



Koala News

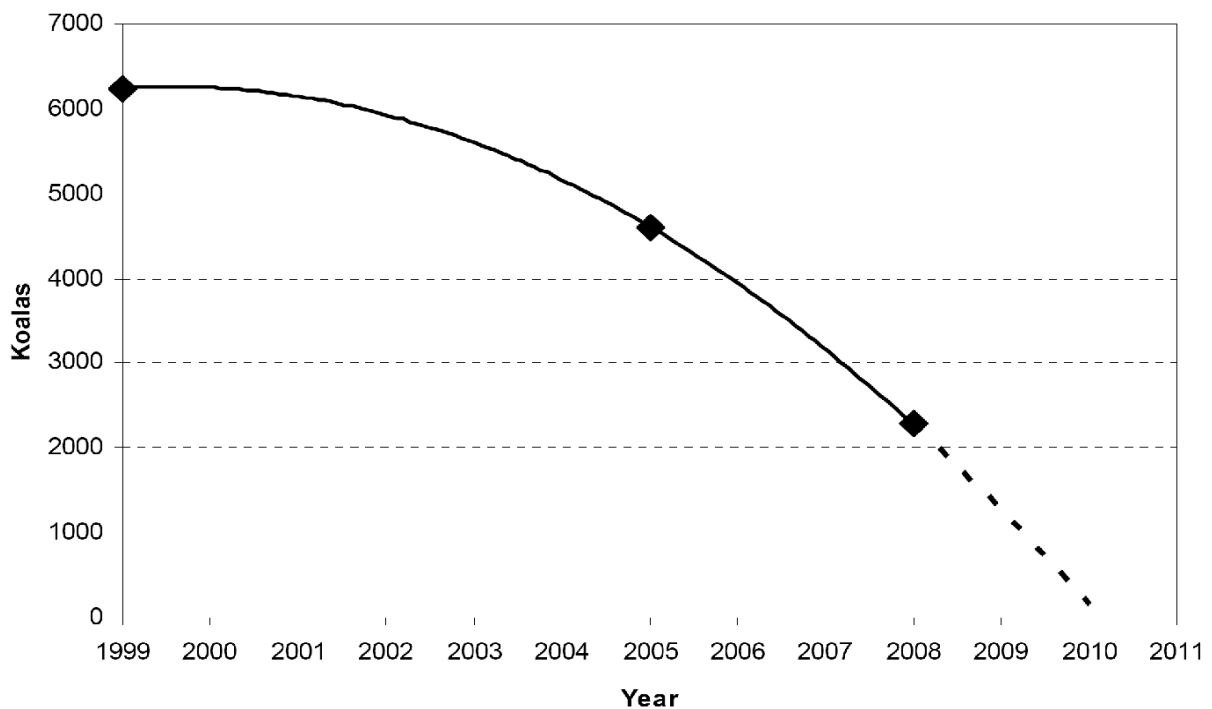


Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland Bayside Branch
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KOALAS EXTINCT IN THE KOALA COAST BY 2011?

The Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management released a paper in April 2009 titled "Decline of the Koala Coast Koala Population: Population Status in 2008".

We have been aware of the results of the Koala density estimates for some time now, but the paper includes the result of modelling (below) that predicts that, if the current rate of decline continues, there will be less than 500 Koalas remaining in the Koala Coast by 2010.



Apart from revealing a significant decline in the Koala population, the paper highlights the long unrecognised significance of the urban Koala population in bolstering the bushland population. It has been demonstrated that bushland sites rely on immigration of Koalas to maintain their viability. Alarming, the urban Koala population within the Koala Coast has been dramatically affected by urban development, and the flow-on effects are now being recorded in protected areas such as Venman Bushland National Park and Daisy Hill Conservation Park.

The paper concludes that, in the absence of conserving a viable urban Koala population, adjacent bushland Koala populations will continue to decline with consequences for the viability of the entire Koala Coast population.



STATE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO KOALA POPULATION CRISIS

On Saturday 23 May, the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability (Kate Jones) and the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning (Stirling Hinchliffe) released a statement titled:

“BLIGH GOVERNMENT REAFFIRMS KOALA RESPONSE STRATEGY”

The media release states that a freeze on clearing State Government land will continue and Koala habitat will more strongly influence planning and development approvals on the Koala Coast.

Actions in the coming months will include:

- The preparation of a model law for councils to adopt providing tighter regulation of dogs in Koala habitat areas;
- The inclusion of Koala habitat mapping and a greater emphasis on Koala protection in the new South East Queensland Regional Plan by the end of July;
- A requirement that all new main roads and upgrades in Koala habitats to be Koala-friendly (e.g. include safe crossing points and fencing);
- A habitat acquisition and rehabilitation strategy based on mapping, including new acquisition powers for land outside of the urban footprint for Koala habitat;
- New measures to require offsets for approved developments where appropriate in specified areas; and
- The continuation of a community education campaign on living with Koalas.

The new State Planning Policy for Koalas will be in force by the end of the year, and is designed to give local authorities and other decision makers a clear framework to prioritise protection of Koala habitat when they are preparing planning schemes and assessing developments.

The minister wants to see a net expansion of Koala habitat in south east Queensland by 2020. (But will this be soon enough?)

What the ...?

The recent clearing of 6a of urban Koala habitat at Ziegenfusz Road in Thornlands by the State Government has upset a lot of Redlands residents. It seems that Redland City Council's concerns regarding the suitability of the site for development, and the planning overlays indicating that the habitat was significant for Koalas and other fauna, were ignored by the State Government during the planning process.



If you are concerned at the loss of the koala from SEQ please write to Premier Anna Blight, Kate Jones, Climate Change & Sustainability Minister C/- of Parliament House Brisbane and urge them to stop clearing of habitat. The clearing mentioned above should never have happened. Also ask for habitat protection to be an urgent priority.

If you would like to contribute to future editions of the **Koala News**, please contact Paulette Jones
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