and Strategy 2008–2012*, contained 150 key actions to address the key threats and improve koala population numbers to be implemented over four years. They covered a spectrum from highly aspirational to detailed and practical. Fifty-seven of these actions were completed over the life of the plan.
- *Koala Conservation Strategy 2016 and Action Plan 2016-2021*, was designed to further guide management actions to help retain a viable koala population across the Redlands Coast.



Minjerribah koala on jetty pontoon © Yura Banji Scooters

Delivery and implentation of the *Koala Conservation Strategy 2016 and Action Plan 2016-2021*



Section 2. Statutory Framework

Framework

Koala protection and conservation involves a hierarchy of legislation across all levels of government. Redland City Council has statutory obligations at each level.

The **Australian Government** assigns a national conservation status and provides advice on research and management actions for reducing threats.

The **Queensland Government** is responsible for animal welfare matters (for example, hospitals and translocation permits), protection of native animal species and vegetation, regulating land use planning and offset requirements.

Local Governments are responsible for the development and implementation of policy, plans, local planning schemes and local laws that deal with a suite of conservation issues, including koalas.

Legislation, policy and plans relevant to koala conservation are constantly altering due to changes in population, threats and the environment. See Attachment 1 for a full list of those currently relating to koala conservation.



Koala on fence being helped by Redlands Coast resident © Clare Bool



Ambassador koala - Oscar ready for release in Ormiston Koala Safe Neighbourhood © Detection Dogs for Conservation

Local plans and policies

The *Corporate Plan to 2026 – Our Future Redlands* and the *Natural Environment Policy* (ENV-001-P) are key guiding documents that demonstrate the commitment by Redland City Council to:

‘protect, enhance and restore the natural values of the City which include koalas and other native animals and plant populations and habitats’.

The Corporate Plan to 2026 – Our Future Redlands

Goal 4 - Natural Environment has two objectives relating to koala conservation over the next five years, including:

4.1 Manage, maintain and enhance our natural assets and ecosystems, including wildlife protection, vegetation management, and marine and waterway health and values.

4.4 Support ecologically sustainable development through clear planning and policy.

The Corporate Plan also includes three specific ‘key initiatives’ relating to koala conservation:

- deliver Council’s Koala Conservation Strategy and review and update the Koala Conservation Action Plan to commit to proactively preserve our koala population
- work with the community to provide education opportunities to support, enhance and encourage environmental understanding and grow environmental connections
- continue to target rehabilitation, regeneration and habitat management works in key priority areas, based on strategic mapping and research and through the delivery of the *Redlands Wildlife Connections Action Plan 2018-2023*.

Natural Environment Policy ENV-001-P

“Our corporate decisions protect, enhance and restore the health and viability of the City’s natural terrestrial and aquatic values both on public and private lands and aquatic environments, for their inherent value and the benefit, use and lifestyle of current and future generations of our community.”

The policy statement includes koalas specifically, as one of these ‘natural values’ (along with other native animal and plant populations).

The Council’s commitment to protect, enhance and restore the natural values of Redlands Coast include:

- koalas and other native animal and plant populations and habitats
- core habitat areas as sanctuaries for wildlife
- safe wildlife movement corridors across the landscape
- maintaining no net loss of native vegetation as defined in the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*.

The policy provides a commitment to a conservation program that benefits koalas through:

- prioritised acquisition of land for rehabilitation and long-term protection to achieve cost effective environmental outcomes that contribute to facilitating biodiversity conservation (e.g. koala survival) and has community benefits
- fostering research partnerships with universities, local, state and commonwealth government agencies and non-government organisations
- working in partnership with the community through action-oriented collaboration, partnerships, and extension programs that empower landholders and the broader community as environmental stewards and citizen scientists.

Section 3. Future Proofing



How the Plan and Action Plan work together

The overall aim of this Plan and the accompanying Action Plan is to guide management actions that will help retain a viable koala population and conserve, restore and manage suitable habitat across Redlands Coast.

The Plan provides the background, policy and process alignment to underpin the Action Plan, while the Action Plan provides a functional 'hands on' tool for Council and the community to identify priority actions in consolidating koala habitat and ecology data, and information to achieve koala conservation within the Redlands.

The Action Plan will focus on the following objectives:

1. Decisions bases on science
2. Community Making a difference
3. Protect and improve habitat
4. Reduce koala deaths

Note: The Plan and accompanying Action Plan do not address Queensland Government controlled issues surrounding koala welfare, including translocation and animal hospitals.

Further information on how the outcomes will be achieved and greater details on the activities can be found in the *Redlands Coast Koala Conservation Action Plan 2022-2027*.



Guiding principles

This Plan was developed using the following guiding principles:

- The conservation of koalas should seek to complement existing strategies and to provide multi-species benefits, via integration with other measures to conserve Redlands Coast's biological diversity and to maintain ecological systems and processes.
- The principles of ecologically sustainable development should be followed, including 'the precautionary principle', which in application means that decisions should be 'guided by careful evaluation to avoid serious or irreversible damage to the environment, and by an assessment of the risk-weighted consequences of options'.
- Community input and involvement should be recognised as being crucial to the conservation of koalas.
- The Plan should continue to build on the current program of works that support and enhance koala conservation outcomes.
- Processes and decision-making should be efficient and transparent and provide for community participation.

Key objectives

The guiding principles for this plan will be supported by our four core objectives:



Decisions Based on Science

Collaborating with research bodies, government agencies and the community to develop a robust understanding of koala population health, ecology and movement across Redlands Coast to inform and strengthen koala conservation planning.



Protect and Improve Koala Habitat

Increase and maintain an integrated, connected, high quality network of koala habitats across the landscape capable of supporting a viable sustainable population of koalas for the long term.



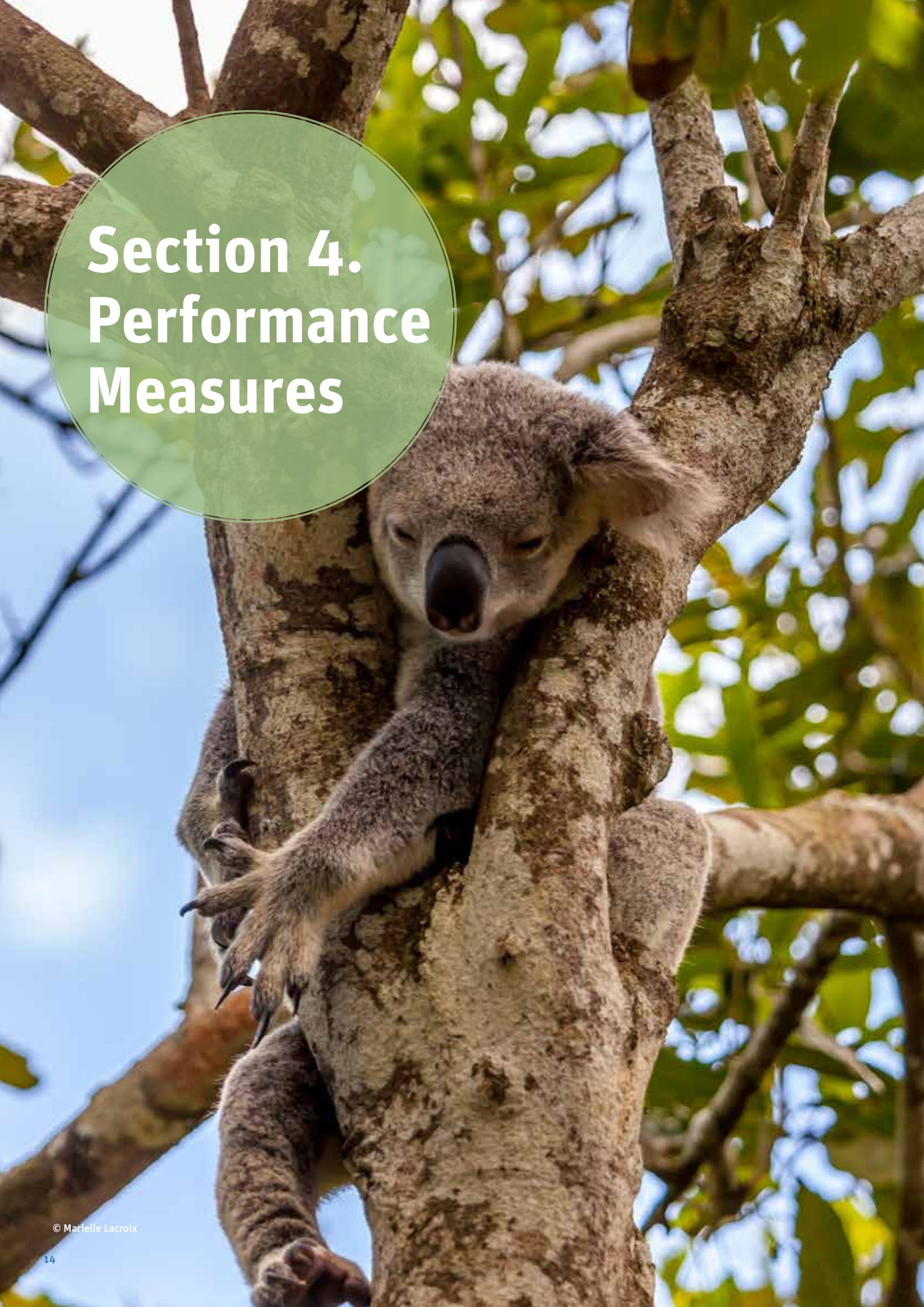
Reduce Koala Deaths

Minimise the impacts of threatening processes on koala populations by undertaking on-ground works that reduce koala mortality.



Community Making a Difference

Increase understanding, connection to and participation in, koala conservation actions and behaviours across all sectors of the community and Council.

A close-up photograph of a koala clinging to a tree trunk. The koala is positioned vertically, with its head near the top of the frame and its body extending downwards. It has a large, dark, leathery nose and its eyes are closed, suggesting it is sleeping. Its grey, woolly fur is clearly visible. The tree trunk is light brown with a rough, textured bark. In the background, there are green leaves and branches, slightly out of focus. A semi-transparent green circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the section title in white text.

Section 4. Performance Measures

To achieve both the short and long-term outcomes, the following activities and processes will be implemented through the five-year action plan:

Short term (0-5 years)	
Current actions	Advancing management practice for koala conservation outcomes.
	Provide policy advice to ensure koala habitat is prioritised in land conservation and management initiatives.
	Provide policy advice to guide the consideration of koala habitat with regard to statutory planning strategies and applications.
	Continue to develop a better understanding of koala population requirements to advance management responses.
	Facilitate increased health and disease management outcomes for koalas.
	Recognise, motivate and commemorate koala conservation efforts.
	Develop and maintain productive, integrated partnerships to influence and achieve greater funding for koala conservation outcomes.
Desired outcomes	Maintain information network with community, universities, wildlife carers, environmental groups and other stakeholder to guide and assist with koala conservation outcomes.
	Koala populations are stabilised and increasing across the Redlands Coast
	Number and genetic distribution of koalas in identified priority areas assessed at least every two years, using accepted monitoring standards, to measure stability and viability.
	Threats such as vehicle-strike, dog attack and disease decrease (source: KoalaBase; Redlands 24hr Wildlife Rescue and research reporting).
	Develop outline for landscape scale koala movement plan for Redlands Coast.
	Continue to increase focus on conservation actions that the community can undertake as part of their daily lives.



Ambassador koala - Bruce - © Detection Dogs for Conservation

Mid term (0-10 years)

Desired outcomes

1. Increased consideration of koala habitat demonstrated in development planning through City planning instruments and Council policy.

Measures:

Increase in percentage of planning decisions that consider delivery of beneficial outcomes for retaining or improving koala habitat and movement.

Prepare and deliver case studies and/or prospectus for urban greening (habitat rewilding) projects guidelines.

2. Greater area of high-quality koala habitat conserved, acquired, restored and rehabilitated and effectively managed for net gain.

Measures:

Number of hectares of koala habitat conserved, restored and rehabilitated.

Number of hectares of high quality koala habitat cleared.

Number of hectares of koala habitat acquired.

Qualitative evidence of landholders and managers improving amount and quality of conservation and management efforts on private land.

Net gain in quality koala habitat year on year.

3. Continued activity based on science to effectively protect and manage koala populations by Redland City Council.

Measures:

Increase in mapped koala, movement, location and sighting records.

Increase community interaction to support koala conservation efforts (e.g. attendance at forums or participation in citizen science activities).

4. Increased community capacity to drive koala conservation and care.

Measures:

Grant funding received by Redland City Council to support koala projects.

Grant funding facilitated by Redland City Council to support community groups and non-government organisations for koala projects.

Extent and quality of information and guidance available to community groups.

5. Productive and integrated partnerships that foster the conservation and welfare of koalas.

Measures:

Qualitative evidence of new or improved engagement between stakeholder groups.

Fewer incidents reported.

Key performance indicators for the Plan include:

Long term (0-50 years)	
Desired outcomes	1. Koala populations are stabilised and increasing across the Redlands Coast. Measure: Number and genetic distribution of koalas identified at designated sentinel sites are consistently determined as stable and strengthened, using accepted monitoring standards (Data source: research reporting).
	2. Threats such as vehicle-strike have been significantly diminished. Measure: Qualitative data establishes the number of koalas being hit by vehicles across Redlands Coast are significantly reduced in relation to the estimated population (Data source: KoalaBase and Redlands 24hr Wildlife Rescue; research reports).
	3. Threats such dogs attack are uncommon. Measure: Demonstrated evidence of reduction in dog attack across Redlands Coast. (Data source: Redlands 24hr Wildlife Rescue and KoalaBase).
	4. Threats such habitat loss and fragmentation mitigated through strategic landscape planning. Measure: Consistent and demonstrable evidence of net gain of high-quality koala habitat to support increased koala density and abundance across the city (Data source: corporate reporting).
	5. Impacts from disease have been significantly reduced. Measure: Fewer incidence of koalas being reported and treated in wildlife hospitals due to lower disease prevalence.
	Continuation of community network for early intervention for sick or diseased koalas results in persistence of healthy koalas being returned to Redlands Coast. (Data source: KoalaBase and Redlands 24hr Wildlife Rescue).



Ambassador koala - Banjo - © Detection Dogs for Conservation

Reporting

The implementation team will provide annual progress reports to the council, including progress against the Action Plan key performance indicators.

Reports will be distributed to relevant council departmental groups, other key stakeholders and the public. They will be available at redland.qld.gov.au/koala

Stakeholders

The successful implementation of the plan depends on:

- sustained commitment by a variety of stakeholders
- ongoing and timely exchange of information between relevant managers, researchers and community groups
- regular monitoring and reporting on progress to enable relevant managers to alter their plans where required.

Stakeholders who will be involved in or responsible for actions under the plan include:

- federal, state and local governments
- research scientists
- non-government organisations
- zoos and wildlife parks
- community groups
- individual members of the public.

Funding

Implementation of this plan will have financial costs and benefits for Redland City Council and the community, resulting in:

- costs to apply the necessary measures to meet the objectives of this plan
- lower costs over time: future costs of koala conservation will be reduced by timely investment in the delivery of sustained conservation outcomes
- benefits are aligned to applied conservation practices toward our natural and cultural heritage, including conservation of co-occurring species and ecosystems, sustainable land use practices and increased opportunities for ecotourism.

While there are already resources directed to koala conservation and management, ongoing resources will be required to implement this Plan.



Resources could be supplemented by ongoing and potentially increased commitments from the private sector, state and federal governments and NGOs to help achieve the Plan's long-term objectives. Outcomes that benefit koalas may also be delivered through conservation activities for other species.

The effective use of resources will be a key focus of the Action Plan. Annual progress reviews will be completed to ensure activities provide value and perform effectively.

Council's implementation of the Action Plan will be funded through a combination of general revenue, environment separate charge, reserve funds and resources obtained through external funding sources.





-  Number of Koala Safe Neighbourhoods in 2021
-  Number of ambassador koalas in December 2021

Creation of additional Koala Safe Neighbourhoods will be investigated during the life of the Plan and will be based on robust science

Attachment 1: Relevant legislation, policy and plans

Instrument	Author	Summary
Federal		
<i>Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>	Australian Government Department of the Environment	Identifies and protects species and ecological communities as ‘matters of national environmental significance’ (MNES) Koala populations in QLD, NSW and ACT listed as vulnerable under EPBC in 2012
<i>Conservation Advice for Koala (QLD, NSW & ACT) 2012</i>	Threatened Species Scientific Committee	Provides advice (research and management actions) for threat abatement actions that would support the recovery of the koala
<i>National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy 2009</i>	Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council	Provides policy advice to ensure koala habitat is prioritised in land conservation and management initiatives and in statutory planning strategies and applications
State		
<i>South East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy 2020-2025</i>	Queensland Government Department of Environment and Science	The Strategy details the Queensland Government’s direction in reversing the decline in koala populations across SEQ
<i>Sustainable Planning Act 2009</i>	Queensland Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulates land use planning and development in Queensland, by managing the process development takes place, effects of development on the environment and coordinating and integrating local, regional and state planning Refers to statutory instruments which are relevant to the protection of koala habitat
<i>Planning Regulation 2017</i>	Queensland Government	<p>Describes the State and the Local Planning Instruments and regulated requirements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development assessments, referral agency assessment and; other matters
<i>State Planning Policy 2014</i>	Queensland Government Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines matters of ‘State Interest’ in land use planning and development including ‘biodiversity’ Directs that ‘Matters of environmental significance are valued and protected and the health and resilience of biodiversity is maintained or enhanced to support ecological integrity’ Directs that to demonstrate compliance local government to prepare a Koala Strategy demonstrating actions to meet objectives of the SPP
<i>South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031</i>	Queensland Government Department of Infrastructure and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides strategic direction to achieve outcomes for the SEQ region by ensuring that state interests are applied in local planning Aims for a net gain in koala habitat by managing conflict with urban development
<i>Nature Conservation (Koala) Conservation Plan 2017</i>	Queensland Government	<p>The main purposes of this plan are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> promote the continued existence of viable koala populations in the wild; and to prevent the decline of koala habitats
<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992 and Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006</i>	Queensland Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies and protects threatened species The koala is currently included in the threatened species list as ‘vulnerable’ Queensland wide

Instrument	Author	Summary
<i>Nature Conservation (Koala) Conservation Plan 2006 and Management Program 2006-2016 (Koala Plan)</i>	Queensland Government Environmental Protection Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parts of this plan were superseded by the introduction of the KSPRP The elements that still apply in Redland City include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> requirements to undertake sequential clearing and use of a koala spotter provisions for rehabilitation of injured and sick koalas and translocation
<i>Vegetation Management Act 1999</i>	Queensland Government	Regulates the clearing of native vegetation, including koala habitat
<i>Vegetation Management Regulation 2018</i>	Queensland Government	<p>Determines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> approval of accepted development vegetation clearing codes, matters relating to regional ecosystems and; other matters prescribed for the Act
<i>Environmental Offsets Act 2014</i>	Queensland Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a framework for offsets to be applied Identifies 'prescribed activities' that may cause 'significant residual impacts' on 'prescribed matters' Specific requirements for koala related offsets (including rehabilitation, establishment and protection of koala habitat to offset koala habitat loss)
<i>Environmental Offsets Regulation 2014</i>	Queensland Government	<p>Describes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> prescribed activities, prescribed environmental matters, requirements about offset conditions and; other matters
Local		
<i>Our Future Redlands – A Corporate Plan to 2026</i>	Redland City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council's commitment to protecting Redland's natural environment that enhances our identity, lifestyle, wellbeing, economy and cultural values. Key Initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to target rehabilitation, regeneration and habitat management works in key priority areas, based on strategic mapping and research through the delivery of the <i>Redlands Wildlife Connections Action Plan</i>. Deliver Council's <i>Koala Conservation Plan</i> and review and update the <i>Koala Conservation Action Plan</i> to commit to proactively preserve our koala population.
<i>Natural Environment Policy 2020 ENV-001-P</i>	Redland City Council	<p>Policy Objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our corporate decisions protect, enhance and restore the health and viability of the City's natural terrestrial and aquatic values both on public and private lands and aquatic environments, for their inherent value and the benefit, use and lifestyle of current and future generations of our community. The Policy statement includes koalas specifically, as one of these 'natural values' (along with other native animal and plant populations).
<i>Redland City Plan 2018</i>	Redland City Council	<p>Key Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Koalas identified in strategic framework as a key priority Provisions within zoning and Environmental Significance overlay codes require development to be designed to provide safe koala movement opportunities, minimise impediments to a koala traversing the landscape, minimises the loss of koala habitat trees and minimises the amount of clearing and fragmentation of koala habitat Tourism will celebrate regionally and internationally significant natural features like Moreton Bay and North Stradbroke Island, the high scenic amenity of rural and bushland landscapes, and native fauna species including the koala.



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