

INQUIRY INTO KOALA POPULATIONS AND HABITAT IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Coast Environmental Alliance (CEA)

Date Received: 28 February 2020

28th February, 2020

Dear Ms Faehrmann,

Thank you for accepting this late submission on behalf of CEA to the inquiry into Koala populations and habitat in NSW.

CEA is a community-based, grassroots lobby group on the Central Coast with over 5000 members and a focus on achieving positive environmental outcomes for the NSW Central Coast.

Our submission relates to the following issues:

1) *Existence of potential and core (SEP 44) Koala habitat on the Central Coast*

The Central Coast encompasses a vast area of core and potential Koala habitat and wildlife corridors for other threatened species, and therefore in accordance with SEP no. 44 we believe the area requires a thorough, systematic investigation to establish Koala numbers, before significant development such as the Wallarah 2 Coal mine takes place.

Further, Brisbane Water National Park in the South of the Central Coast has been identified as an Area of Regional Significance (ARKS) and had previously been home to a significant population of Koalas in the area of Pearl Beach until bushfires in recent years. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of Pearl Beach Arboretum and community members this area has been able to regenerate and now contains appropriate Koala food trees. As such, local and State representatives are collaborating with the community, The University of Sydney and NPWS to investigate the site as a potential Koala translocation area.

In the view of CEA, it makes sense to investigate other areas within the region containing potential Koala habitat, especially if connected to the Brisbane Water National Park corridor.

2) *Evidence of active Koala populations on the Central Coast*

CEA has been working over the past 10 years to collate and document local sightings of Koalas in the area, as reported by the community. Many of these are available on the OEH "Koala sightings" database, however several sightings (with photos) have been reported by community members and have not yet been registered. CEA is currently in the process of registering these sightings, however for the purposes of this enquiry, please see page 3 for further information.

3) ***Impact of recent bushfires on Central Coast Koala Habitat***

As can be seen in the attached map on page 5, the recent bushfires have impacted on Koala habitat to the West of the Central Coast, between two ARKS. Local residents have been reporting increased sightings of Koalas in this area since the recent bushfires, such as in Cedar Brush Creek and Yarramalong (See: <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/central-coast/koalas-sighted-around-cedar-brush-creek-in-yarramalong/news-story/e3bef87c05980d5bac362dc31ac7f22f>).

It is believed that these sightings may be due to Koalas moving away from burnt areas in search of habitat and food, towards the East.

One of CEA's major concerns is that large developments involving land clearing, such as the Wallarah 2 coal mine, have great potential to pose further threat to these (likely already stressed) Koalas moving East in search of habitat and food. We believe that our local Koalas deserve a thorough, unbiased and systematic survey so that they actually have a chance at surviving.




Further, it is clear that the SEP no. 44 legislation at present does not provide sufficient protection to Koalas and their habitat, when a development as large-scale and environmentally-threatening as Wallarah 2 was approved without through assessment of the area's habitat, despite being identified as area worth protecting. As local residents are observing and reporting, it is a corridor which is apparently viable enough to provide habitat and food source for Koalas escaping their burned habitat, and therefore absolutely worth sustaining.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns and please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further information.




Kind regards,

Natalie White




Jake Cassar

 CENTRAL COAST KOALA SIGHTINGS		 COAST ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE	
25/02/19 (PM)	Watapans		Sent to Jake Cassak Registered Bionet sighting

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 CENTRAL COAST KOALA SIGHTINGS		 COAST ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE	
June 2019	Mangrove		Paul – sent to Jake Cassak Mum and joey



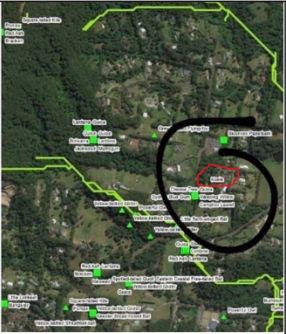
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 CENTRAL COAST KOALA SIGHTINGS		 COAST ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE	
2018 (PM)	Bumbalara, lookout, Gosford		Sam Alex Murphy *Photo without text also available




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 CENTRAL COAST KOALA SIGHTINGS		 COAST ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE	
06/01/17 (PM)	Mangrove Creek Dam		Keith Melville Sighting captured on motion detection camera set up by Keith Melville.

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 CENTRAL COAST KOALA SIGHTINGS		 COAST ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE	
2006	Picketts Valley		Reported to Jake by Cheryl (Picketts Valley action group) Map by Antony Von Christner (from thesis on Yellow Bellied Glider) Dan Lupton's Wildlife Survey - Recorded on Bionet.

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 CENTRAL COAST KOALA SIGHTINGS		 COAST ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE	
21/9/15	Heaton Lookout, Watapans		Tanya Barry

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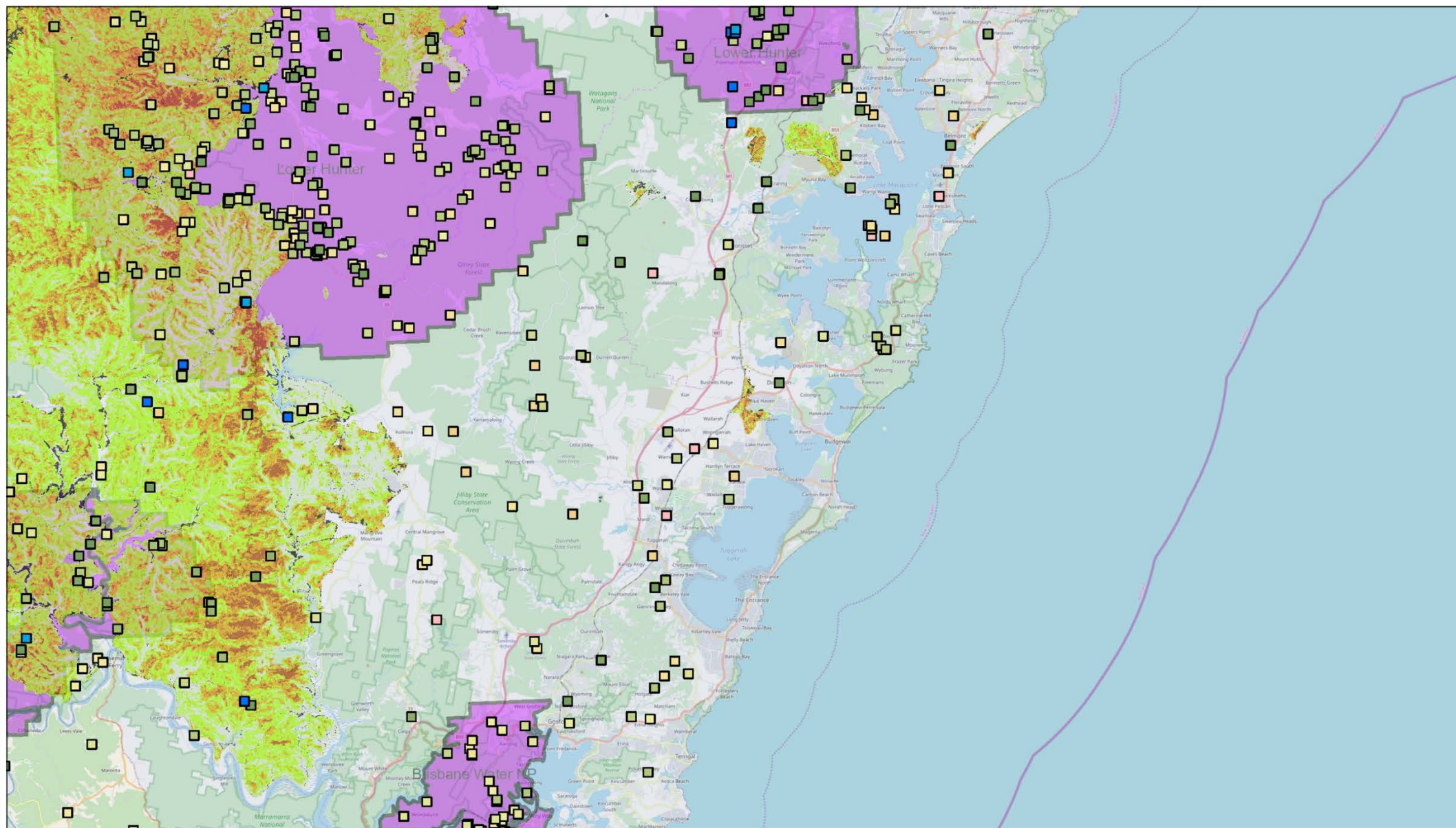


SEED

Sharing and Enabling Environmental Data

SEED Map

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23.1 0 11.57 23.1 Kilometers

Scale 1: 462,679.76

WGS_1984_Web_Mercator_Auxiliary_Sphere

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Legend

	State Environmental Planning Policy No 44-Koala Habitat Protection		1995
			1994
			1993
	Koala Habitat Information Base - Areas of Regional Koala Significance (ARKS)		1992
			1991
			1990
	GEEBAM Burnt Area Class		1989
	Not yet assessed		1988
	Little change		1987
	Canopy unburnt		1986
	Canopy partially affected		1985
	Canopy fully affected		1984
	Koala Species Sightings		1983
	pre 1960		1982
	2020		1981
	2019		1980
	2018		1979
	2017		1978
	2016		1977
	2015		1976
	2014		1975
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