

INQUIRY INTO KOALA POPULATIONS AND HABITAT IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Sustainable Living Armidale. Wildlife Habitat Group

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The NSW Government approved an expansion of the area of the Great National Koala Park near Coffs Harbour late last year.

In spite of this, there is a case to be made for an Armidale Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management, since John Lemon's experience in Gunnedah and David Paull's in western NSW seems to show that koalas will not be able to cope with the hotter summers there. The cooler Northern Tablelands may be a viable long-term refuge for koalas, as long as there is sufficient water.

Since koalas need eucalypts growing on fertile soil, and access to water in drought, the most likely corridors for them to move from one large area of bush to another to breed would be:

On private land, on well-timbered farms which still have flowing or pooling creeks. We would like financial rewards for such farmers to preserve or plant koala feed trees and the shrubs that protect them.

On public land, TSRs are likely to meet the criteria of good soil and access to water. We ask for them not to be sold off ; perhaps renamed TKRs?

In regional towns, new urban and peri-urban developments should be planned to ensure habitat areas are protected before land is subdivided.

The recent threefold increase in land clearing is likely to affect koala populations throughout the state.