



Our Ref: CTS 15394/22

Department of  
**Environment and Science**

23 September 2022

Ray and Murray Chambers  
koalarescue\_qld@hotmail.com

Dear Mr Ray Chambers and Mr Murray Chambers

Thank you for your letter of 3 September 2022 to the Honourable Meaghan Scanlon MP, Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs regarding Koala Rescue Queensland's concerns for the need for greater protections for koalas and koala habitat. The Minister has asked me to respond on her behalf.

I appreciate your concerns and observations, however I can advise that the Queensland Government is strongly committed to securing the long-term survival of koala populations in Queensland as demonstrated through the introduction on 7 February 2020 of the strongest koala habitat protection measures Queensland has ever seen. These new protections increase both the area and level of protection given to koalas in the south-east corner of Queensland (SEQ). These strong new protections prohibit clearing in 332 278 hectares of Koala Habitat Areas (KHAs), within Koala Priority Areas (KPAs), with some exemptions. Whilst for a further 381 763 hectares, the Queensland Government has now assumed responsibility for assessing development applications involving clearing of KHAs outside of a KPA. These applications are assessed against the new State Code 25: Development in SEQ KHA's.

These measures were complemented by the release of the South East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy 2020-2025 (the Strategy) in August 2020. The Strategy, developed in partnership with First Nations peoples, wildlife and conservation groups, building and development industries, local councils and the community outlines critical actions that are necessary to halt the decline in SEQ koala populations. The Strategy includes four high-level interrelated targets which have been designed to work together to stabilise koala population numbers in SEQ, deliver a net gain in the total core KHAs, commence rehabilitation to restore 10 000 hectares of koala habitat and commence 10 programs in threat priority areas to support at least a 25 per cent reduction in disease, injury and mortality rates in those locations. The actions outlined in the Strategy will all contribute to meeting these targets, which are underpinned by a monitoring and evaluation plan to track progress.

The first Annual Report on implementation of the Strategy was released in August 2022 and details progress that has been made on the actions in the Strategy and against the Strategy's targets. The report highlights include improved habitat protections, continuing investment in restoration, koala hospitals and research, as well as community education programs. The annual report can be accessed on the Department of Environment and Science (the department) website at : [https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0029/265961/seq-koala-conservation-strategy-annual-report-2020-2021.pdf](https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0029/265961/seq-koala-conservation-strategy-annual-report-2020-2021.pdf)

Further, the *Queensland Protected Area Strategy 2020–2030* includes priority actions which support the achievement of the Queensland Government’s targets in relation to increased protection and restoration of koala habitat. Priority actions which are already in progress and support achievement of these targets include accelerating growth of the protected area system to further protect natural, cultural and heritage values and building partnerships to secure land that provides the highest level of conservation outcomes.

With regards to broader protections for native vegetation and wildlife habitats, the Queensland Government in 2018 introduced amendments to the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* to reinstate the state’s nation leading vegetation management protections. These amendments strengthened Queensland’s vegetation management laws to increase protection for high-value regrowth and remnant vegetation and boost protection for important habitats. Additional changes to the vegetation management framework introduced at that time included: releasing scientific updates to vegetation management maps, updating accepted development vegetation clearing codes based on scientific advice from the Queensland Herbarium and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation and revoking the relevant vegetation clearing code and area management plans so that managing thickened vegetation now requires a development approval.

Should you require any further information, you may contact Dr Geoff Lundie-Jenkins, Director, Southern Wildlife and Koala Operations, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships of the department on telephone 0411 719 068 or by email at [Geoff.LundieJenkins@des.qld.gov.au](mailto:Geoff.LundieJenkins@des.qld.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



Scott Sullivan  
**Acting Deputy Director-General**  
**Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships**