



The Hon. Anthony Roberts MP
Minister for Planning
Minister for Homes

MDPE22/2481

Ms Helen Minnican
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Via email: helen.minnican@parliament.nsw.gov.au



Dear Ms Minnican

Thank you for referring a petition regarding the protection of koalas in the Macarthur region and across NSW. The NSW Government is committed to protecting the habitat of our threatened species, including koalas which are listed as vulnerable under the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* and endangered under national environmental law.

NSW Koala Strategy

As you may be aware, in April this year the NSW Government released its new NSW Koala Strategy. The strategy outlines key koala conservation targets, with over \$190 million committed to delivering the strategy and working towards the Government's goal of doubling the number of koalas in NSW by 2050. This is the single largest investment in koala conservation in Australia and recognises the iconic nature and cultural importance koalas hold in the NSW community.

Under the Koala Strategy the koala population in south-west Sydney has been designated as one of 19 populations for immediate investment. Targeted investment of this population will include protecting and restoring habitat and mitigating threats such as vehicle strike and dog attack.

More information on the NSW Koala Strategy is available at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/threatened-species/programs-legislation-and-framework/nsw-koala-strategy.

Georges River Koala Reserve

The NSW Government is further building koala protections through the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan (CPCP). The CPCP plays an important role in protecting Sydney's unique koala population and commits to the establishment of the Georges River Koala Reserve.

When finalised the reserve will protect up to 1830 hectares of koala habitat along the Georges River from Appin north to Long Point and will be managed by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). I am pleased to confirm that the first 54 hectares of land was transferred into the management of NSW NPWS in April 2022. A further transfer of land is expected to occur in 2023. The NSW Government owns around 65 per cent of the land within the future reserve.

For more information on the CPCP including its final documentation, mapping and supporting factsheets, please visit the Department of Planning and Environment's (the Department) website at www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Strategic-conservation-planning/Cumberland-Plain-Conservation-Plan.

Gilead development

The Mount Gilead Stage 2 proposal is now on public exhibition. The planning proposal and supporting documents can be accessed at www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/ppr/under-exhibition/gilead-stage-2. The Department is inviting submissions on the proposal until 19 December 2022.

In conjunction with the exhibition of the planning proposal, the Department has also now published an updated structure plan and accompanying Guide to the Greater Macarthur Growth Area. These can be found on the Department's website at www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Priority-Growth-Areas-and-Precincts/Greater-Macarthur-Growth-Area.

The structure plan now provides an up-to-date status of the growth area. Among the updated information, the structure plan and Guide now shows the results of a significant body of work, including strategic investigations and protections for koala corridors in the Gilead Precinct.

Koala crossings

Through the CPCP the Government is committed to delivering koala conservation actions, including the construction of at least 2 koala crossings at Appin Road, restoration of koala habitat and installation of koala fencing.

The Department is working in partnership with Transport for NSW to complete a crossing for koalas and other fauna underneath Appin Road at Kings Falls Bridge south of Appin. This work, in conjunction with associated koala exclusion fencing to help guide koalas to the crossing, is in the final stages of construction. Also, in partnership with Transport for NSW, the Department has completed feasibility studies and is preparing a Review of Environmental Factors for a new koala crossing on Appin Road at Ousedale.

Two additional crossings of Appin Road are being considered as part of the Mount Gilead development. These would be located at Menangle Creek (Noorumba Reserve) and Woodhouse Creek.

Koala corridors

The NSW Government is committed to protecting functional koala corridors across the Greater Macarthur region to assist the movement and dispersal of koalas across the landscape. The CPCP has considered the advice provided by the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer. The Department's response to that advice was published in December 2021 and can be found on the CPCP website www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Strategic-conservation-planning/Cumberland-Plain-Conservation-Plan.

The Office of the Chief Scientist and Engineer has recommended average minimum widths of 325 metres – 450 metres for functional koala corridors in the Greater Macarthur and Wilton growth areas. The final mapping for the CPCP incorporated this advice by protecting at least 325 metres. In many places the width of the protected koala corridor is much wider than 325 metres. Protecting up to 450 metres for a koala corridor was not possible in all locations due to existing zoning or development.

The advice from the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer has also been taken into account for the planning proposal for Mount Gilead development. Protection of koala corridors along Menangle Creek, Woodhouse Creek and the Nepean River have been incorporated into the planning proposal.

Should the petitioners have any questions, they are welcome to contact Ms Maria Plytarias, Acting Director, Environment Policy, at the Department on 9274 6569.

Thank you for taking the time to bring this matter to the Government's attention.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'AR', is positioned above the typed name.

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