



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2024

**National Recovery Plan for the Koala *Phascolarctos cinereus*
(combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales
and the Australian Capital Territory)**

National Koala Recovery Team, May 2024

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The koala recovery team acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea, and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to their elders both past and present.

We are committed to working respectfully with First Nations peoples and acknowledge their use, knowledge and custodianship of Australia's native plants and animals including the koala over countless generations. We support First Nations peoples and their aspirations to maintain, protect and manage their culture, language, land and sea, and heritage.



Foreword

The National Recovery Plan for the Koala established a clear set of actions over the next ten years, with the goal of stopping the declining trend and establishing resilient, connected, and genetically healthy metapopulations of koalas, as well as increasing the extent, quality, and connectivity of habitat occupied by the species.

I am proud to say that a dedicated and motivated recovery team is working to deliver on these actions and helping to ensure that koalas not only survive – but thrive.

This annual implementation plan 2024 maps work on priority actions in the recovery plan. It operates in tandem with other recovery team reporting, such as the 10-year implementation pathway and the annual report, to guide and communicate our collective efforts.

Together, we can ensure a brighter future for the koala in Australia.



Le Trac
Chair, National Koala Recovery Team

Introduction

The koala (combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory) was listed as endangered in February 2022¹. In April 2022, the [National Recovery Plan for the Koala *Phascolarctos cinereus* \(combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory\)](#) (recovery plan) was published, setting a pathway for koala recovery action over a ten-year timeframe.

The national koala recovery team published a [10-year implementation pathway](#) for the recovery in May 2023. The pathway noted that the recovery team would develop annual implementation plans to guide delivery of the recovery plan.

While much of the work of delivering the recovery plan is being implemented by respective member organisations, this document highlights 9 key actions to be delivered in the coming year.

The remaining 28 actions in the recovery plan are also important, with recovery team member organisations also progressing these as part of their everyday work.

¹ Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (2022) [Conservation Advice for *Phascolarctos cinereus* \(Koala\) combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory](#), Attachment A: Listing Assessment for *Phascolarctos cinereus* combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. Canberra.

Implementing Actions

The koala recovery team board has identified nine priority actions in the recovery plan that are priorities for immediate implementation. These priorities will be the focus of recovery team member organisations in this period (**Table 1**). Actions underway or planned against the full list of recovery plan actions are available in the annual report.

Table 1: Next steps for recovery plan actions identified by the recovery team as immediate priorities.

Action	Planned activities	Likely output(s)	Lead organisation(s)
2g Facilitate coordination and national consistency in codes of practice for Koala care, ethics, monitoring, and compliance	Design a way to collate and publish koala health metrics at a national scale as part of the National Koala Monitoring Program (NKMP)	Koala health status published on NKMP website	CSIRO
	National koala monitoring protocols agreed and published	Monitoring protocols published on the NKMP website	CSIRO
	Consideration of managing koalas post- fire	Nationally-endorsed position paper	Wildlife Health Australia
	Consideration of the delivery of chlamydia vaccination programs	Nationally-endorsed position paper	Wildlife Health Australia
3b Establish or expand existing targeted private or leasehold land incentive mechanisms and programs	Continue to protect habitat on private land in NSW	Establishment of conservation agreements	NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust
	Report and analysis of properties to prioritise for purchase in Queensland	Review of properties for purchase for some LGAs in Queensland (consider standardising across Queensland)	Ecosure and Queensland Trust for Nature on behalf of the Queensland Government

Action	Planned activities	Likely output(s)	Lead organisation(s)
	Complete analysis to identify and prioritise sites across South East Queensland to deliver strategic restoration and assisted regeneration of koala habitat	Strategic koala habitat restoration program co-designed and delivered in partnership with local governments in South East Queensland	Healthy Land and Water, on behalf of the Queensland Government
4a Review and update environmental impact guidance to support regulatory decision making	Update koala referral guidelines to provide prescriptive thresholds and guidance on what actions should be referred	Revised referral guidelines for the koala under the EPBC Act.	Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
	Develop advice on habitat connectivity, including the importance of cleared habitat and paddock trees to koala	Inclusion as part of referral guidelines	Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
4b Review, revise, and, where appropriate, strengthen statutory planning instruments and policies	Post-Implementation of Planning regulation for the protection of koala habitat	Revised Koala planning regulations to improve consistency and close loopholes. Release of the Decision Post Implementation Impact Analysis Statement	Queensland Department of Environment, Science and Innovation
	Review of the ACT Nature Conservation Strategy	Revised Strategy	ACT Government
	Review of the South Australian Biodiversity Act and consideration of how that impacts on koala management	Revised Biodiversity Act	SA Government
	Revision of conservation planning arrangements as part of the Australian Government's <i>Nature Positive Plan: better for the environment, better for business</i>	New environmental standard	Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
	Consider how First Nations voices can be heard in the development of new statutory positions	Advice to National Koala Recovery Team Board	First Nations Reference Group

Action	Planned activities	Likely output(s)	Lead organisation(s)
4c Ensure identification and implementation of any offset decisions are strategic at a landscape scale and informed by the recovery plan	Work to better align offset delivery arrangements for government and non-government development to deliver better outcomes at landscape scale	Improved guidance for co-ordinated offset delivery under the Queensland Environmental Offset Fund.	Queensland Department of Environment, Science and Innovation
	Consideration of offsetting arrangements as part of the Australian Government's <i>Nature Positive Plan: better for the environment, better for business</i>	New environmental standard	Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
4e Develop national guidelines or standards for koala-friendly urban design.	Collate principles and resources to provide guidance across the koala's range	Nationally-endorsed position paper	Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
6a Develop meaningful and measurable metrics of health, genetics, population and distribution, and climate at relevant planning scales	Development of health metrics, which are then collated and included in the National Koala Monitoring Program (including expert elicitation)	Koala health indices and metrics included in the NKMP.	CSIRO
	Victorian state-wide koala population, health and genetics surveys (creating metrics of health and genetics)	Snapshot of koala population, health and genetics in Victoria	Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
	Consider integration of koala genetics knowledge into the NKMP at a meaningful scale, including how it might inform metapopulation connectivity questions	Koala genetic information included in the National Koala Monitoring Program	CSIRO
	NSW integrated health, genetic, telemetry and demographic population monitoring through the koala sentinel monitoring program	Demographic, genetic and health related process data for up to 6 koala populations in NSW	NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Action	Planned activities	Likely output(s)	Lead organisation(s)
	NSW statewide priority koala population monitoring program	Trajectories for up to 20 populations in NSW	NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
	NSW statewide koala baseline	Snapshot of koala distribution, occupancy and relative abundance in NSW	NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
6c Regionally assess the feasibility, risks, and cost-effectiveness of fire management options	Prioritise actions to manage for fires and koala conservation in NSW	Bushfire management approaches to better protect koalas and their habitat	NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
	Advance development of National Important Koala Areas (NIKA) for adaptation – considering bushfire and climate change refugia areas	Adaptation NIKA mapping layer	Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
6d Develop and implement fire management	Prioritise actions to manage for fires and koala conservation in NSW	Bushfire management approaches to better protect koalas and their habitat	NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
	Advance development of National Important Koala Areas for adaptation – considering bushfire and climate change refugia areas	Adaptation NIKA mapping layer	Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
	Establish technical working group to scope the development of principles for fire management to support protection of known populations and suitable habitat, and identify any barriers to development of a formal board position	Scoping paper	National Koala Recovery Team Strategic and Coordination Group members

Action	Planned activities	Likely output(s)	Lead organisation(s)
	Evaluate the intended actions and the barriers to deliver across the full suite of stakeholders (permitting, training, equipment/funding etc	Review of barriers to fire management for koalas	ACT Government
	Review and updated Planned Burn Guideline and related guidance material to support improve use of fire within core habitat for koalas.	Updated Planned Burn Guidelines for regional ecosystems which are core habitat for koalas	SEQ Fire and Biodiversity Consortium in conjunction with Queensland Department of Environment, Science and Innovation

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This publication (when finalised) will be made available on the [koala recovery team website](#).

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Photos

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The National Koala Recovery Team is a collaboration of many dedicated partner organisations, coordinated by the Australian Government.

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