

COMMITTEE NO. 7 – PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT INQUIRY INTO KOALA POPULATIONS AND HABITAT IN NEW SOUTH WALES

At Rainbow Room, Cex Coffs, Coffs Harbour, on Tuesday 4 February 2020

John Turbill – Threatened Species Officer, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

Questions on notice

Question 1

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Thank you, I have quite a few questions. This is probably one for you,

Mr Turbill. I am very interested in the success or otherwise of the koala harm mitigation arrangements on the highway—there are the tunnels and the walkovers. Has there been work done on their use by koalas? Would you be able to provide that to the Committee? You can take it on notice.

This is a question for the RMS, who have studied the effectiveness of fauna mitigation measures along the Pacific Highway.

Question 2

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Could I just interrupt for a moment, Mr Turbill? Do councils need to have come to you to apply for that money or do you proactively advise councils that those resources are available?

Mr TURBILL: It happens both ways. If we can get the funding for different sources, we will work with councils. But we will only provide the funding to council, if the council has a resolution at the councillor level to go ahead and do the plan and finalise it. So we are not just talking at an officer level, we are asking councillors to approve the process so that we put up the funding, we put up the process and we seek that councillors approve the process before we provide the funding. So that is over the last 15 years, the funding plus probably more than that in in-kind support from our threatened species staff in helping do the surveys et cetera. So out of those 12 councils,

presently only six have gone through to approved plans. The rest have various stages of koala habitat mapping or draft plans waiting to be approved.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Waiting to be approved by the Minister?

Mr TURBILL: By the planning department, yes, and the Minister.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: So they are not with the Minister yet?

Mr TURBILL: Some have been put up.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Can you just break it down for us specifically where they are at?

Mr TURBILL: I have a chart here that I can provide you with later on.

The CHAIR: We could potentially get that on notice. Given we have got six more minutes of this session, we will get all of that detail on notice if that is all right?

Six Comprehensive Koala Plans of Management have been approved under State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) 44 in NSW. A further 7 are in development.

Status of Comprehensive Koala Plans of Management at February 2020

LGA	Status	Coverage
<i>Ballina</i>	Approved on 6/07/2017 by Department of Planning	Part shire (mainly western uplands)
<i>Bellingen</i>	Approved on 11/11/2016 by Department of Planning	Coastal area
<i>Byron</i>	Submitted to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for approval under the transitional clause under SEPP 44 (2019)	Byron coast only
<i>Campbelltown</i>	Submitted to Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for approval under the transitional clause under SEPP 44 (2019)	Shire-wide
<i>Clarence Valley</i>	Submitted to Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for approval under the transitional clause under SEPP 44 (2019)	Ashby, Woombah and Iluka koala management areas
<i>Coffs Harbour</i>	Approved in 2000 by Department of Planning. New plan submitted to Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for approval under the transitional clause under SEPP 44 (2019)	Shire wide excluding Corindi and Arrawarra.
<i>Cooma - Monaro</i>	Currently a draft	Part shire.
<i>Greater Taree</i>	Currently a draft	Shire-wide
<i>Kempsey</i>	Approved on 25/3/2011 by Department of Planning	East of Pacific Highway only
<i>Lismore</i>	Approved on 22/1/2013 by Department of Planning	South-east Lismore
<i>Port Macquarie / Hastings</i>	Currently a draft	Coastal only
<i>Port Stephens</i>	Approved in 2000 by Department of Planning	Shire wide
<i>Tweed</i>	Submitted to Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for approval under the transitional clause under SEPP 44 (2019)	Tweed coast only

Question 3

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I am trying to understand if access to private property is inhibiting the research that needs to be done to do this koala mapping, because the mapping seems to be the critical information everyone needs.

Mr TURBILL: In some cases we could not get onto properties.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Is it possible for you to give us some information about the studies that you have done, the number of landholders involved and what the responses were at the different stages? Is that something that you could perhaps take on notice?

Mr TURBILL: Yes. I would have to work with council but we would be able to work that out.

Study name	Landholders contacted for permission to survey on their property	Surveys completed
Bellingen Shire Council Coastal Koala Habitat Study (2014)	150	134
Nambucca Shire Council Coastal Koala Habitat Study (2015)	160	126
Coffs Harbour City Council Koala Habitat Study (2019)	248	176

Note: It is not possible to provide exact figures on the number of landholders that gave permission to survey on their land. If a landholder was not contactable before the surveys and permission could therefore not be granted, sites were selected nearby on available public lands.